

SPANISH MODESTY IN *THE CANTERBURY TALES*:
CHAUCER AND DON JUAN MANUEL¹

Now I beg all those who listen to this little research, or read it, that if there is anything in it that they like, that they consider it as a starting point; and if there is anything that they dislike, I beg them to advise me and give me their opinions to improve it.

INTRODUCTION

A relationship between Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and some Spanish medieval authors has been habitually considered as a result of a community of ideas. The popular and traditional background, Latin translations and compilations could without any doubt well be a common source of inspiration. Chaucer and some Spanish authors may have shared some common characteristics, but there are many historical events and some textual evidence which can lead us to think that Chaucer was influenced by, at least, one Spanish author, Don Juan Manuel.²

The method lies in the application of a literary analysis by taking into account the structure of the text, the morphosyntactic and lexical characteristics and applying Halliday's system to the extracts where the influence is supposed to exist. Afterwards it will be necessary to demonstrate non-evidence of a common formula in the medieval texts showing many examples which do not have a common formula but a common function: to preach to people or from

¹ A part of this article was read at the Ninth International Congress of the New Chaucer Society, held in Dublin (July 23-27, 1994).

² Don Juan Manuel's influence on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* has been demonstrated in a recent dissertation: Serrano Reyes, J. L., *Didactismo y Moralismo en Geoffrey Chaucer y Don Juan Manuel: un Estudio Comparativo Textual*. Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 1995.

another point of view, the “authorial ‘captatio’ device applied by writers in order to make the hearer-reader pay close attention to the author.”¹ Nevertheless I do not have enough time to show the examples of the mediaeval texts.

I. - HISTORICAL CONTEXT

El Conde Lucanor was widely known in many Spanish courts. “Las copias manuscritas parecen haber sido abundantes: “La noticia más antigua de ser leído este libro, es la que consta en el Registro 3. 168, folio 139, en donde la reina Doña María pide a Ferrán López de Stuñiga ‘los libros que se clamavan el uno Florença el otro el conde Lucanor el otro de las ystorias despaña’.”² As John England says: “When one thinks of the scarcity of manuscripts of medieval Castilian literature, the survival of five in this case suggests that *El Conde Lucanor* was something of a ‘best-seller’ ”.³

Edward, king of Portugal, (1391-1438) who was Philippa of Lancaster’s son, organized the famous library of “Tower of Tumbo “ainda constam do catálogo a *Confessio Amantis*, de Gower, em tradução do cónego lisbonense Roberto Paine, a obra poética do Arcipreste de Hita, e o *Livro del Conde Lucanor*, de D. João Manuel.”⁴

¹ González Fernández-Corugedo, Santiago 1993: 91-102. The author of this work shows some texts from different Western literary traditions. He includes, among them, both Chaucer’s *Retraction* and Don Juan Manuel’s *Prologue*. His conclusion has nothing to do with mine: “the importance of the rethorical model that seems to have been common to all the Western tradition” (pag. 97). I disagree and my conclusion is the real evidence of an influence. It does not mean that there was not a community of ideas at that age. Nevertheless Fernández-Corugedo notices the parallelism but does not consider the possibility of an influence and he just says: “It is also remarkable that two authors such as Chaucer and The Infant Don Juan Manuel wrote passages that- though presently in chiasmatic disposition, as AB has become BA- must have the same model” (p. 99). I do not agree: they did not have the same model, so they were not influenced by the same author. Don Juan Manuel’s passage was the model.

² Giménez Soler, Andrés 1932: 676: “It seems that the handwritten copies were abundant: The oldest news showing that this book had been read is the one which is in the Register 3.168, sheet 139, where queen Mary asks Ferrán López de Stuñiga for ‘the books which were called the one of Florence, another el conde Lucanor and the other one of the history of Spain.’”

³ England, J. 1977, p. 69.

⁴ Cidadi, Hernani 1975: 93: “where the catalogue of *Confessio Amantis*, by Gower, translated by the Lisbon canon Robert Payne, a poetic work by Arcipreste of Hita, and the *Book of Count Lucanor*, by Juan Manuel are listed.”

We also already know that Chaucer was in Spain in 1366. Chaucer was in France and Italy and was influenced by authors from both countries.¹ Was he influenced by any Spanish authors? Don Juan Manuel had died only eighteen years before Chaucer's stay in Spain.

