Textual Function of *gan* in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A*

Tomoko IWAKUNI

0. Introduction

As is well known, a characteristic feature of Middle English verse style is the appearance of *gan*. *Ginne* is an aphetic form of Old English *onginnan, aginnan* which functions as a marker of the ingressive aspect with the meaning of "to begin". The past form of *ginne* is *gan*. *Gan*'s Northern form *con* is sometimes confused morphologically with *can* and occasionally used as a modal auxiliary verb. The *Gawain*-poet who was a contemporary of Chaucer uses *con* in *Purity*, *Patience*, *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* which are considered as his works. Chaucer seems to be fond of using *gan* as well as using *do* as a periphrastic auxiliary. The *do* periphrasis is general in his time. Mustanoja (1960: 614) suggests "Chaucer, who favours the periphrasis with *gin*, makes sparing use of periphrastic *do*". The form *gan* with an accompanying infinitive contains etymologically a meaning of "to begin" and is often used as a periphrastic auxiliary. The collocation is common throughout the period. It is also pointed out that *gan* is a preterit marker. Furthermore, many scholars have frequently argued that it is a metrical filler or a metrical device. *Gan* is probably one of the most beloved words in Middle English. Moreover, despite the morphological relation of *ginnen* in Middle English to *begin* in Modern English, an ingressive interpretation of *gan* is often impossible. This has evoked the argument among scholars that *gan* serves an emphatic descriptive function in Middle English. They insist that *gan* intensifies the action expressed by the infinitive and separates the highlighted action from the surrounding background actions in the narrative.

Funke (1922: 2, 15) claims that *gan* developed as a sign of "an attention-calling", and he classifies *gan* into three functions (perfectiv (perfective), descriptiv (descriptive), and periphrastisch (pleonastic functions)). Brinton (1996: 73-74) claims that Funke's classification of *gan* is arbitrary, and that dividing *gan* into the three groups is difficult. Brinton (1996: 74-82) suggests that *gan* has a discourse function and a textual function. On the other hand, Smyser (1967: 72-74) indicates that it is impossible to distinguish accurately among the three functions of *gan* which Funke describes because of ambiguity. He contradicts Funke's argument that *gan* has a descriptive meaning, provides the evidence that *gan* is often used in an unimportant context, and indicates that *gan* which Chaucer uses is merely a metrically expedient word (1967: 72-74). However, he states that "we are quite in the dark as to what if any precise function it [*gan*] had" (Smyser, 1967: 71).

Homann (1954: 389-398) indicates that *gan* has an emphatic and descriptive feature, and suggests that scribes or translators may have substituted *gan* for a reflexive pronoun *se* which is used in *verbes prominaux* such as *s'en aller* in Old French.

Furthermore, Mustanoja (1960: 610-615) argues that *gan* has an "intensive-descriptive" function and shows an unannounced and abrupt action with adverbs such as *anon* (at once) and *sodenly* (suddenly). He suggests that *gan* has an ingressive meaning when it accompanies a verb of perception, motion or emotion (1960: 610-615). Terasawa (1974) claims that *gan* has a narrative function. In addition, Tajima (1975) deals with *con* which occurs in the *Gawain*-poet's *Pearl*, and he concludes that *con* is a metrical device to place an infinitive in the rhyme position and to fill a necessary syllable in the line.

The Romaunt of the Rose is not focused on in preceding studies of Chaucer's *gan*. Brinton, for instance, deals mainly with *gan* in *Troilus and Criseyde* because the largest number of occurrences of *gan* in Chaucer's works is in *Troilus and Criseyde* (1996: 67-83). I will examine the frequency of *gan* in *The Romaunt of the Rose* in Section 2, and will ascertain the usage of *gan* in *the Romaunt of the Rose* Fragment A, taking into account the preceding studies.

Regarding the manuscript, only one original manuscript of *The Romaunt of the Rose* in Middle English survives. It has one hundred and sixty-two leaves. Eleven leaves lack some lines or have been lost. It seems that this manuscript (MS. Hunter 409) was made in the first half of the fifteenth century although some Chaucerians have different views. This manuscript belonged to the Hunterian Museum before and now it is in University of Glasgow Library. *The Romaunt of the Rose* written in Middle English consists of Fragments A, B and C. Fragment A is composed of lines 1-1705, Fragment B of liens 1706-5810, and Fragment C of lines 5811-7692. The Old French text edited by Lecoy is composed of the first part (lines 1-4028) and the latter part (lines 4029-21750). The number of lines in *The Romaunt of the Rose* is about one third of that in the original Old French text. The end of the story in Fragment A is the scene in which a poet looks in the well of Narcissus and encounters the Rose. The lines in Fragment A correspond to the Old French lines 1-1668. *The Romaunt of the Rose* consisting of Fragment A, B and C is written by different authors although some Chaucerians have different opinions about it. Only Fragment A is regarded as one of Chaucer's early works at present. Skeat details this problem in *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1894). He concludes that each Fragment is written (or translated) by each author (or translator) and that Fragment A is Chaucer's work (1984: i-xx). I will deal with Fragment A and use the printed book *The Riverside Chaucer* edited by Larry D. Benson (1984) in this paper.

