JOHN LYDGATE'S <u>TROY</u> <u>BOOK</u>:   THE UTILIZATION OF "HISTORY"

FOR MORAL INSTRUCTION

A THESIS

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PREFACE

This study of John Lydgate's <u>Troy</u> <u>Book</u> was originally
stimulated by several discussions of medieval literary criti-
cism in conjunction with a lecture on the subject of mythography
in the Middle Ages. The present author became aware of the
transformation which classical culture had undergone as it was
assimilated into the Church-dominated culture of the Middle
Ages; at the suggestion of Dr. Charles E. Walton, Chairman of
the Department of English, Kansas State Teachers College of
Emporia, the author investigated the reasons for the transfor-
mations and the background of the legend of Troy in the Middle
Ages. The present study extends the investigation of the in-
fluences which directed classical literature to didactic ends
and examines the <u>Troy</u> <u>Book</u> as an example of the medieval utiliza-
tion of a classical theme for the purpose of moral instruction.

The present author should like to express his gratitude
for the instruction and guidance provided by the directing
professor, Dr. Charles E. Walton. Also, he wishes to thank Mr.
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CHAPTER I

THE CLASSICAL BACKGROUND: THE ROLE OF ALLEGORY
IN THE DESCENT OF LEARNING

A student familiar to some degree with the classical story of Troy is likely to be surprized when he encounters Middle English versions of the story. He may find, first of all, that the supernatural elements have been removed, inasmuch as some medieval versions do not tell "how goddes fought in þe filde, folke as þe were," as the author of one work complains that Homer did. Moreover, he may discover that the events of the classical story have been shifted, as it were, to a medieval setting, because often the warriors of Troy are now referred to as knights in the Middle English versions of the story, and incidents are related in which the only remaining classical elements are the names of persons and places. Emphases have been radically altered: Hector is the hero of medieval Troy, Aeneas is depicted as a traitor, and the Trojans are favored over the Greeks. Finally, the student may be puzzled at what can only be called the <u>attitude</u> of the medieval author, who regards his material as history and pauses to point out the lessons of his story to the reader.

This situation is especially true in the case of John Lydgate's <u>Troy</u> <u>Book</u>, in which, for instance, characters are presented as historical models of both good and bad behavior,

and are, sometimes, nearly abstracted into "types." More
important, though, is Lydgate's continual emphasis upon the
consequences of certain behaviors. He narrates the actions
which have led to a character's downfall; then he digresses
to discuss the general consequences of such behavior; finally,
he returns to his original character and warns the audience
to take heed of that character's fate, or simply points out
that the character's misfortunes are an example of, perhaps,
the consequences of hasty, impulsive judgments. In short,
Lydgate takes every opportunity to draw a moral from his story,
and often inserts one into it; in a word, he has moralized
the story of Troy.

While Lydgate's obvious purpose in the Troy Book is to
instruct, the reasons for his alteration of the classical
story cannot be completely understood without a knowledge of
several influences and forces that preceded his century. Of
course, the dominance of the Church in the Middle Ages is an
historical commonplace. Similarly, it is unnecessary to
demonstrate (and hardly necessary to assert) that much medi-
eval literature was didactic. However, "medieval literature"
includes the translations and re-tellings of such classical
literature as had survived in the West, and to say that every-
thing was done for the glory of God and His Church in the
Middle Ages is too simple an explanation for the alteration
and moralizing of classical stories. The complete explanation

lies in several related and overlapping fields--in the development of allegorical interpretation, which provided a natural means for reconciling pagan literature to the Church-dominated society of the Middle Ages; in Biblical exegesis, which gave impetus and legitimacy to the allegorization of classical literature; in the necessary use of pagan writings in the Church schools, which further increased allegorization and turned it more to didactic purposes; and in medieval conceptions of classical fable and theories of poetry, which in themselves were the result and culmination of the earlier influences. Since even a brief review of these forces and tendencies must begin several hundred years before the birth of Christ, it can hardly do more than provide a context, but one that is necessary for a clear understanding of Lydgate's Troy Book as an example of the medieval utilization of "history" for the purposes of moral instruction.

Allegorical interpretation began when the behavior of the gods in Homer, the Greek "Bible," could no longer be reconciled to reason or religion.[1] Homer's works had long been used as textbooks with moral interpretations and support for various systems of philosophy being drawn from his stories; but, with the rise of Greek science, some elements became

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[1]Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, p. 15.

unacceptable.[2] Not wishing to reject either science or Homer,

the Greeks applied allegorical interpretation as a means of

reconciliation.[3] The narrative of actions itself in Homer's

works was soon regarded as symbolic; and moral and religious

interpretations became current in the fifth century B. C.[4]

The Sophists elaborated upon these interpretations; the most

detailed explications combined a physical explanation with an

ethical one, or used allegory to show that Homer's works

contained much more than was readily apparent.[5]

The same problems which had necessitated an allegorical

interpretation of Homer were later encountered by Jews who had

been attracted to Greek philosophy. The Jewish sacred books,

also, contained elements which conflicted with later concep-

tions of morality; an allegorical interpretation of those

works allowed the Jews to reconcile their religion to Greek

philosophy and to show that Jewish literature did not greatly

suffer in comparison with Greek.[6] The work of Philo Judaeus

(20 B. C.-A. D. 50) was not the earliest in the allegorization

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[2]Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages
upon the Christian Church, pp. 53-58.

[3]E. R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin
Middle Ages. p. 205.

[4]Hatch, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

[5]Ibid., pp. 59-63.

[6]Ibid., pp. 65-66.

of the Jewish Scriptures, but it was the most significant;
his metaphysical and spiritual explications opened new areas
of interpretation and allowed him to show that Greek philosophy
was compatible with, and inherent in, Jewish law.[7]

Christian writers quickly recognized the utility of
allegorical interpretations, and soon made use of it--for the
same reasons that it had earlier been used by Greek and Jewish
exegetes. In the second century A. D., it was clear that
Christianity, if it were to survive, would have to absorb the
elements of pagan religion and philosophy which had preceded
it.[8] Allegorical interpretation, aided by the beginning phi-
losophy of Neoplatonism, was the means by which that absorp-
tion was accomplished.[9] Clement of Alexandria (c. 160-c. 215),
the founder of Neoplatonism, attempted to reconcile Christianity
and paganism in his Miscellanies and also applied allegorical
interpretation to Homer.[10]

Much of the Old Testament was difficult to accept for
those who took an ideal view of Christianity or had been

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[7]Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity,
pp. 14-15; Hatch, op. cit., p. 67.

[8]C. H. Moore, The Religious Thought of the Greeks,
p. 327.

[9]Ibid., p. 350; J. E. Sandys, A History of Classical
Scholarship, I, 343.

[10]Sandys, op. cit., pp. 330-332.

introduced to the new religion through the Gospels.[11] The
anthropomorphoisms, the harsh punishments, and the not totally
attractive picture of God presented in the Old Testament were
difficulties which had to be overcome. The threefold interpre-
tation--literal, moral, and spiritual--of Origen (185-254), a
pupil of Clement, overcame the difficulties, standardized the
method of Christian exegesis, and, in preserving the Old
Testament, insured the continuing application of allegorical
interpretation.[12]

As Christianity gained currency in the fourth century,
it was legally recognized as a religion; Christian schools
were established, and a paradox was immediately encountered.[13]
While there was no danger in the study of grammar and rhetoric
as such, the textbooks were liberally illustrated with quota-
tions from pagan authors; thus, in his education, a youth
became familiar with pagan mythology and classical literature
in general--both of which the Church disapproved.[14] However,
while the Church Fathers might (and did) oppose pagan learning,
they could hardly oppose education. The problem was compounded
by the fact that the Fathers themselves were products of the

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[11]Eatch, op. cit., p. 76.

[12]Ibid., p. 79; Moore, op. cit., p. 351.

[13]M. L. W. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western
Europe, p. 45.

[14]Loc. cit.

classical curriculum. There was some opposition to the use of the classics in the schools, but the Church never forbade their study; also, while the Fathers opposed the pagan authors, they, nevertheless, used them in their own writings and thereby established a precedent for later educators.[15] The general Church attitude toward pagan authors became one of acceptance—as long as they were directed to ecclesiastical ends.

Jerome (c. 347-419) changed his attitude toward the classics several times during his life. While he renounced classical studies at one point, his writings reveal that he never completely abandoned them.[16] Also, though he abstained from reading pagan literature for fifteen years, he began to teach it again later in life.[17] His attitude toward the classics was generally tolerant; he admitted that Christians could learn something from most pagan authors; and, since a program of secular studies as a preparation for Biblical interpretation is implicit in Jerome's outline of Christian education, he evidently considered the study of pagan literature as the means to an end.[18] To the early Middle Ages and later times, Jerome represented the humanism of the Church.

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[15] D. Comparetti, Virgil in the Middle Ages, p. 81.

[16] Laistner, op. cit., p. 48.

[17] E. K. Rand, Founders of the Middle Ages, p. 120.

[18] Laistner, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

and his views were influential.[19]

The influence of Augustine (354-430) in all areas of
thought was great and far-reaching.[20]   His attitude toward
pagan learning, stated in On Christian Doctrine, determined
the views of most ecclesiastical writers on the subject for
the next thousand years.[21]   In discussing problems of
Scriptural interpretation, Augustine showed how various
branches of knowledge could contribute to the understanding
of "unknown signs" in the Bible.[22]   He cautioned that the
"falsities of heathen superstition" should be rejected, but
warned his reader not to ignore profane knowledge which would
aid in Scriptural interpretation:

> For we ought not to refuse to learn letters because they
> [the pagans] say that Mercury discovered them; . . .
> Nay, but let every good and true Christian understand
> that wherever truth may be found, it belongs to his
> Master; and while he recognizes and acknowledges the
> truth, even in their religious literature, let him re-
> ject the figments of superstition. . . .[23]

After discussing other branches of knowledge which would be
useful in exegesis, Augustine restated his attitude toward
pagan learning:

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[19]Curtius, op. cit., p. 447.

[20]Charles Guignebert, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern
Christianity, p. 205.

[21]George Saintsbury, A History of Criticism and Literary
Taste, I, 380.

[22]On Christian Doctrine, II.xi-xvii.

[23]Ibid., xviii.

> . . . if those who are called philosophers, and especially
> the Platonists, have said aught that is true and in har-
> mony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from
> it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have
> unlawful possession of it.[24]

After pointing out that even the Israelites took spoils from

Egypt and turned them to better uses, Augustine stated a view

and implied a method which was to prevail throughout the

Middle Ages:

> . . . in the same way all branches of heathen learning
> have not only false and superstitious fancies and heavy
> burdens of unnecessary toil, which every one of us . . .
> ought to abhor and avoid; but they contain also liberal
> instruction which is better adapted to the use of the
> truth, and some excellent precepts of morality; and some
> truths in regard even to the worship of the One God are
> found among them.[25]

In short, he believed that pagan learning must be directed

toward Christian ends, a view which was to become the philos-

ophy of education, so to speak, in the Church schools.

Augustine's words also reveal the Christian interpretations

that were being applied to many pagan authors: ". . . and

some truths in regard even to the worship of the One God are

found among them." Interpretation of Vergil's works had

become common in the fourth century; Augustine and others had

interpreted the Fourth Eclogue as foreshadowing the birth of

Christ.[26]

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[24] Ibid., xl.

[25] Loc. cit.

[26] J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The
Medieval Phase, p. 22.

The problem of reconciliation was increased after the final collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, when the Church became the dominant institution in the West. Education was totally in the hands of the Church, and, being completely directed toward Christian purposes, it, naturally, underwent some changes.[27] However, the curriculum, still based upon pagan authors, remained largely unchanged. Some writers might oppose classical studies in the Church schools, but no other body of writings was considered to be suitable for education.[28] Thus, while the study of theology and an understanding of the Scriptures were the goals of Christian education, they were goals that could not be reached without prior training in the classics.[29] The Church justified the use of pagan literature on the grounds that it would promote the faith. Classical studies were turned to didactic purposes, and, in the familiar phrase, "philosophy" (meaning all knowledge) became the handmaiden of theology.[30]

The work of Gregory the Great (540-604), who was elected Pope in 590, was also widely influential throughout the Middle

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[27]Ibid., p. 9.

[28]H. O. Taylor, The Emergence of Christian Culture in the West, p. 108.

[29]J. W. Adamson, "Education," The Legacy of the Middle Ages, p. 268.

[30]H. E. Barnes, An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World, I, 313.

