

WHY IS *SIR THOPAS* INTERRUPTED?

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I

When we read *Sir Thopas* for the first time, we feel first of all that it is a very curious tale, and some questions arise as a result. Why does the poet Chaucer assign to the Pilgrim Chaucer the role of the narrator of *Sir Thopas*, which is interrupted and bitterly criticized by the Host as the "rym dogerel" and being "nat worth a toord"? Also the questions arise as to how the other Pilgrims responded to the tale and, in particular, how a court audience would have evaluated it if it was read aloud before them. Above all, the question why it is interrupted arouses our interest most. *Sir Thopas* is one of the four unfinished tales in *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Canterbury Tales* itself is, we can say, an unfinished work. Is *Sir Thopas* an unfinished and incomplete work? Chaucer may have got tired of his playful burlesque and at last abandoned it unfinished. Or for some reasons he may have deliberately left it incomplete, that is, he may with some intention have had the Host interrupt the tale.

Sir Thopas is the only tail-rhyme romance in *The Canterbury Tales* and belongs to Fragment VII. This tale is told by the Pilgrim Chaucer himself after *The Prioress' Tale* and followed by *The Tale of Melibee* which is also narrated by the Pilgrim Chaucer. To this group also belong *The Shipman's Tale*, *The Monk's Tale*, which is interrupted by the Knight, and *The Nun's Priest's Tale* as the last tale of this fragment.

The following points arouse our interest in this romance: only Chaucer tells two tales in succession as a result of the interruption of *Sir Thopas*; and

Sir Thopas stands out in sharp contrast to *Melibee* in terms of content, style and length.

The Hengwrt Manuscript, for instance, argues for this remarkable contrast between *Sir Thopas* and *Melibee*. Regarding *Sir Thopas*, tail lines are written separately on the right-hand of each stanza, and couplet rhymes and rhyming tail lines are connected by brackets.¹ *Sir Thopas*, therefore, takes on a geometrical figure. As for *Melibee*, written in prose, its length, in contrast to that of *Sir Thopas*, which is cut short, and its massed letters in deep black, kindle our interest. Thus the two tales are visually unique.

Moreover, in *The Prologue to Sir Thopas*, the Pilgrim Chaucer is depicted from the point of view of the Host in place of the description of the Pilgrims made by Chaucer in *The General Prologue*. Audience and readers for the first time can catch a glimpse of the Pilgrim Chaucer.

In *The Canterbury Tales* are included four unfinished tales: *Sir Thopas*, *The Monk's Tale*, *The Cook's Tale*, and *The Squire's Tale*. Among them only *Sir Thopas* and *The Monk's Tale* work organically in the fragment. In *The Prologue to Sir Thopas*, Chaucer says that he learned the romance long ago. This may show that Chaucer the poet effectively used for Fragment VII an unfinished burlesque which is one of his early writings, or he may have composed an interrupted tail-rhyme romance intentionally from the first.

The various questions and characteristics mentioned above are enough to prove that *Sir Thopas* is a unique and very interesting tale in various respects. This tale arouses numerous questions. Although the relationship of *Sir Thopas* to *Melibee* and Fragment VII must be taken into consideration in order to discuss *Sir Thopas*, in this essay the focus is on the interpretation of the interruption of the tale. Making a comparison between the interruption of *Sir Thopas* and that of *The Monk's Tale* will help the development of the discussion. The relationship between narrator and audience also will provide clues to Chaucer's intention of interrupting *Sir Thopas*.

II

One of the characteristics of Fragment VII, as mentioned above, is that two interrupted tales are included in this group. Various tragedies told by the Monk are interrupted by the Knight. The reason why he interrupts the Monk's performance is that he refuses to listen to heavy and tragic stories any more. He asks for pleasant tales instead. The Host, who joins the Knight's interruption, mentions some of the principles which a narrator must obey.

