

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

HUBERD AND THE PHARISEES:  
CHAUCER'S ANTIFRATERNALISM  
IN THE FRIAR'S TALE

BY

GARY GLEN PETSNIK

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## ABSTRACT

Fraternal Orders during the Middle Ages contributed to the world such great philosophers and teachers as Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus, but to the realm of literature the friars bequeathed an image of hypocrisy satirized by numerous writers. So popular was this antifraternial criticism that by the time of Chaucer a literary stereotype of friars had evolved, and it is this stereotype rather than actual contemporary friars which serves as the model for Chaucer's creation of Friar Huberd in the Canterbury Tales. Chaucer closes his portrait in the General Prologue with an ironically simple statement: "This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd" (269). Considering the catalogue of morally objectionable actions attributed to the Friar, Chaucer's choice of the word "worthy" satirically undercuts Huberd's own view of his worth, while the title of "lymytour" emphasizes with equally effective satire the Friar's selfish mendicant activities rather than his religious ministrations. Finally, the Friar's name alludes to Hubert the kite, the hypocritical confessor from the Old French Renart cycle. These subtly succinct words about Huberd summarize the main charges levelled against friars in the Middle Ages and reveal Chaucer's antifraternial sentiment.

Since a close relationship exists between Chaucer's pilgrims and the stories which they relate, it is imperative that the Friar's Tale be interpreted with regard to its hypocritical narrator. Scholars investigating anti-fraternal literature, though, have focused upon the Summoner's Tale and largely neglected Huberd's tale because it exhibits no overt evidence of antifraternalism. Nevertheless, this thesis shows that the Friar's Tale occupies an important place in the antifraternal literary tradition. Through his artistic adaptation in the Friar's Tale of imagery originated by the great critic of friars, William of St. Amour, Chaucer builds upon the antifraternal structure, although his plainest criticism of friars follows in the Summoner's Tale.

To demonstrate Chaucer's role in the antifraternal tradition it is necessary first to examine the rise of the tradition itself. Through his imagery William of St. Amour responded to a number of historical developments affecting in particular the University of Paris, but also the clergy throughout Europe. The first chapter of this thesis summarizes events which precipitated William's attack, presents the rudiments of his antifraternal imagery, and shows how subsequent critics such as FitzRalph and Wyclif were influenced by his work.

The second chapter illustrates the transfer of William's imagery to literature and the accompanying

amplification of his ideas. Foremost among the works examined is Jean de Meun's Roman de la Rose since Chaucer's Huberd bears significant resemblance to Jean's Faux-Semblant. The remainder of the chapter analyzes anti-fraternal details incorporated into Huberd's portrait.

Chapter III explores the Friar's Tale to show that Huberd's vicious attack of summoners contradicts the display of Christian charity proper to a friar and to suggest that Huberd is himself deserving of condemnation. In the tale Chaucer extends William's primary source for antifraternal imagery, Matthew 23. Not only does Chaucer imply, like William, that friars are as hypocritical as the Pharisees from this Scriptural text; he further suggests that they, like the Pharisees, block the path to salvation for themselves and others, and illustrates this notion imaginatively in Huberd's tale.

For such infernal activity the friars merit hell, and this damnable residence becomes the dominant image in the Summoner's Tale, briefly discussed in the Conclusion to the thesis. The Friar's Tale, ultimately, is linked inextricably to the antifraternalism expressed in Huberd's portrait and the Summoner's Tale, and it presents Chaucer's artistically unique contribution to the realm of anti-fraternal literature.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIEVAL ANTIFRATERNAL IMAGERY

Undercurrents of tension and ill-concealed malice pervaded the atmosphere at the University of Paris throughout much of the mid-thirteenth century. The Dominican Friars had established schools independent of the university, and the Franciscans followed suit after 1225. Although St. Francis had warned his early disciples that scholarly pursuits posed the threat of the sin of pride,<sup>1</sup> the greater body of friars had come to realize that the process of winning souls for Christ often demanded skill in the powers of intellectual persuasion, an accomplishment which could be attained through extensive theological instruction and practice in the art of disputation. Dedicated to their goal of self-improvement through scholastic learning, the friars instituted rigorous training programs which became the envy even of budding scholars bound for university. So popular were lectures by the friars that attendance at other colleges diminished, and secular masters began to feel a tug at their purse strings as tuition fees increasingly eluded them.

Students were not alone in flocking to the friars, though, for "in 1225 four doctors of the university took the



[Franciscan] habit, including the Englishman Haymo of Faversham,"<sup>2</sup> followed shortly by Alexander of Hales; while the Dominicans acquired the services of John of St. Giles.<sup>3</sup> The doctors' act of switching allegiance seriously threatened the control exercised by the secular masters over university affairs; for while fraternal schools were independent of the university, the friars had, through an early kinship and subsequent affiliation with the faculty of theology, been granted the right to vote on issues pertaining to the university as a whole.<sup>4</sup> With the loss of their doctors, the seculars also lost voting power in the faculty of theology, where by 1254 only three of fifteen chairs remained to secular masters. Intensifying the seculars' concern over their waning powers, a decree by Pope Innocent IV on May 30, 1250 commanded the chancellor of the university to confer a licence in theology on all qualified students including those who neglected to apply. Since many friars had until this time been interested primarily in the education they received rather than in the degree licensing them to participate in the business of the university, the papal statute now provided for an influx of fraternal power to the extent that the friars could freely chair the faculty without interference from the seculars.

In addition, the secular masters, fighting on behalf of their students in constant disputes with the town over uncomfortable living conditions and extortionate market prices, faced the foe alone; for the friars refused to cooperate with

the seculars by suspending lectures as a pressure tactic against the townspeople. When the friars failed to support the university in a similar clash with the town in 1253, they were expelled by the seculars, but reinstated by Innocent IV. The Pope granted one concession to the seculars by finally endorsing "the right of the university to raise money to support William of St. Amour, its proctor in Rome, by a pro rata tax on all masters and scholars."<sup>5</sup> This victory for the seculars, however, was short-lived since Alexander IV subsequently voiced papal support for the friars by declaring that in future a two-thirds majority vote by each of the faculties would be mandatory on decisions to suspend lectures. Through their numbers in the faculty of theology the friars possessed power of veto on all university issues, including the mighty threat of suspension which constituted the seculars' main lever on the townspeople. Amid threats by the seculars to dissolve the university in retaliation against the papal statute which awarded such undue control to a minority group, riots ensued. The friars, who in theory remained outside the jurisdiction of the university proper, in reality frequently found themselves victimized along with seculars by hostile townspeople. By attempting over a long period to enjoy their independence at the university, the friars succeeded only in provoking the wrath of the seculars who questioned the worth of retaining a second body of educators, especially a body whose insurgent power

threatened the prestigious position formerly enjoyed by the seculars alone.

Sharing the seculars' wrath and inveighing against the worth of the friars who seemed always to curry papal favour, parish clergy throughout Europe also protested against usurpation of rights. The friars had been awarded power to hear confession and give absolution, lucrative privileges, and these activities began to disrupt the flow of money into parish coffers. Harboring equally profound fears about the alarming increase in the number of churches under construction by friars, and about the friars' refusal to pay tithes on their land, a group of German bishops appealed to Pope Gregory, who replied in support of the friars with his bull Nimis iniqua of August 28, 1231.<sup>6</sup> Although the suffering clergy openly voiced the belief that a second organized religious body, such as that of the friars, was redundant, they could do little to alter the decisions of popes who sanctioned the activities of their minions.

The friars, however, trod on less solid theological ground with their practice of selling letters of fraternity which permitted layfolk to be buried in fraternal habit and supposedly to be assured of a place in heaven.<sup>7</sup> Invariably, legacies from benefactors increased, again to the financial detriment of parish clergy. If the friars' special friendship with the pope provoked clerical animosity, their claimed ambassadorship to God and stewardship of His

heavenly mansion could arouse only suspicions of pride and hypocrisy verging on heresy. Innocent IV felt obliged in 1254 to impose "extensive restrictions on the mendicants' rights of preaching, hearing confessions, celebrating mass, and officiating at burials,"<sup>8</sup> but Alexander IV, always the friend of the friars, removed the restrictions when he took office. Resentment and antagonism towards the friars prevailed among secular masters and clergy allied in a common cause against an upstart group which threatened the supremacy which they claimed through historical precedence and painstaking labour. Had the friars presented a unified front they might have continued to escape the severest thrusts of opponents who challenged their worth, but contention was rife amongst the friars themselves.

Of the four main orders of friars in medieval Europe--Austinians, Carmelites, Dominicans and Franciscans--the Franciscans arouse most interest and demand most attention due to their colourful and stormy history. In contrast to St. Dominic, the staid, capable administrator and founding father of the Dominicans, St. Francis exhibited an overtly passionate nature and idealistic spirit which refused, impractically, to acknowledge the human needs and shortcomings of his followers. Subjected to Francis' nigh impossible demands--his insistence upon absolute poverty to the point of undue physical hardship and his injunction against learning--the Franciscan Order necessarily faced internal discontent and placed itself in danger of

criticism for its decaying standards. The basic premises upon which Francis founded his order were long the occasion for bitter disputes among the friars, and it was only a matter of time before enemies from without mercilessly seized upon the same issues to challenge the friars' very right to exist.

Facilitating the cause of the friars' later opponents, several papal bulls of the thirteenth century neatly circumvented Francis' argument for maintaining poverty as a primary condition of the Franciscan Rule. In 1229, a mere twenty years after papal approval was granted for the founding of the Order, Pope Gregory IX issued the bull Quo elongati relaxing the first Rule by allowing "spiritual friends" to hold property on behalf of the friars and by arguing that the friars' "use" of goods did not contravene the stipulation against "possession" or ownership.<sup>9</sup> A series of similar documents followed, culminating in the decree Ordinem vestrum of November 14, 1245, in which Innocent IV extended fraternal privileges to permit the holding of money by the friends for the friars' "necessity" and "convenience."<sup>10</sup> Subsequent bulls were issued after a serious controversy arose concerning the theological and scriptural evidence for and against the notion of Christ's complete poverty.

Opposed to papal interference and determined utterly to adhere to the spirit of Francis' original precepts, a number of discontented friars banded together into a sect

known as the Spiritual Franciscans, an extreme action which threatened to create a lasting rift in the Order. The Spirituals were aided in their efforts by the strong leadership of John of Parma, Minister General of the Franciscans from 1248 to 1257, but the remaining majority of friars advocated further relaxation of the Rule and continuance of fraternal privileges. Although John's humility and genuine concern for the well-being of the whole Order prevented his being branded a radical, his allegiance to and promulgation of the controversial doctrines of Joachim of Fiore guaranteed his decline in popularity.<sup>11</sup> With the publication at Paris in 1254 of the Introductorius in Evangelium Eternum, a Joachist tract written by the Franciscan Spiritual Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, the Spiritual movement was clearly demonstrated as bordering on heresy.

Joachim developed his new theology before the end of the twelfth century, prior to the founding of the fraternal orders. Interpreting history tropologically as consisting of three phases correspondent to the three Persons of the Trinity, Joachim's Eternal Evangel conformed to traditional interpretation of the Scriptures in associating Old Testament events with the age of the Father, and New Testament times, including the period of the church fathers, with the age of the Son. But Joachim departed from accepted teachings in his notion of a third phase, the age of the Holy Spirit, in which the human duality of body and soul would be ultimately resolved in a transcendent and

totally spiritual entity. This age, warned Joachim with apocalyptic vision, was imminent, to begin in 1260 with the advent of Antichrist. Joachim exercised great interpretative license in claiming fantastically that "two new religious Orders living in apostolic poverty" would arise from the chaos and corruption of the Church "to inaugurate the new era in which there would be no need for authoritative institutions, since men would now live according to the Spirit of God."<sup>12</sup> The organized Church, then, would cease to function in this third age of the world.

To the Franciscan Spiritual Gerard, the Orders heralded by Joachim's apocalyptic work signified precisely the Franciscans and Dominicans. Consequently, the Spiritu-als were incited to regard their persecution by opposing members of the Franciscan Order as a testing ground for their glorious future mission, and as a tribulation divinely foreordained. Although Joachim's teachings had been severely distorted by the fanatical Gerard, such was the indignation of seculars and clerics (supposedly doomed to extinction) that all Joachist sympathizers became suspected of heresy. John of Parma's leadership as Minister General of his Order and his untimely espousal of Joachim's doctrines ensured that the Franciscans suffered the brunt of the attack.<sup>13</sup> Humble friars and fanatics alike were soon to be derided for their presumptuous claims to the position of greatest importance in the spiritual kingdom, and censured for the worthlessness of their existence as a religious

organization.