1. Distribution of *gan* in the Text

In Fragment A, *ginne* is used twenty-two times, the from of *gynneth* (the ending *-th* indicates that this verb is *pr. 3rd. sg.*) is used once in line 53, and the preterit form *gan* occurs twenty-one times. In this section, I will explore *gan* in the whole text from a macro perspective.

The distribution of twenty-one *gan*s is irregular in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A. It is linked to Brinton's view that *gan* has a discourse function and a textual function (1996: 74-82). If *gan* is defined as having the single function of a metrical device, it should be arranged more regularly in each line. However, *gan* is arranged irregularly in the texts. This implies that *gan* has not only a metrical function but also other functions. This is indicated by Brinton (1996), in which she examines the arrangement of *gan* in *Troilus and Criseyde* (Book I to V). According to her, *gan* corresponds to the amount of narrated actions in contrast with indirect speech or thought: *gan* occurs least frequently in Book IV because it is entirely composed of discussion including the imminent separation of Troilus and Criseyde; *gan* occurs most frequently in Book II because it includes all the actions which bring them together; and *gan* appears to occur in foregrounded clauses (1996 : 75-78). Terasawa (1974: 102) suggests that the clauses including *gan* are declarative all the time, and never interrogative, imperative, or negative.

In the light of their indications, I will look at *gan* in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A. *Gan* appears in twenty-one lines (95, 99, 110, 132, 143, 432, 525, 531, 734, 794, 795, 812, 1129, 1328, 1336, 1416, 1471, 1476, 1514, 1546, 1659) in Fragment A (lines 1-1705). *Gan* occurs not regularly but irregularly in the text. Concerning scenes in which *gan* appears, I will divide each of them in accordance with the context of them. In addition, I will confirm the narrative functions of *gan* suggested by Brinton.

> Me thought a-nyght in my sleping,
> Right in my bed, ful redily,
> That it was by the morowe erly,
> And up I roos and **gan** me **clothe**[1].
> Anoon I wissh myn hondis bothe.
> A sylvre nedle forth I drough
> Out of an aguler queynt ynough,
> And **gan** this nedle **threde** anon, (92-99)

Gan appears in lines 95 and 99. These lines are from the scene in which the poet wakes up and dresses in his dream. In "Me thought a-nyght in my sleping, (It seemed to me that (it was) a night in my sleep)"[2] (92), an impersonal construction is used. *Gan* is employed in indirect speech, although

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[1] *Gan* (*for to*) inf. is written in bold letters.
[2] All translations are mine in this paper.

Brinton indicates it is rarely used in indirect speech in *Troilus and Criseyde* (1996: 76). In the original line "m'iere avis (it seemed to me that)" (87) corresponding to Chaucer's line 92, it is used in an impersonal construction in the same way. The impersonal construction bestows objectivity on happenings in his dream and gives a persuasive narrative. Moreover, in the scene, in which two *gan*s are used, a series of actions after getting up is described in minute detail, such as "to wash his hands", "to dress himself", "to thread a needle to stitch his sleeves" and so forth. These minute descriptions emphasize the actions. This has an effect of bringing the audience into the narrative. This scene is drawn in almost all of the illustrated manuscripts written in Old French. *Gan* is used in the foregrounded part at the beginning of the story. Furthermore, in the Old French line "de mon lit tantost me levé (getting up quickly from my bed)" (89) corresponding to Chaucer's line 95, Lorris uses a participial construction. In the same token, in the original line "chauçai moi et mes mains lavé ([I] clothed and washed hands)" (90) corresponding to Chaucer's line 95, Lorris uses a past participle. The construction in the original is difficult for the audience to understand. Chaucer does not use a participial construction. By using *gan* the scene emerges clearly.

> Toward a ryver **gan** I me **dresse**
> That I herd renne faste by,
> For fairer plaiyng non saugh I
> Than playen me by that ryver. (110-13)

This scene is the one in which, after finishing dressing, he hears the murmur of a river and goes to the river. Line 110 including *gan* corresponds to the original line "vers une riviere m'adreice" (104). The Old French line uses the present tense "adreice (turn)". Chaucer translates it to the past tense "gan dresse (turned)" and uses *gan* as a preterit marker. However, "dresse" itself seems to emphasize a momentary motion in that "dresse" means "turn". This *gan* has not only the function as a preterit marker but also a function of emphasis which causes the action "dresse" to be focused on. This scene is also drawn in many illustrated manuscripts written in Old French. It is one of the turning points in the narrative. In this turning point, Chaucer uses a different tense from the original and uses *gan* derived from Old English. Chaucer signals to the audience that the scene is a turning point and highlights the moment.