Ages, especially in the area of Biblical exegesis.[31] His
allegorical interpretations largely determined the later medi-
eval tendency to neglect the literal level of the Bible for
the symbolic (usually moral) meaning.[32] His attitude toward
secular studies and pagan literature was less liberal than
most, although he followed the general practice in condoning
them if they were an assistance to the study of theology, and,
thus, directed toward Christian ends.[33]

Some attempts were made to replace the old, largely
pagan curriculum with a Christian one with the rise and spread
of monasticism in the fifth and sixth centuries.[34] However,
there was no longer any need to oppose paganism, and the read-
ing program had become fixed.[35] A few alterations were made--
quotations from the Vulgate Bible and the Church Fathers were
added to the grammar books--but the pagan authors remained as
the greatest part of the reading.[36] The general attitude of
the Church also remained unchanged; secular studies were
accepted, but only an ancillaries to the study of theology.

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[31]Ibid., p. 334.

[32]Morton W. Bloomfield, "Symbolism in Medieval
Literature," MP, LVI (November, 1958), 74, fn. 3.

[33]H. O. Taylor, The Mediaeval Mind, I, 99.

[34]Laistner, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

[35]Comparetti, op. cit., p. 80.

[36]Loc. cit.

In short, they were directed toward the ends of Christian and moral education, as is evident from the encyclopedic preservations of the time and the work of Christian educators.

While not all of the material in Martianus Capella's Marriage of Mercury and Philology (early fifth century) had been Christianized,[37] it is a significant work both for its influence and for what it reveals about the changed conceptions of pagan culture. Capella's work is a treatise on the liberal arts prefaced by an elaborate account of the marriage of Mercury and Philology--but the mythology has been allegorized.[38] Capella's book was one of the most widely-used texts of the Middle Ages; the allegory of the first two books, as well as their educational content, was greatly influential.[39]

Cassiodorus (c. 490-c. 583) was the first writer to establish Augustine's attitude toward pagan learning on a large scale; his Institutiones not only preserved secular knowledge, but recommended its study while directing it to ecclesiastical ends.[40] He urged that the liberal arts in general be studied, but the goal was better understanding of the Scriptures.[41]

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[37]H. O. Taylor, The Mediaeval Mind, I, 72.

[38]Sandys, op. cit., p. 241.

[39]H. O. Taylor, The Emergence of Christian Culture in the West, pp. 49-50.

[40]Barnes, op. cit., p. 334.

[41]Sandys, op. cit., p. 265.

At one time, Cassiodorus had collaborated with the Pope
in planning a Christian university founded on the classical
model in which secular studies would serve as preparation for
theology and Scriptural interpretation.[42] Unfortunately, the
plans collapsed with the death of the Pope, and Cassiodorus
turned to other work.[43] He was influential in the spread of
monasticism in the West; one monastery which he founded was a
center of both secular and religious learning and contained a
large library of classical works.[44] His work may be summarized
as the study and promotion of all knowledge, but always with
Christian ends in view.[45]

Christian use of allegorical interpretation had
continued since the time of Origen, but it had not been re-
stricted to Biblical exegesis. The interpretation of Vergil's
Fourth Eclogue as foretelling the birth of Christ has already
been mentioned.[46] In the sixth century, Fulgentius, a
Christian grammarian, surveyed mythology with the aid of alle-
gorical interpretation.[47] His Mythologicon was the first

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[42]Rand, op. cit., p. 241.

[43]Loc. cit.

[44]Latourette, op. cit., pp. 331-332.

[45]Ibid., p. 332.

[46]Minor secular allegorical works from the time of Philo
to the fourth century are cited by L. K. Born, "Ovid and
Allegory," Speculum, IX (October, 1934), 367.

[47]Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 393-394.

systematic application of allegory to pagan literature.[48]
Fulgentius also interpreted the _Aeneid_ as an allegory of the
life of man in his journey to "Wisdom," drawing a symbolic
meaning from nearly every syllable of the first line.[49]
Moreover, his allegorization of the _Aeneid_ stimulated many
other works of the same nature.[50]

Greater use of classical studies is shown by the work
of Isidore of Seville (d. 636), who integrated pagan learning
into the educational system of the Church.[51]   His _Etymologies_,
a collection of secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, was
widely used during the Middle Ages.[52]   Through a use of alle-
gorical interpretation, Isidore directed his blend of pagan
learning and Christian principles to ecclesiastical ends.[53]
In his major theological work, the _Sententiae_, he also empha-
sized pagan knowledge as a prerequisite to Biblical studies.[54]
Since Isidore's _Etymologies_ was a standard text for the Middle
Ages, the later edition of the book by Rhabanus Maurus

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[48] J. E. Spingarn, _A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance_, p. 6.

[49] Saintsbury, _op. cit._, p. 395.

[50] Atkins, _op. cit._, p. 34.

[51] Curtius, _op. cit._, p. 455.

[52] Latourette, _op. cit._, p. 341.

[53] Barnes, _op. cit._, p. 355.

[54] Curtius, _op. cit._, p. 457.

(c. 776-856) was also important. Aside from minor changes,
the most important alteration was the expanded use of alle-
gorical interpretation throughout the encyclopedia.[55] The
usefulness of the work and Maurus' reputation made the revi-
sion widely popular in the eighth and ninth centuries.[56]

Maurus assembled other compilations, usually drawing
from Christian sources; however, he advocated a study of the
Ancients as long as the heathen elements were avoided.[57]
Maurus' view was identical to Augustine's: pagan works were
"not to be shunned, but their truths appropriated, as from
unjust possessors."[58] One other point in Maurus' doctrines
is significant for what it reveals about the uses that were
being made of pagan literature. He defined grammar (a term
which was nearly synonymous with the study of literature) as
"the art of explaining poets and historians."[59]

The early stages of the process by which classical
literature was turned to moral-didactic purposes should be
clear. Allegorical interpretation made such works "acceptable"
to the beliefs of later times; Biblical exegesis gave legitimacy

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[55]Laistner, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

[56]Ibid., p. 221.

[57]Barnes, op. cit., p. 337.

[58]Quoted in H. O. Taylor, The Mediaeval Mind, I, 222.

[59]Quoted in L. J. Paetow, The Arts Course at Medieval
Universities, p. 13.

and impetus to the allegorization of secular literature. With
the growing dominance of the Church, it was natural that
interpretations of classical works would be Christian ones.
Pagan literature had long been the foundation of the educa-
tional curriculum; its necessary use in the Church schools made
inevitable its direction toward the ends of Christian educa-
tion. Even after this opposition to paganism had ceased,
classical literature was still "interpreted"; students were
taught to read it for the *sententia*, for the lesson which could
be drawn from it.

Belief in the instructional value of profane literature
continued throughout the later Middle Ages. Since the pagan
authors always had their detractors, those who wished to defend
them had to argue for the utility of classical studies, and,
in the Middle Ages, utility meant moral value.[60]
Interpretation and allegorization continued until even the
works of Ovid were moralized, and classical fable, in general,
was elaborately defended on moral grounds. Ideas of poetry
in the later Middle Ages and conceptions of classical litera-
ture down to Lydgate's own time provide the rest of the context
necessary to understand the *Troy Book* as the moralization of
history.

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[60] Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

CHAPTER II

THE MEDIEVAL BACKGROUND: IDEAS OF POETRY
AND CONCEPTIONS OF CLASSICAL FABLE

Secular and pagan writings continued to be used for
didactic purposes during the later Middle Ages. Attitudes
during the twelfth century ranged from the decidedly humanis-
tic to the traditional "handmaiden" view that the arts were
only ancillary disciplines. The later twelfth century also
saw the beginning decline of literary studies which culminated
in the thirteenth-century neglect of the arts during the domi-
nance of logic and dialectic. The Scholastic opposition to
secular poetry led to its defense--on Scholastic grounds--in
Dante's Convivio early in the fourteenth century. Classical
literature continued to be commented upon and interpreted,
especially in the case of Ovid's works, throughout the thir-
teenth and fourteenth centuries. Finally, classical fable
and secular poetry were praised and justified by several
authors other than Dante, and were elaborately defended on
moral grounds by Boccaccio near the end of the fourteenth
century.

Hugh of St. Victor's Didascalicon (c. 1130), a well-
known and widely-used work in the tradition of earlier medieval
compilations and handbooks, illustrates the general attitude
that secular and classical literature should be read for

instructional values. The author clearly states the purpose
of the work: "The work, moreover, instructs the reader as
well of secular writings as of the Divine Writings."[61] In the
section that treats of secular literature, Hugh distinguishes
between the "arts" and the "appendages to the arts," the
latter being "only tangential to philosophy."[62] However, he
admits that the appendages occasionally ". . . touch in a
scattered and confused fashion upon some topics lifted out of
the arts, or . . . prepare the way for philosophy."[63] Hugh
considers "all the songs of the poets" to be appendages and
recommends that the arts proper be studied first; however, he
does not forbid the reading of secular works, but only suggests
that they be given second place.[64]

Hugh's directions for the exposition of a secular text--
which are identical to those for the exposition of Scripture--[65]
also indicate his belief in the instructional value of
literature:

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[61]The _Didascalicon_, trans. Jerome Taylor, "Preface,"
p. 44. Subsequent references to the _Didascalicon_ are to book
and chapter; references to the "Introduction" and notes will
be made under the name of the translator.

[62]_Didascalicon_, III.iv.

[63]_Loc. cit._

[64]_Loc. cit._

[65]_Ibid._, VI.viii.

Exposition includes three things: the letter, the
sense, and the inner meaning. The letter is the fit
arrangement of words, which we also call construction;
the sense is a certain ready and obvious meaning which
the letter presents on the surface; the inner meaning is
the deeper understanding which can be found only through
interpretation and commentary. Among these, the order
of inquiry is first the letter, then the sense, and
finally the inner meaning. And when this is done, the
exposition is complete. [66]

One scholar has pointed out that Hugh's "inner meaning" of a

secular text is no more than the theme or thesis of the com-

plete work, and that allegorical or moral meanings are not

implied. [67] However, complete understanding of the literal

meaning alone is not the final stage in Hugh's outline of

studies, because he explains that after the exposition of a

secular text comes meditation, which "takes its start from

reading," and is the "consummation" of learning. Hugh's three

types of meditation are "a consideration of morals," "a scru-

tiny of the commandments," and "an investigation of the divine

works." [68] Hugh's editor points out that the definition of

meditation unites all of the secular arts that are considered

in the Didascalicon (I-III) with the Scriptures into a system

in which all knowledge is directed toward man's salvation. [69]

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[66] Ibid., III.viii.

[67] Charles Donahue, "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism
of Medieval Literature: Summation," Critical Approaches to
Medieval Literature, p. 76.

[68] Didascalicon, III.x.

[69] Jerome Taylor, p. 214, fn. 56.

Thus, when the purpose of study is to lead the student to a knowledge of God, a pursuit of the secular arts becomes nearly identical with religion.[70] Hugh's own words, concluding his discussion of secular studies, provide the best summation of his views:

> . . . hold no learning in contempt, for all learning is good. . . . there is, in my opinion, no book which does not set forth something worth looking for, if that book is taken up at the right place and time. . . .[71]

In contrast, John of Salisbury (c. 1110-1180) recommends the study of classical literature as a <u>necessary</u> appendage to the arts.[72] Throughout his writings, he complains about the latter twelfth-century decadent state of classical studies and the predominance of logic and dialectic which had begun with the work of Abelard.[73] Salisbury recognizes the value of logical training, and defends dialectic in his <u>Metalogicon</u>; however, prior to his defense of dialectic, he points out the need for a foundation in grammar (in its wider sense) and rhetoric.[74] He also defends classical literature in his <u>Polycraticus</u>, a political treatise in which Horace and Juvenal

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[70]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 13-15; 192, fn. 69.

[71]<u>Didascalicon</u>, III.xiii.

[72]H. O. Taylor, <u>The Mediaeval Mind</u>, II, 140, fn. 1.

[73]Hastings Rashdall, <u>The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages</u>, I, 69; L. J. Daly, <u>The Medieval University</u>, p. 11.

