

The Author-Narrator-Character Relationship in Medieval Narrative Poetry

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(Received September 24, 1991)

Until the first book printed in the English language, William Caxton's *Requyell of the Histories of Troy*, was issued in 1475, the literary population in England had been limited in number and social ranks, and the only way people had enjoyed literary works had been through oral delivery or by reading manuscripts. These had been copied laboriously by hand.¹⁾ The Middle Ages was the period of transition and in the field of literature also, the tradition of oral address was being replaced almost completely by silent scripts which were both accurate and visually enjoyable.²⁾ However, when we read medieval poems or romances, we are immediately aware that there is a narrator, explicitly or tacitly, who is functioning as something like a scop or minstrel in the Old English poetry. His role is to introduce, explain, emphasize or criticize the characters or the events taking place in the poems or romances. It is the aim of this study to see how some of the representative metrical romances in verse utilize this intermediary in advancing the plot as well as interpreting it.

More deeply indebted to the tradition of classical rhetoric than to the Anglo Saxon oral delivery of poems, which had been necessitated by the lack of writing system, and later of parchment, was the practice of making use of a narrator as a vehicle in recounting a story. The formal rhetorical devices adopted by the English medieval poets derived their sources from Cicero's *De Inventione*, *De Rhetorica*, *ad Herennium* and the *Epistle* of Horace. In the late fourteenth century, which is the time of focus in this thesis, *Ars Versificandi* of Matthieu de Vendome

and *Nova Poetria* of Gaufred de Vinsauf, which had been written about a century before, were popular as a norm to follow in composing romantic narrative poetry. They both followed and refined Ciceronean rhetorical principles, and their influence upon Geoffrey Chaucer as well as the authors of *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which are to be studied here, was very profound. D.E. Everett writes, "I believe that, for a number of English poets of the late fourteenth century, *rhetorica* still had some of its old composing function."³⁾ They not only used the artistic devices such as apostrophe, repetition, parallelism or amplification but also depended on them in arrangement or organization of the poems.

Thus the narrator in the poems to be studied here more or less followed this artistic tradition, or rather, they were made to follow it. Moreover, their presence itself in them is in accord with the rhetorical tradition, which makes their structures more complex and adds color to them. D.S. Brewer puts this as follows:

... the prime literary qualities must reside in imaginative verbal structures, and the rhythms with which the act of narration develop them in order to make them comprehensible.⁴⁾

The narrator plays various roles such as a surrogate of an author, a mere story-teller⁵⁾ or one of the main characters of the story. Taking up two narrative poems of Chaucer, the "General Prologue" of the *Canterbury Tales*⁶⁾ and *Troilus and Criseyde*,⁷⁾ and of the so-called Gawain poet, *Pearl*⁸⁾ and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,⁹⁾ as representatives of late medieval literary masterpieces in England, I make a survey of the relationships between the narrator and the author and between

the former and the characters in order to interpret various functions which the narrator performed in front of a present or an absent audience in Middle Ages and to understand his proper value in literary history of England.

The relationship between the narrator and author is no doubt closest when the author presents himself as the narrator by using the first person singular "I." In Old English elegies entitled "The Wife's Lament" and "Seafarer" in Modern English, the writer is "ic," who is a narrator and is either the wife herself or the sailor himself respectively. This pattern of relationship was succeeded in the Middle English period, and we see an example of it in *Pearl*, the same sort of elegiac narrative poem. However, in this case, the object of longing for the author, "I," is his beloved daughter who had been lost or "hit fro me sprange" (l. 13).

The narrator-author begins his apostrophe to her, Pearl, thus:

Perle, plesaunte to prynces paye

To clanky clos in golde so clere,

Oute of oryent, I hardyly saye,

Ne proued I neuer her precios pere. ll.1-4

Thus the audience or the readers immediately recognize their relationship with the personified "Pearl" and expect no more than his subjective lamentation to follow thereafter.

