UC San Diego
New Chaucer Studies: Pedagogy and Profession

Title
Collaborative Teaching and Creative Assignments Using Contemporary Adaptation

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/182695j9

Journal
New Chaucer Studies: Pedagogy and Profession, 4(2)

Authors
O'Connell, Brendan
Colby, Alexandra

Publication Date
2023

DOI
10.5070/NC34262326

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed

Collaborative Teaching and Creative Assignments Using Contemporary Adaptation

Brendan O'Connell
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1427-9834
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Alexandra Colby
McGill University, Canada

Collaborative Teaching and Creative Assignments Using Contemporary Adaptation

Brendan O'Connell
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1427-9834
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Alexandra Colby
McGill University, Canada

Abstract

In this article, we share our perspectives (as teacher and student) on the role of modern adaptations of Chaucer in teaching and assessment, with a particular focus on the role such adaptations play in supporting the use of creative writing-based assignments in a medieval literature course. We describe our experience of an assessment composed of a creative exercise combined with a critical commentary, and discuss how the incorporation of modern adaptations of medieval texts into the medieval literature curriculum underpins and supports this assessment type. Our account demonstrates that the process by which the meaning of literary texts is generated is iterative and collaborative, a point we hope to underscore through our collaboration on this piece. We hope the experience we describe will foreground the value of dialogue in the processes of teaching, assessment, and feedback, and also highlight the role of modern adaptations in supporting students to recognise and articulate the value of their own creative and critical work within a longer tradition of literary and scholarly responses to medieval literature.

Introduction

In this article, we share our perspectives (as teacher and student) on the role of modern adaptations of Chaucer in teaching and assessment, with a particular focus on the role an adaptation such as Patience Agbabi's *Telling Tales* can play in supporting the use of creative writing-based assignments in a medieval literature course.[1] We describe our experience of an assessment composed of a creative exercise combined with a critical commentary, and discuss how the incorporation of modern adaptations of medieval texts into the medieval literature curriculum underpins and supports this assessment type. As we emphasise, this model of teaching and assessment works particularly well to foreground the ways in which medieval texts not only retell and rework previous sources, but also the ways in which our reading of medieval works is mediated by later and contemporary responses to them. Our account demonstrates that the process by which the meaning of literary texts is generated is iterative and collaborative, a point we hope to underscore through our collaboration on this piece. In the following sections, Brendan O'Connell (as the module co-ordinator) will comment on the design of the teaching methods and assessment, while Alexandra Colby (as a recent student on the module) will comment on the process of completing the assignment, and how this has intersected with her broader research interests. We hope the experience we describe will foreground the value of dialogue in the processes of teaching, assessment, and feedback, and also highlight the role of modern adaptations in supporting students to recognise and articulate the value of their own creative and critical work within a longer tradition of literary and scholarly responses to medieval literature.

Modern Adaptations and Creative Writing in the Medieval Literature Class
(Brendan O'Connell)

The perspectives described here emerged from an optional third-year module called "Surviving Trauma in the Middle Ages." The module lasts for one semester (12 weeks), with meetings once a week for a two-hour seminar, and carries 10 ECTS credits.[2] The assessment currently requires students to submit only one final paper, worth 100% of the grade. This mode of assessment is not uncommon at my school, though I intend to revise this in the future to combine shorter and longer assignments. In 2022–23, students were allowed to choose between a traditional long-form essay of 4000–5000 words or a creative option (consisting of a creative writing exercise and critical commentary). Students also had the opportunity to submit a formative assignment in advance of the final paper, so that they could get feedback and advice. In the following section, I go into greater detail about the precise teaching and learning context to which Alexandra responded in her creative assignment, but here I first set out some of the key principles, opportunities, and challenges of embedding creative work into

---

[1] Brendan O'Connell is an Assistant Professor in the School of English, Trinity College Dublin. Alexandra Colby is a graduate of McGill University and was a Visiting Student at Trinity College Dublin in the first semester of 2022/23, where she took O'Connell's module "Surviving Trauma in the Middle Ages." The authors note that this collaboration was undertaken after Colby had completed the semester at Trinity and returned to McGill, and after assessment for the module had been marked and moderated.