Hastening home from the papal curia in Rome to assume responsibility for spearheading the retaliatory movement of the seculars against the friars, William of St. Amour took advantage of the Joachist controversy to publish De Antichristo et eiusdem ministris and Tractatus brevis de periculis novissimorum temporum,<sup>14</sup> which depicted the friars not as the saving religious orders but as the precursors of Antichrist. William wisely used the friars' own weapons in waging his battle. As the friars pointed to Scripture to justify their mendicant life, so William replied with Scripture to refute their arguments. In a detailed explanation of William's method of "polemical exegesis" employed throughout the De periculis, Penn Rodion Szittyia warns that William misleadingly fuses Biblical with contemporary history:

The result is the crystallization of the image, and a tendency on William's part to foist upon the friars characteristics of the Biblical type rather than the other way around. To put it more metaphorically, what begins as a sign or a symbol comes to take on a reality of its own; for William the Biblical type comes to have a reality more pressing than that of his own flesh-and-blood enemies.<sup>15</sup>

William's elaborate scheme of imagery, although it may have strayed from the truth, supplied fuel for antimendicant fire throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The central attack in William's De periculis and related works focuses upon an extended comparison of the friars to three sets of Scriptural figurae: the Pharisees,



the pseudo-apostles referred to by St. Paul, and the ministers of Antichrist foretold in Old and New Testament prophecies alike. Of primary concern to the secular movement was the endeavour to prove the hypocrisy of the friars' intentions in preaching and teaching, hence the particular utility of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew concerning the hypocritical Pharisees. "It is clearly to the controversy over the friars' magisterial chairs that William alludes in the De Pariseo, when he includes the desire to be called 'master' as one of the signs by which religious hypocrites like the Pharisees can be recognized,"<sup>16</sup> while the friars' designs on preaching from the pulpits evoke for him memories of the Pharisees' similar desires to secure for themselves the best seats during worship at the synagogue. William further compares the Pharisees' enjoyment of places of honour at feasts to the friars' hypocritical delight in fine foods, contravening vows of abstinence and fasting. While this detail about feasting is an amplification of the Scriptural text, William carries his antimendicant enthusiasm even further, for he asserts that the Pharisees, like their Franciscan posterity, walked barefoot.

More importantly, the friars were loudly denounced by William as false apostles for their fundamental claim to be imitators of Christ's poverty. Scripture, William argued, demonstrated beyond a doubt that Judas Iscariot had custody of the loculi, or purse, to provide for the common needs of Christ and His disciples. While William's

assertion sparked decades of theological disputation which prompted a flood of papal bulls each contradicting and invalidating the other,<sup>17</sup> the question of the friars' mendicancy was more tactfully handled. After declaring that civil law permitted only the aged and infirm to beg, and that both Christ and Paul had commissioned the apostles to earn their daily bread by ministering to the people, William accused the friars of preaching covetously for material gain, like the pseudo-apostles described in the Pauline letters,<sup>18</sup> a charge supported in full by the clergy. With reference to abuse of preaching privileges by the friars, William also relied on Paul's warnings against false teachers who attempted to lead the people astray and who prided themselves on their eloquent, but specious, language, an attribute associated with hypocrisy and the sin of avarice. Finally, the false apostles were depicted as "carnal men, attracted to this world, and sometimes given over to luxuria,"<sup>19</sup> or lechery, fond of lodging with the rich and feigning piety, all of which Szittyia advises may have been linked to the friars purely by imaginative extension of William's Scriptural images.

The war waged by William on the third major battle front, however, over the apocalyptic warnings of temporal invasions by the servants of Antichrist, derived from no figment of William's imagination, but from the prominence of the Spirituals and their Joachist heresies. William considered any attempt to diminish the significance of the

Gospel of Christ as an act of blasphemy prompted by Antichrist, and the Eternal Evangel surely fell into this category. Since apocalyptic Scripture foretold the appearance of false prophets within the Church itself during the last days, William conveniently seized upon Gerard's work to identify the friars with these false prophets. Thus, he branded the friars as penetrantes domos, impostors who forced entry into men's houses, and, more horribly, into their souls "by hearing confession, becoming spiritual counselors to the weak, probing souls for secrets" and leading men "away from those having duly constituted spiritual authority over them, that is, the Bishops and the parish clergy."<sup>20</sup> The friars' defense of their worth as spiritual advisors, then, was forcefully denounced by William, who enjoyed the enviable advantage of resting his case upon the securest of authorities, Scripture itself.

William had censured the friars for their hypocrisy, questioned their right to exist and pronounced them minions of Antichrist, devastating assaults for which he was excommunicated in June, 1256 and exiled from France. His physical presence, however, was no longer vital to the continuance of strife between mendicants and seculars, for to his followers William bequeathed the vivid imagery which captivated the imaginations of medieval writers critical of all fraternal Orders, despite arguments in defense of their brothers by such brilliant scholars as the Franciscan St. Bonaventure and the Dominican Thomas Aquinas.<sup>21</sup> Disputes

between the friars and seculars surfaced periodically, in the flurry of tracts between 1269 and 1271 over Clement IV's bull of 1267 granting anew the friars' pastoral rights, the suspension of lectures by the university in 1271 and again in 1282, and the struggle between Boniface VIII and Philippe le Bel in the 1290's and early 1300's for control of the university.<sup>22</sup> Although none of these conflicts attained the proportions of the historic battle begun by William, each successive issue served to emphasize the fact that the friars would incessantly face the challenges of demonstrating and justifying their indispensability to medieval society.

Antifraternal hostility on the continent subsequently spread to England. Oxford entered the conflict in 1303 when "the friars were required to perform their examinatory sermons--decreed in 1253 as a condition of incepting in theology--in St. Mary's away from their own convents by the river" and subject to disrupting noises.<sup>23</sup> Strengthening their fledgling powers, the seculars next forbade the friars to preach directly to members of the theological faculty, then decreed that all bachelors lecturing on the Bible would first be compelled to lecture for a year on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, which were outlawed in the fraternal colleges. When Hugh of Sutton, a friar, was expelled for refusing to comply, the friars complained of ostracism and demanded review of the problem by a joint commission of two seculars and two friars. The statutes

were upheld by the commission's verdict in 1313, but altered by John XXII in 1317, provoking an alliance of the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury against the Pope. During William's time such an alliance would have been ineffective, but since then the English monarchy had gradually succeeded in undermining papal authority in England. Under such pressure from church and state, in 1320 the friars in England submitted to the demands of the university.

But these early troubles in Oxford probably contributed little to the major conflict which erupted during the 1350's. Richard FitzRalph, the instigator, largely ignored the question of the friars' inception and drew instead upon the historic arguments of William of St. Amour to abuse the friars through his controversial sermons. The motivation for FitzRalph's resumption of an old battle is explained perhaps by the knowledge that FitzRalph's influential friend, Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, had been a student at Paris during a dispute lasting from 1312 to 1317 and led by Jean de Pouilli, strong successor to William. Grandisson "was engaged in a long and bitter struggle with the Franciscan friars of Devonshire during the years 1354 and 1355" and, significantly, "FitzRalph's first quarrel with the mendicant friars occurs a year or two after his visit to Exeter."<sup>24</sup>

FitzRalph first preached against fraternal interference "with diocesan administration and discipline"<sup>25</sup> on July 5, 1350 in his sermon Unusquisque, but soon addressed the problem of the growing numbers of friars who were

encroaching upon these parochial areas. In keeping with William of St. Amour's "emphasis on the quality of multiplicity as a characteristic of those who will come at the end of time,"<sup>26</sup> FitzRalph alleged that "the limitless multiplication of friars . . . was against both the law of nature, according to Aristotle, and the law of God."<sup>27</sup> Fears about the reportedly inordinate numbers of friars were ungrounded in historical fact,<sup>28</sup> but William's and FitzRalph's imaginative extension of theological explanation stimulated such comments as Langland's alarming assertion that the friars "wexeth out of noumbre!"<sup>29</sup> and Chaucer's Wife of Bath's amusing complaint about friars "As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem" (868) and "In every bussh or under every tree" (879). The pertinent argument was the seculars' claim that

the divinely ordained hierarchy of the Church included only the successors to those who had received authority directly from Christ--that is, the Twelve Disciples, whose authority had been delegated to the bishops, and the Seventy-Two Apostles, whose authority had passed through the ages to the parish priests and their helpers.<sup>30</sup>

Since the fraternal orders were responsible to no member of the church hierarchy but their own elected leader and the pope, and were rather a separate entity, they were not numbered among the traditional successors to Christ and were therefore regarded as being without number and, hence, of multiplying noxiously. Even after a century of circulation among antifraternals champions, William's imagery continued to exert influence.

FitzRalph tackled once more the mendicant question of use versus possession in a lengthy tract, De Pauperie Salvatoris, but subsequently he found that a larger audience could be reached through the medium of oratory. For launching scathing criticism of friars, especially of Franciscans and their professed poverty, in a series of sermons preached at St. Paul's in London from June, 1356 to March, 1357, FitzRalph was summoned before the Curia at Avignon. Following Jean de Pouilly's lead, FitzRalph boldly declared that the Lateran canon of 1215, Omnis utriusque sexus, which demanded annual confession to a priest, took precedence over the bull of 1300, Super cathedram, which authorized mendicants to hear confessions but neglected to rescind all previous contradictory regulations.<sup>31</sup> The friars, charged FitzRalph, gave "light penance and easy absolution," used deception to lure young boys into the Order, and broke Francis' Rule by seeking material wealth.<sup>32</sup> As John XXII had condemned de Pouilly's doctrines in 1321 with Vas electionis, so now Innocent VI reconfirmed the bull, although he refused to take further action against FitzRalph. With the death of FitzRalph in 1360, followed shortly by the death of his chief opponent, Franciscan Provincial Minister of England, Roger Conway, the dispute between the seculars and mendicants subsided for a time.

Fierce conflicts surfaced again a few years prior to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 when John Wyclif, who had at first commended the Franciscans for their intensive study

of the Bible, became embroiled in bitter arguments with fraternal scholars over the appropriate course of logic to explain the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>33</sup> This source of contention owed nothing to the Paris controversy, but the old tactics of William of St. Amour were soon adopted: Wyclif accused the friars of being a sect without true membership in the body of the Church, or as William would have put it, not sent by Christ.<sup>34</sup> In De Officio Pastoralis, written ca. 1378, Wyclif rebuked the friars for desiring to be called "masters" and accused them of preaching for material gain,<sup>35</sup> both familiar charges. To criticism of their devious eloquence Wyclif added the allegation that friars' sermons were laced with anecdotes and jokes to amuse the people and lead them away from the teachings of Christ.<sup>36</sup> Wyclif pointed out that the friars served Anti-christ by destroying old parish churches and erecting "cayms castels"<sup>37</sup> in their place. And like the Pharisees, friars were found by Wyclif to be guilty of pride, avarice and lechery, feigning piety only to obtain their material and physical desires.

Not only were the friars castigated for their love of prestige, possessions and gaudily ornate churches; they were also accused by Wyclif during the pressures of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 of being political enemies on three counts:

first that "the commonwealth had been more impoverished by their beggings than by all the public taxes and tallages," secondly that they had set an



example by their idle mendicancy which the "serfs and rustics" had not been slow to follow, and thirdly that since the friars were the confessors of the people they might have foreseen and prevented the outbreak.<sup>38</sup>

The charges were certainly a gross injustice to the friars, whose bad example was at least unwitting, but like William before him, Wyclif foisted upon the friars an image of evil in accord with his hatred of fraternal hypocrisy. He interpreted their lack of action in giving moral guidance to placate the discontented peasants as a sanctimonious attempt to remain aloof from worldly problems which they could have helped to ease. This notion of hypocrisy, like that begun by William, once again opened the friars to attack along many channels, and history repeated itself in the nature of many of the charges brought against them.

William's imagery clearly exerted great influence upon the theologians of fourteenth-century England, a fact which shows that the polemics of the contest between seculars and friars at the University of Paris remained a topic of interest to later medieval writers. Whether Chaucer relied upon accounts of William's original struggle with the friars, contemporary antimendicant disputes in England, or imaginative works by fellow literary artists when he shaped his friars in the Canterbury Tales, he was inevitably exposed to aspects of William's pervasive imagery. In accord with the medieval notion of the accretionary process of learning, whereby knowledge imparted by esteemed authorities was accepted largely without question and

amplified through imaginative interpretation, William's early foundation of antifraternality was merely built upon by subsequent literary labourers. The views which Chaucer and other medieval writers expressed about friars, then, should not be regarded as accurate reflections of the times, but rather as pieces of an imaginative response to the prevailing moral climate which the friars, in their role as spiritual counselors, were expected to regulate. The resultant confusion about the actual status of friars in Chaucer's England, however, allowed for the creation of one of the most vivid characters in Middle English literature, for Chaucer's Friar Huberd, through his debt to William's imagery rather than a contemporary model, becomes a personality at once more vital and intriguing than one would believe possible of a flesh and blood prototype.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TRANSFER OF WILLIAM'S FRIAR-PHARISEES TO LITERATURE

William's antifraternality imagery was first successfully transferred from the realm of polemics to that of imaginative literature by Old French writers, most notably Jean de Meun in his continuation of Guillaume de Lorris' Roman de la Rose. While Guillaume began the work as an allegory on the theme of romantic love, Jean felt the need to respond artistically to the changed moral climate of the late 1270's, when shock waves from the force of the University of Paris antimendicant dispute had not yet abated. The hypocrite Faux-Semblant, one of Jean's most interesting characters, owes his creation to Jean's intensely anti-fraternal attitude, while the confession which this rascal makes to the god of Love borrows the substance of William's imagery. The popularity of the Roman throughout France, as well as England (in a Middle English translation, The Romaunt of the Rose, which was possibly the work of Chaucer),<sup>1</sup> guaranteed widespread acquaintance with William's imagery even if his bequest went largely unacknowledged.