This Spanish book may have come to Chaucer's hands in different ways:

- * Through John of Gaunt's wife, Constance of Castile who was Peter's ("The Cruel") daughter or any of the Spaniards at the court of Leicester.
- * Through Henry III of Castile, who married John of Gaunt's daughter Catherine, and was Don Juan Manuel's greatgrandson because his grandmother was Doña Juana Manuela, Don Juan Manuel's daughter.
- * Through Chaucer's friends who took part in the English intervention in Spain at that time.
- * Through Henry of Lancaster, John of Gaunt's father in law, who took part in the siege of Algezir with Don Juan Manuel (August, 1342- March, 1344).

Were Don Juan Manuel and his *El Conde Lucanor* not famous enough as not to be known and read by a genius like Chaucer who was well aware of European culture, including Spanish culture? ("*Senec, Piers Alfonse, Seint Ysidre, Averrois, Lepe, Gernade, Cartage, Fynystere, Spayne, Saint-Jame, Rouncivale, Jubaltare, Septe, tables Tolletanes, cordewane, Petro Rege Is-*

¹ Honoré-Duvergé, Suzanne 1955: 9-13. Here is announced the discovery of the record of Chaucer's trip to Spain: "A tous ceux qui ces presentes lettres verront salut. Savoir faisons que nos avon donne et donnons loyal sauf ser conduit et suave gande jusques a la feste de Penthecoste prouchain venant a Geoffroy de Chauserre escuir englois en sa compaignie trois compaignos avec leurs varlez chevaux et bens quelconques troussez ou a trousser en males ou dehors pour aler venir demorer se remuer converser et retourner par tout ou il lui playra par touz noz villes forteresses por passages et destroiz tant de jour que de nuit ..." You can find more details about this historical background in: Garbáty, Thomas, J., "Chaucer in Spain, 1366: Soldier of Fortune or Agent of the Crown?", *English Language Notes* 5, (1967): 81-87; Baugh, Albert, C. "The Background of Chaucer's Mission to Spain", *Chaucer und seine Zeit*, ed. Arno Esch, (1968): 55-59; and Russel, P. E., *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II*. Oxford, 1955, p. 15.

pannie, Cataloigne, Aragon” are explicit references in Chaucer’s poetry).¹ Don Juan Manuel had a strong and close kinship not only with the king Peter and his daughter Constance but with the Lancaster House:

- * Don Juan Manuel’s father was Edward I’s brother in law.
- * Edward I was Don Juan Manuel’s uncle.
- * Edward II was Don Juan Manuel’s cousin.
- * Edward III was Don Juan Manuel’s nephew of cousins.
- * John I of Castile was Don Juan Manuel’s grandson.²
- * Henry III of Castile, who married John of Gaunt’s daughter, was Don Juan Manuel’s greatgrandson.
- * John I of Portugal, who married Philippa Lancaster, was Don Juan Manuel’s grandson.

II. - TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Readers only have to look at the two texts and they can easily recognize the similarity. But a detailed analysis will show not only that they are the same words but that the words have the same word function, the same author’s intention, the same literary effects, and the same structure to such an extent that I consider that Chaucer was quite clearly influenced by Don Juan Manuel.

1. - THE STRUCTURE OF THE MESSAGE

Another powerful similarity lies in the structure. The equality of the sentence elements is so noticeable that anyone might suppose that it had been caused

¹ See León Sendra, A. & Serrano Reyes, J. L. 1992: 106-141.

² García García, A., Nieto Cumplido, M., and others collect in their *Catálogo de los manuscritos e incunables de la catedral de Córdoba*, a manuscript by Alphonsus XI in appeal to Clemente VI for a dispensation of a fourth consanguinity degree in order to marriage his son Henry and Joan, Don Juan Manuel’s daughter: *Inc. Significat S.V. humilis et devotus filius vester Alphonsus quod cum secundus filius eius et domina J. domini J. filia sint per. des. et cum non obstatibuset clausulis oportunis ut in forma.* 4- 241.(f. 186 v.).

by chance, by the use of a common formula or by influence. The third possibility is proposed by this work. Let us look at the structure:

Chaucer's *Retraction*

... that if ther be any thyng in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse / And if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonnyng and nat to my wyl, ...¹

Don Juan Manuel's *Prologue*

Et lo que y fallaren que no es tan bien dicho, non pongan culpa a la mi entención, mas pónganla a la mengua del mio entendimiento. Et si alguna cosa fallaren bien dicha o aprovechosa, gradéscanlo a Dios, ca El es aquél por quien todos los buenos dichos et fechos se dizen et se fazen.²

Yo digo	I pry
et si	that if
et que	And if
fallaren	ther be
fallaren	ther be
y	in it
lo	any thyng
alguna cosa	any thyng
que	hat
bien dicha o aprovechosa	that liketh
non es tan bien dicho	displese
gradéscanlo	they thanken
pongan	arrette
a Dios	oure Lord Jhesu Crist
la culpa	it
por quien	of whom
a la	to the
todos los dichos	al wit
mengua	faute

¹ Benson, Larry D. ed. 1991, X. 1081-1082, p. 328.

² Blecua, J. M. ed. 1991: 51.

et fechos	and al godnesse
del mio	of myn
se dicen et se fazen	procedeth
entendimiento	unkonnyng
non pongan.	nat
la culpa a la mi intención	to my wyl

Both texts share the same structure. It is a dual structure, divided into two parts. The whole structure starts from the words “Yo digo” ... “I preye”. In the case of Don Juan Manuel these words are immediately before those I have cited (see appendix). After that a dichotomy follows: good (the column on the left) and evil (the column on the right). Each step in the structure shows a parallelism even in the connective elements like “et si” ... “that if” or “que ... that”. So the authors are interested in shielding their works against accusations of immorality.

The message consists of a typical sermon ending. Duality is represented by a religious idea: good and evil. Good is represented by God and subtly connected with the authors’ works. Evil is represented by mankind.

2. - MORPHOSYNTACTIC AND LEXICAL APPROACH

2. 1. - VERBS

Chaucer’s verbs:	Don Juan Manuel’s verbs:
ther be-ther be	fallaren-fallaren
liketh-thanken	(bien) dicha-gradéscanlo
displese-arrette	no es(tan bien) dicho-pongan
preye	
procedeth	es (aquel por quien)
	dizen-fazen

Repetition is another similarity. Both authors twice repeat verbs of similar meaning. The duality shown in “The structure of the message” is supported by the verbs “liketh / (bien)dicha” which implies one way (the way of good) and “displese / (non bien) dicho” which implies the other way (the way of evil). Both implications are consequences of the readers’ or hearers’ perception of the works. This perception is expressed by couples of verbs: “ther be-ther be / fallaren-fallaren”. So there is a clear parallelism in the strategy which

is the basis of the logical argument in the texts. Chaucer wrote one verb (“procedeth”) whose meaning has, seemingly, nothing to do with Don Juan Manuel’s verbs (“es-es-dizen-fazen”), because “of whom procedeth” is equivalent to “El es por quien”. This occurs according to the meaning but not to the subject or object involved, that is, the Spanish author’s verbs are related to God like “procedeth” with “Lord Jhesu Crist”. The verb “preye” has its parallelism in the preceding line of Don Juan Manuel’s text, “digo” (see appendix). The semantic fields show the typical terminology which can be used by preachers: “preye-herkne-rede-thanken / dizen-fazen-dicho-dicha-gradés-canlo”.

2. 2. NOUNS

Chaucer’s nouns:	Don Juan Manuel’s nouns:
thyng	cosa
Lord Jhesu Crist	Dios
wit	dichos (se dizen)
goodnesse	fechos (se fazen)
dafaute	mengua
unkonnynge	entendimiento
wyl	entención

Don Juan Manuel’s nouns have their equivalents in Chaucer’s nouns, following the dual meaning of the sermon: good and evil. “Wit” may be understood as “intelligence”, the capacity of speech and “goodnesse” may be understood as “deeds” to maintain the meaning which both authors meant to express, that is, the antinomy of “words and deeds”. This antinomy is in the intention. This is a topic in religious speech (sermons), expressing this idea: words must be followed by deeds (works), faith without deeds is a dead faith.