[2] Under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, undergraduate students complete a total of 60 ECTS credits per academic year. In this system, 1 credit represents 20-25 hours of estimated student input, including class time, study, and assessment. For the purposes of international comparison, 10 ECTS credits would be equivalent to approximately 5 US credits.

assessment, and describe how modern adaptations of medieval texts have helped me (and my students) to exploit the potential of this approach and overcome some of the challenges.

When embedding creative responses into the curriculum, it is important to think about how to explain to students the value and purpose of creative work. My own school has a long tradition of creative writing, and my colleagues provide excellent models and rubrics that help build assessment literacy about the use of creative writing in the classroom. Nonetheless, the discipline of creative writing is quite different from using creative writing as a mode of assessing a medieval literature module whose aims and outcomes are oriented towards critical practice. One resource that has been helpful for me in thinking about the place of creative work is the Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric developed by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). The VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubrics were developed to help educators assess undergraduate student performance across a wide range of learning outcomes, such as Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, and Problem Solving. The relevant rubric defines Creative Thinking as "both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking." The rubric, which is designed to assess creative thinking rather than creative writing, recognises that "creative thinking in higher education can only be expressed productively within a particular domain" and that the student "must have a strong foundation in the strategies and skills of the domain in order to make connections and synthesize" (AAC&U).

The Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric is intended to help faculty assess creative thinking in a broad range of transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary contexts and could be used in conjunction with numerous modes of assessment, including research papers, lab reports, musical compositions, reflective pieces, or other academic works, whether completed by individuals or groups. The rubric provides a useful model for identifying some of the key qualities of good creative thinking: such thinking is grounded in a domain-specific set of competencies, demonstrates innovative thinking and problem-solving, embraces contradiction and the creative value of risk-taking, and enables students to connect, synthesize, and transform material. While I did not formally deploy this rubric in the module, many of these ideas informed the way that I approached the assignment and how I sought to support students choosing this mode of assessment through teaching methods and formative assessment.

Incorporating modern adaptations of medieval texts into the curriculum reinforces the principles of the Creative Thinking rubric, and enables students to gain core competencies while also learning to recognise the value of their own creative and critical contributions, and thus to build confidence and engage more meaningfully with their assessment. Used alongside more traditional source study, creative adaptations develop core skills by helping students to recognise the choices of authors as rooted in particular social, cultural, and ideological contexts; modern adaptations help students to recognise parallels and divergences between medieval and modern responses to important issues, and to connect and synthesise ideas. They also provide models for the risk-taking which the VALUE rubric identifies as especially desirable for creative thinking. The rubric glosses risk-taking in detail, noting that good creative thinking "may include personal risk (fear of embarrassment or rejection) or risk of failure in successfully completing assignment, i.e., going beyond original parameters of assignment,

introducing new materials and forms, tackling controversial topics, advocating unpopular ideas or solutions" (AAC&U). Embedding modern creative responses to medieval texts in the syllabus helps students recognise the creative and hermeneutic value of informed risk-taking, and expands the range of models available to them. One way of doing this is to provide students, where possible, with examples of other students who have successfully developed creative responses and commentaries in their own assessments. One useful example I have provided for my students is Rebecca Clark's comic-book adaptation of Hoccleve's *Complaint*, published in *postmedieval* (Clark 2017). Providing models of student-authored, peer-reviewed work creates a sense of confidence that the creative and critical responses of undergraduate and postgraduate students are recognised by the discipline as valuable scholarly contributions.

