

Family Values and the Boundaries of Christendom in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*

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Between 1847 and 1851 Ford Madox Brown painted a picture of Chaucer reading the 'Legend of Custance' to an open air gathering of the court of Edward III. (See Appendix, and Gaylord 216–20 and 236–8.) In the *Catalogue of the Piccadilly Exhibition* (1865) Brown identifies the passage being read as a moment of maternal pathos (*Man of Law's Tale* lines 834–40), where Custance is kneeling and hushing her infant son as they are about to be cast adrift on the sea.

Like the *Man of Law's Tale* itself, Brown's romantic scene is overshadowed by a sense of impending doom. Though Chaucer's face is that of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who sat for the picture, Brown depicts with historical accuracy a moment near the end of Edward III's reign. Edward's heir the Black Prince (1330–76) reclines languidly in his last illness, his elbow solicitously supported by his wife, Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent. Alice Perrers, the King's mistress, with an arch or smug look on her face, is complacently fanning herself next to the white-bearded monarch, a heavily armed John of Gaunt standing gloomily beside them. At the Black Prince's knee sits his young son, who is soon to reign as the self-centred voluptuary Richard II, while on Chaucer's right stands Gaunt's stalwart son Henry, holding his father's sword and destined in due course to depose his ineffectual cousin.

Figures in the lower half of the painting seem to fasten their attention on other, more frivolous, entertainment than Chaucer's. Only the Provençal minstrel in the centre is looking back at him. A scarlet clad cardinal, the Pope's nuncio, smirks and points out a jester to two women for whom the jester may be wagging his cap and bells. Katherine, Gaunt's mistress, and her sister Philippa, Chaucer's wife, are earnestly gossiping. Another son of the old King, Thomas of Woodstock, is busy flirting with his future duchess Lady de Bohun, whose girlishly uninhibited

attitude suggests her total preoccupation with him. Gower applauds (but whom?) and Froissart takes notes (but of what?).

Brown seems to have depicted the cosy insularity of a court in great need of spiritual renewal. Of the French war there is little sign, of religious schism or intolerance even less. The impression the painting conveys is one of unwary self-absorption, and perhaps even of political disintegration, social corruption and moral decline. Chaucer's close involvement in the domestic politics of this narrow court did not preclude him from not only taking a wide interest in the rest of the world, as his Continental travels and knowledge of French, Italian and Latin literature would suggest, but also defining his position and that of the King's court in it. cursory attention to *The Man of Law's Tale*, assuming it to be merely an unrealistic hagiographical romance, one that hankers, perhaps, after a perfection Chaucer could not have found either in his society or in any of the great ladies to whom courtiers paid extravagant homage, easily overlooks the religious and political significance that makes it so eminently suitable for its position at the first major turning-point, from secular to spiritual concerns, of *The Canterbury Tales*.

The *Man of Law's Tale* places a historically Christian dynasty in the context of the pressures on its edges of alien religious cultures. The dynastic significance of Custance's maternal care for Maurice, emphasized in an article by David Rabin, fits in with Brown's picture of this dynastically important historical moment, and the feminine principle of continuity. Chaucer chooses a woman as protagonist not just to diverge from the male-centred tales of Fragment I, but in order to focus on the familial relationships of his characters.

The Cardinal in Brown's painting, who apparently finds the jester more entertaining than Chaucer, has presumably travelled from Italy, where, Brown believed, Chaucer had found the tale. Rome, the centre of medieval Christianity, is the city from which Custance, the Emperor's daughter sets out, and to which she returns with her little son Maurice, the future (though historically Byzantine) Emperor. Her maternal function thus preserves the political and spiritual heart of Christendom. But her journeys and her marriages, involuntary all of them, take her 'East, West, North and South' (*Canterbury Tales*, II, 948-9, in Benson) to the land first of the Saracens and then to the pagans in Northumbria, thus geographically and allegorically beating the bounds, as it were, of the religion her tale illustrates.

