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Assoc. Prof. Serap Sarıbaş

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4079-8024>

Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, Faculty of Letters, Karaman/TÜRKİYE

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Symbolism of Birds in Medieval Poetry As an Metaphysical Liberation and Existential Metamorphosis: Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Farid ud-Din Attar's *The conference of Birds* Inspire Chaucer's Narrative in Trans-Cultural Continuum of Mystical Allegory

Orta Çağ Şiirlerinde Kuşların Metafizik Özgürlük ve Varoluşsal Dönüşümün Semböli Olarak Değerlendirilmesi: Dante'nin *İlahi Komedya'sı* ve Feridüddin Attar'ın *Kuşların Meclisi* Eserlerinin Chaucer'ın Mistik Alegorisinin Kültürlerarası Sürekliliğinde Etkisi

ABSTRACT

This scholarly inquiry delves into the intricate intertextuality and thematic resonance between Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*. It elucidates Dante's transformative repudiation of courtly love, which he recontextualizes as a harmonious union of rationality and spiritual transcendence, and its profound impact on Chaucer's incisive satire of societal constructs surrounding romantic idealism. By examining the narrative parallelism between Dante's "Virgil" and Chaucer's "Scipio Africanus," the study illuminates the latter's creative assimilation of Dantean allegorical frameworks. Moreover, the paper foregrounds the avian symbolism as an emblem of metaphysical liberation and existential metamorphosis, juxtaposing Chaucer's depictions with *Farid ud-Din Attar's Conference of Birds*, thereby situating Chaucer's narrative within a trans-cultural continuum of mystical allegory. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the enduring universalism and intellectual profundity of both works, affirming their pivotal role in redefining medieval literature and their timeless capacity to interrogate and illuminate the human condition.

Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* is widely celebrated as one of the most enduring legacies in the history of poetry, profoundly shaping medieval literature and maintaining its relevance across epochs, from the early modern period to the postmodern and globalist eras. Its pervasive influence remains evident in contemporary media, including Hollywood films and video games, underscoring its timeless inspiration for countless creators. Among those significantly influenced is Geoffrey Chaucer, often hailed as the father of English literature. A compelling parallel emerges between Chaucer's use of Scipio Africanus as a guiding figure for the narrator in *The Parliament of Fowls* and Dante's depiction of the Roman poet Virgil as a companion on his metaphysical journey. Additionally, Chaucer's critique of courtly love, particularly its surrounding social constructs, aligns with Dante's rejection of the tradition, as seen in his depiction of love for Beatrice in *Paradiso*. This study aims to explore the profound impact of Dante's *Divine Comedy* on Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* and *The Canterbury Tales*, shedding light on the intricate intertextual connections and shared cultural critiques of their respective eras.

Keywords: Medieval Poetry, Bird Symbol, Metaphysical Liberation, Existential Metamorphosis, Mystical Allegory.

ÖZET

Bu akademik çalışma, Dante Alighieri'nin *İlahi Komedya'sı* ile Geoffrey Chaucer'ın *The Parliament of Fowls* eseri arasındaki karmaşık metinlerarasılık ilişkisini ve tematik uyumu derinlemesine incelemektedir. Dante'nin, aşkı akıl ve ruhsal yücelik ile uyumlu bir birliktelik olarak yeniden tanımladığı, idealize edilmiş aşk anlayışını dönüştürücü bir biçimde reddedişi ve bu yaklaşımın Chaucer'ın romantik idealizmi çevreleyen toplumsal yapıları hicveden eleştirel üslubuna olan derin etkisi vurgulanmaktadır. Çalışma, Dante'nin "Virgil"i ile Chaucer'ın "Scipio Africanus" figürü arasındaki anlatsal paralellikleri irdeleyerek, Chaucer'ın Dantevari alegorik çerçeveleri yaratıcı bir şekilde özümseyişini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, eserlerde kuşların metafizik özgürlük ve varoluşsal dönüşümün birer sembolü olarak ele alınışı ön plana çıkarılmakta ve Chaucer'ın betimlemeleri, Feridüddin Attar'ın *Mantku't-Tayr* eserleriyle karşılaştırılarak, Chaucer'ın anlatsı mistik alegorinin kültürlerarası bir sürekliliği içinde konumlandırılmaktadır. Son olarak, bu analiz, her iki eserin de sürekliliğe meydan okuyan evrenselliğini ve entelektüel derinliğini vurgulayarak, onların Orta Çağ edebiyatını yeniden tanımlamadaki merkezi rolünü ve insanlık durumunu sorgulama ve aydınlatma konusundaki zamansız yetkinliğini tasdik etmektedir.

