

THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS
AND METHODS OF READING
IN JOHN LYDGATE'S *RESON AND SENSUALLYTE*

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Early in *Reson and Sensuallyte*, John Lydgate's expansive translation of the first 4,873 lines of the French dream vision *Les echechs amoureux*, the dreamer-narrator encounters Minerva, Juno, Venus, and Mercury.¹ After he describes their appearance, the narrator is approached by Mercury, who recounts the story of the Judgment of Paris and asks him whether or not Paris was correct. The narrator quickly assents to Paris's choice of Venus as the most beautiful, declaring "I wolde ha do the same / . . . Yif I hadde be arbitrou."² Rejected, Minerva and Juno immediately leave without a word, and Mercury, before taking flight, observes with a shrug, "Al this worlde goeth the same trace" (2107).

Encompassing 1,123 of the poem's 7,042 lines, the Judgment of Paris scene is crucial to Lydgate's poetic agenda, an agenda grounded in a desire for intelligent reading and proper judgment of texts. Critics, however, have not closely examined this scene in relation to Lydgate's concerns. Indeed, with the exception of Ernst Sieper's introduction to the EETS edition and Margaret Ehrhart's somewhat negative assessment of the poem in her discussion of *Les echechs amoureux*, *Reson and Sensuallyte* has been given barely passing notice in literary histories.³ C. S. Lewis, Walter Schirmer, Derek Pearsall, and Lois Ebin all briefly examine the poem only as part of larger scholarly arguments, either as an example within a literary tradition (Lewis) or as part of Lydgate's early canon (the others).⁴ While these discussions of the context of *Reson and Sensuallyte* are illuminating, I wish to refocus critical attention on the poem by arguing two points based on Lydgate's concerns for intelligent reading and proper judgment: first, that the Judgment of Paris scene is the poem's central allegorical action and Minerva the scene's principal allegorical figure; second, that *Reson and Sensuallyte* is a rather sophisticated moral comedy in which Lydgate emphasizes his concerns by encouraging his audience to read against the narrator's judgment of the goddesses and their moral attributes.⁵

In the prologue to the poem, prior to the dream vision proper, Lydgate signals the importance of intelligent reading and proper judgment by expressing his apparent anxiety over the poem's reception. After identifying his audience as those "gentil . . . and

Hodapp

amerouse" folk who love to play chess, he summarizes the literal matter of his story, how through Fortune his narrator was "checkmated" by a pawn (1-16), and begs his audience not to pass a quick judgment on the poem (17-24). Like Chaucer, Lydgate is very much aware of a reading audience here,⁶ and he imagines this audience by constructing two kinds of readers who, in a sense, occupy opposite ends of a spectrum:

For many oon, in metre and prose,
That nouthur kan the text nor glose,
Wil ful oft at prime face
Some thing hindren and difface,
Or they can any lake espye,
Oonly of malyce and envye
Or collateral necligence;
But who that of good dilligence
Lyst bysye him to don his cure
To sen and rede thys scripture,
And feleth fully the sentence,
Yif hee therin kan fynde offence,
My wille is this, that he observe
Me to repreve, as y desserve,
Besechinge him for to directe
Al that ys mys, and to correcte. (25-40)

Again like Chaucer, Lydgate recognizes that readers have power to make meaning from texts, that is, to re-write them,⁷ and he invites such an affective engagement with his poem. Yet he fears that some will, like the first reader inscribed in the text, "difface" the poem (i.e., "produce a meaningless re-writing") based only on a "rime face" understanding, so he inscribes in the poem a second, ideal reader who understands both text and gloss.⁸ Willing to accept correction (i.e., "meaningful re-writing") only from a reader who "feleth fully the sentence," Lydgate implicitly invites his audience to occupy the role of this ideal reader and concludes the prologue with a promise that, if they read the matter of the poem intelligently, they will be able to judge it properly (42-6).