The Roman world was four-cornered, roughly rectangular around the Mediterranean. According to tradition Julius Caesar instructed four surveyors,

one for each compass point, to measure this oblong Roman world. The thirteenth-century Hereford *mappamundi*, however, allocates the North and West, effectively Europe, to one surveyor, Theodotus, thus reducing the number of surveyors to three, because Christian geographers had a tripartite division of the world according to the three sons of Noah, whose descendants inhabited the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa (see Wiseman). But 'Affrica' is written across Europe and 'Europa' upside-down across Africa, to show that according to Orosius, a major source for the layout of the map, some regard Africa and Europe as one continent (cf. Prior xvi). As Custance drifts helplessly about this four-cornered but tri- or bi-partite world, God demonstrates through her the same preserving care He gave to Biblical characters like Daniel, Jonah, David and Judith, who, the Man of Law reminds us, all faced and with God's help overcame apparently overwhelming odds.

God list to shewe his wonderful myracle
In hire, for we sholde seen his mighty werkis
(477–8).

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The Man of Law's Tale has been described not only as hagiographic romance (for additional suggestions, see Rabin 74), but also as orientalist polemic (Schibanoff). Only here in Chaucer are East-West relations, and conflict, depicted to an extent that may strike a sympathetic chord today, and yet they are just part of Chaucer's larger politico-religious purpose in the Tale. We too have witnessed civil massacres and punitive incursions into the foreign territories of former trading partners. Coordinated acts of terror in a world policed by an impregnable superpower have realigned the East-West opposition since the fall of Communism into a religious confrontation more reminiscent of the causes of belligerence in the Middle Ages than of those in the recent Cold War era.

The nations of the West, in effect Europe and America, have a similar set of values, moral and political, but with the considerable difference that whereas Europe has become a predominantly secular society America remains by and large a religious one. According to Nancy Gibbs in *Time* 21 June 2004, 'matters of faith have seldom played a more central role or divided voters more deeply' for there are a variety of faiths: 'in a nation where 19 in 20 people say they believe in God and nearly two-thirds call religion very important in their lives,

there arises a sprawling market of creeds and cults and congregations in which people like to shop'. Gibbs asks, 'How, for instance, does a devout President rally a country against an enemy that claims to fight in God's name without implying that this is a Holy War?'

In a frightening article, but one hard to refute, Ralph Peters, a retired Army officer, points out that the only way to be sure of defeating a bellicose enemy is to kill so many of their soldiers that they not only are defeated but realize that they are: 'Only the shedding of their blood defeats resolute enemies. Especially in our struggle with God-obsessed terrorists—the most implacable enemies our nation has ever faced—there is no economical solution.' (*pseud.* Owen Parry, in *Parameters*; reviewed 24 May 2004) Prince Charles, on the other hand, receiving an award from the Sultan of Brunei for 'tireless' efforts to promote dialogue between Western and Islamic cultures, said 'Many appear to argue that we are past the point of understanding. To them, dialogue is dead and we need to circle the wagons of our own culture. I could not disagree with them more profoundly.'

In the Middle Ages, steadily growing commercial ties between the Latin West, especially Italy, and the nearby Islamic world had reached their height in Chaucer's lifetime, and the question what influence the exchanging of goods might have on the exchange of ideas was becoming a serious one. After a prologue apparently addressed to merchants about the trials of poverty, with which the anxious Antonios among them were doubtless all too familiar, *The Man of Law's Tale* begins with a trading journey to Syria, as a result of which the Sultan hears about the incomparable virtues and charms of Custance, the Roman Emperor's daughter. Though couched in romantic terms, their marriage is evidently a metaphor for the cementing of economic ties, but as it necessitates a wholesale conversion of the Saracens to Christianity, it provokes the hostility of the Sultan's fanatical mother. Medieval western ideas about Islam derive to a large extent from a life of Muhammad contained, surprisingly enough, in Jacobus de Voragine's popular collection of saints' lives, the *Golden Legend*. The life is biased and slandering, as might be expected, but in a recent essay Stefano Mula points out that 'In James of Voragine's Christian world, there was a space for Evil, but a very limited area. It is as if, by mentioning sinners such as Simon Magus or Julian the Apostate, or even Judas, James of Voragine was trying to tame them, to show that despite all the damage they did, they were inside the circular time of the Church, they were expected, and they were, even more important, transient.' (Mula 176) For Christian orthodoxy there were no alternative religions. Its strongest religious rival, Islam, was at best an 'insidious heresy that mimics Christianity' (Schibanoff 60). Against