Faux-Semblant begins his confession in the Romaunt with a long list of the secular and clerical positions

which he has held, to show that hypocrisy is a universal human vice. Foremost among these roles, however, is Faux-Semblant's duplicity as a friar, "Nowe frere Mynor, nowe Iacobyn" (6338), and in keeping with his favourite guise, he leaves the company of the god of Love dressed as a Preaching Friar with a Bible about his neck (7406-7413). The Morgan manuscript of the Old French text contains an illumination which portrays the hypocrite in fraternal garb even while he is being questioned by the god of Love;<sup>2</sup> and certainly Faux-Semblant's words throughout refer to the dispute between friars and seculars at Paris. Faux-Semblant, then, is primarily a hypocritical friar.

Early in his speech Faux-Semblant reveals the friars' misuse of confession when he broaches the matter of annual confession to a priest, which papal decree fraternal confessors had circumvented, to the wrath of parish clergy and secular masters alike. By making an easy confession to a friar who adjusted the penance according to the amount of money which he was paid, the penitent too often thought that he could escape the required confession to his own priest who was apt to be better acquainted with his misdeeds and, thus, harsher in the terms preceding absolution:

Ne I ne haue neuer entencion  
To make double confession. (6395-6396)

Little wonder that men welcomed friars so heartily and that friars gradually became synonymous with sycophants greedy for money from sinners willing to pay for ease in confession!

From this criticism of the friars' corruption of true confession, Faux-Semblant proceeds to attack the practice of begging, the secondary source of income cherished by his brothers. Firmly grounding his charges in William's argument, Faux-Semblant appropriately documents his source at this point in his speech. After inveighing against the sloth of begging, he describes the conditions under which a man may properly beg, and concludes:

As Willyam Seynt Amour wolde preche,  
 And ofte wolde dispute and teche  
 Of this mater al openly  
 At Parys ful solemply. (6763-6766)

Faux-Semblant's reliance upon William as an authority in the lengthy discussion of antimendicant issues is absolute, revealing the profound influence of William's imagery upon contemporary writers. In the particular treatment of begging, Faux-Semblant directly parallels William's imagery about the pseudo-apostles which proceeded from the stream of imagery about the Pharisees.

Maintaining the tradition begun by William, Faux-Semblant cites Matthew 23 as his source for comparing friars to Pharisees, and borrowing as well William's exaggerations, he bestows upon the friars attributes not strictly belonging to them:

Her [bordurs] larger maken they,  
 And make her hemmes wyde alwaye,  
 And louen seates at the table,  
 The fyrste and most honorable;  
 And for to hanne the firste chayris  
 In synagogges, to hem ful dere is;  
 And wyllen that folke hem loute and grete,

Whan that they passen through the strete;  
 And wollen be cleped 'maister' also.

(6911-6919)

Whereas William had to invent an explanation about how the friars widened the hems of their habits to imitate the Pharisees, Faux-Semblant merely takes William's imagery for granted and omits talk of phylacteries and tassels which reminded the Pharisees to be pious. In this imagery, Jean's hypocrite has a ready-made vehicle for satire against the friars, about whom Faux-Semblant, as a friar, has first-hand knowledge. Each charge against the friars in the passage quoted above is borrowed or corrupted from the scriptural depiction of Pharisees, although William's process of formulating the imagery is bypassed and, perhaps, unrecognized.

Jean makes further use of William's imagery by associating friars with the precursors of Antichrist, for "in William's theory of the three persecutions of the Church, it was the Pharisees' hypocrisy and enmity toward Christ in the Gospels that prefigured the religious hypocrisy and iniquity of those who would persecute the Church at the end of time."<sup>3</sup> Faux-Semblant openly claims allegiance to the master of evil: "'Of Antechristes menne am I'" (7009). Shortly thereafter he speaks on behalf of friars in general:

'Thus Antechrist abyden we,  
 For we bene al of his meyne.'

(7155-7156)

The alliance of friars with Antichrist, originating with William, came to dominate popular belief, for it was commonly held that Antichrist "xulde be begotyn of a frere and born of a nune, as folkys have tolde."<sup>4</sup> Faux-Semblant gives voice to the legend when he claims that Forced Abstinence, his companion dressed as a Béguine nun, is pregnant with his child: the Antichrist.<sup>5</sup>

The infernal union of friars with Antichrist was linked in William's mind with the sudden appearance in Paris of Gerard's blasphemous Eternal Evangel which threatened the truth of Holy Scripture. Gerard's work also forms the subject of bitter condemnation by Jean de Meun, who devotes over a hundred lines to its denunciation (M.E. 7085-7212). Faux-Semblant exposes Gerard's book and unveils an infernal plot "to sleen / Al tho that with Peter been" (7193-7194), the followers of Peter being the regular Church headed by the pope. He further brands Gerard's work as "cursednesse" (7147). Ever the hypocrite mindful about the sureness of his disguise, Faux-Semblant admits that the notoriety of the perfidious book endangered his position as a friar:

But hadde that ylke boke endured,  
Of better estate I were ensured.  
(7208-7209)

William's censure primarily of the Spiritual Franciscans who promulgated the Eternal Evangel, then, found its way into literature in and through the Roman de la Rose.

Criticism of friars in general, though, comes not

from Faux-Semblant, but from Jean de Meun after the hypocrite has finished his confession and set out upon his mission for the god of Love. Jean begins by claiming facetiously that friars must be good men because they perform a holy task, but he obviously intends his audience to infer an opposite meaning, for he concludes by warning that appearances are often deceiving:

But sothely, what so menne h[e]m cal,  
 Frere-prechours bene good menne al.  
 Her order wickedly they beren,  
 Suche mynstrelles if they weren.  
 So bene Augustyns and Cordylers,  
 And Carmes, and eke Sacked Freers,  
 And al freres, shodde and bare,  
 (Though some of hem ben great and square)  
 Ful hooly men, as I hem deme;  
 Eueryche of hem wolde good man seme.  
 But shalte thou neuer of apparence  
 Sene conclude good consequence  
 In none argument, ywis,  
 If existens al fayled is.

(7455-7468)

This lack of agreement amongst the Orders about so simple a matter as whether to walk shod or barefoot reflects William's aforementioned belief that the Pharisees, who prefigured the friars in his imagery, walked barefoot like their fraternal posterity (see p.10), while Jean's depiction of the physical bulk of some friars, in apparent violation of the vow of poverty, amplifies William's image of the Pharisees who enjoyed the first places at feasts (see p. 10). Jean's compounding of diverse fraternal Orders thus constitutes an artistic extension of the imagery through which William showed skepticism over the righteousness of friars in general.



Jean's distaste for friars is evident throughout Faux-Semblant's confession, but nowhere does his judgmental tone intrude so blatantly upon his character's speech as in these lines expressing sympathy for the predicament of William, who was

. . . exiled in this caas  
 With wronge, as mayster William was,  
 That my mother Hypocrise  
 Banysshed for her great enuye.  
 (6777-6780)

Despite the fact that Faux-Semblant represents Hypocrisy and, as such, may paradoxically express disgust with the very friars to whom he owes kinship, Jean uses him excessively as a mere mouthpiece for his own hatred of friars (who "wrongfully" persecuted William) and not sufficiently as a rounded character whose moral tone can be credited as distinct from that of his creator. For Jean and for us, Faux-Semblant must remain a cardboard incarnation of William's imagery, a stereotype of a "dirty Pharisee."<sup>6</sup>

Like Jean, Chaucer also includes among his characters a hypocritical friar, but in contrast to Jean, Chaucer never intrudes upon Huberd's words or actions. Even in the portrait of Huberd in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, where the narrator describes his impression of the Friar, there is no overt evidence of Chaucer's personal animosity. Instead, although Chaucer intends criticism, he conveys it subtly through ironic undertones. Despite the vastly different artistic skills displayed by Jean de Meun and Chaucer, the character of Friar Huberd, never-

theless, bears striking resemblance to the allegorical hypocrite, Faux-Semblant, especially as he appears in the Middle English translation of the Roman. And through this resemblance Huberd, too, finds his ancestry in William's imagery.

Both Faux-Semblant and Huberd adopt the outward appearance of piety appropriate in friars, but meekness accompanying such righteousness is sadly lacking. Huberd boasts about the importance of his fraternal duties and takes pride in the fact that he has been awarded special dispensation to hear confession and grant absolution:

For he hadde power of confessioun,  
As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,  
For of his ordre he was licentiat.<sup>7</sup>

One could wish that if Huberd indeed possesses such power, he would at least humbly refrain from advertising it, thus commercializing his spiritual office. This flaunting of self-esteem is a skillfully abbreviated version of Faux-Semblant's bombastic declaration:

I may assoyle, and I may shryue,  
That no prelate maye lette me,  
Al folke, whereeuer they founde be:  
I not no prelat may done so,  
But it the pope be, and no mo,  
That made thilke establisshyng.

(6364-6369)

The privileges which both characters enjoy are not unusual for friars, but their insistence upon being revered for such rights smacks of the criticism by which William found in the friars the Pharisees' desire to be seated in the places of honour in the synagogue. And lack of meekness further

rends the veil of righteousness in these two friars, demonstrating their hypocrisy.

Pride in reputation is followed immediately in Huberd's portrait by avarice, for Huberd gives light penance when he can expect in return "a good pitaunce" (224) for his services as a confessor. Perhaps he has been schooled in materialism by Faux-Semblant, who also displays a weakness for amassing "great pytaunces" and keeps company with the rich to satisfy his gluttony:

'I dwell with hem that proude be,  
 And ful of wyles and subtelte;  
 That worshyp of this worlde coueyten,  
 And great nede connen expleyten,  
 And gon and gadren great pytaunces,  
 And purchace hem the acqueyntaunces  
 Of men that mighty lyfe may leden;  
 And fayne hem poore, and hemselve feden  
 With good morcets delycious,  
 And drinken good wyne precyous;  
 And preche vs pouert and distresse,  
 And fysshen hemselve great rychesse  
 With wyly nettes that they caste.'  
 (6171-6183)

Huberd appears to have borrowed Faux-Semblant's wiles, for he, too, has learned the trick of making powerful acquaintances with the rich "frankeleyns" and "worthy wommen of the toun" (216, 217). So, also, he knows how to obtain the best food and drink by frequenting "tavernes" (240), striking up friendships with "evirich hostiler and tappestere" (241), and dealing "al with riche and selleres of vitaille" (248). Although Pharisees receive no attention from Chaucer in this portrait of Huberd, it is easy to see that William's transfer of the Pharisees' love of feasts to friars' gourmet palates occupies a central

position in the Friar's description as well as in Faux-Semblant's.

The somewhat curious mingling of appetite with materialism in the passages just discussed may be explained with reference to the inter-related qualities of the sins of gluttony and avarice, both springing from the sinner's selfish nature, but materialism was also a trait William had associated with Pharisees. Citing Christ's rebuke in Matthew 23:14 of the Pharisees who "'devour widows' houses and for a pretense . . . make long prayers,'" William blended these two condemnations to show that the Pharisees' lengthy prayers were used "to perturb the consciences of their victims so that they might receive both more money and more praise."<sup>8</sup> This unholy pursuit of money, coupled with their alleged love of fine food at feasts, condemns the Pharisees as worldly men who profane their positions as leaders in their community. Friars who broke vows of poverty and fasting thus found themselves similarly condemned through associations with the hypocritical Pharisees. Huberd is, therefore, allied with Pharisees when his financial prowess is established in this line, "His purchas was wel bettre than his rente" (256), echoing almost to the word Faux-Semblant's boast:

To wynnen is alway myn entent;  
 My purchace is better than my rente.  
 (6837-6838)

Emphasis upon the notion of purchase in both texts shows that Huberd and Faux-Semblant similarly desecrate their holy calling by adopting a monetary rather than religious standard.