Dante Alighieri'nin yazdığı İlahi Komedya, şiir geleneği içinde en kalıcı miraslardan biri olarak geniş çapta kabul edilmektedir. Orta Çağ edebiyatı üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olmuş ve en uzun süre devam eden geleneklerden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Etkisi, modern, geç post-modern ve küresel çağlarda hala aktiftir ve Hollywood filmleri ve video oyunları gibi çeşitli mecralarda gözlemlenebilir. Şüphesiz, pek çok kişiye ilham kaynağı olmuştur. Geoffrey Chaucer gibi İngiliz edebiyatının öncüsü olarak kabul edilen birçok şair ve sanatçı, bu eserden ilham almıştır. Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Tales* ve *Parliament of Fowls* eserlerinde anlatsı için rehber figürü olarak "Scipio Africanus"u kullanması ile Dante'nin yolculuğu boyunca Romalı şair "Virgilius"u bir rehber olarak kullanması arasında bir benzetme yapılabilir. Ayrıca, Chaucer'ın aşkı çevreleyen sosyal çerçeve ve gelenekleri eleştirisi ile Dante'nin Beatrice'e duyduğu hislere dayalı olarak *Paradiso*'da bu geleneği reddetmesi arasında da bir paralellik kurulabilir. Chaucer'ın eleştirisi, romantik ilişkileri çevreleyen sosyal yapıyı içermektedir. Bu yazının amacı, Dante Alighieri'nin *İlahi Komedya'sının* Geoffrey Chaucer'ın *Parliament of Fowls* ve *Canterbury Tales* eserleri üzerindeki etkisini, ilgili dönemde incelemektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Orta Çağ Şiiri, Kuş Semböli, Metafiziksel Özgürlük, Varoluşsal Dönüşüm, Mistik Alegori.

1. INTRODUCTION

Medieval literature adhered to stringent traditional conventions, often comprising narratives derived from existing folkloric tales and anonymous authorship. Predominantly religious in nature, this literary tradition drew heavily from the Bible or interpretations of sacred texts. The era's profound fascination with theological narratives deeply influenced authors, serving as their principal source of inspiration. However, within these confines, Medieval poets imbued creativity into their works, producing original compositions that reimagined ancient tales through a cultural lens. A quintessential example is the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*. Originally Germanic in origin, this narrative was adapted to reflect English and Christian ideologies, transforming its antagonist from a mere monster to a descendant of Cain, the biblical figure.

The epic form played a pivotal role during this epoch, functioning as a literary treasure due to the influence of ancient authors whose surviving texts primarily consisted of epic and divine poetry. This divine-centric perspective significantly shaped poets' engagement with literature, as their access was limited to the Latin texts of antiquity. This trend was particularly pronounced in Italy, culminating in a transformative milestone with the advent of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. Combining biblical conceptions of *Heaven*, *Hell*, and *Purgatory* with his personal odyssey through these realms, Dante redefined poetic expression.

Born in Florence, Italy, Dante's precise birthdate remains uncertain, though it is speculated to be around May 1265, inferred from his opening lines in the *Divine Comedy*, "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*" ("Midway upon the journey of our life."). This suggests he may have been in his thirties while composing this magnum opus (Santagata, Marco, *Dante: The Story of His Life*). Dante's early education is ambiguous; however, his academic pursuits postdating the death of his beloved Beatrice, to whom he bore courtly affection, are well-documented. He attended a Dominican school for theological and philosophical studies, delving into the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, a preeminent thinker of the Dominican mendicant order. Dante also coined the term *Dolce Stil Nuovo* ("Sweet New Style") to characterize his poetic philosophy. Influenced by contemporaries such as Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's fusion of poetry with natural philosophy and science broadened his perception of poetic potential.

