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Citation	長崎大学教養部紀要. 人文科学. 1979, 19, p.81-91
Issue Date	1979-01-31
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10069/9691
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NOTES
TO
CHAUCER'S PILGRIMAGE DEVICE OF
THE FABLIAU TALES

TOSHINORI HIRA

Notes to 'Chaucer's Pilgrimage Device of the Fabliau Tales' printed in *Nagasaki University Annual Bulletin* (Faculty of Liberal Arts), Volume XVIII, 1978 are not free from typographical errors. I have removed the errors which were oversights and I have made structural alterations in some places. Where further knowledge of Chaucer and his times may be desired references are added.

¹ *CT*, I(A), 38-41. Manly, in *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York, 1951), suggests that some characters have their counterparts in real life. Shelly, in *The Living Chaucer*, New York, 1968, p. 244, suggests that the source of Alison of the *Miller's Tale* is a wench of Oxfordshire. Bowden, in *A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, New York, 1957, refers to men and women whom the Chaucer scholars hinted as to models for many Canterbury pilgrims. However, Chaucer's realism of individual pilgrims, though often esteemed (M. Hussey, A. C. Spearing and J. Winny, *An Introduction to Chaucer*, Cambridge, 1965, p. 28), seems to be a mere device for introducing the fabliau tales about which his court audience may probably have been troubled. Chaucer apologizes for his tales unsuitable to aristocratic feelings. It seems unlikely that Chaucer mirrored faithfully the times in which he lived. A true mirror to the state of affairs in England was not expected from the court poet. It was Chaucer's concern to have a sympathetic understanding of the realistic way of thinking and feeling, not to present the social scenes of his day.

² Coghill observes that Chaucer uses his book knowledge of human nature, derived from rhetoric, medicine and astrology, for the descriptions of his characters. See N. Coghill, *Geoffrey Chaucer*, London, 1956, pp. 49f. W. C. Curry conceives many of the personal characteristics of the Wife of Bath, for example, as influenced by her stars. See *Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences*, New York, 1960, pp. 91f.

³ T. Hira, in 'Two Phases of Chaucer, Moral and Mortal,' *Essays in English and American Literature: In Commemoration of Professor Shunichi Maekawa's Sixty-First*

Birthday, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 98–102, has pointed out the possibility of the pilgrim Chaucer's omitting the weak side liable to err of the idealized pilgrims, and of his emphasizing the moral sense of them.

4 *CT*, X(I), 32–41. A Human Comedy is provided by Chaucer's framing narrative which ends with a moral discourse on penitence. See, for example, J. L. Lowes, *Geoffrey Chaucer*, Oxford, 1956, pp. 160f. and R. Baldwin, 'The Unity of The Canterbury Tales' in *Chaucer Criticism*, ed. R. Schoeck and J. Taylor, Indiana, 1960, pp. 14–51. Cf. R. S. Loomis, 'Was Chaucer A Laodicean?' in *Chaucer Criticism*, ed. R. Schoeck and J. Taylor, pp. 302–303. The author regards Chaucer's Parson as one of the Wyclifites; he affords an evidence that Chaucer refers three times to the Gospel and Christ's teaching which the Wyclifites emphasized.

5 See, for example, W. H. Clawson, 'The Framework of the Canterbury Tales' in *Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, Galaxy Book, 1959, pp. 13–14.

6 Chaucer's characterizations varied with individual pilgrims are rated by J. R. Hulbert in 'Chaucer's Pilgrims.' Reprinted in *Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, pp. 23–29.

7 Bowden, in *Commentary*, pp. 1–2, draws a parallel between Chaucer's England and our modern world and makes an appeal to our historical sympathy.

8 For the general history of the fourteenth century see, for example, M. McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307–1399*, Oxford, 1959. The fourteenth-century laws and edicts are included in B. Wilkinson, *Constitutional History of Medieval England, 1216–1399*, 3 vols., London, 1958. G. M. Trevelyan, in *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, London, 1948, makes a survey of the history and religion during the period between C. 1375 and 1399. G. G. Coulton provides a picture of English social life in Chaucer's times in *Chaucer and his England*, London, 1952. The ideal of knighthood and court life in the Middle Ages are discussed in L. Gautier, *Chivalry*, tr. D. C. Dunning, London, 1965; the peasant conditions of medieval England are discussed in H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor*, Cambridge, 1956. D. D. Knowles's book, published at Cambridge in 1959, does much toward learning the religious orders in England; E. Power's book, reprinted in London, 1964, toward learning the medieval English nunneries from C. 1275 to 1535. The relationship of the middle class with wool trade is treated with by E. Power in *Wool Trade in English Medieval History*, Oxford, 1941: the social realities of medieval tradesmen in E. Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Adventurers*, London, 1967. We find the lines from Chaucer in history books. But these lines apparently are quoted in order to illustrate the historical facts. A good illustration of historical realities is afforded by the literary description of medieval social scenes; see, for example, G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, London, 1948 and D. W. Robertson, Jr., *Chaucer's*

London, New York, 1968. A parallelism between the English court scene of the late fourteenth century and the court art and literature of the period is observed by G. Mathew in *Court of Richard II*, New York, 1968.