He then describes his strange dream in which he walked through the wood, along the river, which was dividing this and other worlds. The shore was adorned with "beryl bryzt" (l.110) and the bottom of the bank was paved with "emerad, saffer oper gemme gente" (l.118). There he met the girl who was adorned with white pearls, from top to bottom, and earnestly began talking to her. Their dialogue takes turns rather regularly as the following list of the length of each of their speeches shows:

The narrator

"I" — 12 lines (ll.241-252) — the Pearl — 20 lines (ll.257-276)

— "'I'" — 10 lines (ll.279-288) — the Pearl — 35 lines (ll.290-324)

— "I" — 12 lines (ll.324-336) — the Pearl — 24 lines (ll.337-360)

— "I" — 35 lines (ll.361-398) — the Pearl — 23 lines (ll.397-420)

— "I" — 12 lines (ll.421-432) — the Pearl — 33 lines

(ll.433-468)¹⁰⁾

— "I" — 23 lines (ll.469-492)

The speeches were almost always introduced by "quod I" (ll.241, 279, 325, 421, 469), "ho say" (l.256) or "(Pearl) sayde" (ll.289, 338, 398, 433, 494) and the narrator never talks in the form of indirect speech. Generally, direct speech is often employed in order to give vividness upon the narration, and it is true here also. Besides, the repetition of the same construction here no less reduces the effect of earnest and mundane attitude on the part of the narrator-poet. The mechanical exchange of inquiries and answers reminds us of the Catechism, and the long passages by Pearl ensues from the line 500 on to almost the end of the poem (l.1212). This long admonition of Pearl's to the poet is taken from the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Matthew xx:1-16, the vision of the Heavenly City from Revelation xxi and xxii, and the procession of the 144,000 from Revelation¹¹⁾ xiv, and it is as monotonous as any passage of a sermon quoted from the Bible. In this, the narrator seems to have forgotten that Pearl is the heroine of the poem and speaks directly to the audience, taking her place. When Pearl speaks, it is hard to believe that she made these speeches only to be heard by her father, even though she was sagacious enough to answer his question as to why a small child such as she could have been admitted to Heaven as one of Jesus' wives. There are numerous conversations by the "werkmen," "lorde," and the "gentyl" in the first parable.

Therefore, the narrator-poet in this poem seems to use the heroine as a vehicle to attempt to give sermons to the audience or readers. In this respect, he and the heroine come so close to each other that this poem can be said to have a marvellously coherent theme and attitude involving the author, narrator and character. The empathy, however, of the author with Pearl is not apparent in this poem whatsoever and the poet never tells us of her feelings, forethoughts or afterthoughts, even though he himself often reveals his own feeling thus: "Delyt me drof in y3e and ere / My mane3 mynde to maddying malte" (ll.1153-4) or "Me payed ful ille to be outflemed / So sodenly of pat fayre regioun ..." (ll.1177-8), etc. Only the narrator's viewpoint, his wish to believe in God, is always present even where it is Pearl who claims the infinite love of Christ. This monolithic attitude of the poet

is suited well enough as a presentation of this religious subject. In a less unilateral and less Christian Anglo-Saxon poems such as the "Seafarer" or "Wife's Lament," the empathy of narrator "ic" is sometimes extended to other characters and causes us some dismay. It is not to say that Christian poetry is always recounted from one point of view only, but for the didactic purposes. It is certainly more desirable not to have confusion on the part of the speaker.

Another narrative poem in MS Cotton Nero A.x, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*¹²⁾ also makes use of a narrator, whose relationship with the author is not so close as that in the *Pearl*. The narrator is literally narrating a story which has its source in the legend of King Arthur, like the Trojan cycle of stories from which Chaucer took his materials for *Troilus and Criseyde*, Arthurian stories were popular in the Middle Ages, and particularly King Arthur, with his Celtic background, was held in high esteem. The narrator describes him with eulogy:

Bot of alle þat here bult, of Bretayne kynges,
Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle.
For i an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
Ðat a selly in si3t he summe men hit holden,
And an outrage awenture of Arthurez wonderez. ll.25-9

If the author had continued to allow the narrator to reveal his personal opinion in order to add color to the story, these kind of remarks may have appeared throughout the poem. However, this is not the case in the rest of the poem. He only sometimes says "þat I wot" (l.24), "I schal telle ... as I in toun herde" (l.31), "I am in tent yow to telle" (l.624) or "þe bok as I herde say" (l.690), mainly at the beginning of this narration. We become less aware of the presence of the narrator toward the end of the story.