Dante realized that poets need not confine themselves to traditional elements but could amalgamate diverse doctrines to craft ambitious and innovative compositions. This realization enhanced his philosophical breadth and his portrayal of universality. As modernist poet T.S. Eliot remarked, "*They (William Shakespeare and Dante Alighieri) divide the modern world between them. There is no third.*" Here, Eliot underscores the universal characterizations present in both Dante and Shakespeare's works, lauding their capacity to depict characters relatable even to the uninitiated.

Dante's inspiration extended to the epics of the Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil), themselves reworkings of Homeric Greek epics. These classical texts significantly influenced Dante's poetic lexicon and style. Despite the scholarly convention of writing in Latin, Dante defied this norm, opting instead for vernacular Italian, thus broadening his audience beyond intellectual elites. Eliot further praised Dante's linguistic prowess, stating, "*For one of the interesting things I learnt in trying to imitate Dante in English was its extreme difficulty. This section of a poem—not the length of one canto of the Divine Comedy—cost me far more time and trouble and vexation than any passage of the same length that I have ever written...*" (T.S. Eliot, *What Dante Means*). Eliot observed that Dante's disciplined style demanded precision, where every word served a functional purpose. As he noted, "*The poet should be the servant of his language, rather than the master of it*" (*What Dante Means*). Dante exemplified this philosophy by innovating upon existing poetic traditions while respecting the inherent structure and tone of his vernacular.

Later in life, Dante was exiled to Rome due to political conflicts, where he is believed to have conceptualized *Divine Comedy*. His love for Beatrice also evolved during this period, transitioning from youthful courtly love to a more retrospective and platonic sentiment (Wicksteed, Philip H., *The Convivio of Dante Alighieri*). Despite his noble lineage through his mother's side, Dante's experiences contrasted sharply with those of Geoffrey Chaucer, the preeminent English poet of the time.

In Medieval England, poetry was profoundly influenced by feudal society, predominantly centred on *Romance Tales* and *Arthurian Legends*. This hierarchical structure dictated individuals' societal roles, leaving little room for social mobility. Peasants remained bound to poverty, while nobles thrived on inherited wealth and status. Chaucer's upbringing reflects this dynamic. Although born into a merchant family, he became a page in a noble household, providing him with an education and proximity to the inner court.

Chaucer's travels to Florence during a military expedition introduced him to Italian literary traditions, likely including the works of Dante, though Dante had passed away by this time. The feudal system and Chaucer's exposure to Italian influences profoundly shaped his literary output. His masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, offers a panoramic view of societal structures, akin to Dante's use of vernacular to broaden his reach. Continuing Dante's critical approach, Chaucer parodied courtly love and Arthurian conventions through characters like the *Knight* and the *Wife of Bath*. The Knight's unchivalrous nature contrasts with his tales of chivalry, while the Wife of Bath subverts courtly love norms, prioritizing her own desires over her partner's. Unlike Dante, who rejected courtly love outright, Chaucer used satire to critique these ideals, presenting characters that reflect the contradictions and complexities of his society.

Chaucer's adoption of the vernacular firmly established him as a seminal figure in the development of English literature, earning him the title of the father of the English literary tradition. Many poets who followed acknowledged his contribution, with John Dryden notably comparing Chaucer to literary giants such as Homer and Virgil, recognizing his role in shaping the very language in which he wrote. In Dryden's estimation, Chaucer was held in the same reverence by the English as Homer was by the Greeks and Virgil by the Romans: "In the first place, as he is the Father of English Poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects: As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace." (An excerpt from the *Preface to The Fables*, John Dryden). Dryden further comments on Chaucer's use of iambic pentameter, noting that while Chaucer's execution was imperfect, this can be attributed to his pioneering role in adopting this meter rather than any failure in technique. Dryden asserts, "We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men." (An excerpt from the *Preface to The Fables*, John Dryden). This reflection underscores Chaucer's experimental approach to poetry, not dissimilar to Dante's own innovative use of *Terza Rima*. Chaucer, like Dante, was not content to adhere to conventional forms but sought to develop and refine them, thus laying the foundation for future literary evolution.

