

Toole, JK
612 JL
Dr. Tumiansky
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I

In this excerpt, the Prioress is attempting to distinguish between the monk in the tale and the realistic and worldly monk on the pilgrimage. Thus, the purposeful attempt to qualify the man's character.

II

Trivium and quadrivium are the names given two courses of study in the Medieval universities. The trivium is composed of grammar, rhetoric, and logic and leads to the Bachelor of Arts degree. The quadrivium is composed of geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, and music and leads to the Master of Arts degree. These two courses were the staples of the Medieval university curricula.

III

Fabliau is the name given those Medieval stories which are characterized by bawdiness. As opposed to the Romances, they normally center about certain pornographically stock situations. Chaucer's, Miller's, Reeves', Shipman's and Merchant's Tales are fabliaux but are notable in that they contain greater detail of setting and character, greater involvement, less filth-for-filth's sake, and in certain cases combine the element of the exempla with the fabliaux.

IV

This phrase seems to suggest the state of two people in the tales. One is Constance on the boat of the Man of Law's Tale, the other is Paloman when he is the sole inhabitant of the prison.

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V

This is a cutting remark on the part of Harry Bailly which is addressed to the Cook in connection with his meat pies. Not only was food contamination fairly wide-spread in 14th century England, but also there might understandably exist a degree of antagonism between an innkeeper and the Cook who supplies his inn's food--or, any Cook for that matter.

VI

Harry Bailly "smelle(s) a Lollere in the wynd" in the epilogue to the Man of Law's Tale when the parish priest suggests he refrain from using such colorful language. This is a very clever come-back, incorporating the purity and reform of the Lollard movement which would naturally frown upon (unnecessary) cursing.

VII

The Malady of Love describes a condition common among lovers in which the body literally wasted away from the mental torture of unrequited love. Sleep was difficult, and the heart burned so that the lover was forced to emit sighs. It is alluded to in the case of Arcite in The Knight's Tale who suffers exceedingly after he has left imprisonment in Athens. Finally, his appearance changes.

VIII

This excerpt is taken from the opening lines of the Shipman's Tale and this and other lines, because of their use of "us" as a feminine pronoun, suggest that this tale was originally intended for the Wife of Bath.

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IX

"Swain brotherhood" had to do with the knightly oaths of loyalty. This oath of brotherhood became stronger at times even above the marriage vow. The term and its implications occur in The Knight's Tale.

More realistic is its application to the guilds of the day and thereby would include the haberdasher and the other guildsmen on the pilgrimage.

X Pyncheck was a contemporary Seargent of Law at Chaucer's time when Chaucer is supposedly satirizing in his sketch of the Man of Law. He appears a pompous, superficially wise man who is basically not so intelligent as he himself supposes. It is Manly who has an illuminating discussion upon this.

XI

Choleric is the name of one of the four states in which men may be. The others are sanguine, melancholy, and phlegmatic. In the Canterbury Tales, the Reeve is described as being choleric, and this suggests that he is generally short-tempered and irascible.

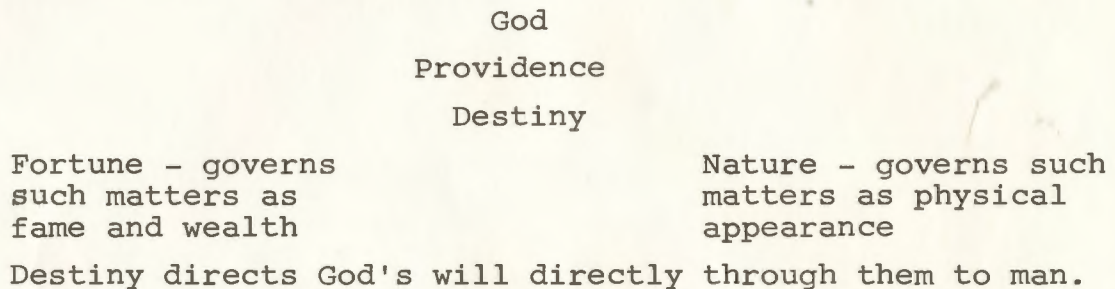
XII

Prime is one of the divisions of the day, from midnight until two a.m. Half-way prime would indicate that the hour was one o'clock in the morning. The Medieval day was divided into such segments as matin, seste and tirce.

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XIII

Fortune and nature are, together, on the bottom rung of what might be called the Boethian hierarchy. A simple diagram may explain their functions:



XIV The scriptona were the writing establishments in which monks acted as the printers and publishers of their day. For a fee they would copy any manuscript, the quality of work depending upon the fee. From them passed many apocryphal versions of the Canterbury Tales. A valuable product of the scriptona is the Ellesmere Manuscript which suggests an extremely high price was paid the monks.

XV

Egens' philosophy is notably Boethian and is not out of context in The Knight's Tale. After the lists have resulted in almost double tragedy he, as Theseus' father, attempts to make some "consolation" by suggesting that these events must be accepted. The thread of Boethian runs throughout this tale.