

# 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

計畫編號：NSC 87-2411-H-018--002

執行期限：86年8月1日至87年7月31日

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## 一、中文摘要

「幻想力」一辭在中世紀英國文字工作者的創作理論裡佔有相當重要的地位，這可以從他們的「文學」中，語多怪力亂神見其端倪。儘管這方面的研究不乏其人，然至今並未有論者澄清其與文本之間的關係。個人已檢視一些文本而求得某些定論。

定論之一，「幻想力」從來就不帶有否定的意味，相反的，他指的是智力發揮的第一線，專司接收來自主體以外真實世界的影像與資訊，並綜合這些影像與資訊，促成分解產生新的文字、修辭、意象、與邏輯。此一定論來自於比較大眾化的文本，如 Bartholomaeus Anglicus 的 *De Proprietatibus Rerum*，Mandeville 的 *Travels*，和 *The Bestiary* 這種伊索預言式的動物故事集。中世紀較著名的作家如 Chaucer、Langland、Gower 和 *Pearl-Poet* 的作品亦有見證。

定論之二，夢境文學 [Dream-Vision] 中所顯現的「幻想力」證明這種文類有其宗教上和政治上的作用。這類夢境文學以 *Piers Plowman*、Geoffrey of Monmouth 和 La3amon 所謂的歷史 *History of the Kings of Britain* 以及 *Brit* 之中的政治性夢境討論為主軸。

定論之三，早期史書有相當多的怪力亂神敘述，而 Norman Conquest 之後所謂的俠情故事 [Chivalric Romances] 則大量借用這些怪力亂神的片段發展成英國中世紀最受歡迎的口述故事體詩，個人比對其中想像語 [Imaginative Speeches] 的部分，證明「幻想力」和中世紀修辭學 [Rhetoric] 有很大關係。此類例子個人溯源自 Geoffrey of Monmouth 和 La3amon 的 *History of the Kings of Britain* 以及 *Brit*。俠情故事部分，則因篇幅關係，只用 *Alliterative Morte Arthure* 以為說明。

最後個人並以英國文藝復興和十九世紀時期「幻想力」和文學創作理論之密切關係做結論。

關鍵詞：幻想力、中世紀英國文學、Bartholomaeus、夢境、俠情故事

## Abstract

This study explores the function of imagination in Middle English literature. By examining several major genres in Middle English literature I hope to point out the significance and continuity of medieval imagination in British literary history.

Never meant to be negative, I discover that medieval imagination, by all possible definitions,

basically separates itself from the functioning of five senses and designates a mental faculty responsive to various information from the subject's constitute outside. It then facilitates an exact process of inventing and remembering imagistic, linguistic, logical, as well as rhetorical syntheses of such information. I also discover that Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Mandeville's *Travels*, and *The Bestiary* are full of evidences to support such a definition. Texts of Chaucer, Langland, Gower, and *Pearl-Poet* give literary evidences.

A second finding is in another popular genre such as *Piers Plowman* and in the prophetic dreams of such "histories" as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain* and Layamon's *Brit*. What connect medieval imagination to this genre are religious and political elements.

A third finding can also be found in Monmouth's *History*, Layamon's *Brit*, and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*. I discover that in trying to cover the supernatural elements the writers and oral transmitter of these "histories" have inserted a great deal of "imaginative speeches." This shows that medieval imagination often has to take on the form of rhetorical inventions, which leads me to conclude that medieval imagination and rhetoric are closely related.

In conclusion, the later development of medieval imagination in the Renaissance and the nineteenth century, namely in Spenser and Coleridge, is also observable.

**Keywords:** Imagination, Middle English Literature, Arthur, Bartholomaeus, Dream-Vision, Chivalric Romance

## 二、緣由與目的

### 1. 緣由

One of the major differences between medieval and modern times lies in how people comprehend the act of composition. Today a work can be appreciated from various angles – the flourishing of postmodern theories all so well testify to this. In the Middle Ages, however, things were quite different. Literature was seen almost quite exclusively from the perspective of rhetoric, whose meaning is simply to persuade. Since today we believe that expressive theory and imagination are inseparable, and since medieval imagination must thus have a close relationship with medieval rhetorical training, studying the place of imagination in medieval literary theory seems to promise a rewarding result. For one thing, medieval imagination seems to be quite necessary to understand literature in general. In the Renaissance, imagination became quite closely connected to the psychology of

melancholy, which scholars have been studying since then. And Fulke Greville wrote that "knowlddges next organ is *Imagination*; A glasse, wherein the object of our Sense / Ought to reflect true height... For vnderstandins cleare intelligence" (*A Treatie of Human Learning*). Bacon also wrote that imagination embodies "the print of Truth" (*Works* 3.382). Finally, the significance of Imagination can be attested by British literary history in the nineteenth century. Coleridge, the father of modern English literary criticism, asserts that imagination is "the faculty by which I had characterized Milton," and fancy the faculty that makes Abraham Cowley a much less powerful poet. The reason is that "Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind." Coleridge further emphasizes that the distinction between these two faculties is so so important that the nature of poetry can be "anticipated" by looking into the essential differences between them (*Biographia Literaria* IV). Indeed, nineteenth-century British literature has brought home a fundamental significance of literary Imagination. And to fully understand this significance, it surely is desirable to study its earlier history, particularly the Middle Ages.

## 2. 目的

In view of the fact that previous studies have not been able to provide a more thorough investigation of the relations between medieval writing and expressive Imagination, this project purports to write a paper on the literary significance of medieval Imagination and on the relations between imaginative process and ways texts were composed in Middle English literature.

## 三、結果

本篇論文內容已如上摘要所述。論文以英文撰寫，數字約八千字，A4紙單行12點New Times Roman字約二十頁，預計一年之內發表。粗稿已然完成，可隨時提供國內外學術界指正。

## 三、計劃成果自評

(1) 本篇論文研究方法是沒有問題的，不過有許多資料在國內並不容易找，國內早期英國文學與文化史的研究環境尚亟待加強；

(2) 本篇論文所提出討論的中世紀英國文學四大文類，即 Popular Literature、History、Dream-Vision和Romance均遺漏了許多名著，此乃因時間與篇幅有限之故，事實上將來仍可進一步研究。

(3) 自柏拉圖和亞里士多德下傳之希羅古典學派文學理論定型之後〔此即Mimetic Theories〕，英國十六至十九世紀之新文學創作理論即以Expressive Theories〔即唯心理論〕為大宗，因此其發展細節部分，尤其其和外緣研究之關連，仍

亟待文學理論學者努力。

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