In the dream vision itself, the goddess Nature echoes Lydgate's concerns first when she commissions the narrator to read her Book, to judge its beauty, and to glean its wisdom as an antidote for his idleness (518-24). More importantly, she clearly articulates

Hodapp

the purpose for pursuing the reading and judgment she orders:

“To fyn, that thou maist comprehende
The mater, and thy selfe amende,
To preyse the lorde eternal,
The whiche made and caused al.” (525-28)

Reading the Book of Nature to understand the “meaning,” or *sententia*, of God’s plan is a common idea in the Middle Ages, as numerous bestiaries, lapidaries, encyclopedias, and *specula* attest. For medieval Christians, as Nature implies, reading intelligently the Book of Nature leads to self-knowledge and to understanding one’s relationship to the universe and to God.

After giving the narrator this commission, Nature instructs him in proper reading methods, bestowing the tools he needs to fulfill his role in the order of creation. She suggests that there are two methods of reading, sensual and rational. Using the common medieval “shell and kernel” metaphor for literary art, Nature attempts to dissuade the narrator from sensual reading, for it seeks only the “barke,” disregarding the “pithe” hidden within (733-40). She then encourages him to read rationally, which leads humans to know divine and spiritual truths (744-6), and advises him to follow the path of reason to heavenly joy rather than the path of sensuality to false pleasure. The narrator declares allegiance to Nature and, before parting, the goddess emphasizes her advice with a final command to follow reason completely (870-2).

When the narrator commences his journey, however, he almost immediately, and rather comically, forgets Nature’s instruction and, inclined to sensual reading, misreads the Book of Nature and misjudges the value of its flora, fauna, and firmament, seeing in them only their transitory beauty. At this point he meets Mercury, Minerva, Juno, and Venus. Although he has forgotten Nature’s advice, he has not completely lost his reason, for he recognizes the deities and describes them in detail. These descriptions are important to the poem because the goddesses, who remain speechless during this encounter, speak metaphorically through their iconography. Beginning with Minerva, he describes, or rather reads, each goddess in turn.

Minerva, he says, is Jupiter’s “ovne doghtre dere” and “chef goddesse of sapiencie” (1042, 1044). She is also the goddess of battle, takes idleness from men, leads them to prudent and virtuous

Hodapp

lives, reveals divine secrets to them and, if they are willing, leads them to heavenly bliss (1089-94). After describing her attributes, the narrator describes her physical appearance: though she is old, her beauty and wisdom do not fade, her eyes burn like torches, and her height changes, ranging from the earth to the heavens (1112-28).⁹ She wears a mantle of three colors¹⁰ and a helmet of temperance and she carries a lance of righteousness in her right hand and a shield of patience in her left, on which is depicted Medusa's head. On her own head is a crown, signifying "That verray wysdam hath no delyt, / Ne no maner of appetyt / In worldly thing most transitorie" (1235-37). And around her head fly swans, whose song reminds reasonable men of the shortness of life.¹¹ These details, as Fulgentius and other mythographers interpret them, indicate Minerva's concerns with wisdom, intellectual pursuits, and moral righteousness.¹²

After the narrator describes Minerva, he also describes Juno and Venus and clearly indicates oppositional relationships among the three goddesses. Juno, clothed in a jewel-studded gold surcoat, wears a crown ringed by a rainbow, carries a scepter, and has peacocks at her feet. Again turning to the mythographers we find that these details signify Juno's concern with wealth and temporal rule, a concern that links her to Fortune.¹³ Venus, on the other hand, is crowned with roses, has rings on every finger, holds a fiery brand in her right hand and a golden apple in her left, and wears a skin-tight coat—"Lych as she had in soth be naked" (1564)—while doves fly around her head. The roses, doves, fiery brand, and near nakedness signify Venus's concern with erotic love, as Fulgentius and others suggest.¹⁴ Moreover, the narrator, by implication, links Venus to Fortune when he declares her mood is forever changing and variable (1549-54). Venus's iconographic details and association with Fortune suggest that here she is the lustful, rather than the celestial, Venus.¹⁵ The narrator underscores this suggestion when he recounts her birth from (as Lydgate has it) Saturn's castrated members flung into the sea (1443-64). As with her other iconographic details, the mythographers associate Venus's birth from the foamy sea with her carnal nature.¹⁶