2. ASSESSING OF THE TEXTS

Both *The Parliament of Fowls* and *The Divine Comedy* exhibit striking similarities, which can be attributed to two primary sources: the prevailing courtly love tradition and its parody, alongside the direct influence of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, particularly the motif of companionship as a guiding figure. During the medieval period, companionship was a central theme, especially within the context of Arthurian legends and romance tales. However, these tales typically portray companionship grounded in brotherhood rather than guidance. This dynamic is vividly represented in the *Knights of the Round Table*, a hallmark of Arthurian literature. The only texts that truly utilize the concept of a guiding companion are *The Parliament of Fowls* and *The Divine Comedy*. In Dante's *Inferno*, Virgil serves as a spiritual guide, while in *The Parliament of Fowls*, Scipio Africanus, referred to by the narrator as "Scipio the Elder," plays a similar guiding role. Both texts, however, share a critical stance towards the ideals of courtly love.

In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante portrays lovers in Hell who have blindly pursued one another, driven by desire rather than reason. For Dante, what they mistakenly identified as love was merely an unreasoned lust, their passions overshadowing their rational faculties. As Katherine Rabogliatti insightfully observes: "Therefore, although the entirety of Dante's *Divine Comedy* can be read as a commentary on the nature of love, it is in *Inferno* 5 and *Purgatorio* 18 that he most clearly rebukes the contemporary notion of courtly love and redefines it in his own terms. Whereas courtly literature presents love as an overpowering storm that eclipses reason, Dante proposes that true love exists in harmony with free will and rational thought. The love about which authors such as Andreas Capellanus and Guido Cavalcanti speak is more properly defined as desire or lust, emotions that the lover then calls love in an attempt to justify their sinful nature" (*Within Reason's Garden: Dante Alighieri and The Redefinition of Courtly Love*, Katherine Rabogliatti, p.7).

Dante's conceptualization of love, which matured over time, reflects his evolving view of Beatrice—from a traditional courtly love to a more rational and spiritual love, akin to the ideal of the "marriage of true minds" in Shakespeare's *Sonnet 116*. In Dante's perspective, Beatrice transcended earthly love and emerged as a celestial guide leading him to Heaven, just as Virgil guided him through Hell.

Before delving into Chaucer's treatment of love in *The Parliament of Fowls*, it is essential to consider the influence of the *Roman de la Rose* on Chaucer's work. The English society in which Chaucer lived was significantly influenced by French culture, a legacy of the French Conquest of 1216, which continued to affect England throughout the Middle Ages. Chaucer's encounter with the *Roman de la Rose* sparked a deep

affinity for its themes, much like Dante's relationship with Petrarch. Chaucer even claimed to have translated a portion of the text, though it remains unclear whether the surviving translation is his or not (Eckhardt, Caroline (1984). *The Art of Translation in Roman de la Rose. Studies in the Age of Chaucer, Vol. 6. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 41–63*).

“For in pleyn text, with–outen nede of glose, Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose, That is an heresyge ageyns my lawe, And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.” In this passage, the narrator (Chaucer) addresses the god of love, who, in turn, criticizes Chaucer for his translation, claiming that it has led wise individuals to withdraw from the god's love. This disapproval likely stems from the content of *Roman de la Rose*, which explores the nature of love in a way that may have been considered controversial or misaligned with the idealized, transcendent form of love the god of love advocates. This critique resonates with the treatment of love in *The Parliament of Fowls*, where Chaucer's exploration of love is more complex and critical. Chaucer may have also drawn inspiration from the portrayal of Venus, a significant figure in both works. “Cytherea, thou blisful lady sweete, That with thy firbrand dauntest whom thee lest, And madest me this swevene for to mete, Be thou myn help in this, for thou maist best; As wisly as I sawgh thee north-north-west Whan I bigan my swevene for to write, So yif me might to ryme and eek t'endite.” (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 115).