> Ful cler was than the morowtyde,
> And ful attempre, out of drede.
> Tho **gan** I **walke** thorough the mede,
> Dounward ay in my pleiyng,
> The ryver syde costeiyng. (130-34)

These lines describe the scene in which he goes through the meadow and descends to the riverside merrily. This scene is also drawn in almost all the illustrated manuscripts written in Old French and it is one of the turning points in the narrative. In "gan walke", *gan* emphasizes and foregrounds the action *walke*. Moreover, in both the original line "tot le rivage costoitant. (going along the riverside)" (128) and the Middle English line "The ryver syde costeiyng. (going along the riverside)" (134), the participial construction is used in the same way. In the Middle English text, line 134 is the subordinate clause to line 132 including *gan*. Both in the original and in the Middle English texts, they do not consist of the complicated participial construction, so that the audience can understand the sentences containing the participial construction. Chaucer translates faithfully to the original because it has no intricate structure.

> Portraied without and wel entailled
> With many riche portraitures.
> And bothe the ymages and the peyntures
> **Gan** I **biholde** bysyly, (140-43)

In this scene, the poet arrives at the outside wall of the garden and observes intently many portraits which are drawn and sculptured on the wall. This scene, with the scenes of his getting up and his going along the riverside, is also drawn in many illustrated manuscripts in Old French and it is one of the turning points in the narrative. The following original lines correspond to the Middle English lines 140-143; "portret dehors et entaillié (painted and carved outside)" (132), "a maintes riches escritures. (with many rich portraits)" (133), "Les ymages et les pointures (The images and the portraits)" (134) and "dou mur volentiers remirai; (I intently looked at the wall)" (135). Chaucer translates them into the Middle English in the same structure. However, Chaucer adds *gan* to the lines there. By adding *gan*, the action *biholde* (behold) accompanying *gan* is emphasized. Moreover, these lines represent the scene in which the poet begins to describe the portraits on the outside wall. Using *gan* makes the audience notice that the scene changes.

> And bisily she **gan to fonde**
> To make many a feynt praiere
> To God and to his seyntis dere. (432-34)

Gan does not appear for about three hundred lines after its appearance in line 143, till it is used again in line 432. There is a high possibility that *gan* is not only a metrical device but also has a textual function in that *gan*s are arranged irregularly. This scene depicts one of the portraits on the outside, Poope-holy (Hypocrisy): Poope-holy pretends eagerly to believe in God. *Gan* is used to emphasize the hypocritical action of Poope-holy.

Tho **gan** I **go** a full gret pas
Envyronyng evene in compas
The closing of the square wall,
Tyl that I fond a wiket small
So shett that I ne myght in gon,
And other entre was ther noon.
Uppon this dore I **gan to smyte**,
That was fetys and so lite,
For other wey coude I not seke. (525-33)

Gan reappears in line 525 after line 432 with the absence of the use of it for about one hundred lines. The lines depict the scene after the description of the portraits on the outside wall, in which the poet manages to enter the beautiful garden enclosed within the wall. The poet cannot find the door to enter the garden and walks quickly around the wall. He finally finds the small door and knocks on it. *Gan* is used at the turning point in the narrative.

Tho wente I forth on my right hond
Doun by a lytel path I fond
Of mentes full, and fenell grene,
And faste by, without wene,
Sir Myrthe I fond, and right anoon
Unto Sir Myrthe **gan** I **goon**,
There as he was hym to solace. (729-35)

Gan reappears in line 735 with the absence of its use for about two hundred lines. These lines present the scene in which the poet goes forward along the path, and finds Myrthe (Mirth) and goes to him. In the original line "m'en entrai ou Deduiz estoit" (717) corresponding to line 734 including *gan*, two preterit tenses are used: one is the simple past form *m'en entrai*. The other is the imperfect past form *estoit*. "M'en entrai" corresponds to "gan I goon". It seems that Chaucer expresses more precisely the difference between two preterit tenses in Old French by using *gan*. Furthermore, Weinrich (1971: 158) suggests that the simple past in Old French highlights the foreground in the narrative. I propose to look at this in Section 3 of this paper.

Upon the karoll wonder faste
I **gan biholde**, til atte laste
A lady **gan** me **for to espie**,
And she was cleped Curtesie, (793-96)

The poet watches intently "the karoll (carol)" and Curtesie (Courtesy) finds him in this scene. *Gan* is used with "biholde (behold)" and "espie (espy, see)". The action of beholding or seeing the poet and Curtesie is focused on and foregrounded.

> Thanne **gan** I **loken** ofte sithe
> The shap, the bodies, and the cheres, (812-13)

Here, the poet watches the faces and figures of the dancing people many times. The action of looking is foregrounded here. In *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the characters are described in detail. In those days the story was very popular and the audience knew the plot well. This *gan* emphasizes the verb *loken* (look), and at the same time it is the signal to start giving the description of the dancing characters.