Modern adaptations of Chaucer have proved to be particularly fertile ground for teachers seeking to make medieval literature more accessible to contemporary readers. Such adaptations can be used in a variety of pedagogic contexts: Kim Zarins, for example, has worked with secondary school teachers to show how her *Sometimes We Tell the Truth* (2016), a young adult adaptation of Chaucer, can be taught alongside *The Canterbury Tales* in the high school class (Zarins, n.d.). Arguably, no modern adaptation has been more influential on the college-level classroom, however, than Patience Agbabi's *Telling Tales* (2014), which has yielded not only its own substantial body of critical commentary, but has also been used in a variety of pedagogical contexts.[3] Elisabeth Sollog has provided her own commentaries on a selection of Agbabi's works, noting their origin in an online senior thesis project. Cynthia Turner Camp has described how her own students have remixed Agbabi's remix of the tales; speaking of how her students adapted Agbabi's retelling of the *Prioress's Tale*, she observes: "The move from a young boy to a college student as the victim allows the video to address town-gown tensions—issues that are racialized in Athens [Georgia, USA] more than in many college towns—while the portrayal of white-on-black violence could speak to contemporary racial problems" (2015). As all of these varied responses to Agbabi's work imply, modern adaptations are particularly effective in the classroom as they remind us not only that Chaucer's works are themselves retellings, but because they help students to imagine new ways of connecting the medieval text to the concerns and interests of contemporary readers. With this in mind, I would like to turn to the particular context in which Agbabi's work has helped my students in developing creative and critical responses to Chaucer's works.

Responding to Griselda: Retellings in the Classroom (Brendan O'Connell)

One of the teaching approaches that has shaped my thinking in recent years is L. Dee Fink's "Taxonomy of Significant Learning," an approach that moves beyond more traditional hierarchical taxonomies to suggest a non-hierarchical approach that connects affective, cognitive, and meta-cognitive aspects of learning across six intersecting domains: foundational knowledge, application, integration, the human dimension, caring, and learning to learn (2013). Fink's taxonomy places emphasis on the principle of conceptual change: to be significant, learning must involve some sort of significant change in the learner. Incorporating modern adaptations of medieval texts in the classroom helps to activate multiple aspects of this approach. Certainly, the comparison between the medieval

---

[3] See Barrington and Hsy 2015; Agbabi 2018; O'Connell 2022.

original and the modern adaptation promotes the development of foundational knowledge and application and integration of knowledge, as the student learns to recognise the significance of what has been added or omitted and starts to recognise the values that the modern writers bring to bear. These modern adaptations stimulate their awareness of the "human dimension" of literary analysis, often helping students to connect what they are learning about intellectually with concepts and values they care about deeply. Engaging with modern texts can be very transformative: as Alexandra outlines below, there is something deeply liberating for a student in looking at a medieval text through the eyes of a modern poet like Agbabi. Such engagement encourages the student to identify the continuing human relevance of the topic and validates the complex affective and emotional responses that students experience when engaging with medieval work.

It is perhaps not surprising that Agbabi's *Telling Tales* works so well in a classroom context that seeks to promote a non-hierarchical approach to learning such as that outlined by Fink. As Helena Van Praet has noted in her "rhizomatic" comparative reading of Agbabi and Anne Carson, Agbabi

> creates a protean collection at the crossroads of slam, poetry, and narrative, thereby defying fixed oppositions and giving prime position to a concerted literary work based on relations not only between the 'original' and her rewriting but also between socio-cultural and gender identities (2021, 87).

This "concerted" aspect of Agbabi's writing, the way it draws together multiple styles and subject positions, works extremely well in a classroom context and encourages students to engage not only with the sources of and influences on Chaucer's work, but the ways his work has, in its turn, become a source and influence for later writers. Because Agbabi's reimaginings resist a hierarchical and linear model of literary influence, moreover, they help students recognise the role their own work can play within a longer tradition of creative and critical responses to Chaucer. While this is arguably true of any of Agbabi's adaptations, it is especially relevant to "I Go Back to May 1967," her retelling of the *Clerk's Tale*.