Roger Ellis, who sees hints in *The Man of Law's Tale* of Chaucer's 'heterodox understanding' of the Muslim point of view, Susan Schibanoff argues that *The Man of Law's Tale* 'renders Islam threatening not by depicting it as different from Christianity—as idolatrous—but by revealing its dangerous closeness to his own religion' (Schibanoff 60).

In *The Man of Law's Tale* 220–1 *The Riverside Chaucer* finds an allusion to Peter Lombard's phrase 'disparitas cultus' [*Sentences* 4.39.1], which was adopted in canon law to indicate a hindrance to marriage between the baptized and the unbaptized (Benson 858, n. to 220–1). We might be tempted to translate this phrase as 'cultural diversity', and to regard the differences as not merely tolerable but actually valuable. In fact it means 'irreconcilability of religions' and implies that their clash can only cause conflict. For medieval Western leaders it is obvious that the East 'needs' Christianity, and their message to the Saracens is simple: 'convert or die'. For Western politicians today, it is equally obvious that the third world 'needs' democratic forms of government, and those who will not see this may for their own good have democracy forced upon them.

Chaucer is less truculent, but nonetheless decisive. As a heresy rather than as a rival religion, the threat from Islam is, initially at any rate, insidious rather than overtly violent. The Sultan and his subjects convert simply because he has no alternative if he wishes to marry the princess whose beauty and virtues have captivated him sight unseen. Acknowledging the 'disparitas cultus', the Mohammedans realize that 'ther was swich diversitee / Bitwene hir bothe lawes' that 'no Cristen prince' would wish his daughter wed according to the law of 'Mahoun'. But the Sultan wants a slice of that wonderful West which the merchants he trades with have told him about. The Pope, the church and the Roman chivalry confirm the Emperor's determination to barter his daughter on condition that the Sultan and his subjects 'sholde yristned be', justifying the exchange by assuring themselves that his conversion will prove to be 'in destruccion of mawmettrie, / And in encrees of Cristes lawe deere' (236-7). It is a pipe dream. The Emperor is called 'imprudent' for not anticipating the disaster about to befall the marriage he has misguidedly promoted. Custance goes reluctantly 'unto the Barbre nacioun', anticipating only 'thraldom and penance' (281, 286). The Sultanness, motivated by a Satanic hatred of the faith that would destroy her own, fraudulently arranges a celebratory banquet and slaughters the unsuspecting converts at table. Custance, the cause of the conversions, is not killed, but ejected with all her possessions. Rapport between Christian and Muslim is illusory, and mutual tolerance is not an option.

Later on, Custance, again adrift, is rescued by a victorious Roman fleet returning from the slaughter of the Sultanness and her incorrigible Saracens. 'They brennen, sleen, and brynge hem to meschance / Ful many a day' (964-5). This 'heigh vengeance', however, is not provoked by religious obstinacy on the part of the Muslims, or held back in the interest of trade relations, but is merely the Emperor's response to the killing of Christian converts and the dishonour done to his daughter. In a context more realistic than that of romance the Emperor might have felt that those who will not conform to the 'right' way of thinking must be flushed out and eliminated. Substitute 'democracy' for 'Christianity', and the attitude is a familiar one in some Western circles.

