

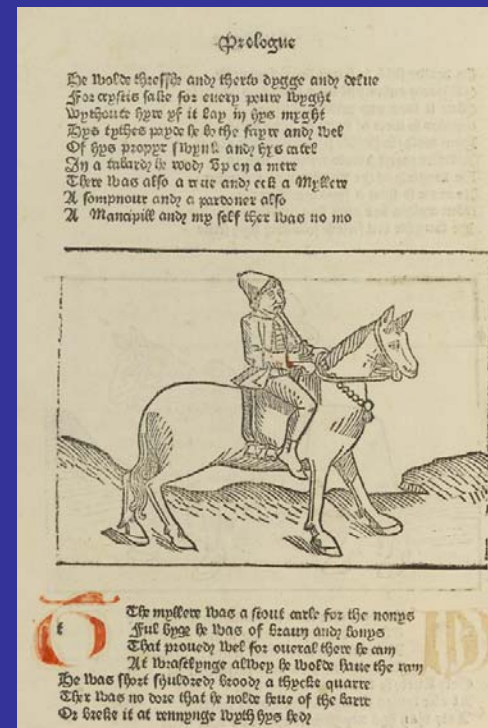
Five British Writers

Day 4





Knight vs. Miller



Which tale seemed most interesting to you?

Order in the Tales!

- The narrator's sense of order

Apology for order (GP 742-746)—like the apology for language (GP 725-738)?

Knight is 1st (Miller is 23rd)

- The host's sense of order

Drawing straws (GP 835-838)

Knight is 1st again.

Choosing a match (Miller's Prologue 3128-3125)

Miller before Monk?!

Knight vs. Miller

Romance:

the dominant mode of secular fictional narrative the Middle Ages, earliest examples crafting pseudo-classical narratives in the vernacular.

Romances usually emphasize aristocratic spectacles, like knightly tournaments, and have courtly love as a theme within a balanced structure of venture and return, risk and success.

The Knight's tale is a rewriting of one of Giovanni Boccaccio's Italian poems, the *Teseida*

Fabliau (plural is Fabliaux):

a short comic tale made popular in medieval France by professional storytellers.

Fabliaux were characterized by vivid detail and realistic observation and were usually comic, coarse, and often cynical, especially in their treatment of women.

Another version of the tale told by the Miller exists in Middle Dutch

Heroic and Comic Love Triangles

How does the Miller 'quite' the Knight?

A Shared Cast and Plot?

A patriarch

an attractive heroine

two suitors:

one suitor wins the woman by violence.

Heroic and Comic Love Triangles: Style

epic similes

simple and short
comparisons

- Knight's Tale
lines 2626-2629
lines 2630-2633

- Miller's Tale
lines 3259-60
line 3704

Heroic and Comic Love Triangles: Heroines

- Knight's Tale
lines 1034-1055

- Miller's Tale
lines 3233-3270

Emilia

Alisoun

Heroic and Comic Love Triangles: The Suitors

Love language:

- Arcite KT 1120-22
- Palamon KT 2242-43
- Nicholas MT 3277-78
- Nicholas MT 3280-81

Love service:

- Arcite KT 1427
- Absolon MT 3376

Innuendo vs. Explicit:

- MT 3274-6
- KT 2331-37

Does Nicholas's grab at
'quentye' change our
interpretation of Venus's
symbolic altar (four
'quentye's in five lines)?

Heroic and Comic Love Triangles: Power!

- Who is in charge?

What is the role of divine agency in each of the tales?

Is Theseus as powerful (or powerless) as the carpenter John?

Heroic and Comic Love Triangles: The Unruly Pilgrim

- Has the Miller's Tale disrupted the balance of power both within the text and in how we read the text?

“sire, I knowe wel that whanne dyverse men and wymmen wolen goen thus aftir her owne willis and fyndingis out on pilgrimageyngis, thei wolen ordeyne bforehonde to have with hem bothe men and wymmen that kunnen wel synge rowtinge songis, and also summe of these pilgrimes wolen have with hem baggepipis so that in eche toun that thei comen through, what with noyse of her syngynge, and with the soun of her pipinge, and with the gingelynge of her Cantirbirie bellis...these maken more noyse than if the king came there away with this clarioneris and manye other mynstrals. And if these men and wymmen ben a monethe oute in her pilgrymage, manye of hem an half yeere aftire schulen be greet jangelers, tale tellers, and lyeris”

William Thorpe [convicted of Lollardy] c. 1407



For Next Week: Body and Text

- Read the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, and read Butler extract (in Media Room).
 - Create your profile!
 - Post question responses!
 - Read classmates' responses!
- A. How is the Wife of Bath's Prologue different from the prologues to the Miller's and Knight's tales?
- B. How does the Wife of Bath's tale represent the relationship between women and power? Compare this representation to the image of female intercession in the Knight's tale.
- C. Judith Butler asks the question "is drag the imitation of gender, or does it constitute the signifying gestures through which gender itself is established?" With this question in mind, do you think we should consider the speaker of the Wife of Bath's tale to be female (the voice of the character) or male (the voice of the writer) or neither? Why?