The particular class that informed and inspired Alexandra's creative assignment was a session on the story of Griselda, a narrative that inspires a range of strong reactions and that is well-suited to assignments that require students to engage with medieval texts in a critical and creative way. In part, this suitability is an effect of the story's well-established reputation as a deeply self-conscious retelling of its sources (Wallace 1997). At the heart of the Griselda tradition, we see how hierarchical structures of power are constructed and perpetuated, not only in terms of patrilineal class and gender hierarchies, but also in the ways successive literary figures have used the tale to negotiate a place for themselves within a hierarchical but contested literary tradition. Chaucer's account of Griselda being "translated" (Chaucer 1987, 142, line 385) at the moment she is dressed in splendid robes is precisely calibrated to capture these parallels between hierarchies of gender, class, and literary *auctoritas*, and subtly echoes Petrarch's claim that, in translating the story from Boccaccio, he has dressed it in new garments (Schwebel 2013, 280–1). Griselda's story, of course, has been dressed in many types of garb: Chaucer's primary source is Petrarch, but he also responds to a French translation (Farrell and Goodwin 2002), and scholars increasingly accept that Chaucer was also familiar with Boccaccio's original (Biggs 2017; Harkins 2013). Throughout, Chaucer's version highlights the importance of context in the production of meaning: in his version, the allegorical moral initially developed by Petrarch is evoked only to be

undermined by the comic envoy that resists such moralistic interpretation, and which, through its dedication to the Wife of Bath, insists on the story's place within the wider meaning-making system of *The Canterbury Tales*. As Wallace argues, the tale insists that there is no such thing as a "final translation": as the historical moment of Petrarch recedes, "Chaucer needs to translate Petrarch into his own cultural present" (Wallace 1997, 282). Chaucer, that is, recognised a key aspect of a poet's relation to his sources which was also acknowledged, centuries later, in Patience Agbabi's pithy formulation that "Chaucer Tales were an unfinished business" (2014, 2).

Agbabi's response to the *Clerk's Tale* is so powerful in part because it subverts and redirects the patrilineal ideology at the heart of the Griselda story in its various medieval retellings. One of the most striking aspects of the Griselda tradition is the way in which the male medieval authors respond to the tale by offering different explanations and rationalisations of Walter's appalling treatment of Griselda. The most famous example of this is of course Petrarch's moralisation, which claims that the tale is not about the treatment of a woman by a man, but an account of how patient all human beings should be while being tested by God. One of the most interesting medieval responses to the story, which has been edited by Richard F. Green, is a poem by Thomas III Marquis of Saluzzo that attempts to explain and justify Walter's actions (Green 2012). In this creative response, which I often share with interested students, Walter's mistreatment of Griselda is explained with reference to the actions of his parents. We are told that, shortly after he married, Walter's father discovered that his wife was already several months pregnant by another man; rather than denounce his new bride, he continued to live with her, and later fathered Walter with her. Before he died, he devised a will that would make only his legitimate son the heir, leading to an elaborate test after his death, in which the blood of both his apparent sons was spilled on his bones, which repelled the blood of the illegitimate child, but not Walter's, thus ensuring the legitimate son became Marquis. This concern with patrilineal legitimacy is replicated throughout the Griselda tradition, where it informs ideas of poetic legacy. Agbabi's poem, however, takes the story in a very different direction.

Agbabi's twenty-first-century adaptation of the *Clerk's Tale*, "I Go Back to May 1967," is a fascinating response to Chaucer that grafts the details of Chaucer's poem, now narrated from the perspective of Griselda's daughter, onto a celebrated poem by Sharon Olds, "I Go Back to May 1937." A number of aspects of Agbabi's adaptation make it particularly engaging for the twenty-first-century reader. First, the adaptation wastes no time trying to explain, contextualise, or justify the abusive treatment of Griselda by Walter, and instead focuses on the impact of the damaged and damaging relationship on the next generation. In my experience, this resonates strongly with students, who are generally less interested in how Walter's behaviour is to be explained than in reflecting on Griselda's ethical position and the impact of her choices (as well as Walter's) on their children. This focus on the legacy of abuse also helps explain Agbabi's choice to blend Chaucer's tale with the poem in which Sharon Olds imagines herself transported back in time to the day her parents met, and considers begging them not to marry, before realising that her very existence depends on their union, however traumatic its impact will be on their children. In Agbabi's version, Griselda and Walter's daughter imagines confronting them on their wedding day:

> I want to approach them and say Stop,
> I am begging you—you are not a bad woman,

>he is not a good man, he is going to put you on trial
>like Job …
>But I do not say it. I want to live my life. (Agbabi 2014, 47–8)

Agbabi's dynamic interweaving of her sources in Chaucer and Olds is, in turn, complicated by her decision to move the political action of the poem from medieval Europe to postcolonial Nigeria in 1967, which sets the action of the tale against a background of imperialism and the Biafran war. Agbabi's poem is a powerful teaching tool, then, not only because it offers a compelling response to Chaucer (though it certainly does), but because it intervenes in the Griselda tradition in a way that validates and legitimises the outrage modern students feel in response to the text, and challenges us to reimagine the ethical centre of the story.