The meaning of the most important nouns related to God implies a positive value: “goodnesse-wit / dichos-fechos”; and the meaning of nouns related to men implies a negative value (“mengua-culpa / defaute-unkonnynge”).

2. 3. SYNTACTICAL APPROACH

Although the main clause is the same in both texts, Don Juan Manuel's text contains it in the preceding line: "... yo, don Iohan, "¹. It is "I preye" in Chaucer's text.

- * Conditional clause: "et ... fallaren" / "And if ... thyng"
- * Relative clause: "que ... dicho" / "that ... them"
- * Sstantive Direct Object clause: "non ... entençión" / "that ... unkonnyng"
- * Adversative clause: "mas ... entendimiento" / "and nat ... wyl"
- * Conditional clause: "et si ... aprovechosa" / "if ... it"
- * Sstantive Direct Object clause: "gradéscanlo ... Dios" / "that ... hem"
- * Relative clause: "por quien ... fazen" / "of whom ... goodnesse"
- * Causal clause: "ca ... aquel"

This significant parallelism shows that both texts are supported basically by the same syntactical structure. The construction of the sentences followed the same steps. The introductory words in many clauses are the same but they are implied in other ones like before "gradéscanlo" where "que" is implicit or in "non ... entençión" where "que" is implicit too. Explicit "that" is characteristic of English syntactical rules.

3. - HALLIDAY'S SYSTEM: LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS INTO LITERARY EFFECTS²

3.1. THE TEXT IN ITS CONTEXT

Chaucer's *Retraction* and Don Juan Manuel's *Prologue* share these characteristics:

- * They are moral, didactic sermons with an explicit intention:

¹ See the complete text in the appendix.

² For the Systemic Linguistics approach we have used the following basic bibliography: Halliday, M. A. K. 1985; 1986; Halliday, M. A. K., "Dimensions of Discourse Analysis: Grammar", *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, vol. 2. London: Academic Press London, 1985. Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. 1976; Kress, G. 1976; Muir, J. 1972. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to Professor Halliday who instructed me in Systemic Linguistics and gave me his advice and opinions on the application of the systemic method to this work.

Chaucer: For oure book seith: “*Al that is writen is writen for our doctrine*”, and that is myn entente.¹

D. J. Manuel: “et entre las palabras entremetí algunos *exiemplos* de que se *podrían aprovechar* los que los oyeren.”

* The authors’ intention was that the books were to be read or heard:

Chaucer: “Now preye I to hem alle that *herkne* this litel tretys or *rede* ...”

D. J. Manuel: “... et entre las palabras entremetí algunos *exiemplos* de que se *podrían aprovechar* los que las *oyeren*.”; “... et los que lo *leyeren* ...”

* Both authors wrote about the salvation of the soul, but Chaucer about his own soul and the Spanish author for his readers’ or hearers’ salvation:

Chaucer: “... studie to the *salvacioum of my soule*, ...”

D. J. Manuel: “... et para el *salvamiento de sus almas* et aprovechamiento de sus cuerpos.”

* They wrote using the first person singular:

Chaucer: “Now *I* preye ...”

D. J. Manuel: “... *yo*, don Iohan ...”

* Both authors addressed God, although Chaucer wrote “God” and “Lord Jhesu Crist” and D. J. Manuel always wrote “Dios”.

* Chaucer mentioned all his works and D. J. Manuel did not, although he cited all his works in *The General Prologue*.

Many other similarities can be found between the whole texts, but I have only highlighted the most evident ones. So there is a parallelism between the two texts, and especially in the parts I am going to analyze applying Halliday’s system.

3. 2. IDEATIONAL COMPONENTS: TRANSITIVITY FUNCTIONS

¹ See the appendix with Chaucer’s *Retraction* and Don Juan Manuel’s *Prologue* for the following quotations.

These are the two texts I shall analyze with the clauses numbered for easy reference and the processes underlined:

Don Juan Manuel's *Prologue*:

"... 1 Et lo que y fallaren 2 que non es tan bien dicho, 3 non pongan culpa a la mi entención, 4 mas pónganla a la mengua del mio entendimiento. 5 Et si alguna cosa fallaren bien dicha o aprovechosa, 6 gradéscanlo a Dios 7 ca El es aquel 8 por quien todos los buenos dichos et fechos se dizen et se 9 fazen."