On the other hand, the degree of the author's subconscious inclination to identify himself with the narrator seems to increase in the latter half of the poem when Gawain's adventure culminates. The author allows the narrator to disclose the inner thoughts of only one character, the King, in the preparatory stage of the adventure as we see in this passage: (This hanselle hatz Arthur of auenturus on fyrst / In 3onge 3er,) for he 3erned 3elpyng to here (ll.491-2). Or, the narrator describes only a general atmosphere of the Arthurian court in the face

of the Green Knight's defiance as in the following:

Dere watz much derue doel driuen in þe sale
Ðat so wrothe as Wawan schulde wende on þat ernde,
To dry3e a delful dynt, and dele no more wyth bronde.
ll.558-61

Al þat se3 þat semly syked in hert,
And sayde soþly al same segges til oper,
Carande for þat comly ... ll.672-4

Then in the Green Castle where Gawain stayed on the way to his destined place to meet the Green Knight's blow, he had a pleasant time with the lord of the castle and his wife. The narrator describes Gawain's hilarious mood and the amenity of the couple as follows:

Ðe lorde laches hym by þe lappe and ledez hym to sytte,
And couply hym knowez and callez hym his nome,
And sayde he watz þe welcomest wy3e of the worlde;
And he hym ponkked þroly, and ayper halched oper,
And seten soberly samen þe seruise quyle.
Denne lyst þe lady to loke on þe kny3t,
Denne com ho of hir closet with mony cler burdez.
ll.936-42

Even when the wife enticed Gawain for three consecutive nights, the author-narrator goes on describing both his and her feelings almost always alternately in a leisurely and patient way at rather regular intervals:

The first night:

Gawain (ll.1189-90), Lady (ll.1191-4);
Gawain (ll.1198-9), Lady (ll.1204-7);
Lady (ll.1282-3), Gawain (ll.1284-9)

The second night:

Gawain (ll.1468-71), Lady (ll.1472-5);
Lady (ll.1549-53);
Lady (ll.1659-60), Gawain (ll.1661-3)

The third night:

Lady (ll.1733-45). Gawain (ll.1750-6);
Gawain (ll.1770-8);
Gawain (ll. 1821), Lady (ll.1824-6), Gawain
(ll.1855-63)

In all these scenes, the author assigns the narrator to act as a story-teller who knows all features of the story including the inner thoughts of the hero and the heroine. At the same time the narrator does not mention at all what the Green Knight (= the lord of the castle) was thinking

or really aiming at in order to increase tension and interest on the part of the audience. The author's manipulation of the narrator is perfect as the narrator appears again toward the end of the poem with the noncommittal "as I haf herde telle (l.1144), "as I trowe" (l.1347) or "3if he ne slepe soundyly, say ne dar I" (l.1991). Then our narrator needs to remind the audience of the fact that he is telling a legendary story, not of his own invention, as the marvellous last stage of adventure is approaching.¹³⁾ Thus the author is in full command of the narrator, who is given a partial empathy towards the characters in the story.

When we come to Chaucer, who is a contemporary of the Pearl-Gawain poet but whose dialect is that of the Southeast Midlands,¹⁴⁾ we find a somewhat similar relationship of the author and the narrator with that of the Gawain poet. In the "General Prologue" of the *Canterbury Tales*, the narrator is used as an important vehicle to advance the story, as it was a usual method in medieval story telling. In this, the Gawain-poet and Chaucer are similar. However, the degree of closeness of the relationship between the author and the narrator is different. We find a more detached air and individualistic flavour in the latter poet. If we take this attitude as more personal and modern, it is interesting to know the poems dealt with here all belong to the same period.¹⁵⁾

In the "General Prologue" the narrator very often says "(as) I gesse," "I trowe," "I seigh"¹⁶⁾ perhaps for the sake of rhyme or rhythm in many cases. He blurs his point by saying, for instance, "I noot how men hym calle" (l.284) about the merchant, "Of his array telle I no lenger tale" (l.330) about the sergeant of law, or "But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe" (l.462) about the husbands of the Wife of Bath. This gives a detached air to his speech and makes him somewhat evasive of responsibility toward the quality of the stories to follow. Moreover, the narrator spends some time apologizing for his possible lack of ability to please the audience by his presentation, as humbleness on the part of a narrator was a usual custom then. The speech of the narrator in the "Prologue" goes beyond this and gives an impression of pretended detachment when he says,

But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,
That ye n'arete it nat my vileynye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere,

To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
For this ye knowen al so wel as I. ll.725-30

On the other hand, the narrator there goes boldly into the inside of the characters, as it was sometimes the case with the narrator in *Gawain*. For instance, in talking about the Prioress, he says, "In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest" (l.132) just by looking at her manners and listening to her speech, or he says the Merchant "wolde the see were kept for any thyng / Bitwixe Mid-delburgh and Orewelle" (ll.276-7), only making an assumption as to the Merchant's wish. Of course, it is natural for a narrator to tell the background or history of an event or a person, for instance in the case of the Knight and his widespread expeditions, but in the above passages we find his confident, definite way of presenting another's likes and dislikes or desires. In other words, the narrator is, though not always, assigned to have an all-round empathy with his characters, and this fact gives us some confusion when we become used to his aloofness and slightly mocking detachment as we saw before. When he talks about himself as one of the pilgrims in point, as we will see, this all-knowing attitude of his seems still more awkward.