Whereas a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence.
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thyng shal weþ reported be. (VII; 2801–2804)²

If audiences fall asleep while a narrator tells his story, then the story, even if it were a very instructive one, was told in vain.

In Fragment VII tales of diverse genres are narrated. A. T. Gaylord points out that the coherent theme of Fragment VII is "the art of story telling."³ To put it another way, one theme of the fragment is the relationship between a narrator and his audience. It can be said that the principles which the Host points out are those of the court poet Chaucer.⁴ This relation between narrator and audience is crucial in considering the meanings of the interruption of *Sir Thopas*.

The question how English people in the age of Chaucer enjoyed and appreciated so-called literature is very important in considering the relation between narrator and audience. Let us consider how *The Canterbury Tales* was enjoyed and appreciated in medieval England—in the age of manuscripts, that is, before *The Canterbury Tales* was printed by William Caxton. We, living in the age of printing, read and enjoy a printed novel alone at a

desk or somewhere else. But medieval people appreciated literature in various ways. Let us consider three ways of enjoying and appreciating literature in the works of Chaucer and in an illustration of a manuscript.

In *The Book of Duchess* there appears a scene where the narrator is spending a wakeful night reading a book.

So when I saw I might not slepe
 Til now late, this other night,
 Upon my bed I sat upright
 And bad oon reche me a book,
 A romaunce, and he it me tok
 To rede, and drive the night away;
 For me thoughte it beter play
 Then play either at ches or tables. (44-51)

Here the narrator reads a book with his own eyes as modern readers do.

In *Troilus and Criseyde* another way of appreciation is depicted. The scene is as follows: when Pandarus visits Criseyde, she, with two other ladies, are enjoying the tale of the siege of Thebes, having a maiden read it aloud.

Whan he was come unto his neces place,
 "Wher is my lady?" to hire folk quod he;
 And they hym tolde, and he forth in gan pace,
 And fond two othere ladys sete, and she,
 Withinne a paved parlour, and they thre
 Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
 Of the siege of Thebes, while hem leste. (II, 78-84)

In this scene the way of appreciation by having someone read a book aloud is described. In this case a number of people are enjoying a tale together. Therefore, as a matter of course, they may state their impressions and discuss some points about the tale after they finish listening to it. Or one of them may comment on the tale while they are listening to it.

Finally, there is the case where a poet himself reads aloud his own work

before audiences—especially courtiers, in the case of Chaucer. This case is shown concretely in an illustration of the manuscript of *Troilus and Criseyde* in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. In this picture Chaucer is standing at the pulpit and reading aloud a book (perhaps his own work, *Troilus and Criseyde*) before noblemen and courtiers. When a poet himself reads aloud his own work, perhaps his performance is different from others' in that he is more at home with his own work. It is not certain whether Chaucer himself read *The Canterbury Tales* aloud before court audiences. If he did so, those audiences must particularly have enjoyed *The Canterbury Tales* in which Chaucer himself appears as a Pilgrim. In particular *Sir Thopas* which is read aloud by the poet Chaucer himself must have had a different effect on its audience.

When composing *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer must have taken the three ways of appreciation mentioned above into consideration. In the Middle Ages, as R. Crosby says, "the masses of the people read by means of the ear rather than the eye."⁵ To poets and audiences, words caught through the ears were more important than those through the eyes. The third way of appreciation, above all, must have occupied Chaucer's creative mind when composing *Sir Thopas*.

Sir Thopas is a burlesque, be its target Flemish bourgeois who are eager to imitate the court culture and chivalry in France and England, or fifteenth-century minstrelsy, or well-known tail-rhyme romances which have no flavor of refined original French romances.⁶ This is, however, an interpretation of modern scholars.

We wish to discover how medieval English people interpreted *Sir Thopas*. In *The Canterbury Tales* it is not depicted how the Pilgrims other than the Host responded to or interpreted *Sir Thopas*. However, in *The Prologue to The Miller's Tale* some responses of the Pilgrims to *The Knight's Tale* are mentioned in some detail.