Expelled from the East, Custance drifts almost as far as possible West, and washes up with her 'tresor' on the shores of mostly pagan Northumbria. This treasure may be regarded metaphorically as the Christianity which the Sultanness has rejected and ironically exported to the pagans. Perhaps because she cannot stand the sight of the crosses engraved on the gold nobles that make up Custance's dowry, the Sultanness orders that it be put in her boat with her when she is cast adrift. Since the pagans have to all intents and purposes no religion, contact with the superior person of Custance is enough to convert the best of them, such as the lady Hermengild, especially when miracles are worked in her presence. Opposition comes not from hostility to Custance's religion, but simply from a lust for power. A rejected suitor of Custance's murders Hermengild and accuses Custance of the crime. However, it is a Christian Gospel book that vindicates her. Historically, the use of such a book in a pagan trial is anachronistic, but in adding it to his source Chaucer doubtless wished to demonstrate the sovereignty of God, who will not tolerate perjurers. When the false accuser swears on this 'Britoun book written with Evaungiles' (666) that Custance was guilty, a hand from heaven miraculously strikes him down, and being converted both by the miracle and by Custance's mediation the King, Alla, who had been about to execute her, marries her instead. But when their child Maurice is born, her 'mannysh' mother-in-law (782), who, like the virago Sultanness (359), wishes to govern the kingdom herself, tricks Alla into believing she has given birth to a fiend, and she is once again cast adrift. 'Pees, litel sone,' she says pathetically, in the passage Brown imagines his Rossetti-Chaucer reading, 'I wol do thee noon harm' (836).

But on her way back to the straits between Gibraltar and 'Sept' (Ceuta in Morocco), she arrives at a nameless heathen castle, the most hellish place of all. For here she is attacked by a 'renegat' who has 'reneyed oure creance', an apostate who has renounced our faith, and if God hadn't seen to it that in the struggle to make

her his 'lemman' he fell overboard and drowned, she could not have resisted him. Gower locates the castle in Spain, and names the steward Thelous (*Confessio Amantis*, II, 1084–93); Chaucer deliberately leaves both location and villain unnamed, for a renegade Christian deserves no better than to have his name blotted out.

Thus she has overcome, or God has preserved her triumphant over, oriental heresy, Northern paganism, and Christian apostasy, by the time that, in the providence of God, she arrives at last back in Rome, the centre of Christendom where she started. Shortly after, she is briefly reunited with her husband, who takes her home to England. But neither survives long, their heavenly reward being richer than any earthly happiness could be, for, as Morton Bloomfield (who in 1972 was the first keynote speaker at the inaugural meeting of this society) argues, *The Man of Law's Tale* is a tragedy of victimization and a Christian comedy: the comedy being the joy awaiting the Christian in the next life as compensation for the tragic victimization inflicted on him by the world.

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Allegorically significant as these geographical wanderings are, Custance's own development as an icon of righteousness and perfected recipient of divine grace is still more so. Initially she is simply the helpless subject of marriage negotiations between the Muslims and the Christians. Deploring her fate, and her feminine position of thralldom to the foreign husband she has never seen, and (one might add) to the father who trades her out of political and economic expediency (286–7), she goes unresisting to the suspiciously recent converts who have persuaded her father to part with her. As the tale progresses, however, Custance's helplessness is seen less as a function of her own passivity and more as the result of the human condition being dependent fully on the grace of God. In Northumbria she encourages her convert Hermengild to work a miracle in Christ's name, and preaches so earnestly ('so ferforth she gan oure lay declare', 572) that she converts Hermengild's husband the Constable too. In Rome she proactively ensures that her son will eventually occupy the position his rank deserves.