From mythographic interpretations of the deities' iconography and their roles in the Judgment of Paris story, we learn that the goddesses implicitly represent the threefold life of humankind: meditative, practical, and sensual.¹⁷ Minerva, as the contemplative life, represents the search for knowledge and truth without greed, rage, spite, or lust. Juno, as the active life, represents

Hodapp

the acquisition of worldly advantages, wealth, and possessions. Venus, as the life of pleasure, represents the pursuit of lust.¹⁸ Considering the narrator's earlier predilection for idleness, it is not surprising that, when asked which goddess is the most beautiful, he chooses Venus.

After the Judgment of Paris scene, Venus remains briefly to tell the narrator how to reach the garden of her sons Deduit and Cupid. In this passage, she secures his allegiance by promising him a lover "fairer than Helen" as a reward for service and by proclaiming her alliance with Nature, after he objects that he cannot serve two goddesses (2257-97). Venus indicates throughout her discourse, however, that she serves a Nature quite different from the one the narrator encountered earlier. When describing Deduit's garden, for instance, she tells the narrator that the best way to gain entrance to it is to acquaint himself with Idleness, who is the "chief porteresse, / Of the entre lady and maistresse" (2615-6). Here, Venus undercuts her claim "to serve" the Nature of this poem (2265), for Nature's initial commission to the narrator opposes Idleness. Yet the narrator metaphorically misreads Venus's discourse, taking her words "at prime face." Venus then points the way to Deduit's garden, saying rather ironically, "Thow art wel onwarde on thy way" (2648), and declares "'The wey[e] also brood and large'" (2652) that he can not miss it.

Armed now with Venus's instruction, the narrator merrily commences his journey to the garden and soon passes through a forest where he encounters the goddess Diana. By the time he meets Diana, however, he has become a thoroughly sensual reader. When he first spies her, for example, he is so taken by her physical beauty that he declares, "Of body, shappe, and of visage, / . . . Ther was no fairer borne a-lyve" (2802, 2805), a judgment he implicitly made about Venus earlier. Considering his total allegiance to Venus, his initial attraction to the goddess of chastity is comical, but more significantly it illustrates his inability to read intelligently. It is only later, when he realizes her beauty is chaste and she attempts to dissuade him from the path of sensuality, that the narrator rejects Diana.

Like the descriptions of the other goddesses, the narrator's iconographic description of Diana accentuates her moral position in the poem. One detail in particular is important: her bow and arrows. Lydgate interjects a significant explanation of these when his narrator states that Diana's chief delight is to chase Idleness out of her forest by shooting arrows at her (2859-68). Because he ostensibly

Hodapp

recognizes her reason for carrying a bow and arrows before he even speaks to her, the narrator's abashed response to Diana's initial rebuke after he tries to make a pass at her (2879-2936) is particularly ironic. Though the narrator fails to understand the implications of what he says, Lydgate indicates Diana's true nature to the reader who "feleth fully the sentence," for Diana's frequent confrontations with Idleness link her with Nature and Minerva in their opposition to Venus.¹⁹ Her discourse, which ultimately turns the narrator against her, substantiates this close relationship.

Diana raises the last voice in the poem on behalf of proper judgment. For example, when she admonishes the narrator for confirming the Judgment of Paris "'To hastily'" (3276-3305) and he, again hastily, reconfirms Paris's choice and seconds his own as reasonable (3307-14), Diana encourages him to reconsider, declaring that quick judgments often lead to wrong decisions (3319-23). Diana's concern for careful judgment in moral decisions underscores Lydgate's own concern for careful judgment of his poem. Though the narrator fails to catch her message, Lydgate intends his audience to understand it, especially those who "haueth . . . insight"(3321) to grasp his "sentence."