Whan that the Knyght had thus his tale ytold,
 In al the route nas ther yong ne oold
 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
 And worthy for to drawen to memorie;
 And namely the gentils everichon. (I, 3109–3113)

The Pilgrims, both young and old alike, admire *The Knight's Tale* as "a noble storie," worthy to memorize. It is also said that the tale was accorded a favorable reception especially among "the gentils." With regard to *Sir Thopas* we can know only the bitter criticism of the Host. How did courtiers interpret the tale? One might say that it is not possible to know how English people in the age of Chaucer interpreted and appreciated the tale. But somewhere there must be a clue to solving this question.

"Rym dogerel" marks the climax of the harsh criticism of the Host.

"Namoore of this, for Goddes dignitee,"
 Quod oure Hooste, "for thou makest me
 So wery of thy verray lewednesse
 That, also wisly God my soule blesse,
 Myne eres aken of thy drasty speche.
 Now swich a rym the devel I biteche!
 This may wel be rym dogerel," quod he. (VII, 919–925)

The Host might have used this phrase to mock at both the rhyme and the Pilgrim Chaucer who like a dog was staring on the ground, as it were, to find a hare⁷. By "rym dogerel" the Host would have meant "a nonsensical rhyme like a bark of a dog." According to the *O. E. D.* and *M. E. D.*, this word "dogerel" "was used only as a proper noun before Chaucer, and so the poet Chaucer, or the Host, used it as an adjective for the first time in the history of the English language. This word is also memorable because the Host, who is a literary critic as well as the judge of the contest of story-telling in *The Canterbury Tales*, employed it as a critical term for the first time in the history

of English literary criticism.

Is *Sir Thopas*, as the Host says, really “rym dogerel nat worth a toord”? Is this tale doomed to oblivion for ever? Fortunately, a poet who recognizes the true value of this romance which suffered the Host’s severe criticism appears in Scotland. He is William Dunbar, the Scottish Chaucerian, who composed a short tail-rhyme romance, “Schir Thomas Norny,” on the model of *Sir Thopas*.⁸ This poem is composed of nine tail-rhyme stanzas and its rhyme scheme is *aabccb*. According to J. M. Manly, this is the basic rhyme scheme of *Sir Thopas*.⁹ “Schir Thomas Norny” begins with the following stanzas:

Now lythis off ane gentill knycht
 Schir Thomas Norny, wys and wycht
 And full off chevelry,
 Quhais father was ane giand keyne—
 His mother was ane farie queyne
 Gottin be sossery.

Ane fairar knycht nor he was ane
 On ground may nothair ryd nor gane
 Na beire bukлар nor brand,
 Or cum in to this court, but dreid;
 He did full mony valzeant deid
 In Rois and Murray land.¹⁰

On the one hand this poem is said to be a satire on *miles gloriosus*; on the other hand, as E. R. Eddy says, this is a burlesque whose target is a fool who was serving the Scottish court when Dunbar composed the poem.¹¹ This poem is comic rather than bitterly satirical as a whole. It can also be said that this is a burlesque on chivalry as depicted in traditional romances. T. Scott mentions that “Schir Thomas Norny” is “a burlesque on the tradition of the romantic knight, which suggests that the guying of the chivalric code was now favourite entertainment at court . . . and probably good materials for jesters.”¹²

Sir Thomas Norny was borne by a fairy queen and his father was a giant. This shows a humorous link with *Sir Thopas*. He was famous for his military prowess, always won the victory at the tournaments, defeated villains and remained unbeaten in wrestling matches, and surpassed others in dancing as well. Moreover, he was more distinguished than wild Robin in shooting and more renowned than Sir Bevis. The narrator, however, says ironically at the end of some stanzas that he does not know whether these things he has narrated are true or not, and that only Sir Thomas Norny knows whether these are lies. He ends his narration with this stanza:

Quhairfoir ever at Pesche and Bull
 I cry him lord off evere full
 That in this regeone duellis;
 And verralie that war gryt rycht
 For, off ane hy renowned knyght,
 He wantis no thing bot bellis.¹³

In the last line of the last stanza the narrator says that this renowned and seemingly perfect knight wanted nothing except bells.