9 The present author observes that many of the Canterbury pilgrims are wealthy or influential enough to rank among the middle classes in the light of the social background of Chaucer's age. T. Hira, 'Chaucer's Gentry in the Historical Background,' *Essays in English and American Literature in Commemoration of Professor Takejiro Nakayama's Sixty-First Birthday*, Tokyo, 1961, pp. 31-38.

10 Chaucer's pilgrims, from the viewpoint of the medieval ideals of society, fall into three main groups—men of war, men of praying and men of labour. See, for example, D. S. Brewer, *Chaucer*, London, 1953, pp. 134f. The changing conceptions of medieval French society are treated in J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman, Penguin Books, 1955, pp. 56-66.

11 *CT*, III(D), 172-183. G. L. Kittredge, in *Chaucer and his Poetry*, Harvard, 1946, pp. 185-211, discusses a matter of the female domination of the husband. He argues that Chaucer's debate on marriage begins with the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and ends with the *Franklin's Tale*. Under the name of the Marriage Group are included the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, the *Clerk's Tale*, and the *Merchant's Tale*.

12 The *Canterbury Tales* collects almost every type of medieval tales (W. P. Ker, *Medieval English Literature*, Oxford, 1948, p. 169; N. Coghill, *The Poet Chaucer*, Oxford, 1955, p.115) but we must bear in mind that the court poet who speaks for the thinking and feelings of his audience is keeping to courtly conventions. The present author, in 'Chaucer's Framing Device of the Canterbury Tales Part II,' *Nagasaki University Annual Bulletin* (Faculty of Liberal Arts), XVII (1977), pp. 109-110, views medieval literature in relation to society. The writer in the Middle Ages adapts every subject for the conventions of the circle to which he belongs. Thus, tales told of the love contrary to the courtly conventions meet with adverse criticism from court audience. See Chaucer's love debate held by two types of birds in the *Parliament*. Chaucer's poetry covers the field of literature, not needing cultivation. How did the court poet's poetry cover the range of 'churls' tales? The practical way of thinking as presented in the remarks made by the waterfowl of the *Parliament* underlies Criseyde's desertion; it trends to the same direction as January's selfish opinion on marriage.

13 *CT*, I(A), 3167f. Manly observes that the humorous tales show a low percentage of special rhetorical devices whereas the noble tales contain a high percentage of them. See 'Chaucer and the Rhetoricians,' in *Chaucer Criticism*, ed. R. Schoeck and J. Taylor, pp. 268-290. For a figure of rhetoric see *CT*, V(F), 716-727:

sires, by cause I (i. e. the Franklin) am a burel man,
 At my bigynnyng first I yow (i. e. the Franklin's company) biseche (implore),
 Have me excused of my rude speche.
 I lerned nevere rethorik, certeyn;
 Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
 I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,
 Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero.
 Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,
 But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
 Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
 Colours of rethoryk been to me queynte;
 My spirit feeleth noght of swich mateere.

14 A discussion on the definition of the fabliaux as "associated with the gentler classes for which gravely literary poetry of medieval France was composed" is given in C. C. Williams, Jr., *The Genre and Art of the Old French Fabliaux*, Michigan, 1968, pp. 46-49. This view of the fabliaux which Per Nykrog advanced in 1957 contrasts with that of Bedier.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 142f. The author suggests that tales told by Chaucer's Merchant, Shipman, Reeve, Miller and Summoner are in the fabliau line.

16 K. H. Vickers, in *England in the Later Middle Ages*, London, 1950, p. 224, refers to the humble origin of Knolles; for the origin of Wykeham see M. McKisack, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

17 See *OED*, s. v. Bourgeois, I, A. See also K. J. Hollyman, *Le Développement du Vocabulaire Féodal en France Pendant le Haut Moyen Age*, Genève, 1957, pp. 82-87. For the fourteenth-century conditions of the middle class see A. R. Myers, *England in the Late Middle Ages*, Penguin Books, 1956, pp. 51-59.