Diana also raises the last voice in the poem on behalf of intelligent reading when she indirectly warns the narrator of the perils of Deduit's garden through a series of *exempla*. She recounts numerous tales, but perhaps the most important ones are those of unfulfilled love, including the adultery of Venus and Mars, the death of Narcissus, and the death of Pyramus and Thisbe. Then, like Reason in the *Roman de la Rose*, she advises him to seek a "mean" in all activity and illustrates her point with tales of Icarus and Phaeton. She concludes her stories with an argument for their ethical value, saying that the wise man learns from others' mistakes (4245-50). The narrator, though, in defending Deduit's garden and Venus's love, critiques her stories, arguing:

"But I me cast[e] nat to fle
With y-charus ouer the se,
Nor with Pheton al my lyve
The chare of Phebus for to dryve. . . ." (4603-6)

Following his sensual inclination, the narrator misreads and misjudges Diana's tales, taking only the "barke" and leaving the "pithe" behind. As with her argument for proper judgment, he again

misunderstands her point regarding intelligent reading.

The narrator's comical inability to understand Diana's meaning, however, is not unexpected. A few lines before his literal reading of Diana's tales, he blatantly misinterprets Nature's command when explaining his desire to see Deduit's garden. He emphatically declares: "[Nature] bad me, as I kan report: / "Go se the world" and me disport, / And theryn oonly me delyte" (4511-13). Diana, of course, challenges this misreading of Nature and refutes his claim that Nature ordered him to experience a place "Wher ydelnesse bereth the key" (4708). Realizing how the narrator is so completely of Venus's company that he even twists Nature's commission to justify his own desires, Diana leaves him with a final warning on free will (4768-72). The narrator, of course, follows his own discretion, but his choices, nevertheless, serve his sensual appetite rather than wisdom, as Diana suggests.

Upon arrival at Deduit's garden, the narrator misreads the garden and its inhabitants and seals his moral downfall at the well of Narcissus. A carved message on the side of the well explains its danger, but the narrator, at possibly the only moment in the poem in which he should read literally, ignores the message and, ravished by its outward beauty, sensually reads the well itself, failing to understand that it signifies morally destructive self-love (5707-16). As an allegorical image of his moral state, the well defines the true nature of Venus's love in this poem. More importantly, the well clarifies the nature of his desire, for like Amans in the *Roman de la Rose* he first sees Venus's promised lady reflected in its crystal bottom. Consequently, the lady seems to represent more an object of the narrator's self-centered desire than an actual or even imagined woman.

Reson and Sensuallyte ends with the narrator forever trapped in his own cupidity. However, it offers a different end for Lydgate's intended audience. Diana's advice on rational reading—"Prudently to taken hede / Of another mannys dede" (4248-9)—resonates throughout the poem. For Lydgate's readers, the narrator's story, like many of Diana's tales, serves as an *exemplum* of foolish love. His moral comedy stands in sharp relief against the poem's ethical message of the need for intelligent reading and proper judgment. Indeed, unlike many medieval writers who invite the audience to occupy affectively the "ego," or subject, position of the text, Lydgate here distances readers from his narrator by encouraging affective engagement with his text through identification with the inscribed