As virgin, wife, widow and mother, princess and Queen, Custance typifies universal womanhood. Such earthly power as she possesses, stemming for example from her rank and her position as mother of the future Emperor, symbolically reflects the power derived from her holiness, which by God's grace enables her to escape a massacre, false accusation, and the assault of the lustful

steward. Chauncey Wood considers the Man of Law's enthusiasm when Alla makes Custance his Queen (693) as a sign of his unspiritual materialism, since queenship seems a very mundane reward for holiness (Wood 192–244). In fact, it is her likeness to Mary, the Queen of Heaven, that the promotion signifies. In Edward's court, the most important figure after the King himself would be his Queen. But there is no Queen in Brown's painting. Edward's Philippa is dead, and Richard's marriage to Anne of Bohemia still some years away. Alice Perrers is the King's mistress, certainly not his Queen; Joan of Kent will never be Queen for her husband the Black Prince will die before his old father. The filling of so important a vacant position must have occupied many minds, as it did again in 1395 when Anne died and Richard commenced negotiations to marry the seven-year-old Isabella of France. Chaucer and his contemporaries would have regarded Custance's royal marriage as triumphant rather than opportunistic.

In the male-centred world of Fragment I, women are playthings, merely objects of desire, but in *The Man of Law's Tale*, where the spiritual values Custance represents are paramount, they play a central role, whether for good (Custance, Hermengild) or evil (the Sultanness, Donegild). Chaucer in fact exaggerates Custance's femininity (in comparison with his sources) and contrasts it with the 'mannysh' behaviour of the Sultanness and Donegild, in order to depict the values of Christian piety that this tale particularly upholds (Rose 170). In her holiness Custance forms a strong contrast with the alluring and easily allured Alison in *The Miller's Tale*. But even that holiness, or rather the simplified idea of holiness that associates it with sexual abstinence, has to be laid aside, says the Man of Law, when she marries:

For though that wyves be ful hooly thynges,
They moste take in pacience at nyght
Swich manere necessities as been plesynges
To folk that han ywedded hem with rynges,
And leye a lite hir hoolynesse aside.

(709–13)

David Rabin proposes that Custance's treasure, the dowry which she takes from her father's palace in Rome on her journey to marry the Sultan and which accompanies her when she is set adrift, represents not only her Christian spirituality, but also her virginity, which is converted by Alla into motherhood (Rabin 76–7). In contrast, Alison's wantonness achieves only the humiliation of

her husband. Especially Alison's confined world on the fringes of town contrasts with the wide travels of Custance. Custance takes Christianity beyond the fringes of Christendom, but in *The Miller's Tale* the parish clerk Absolon and the theological student Nicholas are peculiarly unfitted, temperamentally and morally, to institutionalise it even at home. Custance, however, is herself the means of its continuance, not only through the conversions her virtues bring about, but also through her maternal function as the mother of the future Christian Emperor in Rome.

Rescued by her father's Senator on his way back from the slaughter of the Saracens, Custance refuses to let either him or his wife her aunt know who she is. 'Thus kan Oure Lady bryngen out of wo / Woful Custance, and many another mo' (977-8), but it is up to Custance now to choose to regain her rights, if not her felicity. Proactively passive, so to speak, she decides not to return as a rejected wife and claim her due from her father who sent her to the Saracens. But when Alla arrives in Rome to do penance for his (justified!) matricide, she claims it from him, not for herself but for her son (1009-15). Recognition, explanations and short-lived happiness follow.

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Unlike Custance, whose circular journeyings bring her back to Rome where she began, the Canterbury pilgrims undertake a linear journey from the secular world of the hostelry in Southwark to the heavenly Jerusalem represented by the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury. From a spiritual point of view, Chaucer's pilgrims make a bad start, and it gets worse as the tales in Fragment I proceed. The Knight's tale is noble but historically pre-Christian. Then the drunken Miller insists on requiting it. He provokes a quarrel with the Reeve, and the Cook begins a tale that looks like becoming even more X-rated than the previous two. But it breaks off suddenly after one of Chaucer's bawdiest lines, and Adam Pinkhurst, whom Linne Mooney has recently identified as Chaucer's Adam sciveyn and the scribe of the two best extant manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, tells us in the Hengwrt manuscript that 'Of this Cokes tale maked Chaucer na moore.' This note is no doubt reliable, and implies that Chaucer decided to start again elsewhere. Several critics, including Kolve, Pearsall and Helen Cooper, have suggested that *The Man of Law's Tale* represents a fresh beginning to the pilgrimage, realigning it towards its religious goal after the secular first fragment has degenerated into a moral morass and been deliberately cut short.