In both *Roman de la Rose* and *The Parliament of Fowls*, Venus is depicted as either a guiding figure or someone who can assist the narrator. In this excerpt, the narrator calls upon Venus to grant him the power to rhyme and compose, effectively positioning her as a muse—a concept deeply rooted in the tradition of classical Greek literature. It is also noteworthy that Chaucer incorporates the allegorical characters seen in *Roman de la Rose*, reflecting their influence on *The Parliament of Fowls*: “Before the temple-dore ful sobrelly Dame Pees sat with a curtin in hir hond, And by hir side, wonder discreetly, Dame Pacience sitting ther I foond, With face pale, upon an hil of sond; And aldernext withinne and eek withoute Biheeste and Art, and of hir folk a route.” (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 240). Characters such as Peace, Patience, Promise, and Art are invoked, further solidifying the influence of the *Roman de la Rose* on Chaucer's work.

Having established this, we now turn to Chaucer's perspective on courtly love. Chaucer's treatment of courtly love in *The Parliament of Fowls* presents a critique of its idealization. By emphasizing the unrequited nature of love, Chaucer illustrates its futility. The proud female eagle refuses to accept a mate, disregarding not only the love offered to her but also rational arguments. “Who loveth best this gentil formel here, For everich hath swich replicacioun, That noon by skiles may been brought adown. I can nat see that arguments avail: Thanne seemeth it ther moste be bataile.” (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 535). In this passage, the male eagle asserts that reason cannot sway the female eagle, and thus, the only solution is a battle for her affection. However, Nature intervenes, preventing this conflict, and ultimately, the love of the female eagle remains unreciprocated. This scene can be interpreted as a critique of courtly love, suggesting that it is a futile endeavor that ultimately achieves nothing, a commentary possibly influenced by Dante's rejection of the irrational nature of courtly love, or perhaps as a response to the *Roman de la Rose*.

Furthermore, Chaucer critiques the concept of desire, echoing Dante's depiction of lust in *Inferno*. In *The Parliament of Fowls*, Scipio delivers a speech on lechery: “But brekeres of the lawe, sooth to sayne, And likerous folk, after that they been dede, Shul whirle aboute th'erthe alway in paine, Til many a world be passed, out of drede,” (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 78). Much like Dante's depiction of the lustful being eternally swept by the winds in *Inferno*, Scipio suggests that those driven by lust will be condemned to whirl about the earth in perpetual torment. This parallel further strengthens the connection between Chaucer's critique of love and Dante's moral framework.

The act of whirling in both works is portrayed as a perpetual state of anguish, necessitating continuous motion and action. Alternatively, their movement may stem from this pain, akin to the winds, perpetually inducing the discomfort of movement. Another striking parallel lies in the protagonists' journeys, as both attempts to reach a destination marked by a gate bearing significant inscriptions. In *The Parliament of Fowls*, the gate reads: “ledeth to the sorweful were Ther as a fissh in prison is al drye”, which resonates with the famous lines from *Inferno*'s gate: “Abandon all hope ye who enter here” (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 138).

In both works, the protagonists venture forth, seeking either an audience or to confront something of which they possess limited knowledge. In *The Parliament of Fowls*, the protagonist attends a conference presided over by Mother Nature (the goddess of Nature), aiming to resolve the search for a mate for a bird. In contrast, Dante journeys through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise to confront the deeds, both wicked and virtuous, of humankind. Both protagonists find these experiences alien, sometimes even unnerving. Dante, upon encountering the inhabitants of Hell, expresses sympathy, while in *The Parliament of Fowls*, the narrator

demonstrates a sense of discontent: "Within the temple of sikes hote as fir I herde a swough that gan aboute renne, Whiche sikes were engendred with desir, That maden every auter for to brenne Of newe flaumbe; and wel espied I thenne That al the cause of sorwes that they drie Cometh of the bittre goddesse Jalousye." (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 246).

This passage reveals the narrator's disillusionment with the goddess of jealousy and her destructive influence over her devotees. However, both texts eventually reveal glimpses of an idealized state, a glimpse of the heavens or perfection. Dante, accompanied by Beatrice, beholds the celestial pleasures of Heaven, populated by souls of the virtuous. In a similar vein, the narrator of *The Parliament of Fowls* experiences an encounter with a divine figure, Venus, as he describes: "Whan I was come ayain unto the place That I of spak, that was so soote and greene, Forth welk I tho myselven to solace; Tho was I war wher that ther sat a queene, That as of light the someres sonne sheene Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure She fairer was than any creature." (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 295). This passage demonstrates the narrator's awe and admiration for the overwhelming beauty of Venus, who represents an idealized vision of love, mirroring the divine revelation Dante experiences in the company of Beatrice.