Sir Thopas outlived the harsh criticism of the Host: "Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!" *Sir Thopas* produced "Schir Thomas Norny." For those who have powers of appreciation, *Sir Thopas* continued to live as a burlesque. Dunbar's poem seems to give us a clue to the response of cultivated courtiers, if we assume that Dunbar himself was one of them.

The Host who interrupts *Sir Thopas* in *The Canterbury Tales* is a member of the audience as well as the judge of a story-telling game, who passes judgment on the tales told by the Pilgrims. In respect to the audience, we can say that there are two kinds: the fictional audience (the Pilgrims) who listen to the various tales in *The Canterbury Tales*, and the real audience (for example, the court audience) who hear someone read aloud *The Canterbury Tales*. These two kinds of audience are listening to *Sir Thopas* together. When

the Host interrupts and severely criticizes *Sir Thopas*, the real audience who are listening to the tale, if they have a keener sense of appreciation than the Host, will possibly laugh at the Host's incompetency as a judge and literary critic. When a tale is narrated to some listeners, if there is a difference in their powers of appreciation, their various responses to the tale themselves provoke laughter. This sort of laughter is not provoked when we read the tale alone at a desk. Chaucer must have kept this effect in mind when he had the Host stop *Sir Thopas*.

Let us consider here why the poet Chaucer intentionally had the Pilgrim Chaucer tell an interrupted and "dogerel" romance. I have already said that *Sir Thopas*, when read aloud by Chaucer himself, must have had a different effect on the audience. It appears that, in *The Canterbury Tales*, the Host was not aware that the Pilgrim who narrated *Sir Thopas* was Chaucer, the court poet. For the Host, *Sir Thopas* was told by a mere Pilgrim and was nothing but a worthless, unpleasant, and nonsensical tale, a piece of rubbish. Yet for those who knew Chaucer well, the mere fact that such a famous and refined and talented poet as Chaucer narrated such a comic, playful, and, furthermore, interrupted and harshly criticized tale as *Sir Thopas* provokes laughter. For example, let us imagine a situation where some famous talented singer sings a song completely out of tune. On the one hand, those who do not know the singer at all will certainly say, "Stop your discordant song for mercy's sake! My ears ache." Those who know the singer and his or her talent very well, on the other, will admire the song and say, "How completely and artistically discordant your song is! I'm sure that it will be much more difficult for you to sing out of tune deliberately like that than to sing in tune." If Chaucer himself had read aloud *Sir Thopas* before an audience who knew him well, his performance would have provoked much more laughter than others would have.

III

One of the characteristics of Fragment VII, as mentioned above, is that in this group two interrupted tales are included. Here I want to examine how the two tales are interrupted.¹⁴

First, I want to examine how *The Monk's Tale* is interrupted. *The Monk's Tale* is interrupted by the Knight. In an early form of the Monk-Nun's Priest Link, however, the Host interrupts the tale. In his first plan Chaucer seems to have intended to have the Host stop the tale.¹⁵ If so, he changed his plan. This change shows how he took pains over the way of interruption.

The Monk's Tale is said to be one of Chaucer's early writings. The fact that Chaucer put the episode of Bernabo Visconti of Lombardy, still vivid in people's memory, into the tale shows that he modified and developed his study to set it organically in Fragment VII.

Although *The Monk's Tale* seems to be unfinished, its completeness, if examined in detail, is apparent. If the Monk does not say that he will tell a hundred tragedies and the Knight does not stop the tale, this tale can be passed off as a complete tale. The fact that the tale ends with a definition of tragedy shows that, although the tale is interrupted and in unfinished form, the poet seems to have regarded it as complete.