> Dame Richesse on hir hond **gan lede**
> A yong man ful of semelyhede,
> That she best loved of ony thing.
> His lust was mych in housholding. (1129-32)

After *gan* in line 812, the next use of *gan* occurs in line 1129. *Gan* does not appear for about three hundred lines. In the intervening three hundred lines, the characters joining the carol are almost continuously described. Lines 1129-1132 describe the scene in which Dame Richesse (Riches) brings a good looking and young man with her. Her feeling for the young man who lives a luxurious life is expressed in "That she best loved of ony thing. (She loved him more than anyone else)" (1131). Her feeling that she hopes to *lede* (lead, hold, bring) the young man is described by using "gan lede". The feeling is much more focused on by adding *gan*.

> Oute of that place wente I thoo,
> And in that gardyn **gan** I **goo**,
> Pleyyng along full meryly. (1327-29)

After the characters joining the carol with Mirth are described, the narrative moves to the scene in which the poet goes to the inner garden. *Gan* is used at the turning point in the narrative. In addition, lines 1327-1329 correspond to the original lines "D'ileques me parti atant, (From there I moved, then)" (1299), "si m'en alai seus esbatant (and I went along (the way), taking pleasure)" (1300) and "par le vergier de ça en la; (through the garden from there)" (1301). In the original line 1300, the participial construction is used. Chaucer translates the original line into Middle English with the participial construction, in a way that the construction in line 1329 corresponds to that of the original line 1300. Chaucer translates faithfully to the original because the participial construction can be

easily understood by the audience. Furthermore, the Middle English line 1328 is subordinated to line 1329 containing the participial construction. The participial construction in line 1329 supplies the lack of the explanation of the action "goo" and emphasizes it. The merry action is emphasized much more by adding *gan* to the narrative.

> And he full soone [it] sette an-ende,
> And at a braid he **gan** it **bende**,
> And tok hym of his arowes fyve, (1335-37)

The Love of God gives Swete-lookyng (Good-looking) five arrows and orders him to shoot the poet. Swere-lookyng is about to shoot him in this scene. The source of five gold arrows is *Metamorphoses* by Ovidius. Five gold arrows and five silver arrows are described in *Metamorphoses*. The five gold arrows are symbols of beauty, purity, nobility, companionship and courtship (Shinoda 2007(I): 55). In *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the five gold arrows are based on those in Ovidius. However, the names of the five gold arrows are not to be found either in *Le Roman de la Rose* or *The Romaunt of the Rose*. Some of them are symbolically described as representing what encourages love. The arrow encouraging love is about to be shot by Swete-lookyng in this scene.

> Of whiche the water in rennyng
> **Gan make** a noyse ful lykyng. (1415-16)

Escaping from the God of Love 's pursuit, the poet moves about in the garden and hears the murmur of the running water in the aqueduct which Mirth made in this scene. In "Gan make a noyse ful lykyng." (1416), *gan* co-ocuurs with "make a noyse". This makes the audience pay attention to the sound of the water and associate the fountain of Narcissus with the sound of the water. It indicates that the story of the fountain of Narcissus is coming soon.

> Letters smal that sayden thus,
> "Here starf the fayre Narcisus."
> Narcisus was a bacheler
> That Love had caught in his danger,
> And in his net **gan** hym so **strayne**,
> And dyd him so to wepe and playne, (1467-72)

In this scene, the poet hides behind a big pine tree and finds a fountain. The small letters on the stone beside the fountain say "Here starf the fayre Narcisus. (Handsome Narcissus died here.)". The poet notices the letters, and the story of Narcissus begins to be narrated. The story described in *Metamorphoses* was well known to the audience. *Gan* indicates the turning point of the scene. This

scene implies that the poet like Narcissus is about to be caught in the net of the God of Love. In this important scene, *gan* is used.

> For a fayr lady that hight Echo
> Him loved over any creature,
> And **gan** for hym such payne **endure**
> That on a tyme she him tolde That if he her loven nolde,
> That her behoved nedes dye; (1474-79)

In this scene, the story of Narcissus is continually described. Echo who loves Narcissus distresses herself and predicts that he is to die if he loves her. *Gan* is used in the sentimental scene and *gan* emphasizes the feeling of love. *Gan* makes the audience notice that this scene is important, and at the same time, *gan* makes the words "payne endure" echoed.

> He thoughte of thilke water shene
> To drynke, and fresshe hym wel withalle.
> And doun on knees he **gan to falle**,
> And forth his heed and necke he straughte
> To drynken of that welle a draughte.
> And in the water anoon was seene
> His nose, his mouth, his yen sheene, (1512-18)

These lines depict the scene in which Narcissus finds a clear fountain, bends down to drink the water and looks into his reflected figure. Line 1514 including *gan* incicates that the important scene begins.

> Whanne that this lettre of which I telle
> Hadde taught me that it was the welle
> Of Narcisus in his beaute,
> I **gan** anoon **withdrawe** me,
> Whanne it fel in my remembraunce
> That hym bitidde such myschaunce. (1543-48)

Here, the poet finishes narrating the story of Narcissus, remembers that Narcissus suffered a misfortune, and flinches from the fountain. The emphasis in the story shifts from the descriptions of Narcissus to his action in the fountain. *Gan* is used at the turning point.