[74]Daly, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 14.

are quoted as moralists, and Vergil's fables are seen as
disguised philosophic truths.[75] In general, Salisbury's view
is the traditional one: classical literature should be studied
for the truths concealed under the poetic fictions.[76]

Other twelfth-century attitudes further illustrate
that classical literature is being used for moral-didactic
purposes. Bernard Silvestrius, arguing that poetry and phi-
losophy are united, allegorically interprets the Aeneid as
the story of man's life.[77] In Silvestrius' division of knowl-
edge, poetry is an introduction to philosophy, since the study
of poetry leads to "eloquence," and then to "wisdom" or "phi-
losophy" in a graded series.[78] Silvestrius considers Vergil
to be both a philosopher and a poet, and believes that the
reader gains moral value from the Aeneid.[79] Thus, since Vergil
instructs as a model for writing and by furnishing examples of
correct action, Silvestrius repeats the classical dictum that
poetry should both instruct and entertain.[80]

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[75]Maurice Hélin, A History of Medieval Latin Literature,
pp. 108-109.

[76]Curtius, op. cit., p. 206, fn. 9.

[77]Richard McKeon, "Poetry and Philosophy in the Twelfth
Century: The Renaissance of Rhetoric," Critics and Criticism,
pp. 303-304.

[78]Ibid., p. 304.

[79]R. H. Green, "Alan of Lille's De Planctu Naturae,"
Speculum, XXXI (1956), 659.

[80]McKeon, op. cit., p. 305.

Several other twelfth-century writers followed Silvestrius' view, one going so far as to recommend that a fourfold method of interpretation be applied to pagan authors; one level of meaning is moral.[81] Also, many twelfth-century florilegia, or collections of "sentences," pick passages with a moral lesson from classical authors.[82] An early thirteenth-century treatise on teaching discusses the educational value of various classical authors in which several are considered useful for moral instruction.[83]

Dante's defense of the vernacular in the Convivio near the beginning of the fourteenth century is significant to a discussion of attitudes affecting classical literature, since it is both the culmination of a debate over poetry and a refutation of attacks made upon it. Classical studies were declining in the time of John of Salisbury;[84] the reception of the remaining works of Aristotle leads to further neglect in the thirteenth century.[85] The main intellectual concerns become logic and dialectic; the most favored professions are

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[81]Ibid., pp. 310, 316.

[82]Born, op. cit., p. 371.

[83]Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 409-410. The work also praised Dares, one of the originators of the medieval version of the Troy-story, for his "veracity."

[84]Supra, p. 20.

[85]Rashdall, op. cit., p. 70.

the practical ones of law and medicine.[86] More importantly,

in the rise of Scholastic philosophy, logic is applied to the

problems of theology; the use of dialectic and disputation,

which began with Abelard, becomes the method by which truth in

philosophical and theological matters is reached.[87] With

logic serving its new function, a sharp distinction is drawn

between the "arts" and theology, with the latter denying dis-

cussion of "philosophical" matters to the former.[88] Formerly,

of course, philosophy was associated with the study of classi-

cal literature, but, in the thirteenth century, dialectic, for

all practical purposes, becomes the whole of the arts course

at the universities.[89] Theology is still the end of education,

but only the study of dialectic and "philosophy" (meaning the

logical and metaphysical works of Aristotle) precede it.[90]

The result, of course, is a general decline in the study of

Latin grammar and literature. Even in the elementary schools,

the student receives training only in Latin grammar per se

and composition.[91] In the universities, the situation is even

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[86]Paetow, op. cit., p. 14.

[87]Daly, op. cit., p. 11; Rashdall, op. cit., p. 65.

[88]David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought,
pp. 225-226.

[89]Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought, p. 168.

[90]Ibid., pp. 169-170.

[91]Paul Abelson, The Seven Liberal Arts, pp. 33-34;
Knowles, op. cit., p. 225.

worse; in some cases, the classics are not studied at all.[92]

The rise of Scholastic philosophy, therefore, means
the decline and neglect of classical studies; more importantly,
however, the use of logic and dialectic in theology and phi-
losophy leads to the Scholastic denial that poetry can convey
philosophic truth.[93] For instance, Aquinas (who should serve
as an example of the Scholastic view) maintains that secular
poetry can be read only on the literal level and denies that
it has an allegorical or moral meaning.[94] Thus, since one of
Dante's reasons for writing in the vernacular is that a work
in the vulgar tongue will be useful to more men (since more
can read the vernacular than Latin), Dante's defense of his
native language becomes a defense--or justification--of ver-
nacular poetry itself.[95] Of course, the argument may be
extended to include imaginative literature in general and be-
comes a refutation of the Scholastic denial of didactic
powers.[96] While one need not cover Dante's defense of his

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[92]Rashdall, op. cit., p. 72. Of course, the classics
were not totally neglected and were even defended by such men
as John of Garland, Henri d'Andeli, and Alexander Neckam
(Paetow, op. cit., pp. 17-18, 19, 31-32). In general, however,
classical studies were neglected, and the moral-didactic
powers of secular poetry were denied.

[93]Curtius, op. cit., pp. 224-225; Knowles, op. cit.,
pp. 225-226.

[94]W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, Literary
Criticism: A Short History, p. 149.

[95]"Dante Alighieri," The Great Critics, p. 13.

[96]Loc. cit.

native tongue completely, he should emphasize the main points of the argument, particularly Dante's exposition of the four levels of meaning, since his didactic intention is implicit throughout.

To explain his method, Dante states that he will present the matter of his work in the Canzoni, each of which will be explained allegorically in a following commentary.[97] Dante first reveals his didactic purpose in the Convivio when, noting that self-praise always turns into blame upon examination, he explains why he speaks of himself in the work. Citing the example of Augustine's Confessions, he points out that a justification for his speaking of himself is that of wishing to help others, as he intends to do in the Convivio; he wishes to demonstrate how his allegorical explications of the Canzoni may be used to understand other writings.[98]

The "three causes" which move him to use the vernacular in the Convivio are "precaution against unseemly disorder," "whole-heartedness of liberality," and "natural affection" for his native language.[90] His explanations of his "causes" clearly reveal that his main concern is with the potential

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[97]Dante's Convivio, trans. W. W. Jackson, I.i. Subsequent references to the Convivio are to Tractate and its subdivision under the abbreviation Conv.; reference to the introductory material will be made under the name of the editor.

[98]Ibid., I.ii.

[99]Ibid., v.

usefulness of his work. In explaining the cause of "protection against unseemly disorder," he points out that his commentaries are intended to explain the Canzoni, which are written in the vernacular; therefore, if they are to serve their purpose, they must be submissive, must "play the part of a servant to the Canzoni," and Latin would not have served.[100] Latin "would not have been subject but sovereign" because of its "nobility, and on account of its goodness and of its beauty."[101] The pains taken by Dante to insure that his work be understood are obvious.

After defining the terms, "nobility," "goodness," and "beauty," as he utilizes them, Dante explains that he did not use Latin in the commentaries, because it would not have been "intimate" with the Canzoni, since Latin only "knows" the vulgar tongue in a "general" way, and not individually.[102] Thus, if Latin is not "intimate" with the vulgar tongue, it cannot be intimate with the "friends" of that language.[103] Also, he notes that perfect intimacy is impossible without "converse and familiarity," and that fewer people know Latin than know the vernacular; thus, he concludes that Latin converses only

[100] Loc. cit.

[101] Loc. cit.

[102] Ibid., vi.

[103] Loc. cit.

with "certain friends" of the vulgar tongue, not with all.[104]
Dante's wish that his work be intelligible to as wide an audi-
ence as possible is as obvious as his earlier desire to be
perfectly understood.

To show that Latin commentaries would not have been
"obedient" to the vernacular Canzoni, Dante states the three
qualities of obedience--it is "sweet not bitter," "wholly pre-
scribed, and not self-chosen," and "within measure and not
unmeasured"--and, then, shows that Latin commentaries would
have lacked these qualities.[105] Since "everything that pro-
ceeds in inverted order is laboured, and therefore is not
sweet but bitter," the relations between vernacular Canzoni
and Latin commentaries could not have been "sweet."[106]
Furthermore, had the commentaries been in Latin, a part of
their exposition of the Canzoni would have been "spontaneous,"
not "wholly prescribed," because of the nature of the Latin
language.[107] Finally, Latin commentaries would have exceeded
and have fallen short of their command to expound the Canzoni,
and, hence, would not have been obedient.[108] The Canzoni wish

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[104]Loc. cit.

[105]Ibid., vii.

[106]Loc. cit.

[107]Loc. cit. Dante has earlier remarked (Conv. I.v)
that Latin is "better" than the vernacular because it can
"make manifest" many things which Italian cannot.

[108]Loc. cit.

to be ". . . expounded to all those to whom their meaning may
be brought home," and Latin commentaries would have been in-
telligible only to the lettered; also, Latin would have
expounded the Canzoni to "people of other languages," and,
thus, would have exceeded their command, since the Canzoni
would not want to be expounded "in quarters to which their
beauty could not be conveyed as well."[109] Again, Dante's wish
is clearly that the instruction within his work be intelligible
to those who can best understand it.

Dante's explanation of the "whole-hearted liberality"
which made him choose the vernacular over the Italian may
stand by itself. Quite simply, he chose the vernacular be-
cause it possesses the three qualities of that liberality: it
gives to many, it gives useful things, and it gives without
being asked.[110] He argues that Latin would not have served
many, since it could not have been used by "scholars outside
the pale of the Italian language"; it would not have given as
useful a gift, because it would not have been used as much;
and Latin would not have given its gift without being asked,
as will the vernacular.[111]

Dante, then, in defending his use of the vernacular,
defends the composition of secular poetry in the vernacular;

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[109]Loc. cit.

[110]Ibid., viii.

[111]Ibid., viii-ix.

also, since he claims that his work contains instruction, his
defense of the vulgar tongue becomes a refutation of the
Scholastic denial that poetry could convey philosophic truth.[112]
However, Dante's claims for the instructional value of secular
(and, by implication, classical) literature hardly have to be
deduced from his defense of the vernacular. In the second
Tractate of the Convivio, Dante sets forth the familiar four-
fold method of expounding the text:

> I say that, as is affirmed in the first chapter, it is
> meet for this exposition to be both literal and allegori-
> cal. And to make this intelligible, it should be known
> that writings can be understood chiefly in four senses.
> The first is called literal, and this is that sense which
> does not go beyond the strict limits of the letter; the
> second is called allegorical, and this is disguised under
> the cloak of such stories, and is a truth hidden under a
> beautiful fiction. Thus Ovid says that Orpheus with his
> lyre made beasts tame, and trees and stones move toward
> himself; that is to say that the wise man by the instru-
> ment of his voice makes cruel hearts grow mild and humble,
> and those who have not the life of Science and of Art
> move to his will, while they who have no rational life
> are as it were like stones. And wherefore this disguise
> was invented by the wise will be shown in the last
> Tractate but one. Theologians indeed do not apprehend
> this sense in the same fashion as poets; but, inasmuch
> as my intention is to follow here the custom of poets, I
> will take the allegorical sense after the manner which
> poets use.[113]

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[112] Jackson points out (p. 9) that the Convivio was
intended to be ". . . a comprehensive summary of the truth of
Philosophy, or the highest knowledge, in their application to
life." By "Philosophy" is meant the seven liberal arts, the
Moral, Physical, and Metaphysical Sciences, and Theology, to
which all the others were directed. Dante, quite obviously,
opposed the Scholastic view that poetry could not convey
philosophic truths.

[113] Conv., II.i.

Dante, next, explains the moral and anagogic senses, citing

Scripture to illustrate the two higher levels of meaning.

However, he has already made his most important point: he

has distinguished the allegory of poets--which is "truth hidden

under a beautiful fiction"--from the allegory of theologians,

which is truth under the literal, <u>historical</u> level of

Scripture.[114] Thus, although Dante claims that his work con-

tains moral and philosophic truths, he admits that it is

fictional on the literal level, and does not equate it with

Scripture. He does so, however, at least seemingly, in the

letter to Can Grande in which he explains the method for

interpreting the <u>Comedy</u>:

> . . . be it known that the sense of this work is not
> simple, but on the contrary it may be called polysemous,
> that is to say, "of more senses than one"; for it is one
> sense which we get through the letter, and another which
> we get through the thing the letter signifies; and the
> first is called literal, but the second allegorical or
> mystic. And this mode of treatment, for its better mani-
> festation, may be considered in this verse: "When Israel
> came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a people
> of strange speech, Judaea became his santification,
> Israel his power." For if we inspect the letter alone
> the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in
> the time of Moses is presented to us; if the allegory,
> our redemption wrought by Christ; if the moral sense, the
> conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin
> to the state of grace is presented to us; if the anagogi-
> cal, the departure of the holy soul from slavery of this
> corruption to the liberty of eternal glory is presented
> to us. And although these mystic senses have each their

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[114]For an extended discussion of this point, the reader
is directed to the appendix of Charles S. Singleton's <u>Commedia</u>:
<u>Elements</u> <u>of</u> <u>Structure</u> (<u>Dante</u> <u>Studies</u>, 1), pp. 85-94.

special denominations, they may all in general be called
allegorical, since they differ from the literal and
historical. . . .[115]

Thus, Dante not only applies the Scriptural method of exegesis
to his own work, but, as he did in the Convivio, claims that
his poem can convey philosophic truth--which function
Scholasticism had denied to poetry in general. As one critic
summarizes Dante's argument, "My work affords poetry, but at
the same time philosophy too."[116] Of Dante's method--
"Scriptural method put to the explication and vindication of
religious poetry written by natural inspiration"--it has been
said that ". . . with more difficulty the same thing could be
done for fully secular and even for pagan poetry."[117] Of
course, the method was applied before Dante's time, for pur-
poses of reconciliation; but, throughout the fourteenth century,
pagan poetry is used for moral instruction and defended on
moral grounds.