Next, I want to consider in detail the way of interruption of *Sir Thopas*, focussing my discussion on where and when the tale is interrupted. To state my conclusion first, though *Sir Thopas* is interrupted and apparently unfinished, the poet likewise considered it complete, as in the case of *The Monk's Tale*.

J. A. Burrow divides *Sir Thopas* into three fits. The First Fit has 18 stanzas, the Second 9, the Third 4 1/2. And as the basic ratio 2:1, according to Macrobius, is productive of a harmonious effect in poetry, Burrow sees in *Sir Thopas* mathematical harmony of form which was created intentionally by

Chaucer. Burrow sees in the ratios 4:2:1 a principle of progressive diminution.¹⁶ He examines the distributing of narrative material between the three fits:

The First Fit is relatively eventful, incorporating the whole basic pattern of romance adventure: the hero sets out from home for strange countries, encounters a dangerous adversary, and returns home safely (though in this case somewhat ignominiously). The Second Fit, by contrast, is almost entirely devoted to a laboriously detailed account of how Thopas dons his armour in preparation for his second encounter with Olifaunt; and in the Third Fit, the hero only has time to mount his good steed and set off once more to find the giant before Harry Bailey interrupts: 'Namoore of this, for Goddes dignitee'. Thus the poem seems to narrow away, section by section, towards nothingness¹⁷

Burrow found a calculated beauty in *Sir Thopas*, even though it is interrupted and apparently incomplete. Of course, only those who read manuscripts and appreciate literature through their own eyes can find this beauty. This privilege is not given to those who enjoy literary works only through their ears.

Regarding its content as well as its form, *Sir Thopas* gives us an impression of being almost a complete tale. *Sir Thopas* is seemingly incomplete because it ends abruptly halfway through the thirty-second stanza where Thopas is about to set off in arms to fight with the giant. Despite this abruptness, however, we can develop the story by ourselves and imagine a denouement because we were told what kind of knight Thopas was. We know his feminine figure, effeminate conduct, and cowardly behavior in the encounter with the giant. If we know the episode of David and Goliath in the Bible, we can see how Thopas' encounter with the giant is comic.¹⁸ F. P. Magoun, Jr., for instance, imagines a denouement thus:

The poet would have told us anon--so he says--"Of bataille and of

chivalry,/ And of ladyes love-drury" (B 2084-86). "Bataille" surely hints at a return engagement between Sir Thopas and Sir Oliphant, and "chivalry" leads us to expect brave deeds struck out by our hero, emboldened and strengthened by "the swete wyn, and mede eek in amaselyn." And to what else can "ladyes love-drury" refer than to the elf-queen, who, like her prototype the Dame d' Amour in *LD* [*Lybeaus Desconus*], might well have kept her successful lover, Sir Thopas, by her for a twelve-month and more? Such must have been the expectations of those of the Pilgrims not already lulled to sleep by the poet's rigamarole.¹⁹

Sir Thopas includes almost every element essential for romance: narrator's appeal to audience, description of the hero's lineage, his figure, feats of arms, hunting and love affairs, and moreover the detailed depiction of his arms, comparison with other romance heroes, and a fight with a giant. In the interrupted tale these well-known factors are compactly composed together.

It seems that it was Chaucer's deliberate calculation that produced the interruption of *Sir Thopas* and *The Monk's Tale*. Chaucer had the Host and the Knight interrupt the tales respectively at the right time and at the right place.

In the case of *The Monk's Tale*, the Pilgrims (readers and audiences also) will become thoroughly disgusted with a hundred tragedies if the Monk continues to tell them to the last. Chaucer, blending a very recent incident, which must have attracted people's interest, with old famous ones, made the Knight stop *The Monk's Tale* at the right place where the Monk, as a conclusion, defines tragedy again, and at the right time when the Pilgrims (audience and readers) cannot endure to listen to heavy and sad stories any more.