This distortion of moral values implied through the word "purchas" is matched by perversion of service through the word "rente." Initially in Middle English, "rente" signified the labour owed by a serf to his feudal lord, but the term altered in meaning to include the love-service expected of man by God.<sup>9</sup> While Faux-Semblant and Huberd are great workers, they labour primarily neither to the spiritual uplifting of their friaries nor the praise of God but rather to their own greed for money. As a licensed "lymytour" Huberd ostensibly proves himself a model friar by amassing a fortune for his friary through his excellence at begging, but he undoubtedly takes a substantial commission from what he collects, for "His purchas was wel better than his rente" (256). Such profitable begging sometimes led friars to forget their spiritual duties to the extent that begging replaced their true work of winning souls for Christ. William's early charge that the friars overstepped their right to beg out of need<sup>10</sup> was meant to plead the cause of the parish clergy who were losing monetary support due to the friars' begging and to criticize the Franciscans who brought about a rift in their own Order due to contravening St. Francis' original vow of complete poverty. More importantly, William's warning about abuse of mendicance was realized in the friars' gradual, but ever-increasing, construction of large and ornate friaries which Wyclif, as we have seen, described contemptuously as "cayms castels." Although

Huberd and Faux-Semblant feign righteousness, they fail to render their spiritual gifts as friars without this same corrupting element of money. For them, material wealth dominates spiritual prosperity, likening them to William's worldly Pharisees and the friars in his imagery.

Huberd and Faux-Semblant further belie their self-attested sanctity by neglecting the tenets of Christian charity; they disdain to minister to the sick and the poor who cannot afford to pay them for their trouble. Lack of fraternal charity constitutes another charge which stems from William's imagery, for if William's friars as false apostles sought "opulent lodgings" and feasted "at the tables of the rich,"<sup>11</sup> it follows by reverse logic that they must also have spurned the poor.. Faux-Semblant speaks scornfully of a scene which should inspire pity:

For whan I se beggers quakyng  
 Naked on myxins al stynkyng,  
 For hongre crye, and eke for care,  
 I entremet not of her fare.  
 They ben so poore and ful of pyne,  
 They might not ones yeue me a dyne,  
 For they haue nothyng but her lyfe:  
 What shulde he yeue that lycketh his knyfe?  
 (6495-6502)

Forgetting the humble example of St. Francis who forced himself to attend the sick, especially the lepers for whom he had always felt inner revulsion,<sup>12</sup> Huberd fastidiously refuses to condescend to the level of those in suffering and misery:

For unto swich a worthy man as he  
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,  
 To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.

It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce,  
 For to deelen with no swich poraille.  
 (243-247)

Huberd identifies lack of charity in his case with being "honest," for his special "facultee" for immersing himself only in profitable deals which "avaunce" his material wealth apparently elevates him above the level of Christian morality. To be true to his inflated sense of propriety Huberd must reject the poor and suffering, and embrace the rich in a hypocritical inversion of his fraternal office which was founded for the purpose of ministering humbly to all mankind, poor as well as rich.

Faux-Semblant's hypocrisy goes deeper in some ways than Huberd's, however, for Faux-Semblant greedily haunts the sick-chamber of wealthy men through hope of sharing the spoils:

But a riche sicke vsurere  
 Wolde I visyte and drawe nere;  
 Him wol I comforte and rehetete,  
 For I hoope of his golde to gete;  
 And if that wicked dethe him haue,  
 I wol go with him to his graue.  
 (6507-6512)

If Huberd cannot steel himself to face the sick even with the hope of obtaining money for himself or a bequest to the friary, his compatriot Friar John in the Summoner's Tale thrives upon such fawning over the ailing Thomas. Both Faux-Semblant and John resemble vultures awaiting the death of their victims to despoil the carcass or, metaphorically in their case, to plunder possessions by claiming an inheritance which they do not deserve. This shocking picture of

friars' ruthlessness perhaps owes its source to FitzRalph who, in comparing the friars to vultures in their procurement of privileges of sepulture,<sup>13</sup> followed William's lead in attacking the friars' avarice. A new dimension, then, was added to William's imagery about hypocritical friars.

In Huberd's portrait no such predatory scene is depicted, but perhaps the name of Chaucer's Friar is alone sufficient to conjure up the image. Huberd is named after another hypocritical confessor, Hubert the kite, from Branch VII of the Roman de Renart and from a later reworking and amplification in Renart le Contrefait. The choice of a kite to represent corrupt clerics, particularly friars, in the Old French beast fable satire is apt:

The bird was commonly detested in the middle ages . . . for its rapacity. A widely current bestiary-interpretation, furthermore, presents the kite as a symbol of the voluptuary, combining with greed some other traits of Chaucer's friar, as his preying on the young and unwary, his mastery of "fair langage" and his acquaintance with "selleres of vitaille."<sup>14</sup>

But the kite's infamous traits were somewhat altered by the French writers to depict Hubert primarily as the epitome of the hypocritical confessor, as a false friar; and it is this characteristic hypocrisy which Chaucer's Huberd most shares with his namesake.

The bestiary detail about voluptuousness becomes not so much a distinguishing mark of the kite as a device for pointing out Hubert's hypocrisy in shriving the supreme hypocrite, Renart the fox, and deluding himself with the thought that he is superior to the fox. Hubert capitalizes



on the sins of the penitent Renart in Branch VII of the Roman, most leeringly upon the sin of lechery; for even after Renart confesses to having sexually violated Hersant (the wife of Isengrin, his arch foe), Hubert delays the process of redemption by upbraiding the fox in an angry tirade which is not especially beneficial to a creature who has supposedly already repented of wrongdoing:

Fel rous, fel vius, fel recreüz,  
 com par ies ore deceüz,  
 que as Hersant t'amor donee,  
 a une vielle espoitronee  
 qui ne puet mes ses pez tenir.<sup>15</sup>

Hubert expresses a perverse interest in the nature of the sin rather than the penitence of the sinner, a fact which opposes the Church's teaching that confession and absolution effectually obliterate the actuality of commission of the sin. Renart, who prior to meeting Hubert had prayerfully asked God to torment corrupt clergy (14405-14410), now justly reproves his foul-minded confessor:

Vos en par avez dist trop mal,  
 s'avez menti com desloial;  
 je vos ferai en mon Dieu croire:  
 s'onques nus menja son provoire  
 je vos menjerai hui cest jor,  
 ja n'en avrez autre retor.

(14715-14720)

Unable to obtain satisfaction from Hubert, a lying, disloyal, unholy confessor, Renart informs the kite that he will make him believe in God, by threatening him with death and giving him a last chance to make his peace with God. Renart eats the kite, carrying out poetic justice upon one who preached that hypocritical clerics were destined

for the hell which they vividly described in their sermons (14469-14478).<sup>16</sup> Hubert's lurid interest in sexual transgression violates his claim to sanctity and dramatically demonstrates his hypocrisy in hearing confession.

Chaucer, too, hints at voluptuousness as a sign of hypocrisy in his confessor. Yet, in conformance with William's imagery which shows friars as "carnal men, . . . sometimes given over to luxuria,"<sup>17</sup> Huberd is himself probably entangled in lecherous activities.

He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.  
(212-213)

By presenting the Friar's action in ostensibly laudatory terms, Chaucer thus depicts a hypocrite's attempt to protect his reputation for having seduced these young women and subsequently having been obliged to find suitable husbands for them to clear himself of blame. The Friar's ploy approaches the frequency of habit, for he has arranged such marriages "ful many" a time. Such suspicions about the immorality of friars were common in literature, owing to William's accusation that friars as false apostles were lecherous. Gower, Chaucer's contemporary, makes the queries about the friars' sexual conduct forcefully specific in his Mirour de l'omme:

But I assure you  
that they seek no woman except  
the tender and pretty and young.  
Thus it is that women  
often have babies that a friar begets  
when another is the father of the children.<sup>18</sup>

What began as an image of unchastity meant to defame friars came through literature to be accepted as truth.

Chaucer augments his criticism with additional clues to the Friar's breaking of the vow of chastity. Huberd, "a wantowne and a merye" (208), a friar "that kan / So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage" (210-211), traits which carry sexual connotations as well as jovial and comradely significance, appears to flirt with older women in addition to young.

His typet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
 And pynnes, for to yeven faire wyves.  
 (233-234)

Huberd's liberality in bestowing gifts upon women is inconsistent with his determination to wheedle "a ferthyng" from even "a wydwe [who] hadde noght a sho" (253). His generosity surely expects some favour in return, and the lecherous nature of that return was a favourite topic in Wyclif's sermons<sup>19</sup> and in literature where Huberd's trinkets appear in a poetic attack upon licentious friars:

Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,  
 With gyrdles, gloves, for wenches and wyves:  
 Bot ever backward the husband thryves  
 Ther thai are haunted tille.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond this satire exposing him as a lecher, the Friar's contradictory behaviour with different women, badgering some while enjoying the favours of others, joins him to the Pharisees and their "whitewashed tombs" in Matthew 23:27 for attempting to maintain his pious demeanour while carefully selecting those to whom he will minister. William's

notions of the friars' lack of charity and their kinship with Pharisees are thereby amplified.

Absence of humility is the outstanding feature in each of the remaining traits contained in Huberd's portrait. William of St. Amour had expressed dissatisfaction with friars when he noted that their interference in university affairs, like "the Pharisees' uncloistered and active presence in the cities of the New Testament," was "a violation of and hypocritical departure from the monastic life to which they pretended as religiosi."<sup>21</sup> Friar Huberd's excellence in music, far from helping him to withdraw spiritually from the cares of the world, thrusts him into that world; and he appears to make his talent a source of pride unbecoming a meek friar:

And certainly he hadde a murye note;  
Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote;  
Of yeddynges he baar outrely the pris.  
(235-237)

His songs are highly praised, while his ability to play the "rote," a stringed instrument, reveals the Friar to be an accomplished musician in the company of medieval minstrels. Although St. Francis had exhibited a passionate love for spiritual music, sometimes singing and mimicking the playing of a viola and calling his followers joculatores Domini, or "God's minstrels,"<sup>22</sup> subsequent religious came to regard minstrels as the cursed of the Devil, and more commonly as sexual sinners.<sup>23</sup> Chaucer's strategic placing of Huberd's musical trait immediately following the reference to trinkets

and fair wives ironically links the Friar's talent to a lecher's tool for procurement through romantic music. Certainly Huberd's excellence at "yeddynges," or ballads, reveals that his music is devoted to secular love rather than spiritual. Thus, what at first appears to be a praiseworthy characteristic of the Friar at last condemns him for lack of spirituality.

Similarly, the Friar's fair skin betokening, perhaps, a physical purity symbolic of spiritual purity, becomes a mark of hypocrisy and a reproach on his practice of begging rather than working to earn a living.

His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys;  
Therto he strong was as a champioun.  
(238-239)

Delicacy of complexion belongs to a man unaccustomed to long hours of toil outdoors, and Huberd (as previously noted) spends much of his time in the company of the rich who cater to his refined tastes. Exposure to the elements and abject self-denial, practices of many religious devotees, remain unknown to Huberd. The detail about his strength, then, assumes a dimension of irony, for the Friar did not build his "champioun" physique through days of manual labour. Perhaps Huberd is a champion instead at avoiding the very manual tasks which friars should, according to William, have undertaken as their means of support; so that the reference to Huberd's strength becomes a criticism of his mendicance.

Failure to withdraw into a spiritual realm is evident

in Chaucer's irony surrounding Huberd's notion of what is "honest" as well as in his effort to make temporal the Christian virtues:

And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,  
Curteis he was and lowely of servyse.  
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.

(249-251)

Just as Huberd allies honesty with materialism, so he joins courtesy, humble service, and virtue to "profit." The Friar knows how a Christian should act, but he remains oblivious to the goal of those actions: winning riches in heaven rather than earth. He certainly changes his bearing to suit his wants, being true to form as a hypocrite, especially where he hopes to profit. At this point in the portrait it is perhaps too early to make much of the scriptural significance of the Friar's "profit," but Huberd's tale about the summoner who is damned for his greed could serve as an illustration to Huberd of Christ's query: "'For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?'" (Matthew 16:26). Furthermore, the Friar's ability to "rage . . . as it were right a whelp" (257) hides under the frolicsome puppyishness a potential for riotous passions, not only in love, but in anger which he later directs to the Summoner, again belying his fraternal responsibility to show Christian love. Huberd's abuse of Christian virtues for the accumulation of wealth and his passionate lack of self-restraint connect him with the worldly and excitable Pharisees who piously defended their

actions.

In his official capacity as arbitrator in disputes settled on "love-dayes" Huberd shows additional kinship with the Pharisees, here with respect to pride and ostentation:

In love-dayes ther koude he muchel help,  
 For ther he was nat lyk a cloysterer  
 With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,  
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.  
 Of double worstede was his semycope,  
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.  
 (258-263)

Humility is forgotten. One can almost visualize Huberd as he struts about, making himself look important and showing off his fine "semycope," not the regulation habit according to an amendment of fraternal rule in 1316 which permitted friars to wear a mantellus, or cloak, "so long as it was plain."<sup>24</sup> The interesting detail about the fullness of Huberd's cloak parallels William's imagery about the Pharisees' pretentious additions to their garments. In addition, Huberd is likened to a "maister," the epithet of the Paris friars and the Pharisees; and with unsurpassed presumption, his status challenges even that of the pope with regard to dress. The Friar is a man greedy for attention, not the figure of a meek servant of God.