Richard de Bury in his Philobiblon (The Love of Books),
from the middle of the century, defends classical fable with,
basically, an argument of utility. De Bury opens his chapter
entitled, "Why We have not Wholly Neglected the Fables of the
Poets," with a clear statement of his view:

[115]"Dante Alighieri," The Great Critics. pp. 145-146.

[116]Curtius, op. cit., pp. 225, 595.

[117]Wimsatt and Brooks, op. cit., p. 148.

> All the kinds of assaults which lovers of naked truth
> hurl against the poets are to be warded off with a double
> shield, either by the reason that in an unbecoming theme
> a pleasing style of speech may be learned, or that, when
> a fictitious but becoming theme is being handled, natural
> or historical truth is aimed at under the guise of
> figurative invention.[118]

In De Bury's view, poetic fables are the means by which learn-

ing is made attractive, "a device by which the wanton dispo-

sition of man might be captured, as it were, by a pious snare,

and the dainty Minerva be concealed behind the mask of

pleasure."[119]

The utility of the poetic disguise constitutes De Bury's

"defense" of the poets; he, then, proceeds to show that the

study itself of the fables is beneficial. His first point, as

one might expect, is that, since

> . . . the sayings of the saints often refer to the
> inventions of the poets, it must needs happen that, if
> the poem under discussion be not known, the whole intent
> of the author is totally obscured.[120]

In short, one must know the works of the poets to understand

patristic writings. Also, since De Bury is referring to

(among others) the writings of Jerome and Augustine, he is,

obviously, arguing that one must know the works of the pagan

poets.[121] De Bury also quotes a passage from Bede which

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[118]Richard de Bury, The Philobiblon, p. 73.

[119]Loc. cit.

[120]Ibid., p. 74.

[121]Ibid., p. 75.

praises those who read pagan literature so that ". . . they
may thoroughly detest the errors of the heathen and apply the
useful things they discover to the purpose of holy and devout
edification."[122] He concludes simply by saying that one
". . . may make a study acceptable unto God" in any subject
if one will only "regard the conditions of virtue."[123]

Allegorical interpretation of pagan poetry continues
throughout the fourteenth century, and was common even during
the thirteenth-century decline and neglect of classical studies.
In spite of opposition, Ovid's works grow in popularity during
the latter twelfth and thirteenth centuries; they are made
"acceptable" by the same methods which had earlier been applied
to Vergil.[124] Soon, interpretations are written which show
that Ovid was a Christian poet with moral teachings in his
works; some stories are compared to Biblical tales, but most
are given a moral interpretation.[125] John of Garland inter-
prets the Metamorphoses, making many passages acceptable, in
his Integumenta, a work popular and important in its own day.[126]
In France, the Metamorphoses are transformed into the Ovide

[122] op. cit.
[123] loc. cit.
[124] Born, op. cit., pp. 363-364.
[125] Ibid., pp. 364-365.
[126] Ibid., p. 373.

moralisé near the end of the thirteenth century.[127] Philip

de Vitri translates and moralizes the Metamorphoses in the

early fourteenth century; Giovanni del Vergilio, a contemporary

of Dante, provides a complete allegorical interpretation of

Ovid's major work.[128] Near the middle of the century, Petrus

Berchorius (Peter Bersuire) allegorically interprets pagan

divinites, the Metamorphoses, and several Biblical stories in

the fifteenth and sixteenth books of his encyclopedic

Reductorium morale.[129] Bersuire's sole interest is using

poetry; thus, his work, which was popular in England, explains

Ovid's allegorical and moral meaning.[130]

Pagan poetry and classical fable are also defended

throughout the fourteenth century. For example, Albertino

Mussato (1261-1329) defends poetry in general, claiming that

it springs from a divine impulse and maintaining that pagan

myths tell the same truths as the Scriptures.[131] Mussato goes

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[127]Bush, op. cit., p. 17.

[128]Sandys, op. cit., pp. 639-640.

[129]J. M. Steadman, "Perseus upon Pegasus and Ovid Moralized," RES, n. s. IX (November, 1958), 407, fn. 5; E. H. Wilkins, "Descriptions of Pagan Divinities from Petrarch to Chaucer," Speculum, XXXII (July, 1957), 513.

[130]R. H. Green, "Classical Fable and English Poetry in the Fourteenth Century," Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, 122. Several other fourteenth-century interpretations of Ovid are cited by Born, op. cit., pp. 376-377.

[131]Curtius, op. cit., p. 215.

so far as to call the pagan authors prophets and their poetry

a type of theology.[132]   Collucio Salutati allegorically inter-

prets the Herculean myths, and, in defending pagan poetry,

restates the classical idea of instruction and entertainment:

> No one should suppose that the sacred poets . . . left
> us their fables of gods and men with the intention that
> their stories should be believed or imitated. . . .
> Something wholly different was hidden (and is still
> hidden) beneath the surface of the fables which they art-
> fully composed, so that, although they may deceive the
> ignorant with a certain pleasure, they offer to wiser
> readers the fragrant odor and sweet taste of inner
> meaning.[133]

However, the work of Mussato and Salutati is minor in compari-

son to Boccaccio's elaborate interpretation and defense of

classical fable in his Genealogia Deorum Gentilium near the

end of the century.

In his preface, Boccaccio explains his purpose in

collecting and interpreting the pagan fables:

> . . . these interpretations will enable you to see not
> only the art of the ancient poets, and the consanguinity
> and relations of the false gods, but certain natural
> truths, hidden with an art that will surprise you, to-
> gether with deeds and moral civilization of the Ancients
> that are not a matter of every-day information.[134]

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[132]Ibid., p. 216.

[133]Quoted in Green, "Fable," p. 119.

[134]Charles G. Osgood, "Preface," Boccaccio on Poetry,
p. 12. Subsequent references to Boccaccio's Genealogia Deorum
Gentilium will be made by book and chapter under the abbrevia-
tion GDG; references to the "Introduction" or notes will be
made under the name of the editor.

In theory, Boccaccio uses the traditional fourfold method of interpretation in his work; however, he seldom applies all four levels of meaning, but usually stops with a "moral" or the simpler "allegorical" interpretation.[135] Boccaccio also makes use of two other systems of interpretation, blending them with the traditional method; thus, in the final analysis, any specific myth may be euhemeristic--that is, history which was recast by the poets; "moral" or "allegorical" in a narrow sense, meaning that the poet, through his story, is veiling some truth of nature; or the myth may be a foreshadowing of some Christian truth or a commentary upon it.[136]

In his preface, Boccaccio explains that the final two books of his work will be, first, a reply to those who attack pagan poetry and, second, an attempt to excuse any criticism which might be directed at the work itself.[137] While there is no need for a complete examination of Boccaccio's work, portions of it deserve attention for the light that they will throw upon Boccaccio's attitude toward the ancient poets; his firm belief that the fables of the poets are essentially instructive is also revealed in this defense of poetry.

Boccaccio does not even deign to answer some of the critics of classical fable; however, he does answer the

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[135]Osgood, p. xviii.

[136]Ibid., p. xix.

[137]GDG, "Preface," p. 12.

criticisms of the lawyers, and his reply reveals much about his view of the pagan fables. He notes that lawyers attack poetry because their only criterion is money and consider all to be fools who do not attempt to make as much of it as possible. Boccaccio admits that poets do not pursue material gain, but he is far from being apologetic:

> . . . Poetry devotes herself to something greater; for while she dwells in heaven, and mingles with the divine counsels, she moves the minds of a few men from on high to a yearning for the eternal, lifting them by her loveliness to high revery, drawing them away into the discovery of strange wonders, and pouring forth most exquisite discourse from her exalted mind.[138]

Since, in Boccaccio's view, "Poetry . . . dwells in heaven," his definition of poetry itself comes as no surprise:

> . . . a sort of fervid and exquisite invention, with fervid expression, in speech or writing, of that which the mind has invented. It proceeds from the bosom of God, . . . It veils truth in a fair and fitting garment of fiction.[139]

In answering those critics who call the poets liars, Boccaccio grants that the poets tell stories, but he does not consider this practice to be either evil or a waste of time. He points out that ". . . fiction is a form of discourse, which, under guise of invention, illustrates or proves an idea."[140] He insists that the "superficial aspect" must be removed; then,

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[138] GDG, XIV.iv.

[139] Ibid., vii.

[140] Ibid., ix.

"if sense is revealed from under the veil of fiction, the composition of fiction is not idle nonsense."[141] Boccaccio, also, points out that even Christ used a fictional form of discourse when he spoke in parables.[142] He further explains that one purpose of the veil of fiction is to attract, and gives an example of a boy who was stimulated to study by fables; thus, he repeats the classical dictum that literature should both instruct and entertain.[143]

Boccaccio has no patience with those critics who insist that the poets conceal no meaning beneath their eloquence. After citing examples from the "philosophical poets" (Vergil, Dante, and Petrarch), Boccaccio concludes his argument with the point that "there was never a maundering old woman," sitting up at night spinning stories with no real basis, who did not ".... feel beneath the surface of her tale . . . at least some meaning."[144]

Boccaccio answers those critics who claim that the poets are obscure by pointing out, first, that even the philosophers and the Scriptures are difficult to understand.[145]

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[141] Loc. cit.
[142] Loc. cit.
[143] Loc. cit.
[144] Ibid., x.
[145] Ibid., xii.

In any case, the poet's function is not to reveal his meaning, but to conceal it, so that (1) the truth under the fiction will not become cheapened through exposure; (2) the reader will be spurred to "strong intellectual effort"; and (3) the truth will be more precious when it is finally discovered.[146]

Boccaccio most clearly reveals his belief in the instructional value of classical literature when he explains Vergil's purposes in telling the fiction of Aeneas and Dido. He is convinced that other than re-telling an earlier story and glorifying Rome, Vergil's intention in the story was ". . . to show with what passions human frailty is infested, and the strength with which a steady man subdues them."[147] Thus, Vergil ". . . represents in Dido the attracting power of the passion of love . . . and in Aeneas one who is readily disposed in that way and at length overcome."[148] Mercury, who rebukes Aeneas and sends him on his way again, is interpreted by Boccaccio to represent ". . . either remorse, or the reproof of some outspoken friend, either of which rouses us from slumber in the mire of turpitude, and calls us back into the fair and even path to glory."[149]

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[146] Loc. cit.; Osgood, p. 170, fn. 12.

[147] GDG, XIV.xiii.

[148] Loc. cit.

[149] Loc. cit.

Boccaccio defends his collection of myths in the final book of his work. While he is ready to argue that one merit of the Genealogia is simply the beauty of its stories, he also repeats his point that the myths, when interpreted and understood, are instructive:

> But there remains [the book's] usefulness, public and private, _in which its greater value resides_. Some men have thought that the learned poet merely invents shallow tales, and is therefore not only useless, but a positive harm. . . . Now this work of mine removes the veil from these inventions, shows that poets were really men of wisdom, and renders their compositions full of profit and pleasure to the reader.[150]

In the remainder of his last book, Boccaccio, while admitting that heathen beliefs are to be found in the fables of the poets, argues that much of the "old theology" foreshadows Christian truths, and repeats his praise of the poets as men of genius.[151] However, he has already made his most important point: _i.e._, the great poets are teachers, and their work is similar to the Biblical presentation of truth.[152] His view is the common one held in the later Middle Ages. A belief in the moral-didactic possibilities of the classical stories is so widespread that it is usual for medieval redactors of the classical themes to present their translations as instruction, not narrative, and to point out the moral of the story to their readers. One

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[150]_Ibid._, XV.1. The italics are those of the present author.