Is the length of interrupted *Sir Thopas* not enough to let readers and audience relish a burlesque? Dunbar's "Schir Thomas Norny," for instance, is composed of only nine stanzas, but its length is enough for us to appreciate the burlesque thoroughly. If what a poet is chiefly aiming at is not a romance

in which emphasis is put on plot and "sentence" but a burlesque and "myrthe and solas," and if he can give enough pleasure to his readers and audience, the length of his work holds little significance for him. In the case of *Sir Thopas*, what Chaucer aimed at was to give his readers and audience "myrthe and solas." Chaucer begins his tale with this stanza:

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
 And I wol telle verrayment
 Of myrthe and of solas;
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent
 In bataille and in tourneyment,
 His name was sire Thopas. (VII, 712–717)

So it is quite important for him whether his tale bores his audience and readers or not. Chaucer the poet had the Host stop the tale of the Pilgrim Chaucer because he was very conscious of his audience and readers and their responses to *Sir Thopas*.

Did Chaucer have the Host interrupt *Sir Thopas* at the right place and at the right time? The tale is interrupted by the Host just after Thopas drinks water from the well as did Sir Perceval.

Hymself drank water of the well,
 As dide the knyght sire Percyvell
 So worthy under wede,
 Til on a day— (VII, 915–918)

That Perceval drank water from the well is narrated in the first stanza of *Sir Perceval of Galles*.

Lef, lythes to me,
 Two wordes or thre,
 Off one þat was faire and fre
 And fell in his fighte.

His righte name was Percyuell,
 He was ffosterde in the felle,
 He dranke water of þe welle:
 And þitt was he wyghte.²⁰

Perceval, in his boyhood, spent his life with his mother in the bosom of nature and apart from court society. What is narrated just before the interruption in *Sir Thopas* appears in the opening stanza of *Sir Perceval of Galles*.

In *Sir Perceval of Galles* is also described Perceval's fight with a giant, but it is narrated near the end of the story, after many other episodes. If the Host knew *Sir Perceval of Galles* well, he might have thought, when he was told that Thopas drank water from the well as did Perceval, that he had to bear listening to many episodes before he could hear the fight of Thopas with the giant. The Host must thoroughly have known romances sung by minstrels because he was a host of a tavern which minstrels must often have visited. Thopas' fight with the giant might have attracted the interest of the Host. But he thought that he was not able to endure any more the tiresome and nonsensical romance quite different from those he had known well in terms of content and style.

There is no interruption when Chaucer says at the end of the First Fit (the Second Fit in Burrow's division), "If ye wol any moore of it, / To telle it wol I fonde" (VII, 889-890). It appears that this is the right point for the Host to interrupt the tale. Yet the Host does not stop the tale here. Chaucer's appeal "Now holde youre mouth" (VII, 891) at the opening of the Second Fit, a cliché employed by minstrels, shows, if interpreted literally, that *Sir Thopas*, which is doggerel and quite different from traditional and well-known romances, began at this point to create a general stir among the Pilgrims. The ears of the Host would have ached because *Sir Thopas* comprised eight kinds of rhyme schemes. The Host's patience became exhausted when the tale

reached the place where Thopas drank water from the well as Perceval did. The Host's perseverance is lost gradually as the poem, as Burrow says, narrows away, section by section, towards nothingness. It is very interesting that *Sir Thopas*, composed on the basis of the ratios 4:2:1, a principle of progressive diminution, ends with the opening episode of *Sir Perceval of Galles*. It is as if *Sir Thopas* has reached its starting point again.