The relationship between the author (Chaucer), and the narrator is more unstable in *Troilus and Criseyde* which is Chaucer's representative love poem based on the legendary story of Troy¹⁷⁾ than in the *Canterbury Tales*. Like the narrator of the "Prologue" who declared his role as a narrator in the poem thus,

..., whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me ll.34-8

the narrator of *Troilus* begins the poem impressing on the audience that he is the writer of the poem:

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovyng, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thow help me for t'endite
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write. ll.1-7

He describes the inchoate stage of Troilus' love rather objectively but little by little, he goes into Troilus' mind, saying, for instance, "Out of the temple al esilich he wente, / Repentyng hym that he hadde evere ijaped / Of Loves folk ..." (I-317-9) and "His woo he gan dissimulen and hide" (I-322). His heart was full of love toward Criseyde then and "Right with hire look thorough-shoten and thorough-darted, / Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth" (II-324-6). He goes on describing Troilus' joy and yearning in the lines beginning at III-350, 422, 531, 1060, 1530, 1793, etc. and his sorrow after Criseyde is gone in the lines beginning at IV-150, V-450, 580, etc.

The writer also reveals Criseyde's feeling as if he has an empathy for her, for instance, when he says:

Criseyde, which that koude as muche good
As half a world, took hede of his preiere;
And syn it ron, and al was on a flod,
She thoughte, 'As good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a frendes chere,
And have a thonk, as grucche and thanne abide
(III-638-43).

Toward the end of the poem, the author is increasingly indirect or vague in explaining Criseyde's deeds. He says it is beyond his ability to describe Criseyde's sorrow in parting from Troilus.¹⁸⁾ After it became clear that Criseyde does not return to Troy, he has recourse to Goddess of Fortune for her deceit. He says, "but longe may they (= Troilus and Pandarus¹⁹⁾) seche / Er that they fynde that they after cape. / Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape!" (V-1132-4).

The narrator detaches himself from the author as he says, "Nought list myn auctour fully to declare / What that she thoughte whan he seyde so²⁰⁾, / That Troilus was out of towne yfare, / As if he seyde therof soth or no" (III-575-8), or when he concludes the climax of their love, saying thus:

Thorough yow have I seyde fully in my song
Th'effect and joie of Troilus servise,
Al be that ther was some disese among,
As to myn auctour listeth to devise. III-1814-7

Considering the fact that these words are uttered before the catastrophe occurs it may well be said that the narrator prepares himself to evade the censure from the audience about Criseyde's deceit because he has been so

enthusiastic about the accomplishment of their love. Then at the end when Criseyde did actually deceive Troilus to go to Diomedes, the narrator hastens to a conclusion as if trying to escape from the goring scene by saying, "The morwen com, and gostly for to speke, / This Diomedes is come unto Criseyde; / And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke, / So wel he for hymselfen spak and seyde / That alle hire sikes soore adown he leyde; (V-1030-4). He further pretends that he does not know how long it took Diomedes to gain Criseyde's love (V-1086-90), and finally when Troilus saw his brooch on Diomedes' sleeve which had been given to Criseyde as a token of love, he says that Troilus knew very well that "His lady nas no longer on to triste" (V-1665-7) and gives a detached air to the scene by saying "as seith the storie" (V-1651) and "as telleth Lollius²¹⁾" (V-1653). He is busy trying to get away from the cruel scene of Troilus' and in desperation says, "Swich is this world, whoso it kan byholde; / In ech estat is litel hertes reste. / God leve us for to take it for the beste!" (V-1748-50). Then he implores a favour on the part of the audience who may have felt disgusted about Criseyde by saying, "That al be that Criseyde was untrewe, / That for that gilt she be nat wroth with me. / Ye may hire giltes in other bokes se;" (V-1774-6).