Chaucer's *Retraction*:

"... 1 that if ther be any thyng in it 2 that liketh hem, 3 that therof they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, 4 of whom procedeth al wit and goodnesse. / 5 And if ther be any thyng 6 that displese hem, 7 I preye hem also 8 that they arrette it to the defaute of my unkonnyng and nat to my wyl."

Don Juan Manuel's *Prologue*

PARTICIPANTS	PROCESS	CLAUSE N°
Ellos: senser (implicit) fallaren:	mental,	perception 1
lo: phenomenon fallaren:	mental,	perception 1
lo: carrier (implicit) es:	relational / attr.	intensive 2
ellos: senser (implicit) pongan:	mental,	reaction 3
culpa: phenomenon pongan:	mental,	reaction 3
ellos: senser (implicit) póngan(la):	mental,	reaction 4
la: phenomenon póngan(la):	mental,	reaction 4
ellos: senser (implicit) fallaren:	mental,	perception 5
cosa: phenomenon fallaren:	mental,	perception 5
they: senser (implicit) gradéscan(lo):	mental,	reaction 6
lo: phenomenon gradéscan(lo):	mental,	reaction 6
El: carrier es:	relational / attr.	equative 7
aquel: carrier es:	relational / attr.	equative 7
ellos: senser (implicit) dizen:	mental,	verbalization 8
dichos: phenomenon dizen:	mental,	verbalization 8
ellos: actor (implicit) fazen:	material,	operative 9
hechos: goal fazen:	material,	operative 9

Chaucer's *Retraction*

PARTICIPANTS	PROCESS	CLAUSE N°
thyng: carrier ther be:	relational,	atributive 1
that: senser liketh:	mental,	reaction 2
hem: phenomenon liketh:	mental,	reaction 2
they: senser thanken:	mental,	reaction 3
oure Lord: phenonon thanken:	mental,	reaction 3

whom: senser procedeth:	mental,	perception 4
wit-goodnesse: phenom. procedeth:	mental,	perception 4
thyng: carrier ther be:	relational,	atributive 5
that: senser displese:	mental,	reaction 6
hem: phenomenon displese:	mental,	reaction 6
I: senser preye:	mental,	verbalization 7
hem: phenomenon preye:	mental,	verbalization 7
they: senser arrette:	mental,	reaction 8
it: phenomenon arrette:	mental,	reaction 8

There are some interesting literary effects. I propose to look at those which imply a parallelism:

* There is no process of action in either texts, excepting “fazen” in Don Juan Manuel’s Prologue. Nevertheless it may be considered necessary to support the sermonizer’s argument trying to make a generalization: spiritual (“dizen” implies words, intelligence) and material (“fazen” implies deeds). It is the unique material process to reinforce the idea of linking words and deeds: words are as vanishing without good deeds as is said in *The Bible*. So there is no direct action but an allusion to action. Mental and relational processes show the authors’ intention by means of a sermon. The authors wanted the readers or hearers to perceive, to react and then to relate. These three actions are not material actions but intellectual or mental actions in the readers’ or hearers’ minds. The Spanish and English writer expected the addressees to perceive their works and then, depending on their perception (“liketh” - “displese”) to react in a positive or negative way and to relate the positive reaction with God and the negative reaction with their ignorance. So, mental-perception, mental-reaction and relational processes are suitable for a moral, didactic speech.

* The possible negative perception by the hearers or readers is hidden in our two authors. Namely, Don Juan Manuel wrote the phenomenon “lo” with the relational process “es” and Chaucer wrote the phenomenon “it” which has the same equivalence. It does not introduce an explicit word to mention the dislike of the addressees.

* The verbs are all transitive except “to be”. This implies the necessary existence of goals which lead us to a purpose. All goals are explicit, which means explicit purposes. So, the authors’ intention is explicit, too. Transitive verbs, except “procedeth” can be classified as inherently goal verbs. There-

fore, the explicit meaning in the message runs from the root to the branches. This characteristic involves a clear plain language and, hence, plain hearers and readers.