[151]_Ibid._, viii, xiv.

[152]Vernon Hall, _A Short History of Literary Criticism_ p. 29.

in particular--John Lydgate, Monk of Bury--does so with
freedom, not only presenting his story itself as an example,
but interpreting specific incidents within the story in light
of his overall moral purpose. His <u>Troy</u> <u>Book</u>, therefore, is
in the center of the medieval tradition of utilizing "history"
for the purpose of moral instruction.

CHAPTER III

JOHN LYDGATE'S TROY BOOK: THE UTILIZATION OF "HISTORY"

FOR MORAL INSTRUCTION

Lydgate's Troy Book, composed during the years 1412-
1420 at the request of Prince Henry (later Henry V),[153] is
only one of many medieval retellings of the Troy story. As
his main source, Lydgate took Guido delle Colonne's Historia
Destructionis Troiae (c. 1287), considered the authoritative
version of the legend in the Middle Ages.[154] Guido's Historia,
in turn, was an abridged (and unacknowledged) translation of
Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Roman de Troye, which had initiated
the practice of recasting classical themes in medieval terms.[155]
Benoît emphasized the chivalric ideal, transformed the classi-
cal characters into medieval knights, and presented the Trojans
as the heroes of the conflict, but his alterations of this
story were not the first to be made.[156] Benoît's work and
those which followed it departed from the classical version of

[153] J. R. Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle
English, p. 110.

[154] Ibid., p. 107; W. F. Schirmer, John Lydgate, p. 43.

[155] G. A. Panton (ed.), The "Gest Historiale" of the
Destruction of Troy, p. ix; Margaret Schlauch, English
Medieval Literature, p. 181.

[156] Loc. cit.; M. R. Scherer, The Legends of Troy in
Art and Literature, p. xiii.

the legend because of a tradition which existed long before
them; indeed, when one realizes that Homer was unknown in
Western Europe until the late fourteenth century (except for
a first-century Latin condensation of the Iliad), and that
altered accounts of the story served as sources for the Middle
Ages, the later medieval distortions of the legend are less
mystifying.[157]

The ultimate sources for the medieval version of the
Troy-story are the fourth- and sixth-century forgeries of Dares
and Dictys, each, supposedly, written by an eyewitness to the
war.[158] Both works contain an elaborate introduction account-
ing for their survival and establishing their claim to
authenticity; each gives much detail in support of its eye-
witness claim, and, more importantly, eliminates ancient
supernatural elements from the story.[159] For instance, Dares'
pro-Trojan work presents the episode of the Judgment of Paris
as a dream.[160] Moreover, other details are radically altered;
Achilles is presented as treacherous, Ulysses is tricky and
deceitful, and Aeneas is depicted as the traitor who betrays

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[157]Loc. cit.

[158]Wells, op. cit., pp. 106-108.

[159]N. E. Griffin, "Un-Homeric Elements in the Medieval
Story of Troy," JEGP, VII (January, 1908), 35-36.

[160]Ibid., p. 35; Scherer, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

Troy to the Greeks.[161]   The effect of this final alteration

is evident in the opening lines of Sir Gawain and the Green

Knight:

> Siþen þe sege and þe assaut watȝ sesed at Troye,
> Þe borȝ brittened and brent to brondeȝ and askeȝ,
> Þe tulk þat þe trammes of treasoun þer wroȝt
> Watȝ tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe:
> Hit watȝ Ennias þe athel. . . .[162]
> (1-5)

The eyewitness claims of Dares and Dictys were believed

by later times; though unknown in the original, Homer was re-

garded as a late commentator on the war and prejudiced in

favor of the Greeks.[163]   Dares' pro-Trojan work was the more

popular of the two in the West, since several nations had

adopted the legend of a Trojan origin; it was especially popu-

lar in England, where belief in Trojan ancestry was strong.[164]

The legend had gained currency through the work of Geoffrey of

Monmouth, whose Historia Regum Britanniae, with its attractive

figure of King Arthur, was primarily responsible for the deep

rooting of the Trojan legend in Britain.[165]

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[161]Griffin, op. cit., p. 35.

[162]The text of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight cited is the Tolkien and Gordon edition.

[163]George Saintsbury, The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory, p. 169.

[164]Griffin, op. cit., p. 48; A. E. Parsons, "The Trojan Legend in Britain," MLR, XXIV (1929), 253.

[165]Ibid., pp. 256-257.

The pro-Trojan work of Dares served as the main source
for Benoît's _Roman_, with the work of Dictys supplementing it
when necessary; both accounts suit Benoît's purpose better
than did the _Aeneid_, which was also available at the time.[166]
The details which had been added by Dares and Dictys to support
their eyewitness claims were appropriate to Benoît's romanti-
cized retelling of the story; both works had minimized or
eliminated the supernatural elements which would have been
unacceptable to Benoît's audience; and Dares' work had added
a love interest that Benoît expanded into the Troilus-Briseida
story.[167] Of course, Benoît considered Dares and Dictys to
be reliable in their accounts, and also commented upon the
untrustworthiness of Homer.[168] Thus, since delle Colonne's
abridged translation was the main source for later poets,
Benoît's work originated and influenced much of the later
material which dealt with the legend of Troy.[169] However,
Guido altered the story by attempting to explain away the re-
maining elements of pagan religion in the narrative, since
Benoît's _Roman_ had contained a mixture of medieval and classical

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[166]Scherer, _op. cit._, p. xiii.

[167]Gilbert Highet, _The Classical Tradition_, p. 53;
Scherer, _op. cit._, p. 224.

[168]_Ibid._, p. xiii.

[169]Schlauch, _op. cit._, p. 181; Panton, _op. cit._, p. ix.

materials.[170] Lydgate, then, further altered the story by
expanding Guido's work, turning it to moral-didactic purposes.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to review the general
attitudes of medieval authors toward the legends and stories
that they redacted. The anonymous "Gest Historiale" of the
Destruction of Troy, from the latter fourteenth century, is
a somewhat free redaction into English of Guido's Historia.[171]
In the prologue, the author complains that the great deeds
and heroic feats of past days had been nearly forgotten--had
been ". . . swolowet into swym by swiftenes of yeres," and
that new books which told of more contemporary times could not
be trusted: some were "tru for to traist, triet in þe ende, /
Sum feynit o fere & ay false vnder" (5-18). However, he points
out that, since the old stories "may be solas" to those who
did not witness the exploits of the past, the records of eye-
witnesses to great deeds may satisfy those who wish ". . . to
ken all the crafte how the case felle" (21-25). The author,
then, states, "of Troy forto telle is myn entent euyn" (27),
and explains that he will tell the story "alss wise men have
writen the wordes before" (31), not as have many poets who
"with fablis and falshed fayned þere spech" (34). One of these

[170] J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Epilogue of Chaucer's Troilus,"
MP, XVIII (1921), 642, fn. 3.

[171] K. Sisam (ed.), Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose,
p. 68. Line numbers in parentheses in this section refer to
the Panton edition of the Gest.

kinds of poets was Homer, who ". . . feynet myche fals was neuer before wroght" (41), telling "how goddes foght in the filde, folke as þai were, / And other errours vnable þat after were knowen" (43-44). The author, then, declares that he will rely upon the work of Guido delle Colonne (54), who compiled his Historia from the works of two authors who ". . . bothe were in batell while the batell last, / And euþer sawte & assemely see with þere een" (56-57). He is referring, of course, to Dares and Diotys; and thereafter, but briefly, he traces the descent of the correct version down to Guido's work (61-67), in which he vows ". . . shall faithfully be founden to the fer ende, / All þe dedes by dene as þai done were" (78-79). Several attitudes are revealed in the introduction to this work. First--and, perhaps, most important--is the historical view taken toward the material. The story of Troy is accepted as true, although not in all versions, since some poets have falsified and distorted it. The judgments about the veracity of different sources both illustrate this historical view and imply a critical attitude toward the earlier versions, which attitude itself is further evidence to show that the story was regarded, at this time, as history. Also, the prologue to the Gest implies (though it does not clearly state) the moral usefulness of a record of past great deeds; and, obviously, the story was in demand, since one notes that there are those who wish "to ken all the crafte how the case felle."

The opening lines of the prologue to Barbour's Bruce
(also from the latter fourteenth century) more clearly reveal
the idea that the historical accounts of past heroes and their
exploits should be useful. Indeed, these lines are, nearly, a
restatement of the classical belief that instruction and
entertainment should be joined, as follows:

> Storys to rede ar delitabill,
> Suppos that thai be nocht bot fabill;
> Than suld storys that suthfast wer,
> And thai war said on gud maner,
> Hawe doubill plesance in heryng.
> The fyrst plesance is the carpyng,
> And the tothir the suthfastnes,
> That schawys the thing rycht as it wes;
> And suth thyngis that ar likand
> Tyll mannys heryng, ar plesand.[172]
>   (1-10)

The meaning, here, is clear: even fables are pleasant to read,
but a true story, well-told, is of double value. While the
author of the Bruce does not openly claim that his story will
be directly instructive, he obviously considers its veracity
(which "schawys the thing rycht as it wes") to be valuable in
itself. However, Lydgate not only considers his narrative as
history, but (in the prologue and informal epilogue) clearly
states that it is instructive, and is meant to be used.

Appropriately, Lydgate opens his prologue to the Troy
Book with an invocation to Mars, appealing for help in composing

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[172]The text of The Bruce cited is the edition by W. W.
Skeat.

the work (1-45).[173]   He first indicates his belief in his

story as history when he asks Mars, "maketh Clyo for to ben

my muse" (40)--Clio, of course, being the Muse of history.[174]

He, then, explains that he undertakes this work at the request

of Prince Henry, who

> . . . hath desire, sothly for to seyn,
> Of verray kny3thod to remembre ageyn,
> The worthynes . . .
> And the prowesse of olde chiualrie.
>   (75-78)

He also notes that Henry enjoys reading stories of antiquity

in order to imitate the examples of "vertu" displayed therein

and to ". . . eschewe / The cursyd vice of slouthe and ydelnesse"

(80-83). After flattering his patron, Lydgate explains that

Henry has requested that an English translation of the Troy

Book be made so that

> The noble story openly wer knowe
> In oure tonge, aboute in euery age,
> And y-writen as wel in oure langage
> As in latyn and in frensche it is;
> That of the story þe trouth[e] we nat mys
> No more than doth eche other nacioun.
>   (112-117)

Thus, he reveals that this Troy-story is not only true, but

valuable as an example of past deeds worthy of imitation.

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[173]Numbers in parentheses indicate lines in Lydgate's
Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen.

[174]Later, in the Troy Book (II.178), Lydgate deprecates
his talents as a poet, complaining that "Clyo" came to him
late in life.

He, next, considers the importance of writers and their
works (147-194), explaining that the Troy-story has been com-
piled over the centuries by honest writers who told only the
truth (149-153) so that later ages would not be ". . . begyled
/ Of necligence thoru3 for3etilnesse" (153-154). He explains
that, without these old writings, "Dethe with his swerde"
would have obscured the "gret[e] prowes" of past heroes and
"dirked eke the bri3tnesse of her fame, / That schyneth 3et
by report of her name" (171-176).[175] He is confident, as well,
that the old books which tell of past deeds may be trusted,
because they ". . . represent / With-out[e] feynynge" the lives
of the heroes (177-179). He, then, warns his reader of a
writer's power:

> Ageyn the trouthe who so euere stryue,
> Or counterplete or make any debate,
> The sothe is rad of hi3e or lowe estate,
> With-oute fauour, who so list take hede;
> For after deth clerkis lityl drede
> After desert for to bere witnesse,
> Nor of a tyraunt the trouthe to expresse,
> As men disserue, with-oute excepcioun.
> (180-187)

Of course, these lines are, also, additional evidence with
which to show that Lydgate considered his own story to be true.
Lydgate continues in praise of past writers, noting how they

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[175]Judging from this statement, one would expect Lydgate
to make a greater effort to present various characters as
exemplars of behavior; however, while he praises some (e.g.,
Hector and Troilus), he does not recommend that they be imi-
tated. Schirmer, op. cit., p. 47, may be correct in his
statement that Lydgate did not share his patron's view of the
story.

were honored in ancient days (195-197), and how they have
preserved the stories of antiquity, which, otherwise, would
have been lost (198-225). After mentioning the story of Thebes
and its historian (226-244), he discusses the story of Troy
and those of the past who have recorded it (245-384), reveal-
ing attitudes similar to those found in the prologue to the
Gest Historiale. He observes that the "dillygence of crony-
c[u]leris" has preserved the truth of the story, which their
art has kept new and fresh and so well-told that neither "deth
nor age" will ever extinguish the truth (245-259). However,
he admits that some authors have falsified the story, trans-
forming it in their poetry

> Thoru3 veyne[e] fables, whiche of entencioun
> They han contreved by false transumpcioun
> To hyde trouthe falsely vnder cloude.
> (263-265)

He agrees that Homer is one ancient who departed from the truth,
pretending that the gods helped the Greeks against the Trojans
and fought among them like men (267-275). Neither does he
think Ovid is to be trusted, because he ". . . poetycally hath
closyd / Falshede with trouthe," tricking the reader with his
"mysty speche" (299-303). He claims that Vergil, also, distorted
the story, in part because he followed Homer (304-308).
However, he is convinced that Dares and Dictys are to be
trusted, because they were present during the war and each
tells the story so accurately that there is no discrepancy to
be found between their works (310-316).