> Toward the roser **gan** I **go**;
> And whanne I was not fer therfro, (1659-60)

These lines present the scene in which the poet looks into the fountain of Narcissus and finds the Rosebud reflected by two crystals at the bottom of the fountain. The poet goes to the Rosebud with a strong feeling which brings him to ruin. *Gan* indicates that it moves to the last scene in which the poet arrives at the rose bush and chooses a beautiful rosebud from there. The co-occurrence of *Gan* with *go* foregrounds the action *go*.

As shown above, as we understand the story, it appears that *gan*s are distributed in a way which suggests that places where *gan* appears are linked. This demonstrates that *gan* in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A has narrative functions which Brinton (1996) suggests. Furthermore, the clauses including *gan* are put not in the background but the foreground because *gan* is used at the turning points and the important scenes in the narrative.

2. Frequency of *gan*s per Hundred Lines in Verses and the Positions of the Infinitive Following *gan*

I have examined how *gan* is distributed in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A, focusing on how *gan* is irregularly distributed in texts, in Section 1. I have divided the scenes of *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A to confirm the distribution of *gan* in Section 1. However, dividing the scenes into some groups in a text turns to be arbitrary to some degree. In Section 2, I will divide some verses by exactly one hundred lines to remove the arbitrariness, and I will inspect the frequency of *gan*s per hundred lines. In addition, I will investigate the positions of the infinitive following *gan*.

Terasawa mentions that *gan* is very rare in prose and absolutely not frequent in unrhymed alliterative verse (1974 : 99-100). Chaucer uses *gan* six hundred and sixty-nine times in his rhymed verse, while he uses it only three times in "The tale of Melibee" and it is not used at all in his other prose works (Oizumi, 1991: s. *v. gan, gonne, gonnen*). For this reason, *gan* in Chaucer's prose works has not been investigated, but this section explores it in Chaucer's and the *Gawain*-poet's verse works. I will examine the frequency of *gan* per hundred lines in some verse works.

Con is the Northern form of *gan* (*OED*, s. v. *can*, $v.^2$). A considerable number of *con*s are used in the rhymed alliterative poem *Pearl* by the *Gawain*-poet. Tajima points out that "the exacting rhyme-scheme of *Pearl* demanded frequent recourse to the *con*-periphrasis" (1975: 429), and concludes that "the *con*-periphrasis is merely a metrical device of the *Gawain*-poet for obtaining the necessary number of syllables to fill the line or, more particularly, for placing the infinitive in rhyming position" (1975: 438). Tajima (1975: 432) shows the figures of the occurrences of *gan* in verse works based on Homann's figures (1954: 394), with the additional figures in two of the *Gawain*-port's works as in Table 1:

Table 1. Figures of the occurrences of *gan* in verse works (Tajima, 1975: 432)

Works	Number of lines	Occurrences of *gan*
Canterbury Tales	19,435	161
Troilus and Criseyde	8,239	289
Gower, Confessio Amantis	28,708	95
Pearl	1,212	60
Gawain and the Green Knight (rhymed parts)	505	20

According to the figures in Table 1, the frequency of *gan* per hundred lines in *Pearl* is 4.95 times. It is apparent that the Gawain-port's *con* (*gan*) is much more frequently used in *Pearl* than in the other texts. This confirms that the *Gawain*-poet's *con* (*gan*) is a metrical device as Tajima points out. Smyser (1967: 83) calculated in detail the frequency of *gan* in Chaucer's works per hundred lines in Chaucer's verse works as in Table 2:

Table 2. Frequency of *gan* per hundred lines in Chaucer's verse works (Smyser, 1967: 83)

Works	Frequency of *gan* per hundred lines
Book of the Duchess	0.97
Parliament of Fowles	3.29
House of Fame	3.66
Troilus and Criseyde	3.93
Legend of Good Women	1.83
Canterbury Tales (all verses)	0.98

I have newly calculated the frequency of *gan* per hundred lines in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A. The result is that it occurs 1.29 times per hundred lines. The average frequency of *gan* per hundred lines in the Chaucer's seven verse works is 2.27 times. Compared with 4.95 times in *Pearl*, the frequency of *gan* in Chaucer's woks is much lower than that in *Pearl*. Whereas *con* (*gan*) in *Pearl* is probably used as a metrical device, *gan* in Chaucer's works seems to have not only the function of a metrical device but also other functions.

Furthermore, Tajima (1975: 438) has concluded that *con* (*gan*) is a metrical device to arrange the infinitive following *con* in the rhyming position in *Pearl*. In *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A, however, it is not a metrical device. In Fragment A, the from of "*gan* + *inf.*" appears seventeen times and the form of "*gan* + (for) to *inf.*" four times. The form of "*gan* + (for) to *inf.*" appears in lines 432, 531, 795, and 1514. In these lines, all of the infinitives are arranged in the rhyming position. This shows that when the infinitive takes the form of "(for) to *inf.*", *gan* is a metrical device to arrange the

infinitive in the rhyming position. On the other hand, in nine out of the seventeen "*gan + inf.*", the infinitive is arranged in the rhyming position in lines 95, 110, 734, 1129, 1328, 1336, 1471, 1476, and 1659. However, in the remaining eight "*gan + inf.*" forms (99, 132, 143, 525, 794, 812, 1416, 1546), the infinitive is not arranged in the rhyming position. This implies that Chaucer's *gan* is not merely used as a metrical device.