* Implicit sensers imply that the author cannot control the readers' or hearers' reaction after the perception of his text. It shows the alternative "to be or not to be", that is, to like or dislike. The authors had to give a solution to this dilemma in the hearers' and readers' reaction.

All sensers in Don Juan Manuel's text are implicit ("ellos") and they are the readers and the hearers. Chaucer wrote explicit senser "they" with mental-reaction process ("thanken" and "arrete"). It is significant because it may show that Chaucer knew his possible audience, although explicit can be a grammatical characteristic in the English language. When Chaucer wrote "hem" with the mental process "liketh" and "displese" its real function is more of an actor than of a goal.

* The apparent difference between "fallaren" and "ther be" is just because they are different words but not different meanings. Both words imply the description of the same idea: there is something for the readers and hearers (the work) which can be evaluated. The difference lies in the author's implication in this evaluation. Chaucer wrote a relational process which was repeated twice ("ther be"), the first one related to the mental process "liketh" and the second one to the mental process "displese". So, the real implication is the same as in Don Juan Manuel's text when he wrote "fallaren" twice.

* There is a repetitive process:

hem: phenomenon
they: senser

Crist: phenomenon
whom: senser

Readers or hearers of Chaucer's work are situated at the same level as God. There is a successive interchange of roles between men and God, a sort of dialogue: men receive good (pleasure) through Chaucer's work and they thank God who is now the receiver (phenomenon) and then He gives "wit and goodnesse" to men. The same idea is brought out by this device: Chaucer's work implies holy indulgences. So Chaucer's intention in his *Retraction* appears to be to try to save his moralism and didacticism. The same occurs with D. Juan Manuel's intention.

III. - CONCLUSIONS

* A mere reading is enough to notice the similarity between the two texts.

* Historical events, circumstances and royal bonds offered fitting conditions for a Spanish influence at that time.

* The textual analysis gives clear proof of the equality of both texts: the dual structure of the message, meaning good and evil and the same morphosyntactic and lexical characteristics.

* Halliday's system shows the identity in the process system used by the Spanish and English authors, revealing the existence of mental-perception-reaction process to strengthen the power of the sermon language.

* The non-existence of a mediaeval common formula used in the prologues and epilogues demonstrates that the similarity of both texts are not by chance, and the suspicion of a common formula is changed into a suspicion of a "copy" or a source of inspiration. I trust this analysis has turned this suspicion into a certainty.

* The topic of modesty was widespread in the Middle Ages and its source dates from the rhetorical system in the Classical Period: the forensic speech. Nevertheless, mediaeval authors used different words to express the same ideas. Chaucer and Don Juan Manuel are the two authors who, to my knowledge, share the same or similar words, when they use the topic of modesty. Don Juan Manuel used similar words to express modesty in: *El Conde Lucanor*, *El Libro de los Estados*, *Libro Enfenido* and *Crónica Abreviada*.

APPENDIX

The bold letters show the texts which share the similarity.

CHAUCER'S RETRACTION

Heere taketh the makere of this book his leve

Now preye I to hem alle that herkne thi litel tretys or rede, that if ther be any thyng in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. / And if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also

that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonnyng and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konnyng. / For oure book seith, "Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine", and that is myn entente. / Wherefore I biseke yow mekely, for me that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes; / and namely of my translacions and enditynges of wordly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns: / as is the book of Troilus; the book also of Fame; the book of the Duchesse; the book of Seint Valentynes day of the Parlement of Briddes; the tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sownen into synne; / the book of the Leoun; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance, and many a song and many a leccherous lay, that Crist for his grete mercy foryeve me the synne. / But of the translacion of Boece de Consolacione, and omelies, and moralitee, and devocioum, / that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist and his blisful Mooder, and alle the seintes of hevene, / bisekyng hem that they from hennes forth unto my lyves ende sende me grace of verray penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun to doon in this present lyf, / thurgh the benigne grace of hym that is kyng of kynges and preest over alle alle preestes, that boghte us with the precious blood of his herte, / so that I may been oon of hem at the day of doom that shulle be saved. Qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia secula. Amen.