Hodapp

ideal reader rather than through the “ego” of the first-person narrative.²⁰

Though the narrator seals his downfall at Narcissus’s well, the position of the Judgment of Paris in the narrative, between Nature’s and Diana’s discourses on reading, indicates its significance as the poem’s central allegorical scene. Moreover, Minerva’s role in the scene suggests she is its principal allegorical figure. Nature’s attempt to prepare the narrator for the Judgment scene and Diana’s attempt to persuade him to reconsider his choice serve as metaphorical bookends to the Judgment and Minerva herself. In a poem that draws on a rich textual tradition for its narrative and meaning, the Judgment of Paris story is arguably the principal “text” within the poem. It demands intelligent reading and proper judgment. While the narrator misreads the moral significance of the three goddesses, the poem’s readers who diligently “rede thys scripture / And feleth fully the sentence” should not. Of the three goddesses, Minerva as representative of the meditative life is obviously to be preferred. Nature’s and Diana’s positive alliances with Minerva further underscore Lydgate’s intent. Though verbally silent, Minerva speaks clearly through her iconography and role in the Judgment story. Her wisdom offers potential redemption to readers who, unlike the narrator, read the Judgment scene rationally and choose her life of wisdom. Without a clear understanding of Minerva and the role of reading in the poem, however, *Reson and Sensuallyte* can be misread, as Lydgate fears in his prologue, and readers, like the narrator, can mistake its “barke” for the “pithe” hidden within.

The College of St. Scholastica

Hodapp

Notes

1. Composed between 1370 and 1380, the French poem of approximately 30,000 lines is written in the tradition of the *Roman de la Rose*, with an elaborate allegory carrying a tremendous amount of encyclopedic knowledge. Lydgate chose to translate only the first 4,873 lines, or less than one-sixth of the original, expanding them to 7,042 lines before discontinuing the project (Lois Ebin, *John Lydgate*, TEAS 407 [Boston: Twayne, 1985] 35).

2. John Lydgate, *Reson and Sensuallyte*, EETS e.s. 84, 89, ed. Ernst Sieper (London: Kegan Paul, 1901, 1903) 2096, 2098. Hereafter, parenthetical line references are to this edition.

3. Margaret J. Ehrhart, *The Judgment of the Trojan Prince Paris in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1987) 167-73.

4. C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1936) 271-8; Walter Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, trans. Ann E. Keep (London: Methuen, 1961) 31-41; Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1970) 83-121; Ebin 20-38.

5. Because of the current state of the manuscripts of *Les echechs*, it is difficult to make a complete comparison between the Middle English poem and the French original (a complete edition is non-existent, and the two existing mss. are incomplete: Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek Oc 66, was damaged in World War II; and Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana Fr. App. 23, is missing sections of the poem [Ehrhart 268 n.74]). Yet, from summaries of *Les echechs* written by Ehrhart, Sieper, and Galpin, and from Galpin's extracts and Sieper's notes, which also include numerous passages from the original, we can ascertain the broad outline and certain passages of the French poem and note Lydgate's retention of the narrative's general structure (Ehrhart 151-3; Sieper 59-76; Stanley L. Galpin, "Les Echez Amoureux: A Complete Synopsis with Unpublished Extracts," *Romanic Review* 11 [1920]: 283-307). Like most medieval poets who composed translations, however, Lydgate used the opportunity for creative expression, and his translation seems to

Hodapp

differ most from the original in its satirical thrust, especially regarding the Judgment of Paris scene (on medieval translation theory, see Charles S.F. Burnett, "Translation and Translators, Western European," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* [New York: Scribner's, 1989]; Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991] 63-84, 179-230; and Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991] 154-8).

6. In the prologue to the Miller's Tale, for instance, Chaucer is aware of a reading audience that can exercise editorial power when he says, "[W]hoso list it nat yheere / Turne over the leef and chese another tale" (John H. Fisher, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer* [New York: Holt, 1977] lines 3176-7. All Chaucer citations are to this edition).

7. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer recognizes that readers contribute to narrative meaning when he invites them to displace his narration with their own. His narrator states:

For myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow that felyng han in loves art,
And putte it al in youre discrecioun
T'encresse or maken dyminucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow byseche. (III.1331-36)

See also Peter W. Travis's excellent discussion of this passage ("Affective Criticism and Medieval English Literature," *Medieval Texts & Contemporary Readers*, ed. Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987] 203-4).