IV

Although the responses of all the Pilgrims are not described in *Sir Thopas*, for those who have almost the same appreciations as the Host's, any further performance of the Pilgrim Chaucer would have passed the limits of their patience. The length of interrupted *Sir Thopas*, on the other hand, gives pleasure and a real taste of burlesque without weariness to those who have a keen appreciative sense, like William Dunbar. If Chaucer, as Manly says, was "at play, having no end of fun with the romances and his readers and himself,"²¹ he stopped his play at the right time and at the right place. Even a good-humored rollick becomes offensive if it passes a certain limit. Chaucer, as N. E. Eliason concludes, had the Host interrupt the tale "at precisely the point when it was time to call a halt since any further continuation of the fun would only have spoiled it."²² Chaucer, who, as a court poet, was at home with the psychology of the court audience, made a remarkably tactful and perfect interruption.

Sir Thopas is put between the two tales. It is preceded by *The Prioress' Tale* which is a tale on the miracle of the Virgin and impressed the Pilgrims deeply and moved them to tears. And after *Sir Thopas* comes *Melibee* which is an extremely long didactic story completely dedicated to "sentence" and written in prose. Unless such a light tale as *Sir Thopas* is set between the two heavy tales, audiences who have to listen to *The Prioress' Tale* and *Melibee* in succession will certainly feel stiff in their shoulders. *Sir Thopas*, though

discordant and worthless for the Host, serves to recreate the audience. It is organically set between the two tales.

Is *Sir Thopas* an unfinished and incomplete work? It is not so. F. N. Blake argues that incompleteness is essential for *Sir Thopas* to be taken as a parody:

... , for if it had been completed it could easily have been abstracted from its context and passed off as a straight tale. As it stands, *Sir Thopas* can be appreciated only in the light of its context, particularly the words of the Host. I therefore find it difficult to accept, as is often suggested, that Chaucer got tired of his parody and so failed to complete it.²³

Sir Thopas is entirely complete because it is incomplete (interrupted). *Sir Thopas* was composed on the basis of this paradox. Calculated interruption makes it a perfect burlesque in terms of form, content and the relationship between narrator and audience. Interrupted *Sir Thopas*, with *The Monk's Tale*, gives verisimilitude to *The Canterbury Tales* and helps to prove that *The Canterbury Tales* is more than a medieval collection of tales. By having the Host interrupt *Sir Thopas* Chaucer admirably succeeded in completing the tale.

(This essay is based on the paper read at the 37th regular meeting of the Medieval English Literary Society held at Kyoto University, May 1, 1983.)

Notes

- 1 P.G. Ruggiers (ed.), *The Canterbury Tales: A Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript, with Variants from the Ellesmere Manuscript* ("A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Vol. I; Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), pp. 848-49.

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Listeth lordes / in good entent | } Of myrthe / and of solas |
| And I wil telle verrayment | |
| Al of a knyght was fair and gent | } his name / was sir Thopas |
| In bataille / and in tornament | |

- 2 All my quotations are from F. N. Robinson (ed.), *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (2nd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957).
- 3 A. T. Gaylord, "Sentence and Solaas in Fragment VII of the *Canterbury Tales*. Harry Bailly as Horseback Editor," *PMLA*, 82(1967), 226.
- 4 In *Troilus and Criseyde* the narrator is attentive to how his audience or readers respond to his tale, and on his way of narration he inserts, for example, the following passage: ". . . , lest that ye my tale breke, . . ." (V, 1032).
- 5 R. Crosby, "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, 11(1936), 88.
- 6 Cf. J. M. Manly, "Sir Thopas: A Satire," *ES&S*, 13(1928), 52-73, and A. K. Moore, "'Sir Thopas' as Criticism of Fifteenth-Century Minstrelsy," *JEGP*, 53(1954), 532-45.
- 7 ". . . when *fynde an hare* is used as a technical term in the hunting treatises, the understanding is that dogs are employed in the hunt. . . . It seems, then, that if the Host is employing a hunting figure, he is either assuming that the hare is like the rabbit, which has a burrow and can be tracked, or referring to Chaucer himself as a *limier* looking for a hare." B. Rowland, "Bihoold the Murye Wordes of the Hoost to Chaucer," *NM*, 64(1963), 49.
- 8 ". . . considering the similarity of satirical purpose in the two poems, the practical identity of stanza, and the occurrence of a considerable number of rather striking verbal similarities, one is justified, I believe, in saying that when he wrote *Sir Thomas Norray* Dunbar was consciously imitating *Sir Thopas*." F. B. Snyder, "*Sir Thomas Norray* and *Sir Thopas*," *MLN*, 25(1910), 80.
- 9 J. M. Manly, "The Stanza-Forms of *Sir Thopas*," *MP*, 8(1910-11), 142.
- 10 J. Kinsley (ed.), *The Poems of William Dunbar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 98.
- 11 E. R. Eddy, "Sir Thopas and Sir Thomas Norny: Romance Parody in Chaucer and Dunbar," *RES*, 22(1971), 406.
- 12 T. Scott, *Dunbar: A Critical Exposition of the Poems* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), p. 216.