Judging from the distribution of *gan* per hundred lines and the position of the infinitive following *gan*, it can be concluded that *gan* is not only a metrical device but also has the narrative function suggested in Section 1.

3. The Combination of Tenses

In the original seventeen lines (90, 93, 126, 135, 511, 517, 717, 776, 778, 794, 1107, 1300, 1308, 1439, 1444, 1480, and 1623) corresponding to the lines in which *gan* is used in Fragment A, the *passé simple* (simple past) is used. In the remaining four lines (104, 422, 1388 and 1512) corresponding to the lines in which *gan* is used in Fragment A, the other tenses or different forms are used. The present tense is used in line 104, and the *imparfait* (imperfect tense) is used in line 422, the noun phrase is used in line 1388, and the *passé composé* (compound past tense) is used in line 1512. This in turn indicates that the simple past is used in many lines corresponding to the lines in which *gan* is used in Fragment A. The surrounding context shows that the simple past tense and the imperfect tense appear alternately with some regularity in *Le Roman de la Rose*. Weinrich indicates this alternation in *Le Temps* (1971) :

> Il ne faudrait pas en conclure à l'absence totale d'un contraste narratif entre arrière-plan et premier plan. L'Imperfetto[3] apparaît dans le text, en alternance plus ou moins régulière avec le Passato remoto[4]. Il est nettement revêtu d'une fonction d'arrière-plan. On le rencontre même avec une fréquence remarquable au commencement de la nouvelle, sauf justement au début de la première phase. (1971: 158)
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> (We should not conclude that the narrative contrast between a foreground and background does not exist at all. In a text, the simple past tense and the imperfect tense appear more or less alternately and regularly. It [the imperfect tense] obviously has the function of the background. At the beginning of the story, although it may not be the very start, we see it [the imperfect tense].)[5]

Weinrich examined many Middle English texts like *Decameron* in *Le Temps*. Weinrich indicates that a frame story uses the imperfect tense at the outset of the story and the simple past and the

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[3] *L'Imperfetto* in Italian means the imperfect (tense) in English for *l'imparfait* in French.
[4] *Le Passato remoto* in Italian means the simple past in English for *le passé simple* in French.
[5] My translation.

imperfect tense alternately to some degree in the story in progress in a frame story (1971: 158-166). His claim is that the combination of the two preterit tenses has a narrative effect, and the simple past has the effect of indicating the foreground and the imperfect tense has the effect of indicating the background (1971 : 158). In the seventeen lines corresponding to the lines in which *gan* is used in Fragment A, the simple past is used in *Le Roman de la Rose*. Based on Weinrich's argument, I will analyse the tenses in the Old French and the Middle English text in detail with special reference to the especially important lines in order to avoid duplicating the explanation given in Section 1. In the following extracts, the first set of lines are from *Le Roman de la Rose* and the second set of lines are from Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose*. In the Old French lines, shading is added to the part of the imperfect tense, a square is put around the part of the simple past, and the part corresponding to the lines in which *gan* is used in Fragment A is written in bold letters. In Chaucer's lines, "*gan* + (for to) *inf.*" is written in bold letters and the past tense is underlined.

> as oisiaus les douz chans piteus.
> En icelui tens deliteus,
> que toute rein d'amer s'esfroie,
> songai une nuit que j'estoie.
> Lors m'iere avis en mon dormant
> qu'il iere matin durement ;
> de mon lit tantost me levé,
> **chauçai** moi et mes mains lavé ;
> lors trés une aguille d'argent
> d'un aguillier mignot et gent,
> si **prins** l'aguille a enfiler. (83-93)

> The smale briddes syngen clere
> Her blisful swete song pitous.
> And in this sesoun delytous,
> Whan love affraieth alle thing,
> Me <u>thought</u> a-nyght in my sleping,
> Right in my bed, ful redily,
> That it <u>was</u> by the morowe erly,
> And up I <u>roos</u> and **gan** me **clothe**.
> Anoon I <u>wissh</u> myn hondis bothe
> A sylvre nedle forth I <u>drough</u>
> Out of an aguler queynt ynough,
> And **gan** this nedle **threde** anon, (88-99)

These lines are the opening of the narrative. In the Old French, the imperfect tense is used as Weinrich indicates (1971: 158). The traditional descriptions of nature in May are seen here like those

in *The Canterbury Tales*. In the Old French lines, the imperfect tense which has the effect of indicating the background is used until line 88. In the Middle English lines, the present tense is used in lines 88 and 91 ("syngen (sing)" and "affraieth (arouse)" respectively), and the past tense is used after line 92. In the Middle English lines, the description of May is written with the present tense, and the scene in which the poet wakes up is written in the past tense.

