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The Comment Clauses in Chaucer:
With Special Reference to *The Canterbury Tales*
and *Troilus and Criseyde*

Norimasa Kimura

This thesis examines Comment Clauses (CC) involving five verbs, *guess*, *think* (impers.), *troue*, *undertake*, and *wite* in two of Chaucer's works, *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. Especially, it surveys the meanings and functions of CC in terms of the position, rhyme, forms, word order, stress pattern and users.

In Chapter 1, I discuss the frequency of CC in the two works, the definitions of the verbs in the *OED*, and the difference between the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts, which are the earliest manuscripts in *The Canterbury Tales*. As to the frequency of the CC, though there are some examples of *think* (impers.) and *wite* in the second and third persons, *guess* and *undertake* have no examples in the second and third persons. With regard to the definitions of the verbs treated in the *OED*, *guess*, *think* (impers.), and *troue* have meanings related to emotional attitudes, while *undertake* and *wite* have the meaning of emphasizing facts. In addition, from the examination of the differences between the two manuscripts, there seems to be a distinction in the use of the verbs, and replacing them with other verbs is likely to be difficult.

Chapter 2 discusses the position and rhyme of CC. There are examples of CC in Chaucer's prose as well as in his verse. In his verse, *guess*, *think* (impers.), and *undertake* are often used for the rhyme, but *troue* and *wite* are not often put in the rhyme position. However, as Masui says, even *guess* is put in the rhyme position not only for metrical reasons but for the social reason of the relation between the speaker and audience. Therefore, the CC is not necessarily used due to the demand of the rhyme.

In Chapter 3, the forms, word order and stress pattern of CC are dealt with. The three verbs, *guess*, *think* (impers.), and *troue* take the form with conjunction *as*, while the others, *undertake* and *wite*, take *well*. Of the three verbs, *troue* does not appear with *as* while the other two most often appear with *as*. Also, in contrast to *guess* and *undertake*, *think* (impers.), *troue*, and *wite* have various word orders such as *as thynketh me*, *troue I*, and *wel woot I*.

Sometimes this makes the stress pattern ambiguous, and the interpretation of the text varies according to where the stress is put.

Chapter 4 deals with the difference in the use of CC by different characters. *(As) I gesse* is often put in the rhyme position in the works as a whole, but there are distinctions in the four characters' use of it. Pandarus uses it to show consideration to Troilus. In contrast, Walter in *The Clerk's Tale* puts it at the end of the sentence spoken to his wife to emphasize his question and get a positive answer from her. In *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, it co-occurs with *as thynketh me* when the wife introduces her metaphors. In *The Man of Law's Tale*, it is used to show the speaker's consideration for the audience, who know the content of *Les Cronicles*, which is its source. Thus, *(as) I gesse* is used in the main characters' speeches and has various functions.

From the analyses, it can be said that CC is not used only for rhyme, and that these syntactic aspects such as word order influence the meaning of CC. In addition, there seems to be a difference in its use by different characters.