- 13 *The Poems of William Dunbar*, p. 99.
- 14 Manly points out the difference in the ways of interruption of the two tales in this way: "Between the interruption in the Th-Mel Link and that in the Mk-Np Link there is an important difference, obvious but unnoticed. The former is the genuine interruption of a tale composed especially to be interrupted; the latter is not in any real sense an interruption, but only a literary device for getting on with the next tale." J. M. Manly & Edith Rickert (eds.), *The Text of the Canterbury Tales* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940), Vol. II, p. 410.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 412.
- 16 J. A. Burrow, "Sir Thopas: An Agony in Three Fits," *RES*, 22(1971), 57-58.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 18 Cf. L. H. Loomis, "Sir Thopas and David Goliath," *MLN*, 51(1936), 311-13.
- 19 F. P. Magoun, Jr., "The Source of Chaucer's *Rime of Sir Thopas*," *PMLA*, 42(1927), 838-39.
- 20 W. H. French & C. B. Hale (eds.), *Middle English Metrical Romances* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), Vol. II, p. 532.
- 21 "The Stanza-Forms of *Sir Thopas*," 144.
- 22 N. E. Eliason, *The Language of Chaucer's Poetry. An Appraisal of the Verse, Style, and Structure* (*Anglistica*, Vol. 17; Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1972), p. 193.
- 23 N. F. Blake, *The English Language in Medieval Literature* (London: Methuen, 1979), p. 123.

In 1980, Sir Thomas More was added to the Church of England's calendar of saints (July 6). However, his martyrdom was an act which denied this church's authority. I'm just looking for some insight on why he was venerated. QUOTE: Thomas More has been venerated as a saint by the Catholic Church since 1935, and since 1980 his name has been included in the Anglican calendar of saints. . http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/jubilevents/jub_jubilparlgov_20001026_thomas-more_en.html. print Print. document PDF. That is why he is considered a saint: he was sanctified by the Truth. Edit: this question was originally about why Sir Thomas More was murdered. 203 Views Â· View 8 Upvoters. Related QuestionsMore Answers Below.Â Sir Thomas More investigated the role of the papacy in the Church. And his research led him to believe that Jesus Christ founded the Church and founded the papacy, and that it was incumbent on Christians to acknowledge the pope. What was interesting to me was how none of this was self-evident to him in the early 16th century as it would be today to any educated Catholic. It seems that the religious origins of the papacy was not a topic that many people knew about, even people as intelligent and educated as Sir Thomas More. 227 Views Â· View 1 Upvoter. This was written by Thomas More in order to show his disdain about the political corruption that was happening in Europe at that time. Aside from the corruption in Europe, he also talked about the hypocrisy of religion that was happening at that time. Utopia stands for the imaginary island that he created. It is actually ironic that he is the advisor of King Henry VIII. In spite of it all, he was able to create literature that is still being celebrated and read by different people up to now. - ProProfs Discuss