

Diferencias de género y estilo entre El Cuento del Caballero El cuento del Molinero

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Resumen

La distinción más ramarcable entre las obras de Chaucer es la presente entre El cuento del Caballero y El cuento del Molinero. En primer lugar, ambos cuentos difieren en género. La segunda diferencia se presenta en términos de narración e imágenes. Las variaciones entre los dos cuentos prevalecen en género y estilo. Como Benson indica en su libro, Derek Brewer considera que "el contraste entre los dos cuentos es muy refrescante muy típico de Chaucer".

Palabras clave: Literatura, Chaucer, Proyecto Literario, Cuentos.

Title: Generic and Stylistic Contrast between The Knight's Tale and The Miller's Tale.

Abstract

The most remarkable literary distinction in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is that between the Knight's Tale and the Miller's Tale. First of all, both tales diverge in genre. The second difference is in terms of narration and images. Variations between the two tales prevail in genre and style. As Benson states in his work, Derek Brewer considers that "the contrast between the two tales is very refreshing, and very typical of Chaucer".

Keywords: literature, tales.

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The most remarkable literary distinction in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is that between the *Knight's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale*.

First of all, both tales diverge in genre. The *Knight's Tale* is a chivalric romance, that is, a story which typically deals with aristocratic characters (Palamon, Arcite and Theseus) involved in both love (Emelye) and warfare, and drawing on the conventions of courtly love. In contrast, the *Miller's Tale* belongs to a genre known as "fabliau", which is a short story in verse that deal satirical and fantastically with intrigues and trickery (Nicholas, Absolon) about sex and money (John the carpenter and his wife, Alisoun).

The dissimilarities between the two tales state themselves from the beginning: "Whilom, as olde stories tellen us, there was a duc that highte Theseus; of Atthenes he was lord and governour [...] (I.1-5)". The style and terminology of the first tale is reasonably simple, and in the first line, the reputation of the subject is emphasized. Theseus is given a series of titles which suggest authority and control. If we look at the beginning of the *Miller's Tale*, differences are directly noticed:

"Whilom ther was dwellynge at Oxenford, a riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord, and of his craft he was carpenter (I.79-81)". Although it opens with the same word as the romance and also immediately describes the ancient male character in the story, its style is very different: the first character is a carpenter.

In terms of narration, the first tale has an involved narrator, whereas the narrator of the second tale is cool and rather derisive. The authoritative narrator of the *Knight's Tale* often uses the pronoun "I" and is engaged with both his characters and readers: "Now wol I stynte of Palamon a lite [...]" (III.

1621). However, the narrator of the *Miller's Tale* enjoys with the irrationality of his characters.

Besides, the statements which included the first personal pronoun are not at all personal: "I dar wel seyn" (I.238).

The extreme change in genre from romance to fabliau inevitably results in two type of characters.

The characterization of Emelye in the first tale is simple and idealized, as the opening lines of her description reveal:

Till it fil ones, in a morwe of May,

That Emelye, that fairer was to sene,
Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene [...]
(I.176-86).

The images of May and lily are, in Benson's own words "commonly associated with a traditional type of romance heroine". In contrast, Alisoun is described in an extended portrait:

As brood as is the boos of a bokeler,
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.
She was a prymerole, a piggesnye [...] (I.158-162)

Her description is specific and physical. However, she is compared not to a lily but to a

"piggesnye", reminiscent of a pig. According to Benson, "this portrait concentrates vivid imagery, whose effect is comically reductive". (76)

The poetic tone of each tale is substantially different. In the *Knight's Tale* the events follow a

definite and expressive order. However, in the *Miller's Tale*, the tone is much quicker. Each tale encloses an unpredicted tragedy at the end: on the one hand, the fall of Arcite from his horse

(III.2201-2206), which is conveyed as a heroic death. On the other, the fall of John from the rafters, which is described in a satirical tone, portraying John's hurt and humiliation (I.343-349).

Finally, the contrast between the two tales is also manifested in terms of vocabulary. For example, chivalric words like "pitee", "honour" and "chivalrie" appear in the romance, but those words do not appear in the fabliau; conversely, words of pleasure and deception like "joly", "gay" and

"derne" appear only in the fabliau. In the same way, words that appear in both stories have different senses. According to Benson, "Lord, for example, occurs many times in the *Knight's Tale* to describe Theseus and his authority. However, in the second tale the word has different senses. For instance, it is used once in Absalom's description of himself: "a lord at alle degrees" (I.616)" (83).

To conclude, variations between the two tales prevail in genre and style. As Benson states in his work, Derek Brewer considers that "the contrast between the two tales is very refreshing, and very typical of Chaucer" (64).

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