At the very end the narrator seems not only to try and evade the responsibility of narrating such a deceitful story but also to eliminate the presence of the original book of *Troilus* altogether. He wishes the work to vanish and says, "Go, litel bok, go" (V-1786). It is not a true recantation as we find, for instance, at the end of the *Canterbury Tales* but it merely shows the narrator's reluctance to keep himself involved with such a tragedy that was caused by the infidelity of fickle Criseyde. There is a distance between the author and the narrator here. It means that there is quite a different relationship between them now in comparison with the beginning of the story, even though in this narration, the narrator does not say clearly that he stands so close to the author that he almost identifies himself as the later.

Among the four narrative poems taken up in this thesis, the two are similar when we come to look at the relationship of the narrator and the character, mainly a hero or a heroine. *Troilus* and *Gawain* never present their narrators as one of characters in the story, whereas the ones in *Pearl* and the "Prologue" do.

In *Pearl* the narrator is naturally one of the main characters in the poem as the author uses the first person singular in the narrative. One can describe one's sorrows as well as joys more thoroughly than any person does if the narrator is "I." The emotional involvement of the narrator with Pearl is almost like a romantic love between a man and a woman. The following statement of Bethurum about the medieval love romance may help explain the situation that the authors were very close emotionally with a hero or a heroine of his own making.

The convention exemplified in the love visions of Machaut, Froissart, and other of Chaucer's near contemporaries is that the narrator of the events — or sentiments — is himself implicated in them and writes from experience.²²⁾

In Boccaccio's version of the story of Troilus and Criseyde also, the narrator is so emotionally involved with the hero that he and Troilus sound like one and the same person at times. As the relationship between the author and the narrator in this case is also so close as to be regarded almost identical, the equation brings about the result that the author here equals the hero, Troilus.

The author, Boccaccio, talks about this relationship in the prologue to his *Filostrato*:

And the means was this: in the person of some impassioned one, such as I was and am, to relate my suffering in song. I began therefore to turn over in my mind with great care ancient stories, in order to find one that would serve in all color of likelihood as a mask for my sweet and amorous grief. Nor did other more apt for such a need occur to me than the valiant young Troilus.²³⁾

It means that the act of writing this love poem was almost cathartic for the author. Boccaccio felt like Troilus as he wrote the poem.

In the case of Chaucer, however, the author is often treated by the narrator as someone who is the only one that is responsible for the occurrence of the events in the story. The narrator himself fluctuates, deliberately or not, about the responsible matter as we already saw on p.157. The fact that Chaucer is so subtle about the role of the narrator shows his skill in composing the narrative. His sensitivity to the audience's response toward the story makes him calculate when to suspend the plot or to have the narrator take a dilatory attitude.

In the "General Prologue" of the *Canterbury Tales*, however, Chaucer does not blur the position of the narrator so much, though he sometimes perhaps deliberately pretends his ignorance, saying, "I noot how men hym calle" (l.284) about the merchant or "And I seyde his opinion was good" (l.183) when it seems that he actually did not believe in what he was saying. Moreover, the author-narrator clearly declares himself to be one of the characters participating in the pilgrimage. He says so not only at the beginning of the "Prologue" (ll.20-42) but also in the recantation at the end (ll.1080-1092). No wonder he seems at home in narrating the pilgrim's profiles and presiding over the presentation of the various stories. Although his status is sometimes not so clear, as mentioned above, there is a coherent close identity of himself and the one in the poem.

In *Troilus*, Chaucer never identifies the narrator with the hero. Even though the narrator sometimes talks as if he knows the inner thoughts and emotions of Troilus more than himself as we saw on P.157. The narrator is never in the lover's position. In *Gawain*, the narrator remains to be a story-teller, does not identify himself with characters such as Gawain or the Green Knight throughout the poem.

Notes:

1. See Chapter IV "Caxton and the Printing Press" in George H. McKnight, *The Evolution of the English Language*, Dover Publications, New York, 1956, pp.58-69.
2. At the same time, we have to think of our habit of reading stories aloud to others as D.R. Howard says, "Writers still read orally, if only to their wives, and they may well imagine themselves speaking aloud as they compose." "Chaucer the Man," *Publication of Modern Language Association* 80, 1965, p.339.
3. D.E. Everett, "Some Reflections on Chaucer's 'Art Poetica,'" in J.A. Burrow ed. *Middle English Literature*, British Academy Gollancz Lectures, Oxford University Press, 1989, p.23.
4. D.S. Brewer, "Towards a Chaucerian Poetic," in J.A. Burrow, *Op. Cit.* p.164.
5. In the Middle Ages, the romances and narrative poetry mostly took after legends or older materials.
6. Larry D. Benson assigns the years between 1388 and 1392 for the writing of the General Prologue part of