In the remainder of his prologue, Lydgate briefly traces the descent of the true story of Troy to Guido's work and admits that he will follow the Historia (317-375). Then, after asking his readers to correct him whenever he errs, he concludes the introduction (376-384).

One sees that Lydgate regards his material as history and follows his patron in believing the "noble story" to be useful. It is evident from his words that Prince Henry considered the deeds recorded in the legend to be examples worthy of emulation. On the other hand, that Lydgate believes the story of Troy to be instructive in a different way is made clear in his epilogue.[176] After miscellaneous remarks on the statistics related to the siege, in praise of his patron, and in a brief review of his reasons for translating the Troy Book, Lydgate points to the lesson contained in his work:

> . . . who-so liste to se variaunce
> Or worldly þing wroȝt be daies olde,
> In þis boke he may ful wel beholde
> Chaunge of Fortune, in hir cours mutable,
> Selde or nat feithful ouþer stable.
> (3544-3548)

After a long parenthetical catalog of examples of Fortune's mutability to be found in the Troy Book, Lydgate again emphasizes that the lesson of Fortune's caprices is intended

> To declare, þat in al worldly lust,
> Who loke ariȝt, is but litel trust,

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[176]Lydgate's epilogue is an informal one, and has been separated from the body of the text by the editor.

> As in þis boke exaumple 3e shal fynde,
> 3if þat 3e list emprente it in 3our mynde--
> How al passeth & halt here no soiour,
> Wastyng a-way as doth a somer flour,
> Riche & pore, of euery maner age:
> For oure lyf here is but a pilgrymage,
> Meynt with labour & with moche wo,
> Þat 3if men wolde taken hede þer-to,
> And to forn prudently aduerte,
> Litel Ioie þei shuld han in her herte
> To sette her trust in any worldly þing;
> For þer is nouþer prince, lord, nor kyng,
> Be exaumple of Troye, like as 3e may se,
> Þat in þis lif may haue ful surete.
> (3563-3578)

His lesson concerned with the mutability of Fortune and the
total uncertainty of all worldly things then leads him to the
logical conclusion that one should trust in Christ, Who can
grant victory in battle, make princes strong, cast down
tyrants--Who has the power, in short, ". . . eche man taquite
liche as he disserueth" (3579-3592). Lydgate's moral is clear.
Since Fortune is totally capricious and cannot be trusted, all
things in this world are completely uncertain and transitory.
No man, regardless of rank, may consider his station secure,
". . . be exaumple of Troye, like as 3e may se."[177] Obviously,
he considers the entire legend (as he presents it) to be an
example of his moral; in his own words, the Troy Book is the
story of

> Lordes, princes from her royalte
> Sodeinly brou3t in aduersite,

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[177]Schirmer, op. cit., pp. 47-48, notes Lydgate's "theme
of transitoriness" and his digressions on Fortune, but men-
tions them separately, whereas, the two are joined in Lydgate's
argument.

And kynges eke plounged in pouert,
And for drede darynge in desert,--
Vnwar slau3ter compassed of envie,
Mordre execut by conspirasie,
Await[e] liggyng falshede and tresoun,
And of kyngdammys sodeyn euersioun,--
Rauysshyng of wommen for delyt,
Rote of þe werre & of mortal despit, .
Fals mayntenaunce of avout[e]rye,
Many worthi causyng for to dye,
Synne ay concludynge, who-so taketh hede,
Vengaunce vnwar for his final mede.
                    (3549-3562)

Conceivably, then, his entire narrative could stand unassisted
as an example of his moral; however, he is not content with
so simple a method. Within his narrative, he repeatedly
"interprets" incidents, drawing from them the lesson of
Fortune's capriciousness, and, thus, uses specific examples
to illustrate his dominant moral.[178] Usually, his method is
obvious. He will, for instance, narrate the story of a char-
acter's downfall and, then, digress, pointing out that Fortune
brought this character to this fate. Occasionally, he will
simply warn his reader that Fortune has turned against a char-
acter and ordained his fate; afterwards, he will relate the
story, exhorting his readers to "take hede" of the example
thus presented them.

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[178]It is obvious from Lydgate's summary of his story
that he considers the entire narrative to be an example of his
main moral, and, as stated above, the entire story could (with
some difficulty) be read as such an example. However, the
present study is concerned with Lydgate's utilization of his
material--that is, with his actual practice of drawing a moral
from specific incidents within the narrative.

The caprices of Fortune and the uncertainty of all
worldly things are Lydgate's most important teachings in the
Troy Book, but they are not his only lessons. For example, he
often illustrates other concepts--e.g., that murder will be
repaid in its own coin, or that God will punish those who
commit sacrilege. Nor are all of the lessons moral, because
he occasionally digresses from the narrative to establish a
personal point or to offer practical advice, such as his admo-
nition that common people cannot be trusted, or the observation
that morning is the best time in which to choose a wife.
These latter practices, while secondary to his main purpose,
are, of course, relevant to his didactic aim in the Troy Book
and should be considered. First, however, his purpose and the
practices themselves must be comprehended.

Lydgate's method of instruction is direct to the point
of bluntness. He never hesitates to interrupt his narrative
to discuss the vagaries of Fortune, to digress upon the con-
sequences of certain actions, or to warn his readers to take
heed of the example presented them. For this method, in addi-
tion to the fact that he is far from being economical with
words, Lydgate has often been criticized. For example, Bennett
complains that, at any mention of the "stock subjects" of the
Middle Ages, Lydgate takes the opportunity to pour out his
knowledge or indulge in ". . . trite and dreary moralizing with

a seemingly unending series of examples."[179] Lewis refers to
Lydgate's unbounded "fatal garrulity" whenever writing in
couplets.[180] In his discussion of the Troy Book, Schirmer
notes that Lydgate takes every opportunity to present the
moral of his story, but complains that he does so "even at the
cost of the narrative."[181] However, another critic, in a dis-
cussion of Lydgate's Siege of Thebes, points out that such
criticisms of the poet's method are valid only if one assumes
that Lydgate's main concern is the story and his primary pur-
pose is to narrate.[182] Since Lydgate's intention in the Troy
Book is to instruct, his "digressions from the narrative"
should hardly be designated as such, much less criticized;
indeed, at times it seems that he regards his story as little
more than a vehicle affording him a chance to instruct and
providing him a stock of historical examples with which to
illustrate his lessons. Lydgate writes with an overall mo
purpose in the Troy Book, and illustrates it with specific
examples within the narrative. Furthermore, he draws various
other "morals" from incidents of story and offers practical

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[179]H. S. Bennett, Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century, p.
145.

[180]C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 240.

[181]Schirmer, op. cit., p. 47.

[182]R. W. Ayers, "Medieval History, Moral Purpose, and
the Structure of Lydgate's Siege of Thebes," PMLA, LXXIII
(1958), 463. The present author is indebted throughout this
paragraph to Ayers.

advice. An examination of his didactic practices--all of which may be described as the utilization of his material-- clearly reveals his relation to the long-established tradition of interpreting and moralizing classical stories for purposes of instruction. However, a first aspect of the _Troy Book_ that must be examined does not concern didactic purpose, but is of primary importance to an understanding of his work.

Few characteristics in the _Troy Book_ are as revealing of Lydgate's view of his material and his relation to the tradition behind him as the absence from the narrative of certain supernatural elements and his attitude toward several that are present. For instance, he follows his source[183] in presenting the entire episode of the Judgment of Paris (II.2369-2792) as a dream instead of as a visitation of the goddesses.[184] Another example is his account of the death of Achilles, who (in ambush) is killed by a spear and several sword wounds; no mention is made of his invulnerability or of his unprotected heel at any point in the text.[185] Thus, Lydgate reveals the effects of the earlier tradition of rationalizing the pagan

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[183]_Lydgate's_ _Troy_ _Book_, Part IV, ed. Henry Bergen. Subsequent references to this section (the notes to Lydgate's and delle Colonne's works) will be noted under the name of the editor.

[184]Dares' presentation of the Judgment of Paris as a dream has already been mentioned (_supra_, p. 43).

[185]Bergen, _op._ _cit._, p. 172, notes that Lydgate also follows Guido in his account of Achilles' death.

supernatural elements in classical stories. His attitude
toward several other incidents further illustrates his part
in this tradition; for instance, his accusation, in the pro-
logue, that Ovid mixes "falshede with trouthe" (300) is used
to explain a number of supernatural elements. For example, at
the opening of Book I, he relates the story of the Myrmidons,
a people ". . . of whom Ovyde feyneth in his sawes, /
Methamorphoseos" (10-11). Supposedly, after its destruction
by the gods, this race was recreated by Jupiter's transforma-
tion of ants into men (12-59), but Lydgate has his own
explanation in which he shows that the Myrmidons were a race
of ". . . strenthe and gret[e] hardynes," wisdom and prudence,
"besy labour and wilful dilligence, / . . . for-seynge and
discrecioun." (74-86). Thus, he not only points out that Ovid
"feyneth" the entire story, but finds a rational explanation
for the fable itself. Thus, one suspects him of speaking with
tongue-in-cheek when he returns to the narrative: "But in this
mater I holde no sermoun, / I wil no longer make disgres-
sioun . . ." (87-88).

Lydgate also relies upon the tradition of Ovid's
untrustworthiness to explain Medea's reputation as a sorceress.
After describing her abilities--which include a wide knowledge
of the sciences (I.1623-1639) and powers over nature and the
planets (1643-1687)--he claims that Ovid has ascribed such
powers to Medea only "tencrease hir name vp-on euery syde"

(1708); thus, he asserts that no "wy3t or lyvyng creature"
has powers over nature (1716-1722). He explains that God has
fixed the planets in a system which cannot be altered (1723-
1733), and that only He may change this plan or "restreyne"
the course of the elements (1766-1776). Concluding his digres-
sion, he reiterates that Ovid wrote, thus, of Medea to exalt
her name and, therefore, fell short of the truth (1793-1796).
He grants, however, that Medea was "a passyng sorceresse, /
And ferþest named of any chanteresse" (1797-1798). When
Lydgate mentions a Trojan in whom the soul of Pythagoras was
"transmewed," he notes, again, that Ovid "feyneth" the story
in the Metamorphoses (II.3154-3158). In two other cases, how-
ever, he uses his own good sense to deprecate a supernatural
story. For example, after narrating a fable of enchanted
birds that can distinguish between Greeks and Latins and avoid
the latter (I.872-903), he confesses that the story is "swiche
a wonder" to him that he cannot discover the cause of the
sorcery (904-906), adding that he well knows that the "rote
of al was fals enchauntement," and that all Christians should
"defye / Swiche apparencis" which are only illusions "of þe
fende" (907-911). In Book V, he faithfully relates a super-
natural story from his source (2882-2907), but concludes that
he can neither judge the story nor believe it, since it
"transcendeth" his reason (2908-2911). Thus, Lydgate's rela-
tion to earlier practices is revealed in two obvious ways:

in the absence of some supernatural elements (which had been removed from earlier works) and in his own rational attitude toward other "fables" in the story. However, while the similarity of his method to the earlier practice of making the pagan stories "acceptable" is clear, it would be an easy matter to overlook the concern for the truth implicit in Lydgate's attitude, because, although he faithfully follows his source in relating incidents, he is always careful to note that the story is only a fable.