8. This notion of an "ideal" reader comes primarily from Gerald Prince's discussion of the narratee, in which he describes an "ideal" reader as one who understands an entire text and approves of it completely ("Introduction to the Study of the Narratee," *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980] 9). It is also rooted in Walker Gibson's notion of a "mock" reader, that is, "the

Hodapp

mask and costume the individual [reader] takes on in order to experience the language” of the text (“Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers,” in Tompkins, 2).

9. These details mirror the descriptions of other positive literary wisdom figures; Boethius’s Lady Philosophy, for instance, has flashing eyes, a varying height, and a garment woven by her own hands, and she is both vigorously young and of great age (*The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Richard H. Green [Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1962] Bk. 1, Pr. 1, 3-4). Similarly, Guillaume de Lorris incorporates some of these details in his description of Reason (*The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Charles Dahlberg [Hanover: UP of New England, 1986] 73; 2971-95), as does Alain de Lille in his descriptions of Prudence (*Anticlaudianus*, trans. James J. Sheridan [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973] Bk. 1, 57) and Temperance (*The Plaint of Nature*, trans. James J. Sheridan [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980] Pr. 8, 200-1).

10. The colors on the mantle represent the parts of philosophy, presumably ethics, physics, and metaphysics, or what Augustine, inspired by Plato, calls the moral, the natural, and the rational aspects of philosophy (*The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson [New York: Penguin, 1984] 303-11; 8.4-9). It is also possible, however, that the three colors could have a more specific reference. Hugh of St. Victor, inspired by Aristotle, divides philosophy into four areas—mechanical, practical, theoretical, and logical—and interestingly links Minerva to theoretical philosophy: “There are those who suppose that these three parts of the theoretical [theology, mathematics, physics] are mystically represented in one of the names of Pallas, fictional goddess of wisdom. For she is called ‘Tritona’ for *tritoona*, that is, threefold apprehension of God, called intellectible; of souls, called intelligible; and of bodies, called natural” (*Didascalicon*, trans. Jerome Taylor [New York: Columbia UP, 1961] 73; Bk. 2, Ch. 18).

11. Occasionally, poets associate swans with Venus; for example, in *Metamorphoses* 10.718, swans pull Venus’s chariot. In this poem, however, Lydgate uses swans and swan-song as portents of death. Here, Lydgate seems to follow Alain de Lille, who writes, “There the swan, the herald of his own death, prophesied the end of his life by the strains of his honey-sweet lute” (*Plaint* Pr. 1, 87). He also could

Hodapp

be drawing on Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*—"The jelous swan, ayens his deth that syngeth" (342)—his *Legend of Dido*—"Ryght so,' quod she, 'as that the white swanne / Ayenst his deeth begynnthe for to synge'" (1355-6)—and his *Anelida and Arcite*—"But as the swan, I [Anelida] have herd seyde ful yore, / Ayeins his deth shal singe in his penaunce, / So singe I here my destany or chaunce" (346-8). Minerva's traditional bird, the owl, is also associated with warnings of death in literature. For example, in Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dido hears an owl sing a funeral dirge shortly before Aeneas departs and she commits suicide (4.460-5). Similarly, in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the nightingale chides the owl for foretelling death (lls 1-2). And, in Lydgate's *Troy Book*, where Minerva does appear with an owl, the latter's song signifies death (2.2569-72). Here, Lydgate amplifies *Les echecs*, which merely mentions the swans, by interpreting the reference (see Sieper's note in *RS*, 97).

12. Many of her iconographic details come from a favorable Minerva in the mythographic tradition. In Fulgentius, Minerva's association with Medusa signifies the awe wisdom instills in its enemies, and she is helmeted and carries a spear and shield because wisdom is always armed and can strike at long range with its pronouncements (*The Mythologies, Fulgentius the Mythographer*, trans. Leslie George Whitbread [N.p.: Ohio State P, 1971] 2.1, 65). In the Third Vatican Mythographer, her descent from Jupiter signifies the origin of her wisdom in God (*Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres Romae nuper reperti*, ed. George H. Bode [rpt. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968] 10.2.12-6, 222). And, like Lydgate, Petrus Berchorius describes Minerva's robe as three-colored; however, with Berchorius the colors signify "the three theological virtues" rather than the three parts of philosophy (*De formis figurisque deorum*, ed. J. Engels [Utrecht: Instituut voor Laat Latijn der Rijksuniversiteit, 1966] 31).