Huberd's preciosity in dress is not a solitary eccentricity, however, for it is augmented by his affectation in speech as well:

Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,  
 To make his Englissh sweete upon his tongue.  
 (264-265)

This deliberate sweetening of speech, whether it be to facilitate his procurement of partners in the "wantownesse" of love or of money from gullible donors, harks back to William's anger at the Pharisees' specious language. The Friar's hypocrisy of speech is later mocked by the Summoner, who capitalizes on Huberd's lisp in Friar John's potentially hilarious pronunciation of "What is a ferthyng worth parted in twelve?" (1967), which furnishes ample inspiration for Thomas' vulgar joke in the Summoner's Tale.<sup>25</sup> At any rate, Huberd's sugary speech must serve as warning against accepting at face value the words of his own tale, for his every word exudes hypocrisy.

Chaucer's superb portrait of a hypocrite is crystallized in three beautifully evocative lines penultimate to the conclusion of the description:

And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,  
His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght  
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.  
(266-268)

To those captivated by Huberd's charm, a soft voice set against twinkling eyes may seem the ultimate revelation of a warm and romantic nature; to those cognizant of the hypocrisy satirized throughout the portrait, the twinkling betrays a craftiness befitting a con artist. Stars are especially suspect as symbols relating to friars, for Wyclif borrows an epithet from the Epistle of Jude to label the friars as wandering stars,<sup>26</sup> wanderers connoting "cayms kynde," the descendants of Cain, cursed among men.



Pope Gregory IX had, a century earlier, set a precedent for happier symbolism by referring graciously to St. Francis as a "morning star in the midst of a cloud,"<sup>27</sup> but Huberd's nocturnal brilliance stands in marked contrast to the softly diffused light of St. Francis. Whether or not these ironic associations of friars with stars are intentional, Chaucer leaves us with a picture of Huberd's chilling luster, of a man deceptively companionable, a hypocritical guide into rather than out of the darkness.

Chaucer significantly refrains from naming his Friar in the General Prologue until the last line of the portrait, signalling "an ironic summary rather than an afterthought"<sup>28</sup> and drawing attention to the Friar's worth: "This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd" (269). In overview, Huberd's lechery and avarice invite comparisons with the rapacious kite for whom the Friar is named, but the abstract term "worthy" cries out as strongly for attention, for some qualification of its meaning. After the portrait of hypocrisy it is doubtful that the Friar has any spiritual worth, but Chaucer does not pass judgment upon him. At one point Chaucer's satire becomes so sharp as to reveal his condemnation of friars, but even then he employs a simpering tone which Huberd might well have used to explain why poor sinners are attracted to fraternal confessors:

For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
 He may nat wepe, althogh hym soore smerte.  
 Therefore in stede of wepyng and preyeres  
 Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.  
 (229-232)



The deceptive simplicity of the picture of sinners being redeemed by humble friars is shattered by the realization that the sinner who has hardened his heart and, thus, deliberately cut himself off from God, here receives complete absolution for a small fee. Chaucer seems to have shared the objections of the antimendicants who accused the friars of making a mockery of the process of salvation with their worship of the silver which is offered to them in payment for their supposedly holy ministrations.

So, too, the single important reference in the portrait to Huberd's liturgical vocabulary negates his spiritual worth and proves his hypocrisy. His pleasant "In principio" (254) is used to help him win money from a poor widow, but the spiritual satisfaction which this text should bring is overshadowed by the Friar's pleasure over increased wealth. Interestingly, the widow is not described as freely giving her gift; rather, the Friar is depicted almost as forcibly obtaining it before he agrees to leave the poor woman in peace: "Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente" (255). Huberd abuses the In principio text from John 1:1-14, commonly regarded in the Middle Ages "as a charm against all evils,"<sup>29</sup> to cover his deceitful collection of money. Furthermore, Huberd inverts in his person this scriptural teaching that John the Baptist prepared the way for the Light of the World, for the Friar's deeds are physical rather than spiritual, and full of darkness rather than light.

As a relative of Faux-Semblant, Huberd is a dark servant, a type of the precursors of Antichrist. As nominal kite, he bears kinship with the blind buzzards decried by antimendicant writers.<sup>30</sup> As a hypocrite and a guide to moral darkness, Huberd continues in the tradition of the Pharisees from Matthew 23, who are "blind guides" (v. 16) devoid of spiritual light or understanding. As a hypocrite Huberd appears harmless enough, but as a blind guide he imperils the souls of those in his care; and in the maliciousness of his tale damning summoners and in his personal animosity towards the pilgrim Summoner, he imitates the Pharisees who "'shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in'" (Matthew 23:13). In his spiritual darkness Huberd closes the door to heaven and blocks the path to salvation for all to whom he ministers. The hypocrite's specious language, then, assumes dangerous significance when Huberd begins to tell his damning tale.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE FRIAR'S TALE: BLOCKING THE WAY TO SALVATION

Modern research into Chaucer's antifraternality is usually confined to penetrating studies of Huberd's portrait and, more importantly, the Summoner's Tale, which stands out as one of the single most devastating attacks upon friars in medieval literature. The Summoner's fawning hypocrite, Friar John, is fair game for all opponents of friars. Huberd's tale, understandably devoid of anti-fraternal echoes (for what friar other than the allegorical hypocrite, Faux-Semblant, would wittingly condemn himself?), seldom finds a place in such criticism. Certainly, the Friar's Tale must be viewed as a particularly clever and bitingly effective exposé of dishonest summoners who practise extortion, and as a rollicking example of the comic depths to which poetic justice may drag a character, in this case the damnation of a braggart summoner who finally meets his match in a demon. And Huberd's choice of topic is generally apt, since a traditional rivalry existed between friars and summoners. On the surface, then, the Friar's Tale suits its teller.

Chaucer's portrait of Huberd, though, contains no

references to summoners as preparation for the satiric subject of the Friar's Tale. Instead, Chaucer's picture of a friar who is especially caught up in his glorious self-image, grounded in grand claims to power and eloquence, must contribute to an understanding of the tale which Huberd tells, especially considering the close relationship which Chaucer develops between narrators and their tales among the Canterbury pilgrims. It is possible that Huberd uses his power and grandiloquence to sidetrack his audience from his hidden desire, which is not mere mockery of summoners but a sincere wish to damn them everlastingly. While his portrait condemns him as a Pharisee in the tradition begun by William and stigmatizes him as a blind guide, Huberd's tale extends comparisons with the Pharisees from Matthew 23. His words suggest that he has "'neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith'" (v. 23), omissions which would prevent him from entering the kingdom of heaven (v. 13), and that he would also shut the gate for those who would enter the heavenly realm (v. 13), specifically summoners. While the Friar's Tale warrants Wyclif's criticism that the preaching of stories and fables led people away from true worship of God,<sup>1</sup> it assumes greater significance among antifraternial literature as an amplification of the source of William's imagery through its satiric revelation of Huberd's attempt ultimately to block the pathway to salvation for his foes.

Although the basic plot of the Friar's Tale concludes

with the scene showing the summoner's damnation, thereby fulfilling the Friar's deepest desire to deny salvation to summoners, it is far from a simple and direct illustration of Huberd's wish. Fundamentally, the tale is intended as "a game" (1279), a joke at the summoner's expense, and Huberd must subordinate his baser motives to his primary purpose of entertaining the pilgrims. Consequently, the Friar does not blatantly emphasize each point of satire, nor can he safely do so without jeopardizing the air of sanctity which surrounds his fraternal position. Further complicating our recognition of the blocking aspect of the tale, Huberd voices clues unwittingly and Chaucer employs ironic associations beyond Huberd's knowledge as a character, so that the Friar's blocking effort is at times advanced through indirection. Nevertheless, the Friar's definite malice towards the pilgrim Summoner may clearly be seen to constitute the starting point for Huberd's endeavours, conscious or otherwise, to block the path to salvation.

Huberd's malice first becomes evident after he makes fun of the Wife of Bath's lengthy prologue (830-831) and is rebuked rather viciously by the Summoner who compares friars to flies always interfering where they have no business (834-836), and claims that the Friar's interruption is spoiling the Wife's story (837-839). Instead of humbly apologizing, the Friar grows irate and vows revenge:

'Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,

Telle of a somonour swich a tale or two,  
 That alle the folk shal laughen in this place.'  
 (841-843)

Through his explosive temper the Friar inadvertently condemns himself but also abandons the opportunity of demonstrating to the pilgrims an example of forgiveness, thus neglecting to instruct them in one of the steps requisite to the process of salvation. Although he manages to refrain from additional retort so that the Wife of Bath can proceed with her tale, he harbours resentment and seizes the first chance to fan the smouldering fire of wrath within him by resuming his invective immediately after the Wife has finished her tale. He speaks so spitefully that the Host calls upon him for a tale (1300) to silence his abuse of summoners.

The Friar barely succeeds in controlling his temper during the Wife's tale, for he directs a number of scowling glances towards the Summoner:

This worthy lymytour, this noble Frere,  
 He made alwey a maner louryng chiere  
 Upon the Somonour, but for honestee  
 No vileyns word as yet to hym spak he.  
 (1265-1268)

The words "worthy" and "noble" with reference to the malicious Friar assume ironic dimensions, as does the narrator's use of the reservation "as yet" which suggests that an angry outburst, utilizing to full advantage the "vileyns word," is imminent. Hastening to launch his verbal attack, the Friar once more misses an opportunity to edify the pilgrims spiritually, for he deliberately sweeps aside the Wife of

Bath's allusions in her tale to theological and philosophical questions:

But, dame, heere as we ryde by the weye,  
 Us nedeth nat to speken but of game,  
 And lete auctorities, on Goddes name,  
 To prechyng and to scole eek of clergye.  
 (1274-1277)

In effect, Huberd degrades his calling as a preacher to tell a common joke, straying from the path to salvation and carrying the Summoner and pilgrim audience with him. Huberd here exemplifies Wyclif's charge that friars spoke not to edify but to amuse.

Huberd first defames summoners in general so that the pilgrim Summoner will likewise lose face:

'Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name  
 That of a somonour may no good be sayd;  
 I praye that noon of you be yvele apayd.  
 A somonour is a rennere up and doun  
 With mandementz for fornicacioun,  
 And is ybet at every townes ende.'  
 (1280-1285)

Despite the possible validity of the bitter charge, Huberd abuses his right to criticize, for correction of summoners does not appear to be his aim. Indeed, he voices his argument in the same type of sweeping generalization that the Summoner previously applied to friars and flies, thinking perhaps that the best battle tactic is to challenge an enemy with his own weapons. The Friar obviously carries his calculated malice too far, since the Host feels obliged to interrupt him and remind him of his place, "'A! sire, ye sholde be hende / And curteys, as a man of youre estaat'" (1286-1287). Thus, even so tolerant a judge as the



Host sees that Huberd scarcely functions as a guide to the heavenly kingdom.

The Summoner reasonably withholds objection to Huberd's heatedness, declaring that he will have a chance to reply later, at which time he will mockingly "'tellen which a greet honour / It is to be a flaterynge lymytour'" (1293-1294). Huberd's portrait has not gone unnoticed, for the Summoner has caught the hypocrisy of this flatterer. And his barb seems to have hit the target, for apparently Huberd is sufficiently moved by the remark for the Host to find it necessary to intervene once more, this time to assuage the Friar by calling him "'my leeve maister deere'" (1300). But Huberd's malice is only beginning to show. When introducing the summoner who is the central character in his story, Huberd digresses to voice contempt for all summoners:

To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare;  
 For we been out of his correccioun.  
 They han of us no jurisdiccoun,  
 Ne nevere shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.  
 (1328-1331)

Since Huberd is safely beyond the jurisdiction of summoners, he takes it upon himself to demonstrate their shortcomings; but one can assume that were his position not so secure, he would unheroically neglect his fraternal responsibility of decrying sin. Once again he harps uncharitably on the villainy of summoners and proceeds to belittle their authority, which prompts the Summoner's outraged reply and the Host's further intervention deferring again to the Friar,

"'myn owene maister deere'" (1337). This entire scene of repeated provocation, retort, and pacification, contends Paul E. Beichner, is ingeniously contrived by the malicious Friar deliberately to engage the Summoner in a battle of wits from which the less gifted Summoner must emerge the loser, all part of Huberd's technique of "Baiting the Summoner."<sup>2</sup>

Beichner's argument possesses strong appeal because it accounts for the stop-and-start quality of the opening of the Friar's Prologue and Tale as well as Huberd's choice of topic stressing the Friar's definite malice. First, the Friar goads the Summoner into providing the pilgrims with a display of his bad temper:

When the Friar says that he will tell a tale about a summoner which will make all the company laugh, the summoner curses the Friar and himself in his threat to retaliate. The imprecations, however mild, cannot have passed unnoticed by the Friar, for the tale which he will tell will be about an impenitent summoner ensnared by curses.<sup>3</sup>

Then the Friar prompts the Summoner's further interruption so that the Host will intervene and silence the Summoner (1327-1337), thus appearing to defend the Friar. By the end of the tale, Huberd has successfully illustrated the stupidity of the summoner, thereby cleverly blocking in advance the effect of the Summoner's reply to the tale:

The Friar has successfully impaled the Summoner on the horns of a dilemma, leaving him with the choice between retaliation and silence. If he retaliates, he will appear more and more unrepentant and stupid, like the summoner of the exemplum. If he remains silent, he will have to swallow his boast of the Prologue to best the Friar, and he will give the

impression that he is repenting of prior evil ways.  
In either case the Friar will appear to win.<sup>4</sup>

In short, Huberd attempts to deny the Summoner the chance to redeem his reputation by discrediting any possible claims to goodness. His malice, then, partially blocks the Summoner's path to salvation, which in medieval theology was attained almost as much through performance of good deeds as through declaration of faith, and certainly blocks his own path because he persistently wishes evil upon the Summoner.

