COMPARATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISATION OF THE MERCHANT AND THE KNIGHT

Both the characters are known to the reader by the telling technique, so the reader is influenced by the speaker’s point of view. In addition, the poet makes a reference to the characters profession: one is a merchant, the other is a knight, and then creates a visual impression of the characters.

In particular he conveys information about their dressing style: the merchant’s one is eccentric and extravagant, while the knight’s one is humble and modest. In this way the reader understands that while the merchant wants to be the centre of attention and makes cleared his high social status, the knight is not interested in showing his money.

Afterward the poet makes a refence to their sitting style: the merchant is “Hight on his horse” while the knight is sat in “His place on honour”. Therefore, the reader understands that the merchant has a great consideration of himself, also highlighted by his speaking style; indeed, he speaks in solemn tones because he wants to appear wise and intelligent, while the knight speaks politely, because he had had an education based on chivalry.

Eventually while the knight’s victories are reported through a catalogue made by the poet, the merchant’s ability is conveyed by himself, thus creating suspect in the reader’s mind.

At this point the reader can say that while in the merchant’s characterisation the poet recurs to irony, in the knight’s one he conveys a true positive judgement. Indeed, even the adjective “Estimable” appears ironic in the merchant presentation. Anyway, while the knight is connoted by a little bit of exaggeration that doesn’t make it seem real, the merchant represents a type of person that we can meet every day.