18 A classification based upon the literary features of the fabliaux is given by G. Dempster in *Dramatic Irony in Chaucer*, New York, 1959, pp. 27f. The author classes the tales told by the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Friar, the Summoner and the Merchant among the fabliaux. C. Muscatine, in *Chaucer and the French Tradition*, Berkeley, 1957, classes the *Reeve's Tale*, the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* under the name of the English version of the "naturalism" of French fabliaux, and the *Miller's Tale*, the *Merchant's Tale* and the *Nun's Priest's Tale* under the name of the "mixed style."

19 *CT*, I(A), 3981-3986.

20 A possibility of Chaucer's satirizing the decline of the English knighthood is

suggested in T. Hira, 'Two Phases of Chaucer,' pp. 113-114. It may be guessed that Chaucer satirizes the English knights by representing Sir Thopas as "a good archeer." The English yeomen archers were counted as national heroes in the battle of Crécy or Poitier. For the art of war see *Medieval England*, ed. A. L. Poole, vol. I, Oxford, 1958, pp. 147-163.

21 C. C. Williams, Jr. (*op. cit.*, pp. 36-37) takes similar views of the fabliaux to Nykrog. C. Muscatine (*op. cit.*, p. 67) also does view the matter in the same light.

22 G. Dempster, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35; he suggests that the theme of a cheated husband can be expressed in the phrase "poetic justice" in the fabliaux. The kind of view is held by N. Coghill. See *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

23 *CT*, I(A), 4313-4321. The note number 23 is omitted from the quoted lines.

24 G. Dempster observes that Chaucer's satire is directed at women and marriage. In contrast with Alison of the *Miller's Tale* May is thought to be a malign imp. See G. Dempster, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-58. For the description of Alison of the *Miller's Tale* see C. Muscatine, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

25 *CT*, IV(E), 2421-2425.

26 See G. Dempster, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

27 *CT*, III(D), 209-221.

28 Satire appears in various forms; even "ernest" may be taken as "game." Chaucer's Knight, according to the medieval social ideal, is an ideal character, but, on the contrary, be, from the human point of view, is presented for our derision. See T. Hira, 'Two Phases of Chaucer,' *op. cit.*, pp. 108-114.

29 C. Muscatine (*op. cit.*, p. 69, pp. 197f.) takes adverse views of Chaucer's fabliaux. On careful comparison with the traditional French fabliaux or fabliau-like stories to which Chaucer refers or from part of which he derives his descriptions Muscatine discusses Chaucer's fabliaux. The fabliaux, he says, are the funny stories featuring an anti-clerical or anti-feminist representation of clerical abuses, or animal love in men of the middle or lower class.

30 See *CT*, I(A), 3987-3988.

31 *CT*, I(A), 4268-4272.

32 *CT*, I(A), 4236-4239.

33 *CT*, IV(E), 1627-1630.

34 A. Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, tr. J. J. Parry, New York, 1959, p. 184.

35 January behaves himself well in hope of befitting his degree as a king's. See IV(E), 2021-2033. Chaucer's Franklin who holds 20 pound worth of land and ranks with a knight has had many public offices. He is a lord who is eager to imitate courtly manners and taste. Many London merchants bought manors in counties. Some wealthier merchants had fine

houses in counties. See *Medieval England*, ed. A. L. Poole, Vol. I, Oxford, 1958, pp. 75-77.

36 CT, IV(E), 1274-1276.

37 CT, IV(E), 1774-1777.

38 CT, IV(E), 1600-1604.

39 CT, III(D), 226-228.

40 CT, III(D), 231-232.

41 G. M. Trevelyan refers to the position of women of the Middle Ages in *Shortened History of England*, Penguin Books, 1959, p. 196. See also *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, New York, 1969, pp. 157-162; E. Power, *Medieval People*, Penguin Books, 1954, pp. 96-122.

42 G. G. Coulton, in *Chaucer and his England*, London, 1952, p. 202, views the rights of women from the standpoint that women were unable to hold ground in the age of chivalry. See also J. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, Cambridge, 1973, p. 121.

43 CT, III(D), 1038-1040.

44 CT, IX(H), 211-220.

45 CT, III(D), 164-168. In writing of the character the Wife of Bath Chaucer borrows partly the lines from Jean de Meun's *Roman*. Cf. R. D. French, *A Chaucer Handbook*, New York, 1947, pp. 272-278. The Wife of Bath's experimentalism places her at the center of her world. She is treated as an individual, not as a woman to be saved.