Appropriately matching his language to his malice, Huberd tells a predatory tale filled with imagery drawn from the hunting sports. The summoner of the tale employs "bawdes redy to his hond, / As any hawk to lure in Engelond" (1339-1340), using sex as an especially effective hunting instrument. He possesses a keen talent for tracking down those who have committed sexual transgressions, and he is adept at worrying his wounded quarry and waiting patiently to make the kill:

For in this world nys dogge for the bowe  
That kan an hurt deer from an hool yknowe  
Bet than this somnour knew a sly lecchour,  
Or an avowtier, or a paramour.

(1369-1372)

Huberd displays an almost business-like manner in exposing the summoner's tricks of the trade, and the tone of moral indignation which might be expected from a friar is strikingly absent. To Friar Huberd, this business of feretting out sinners seems rather amusing, and he appears almost

grateful to the sins which he should hate because they enable him to criticize summoners, a sport in which he takes pleasure. Huberd would gladly trap the Summoner if he had the chance, and his baiting of an opponent conforms to his predatory character, especially since his namesake, the kite (see p. 33 above), also preys upon the defenseless or unsuspecting.

These verbal clues to Huberd's malice in stalking the pilgrim Summoner as the summoner in the tale stalks sinners are importantly augmented by the narrative framework of the Friar's Tale. Granted that the summoner in the tale damns himself through his own greed and a trumped-up charge against the old widow, but Huberd manipulates the folklore about cursing to focus his narrative upon the actual moment of damnation. Convention dictated three cursing episodes in each tale, the first two insincere and harmless, but the third terribly effective.<sup>5</sup> Huberd omits the standard second cursing episode and passes directly from the carter's insincere cursing of "'bothe hors and cart and hey!'" (1547) to the confrontation between the summoner and the widow. His oversight perhaps accords with a subconscious wish to hasten his narrative towards what must be for him the delectable culmination of the story, when the summoner is carted off to hell in company with the widow's "panne." Such haste reflects the Friar's lack of charity as well as a perverse interest in the process of damnation rather than salvation, and constitutes an attempt

to block the way to salvation by denying the protagonist of his tale the standard twin examples of the function of curses.

Ironically, while Huberd describes but two of the usual three incidents, he uses three actual curses. Widow Mabely supplies the final, effective curse which, though delayed by her charitable offer of time for repentance, effectively damns the summoner:

'Unto the devel blak and rough of hewe  
Yeve I thy body and my panne also!'  
(1622-1623)

The summoner himself utters the second curse in this encounter, "'the foule feend me fecche / If I th'excuse'" (1610-1611); and it is this curse which reverts upon him to damn him, together with Mabely's curse. Huberd's omission of the usual second cursing incident perhaps signals a keen personal desire to hasten the narrative towards the moment of inescapable defeat for the summoner, but his use of two separate and equally effective curses undoubtedly reveals his hatred for summoners, whom he would dispatch summarily.

The summoner's blustering oath against himself during his verbal exchange with Mabely comically assumes the terrible power of redounding curses popularized in folklore, demonstrating anew Huberd's familiarity with the cursing tradition, but Huberd's emphasis upon the curse which backfires has moral implications which endanger him as well as the summoner. Traditionally, curses were magical hexes

capable of inflicting physical discomfort or injury upon the sorcerer's foe, but increasingly satiric poetry itself came to be regarded as destructive "and it was related of no less a poet than Dafydd ap Gwilym, almost a contemporary of Chaucer, that he killed a literary antagonist by the virulence of his verse."<sup>6</sup> Huberd's satiric tale against summoners has a similarly destructive intent, but such vengeance from a friar is unbecoming. According to oral and literary tradition, curses or satires improperly or unjustly administered were often wont to revert upon the satirists themselves; and Bromyard warns in a sermon on the sin of greed: "'Generally speaking, it is dangerous to curse people . . . , for the malediction may turn on the speaker.'"<sup>7</sup> The rivalry sparked between friars and summoners over greed for money subjects Huberd to the admonitions which form the topic for the whole sermon, but this warning about the redounding power of the curse is especially applicable to him in view of his attack on summoners. Satires historically included "slander, betrayal, or false witness," termed generally as "'crimes of the tongue,'"<sup>8</sup> so that Huberd's malice, a "crime of the tongue," directed towards the Summoner through the satire of his tale about cursing and damnation has similar potential for recoil. In his attempt to block the path to salvation by grounding his tale in cursing and damnation, the Friar stoops to laughable slander of summoners, denies his own calling, belies his worth as a moral example, and deserves the

spiritual peril which he treats so lightly. In short, for his malice the Friar succeeds in satirizing himself.

If Friar Huberd's unsuitable interest in cursing anecdotes ranks him among the common story-tellers rather than religious preachers, thus demonstrating his difficulty in finding the path to salvation for himself and pointing it out to others, his careless references to the much more serious matter of the Church's curse suggest that he veers dangerously close to damnation. In the writings of church authorities the curse was viewed solemnly as a divine power bestowed upon man, a power to be used justly and sparingly. To clarify this point, Mroczkowski cites the explanation of Peraldus "'that the Lord shall greatly punish the robbers (raptores)' and that 'by imprecations and curses spoken at them by widows and children whom they despoil. For the scripture says that such imprecations are heard out.'"<sup>9</sup> Huberd's superficial accord with traditional Church views is demonstrated by the fact that the old widow in his tale justly curses the summoner who wished to cheat her. Furthermore, Huberd employs details "full of echoes of the articles of excommunication and of the anathema which accompanied them."<sup>10</sup> These details, as Cawley has shown, are apparent in the list of excommunicable sins at the beginning of the tale, the references to cursing (1347, 1587), a reversal of the anathema ("which invokes the curse of the Trinity, the saints, and Holy Church against the excommunicate") in the carter's sudden blessing of his horses,

and in the widow's mention of repentance which nullifies the curse. These grave echoes receive decidedly light treatment from Huberd, who seems to use them as mildly comical foreshadowing of the end which awaits his spiritually blind summoner.

Nor does Huberd take advantage of the fact that his central character occupies an integral position in the Church's structure for initiating salvation, an important detail which should deepen the spiritual significance of the tale and make the audience aware of escape routes for the foolhardy summoner who walks blithely towards his doom. The summons to an ecclesiastical court and the threat of excommunication were intended to frighten the sinner into repentance and were employed as "a means of restoring the sinner to a state of grace, of extending salvation to him."<sup>11</sup> Chaucer appears to share this grave view of summoners as administrators of the Church's powerful curse, for as narrator in the General Prologue he criticizes the pilgrim Summoner's corruption of his saving office for the selfish pursuit of money:

And if he foond owher a good felawe,  
 He wolde techen him to have noon awe  
 In swich caas of the ercedekenes curs,  
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
 For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.  
 'Purs is the ercedekenes helle,' seyde he.  
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;  
 Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede,  
 For curs wol slee right as assoillyng savith,  
 And also war hym of a Significavit.  
 (653-662)

Chaucer's judgmental position in this portrait of the



Summoner implies his criticism of the summoner in the Friar's Tale as well.

While the summoner in the tale makes a mockery of his saving office through his greed and dishonesty, the Friar fails to stress the point sufficiently for it to play a major part in the tale. Huberd could easily point out to his audience that the summoner corrupts and impedes the Church's process of salvation, for which he deserves his ultimate damnation, but the Friar chooses instead to damn the summoner for sins of far less significance. It is almost as if Huberd refuses even to mention salvation, for fear of awakening the summoner to the consequences of his sin and providing him with a chance to repent and be saved. At all costs he would block the path to salvation.

Furthermore, the Friar's aforementioned references to excommunication function as a device for ridiculing the summoner rather than leading him to a state of grace. Tom Hatton suggests that the Friar probably does not understand these implications in his tale and that "he certainly fails to see that its satiric point reflects on him as much as the summoner he intends to attack. For he, too, acts as one of the Church's instruments of salvation."<sup>12</sup> Despite his concluding plea to the audience to pray that summoners repent of their sins, Huberd's final words uncharitably recall the curse: "er that the feend hem hente!" (1664). The tale seems to be merely a vehicle for Huberd's cursing of his rival Summoner, and as such is a mockery of the

Church's high regard for the curse as a potential instrument for salvation. Again it appears that the Friar would suppress the Church's power of redeeming sinners and would shut the gate of heaven at least to summoners and, unintentionally, to himself.

Huberd's curious handling of sermon material also casts doubt upon the spiritual intent of his narrative. Although his tale is rich in exempla illustrating commonplace themes from contemporary pulpit literature and harking back to the work of Aquinas and Bromyard,<sup>13</sup> it departs from traditional sermon form in that it contains only one final gloss for the story rather than moral explanations for several brief anecdotes. Apparently, Huberd endeavours to keep his moral instruction to a minimum, in contrast to his fraternal responsibility constantly to preach and teach God's word. The inference to be drawn from these comparisons is that while Chaucer was well acquainted with homiletic literature and aptly employed it to underline the Friar's Tale, he portrayed his Friar deliberately departing from the standard form, thereby establishing an atmosphere of irony about Huberd.

In addition, Huberd inverts the main teachings from the sermon of Hubert the kite in Renart le Contrefait (a work which may have been known to the medieval English audience through oral transmission but which Chaucer evidently knew well and utilized, as Pratt has revealed through his study of linguistic parallels between this Old

French source and the Nun's Priest's Tale).<sup>14</sup> Although Hubert the kite is finally, like his predecessor in Branch VII of the Roman de Renart, eaten for his hypocrisy, he at least makes the pretense of preaching a moral sermon of extraordinary length to show his profound theological knowledge, whereas Friar Huberd abandons Church texts as the basis for his worldly tale. Huberd hardly atones for this deficiency when he concludes with the feeble excuse that he could have told the pilgrims about the pains of hell "After the text of Crist, Poul, and John" (1647) under different circumstances: "Hadde I had leyser for this Somnour heere" (1646). If the pilgrims lack anything, it is certainly not leisure to tell a story; but the Friar has spent his allotted time frivolously, whereas he might have used it to edify. It is he rather than the Summoner who has removed the "leisure" and charged the atmosphere with tension. Unlike the kite who instructs Renart at great length in the steps leading to salvation, Huberd pursues both in literal tale and inner intent the path to damnation.

Hubert the kite first outlines to Renart the goodness and power of God throughout eternity<sup>15</sup> and stresses man's proper heritage as a creature created in God's image for the express purpose of serving Him:

Dieu forma homme a sa semblance  
 Pour ce qu'il eüst ramembrance  
 De lui et que ses biens eüst  
 Et que desservir les peüst  
 Par droit comme son heritage.  
 Pour ce qu'il est fait a s'ymage,  
 Et pour ce que mieulx nous amast,

Quant il sa forme regardast,  
 Dessus toute aultre creature,  
 Doit Dieu mieulx amer sa faiture.  
 Et lui donna naturelment  
 Le plus gentil entendement  
 De lui servir et honorer.

(34037-34049)

The passage conveys strikingly the great love displayed by God towards man and preaches man's primary duty of reciprocating such love through service. The kite stresses that divine love is intended for man as his heritage, recalling the scriptural association of the word "heritage" with heaven, the place won by those who conquer sin (Revelation 21:7).

Friar Huberd borrows the kite's terminology but leaves the reverence when he touches flippantly upon an opposite place of spiritual residence with the devil: "Where as that somonours han hir heritage" (1641). His inversion of a holy meaning denies summoners the salvation which is intended for all mankind, in glaring contrast to his next words which reflect Hubert's concern about man being an image of God:

'And God, that maked after his ymage  
 Mankynde, save and gyde us, alle and some,  
 And leve this somonours goode men bicomel'  
 (1642-1644)

The Friar does not suggest, though, how summoners can become good men. He could admonish them to love God as a remedy for escaping the pains of hell, but he avoids Hubert's theological teaching about the redemptive power of love. Indeed, the sole theological instruction in the tale pro-

ceeds from the mouth of the demon who explains the metaphysical qualities of devils and their place in God's plan. For failing to act as a spiritual advisor, Huberd cuts himself off from the heavenly kingdom but also denies access to summoners and may even lull some listeners into trusting the demon's guidance in other matters because of the truth of his lecture.

