CHAUCER AND THE SUBVERSION
OF FORM

Responding to the lively resurgence of literary formalism, this volume delivers a timely and fresh exploration of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Advancing “new formalist” approaches, medieval scholars have begun to ask what happens when structure fails to yield meaning, probing the very limits of poetic organization. While Chaucer is acknowledged as a master of form, his work also foregrounds troubling questions about formal agency: the disparate forces of narrative and poetic practice, readerly reception, intertextuality, genre, scribal attention, patronage, and historical change. This definitive collection offers diverse perspectives on Chaucer and a varied analysis of these problems, asking what happens when form is resisted by author or reader, when it fails by accident or by design, and how it can be misleading, errant, or even dangerous.


JESSICA ROSENFELD is Associate Professor of English at Washington University, St. Louis. She is the author of Ethics and Enjoyment in Late Medieval Poetry: Love after Aristotle (Cambridge, 2011).
This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages – the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek – during the period c.1100–1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

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CHAUCER AND THE SUBVERSION OF FORM

EDITED BY

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