46 CT, VII(B²), 2801-2802.

47 From eight variant groups of the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, and the fabliau-like tales extant (*The Good Wyfe wold a Pylgremage*, for example) G. Mathew, op. cit., p. 72, 104, constitutes the theory that sections of the *Canterbury Tales* were read at London bourgeois circles. But he does not examine that Chaucer is a court poet and his fabliau tales are parts of the framing tales. Indeed, the middle-class men gradually grew to gain ground, with the result that their thinking and feelings were embodied in poems. Various kinds of rhymes saying about the middle-class men and their views are printed, for example, in *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. R. H. Robbins, New York, 1959.

48 A list of men who sit at the knight table and at the squire table is given in *The Babees Book*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS, OS 32, pp. 188-189. The present author, in 'Chaucer's Gentry, pp. 31-38, makes an approach to Chaucer's pilgrims of the gentry class from their social background. For Chaucer's address to his court audience and readers see, for example, the *Compleynt of Mars*, 272f.:

to yow, hardy knyghtes of renoun,
 Syn that ye be of my devisioun (clan),
 Al be I (i. e. Mars) now worthy to so gret a name,
 Yet, seyn these clerkes, I am your patroun;
 Therefore ye oghte have som compassioun
 Of my dise (distress), and take hit not a-game.
 The proudest of yow may be mad ful tame;
 Wherefore I prey yow, of your gentillesse (kindness),
 That ye compleyne for myn hevynesse (sorrow).

And ye, my ladyes, that ben true and stable (steadfast).
 Be wey of kynde, ye oughten to be able
 To have pite of folk that be in peyne.
 Now have ye cause to clothe yow in sable;
 Sith that youre emperise, the honorable,
 Is desolat, wel oghte ye to pleyne;
 Now shulde your holy teres (tears) falle and reyne.
 Alas! your honour and your emperise,
 Negh (nigh) ded for drede, ne can her not cheivse (succeed).

Compleyneth eke, ye lovers, al in-fere (together),
 For her that with unfeyned humble chere (demeanor)
 Was evere redy to do yow socour (succor)...

49 The present author, in 'Chaucer's Meagre Reference to the Variable World Part II,' *Nagasaki University Annual Bulletin* (Faculty of Liberal Arts), IV(1964), pp. 22f., examines scutages as the fall of knighthood. The author owes to F. Stenton much knowledge of scutages. See *The First Century of English Feudalism 1066-1166*, Oxford, 1961, pp. 164f.

50 The rise of the middle class was caused, in a way, by Orders for distraint of knighthood. Hira, *loc. cit.*, pp. 23-31.

51 See M. Mckisack, *The Parliamentary Representation of the English Boroughs during the Middle Ages*, London, 1962, pp. 24-43, 102.

52 See E. Power, *Wool Trade*, pp. 104f.

53 See M. Rickert, *Chaucer's World*, New York, 1948, pp. 185-193.

54 See M. Chute, *Geoffrey Chaucer of England*, New York, 1956, pp. 141-143.

55 See T. Hira, 'Chaucer's Framing Device of the Canterbury Tales Part I,' in *Nagasaki*

University Annual Bulletin (Faculty of Liberal Arts), XVI (1975), pp. 87–91. Cf. J. L. Shanley, 'The Troilus and Christian Love,' in *Chaucer*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, pp. 394–395. The author examines the story as an expression of Chaucer's faith in heavenly love. He argues that the poet who has enjoyed life rises above the trivialities of life and puts his faith in heavenly love. The religions of both Love and the Church are alike in character (W. G. Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower*, Harvard, 1959, p. 20). C. Hardie examines Beatrice as represented with the characteristics of the lady of romances ('Dante and the Tradition of Courtly Love,' in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy*, ed. J. Lawlor, London, 1966, pp. 26–44). Genius of *Confessio Amantis*, though Love's priest, criticizes the stories told by the poet from the Church's viewpoint, not from the viewpoint of the religion of Love. There is no denying, as Andreas himself says (*The Art of Courtly Love*, tr. J. J. Parry, p. 187), the Church's disapproval of the foul delight of illicit love. The Parson's Tale says (X (I), 845–850):

...Lo, what seith Seint Mathew in the gospel, that "whose seeth a womman to coveitise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hire in his herte." / Heere may ye seen that nat oonly the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to doon that synne. / This cursed synne anoyeth grevousliche (grievously) hem that it haunten. And first to hire soule, for he obligeth (compels) it to synne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable (imperishable). / Unto the body anoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth hym, and wasteth him, and shent (ruins) hym, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the feend of helle. It wasteth eek his catel and his substaunce. / And certes, if it be a foul thyng a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thyng whan that, for swich ordure (filthiness), wommen dispenden upon men hir catel and substaunce. / This synne, as seith the prophete, bireveth (bereaves) man and womman hir goode fame and al hire honour; and it is ful plesaunt to the devel, for therby wynneth he the mooste partie of this world.