In the Bible, judgement and a prospect of spiritual renewal are, famously and powerfully in the medieval consciousness, represented by the story of Noah's Flood.

God sweeps away the wicked and saves righteous Noah and his family in an Ark carrying the basic needs for his survival in the best-known new beginning in human history or literature. A similar concept seems to inform the first five *Canterbury Tales*, the crucial theological reversal being illustrated by the two contrasting stories involving the Flood: the *Miller's* and *Man of Law's* tales.

The Miller's Tale in the middle of Fragment I is an overt parody of the story of Noah's Flood. Old John the carpenter prepares an Ark, or rather three kneading-tubs, to cope with the peril of a Flood which he should have known was not coming if he had understood the allegorical significance of the rainbow. According to Peter Comestor's famous Biblical commentary the *Historia Scholastica*, and to the early Middle English poem *Genesis and Exodus* that is based on Comestor, the rainbow was a sign not simply of God's promise never to send another Flood, but also of past and future judgement:

The blue signifies the judgement by water, which is exterior and past; the red is interior and signifies the judgement that is yet to be sent, when this whole world will be burnt; and the flame will rise just as high as the flood overflowed the hills. For forty years before doomsday nobody will be able to see this sign.
(*Genesis & Exodus*, ed. Arngart, 638–46; my translation).

So beware if you stop seeing rainbows! The climax of *The Miller's Tale* pivots wonderfully on Nicholas's cry of 'Water' to relieve the pain of his scalded backside—he's suffered the judgement of fire, and wants the cleansing of water, but his cry brings John down from the roof so that the old cuckold suffers a broken arm by falling not in water but on the hard floor. This reverses the meaning of the rainbow according to Comestor and the Middle English *Genesis and Exodus* where blue betokens the flood that is exterior, past and won't recur, and red the fire of the last judgement which is interior and still to come.

The Man of Law's Tale on the other hand portrays salvation by water—the holy Custance, set adrift by her mothers-in-law, the Satanic Sultaness and the 'mannysh' Donegild, survives by the grace of God. The universality of the Flood suggests God's universal sovereignty. All the wicked are drowned and only Noah

and his family survive. The fourteenth-century Holkham Bible Picture Book (see Appendix) shows Noah releasing a dove and a raven from the Ark, while the naked and the dead float in the waves below. If Noah represents mankind, Custance stands for womankind. All her enemies are killed, one way or another, while she and her family survive, at least till God calls them.

Key concepts in John Navone's theory of narrative theology (discussed by Bequette 13–16) are 'at-homeness' and 'Dwelling'. The latter is the eternal resting place anticipated at the end of life's journey, the former subjective adumbrations of it, often coinciding with turning-points or re-directions of the pilgrim's progress towards his goal. As religious narrative, *The Man of Law's Tale* illustrates Navone's concepts of 'at-homeness' and 'Dwelling' within its own structure and not only by virtue of its position in the architecture of the *Canterbury Tales* as a whole. 'The phenomenological categories of the travel story exhibit temporality as movement, uprootedness, and 'feelings of not-at-home', which dialectically evoke a sense of at-homeness. At-homeness, in turn, is the subjective experience of the calling of the eternal, a calling that alludes to the traveler's arrival at a final destination. At various points in the journey, Dwelling will reveal itself, make its own reality felt, in the traveler's experience of at-homeness.' (Bequette 16) Custance starts badly, ejected from her home to endure thralldom among the barbarians. Then, preserving her 'treasure', her faith, she is sent by divine grace to Northumbria, where she effects the conversion and enjoys the friendship of Hermengild and her husband the Constable. This interlude of 'at-homeness' is shattered by Hermengild's murder, the false accusation of her rejected suitor, and the terror of imminent execution. God again intervenes, and rewards her with promotion to her position as the King's chosen bride. But Alla waits only to get her with child before going off to harry the Scots (715–18), proving there is no 'dwelling' even at the acme of her earthly joys. Cast adrift once more by the machinations of another wicked mother-in-law, she journeys a third time, this time back to Rome, God saving her both on the way and when she is admitted incognito to her aunt's house. Her journey back to England when reunited with her husband takes her almost to the 'Dwelling' which has been the ultimate goal of all her travels,