Much of his instruction not concerned with stressing the moral about Fortune is somewhat difficult to define or classify. It is more than simple information, but is not always moral teaching per se. Occasionally, Lydgate makes a point in an almost-proverbial statement, or offers advice or a warning; at times, he introduces "teaching" obviously derived from his own personal feelings. While many of his lessons are undoubtedly unique, he makes several remarks about the inconstancy of women, in addition to offering his usual adivce. He comments twice upon the untrustworthiness of the common people. He repeatedly warns his audience of the dangers of covetousness. He consistently points out the consequences and punishments of various kinds of behavior. Of course, such lessons and advice are secondary to his main interest in teaching, but they are further evidence of his didactic purpose in the Troy Book. Moreover, they often illustrate his method in drawing a moral from his story.

Lydgate first digresses upon the inconstancy of women,
when King Cethes, during a feast in honor of Jason and Hercules,
bids Medea, his duaghter, to sit next to the important guest
(I.1820-1823). Here, Lydgate laments Cethes' imprudence in
failing to take note of "þe vnwar chaunge þat is in wommanhed"
(1843), observing that women cannot be trusted, since they
are by nature allied with "doubilnes" and "variaunce" (1854).
He argues that women are patrons of "Inconstaunce" (1868) and
that they cannot be satisfied with one man, but always pursue
many (1879-1893). He observes that they hide their nature,
pretending to be stable, but are truly inconstant (1894-1904).
Then, he repeats his lament for Cethes' imprudence and con-
cludes his digression with an account of the troubles caused
when Medea betrayed her father.

Lydgate even more clearly reveals his intentions in
two other digressions on the subject of the inconstancy of
women and their ability to feign (I.2072-2096, III.4264-4342).
In each case, he translates from his source, follows his
digression with an _apologia_ (claiming that he only repeats the
words of his author), and attacks Guido for that author's
derogatory comments. Although Lydgate's sincerity is doubtful,
his purpose is always clear, since he expands or strengthens
Guido's remarks in both cases.[186] While Cressid toys with

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[186]_Ibid._, pp. 105, 160.

Diomede, keeping him "ful vnsur betwene hope & dispeire" (III.
4843), Lydgate takes this opportunity to digress and remark
that this practice is a common tendency of women (4849-4863).
Later, when she forsakes Troilus and yields to Diomede (IV.
2146-2147), Lydgate uses Cressid as a further example of
woman's inconstancy, remarking that one could not make change
"in Lombard Strete of crowne nor doket" as rapidly as did
Cressid change her affections (2154-2155). Regardless of his
claims that he only follows his source, Lydgate deliberately
alters his material in order to warn his readers of the incon-
stancy of women. In addition, he offers some practical advice.
For instance, in lines that are his own interpolation,[187] he
warns his reader that, since cosmetics make a woman more attrac-
tive than she really is (II.2681-2690), one should make a choice
of a wife early in the morning "whan euery drogge & pot is set
a-syde," so as not to be deceived, "for now-a-dayes swiche
craft is ful rife" (2695-2699).

In the same book, he uses Helen's meeting with Paris to
illustrate the fact that a woman should always stay in her
chamber (3609). Observing that no ship would ever sink or be
wrecked if it never left its harbor (3610-3614), he points
that, if Helen had not left her room to meet Paris, the tragic
war would never have occurred (3622-3631).

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[187]Ibid., p. 126.

Lydgate twice attacks the common people, warning that
they cannot be trusted. In each case, the digression is his
own.[188] He makes one warning only in passing, simply observ-
ing that, since the common people frequently change their
opinions, whoever trusts in them will find them "ful vnstable"
(I.3506-3512). Later (IV.4951-4995), his account of Priam's
secret plans leads him to point out that such matters cannot
be kept private, because people cannot hold their tongues
(4951-4975). He repeats, then, his earlier view that the common
people cannot be trusted because of their unstable natures
(4987-4995).

Several times, he warns his reader of the dangers of
covetousness (I.237-249, 356-357), but the digression in which
he uses the death of Hector as an example is particularly
effective as a good illustration of his customary method of
extracting a moral from his story. In the midst of battle,
Hector meets and kills a Greek king who is wearing a suit of
richly-jewelled armor and carries him away "to spoillen hym of
his riche array" (III.5332-5353). Here, Lydgate digresses upon
the dangers of covetousness, which

> Hath cause ben and rote of þe ruyne
> Of many worþi--who-so liste take hede--
> Like as 3e may now of Hector rede,
> Þat sodeinly was brou3t to his endynge
> Only for spoillynge of þis riche kyng.
> (5368-5372)

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[188]Ibid., pp. 112, 179.

Having prepared his readers and having warned them to "take
hede," he relates the death of Hector, who having "cast his
shelde at his bak be-hynde" for ease in removing the jewelled
armor, and thus exposed, was stabbed by Achilles (5373-5399).

Lydgate also clearly reveals his moral-didactic purpose
in his repeated comments upon the consequences and punishments
of a variety of actions and crimes. Almost all of these re-
marks are his own interpolations unless they occur in a section
which he has expanded from his source. For instance, he uses
Medea's failure to forsee the unfortunate outcome of her
flight to Greece with Jason (I.3599-3622) to illustrate his
point that those who will not consider the consequences of
their actions invariably will end in adversity (3623-3654).
Thus, he amplifies his source in the passage containing his
"lesson."[189] The account of Achilles' death and the mistreat-
ment of his body (IV.3184-3209) permits Lydgate to point out
that treachery is always repaid by death, "as ʒe may se of
þis Achilles" (3210-3219), again, expanding a short passage
from his source.[190] In the same book, in the episode in which
Priam conspires against the traitorous Aeneas and Antenor, he
notes that "shameful deth" is the "final mede" for treason
(4915-4917).

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[189]Ibid., p. 113.

[190]Ibid., p. 172.

His comments on Bishop Calchas (III.6023-6039), the traitor who conceived the idea of the Trojan horse, include a warning similar to that which he earlier expresses about the power of the writer.[191] According to Lydgate, "clerkis" have put Calchas into their books "to exemplifie no man be vntrewe" (6028), inasmuch as the record of such actions will make them widely known in later years (6029-6037). His remarks on treachery are his own additions to the narrative.[192]

Lydgate's interesting and amusing lesson on the consequences of an action occurs early in Book V. When Oileus Ajax nearly drown in a storm that wrecks the Greek navy (640-669), Lydgate explains that Minerva is punishing Ajax for his seizure of Cassandra at the altar of the goddess (670-673).[193] However, in his following digression on the peril of offending holy places (674-689), Lydgate warns that it is God Who will punish those who commit sacrilege (678-679, 684-685).

The murder of Agamemnon (V.1119-1120) affords him several opportunities to introduce his own comments on the consequences of adultery and murder.[194] In his first digression, he laments the death, points out that adultery has led to

[191]Supra, p. 50.

[192]Bergen, op. cit., p. 183.

[193]Lydgate relates the incident in IV.6512-6513.

[194]Bergen, op. cit., pp. 191-192, 194.

murder by conspiracy, and warns that God will punish the guilty

(1126-1147). In his second interpolation, he reminds his

reader that, as required by God, murder by conspiracy must be

punished by death, and notes that God has given Orestes the

"power, grace & my3t" to avenge the death of his father (1467-

1487). After the executions of Clytemnestra (1642) and

Aegisthus (1652), he restates his earlier warnings, now as

conclusions: "Lo, how mordre hap his guerdon wonne! / Lo,

how falshed his maister can awake!" (1654-1655). Furthermore,

one is told that death is also a just punishment for adultery,

as Lydgate remarks after Orestes kills the man who had ravished

his wife (V.2808-2813).[195]

Lydgate obviously wished to instruct his readers with

his numerous comments on women, the common people, covetous-

ness, and the consequences of various actions.[196] However,

the same statement could be made of the many other lessons

which Lydgate introduces only once; again, most of them are

his own additions. These minor lessons are too great in number

to be considered in detail, but should, at least, be considered

in passing. For example, Jason's betrayal of Medea leads

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[195]However, Lydgate elsewhere advises (II.5814-5819)
that men should pay no great attention to their wives' adultery.

[196]In two other cases (I.4372-4381, II.2812-2839),
Lydgate points out the consequences of actions, but does not
make a general statement or issue a warning which might apply
to his readers.

Lydgate to remark that women might learn from this example
how little men can be trusted (I.2918-2919). In his discus-
sion of the recreations available in New Troy, he digresses
upon the troubles caused by gambling (II.824-841). His dis-
cussion of Bacchus and the evils of drink (I.5736-5785) is,
largely, his own interpolation.[197] A long speech (II.6517-
6719) which contains cautions against pride and presumption
has been "greatly extended" by Lydgate.[198] After a lengthy
catalog of the Trojan forces (II.7621-7848), he asks his
readers to "taketh . . . good hede" that "almost for nou3t
was þis strif be-gonne" (7855), and that the only reward won
by those who participated was death (7856-7863). When
Cassandra is bound and confined because of her lament for the
impending destruction of Troy (III.2289-2296), he digresses
to comment that wisdom and prophecy "availeth nat" if they
find no favor (2297-2316). When the Greek forces disagree in
a choice of leaders, he reflects on the dangers of discord and
envy (2342-2354). After the Greeks change leaders (IV.270-298),
Lydgate points out that it illustrates that men delight in
new things (299-309). Other "lessons" include a warning that
the influence of Mars brings discord and disaster to a kingdom
(IV.4440-4537) and a reminder that prudence is sometimes better

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[197]Bergen, op. cit., p. 140.

[198]Ibid., p. 145.

than speaking out, even when one speaks truth (IV.5452-5476).
Also, Lydgate remarks on the power of gold and the love of
money (IV.5812-5820), attacks priests and their natural
covetousness (IV.5833-5899), and points out the dangers of
the old pagan faith (IV.6992-7031).

Lydgate's moral-didactic purpose in the Troy Book
should be evident from his minor morals and lessons alone.
However, one must remember that Lydgate views his entire work
as an illustration of his main point: that Fortune was totally
capricious and, thus, that all worldly things were transitory.
Throughout the Troy Book, Lydgate emphasizes this moral by
simple restatement, by ascribing the responsibility for the
war to Fortune's influence, and by "interpreting" incidents,
using characters and their individual fates to illustrate his
lesson.

Lydgate first remarks on Fortune's power early in Book
I, when Jason's forces, in their quest for the Golden Fleece,
land at a port near Troy (728-732). Lydgate points out that
the Greeks meant no harm to the Trojans, but only wished to
pause for a time during their journey (733-740); however, "þe
ordre of Fortunys my3t" makes the Trojans believe that the
Greeks come as aggressors (750-758). The ultimate effect of
this misunderstanding is the subsequent war, as Lydgate explains:
". . . þe cause of þis suspecioun / Hath many brou3t vn-to
destruccioun" (759-760). After a brief description, he repeats

that Fortune caused the war to "schewen her my3t and her

cruelte, / In vengaunce takyng vp-on þis cite" (776-778).

Clearly, he is convinced that the entire conflict resulted

only from Fortune's caprices. Also, his following warning

that small quarrels grow into large ones--"þou3 þe gynnyng be

but casuel, / Þe fret abydyng is passyng[ly] cruel" (801-802)--

foreshadows events which are soon to follow, for Lamedon,

King of Old Troy, premptorily orders the Greeks to leave his

land (977-1014). Jason replies to the king's messenger (1029-

1089) and points out that the Greeks intended no harm to the

Trojans (1038-1043) and warns that Lamedon's ill-treatment of

his guests will "on hym silfe rebounde" (1080), as it later

does. After the Quest is completed, Jason plans an expedi-

tion to punish Lamedon for his actions (I.3752-3906). With

no additional remarks on Fortune, Lydgate relates the destruc-

tion of Old Troy and the death of Lamedon in the remainder of

Book I (3907-4436).