- the *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. The dialect in which this and another of Chaucer's poems taken up in this thesis is that of the East and Central Midlands. The texts and the statement above are based on Larry D. Benson ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1987.
7. The date of the composition of *Troilus and Criseyde* is some time between 1382 and 1386. *Op. Cit.* p.xxix.
 8. *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are in MS Cotton Nero A.x. with two other poems. The author is unknown.
About the date of the composition of *Pearl*, E.V. Gordon says, "*Pearl* cannot be dated with any precision. The downward limit is fixed by the date of the manuscript, which is not later than c.1400." E.V. Gordon ed. *Pearl*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1974, p.xliii. The text of *Pearl* is based on this version. The dialect of both poems belongs to the Northwest Midlands.
 9. About the date of the composition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Norman Davis says what is similar to Benson's: "*Gawain* cannot be dated precisely. The latest possible date is obviously that of the manuscript, which can hardly be later than 1400." J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1977, p.xxv.
 10. The number of lines differ from the number which can be figured out from the line numbers in the parentheses, that is, $468 - 433 = 35$, not 33, because a narrative description, for instance, in this case, "penne sayde þat gaye, / Knelande to grounde, folde vp hyr face," (ll.432-433) is inserted.
 11. Gordon, *Op.Cit.* p.xxix.
 12. Gordon says that most of those who have studied the poems (*The Pearl*, *Sir Gawain*, *Purity* and *Patience*: the items in this parentheses are added by Kobayashi) in detail have come to the opinion that they are composed by the same author. Gordon, *Op.cit.* p.xli.
 13. The words in the lines 1144 and 1347 are uttered when describing the lord's hunting, perhaps because the luxurious and barbarous way of the hunting was something beyond the ordinary, reserved speech of the narrator.
 14. F.N. Robinson ed., *The Complete Works of Chaucer*, Oxford University Press, London, 1974, p.xxx.
 15. The date of the composition of the "General Prologue" is mentioned in note 6, and that of the rest of the *Canterbury Tales* is between 1391 and 1400, though some of the individual stories, particularly traditional ones, may have been written earlier. *Op.cit.* p.xxix.
 16. The text is Larry D. Benson ed., *Op.cit.*
See also Robinson ed., *Op. cit.* Note 14 above.
The examples of this type of phrase are found in the following lines.
I gesse — 1.82; as I gesse — 1.117; I trowe — 11.115, 524, 691; as I was war — 1.157; I seigh — 1.192; i undertake — 1.288; For aught I woot — 1.389; I dorste swere — 1.454; of which I telle — 1.619; wel I woot — 1.659; wol I telle — 1.723
 17. The immediate source of the story is Boccaccio's *II Filostrato*. Cf. pp.810-813 of Robinson, *Op.Cit* and pp. 1020-1025 of Benson, *Op. Cit.*
 18. Cf. How myghte it evere yred ben or ysonge,
The pleynte that she made in hire destresse?
I not; but, as for me, my litel tongue,
If I discryven wolde hire hevynesse,
It sholde make hire sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hire heigh compleynte, and therefore ich it pace. IV
799-805.
 19. Parenthesized words are by Kobayashi.
 20. "So" here refers to that-clause following this line.
 21. Robinson says, "Chaucer's own attribution of his original to 'myn auctour called Lollius' (I 394) has been the subject of much discussion." Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.812.
 22. Dorothy Bethurum, "Chaucer's Point of View as Narrator in the Love Poems," Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor eds., *Chaucer Criticism II*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1971, p.211.
 23. John M. Flyer, *Chaucer and Ovid*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1979, p.128.

中世英文学における作者と語り手と登場人物の関係

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(平成3年9月24日受理)

中世英文学では口誦時代を過ぎてもなお語り手が重要な役割を果たすが、語り手と書き手と登場人物の間には複雑な関係がある。一人称の語り手がそのまま作者でもあり、作中の主人公の一人である場合もあり、伝聞形式であって、他に著者が居て、語り手と登場人物の間に距離がある場合もあり、語り手が感情移入したり、作者の立場に

立ったり、と瞬時的な位置に居る場合もある。いわゆる Pearl-poet の作とされる「真珠」, 「サー・ガウェインと緑の騎士」, それとチャーサーの二作品を例にとって調べると、Pearl-poet の作品は前二者に該当し、チャーサーの作品は第三の場合に該当するという論拠を呈示した。