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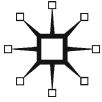


CONSOLATION IN MEDIEVAL  
NARRATIVE

AUGUSTINIAN AUTHORITY  
AND OPEN FORM

*Chad D. Schrock*

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CONSOLATION IN MEDIEVAL NARRATIVE

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*for my father, Arlin,  
who obsessed me with language  
and for my mother, Velma,  
who haunted me with time*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book began as the last sentence of a 24-line endnote 52: “A full study of Chaucer’s use of Augustine remains a desideratum.”<sup>1</sup> My thanks to Dabney Bankert at James Madison University for writing that endnote, then remembering it when it came time to help me dream up potential PhD research topics. Only one chapter’s on Chaucer, as it turns out, but ideas twist when you think about them for years.

That idea became a Penn State dissertation—built block by conceptual block on a desktop computer in a little room. Robert Edwards gave me another influential formulation—“The literary framework of the *Confessions* is thus continuous with its metaphysics: medieval writers will exploit this convergence as a key feature of rhetorical and narrative technique”<sup>2</sup>—then directed the dissertation and guided my fledgling professional career with an elegant and economical precision. I and this book still owe a great deal to his ability to see issues and solutions clearly. Patrick Cheney, Caroline Eckhardt, Kathryn Hume, Sanford Schwartz, and Ryan Stark have continued to invest generously in me and my work well past duty’s expiration date. Ryan Hackenbracht, Gabriel Ford, Giuseppina Iacono Lobo, and Katharine Cleland were wonderful peers at Penn State, professional colleagues now. It’s lovely to see us all out in the wider world, doing what we had wanted to do. David Lyle Jeffrey, Phillip Cary, and Ephraim Radner graciously received chapter one with encouragement, giving me confidence early on that this project could be at once viable and of interest across disciplines.

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Close to the heart of the matter, my brother Terrill and sister Laura keep modeling how to combine familial warmth with a dogged determination to follow truth and logical trails wherever they lead. It’s hard to imagine siblings more congenial to a healthy life of the mind—and heart. For many years now my wife, Rachel, has received strangely shaped academic obsessions into our home with love, good humor, patience, and kindness, willing to learn with me what it means to live them out in the meaningful story of our shared life. Our son, Toby, comes closer than anything else—patristic polemic or academic reader’s report—to disproving the Augustinian ideas in this book. If there’s such a thing as fully present consolation, he’s it.

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