Another central theme in the kite's sermon is the doctrine that man has been granted perfect freedom of choice:

Dieu donna a homme pooir  
 Que il fesist a son voloir  
 Bien ou mal, lequel qu'il lui plaist.  
 (34067-34069)

Without such freedom to choose between good and evil, Hubert explains, man would not really bestow honour upon God because his love would be compelled rather than won. It is expected, however, that man will exercise his freedom in the right way by choosing good in place of evil.

Friar Huberd again perverts such sound theology by preparing his audience for the evil choice made by the summoner. Huberd's words gleefully impersonate the summoner's swaggering oath to remain the green yeoman's loyal friend even after the revelation that his comrade is a demon:

'For though thou were the devel Sathanas,  
 My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,  
 As I am sworn . . . .'  
 (1526-1528)

The summoner later chooses to attempt extortion of the old woman whom he knows to be innocent, and ultimately chooses to deny the way out of damnation mercifully held out to him

by the widow's reminder of repentance:

'Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn entente,  
 Quod this somonour, 'for to repente me  
 For any thyng that I have had of thee.  
 I wolde I hadde thy smok and every clooth!'  
 (1630-1633)

Either the Friar possesses a singularly dramatic flair for vivid characterization, or he takes an unsuitably personal delight in the summoner's wickedness, for we can hear and visualize the villainous sneer directed at the poor old woman. Huberd knows that his summoner will finally make the wrong choice, but he neglects to moralize at the moments of danger, so keen is he to reach the climax of his tale: damnation for the summoner.

Huberd also minimizes the power of repentance to save a condemned soul. Hubert declares of sinners: "ilz sont au deable debteur" (35762), a sort of pact resembling the sworn friendship between summoner and fiend in the Friar's Tale. Yet, mercy is miraculously available at all times to those who have renounced sin, "ont laissié le mal oeuvre" (35773), and is denied only to those who persist in evil, "continuent leur errement," and refuse to repent (35789-35803). Only such hardened sinners are beyond redemption, "Perdus sont sans point demander" (35825). By applying Hubert's logic to the Friar's Tale it is easy to understand why the summoner's damnation is irrevocable, for the summoner refuses to seize his last chance of redeeming his soul, proving that his heart is hardened and that salvation is impossible for him. Friar Huberd mentions

repentance again at the conclusion of his tale:

And prayeth that thise somonours hem repente  
Of hir mysdedes, er that the feend hem hente!  
(1663-1664)

Unfortunately, his final words recall the comic glibness with which he described how the fiend carried the summoner to hell in company with the widow's "panne." What slight moral impression the Friar's gloss may have wrought after the purely entertaining tale is erased by this concluding comic replay, demonstrating that Huberd finds damnation a more sustaining topic of interest than salvation.

The Friar's Tale also bears resemblance to the portion of Hubert's sermon about pride and serves as an ironic gloss, since the Friar remains unaware of the arrogance he is revealing and unconsciously permits it to condemn him. Hubert warns that Pride, eldest son of the devil (34401), ultimately sends man to hell (34411-34413), but initially leads him to commit the sins of presumption, ambition, vainglory, hypocrisy and ingratitude. These vices are displayed by the summoner of the Friar's Tale in his attempt to prove himself superior to the demon and probably to rob the devil of the gold and silver which he has generously offered to share with this mortal (1400-1402). But Huberd also exhibits these sins in his attempt to best his rival Summoner by telling a tale to which there can be, or so he supposes, no equally clever reply.

More importantly, the kite teaches that pride induces spite:

Tant a le coeur plain de despit  
 Qu'il ne scet qu'il fait ne qu'il dit.  
 Or se voeult servir, or ne daigne;  
 Or ne scet quel chemin il tiengne.  
 (34481-34484)

The summoner surely suffers from spite as Hubert defines it, for he knows neither what he is saying when he promises loyalty to the devil nor the road which he is following. Nor does he know whom to serve and whom to deal with, for his friendship with a demon is clearly unnatural. Even after the summoner is made aware of his mistake, he refuses to renege on his deal with the demon. Huberd, too, blithely walks an unsure path, for he cannot imagine that the Summoner's invective will be as deeply injurious as his own, and he, too, refuses to terminate his resolve to vilify the Summoner even after the Host has reminded him of his fraternal position.

Furthermore, says Hubert, pride leads to a desire to master all one's friends (34497), a trait of the summoner, who advises his companion later to "'taak heer ensample of me'" (1580) during the incident with Widow Mabely. Oblivious to the terrible consequences of consorting with a devil, the summoner is spiritually blind; but such blindness stems from pride, as Hubert explains: "Car cil qui l'a, il est avugles" (34395). It has already been shown that Huberd and the Pharisees share a love of mastery which stems from pride, and that Huberd represents a blind guide, but the Friar is blind to the fact that his tale reveals his pride also. He fails to see that his



arrogance in attacking an opponent and his preference for stories about damnation may redound upon him, since a friar so poisoned by malice and obsessed with the merriment of consigning stupid summoners to hell can scarcely steer others away from hell, much less save himself.

Spiritual peril also underlies the kite's message in a brief exemplum about a bailiff, which bears a curious similarity to Friar Huberd's supposedly moral exemplum about the summoner and devil who both call themselves bailiffs (1392-1396). In Hubert's anecdote the bailiff serves as judge in a dispute between two rivals who try to bribe him by offering a cow and an ox, respectively. The inherent bribery parallels the summoner's extortions and devil's sly manipulation of an opportunity, but the exemplum primarily demonstrates the necessity of frequently having to make a sacrifice in order to obtain one's chief desire (35910-35970). This sacrifice is comically rendered in the widow's sacrifice of her "panne" in order to be rid of the cursed summoner, and the summoner's regrettable sacrifice of his body and soul for nothing more valuable than the widow's "panne," and possibly her "smok and every clooth!" (1633). Huberd's devilish talent for profaning moral examples and inverting them for comic, and possibly damning, purposes is demonstrated anew.

More significantly, the exemplum from the Old French text emphasizes the word "semer" (35957) in the gloss, to prove the aptness of the moral teaching from Galatians 6:7,

"whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." The scriptural passage immediately continues: "For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." The special pertinence of this text seems hardly to have escaped Friar Huberd, for his summoner clearly forsakes the spirit and "sows to his own flesh" through his extortions and licentiousness, meriting eternal damnation for his moral corruption. The Friar neglects to apply this text to his own actions, though; and Chaucer's portrait of a friar given to intense physical enjoyment as well as Huberd's own forsaking of the spirit by intending to damn the summoner even to the bitter end both suggest that the Friar is a man who sows to the flesh and who will reap corruption.

The dichotomy between body and soul raised in the Biblical quotation, as well as in Hubert's sermon, operates as one of the main motifs in Huberd's tale, for the summoner allows his body to rule his soul. While Friar Huberd seems properly aware of the import of this separation of the physical and the spiritual, his theological instruction is imparted ironically through the mouth of the demonic green yeoman who explains that fiends easily make the distinction:

And somtyme, at oure prayere, han we leve  
 Only the body and nat the soule greve;  
 Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo.  
 And somtyme han we myght of bothe two,  
 This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.

And somtyme be we suffred for to seke  
 Upon a man, and doon his soule unreste,  
 And nat his body, and al is for the beste.  
 (1489-1496)

As his portrait indicates, Friar Huberd frequently blurs the distinctions between body and soul and mistakes physical desires for spiritual obligations (it is not "honest" for him to associate with the sick and poor since he cannot profit from their company). He similarly fuses physical and spiritual elements in his tale when he describes the summoner's double plight: "Body and soule he with the devel wente" (1640), forgetting that the Church's curse "puts the soul in peril of eternal death, but leaves the body unscathed."<sup>16</sup> Chaucer increases the irony when Huberd alludes to Romans 6:17 to warn against spiritual enslavement to "'The feend, that you wolde make thral and bonde'" (1660), for this scriptural text further admonishes the hearer to beware yielding his bodily members to sin, an apt warning for a friar who dwells upon the summoner's sexual activities and whose own portrait betrays licentious characteristics. A friar so pathetically remiss at disassociating his physical passions from his spiritual repose must remain a slave to sin, and to such the gates of heaven must remain shut.

Comparisons between Huberd's words and the scriptural passages which they echo may be drawn at various points in the tale, revealing through the Friar's liturgical vocabulary that religious significance permeates his every

word. Unfortunately, parody is evident in Huberd's brief allusions to events proceeding from the Last Supper. Early in the tale, the devil makes a declaration which echoes Christ's predictions to the disciples that one of them would betray Him. The devil promises to keep faith with the summoner:

'For I wole holde compaignye with thee  
Til it be so that thou forsake me.'  
(1521-1522)

Later, when the devil claims his winnings, his words to the summoner invert those of Christ to the crucified thief who was to join Him in Paradise: "'Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-nyght'" (1636). In the allusions, the summoner takes the part of Pilate and summons the widow, who is a type of "the Church as the body of Christ,"<sup>17</sup> to trial "'T'answere to the court of certeyn thynges'" (1589). Like Pilate, who could find no fault with Christ, the summoner is convinced of the widow's innocence: "'And yet, God woot, of hire knowe I no vice'" (1578). Still, the widow is persecuted, and her complaint--"'so priketh it in my syde'" (1594),--superficially an ailment common to old people, bears a strong similarity, as Hatton has shown, to the wound received by Christ on the cross.

These allusions are surely not intended by Huberd as a parody of what he holds to be holy, but they do indicate that his words are fraught with scriptural overtones and that even unconsciously his words conform to the familiar liturgical patterns, befitting the conversation

and preaching of a friar. Yet, the devil, whose words parody Christ's, functions remarkably as the hero of Huberd's tale, for his wit and charm transform a potentially sobering end for the summoner into a comical delight so that the Friar is able to entertain his audience. The fact that a demon assumes heroic stature within the point of view of a friar is deeply unsettling. In addition, if Huberd is so well versed in the text of the Last Supper, Trial and Crucifixion of Christ, he must be aware of the emphasis which the Church places upon the Resurrection, and the glory of this saving event for mankind should permeate Huberd's every word. His subconscious seems well trained at excluding any such words of promise, for salvation is the missing element in his narrative. The focus of Huberd's tale and of the words which he selects, consciously or otherwise, to relate that tale, invariably bypasses the theme of salvation proper to the speech of an earnest friar.

The Friar's gloss on his tale, although a valiant last-minute attempt to salvage his reputation and dignify his low comedy by attaching to it a profound moral significance, further enmeshes Huberd in the machinery of damnation. Huberd's single direct quotation of scripture has implications which he overlooks:

'The leoun sit in his awayt alway  
To sle the innocent, if that he may.'  
(1657-1658)

Although allegorical exegesis might cite I Peter 5:8 to view the lion as Satan, the Psalmist's lion is a metaphor

for the wicked man who awaits his chance to take advantage of the poor (Psalm 10:8-9), an apt comparison with Huberd's summoner who is damned for his unjust attempt to swindle Mabely. Yet, the allusion redounds upon Huberd, who similarly manipulates a poor widow to obtain a farthing (G.P., 253-255), and the context of the passage is better suited to Huberd's spiteful tale than to his pious gloss. Psalm 10 constitutes a prayer for the overthrow of the wicked, whose deceits resemble those of the summoner:

In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;  
 let them be caught in the schemes which they have  
 devised.  
 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his heart,  
 and the man greedy for gain curses and renounces  
 the Lord.

(Psalm 10:2-3)

The possibility of salvation is excluded for these sinners who are beyond redemption. The text suits Huberd's intentions extremely well, for he would also damn the wicked without reservation and "let them be caught," particularly if they are summoners.

In his further gloss of Psalm 10 Huberd emulates the exegetes who commonly saw this as a text warning people to be vigilant. Huberd's liturgical vocabulary operates to its fullest extent as he warns his audience to "Waketh, and preyeth Jhesu for his grace" (1654) and "to withstonde / The feend" (1659-1660). These lines "appear to be the outline for a sermon based on Compline, which is the one hour of the seven hours of the breviary with the unique quality of warning. The warning command and the direct warning in

D1645-62 are the characteristic elements in *Compline*."<sup>18</sup> The Friar's liturgical training appears to be so thoroughly instilled into him that he can automatically mouth the correct formula even when his mind is occupied with other matters, such as damning summoners. But it has been shown that his choice of text and his hasty switch of direction from tale to moral both satirize his efforts as a friar, while his very last words--"er that the feend hem hente" (1664)--again demonstrate his obsession with damnation. In Huberd's theology, the Scriptures are inverted and texts about salvation go unfinished. Huberd's feeble attempt to play the true friar for a few lines cannot atone for the many shortcomings revealed indirectly through his tale, nor can it mask the Friar's malice in desiring to annihilate his enemy Summoner by blocking the path to salvation so completely that he almost refuses to acknowledge that such a path exists.