But litel while it lasteth, I yow heete,
Joy of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde;
(1132–3).

Alla dies and she returns to Rome and her father, where in holy living both prepare for the final transformation that will, as Bloomfield has it, change their earthly tragedy into a Christian comedy.

Meanwhile, just as the Biblical Creation, Fall, and increasing wickedness are followed by cleansing judgement and a fresh start with righteous Noah and his sons who go out to repopulate the three continents of the world, so the liquidation of barbarian and pagan enemies of Christ and the survival of Maurice as saintly son and eventually Christian Emperor in the chief city of Western Christendom help to ensure the triumph of the one true religion in the West where it particularly belongs.

When Ford Madox Brown decided to link his picture of Chaucer at the court of Edward III to 'a moment of maternal pathos' in *The Man of Law's Tale*, he was, perhaps inadvertently, fastening on aspects of familial and historical change that imply both continuity and renewal. The royal succession was a primary matter of concern in the years 1376-77, when the King's heir, Edward the Black Prince, and then the King himself died. Indeed, it not only precipitated the usurpation of 1399 but was also, when the long war with France at last came to an end, to promote the civil disturbances of the Wars of the Roses, which were essentially a series of conflicts of feuding families. In a metaphorically shrinking world, our own international conflicts, since 9/11 and now 7/7, seem to have sprung from a form of propinquo- rather than xenophobia that the restoration of 'family values', based on cooperation rather than division, alone can be expected to overcome. From this point of view, the relevance of *The Man of Law's Tale*, with its emphasis on the political consequences of the disruption and reintegration of the family, to contemporary issues is not far to seek.

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APPENDIX



Copied from http://www.artrenewal.org/images/artists/b/Brown_Ford_Madox_Brown_F_M_Chaucer_at_the_Court_of_Edward_III.jpg

Brown's diary describes the hours he spent between 1847 and 1851 in between other work in procuring models and making up drapery for the figures, outlining, painting, and repainting; identifying the figures came later. Resuming the diary in August 1854 Brown writes: 'In 1851 I finished the centre compartment of the 'Fruits of English Poetry' having determined to abandon the wings. To get this part finished for the academy I had to labour very hard & at the last worked three whole nights in one week, only lying down with my cloaths on for a couple of hours. Emma [Brown's 2nd wife] sat for the Princess [Fair Maid of Kent] which was done in two sittings of two hours each. Gabriel Rossetti sat for Chaucer beginning at 11 at night, he sitting up beside me on the scaffolding scetching while I worked. We finished about four in the morning & the head was never subsequently touched. His brother William was the troubadour. Elliott a pupil of Lucy's, the cardinal. John Marshall of University Hospital was the Jester. Miss Gregson since Mrs Lee [a model who married Mr Lee, secretary of the Clipstone Street Artists Society, where life classes were held] was the fair princess behind the Black Prince. Her friend Miss Byne sat for the dark one but much altered. The scoundrel & afterwards thief Maitland then under Marshals hand for an operation, sat for the Black prince. The fine woman below looking round was a portrait of Julia Wild celebrated as model & prostitute also for black eyes, the boys were mostly portraits, but the other heads Ideal chiefly.' (Surtees 72 and 74)



From the Holkham Bible Picture Book (1320-30), BL Add. 47682, f.8. Copied from the CD 'Images of Salvation: The Story of the Bible through Medieval Art', ed. Dee Dyas (Christianity and Culture, St John's College, Nottingham).