The *Clerk's Tale* has long inspired strong reactions. Over many years of teaching this text, I have encountered students expressing a range of responses, including astonishment, anger, distress, irritation, and outrage. Situating their own affective responses within the longer history of telling the tale is a useful way of encouraging students to reflect on its purpose. Students are usually amused but also intrigued to learn that one Italian reader, reacting to the tale in a memorable marginal annotation, has imagined Griselda responding to Walter, when he finally stops tormenting her, by saying "Pisciarti in mano Gualtieri! chi mi ristora di dodici anni? le forche?" ["Go piss on your hand Gualtieri! Who'll give me back twelve years? The gallows?"] (the 'Mannelli Codex,' Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 42, 1 [f. 170rb], cited in Clarke 2011, 122). Through encounters with such medieval readers of the tale, as well as modern readers such as Agbabi, students come to learn that a powerful affective response is not only legitimate, but essential to help readers confront what J. Allan Mitchell has referred to as the "ethical monstrosity" at the centre of the action (2005, 6). Agbabi's adaptation confronts us with the horror of the impact of Walter's actions (and indeed Griselda's) on the children of the marriage, and it is this process that Alexandra identifies and discusses in her account of her assignment in the creative assessment.

A Student's Perspective on Responding to Modern Retellings in a Creative Assignment (Alexandra Colby)

As a twenty-first-century reader of medieval literature, I had very different moral reactions to these works than I imagine someone from that period might have had. In class discussions, my peers and I expressed our horror at the sexual, physical, and emotional traumas in these pieces and the lack of appropriate responses to them. To me, what stood out the most was the atrocious treatment of children and how it went unaddressed, particularly in the case of Griselda and Walter's children in Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*. I knew that the trauma that these children endured would not stop when the story did; it would be constantly present for the rest of their lives. Left undealt with as it was in the stories, it had the potential to cause serious mental and physical health crises. I decided I wanted to write on this for my final assessment, but when I put my pen to paper, I felt I could not adequately describe the effects of trauma on these children later in life. Instead, I wanted to *show* the readers. When my professor presented the class with the option to do a creative piece and commentary instead of a large formal essay for the assessment, I knew that I had found my vehicle to do so. I decided to write a story about Griselda's daughter giving birth to her own child; throughout the gory and

traumatic birth, the reader comes to understand how deeply impacted she was by the nonchalant abandonment of her mother and being told to follow her example by repressing these feelings throughout her childhood. The process of doing this assignment taught me that creative writing is a method of illustrating difficult or sensitive points in a way that makes them relevant to the modern reader, which, as a student of literature, has impacted the way I comment on texts of this nature.

When I began writing my piece, I was immediately invigorated by the opportunities it presented to make my argument. Instead of simply writing "Griselda's mother saying nothing in the face of her children being dragged to their execution would likely have drastic mental health effects for those children," I was able to illustrate this by having my main character suffer delusions and paranoia, have attachment issues with her own child, and grapple with her spirituality in her own thoughts. When it comes to sensitive subjects such as trauma, readers can get a better understanding by *feeling* and *empathizing*, rather than simply being told overwhelming information. I chose to focus on one small moment in time to make my point. This decision was inspired by Patience Agbabi's retelling of the same story, which we read in class. Agbabi also writes from the perspective of Griselda's child, but instead of the story taking place in the future, it depicts her watching her parents meet and feeling powerless against the destruction she knows will follow. Agbabi relocates the piece and modernizes it, so that the Marquis possesses many items that signal wealth in the modern world, in order to make a comment on class. Her narrow focus in the piece makes her point incredibly clear while still being told in a sensitive and imaginative way. I found her story made more of an impact on me than any of the academic papers I had read on the *Clerk's Tale*, and her point became a lot more apparent as it was *shown* rather than *described* to me, which is why I tried to emulate her methods in my own piece.