Heere is ended the book of the tales of Canterbury, compiled by Geffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Jhesu Crist have mercy. Amen."¹

DON JUAN MANUEL'S PROLOGUE

En el nombre de Dios: amén. Entre muchas cosas estrañas et maravillosas que nuestro Señor Dios fizo, tovo por bien de fazer una muy maravillosa; ésta es [que] de quantos [ommes] en el mundo son, non a uno que semeje a otro en la cara; ca commo quier que todos los ommes an essas mismas cosas en la cara, lo unos que los que los otros, pero las caras en sí mismas non semejan las unas a las otras. Et pues en las caras, que son tan pequeñas cosas, ha en ellas tan grant departamento, menor maravilla es que aya departamento en las voluntades et en las entenciones de los ommes. Et así fallaredes que ningún omme non se semeja del todo en la voluntad nin en la entención con otro. Et fazervos he algunos enxiemplos porque lo entendades mejor.

Todos los que quieren et desean servir a Dios, todos quieren una cosa, pero non lo sirven todos en una manera: que unos le sirven en una manera et otros en otra. Otrosí, los que sirven a los señores, todos los sirven, mas non los sirven todos en una manera. Et los que labran et crían et trebejan et çaçan et fazen todas las otras cosas, todos las fazen, mas non las entienden nin las fazen todos en una manera. Et así, por este exiemplo, et por otros ayan voluntades et entenciones, que atán poco commo se semejan en las caras, tan poco se semejan en las entenciones et en las voluntades; pero todos se semejan en tanto que todos usan et quieren et aprenden mejor aquellas cosas de que se más pagan que las otras. Et porque cada omme aprende mejor aquello de se más paga, por ende el que alguna cosa quiere mostrar [a otro], devegelo mostrar en la manera que entendiere que será más pagado el que la ha de aprender. Et porque [a] muchos ommes las cosas sotiles entienden bien, non toman plazer en leer aquellos libros, nin aprender

¹ Benson, Larry D. ed. 1991: 328.

lo que es escripto en ellos. Et porque non toman plazer en ello, non lo pueden aprender nin saber así commo a ellos cumplía.

Por ende, yo don Johan, fijo del infante don Manuel, adelantado mayor de la frontera et del regno de Murçia, fiz este libro compuesto de las más apuestas palabras que yo pude, et entre las palabras entremetí algunos exiemplos de que se podrían aprovechar los que los oyeren. Et esto fiz segund la manera que fazen los físicos, que quando quieren fazer alguna melizina que aproveche al figado, por razón que naturalmente el figado se paga de las cosas dulçes, mezcla[n] con auquella melizina que quiere[n] melizinar el figado, açúcar o miel o alguna cosa dulçe; et por el pagamiento que el figado a de la cosa dulçe, en tirándola para sí, lieva con ella la melezina quel a de aprovechar. Et esso mismo fazen a qualquier miembro que aya mester alguna melizina, que siempre la dan con alguna cosa que naturalmente aquel miembro la aya de tirar a sí. Et a esta semeiança, con la merçed de Dios, será fecho este libro, et los que lo leyeren [si por] su voluntad tomaren plazer de las cosas provechosas que y fallaren, será bien; et aun los que lo tan bien non entendieren, non podrán escusar que, en leyendo el libro, por las palabras falagueras et apuestas que en él fallarán, que non ayan a leer las cosas provechosas que son y mezcladas, et aunque ellos non lo des[e]n, aprovecharse an dellas, así como el figado et los otros miembros dichos se aprovechan de las melizinas que son mezcladas con las cosas de que se ellos pagan. Et Dios, que es cumplido et complidor de todos los buenos [fechos], por la su merçed et por la su piadat, quiera que los que este libro leyeren, que se aprovechen dél a servicio de Dios et para salvamiento de sus almas et aprovechamiento de sus cuerpos; así commo El sabe que yo, don Iohan, lo digo a essa entençión. *Et lo que y fallaren que non es tan bien dicho, non pongan culpa a la mi entençión, mas pónganla a la mengua del mio entendimiento. Et si alguna cosa fallaren bien dicha o provechosa, gradéscanlo a Dios, ca El es aquél por quien todos los buenos dichos et fechos se dizen et se fazen.*

Et pues el prólogo es acabado, de aquí adelante començaré la manera del libro, en manera de un grand señor que fablava con un su consegero. Et dizían al señor, conde Lucanor, et al consegero, Patronio.¹

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