In the Middle English lines 95 and 99, *gan* is used as indicating the ingressive meaning and emphasizes "clothe" (95) and "threde" (99). On the other hand, the simple past tense ("chauçai" (90) and "prins" (93)) is used in the Old French lines. By using the simple past, these actions are also foregrounded. Furthermore, the present tense in the Middle English lines 88 and 91, works effectively as a device by which the audience is drawn into the story. The narrator tells the audience "the now *is* May", and uses the past tense to make the audience enter the inner story of the frame story. *Gan* is effectively used to indicate the foreground of the inner story.

In addition, in the Old French line "as oisiaus les douz chans piteus. (the piteous and sweet songs from the birds)" (83), Lorris describes the song as *douz* (sweet) and *piteus* (piteous), whereas Chaucer adds *blisful* (blissful) to the corresponding line ("Her blisful swete song pitous." (89)) in order to describe the song. By adding *blisful*, Chaucer contrasts *pitous* with *blisful*. In this fashion, Chaucer alters the description of May in the original.

> La praierie grant et bele
> tres qu'au pié de l'eve bastoit;
> clere et serie et neite estoit
> la matinee, et atempree.
> Lors m'en alai par mi la pree
> contreval l'eve esbanoiant,
> tot le rivage costoiant. (122-28)

> The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
> Beet right on the watir syde.
> Ful cler was than the morowtyde,
> And ful attempre, out of drede.
> Tho **gan** I **walke** thorough the mede,
> Dounward ay in my pleiyng,
> The ryver syde costeiyng. (128-34)

The scene describes that the poet goes through the meadow and descends to the riverside. The Old French line 124 uses the imperfect tense as the background. In the Middle English line 130 corresponding to the Old Fench line 124, the past tense is used without using *gan* because the scene is a background. In the Old French line 126 corresponding to the Middle English line 132 including

"gan walke", the simple past is used for foregrounding. In the Middle English line "The medewe softe, swote, and grene, (The soft, sweet and green meadow)" (128) corresponding to the Old French line "La praierie grant et bele (The large and beautiful prairie)" (122), Chaucer rewrites the description of nature for the British audience.

In the Old French line "clere et serie et neite estoit ([It] was clear and serene and bright)" (124), "et (and)" is used twice in the same line ("A et B et C"). This style is often seen in the Old French text. In the Middle English line "Ful cler was than the morowtyde, (Then the morning was very clear)" (130) corresponding to the Old French line 124, Chaucer changes the original style into his style. This alteration is often seen in Chaucer's text.

Moreover, in Middle English line 131, Chaucer adds the adverbial "out of drede (no doubt, surely)". This is one of the characteristic styles of Chaucer. However, the adverbial is sometimes used in some parts of the Old French text, for example, the adverbial in line 977 ("sanz doute (no doubt)"). In this way, the adverbial which makes the audience notice the narrator in the outer frame story is sometimes woven into *Le Roman de la Rose*. This may have influenced Chaucer.

> Lors **m'en alai** grant aleüre,
> acernant la compasseüre
> et la cloison dou mur querré,
> tant c'un huisset mout bien serré
> trovai, petitet et estroit.
> Par autre leu nus n'i entroit.
> A l'uis **comançai a ferir**,
> qu'autre entree n'i soi querir. (511-18)

> Tho **gan** I **go** a full gret pas
> Envyronyng evene in compas
> The closing of the square wall,
> Tyl that I fond a wiket small
> So shett that I ne myght in gon,
> And other entre was ther noon.
> Uppon this dore I **gan to smyte**,
> That was fetys and so lite,
> For other wey coude I not seke. (525-33)

These lines depict the scene in which the poet is outside the garden. In this scene, both the simple past and the imperfect tense appear in the Old French text. For example, the imperfect tense is used for the background in "Par autre leu nus n'i entroit (another place to enter there was not)" (516). In the Middle English line "And other entre was ther noon." (530) corresponding to the Old French line 516, the past tense is used for the background without using *gan*. The simple past is used for

foregrounding in the Old French line 511, which corresponds to the use of "gan go" to emphasize the motion inn the Middle English line 525. The same explanation is applied to the use of the tense in the Old French line 517 and the Middle English line 531 ("gan to smyte (knocked)"). Both the Old French text and Chaucer's text focus on the actions that the poet manages to enter the garden.

> Richece **tint** par mi la main
> un valet de grant biauté plain
> qui fu ses amis veritex.
> C'est uns hom qui en biaus ostiex
> maintenir mout se delitoit.
> Il se chauçoit bien et vestoit, (1107-12)

> Dame Richesse on hir hond **gan lede**
> A young man ful of semelyhede,
> That she best loved of ony thing.
> His lust was mych in housholding.
> In clothyng was he ful fetys, (1129-33)

In two Old French lines, "Richese tint par mi la main (Riches held his hand)" (1107) and "qui fu ses amis veritex. (who [he] was her true lover)" (1109), the simple past is used, and these lines are foregrounded. In the original text, the minute description of Riches' sweetheart is presented as the background by using the imperfect tense. In the Middle English line 1129, "gan lede (led, held, brought)" is used. *Gan* foregrounds the action *lede*. Moreover, in the Middle English line 1131 ("That she best loved of ony thing. (She loved him more than any more else)") corresponding to the Old French line 1109, Chaucer emphasizes Riches' affection for her sweetheart. The emotional action *gan lede* seems to be reinforced by Chaucer's rewriting.