I did face some challenges in writing my creative piece. This was the sole assessment for an academic class, and therefore I was not just trying to write a good and moving story—I was also striving to demonstrate to my professor what I had learned in the class. Once I had written the story, I had a chance to write a commentary explaining how the creative piece revealed a thesis that I wished to argue about the course content. This component of the assignment was critical because although I had developed a thesis in order to write my creative piece, I could not directly state it as I would in a traditional essay. I also had the opportunity to submit a formative assessment. Due to the fact that I had never written a creative assignment for such a large part of a course grade before, I was anxious about meeting these course objectives, and so I decided to submit a detailed outline of my commentary as my formative assessment. In this outline, I highlighted how different parts of my story proved my thesis and what learning outcome they demonstrated. The guidance that I received from my professor after he read this formative assessment was very helpful. He pointed out to me that I did not have to explicitly tie my piece back to *every* learning outcome and *every* text we had read in the course, and that my piece may be better with a more narrow and coherent focus. With creative writing, it can be easy to throw in a simile or allusion to several different texts and ideas, but the drawback of doing so is that your thesis gets lost. Once I took out things that did not directly relate to my objective of illustrating the future trauma of children, my story and commentary became much more readable as a result. I was also able to demonstrate my understanding of course material by showcasing the different forms trauma can take, ways in which someone survives trauma (and how a lack of help in doing so can be damaging), and the literary tradition that I had become a part of via my own retelling. In fact, I feel that I was *better* able to demonstrate these course objectives through a story than I would have

been through a more traditional assignment. I was somewhat relieved from the frustration I had felt upon first reading about the ethical transgressions in these texts as a modern reader, and felt a sense of accomplishment, as if my contribution to this tradition of retelling helped make this text more relevant in a modern context.

Not only did I find creative writing to be a more effective and engaging way to *talk about* sensitive topics in medieval literature, I also found it a more compassionate and nuanced way to *interpret* them myself. I was able to really get inside the character's head and develop a more fleshed-out argument as a result. This understanding led me to want to do similar things in my other courses. For example, recently I have been working on retellings of Victorian horror stories with a modern, often feminist, angle. I have also been working on creative responses to Romantic-era authors, such as Blake and Hogg, in order to better make sense of their historically difficult-to-read texts in a modern context. Ultimately, what these assignments made clear to me is that a traditional essay is not always the best way to analyze literature, and that some points are better made when you expand your horizons into a creative realm.

Conclusions
(Brendan O'Connell and Alexandra Colby)

As we have seen from this analysis, modern adaptations of medieval texts can play a crucial role in classroom contexts, particularly in supporting students to develop creative and critical responses to medieval literature. In the case of reading the *Clerk's Tale* and "I Go Back to May 1967," students learn not only that texts participate in a longer tradition and dialogue, but also that strong emotional responses are not only valid but integral to the way the text produces meaning, and indeed the ways the story has reproduced itself over the centuries. As we have seen, one enduring way of interpreting the *Clerk's Tale* is to think of it as a highly self-conscious reflection on the problem of literary influence, in which Chaucer explores how hierarchical structures of political, gender, and literary authority reproduce themselves. Encouraging students to draw on modern retellings of this tale and to develop their own creative and critical responses to it can help them not only to analyse how these structures operate in this tradition, but also to resist them.

In a recurring trope in the *Clerk's Tale*, Griselda is repeatedly undressed and dressed in different clothes, signalling the stages by which she transitions from poor peasant to marchioness and back again before her final transformation. This powerful metaphor of gendered and social power is described explicitly in the text as a form of translation (Chaucer 1987, 142, line 385), establishing an analogy with the processes of adaptation and translation in which the author implicitly aligns himself with Walter as the one controlling Griselda's narrative by dressing it up in his choice of clothes. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Agbabi herself has deployed this trope in her account of re-telling Chaucer, narrating the story of how a panicked rush to make a train connection inadvertently led her to a valuable realisation about the process of her adaptation:

> It was only when my connecting train arrived that I realised I didn't have my suitcase. I spent the entire weekend in borrowed clothes, worrying I might have lost my belongings forever. But beneath that anxiety was a sense of excitement: the power of poetry had caused this. (2018, n.p.)