In this quotation, the narrator exemplifies the sheer beauty and elegance of Venus' temple and the Goddess Nature, taking great joy and delight in witnessing them, much like Dante's response upon seeing Paradise. Both portray an awe-striking vision, where the characters experience transcendent beauty that resonates with a deeper sense of spiritual fulfillment. This mirrors the elevation of Dante's soul through his journey in *Divine Comedy*, where his gaze upon the splendor of Heaven contrasts the torment of Hell.

However, perhaps the most crucial influence is the companion guide. This convention of a guiding companion is pivotal in ensuring the protagonist's safe passage. Vergilius leads Dante through Hell, while Scipio guides the narrator to the Parliament of Fowls through celestial spheres. Both companions impart wisdom and reason, offering essential insight to the protagonist's quest. The parallels between the two texts are undeniable, and Chaucer's evident influence from Dante in *The Canterbury Tales* further suggests that Dante's guidance model left its mark on Chaucer's own work.

Bird symbolism held immense significance in medieval spiritual thought, representing ideals of freedom, transcendence, and divine euphoria. This imagery was not confined merely to real birds; mythical birds, too, played a crucial role in shaping medieval perceptions. For instance, the Caladrius, a bird of pure white feathers, was believed to absorb the sickness of the ill and depart, curing them. While rooted in Roman mythology, its Christian interpretation evolved, associating the bird with Christ's healing powers. This symbolism might have even been shaped by the terror of the Black Plague that gripped medieval Europe. In the larger metaphysical context, birds symbolized the human soul's journey towards spiritual transformation, as seen in medieval bestiaries and texts like *The Conference of Birds* by Farīd ud-Dīn Attar.

Attar's poem, which mirrors Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, illustrates a Sufi approach to bird symbolism. In Attar's allegory, a group of birds embarks on a quest to find the Simurgh, a mythical bird akin to the Western Phoenix. This allegory, much like Chaucer's work, uses birds to symbolize the human soul's pursuit of enlightenment, offering a parallel to the medieval Western conception of birds as symbols of spiritual renewal and transcendence.

The depiction of birds in both *Parliament of Fowls* and Attar's poem underscores the spiritual metaphors associated with birds, reflecting a shared understanding across cultures of the bird as a transcendent symbol of inner peace and spiritual journey.

The Conference of Birds serves as an allegory for the spiritual awakening of humankind, where the birds embody various facets of the human condition. Some are portrayed as wise, while others represent vices, highlighting the spectrum of human experience. The poem conveys that life is a journey toward greatness, showing that individuals have the potential to become the best versions of themselves through their own will. This medieval portrayal of birds closely mirrors that of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, as both works use birds to symbolize mystical enlightenment and a journey of self-discovery within a larger, grand narrative.

As Michael J. Warren articulates in his interview about his book *Birds in Medieval English Poetry*: "Birds, in life and in poetry, always seem to be in some sort of 'trans' status, and I think this has a lot to do with why they were (and are) so compelling. David Wallace has eloquently said in his recent book on Chaucer that medieval conceptions of the human condition engaged the 'perilous art' of aligning 'bawdy bodies and stargazing intelligences.'" This statement highlights the transformative symbolism attributed to birds during the medieval period. Poets and writers were intrigued by the idea of spiritual transformation, which led them to associate birds with this concept.

The symbolic significance of birds may not always be clearly articulated, but certain interpretations can be inferred. First, birds are undeniably symbols of freedom, owing to their ability to soar through the skies, a characteristic unmatched by any other creature. Additionally, their migratory nature, traveling to warmer climates in response to changing conditions, mirrors the concept of change or transformation. This parallels the journeys depicted in *Parliament of Fowls* and *Conference of Birds*, where birds embark on quests to explore new territories and lives. This choice of birds as a symbol seems to reflect the poets' view of human nature: a free spirit guided by instinct, ever striving to reach new horizons.