13. Fulgentius 2.1, 65-6. See also, for example, Thomas Walsingham, *De Archana Deorum*, ed. Robert A. van Kluyve (Durham: Duke UP, 1968), 1.5.24-35, 10; and Berchorius, *Libellus* (New York: Garland, 1979)177. In *RS*, Lydgate makes Juno's connection with Fortune explicit when the narrator states:

For she is quene and eke goddesse
Of worldly tresour and rychess,
And hem gouerneth, sooth to say,

Hodapp

For fortune doth hir lust obey,
The gerful lady with hir whel,
That blynd is and seth neuer a del

.....
For Iuno is the tresourere,
And fortune hir awmonere. (1355-60, 1363-4)

14. Fulgentius, 2.1, 66-7. See, especially, the Third Vatican Mythographer, 11.1-2, 228-9.

15. Venus's traditional double nature—lawful (celestial, harmonious love) and lustful (worldly, cupidinous love)—is derived from Plato's distinction between a Common and a Heavenly Aphrodite (*Symposium*, trans. Walter Hamilton [New York: Penguin, 1951] 46-7; 180e-182a). For medieval discussions of Venus's double nature, see Bernard Silvestris, *Commentum . . . super sex libros Eneidos Virgilitii*, ed. Julian and Elizabeth Jones (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1977) 9, and Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Book of Theseus*, trans. Bernadette Marie McCoy (New York: Medieval Text Association, 1974) 199; for a modern discussion, see Robert Hollander, *Boccaccio's Two Venuses* (New York: Columbia UP, 1977).

16. See, especially, Fulgentius 2.1, 66; the Third Vatican Mythographer 11.1, 228-9; Berchorius, *De formis* 7; and Walsingham 1.11.1-15, 21.

17. Ehrhart distinguishes three traditions of the Judgment of Paris story in classical and medieval literature: classical, allegorical, and rationalizing. She argues that the judgment in *Les echechs* and *RS* is allegorical in the vein developed by Fulgentius (151-73).

18. Fulgentius, 2.1, 64-5. See also the Second Vatican Mythographer, *Mythographi Vaticani I et II*, ed. Peter Kulcsar, Corpus Christianorum Ser. Lat. 91c (Turnholt: Brepols, 1987) 248-9, 276-80; Bernard Silvestris 6.64, 46; Boccaccio 7.50, 207-8; Berchorius, *De formis* 30, and *Metamorphosis Ovidiana Moraliter . . . Explanata* (New York: Garland, 1979) 12, fols. 80v-81v; and Walsingham 1.24.9-13, 33, and 12.1, 169-71. In *The Mythologies* 3.7, Fulgentius also implies the three lives when delineating the parts of human anatomy that the deities possessed, according to "heathen" belief: Minerva had "the eyes," Juno "the arms," Venus "the kidneys

Hodapp

and sex organs" (91). These attributions are appropriate for the lives the goddesses represent: eyes to contemplate the truth; arms to pursue the active life; sex organs to pursue the sensual life.

19. That this interpretation is Lydgate's own addition seems likely from Galpin's summary of the narrator's encounter with Diana in *Les echecs amoureux* (285).

20. For a discussion of how readers displace the particular self with the "ego" of lyric, see Judson Boyce Allen's "Grammar, Poetic Form, and the Lyric Ego: A Medieval *a Priori*," in *Vernacular Poetics in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lois Ebin, *Studies in Medieval Culture* 16 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1984) 208.