56 K. Malone, in *Chapters on Chaucer*, Baltimore, 1951, pp. 59–60, advances a theory that Chaucer may have had an intention of relating the matter of fame to that of his personal affairs.

57 Cf. P. G. Ruggiers, 'The Unity of Chaucer's House of Fame,' in *Chaucer*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, pp. 305–306. The author examines the matter of the love-tidings as absorbed into that of fame, and suggests the hypothesis that the falseness of men embodied in the tale of Dido is an anticipation of the tidings which Chaucer is to hear in the House of Fame. In God some act a falsehood, some acquire a fair fame. Bronson shares Ruggiers's opinion. See B. H. Bronson, *In Search of Chaucer*, Toronto, 1960, pp. 39–40.

58 *House of Fame*, 672–678.

59 Cf. C. O. McDonald, 'An Interpretation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules,' in *Chaucer*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, pp. 309–327. The author advances the suggestion that Nature who is the unifying factor in the poem reconciles the difference between natural and artificial love. W. Clemen, in *Chaucer's Early Poetry*, London, 1963 pp. 168–169, calls attention to Chaucer's presentation of varied characters represented by birds, foreshadowing the characterizations of varied pilgrims of the *Canterbury Tales*. The author realizes that a variety of activities brought the poet into a combination of aristocratic and bourgeois types of thinking and speaking, but he concludes by saying that the poet's dramatic presentation of various characters and their opinions is due to his genial and capacious mind.

60 *Parliament of Fowls*, 563–567. See also *ibid.*, 590–593. Cf. *ibid.*, 596–602:

"Now fy, cherl!" quod the gentil tercelet,
 "Out of the donghil cam that word ful right!
 Thow canst nat seen which thyng is wel beset (employed)!
 Thow farst by (with) love as oules don by lyght:
 The day hem blent, ful wel they se by nyght.
 Thy kynde is of so low a wrechednesse (wretched)
 That what love is, thow canst nat seen ne gesse."

61 *Legend of Good Women*, AG, 254–266. Cf. *CT*, I(A), 1799–1814:

Who may been a fool, but if he love?
 Bihoold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
 Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed (in a noble plight)?
 Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, ypayed
 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle (betide)
 But this is yet the beste game of alle,
 That she for whom they han this jolitee
 Kan hem therefore as mucche thank as me.
 She woot namoore of al this hoot fare (conduct),
 By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!
 But all moot ben assayed, hoot and coold;
 A man moot ben a fool, or yong or old,—

I (i.e. Theseus) woot it by myself ful yore agon,
For in my tyme a servant was I oon.

62 *Legend of Good Women*, AG, 401; see also *ibid.*, 209, 257. Of course, the word renegat here means a man apostate from the religion of Love. The Queen of the *Legend* says of the falseness of Chaucer to Love presumably because he is no longer qualified for serving Love in his maturer days. See *Merciles Beaute*, 27-29 :

Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never think to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

With respect to the matter the god of Love bids the lover learn the pains of love (*Romaunt of the Rose*, 2685-2686):

Love leveth colour ne cleernesse;
Who loveth trewe hath no fatnesse.

But is it simply from the religion of Love that Chaucer apostatized? There is a parallelism between the worship of Love and the worship of God. Love demands of his servant such virtues of courtly love as courtesy, generosity and constancy, which are parallel to those of the Christian faith. The *Romaunt* says (2351-2354):

Whoso with Love wole goon or ride,
He mot be curteis, and voide of pride,
Mery, and full of jolite,
And of largesse alosed (noted) be.

Moreover, in respect to his servants Love holds the position that the feudal lord occupies among his vassals. The lover yields obedience to Love (*Romaunt of the Rose*, 1945-1951):

at youre biddyng,
I wole me yelde in alle thyng.
To youre servyse I wol me take ;
For God defende that I shulde make

Ageyn youre bidyng resistence;
I wole not don so gret offence;
For if I dide, it were no skile (avail).

These religious and feudal similarities are pointed out by D. D. Griffith in 'An Interpretation of Chaucer's Legend of Good Women,' *Chaucer*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, p. 400. B. L. Jefferson, in 'Queen Anne and Queen Alcestis,' in *Chaucer*, ed. E. Wagenknecht, pp. 405-413, whether the lady sovereign identifies as Queen Anne or not, considers the relationship which exists between an object of love and praise and a great lady of high position.

(昭和53年9月20日受理)