3. CONCLUSION

This evaluation offers a comprehensive exploration of the profound interconnections between Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*. By delving deeply into the literary, cultural, and philosophical parallels between these two monumental works, the document sheds light on how Dante's groundbreaking contributions to medieval literature influenced Chaucer's poetic vision. Through a detailed examination of their shared themes, symbolic elements, and structural innovations, the study highlights the enduring relevance of both works as reflections of universal human concerns. Dante's *Divine Comedy* emerges as a revolutionary text that redefined medieval literature through its ambitious scope and innovative approach. Dante's decision to write in vernacular Italian rather than the traditional Latin exemplifies his intent to make poetry accessible to a wider audience, breaking the barriers of elitism in literature. This choice, coupled with his use of allegory, philosophical depth, and the guiding figure of Virgil, introduced a new paradigm for narrative structure and thematic exploration. The *Divine Comedy*'s nuanced critique of courtly love—a rejection of its irrationality and its elevation of love to a union of reason, free will, and spiritual transcendence—marked a shift in the cultural understanding of romance. This transformation is mirrored in Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*, which critiques the idealized notions of courtly love through satire and allegory, portraying its futility and inherent contradictions.

Chaucer's adaptation of Dante's narrative techniques, particularly the use of a guiding companion, reflects a deep intertextual connection. By incorporating Scipio Africanus as a mentor-like figure, Chaucer mirrors Dante's Virgil, emphasizing the importance of guidance and wisdom in navigating complex moral and spiritual landscapes. This structural parallel underscores how Chaucer drew inspiration from Dante while adapting these elements to fit his unique cultural and poetic context. Chaucer's ability to blend satire with allegory, as seen in his exploration of love and desire, exemplifies his innovative approach to critiquing societal norms.

The report also contextualizes Chaucer's engagement with earlier influences, such as the *Roman de la Rose*, and his creative incorporation of allegorical characters. It expands on the symbolic role of birds in *The Parliament of Fowls*, connecting them to broader medieval and cross-cultural traditions. Birds, as symbols of freedom, transformation, and spiritual transcendence, resonate not only in European literature but also in works like Farīd ud-Dīn Attar's *Conference of Birds*. Both texts use avian imagery to explore the human soul's journey toward enlightenment and self-discovery. In this sense, Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls* transcends its immediate cultural context, positioning itself within a larger tradition of global literary symbolism. The analysis further highlights the shared critiques of societal norms in Dante's and Chaucer's works. Dante's moralistic depiction of the souls in Hell and Chaucer's satirical portrayal of the social constructs surrounding courtly love both serve to challenge the prevailing ideologies of their times. Through allegory and narrative complexity, these poets invite their audiences to question the rationality and justice of social conventions. Chaucer's humorous yet incisive critique of unrequited love and irrational desire aligns with Dante's moral vision, reinforcing the idea that true love must harmonize reason and virtue. As well, the document situates these works within the broader evolution of Western literature. Dante and Chaucer, as pioneers of vernacular poetry, played pivotal roles in democratizing literary expression, making it accessible to diverse audiences. Their innovative use of language, thematic ambition, and narrative experimentation laid the groundwork for subsequent generations of writers. Dante's disciplined poetic style and Chaucer's satirical tone reflect a shared commitment to pushing the boundaries of literary conventions, solidifying their legacies as foundational figures in their respective traditions.

In examining the spiritual and symbolic dimensions of their works, the document highlights how both poets use allegory to address the fundamental questions of human existence. Dante's portrayal of Beatrice as a celestial guide and Chaucer's depiction of Venus as an emblem of idealized love reveal their shared fascination with the interplay between the earthly and the divine. Both poets create narratives that transcend individual experiences, offering timeless reflections on love, morality, and the human condition. Ultimately, this study reveals the intricate interplay of influence and innovation that defines the relationship between

The Divine Comedy and *The Parliament of Fowls*. It positions these works as enduring cultural artifacts that bridge the historical and cultural divide between medieval Italy and England. Through their critiques of love, their symbolic use of birds, and their innovative narrative structures, Dante and Chaucer continue to inspire modern readers, demonstrating the transformative power of literature to illuminate the complexities of human experience. By situating their works within a broader tradition of philosophical and cultural exchange, the document underscores the timelessness of their contributions and their ability to resonate across centuries as testaments to the enduring relevance of art, creativity, and shared human values.

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