Agbabi here evokes the metaphor of language as the clothing of thought, imagining something strangely liberating in the poet being required to dress in borrowed clothes. As she describes it, spending a few days in borrowed clothes helped her to free herself from her preconceived ideas about what her adaptation of Chaucer needed to be. In a similar way, the process of engaging with both medieval originals and modern retellings enables students to recognise that the ways in which the Griselda story has been dressed in different guises over the years is not just a question of style and literary influence, but a statement about who gets to control and shape literary tradition. These retellings and adaptations are invaluable in helping students to translate the text into their own cultural moment. They help students to recognise that they are not simply standing outside a literary artefact, trying to make sense of it, but standing within, and contributing to, a creative and critical tradition that extends across a range of historical moments and cultural contexts.

Works Cited: Printed

Agbabi, Patience. 2014. *Telling Tales*. Edinburgh: Canongate.

Biggs, Frederick M. 2017. *Chaucer's Decameron and the Origin of the* Canterbury Tales. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. 1987. *The Riverside Chaucer*, edited by Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Clarke, K. P. 2011. *Chaucer and Italian Textuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Farrell, Thomas J., and Amy W. Goodwin. 2002. "The Clerk's Tale." In *Sources and Analogues of the* Canterbury Tales, vol. 1, edited by Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel, 101–68. Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer.

Fink, L. Dee. 2013. *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses, Revised and Updated*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wallace, David. 1997. *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zarins, Kim. 2016. *Sometimes We Tell the Truth*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Works Cited: Online

Agbabi, Patience. 2018. "Stories in Stanza'd English: A Cross-Cultural *Canterbury Tales*." *Literature Compass* 15, no. 6: n.p. https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12455.

Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). 2009. "Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric." https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics.

Barrington, Candace, and Jonathan Hsy. 2015. "Remediated Verse: Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* and Patience Agbabi's 'Unfinished Business'." *postmedieval* 6, no. 2: 136–45. https://doi.org/10.1057/pmed.2015.8.

Camp, Cynthia Turner. 2015. "Sharps an Flats (UGA Remix)." *University of Georgia*, https://ctcamp.franklinresearch.uga.edu/news/stories/2015/sharps-flats-uga-remix.

Clark, Rebecca. 2017. "Good Grief: Notes on (Re)Animating Hoccleve in Comics." *postmedieval* 8: 479–99. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41280-017-0054-2.

Green, Richard F. 2012. "Why Marquis Walter Treats His Wife So Badly." *The Chaucer Review* 47, no. 1: 48–62. https://doi.org/10.5325/chaucerrev.47.1.0048.

Harkins, Jessica. 2013. "Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* X.10." *The Chaucer Review* 47, no. 3: 247–73. https://doi.org/10.5325/chaucerrev.47.3.0247.

Mitchell, J. Allan. 2005. "Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* and the Question of Ethical Monstrosity." *Studies in Philology* 102, no. 1: 1–26. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4174806.

O'Connell, Brendan. 2022. "'Think of All the Differences!': Mixed Marriages in Transcultural Adaptations of Chaucer's 'Man of Law's Tale'." *Adaptation* 15, no. 1: 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apaa036.

Sollog, Elizabeth. n.d. *A Critical Annotation of 'Telling Tales.'* https://wordpress.lehigh.edu/tellingtalesannotation/.

Schwebel, Leah. 2013. "Redressing Griselda: Restoration through Translation in the *Clerk's Tale*." *The Chaucer Review* 47, no. 3: 274–99. https://doi.org/10.5325/chaucerrev.47.3.0274.

Van Praet, Helena. 2021. "Rhizomatic Challenges to Compartmentalization: Rewriting in Anne Carson's *Decreation* and Patience Agbabi's *Telling Tales*." *Studies in Canadian Literature / Études en littérature canadienne* 45, no. 1: 74–94. https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/SCL/article/view/31520.

Zarins, Kim. n.d. "Kim Zarins." http://www.kimzarins.com/.