He discusses Fortune and interprets the events he has

previously narrated in a long introduction to his second book

(1-202). Here, he explains that, because she is "blinde, fikel,

and vnstable" (5), Fortune gives men no peace in their daily

lives; she brings a man to destruction when he is at the

height of his powers and least expects it (7-11). Therefore,

he warns that no man may trust her, since she appears most

trustworthy when she is least so; she is totally capricious,

bringing honor to some and destruction to others according to
her whim (12-68). He adds that Fortune will "ouercaste" who-
ever trusts her, regardless of his estate (69-72). Finally,
he "interprets" the events he has earlier related:

> Sethe here example of kyng Lamedoun,
> Whom sche haþ brou3t to confusioun
> For litel cause, and for a þing of nou3t;
> Hir cruelte he haþe to dere a-bou3t.
> Wherfore, I rede, euery man take hede
> To gynne a quarel where as is no nede.
> (73-78)

After restating his earlier point that small quarrels grow
into large ones (79-82), he directly addresses his reader:

> Þerfor, 3e kynges and lordis euerychon,
> Make 3ow a merour of þis Lamedoun,
> And beþ wel war to do no violence
> Vn-to straungers, whan þei do noon offence,
> Whan þei com fer in-to 3oure regioun.
> (83-87)

Lydgate, next, reminds the reader that, while he may be secure
in his place at present, his fortunes may change for the worse;
then, he repeats his recommendation that strangers be treated
with kindness and points out that the Trojans' offensive treat-
ment of the Greeks ultimately caused the destruction of Old
Troy and the subsequent war (91-118). He concludes by reiter-
ating that the entire conflict and the deaths of those who
participated ". . . wer meved first of smal occasioun" (119-
142). The sequence of the argument and the transferred
emphasis in the latter digression nearly obscure Lydgate's
original point. He first uses Lamdeon's fate as an example of
Fortune's caprices, maintaining that the king and his city are

destroyed only because of his minor error of misunderstanding the intentions of his visitors. However, still using his example of Lamedon, Lydgate advises his reader of the importance of giving strangers good treatment and emphasizes that the small quarrel over Lamedon's ill-treatment of his guests initiated the entire Trojan conflict. Earlier, though (1733-1804), he attributed the original misunderstanding to Fortune (750-760). Thus, in Lydgate's argument, Fortune is responsible for Lamedon's fate, the destruction of Old Troy, and, ultimately, the entire Trojan war. One should note, too, that the argument is Lydgate's, for nearly all of the comments upon Fortune are his own addition to the text.[199]

When Priam decides to undertake a naval war against the Greeks (II.1786-1790), Lydgate sees an opportunity to amplify his source and reinforce the moral of his work.[200] For example, after rebuking Priam for lacking reason and prudence in his decision (1797-1856), Lydgate repeats his earlier warnings that Fortune is totally capricious and will betray those who trust her:

> As ʒe may se be example of Priamus,
> Þat of foly is so desyrous
> To wirke of hede & folwe his oune wille,
> To trouble, allas, þe calm of his tranquille.
>   (1879-1882)

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[199] _Ibid._, pp. 100, 116.

[200] _Ibid._, p. 125.

Pointing out that Priam's fate, in addition, should be taken as an example of the foolishness of beginning a war, he again exhorts his reader to "late Priam alwey 3our meror ben" and returns to his narrative (1883-1902).

Lydgate also remarks upon Fortune's responsibility for the war after the failure of several attempts to dissuade Priam from his enterprise (II.2183-2304, 2908-2984, 3161-3211, 3267-3279). In his digression, here, he laments that Fortune has "turned hir whele vnstable" and enticed the Trojans into a conflict which will only destroy them (3280-3291). He explains that wise and prudent counsel was useless, for "Fortune wil haue hir cours alwey, / Whos purpos holt, who seyth 3e or nay" (3295-3308).

After narrating the Trojan expedition that plunders the Temple of Venus and removes Helen to Troy (II.3819-3889) and the Trojans' celebration of their success (4097-4189), Lydgate evidently feels it necessary to remind his readers that this success was only temporary. In a short digression (4255-4269), he remarks that Fortune has only "falsly gan to smyle" upon the Trojans, and that, while she favors them at present, her stability is only temporary. He observes that the Trojans "litel wist" the fate which Fortune will ultimately bring to them. Of course, since Lydgate reminds his reader of the outcome of the war at a time when the Trojans are enjoying success, the digression is a restatement of his moral,

which he certainly intended; and, once more, these comments upon Fortune are his own addition to the narrative.[201]

While Lydgate holds Fortune responsible for the entire conflict and the ultimate Trojan defeat, he also claims that she determines the outcome of specific events within the narrative. For instance, when the Trojans drive the Greeks from the field of battle, only to spoil them and return to Troy (III.1949-1958), he states that Fortune prevented the victory of the Trojan forces, arguing that they would have defeated the Greeks had Fortune not turned her wheel and blinded them, especially Hector, to the consequences of their withdrawal (1959-1996). Moreover, he complains of the Trojans' "lak of resoun and of hiȝe prudence" in not pressing their advantage while Fortune favored them (1997-2009) and notes that she will desert those who once refuse her favors (2010-2026). He concludes his digression by repeating that the Trojans could have won, had they not "reffusid folily" to press their advantage (2027-2035). Following his digression by explaining that Hector, "enclyned / . . . of hasty wilfulness," withdrew the Trojan forces at the request of his Greek cousin (2125-2134), his preceding comments on Fortune's responsibility seem somewhat contrived; however, his desire to reëmphasize his moral becomes more obvious.

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[201]Ibid., p. 131.

When Achilles agrees to a scheme for killing Hector
(III.2716-2718), Lydgate passingly remarks upon the dangers of
trusting Fortune, noting that Achilles must now beware that
Fortune does not "loke on hym with a froward chere" and cause
him ". . . to falle hym silfe in þe same dyche / Þat he for
Hector compassid haþ & shape" (2719-2729).

Lydgate twice refers to the story of Troilus and Cressid
to illustrate his moral; in the first instance, he uses
Troilus' sorrow over his separation from Cressid as a direct
example of Fortune's mutability:

> Alas!   Fortune, gery and vnstable
> And redy ay [for] to be chaungable;
> Whan folk most triste in þi stormy face,
> Liche her desire þe fully to embrace:
> Þanne is þi Ioye aweye to turne & wryþe,
> Vp-on wrechis þi power for to kiþe--
> Record on Troylus, þat fro þi whele so lowe
> By fals envie þou hast ouer-þrowe,
> Oute of þe Ioye which [þat] he was Inne,
> From his lady to make him for to twynne
> Whan he best wende for to haue be surid.
> (4077-4087)

In this case, Lydgate's "interpretation" of his source material
becomes especially obvious when one notes that this entire sec-
tion is his own interpolation.[202] He also holds Fortune
directly responsible for the lovers' separation in his second
use of the story (III.4186-4233). Referring, here, to Chaucer's
account of the earlier stages of the affair, he argues that all
went well with Troilus

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[202] Ibid., p. 160.

> Till Fortune gan vp-on hym frowne,
> Ðat she from hym mvst goon oute of towne
> Al sodeynly, and neuer hym after se.
> Lo! here þe fyn of false felicite,
> Lo! here þe ende of worldly brotilnes,
> Of fleshly lust, lo! here thunstabilnes,
> Lo! here þe double variacioun
> Of wor[l]dly blisse and transmvtacioun:
> Ðis day in myrthe & in wo to-morwe!
> For al þe fyn, allas! of Ioie is sorwe.
> (4221-4230)

One need hardly call attention to the fact that Lydgate not only illustrates his lesson of Fortune's mutability, but also draws from this incident his own conclusion about the transitoriness of all worldly things. As in his first application of the Troilus-Cressid story, Lydgate's comments on Fortune are, again, his own addition to the narrative.[203]

He uses the death of Ajax in a minor illustration of his lesson.[204] When Ajax is fighting at his best in the midst of battle (IV.3486-3501), Lydgate digresses, remarking upon the impossibility of escaping Fortune's decrees (3502-3505), and repeats that she can

> . . . bring a man vnwarly to meschaunce
> Whan he best weneth to han assurance . . .
> Lik as it fel of worþi Thelamoun
> Ðis same day. . . .
> (3507-3511)

In one case, he illustrates his lesson of the transitoriness of all worldly things without deducing from Fortune's

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[203]Loc. cit.

[204]Lydgate also comments upon Fortune in passing in II. 2416-2417, IV.2683-2686, and IV.4274-4276.

mutability. Describing the celebration in Troy as the horse
is brought into the city (IV.6215-6221), he points out that
woe and adversity always follow joy and that one is foolish
to place his trust in present happiness (6222-6231):

> For worldly lust, þou3 it be now blowe
> With pompe and pride, & with bost and soun,
> Anon it passeth: record of Troie toun. . . .
> (6232-6234)

In two minor examples, Lydgate uses the complete triumph
of the Greeks to restate his point that Fortune can easily
turn against those who stand at the height of their powers.
His interpolation[205] in which he comments upon Fortune's ca-
prices and emphasizes the security of the Greeks in their
victory (V.16-40) is immediately followed by an account of the
envy caused among them by Ulysses' possession of a trophy from
Troy (45-81). At one point in their journey home, the Greeks
enjoy three days of perfect sailing weather (V.624-629) before
a sudden storm wrecks the fleet (640-656); immediately pre-
ceding the account of this story, Lydgate comments upon
Fortune's ability to change when least expected, in lines
which are his own addition to the text (630-640).[206]

Agamemnon's death is Lydgate's final illustration of
his moral. In a long interpolation (V.1011-1072)[207] preceding

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[205] Bergen, op. cit., p. 187.

[206] Ibid., p. 190.

[207] Ibid., p. 191.

the account of Agamemnon's murder (1119-1120), he laments the
"vnsur trust of al worldly glorie" and the "Iole vnstable of
veyn ambicioun" (1011-1013), emphasizing that fame, pomp, the
honors of triumph--all are as transitory as shadows (1015-
1018). He observes that Fortune, "fals and vnassured," is
faithful to no one, because she will bring down a man when he
sits highest on the "vnstable whele" (1019-1029). He points
out, then, that she spares none in her mutability, but pulls
down princes, dukes, great emperors, all those who "richest
regne in her royal floures":

> I take witnesse of Agamenoun,
> Đat was so noble & my3ti in his lyve,
> As sondry auctors his hi3e renoun discribe;
> But sothfastly, for his excellence,
> He my3t[e] nat make no diffence, . . .
> Reskus was noon þat he koude make!
> (1030-1043)

Lydgate, then, offers a variety of instruction in the
Troy Book. The entire story, he claims, is an example of
Fortune's mutability and the transitoriness of all worldly
things; to illustrate his moral, Lydgate repeatedly interprets
incidents as specific examples of his lesson. In addition, he
draws a number of other morals from the incidents of his narra-
tive and offers practical advice as well as an occasional
warning to his readers. Even if one disregards Lydgate's own
statements that his work is intended to instruct, his numerous
and obvious efforts to point out the lessons of his story are
sufficient evidence of his didactic purpose. In short,

Lydgate is not primarily concerned with his narrative; it is, so to speak, a vehicle which allows him to instruct and supplies him with a stock of "historical" examples with which to illustrate his lessons.

Several aspects of the Troy Book reveal its relation to the tradition which preceded it. When pagan literature was first interpreted and allegorized for purposes of reconciliation, the supernatural elements which were unacceptable to the beliefs of more sophisticated readers were either removed or "explained." The general absence of such elements from the Troy Book clearly illustrates the influence of the earlier practices. Lydgate's own skeptical and rational view of several other "fables" in his narrative is similar to the attitudes which first necessitated the rationalization and removal of supernatural elements. Of course, Lydgate's utilization of his material is not an innovation, since the classical stories had been used in education since antiquity. However, the widespread application of allegorical interpretation (given impetus by Biblical exegesis) in the later Middle Ages led to the belief that the classical stories concealed moral and philosophic truths under a veil of fiction. Subsequently, pagan literature was interpreted and turned to the ends of Christian education in the Church schools. Thus, Lydgate's direction of his story to didactic purposes places him in the center of the medieval tradition of utilizing "history" for moral instruction.

Obviously, then, Lydgate's work cannot be read simply as another medieval redaction and retelling of the familiar story of Troy. One must, first, take note of the early influence of allegorical interpretation and its application to pagan literature for purposes of reconciliation. Second, he must consider the domination of the Church in the Middle Ages and its effect upon the ends to which secular and classical literature were directed. Third, he must be aware of the widespread medieval belief in the didactic possibilities of secular and pagan literature. Finally, one must grant Lydgate his moral purpose and accept the Troy Book as an example of the medieval utilization of "history" for instruction; otherwise, of course, he will completely misunderstand the work. For instance, if one views the Troy Book as a narrative, it becomes a verbose, dry, and largely boring work filled with digressions which do little or nothing to advance the story. The correct view of the Troy Book does nothing to reduce the number of words, but it does add to one's understanding of the author, his work, and its place in the tradition of utilizing "history" for the purpose of moral instruction. Certainly, in light of Lydgate's didactic purpose in the Troy Book, other of his works could be reëxamined with profit.

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