> Narcisus fu uns demoisiaus
> qui Amors tint en ses raisiaus;
> et tant le **sot** Amors destraindre
> et tant le fist plorer et plaindre (1437-40)

> Narcisus was abacheler
> That Love had caught in his danger,
> And in his net **gan** hym so **strayne**,
> And dyd him so to wepe and playne, (1469-72)

In this scene of Narcissus, the simple past tenses are arranged in the Old French lines, whereas the past tense, the past perfect tense and *gan + inf.* are variously arranged in the Middle English lines. By using various tenses, Chaucer seems to make a tempo fluctuation in the narrative.

vers les roisiers tantost **me trés**;
et bien sachiez, quant je fui pres; (1623-24)

Toward the roser **gan** I **go**.
And whan I <u>was</u> not fer therfro, (1659-60)

The poet goes to the rose bush in this scene. In the Old French text, this scene is foregrounded by the use of the simple past. In the Middle English line 1659, the action *go* is foregrounded by the co-occurrence with *gan*. The simple past *sachiez*, which is an imperative form, is used in the Old French line 1624. This imperative form is adverbial, and means "you know". Chaucer never translates accurately the word *sachiez* into Middle English in the text, although *sachiez* is sometimes used in *Le Roman de la Rose*.

As shown above, Chaucer's various techniques for translation and his style are seen in Fragment A. The analysis in this paper shows that *gan* is used as one of the devices for translations in that *gan* is placed in the foreground in the narrative. Based on Weinrich's argument, I have examined the lines including *gan* corresponding to lines using the simple past for foregrounding in the Old French, and found out that many *gan*s are arranged in the foreground. It seems that Chaucer used "*gan + inf.*" as corresponding to the simple past, when he translated *Le Roman de la Rose* into Middle English. Middle English does not have the imperfect tense. When Chaucer translated the combination of the simple past and the imperfect tense into Middle English, he often substituted the combination of "*gan + inf.*" and the past tense for the combination of two preterit tenses in Old French. By weaving the combination of "*gan + inf.*" and the past tense into the text, he brings a comfortable texture into the narrative.

4. Conclusion

It is frequently said that *gan* in Middle English had nearly lost the etymological inceptive meaning, and that it was one of the preterit tense markers. However, some scholars claim that *gan* is merely a metrical filler to arrange the rhyme. Other scholars suggest that *gan* has a narrative function. In order to confirm the functions of *gan*, I have explored the use of *gan* in the whole text from a macro perspective in this paper.

At the outset, it is concluded from the survey of the distribution of *gan* in the whole text that the distribution of *gan* is irregular and *gan*s are arranged according to the way in which we understand the story, and are linked to the situations in which they appear. This indicates that *gan* has a narrative function as Brinton suggests. It has also become clear that *gan* has a function of foregrounding clauses including it because it occurs in the important scenes and at turning points in the narrative.

Subsequently, I have examined the frequency of *gan*s per hundred lines to remove the arbitrariness of dividing the scenes into some groups. I have counted the frequency of *gan*s per hundred lines, and found out that its frequency in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A is much lower than that in *Pearl* in which *con* (*gan*) is used as a metrical device to arrange the infinitive following *con* in the rhyming position as Tajima (1975) suggests. Based on this result, I have concluded that there is a high possibility that *gan* in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A is not only a metrical device but also has a narrative function.

Furthermore, I have examined Weinrich's argument that the simple past has a function of indicating the foreground in a frame story and the combination of the simple past and the imperfect tense has this narrative effect in Old French. Comparing the lines including *gan* with the corresponding Old French lines, I have discovered that 85 percent of the *gan*s in Chaucer's text correspond to the simple past, except those in a noun phrase (1387-1388), in the Old French text. I have also shown that many the Old French lines corresponding to the lines in which *gan* is used in Fragment A are foregrounded. This seems to be the reason why Chaucer substituted the combination of "*gan + inf.*" and the preterit tense for the combination of the simple past and the imperfect tense in Old French. The comparative study of the Old French and the Middle English texts makes it evident that *gan* is used as one of the devices for translation in that *gan* is placed in the foreground in the narrative.

Lastly, as stated above, it seems natural to conclude that *gan* has the function of arranging the rhyme, of creating a narrative effect and of foregrounding and the function as a preterit marker. It should be noted, however, that each function of *gan* works not singly but compositely. This study has indicated that Chaucer effectively uses *gan* which works in multiple ways in *The Romaunt of the Rose*-A.

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Master Course student, Graduate School of Letters, Hiroshima University