Huberd's tale of the curse which reverts upon the foul summoner ultimately backfires upon the Friar himself. Through the predatory quality of his imagery and through his narration of a cursing incident which detracts from the conventional purpose of such tales in glorifying the decision to repent, Huberd veers off the path which should lead his audience to contemplate salvation. In his blindness to the redemptive provision in the Church's curse (the proper basis of any tale about a summoner), and in his parody of the Scriptures through an unconsciously light-

hearted regard for spiritual matters, the Friar blocks the channels to salvation opened by the teachings of the Church. By inverting the values in the sermon form which he simulates, and by missing the implications of his moral gloss, Huberd proves his ineptitude as a preaching friar and merits the hell reserved for men righteous in appearance but lacking the inner brand of holiness. Like the Pharisees, Huberd is a blind guide, ignorant of "justice and mercy and faith," and destined for hell. He blocks the way to salvation for the summoner of his tale, wishes it blocked for the pilgrim Summoner, and unwittingly blocks it for himself and for those unfortunate enough to be ministered to by this less than model friar.

In the special relationship of tale and teller, Chaucer artistically finishes an image only begun by William of St. Amour. The portrait in the General Prologue, depicting Huberd as one of William's gluttonous and avaricious Pharisees, is set in motion as the Friar narrates his tale. Huberd completes the Biblical context as he inexorably prepares a pathway to hell. Significantly, Chaucer allows the Summoner to reply to Huberd's moral darkness in a scathing attack, for the Summoner prefaces his tale with a description of the friars' residence in hell. Chaucer's artistic insight and systematic approach reach their culmination in the Summoner's facetious exploration of the question about the hypocritical Pharisee, and friar: how is he to escape hell?



## CONCLUSION

In the conclusion to his tale Friar Huberd consigns the summoner to hell and cuts short his moral gloss, choosing not to preach about "The peynes of thilke cursed hous of helle" (1652) but simply to warn his audience to beware the fiend. The pilgrim Summoner, however, exposes the flaw in this apparently innocent gloss when he suggests that Huberd's decision entails an unintentional incrimination of himself by displaying an ironically intimate knowledge of hell:

'This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,  
And God it woot, that it is litel wonder;  
Freres and feendes been but lyte asonder.  
(1672-1674)

His overwhelmingly gross depiction of the friars' residence in hell (1690-1698) guarantees that his audience will remember his anecdote even after the Friar's Tale has been forgotten. Yet the Summoner's coarseness is not without a subtlety of wit; for as Huberd taught that hell was the "heritage" of summoners, so the Summoner slyly inverts this image when presenting the infernal vision of the friar in his Prologue:

'So was the develes ers ay in his mynde,  
That is his heritage of verray kynde.'  
(1705-1706)

In the brief but caustic scenes from the Summoner's Prologue

Chaucer cleverly contrives a response to the reader's instinctive reaction after listening to the Friar's Tale, as well as a reply to the rhetorical question asked of Pharisees in Matthew 23:33 and especially apt for Huberd: how is such a malicious hypocrite to escape being sentenced to hell?

What follows in the Summoner's Tale is a comical representation of the hell which friars perpetrate on earth, conveyed by Chaucer through William's fervid anti-mendicant imagery as well as the heartily gross humour of the satiric fabliau tradition. Corrupt friars could serve as a leaven of evil, heightening peril to the soul in a time characterized by Charles Muscatine as an "age of crisis."<sup>1</sup> Extending William's vision of the friars as penetrantes domos who broke open the portals to the souls of weak men, Langland chose a friar to represent the false physician in Passus XX (352-384, B-text) of Piers Plowman and Wyclif claimed that friars masqueraded as physicians to seduce women.<sup>2</sup> Friar John, who attends the ailing Thomas in the Summoner's Tale, is just such a false physician who claims to be "'a parfit leche'" (1956) and whose interest in Thomas' wife is far from chaste:

And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,  
And kiste hire sweete, and chirketh as a sparwe.  
(1803-1804)

Thomas is purged of his illness when he imparts his windy gift to Friar John, while the Friar endures greater misery in endeavouring to distribute this gift equitably amongst

his brethren, suggesting ironically that the friars dwell within hell on earth. This notion of the friars' infernal residence, prolonged through Prologue and Tale, represents a comic innovation in the third segment of William's imagery: persecution of the Church by the friars as the precursors of Antichrist or agents of hell.

William's tripartite imagery pervades the Summoner's Tale in scattered details. There is a distinct recollection of the penetrantes domos charge, though less forceful than the previously discussed references to hell, in the Summoner's description of Friar John's scavenging tactics:

In every hous he gan to poure and pry,  
And beggeth mele and chese, or elles corn.  
(1738-1739)

The passing reference to begging, suggestive of the friars as William's pseudo-apostles, mushrooms into the Friar's sermon on the virtues of the life of poverty and abstinence practised by the fraternal imitators of Christ:

We lyve in poverte and in abstinence,  
And burell folk in richesse and despence  
Of mete and drynke, and in hir foul delit.  
(1873-1875)

Yet the Friar tends towards the Pharisees' delicacy of appetite rather than acceptance of humble fare, since he asks Thomas' wife for "softe breed," a capon's liver and roasted head of pig (1838-1843), the menu approaching that of a medieval feast. Friar John perfectly epitomizes the hypocritical friars whom William berated for their love of luxury. Like the Pharisees, too, he is called "maister"

(1781, 1800, 1834, 2184), and although he professes to dislike the title (2185-2188), his ostentatious protests reveal an inner pleasure with his esteemed position, meriting William's criticism of Friar John's proud ancestors.

Satire of the friars' practice of glossing Scripture at the risk of withholding from the people the pure and simple word of God, a specifically Wycliffite charge, stems from William's dissatisfaction with specious language mouthed by the friars as false apostles. The Summoner's remark that Friar John preaches to the people "with nyfles and with fables" (1760) incites Huberd to interrupt the tale (1761) in protest, but his own practice of telling a profane story rather than preaching a moral sermon contradicts his apparently upright stance. Huberd is further satirized for his deliberate abandonment of a Scriptural basis for his tale by Friar John's blithe excuse for his forgetfulness in accurately documenting the conviction that Christ's teachings made provision for the friars' holy practice of poverty:

I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,  
But I shal fynde it in a maner glose.  
(1919-1920)

The brunt of this satiric thrust is directed towards the friars' theological disputations upon the notion of poverty, but Friar John's prior words reveal a supreme delight in the art of glossing and bear heavily ironic associations with Huberd's unfortunate attempt to gloss his tale as a moral exemplum:

Glosynge is a glorious thyng, certeyn,  
 For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn.  
 (1793-1794)

These lines suggest the dichotomy which exists between the letter of the Law (what the Scriptures dictate literally) and the spirit of the message (what the Scriptures may signify figuratively), a dichotomy which parallels that of body and soul in the Friar's Tale. As the summoner in the latter tale expressed too great an interest in material things to his detriment and ultimate damnation, and Huberd subordinated spiritual satisfaction to physical, so the friar in the Summoner's Tale finds himself in a quandary arising from his literalness in attempting to find a solution for the "ars-metrike" (2222) problem. The squire who provides the answer interprets the spirit of the problem as it was intended: a satire upon a greedy friar who probes in forbidden places for material gain.

Friar John's vulgar lesson in arithmetic probably operates as a satire upon Friar Huberd with his affected lisp, as has already been shown (see p. 41), but it conveys as well through its comic association of passed wind and spirit the absence of spirituality among friars and the need for a spiritual in-filling. As such, the Summoner's device for introducing low comedy functions as a parody of the events of Pentecost,<sup>3</sup> especially satirizing the Spiritual Franciscans' heretical belief in a second Pentecost. Once again, William's example of borrowing

Scripture to deflate the friars is artistically amplified. But the dimensions of Chaucer's imagery surpass William's, for the squire's solution to Friar John's problem of sharing or dividing his gift possibly finds its inspiration in the art work of "the Pentecost cupola of St. Mark's in Venice, where the central iconographic image is a wheel."<sup>4</sup> The Summoner's comparison of friars with flies in his argument with Huberd prior to the Wife of Bath's Tale (835-836), echoing St. Francis' rebuke of an idle brother--"Get thee gone, brother Fly--Vade, frater musca"<sup>5</sup>--and his mockery of the visions of Francis in the diabolical vision which opens his Prologue, further contribute towards the satire against the Franciscans. In each of these allusions lack of spirituality, William's original complaint with friars, is mocked.

Unlike those Franciscans who distort the letter of the law in their attempt to propagate their own false spiritualism, Friar John, like the Pharisees, relies totally upon the literal message and misses the spiritual significance of Scripture:

I walke, and fische Cristen mennes soules,  
 To yelden Jhesu Crist his propre rente;  
 To sprede his word is set al myn entente.  
 (1820-1822)

John's pious declaration conceals his true intentions which are betrayed by his constant efforts to increase his material wealth. The "entente" of paying "rente" or love-service to God is belied by the actions of the Friar, who

intends only to procure by any means a gift of money from Thomas. John and Huberd alike are guilty of false intentions in serving themselves rather than God; and the extent of their spirituality is reflected in their outer guise of piety which only partially conceals their inner hypocrisy and corruption and shows them to be "whitewashed tombs" like the Pharisees in Matthew 23.

While Chaucer's satire in the Friar's Tale applies primarily to Huberd, his criticism in the Summoner's Tale is directed against friars in general, especially since Friar John demonstrates such earnestness in sharing his gift with the "covent" (2259) of friars. Several scholars have published intensive antimendicant studies of the Summoner's Tale<sup>6</sup> but their work is not directly related to this thesis, which has attempted to show Chaucer's extension of William's original text from Matthew 23. It is sufficient here to point out that besides conforming to the tradition begun by William and constituting one of the most important works of medieval antifraternalism, the Summoner's Tale completes Chaucer's artistic scheme in amplifying William's imagery and caps his satire of friars inadvertently begun by Friar Huberd. The parody of Pentecost at the close of the Summoner's Tale highlights the criticism, for it suggests that friars have inverted the Scriptures and that they indeed personify William's imagery about the precursors of Antichrist.

Though much of William's criticism may have been

warranted, his writings were intended to prejudice readers against the cause of the friars. To this end William initiated an imaginative scheme of associations, a literary device which appealed to later writers and was copied by them. Through literature such as the Roman de la Rose William's imagery was amplified and extended, but among medieval writers Chaucer especially adopted the imagery with a complex artistic plan. Through his portrait of Friar Huberd, Chaucer shows close conformity with William's model, as had Jean de Meun in his presentation of Faux-Semblant. In the Friar's Tale, however, Chaucer exhibits his excellence as a literary craftsman, for unlike William he resists the temptation to assemble various Scriptural texts into a fantastical attack on the friars and limits himself to exploring the possibilities for criticism through a single text from Matthew.

In adapting Matthew 23 to his artistic purpose Chaucer directly utilizes in his portrait of Huberd William's imagery of friars as hypocritical Pharisees and indirectly reflects in the Friar's Tale William's moral vision of the friars as agents of hell. Chaucer gives flesh and blood to William's figurae as he depicts Huberd at work in the Friar's Tale. Instead of portraying Huberd as one of William's symbols of darkness, Chaucer demonstrates that a vital character can manifest signs of such darkness through very human behaviour. In his efforts to attack and damn his rival Summoner, Huberd attempts to



block the path to salvation, thereby fulfilling Chaucer's artistic purpose of extending William's source for anti-fraternalism to verses of vaster satiric potential in Matthew 23. The Summoner's Tale clinches the fate of friars by graphically illustrating the hell which the Scriptural text reserves for such hypocrites. Chaucer's artistry associates friars morally with the hell to which their hypocrisy condemns them, ultimately the same hell envisioned for friars by William.

The bulk of literature in the Middle Ages presents a picture of friars without regard to historical veracity, a picture based instead largely upon the imagination of one embittered critic, William of St. Amour. By the time of Chaucer, the friar was unjustly but almost universally stereotyped as an immoral hypocrite, yet the possible injustice of such a portrait is of slight consequence to the religious framework of the Canterbury Tales. Borrowing the pattern of the banquet from Dante's Convivio. Chaucer arranges his sequence of tales between the structural signposts of the initial meeting of the pilgrims at an inn and the final feast promised as a reward to the teller of the best tale. The Canterbury Tales should theoretically move towards this celebration or feast, but the Parson's Tale prepares the company to celebrate the higher feast of Holy Communion and effects the transition from an earthly to a heavenly pilgrimage. Measured against this spiritual context Friars Huberd and John clearly fail to fulfill their

duties as spiritual leaders of men, and as an obstacle to salvation Huberd becomes by default a guide to hell. Chaucer's friars stand as a warning to the medieval audience against proud and self-righteous hypocrites, but more importantly against friars who as a body neglected for two centuries to benefit from William's early criticism by reassessing their goals and purifying their religious practices. Suppressing overt censure in favour of subtler irony about friars, Chaucer seems charitably as well as optimistically to allow for the possibility of amelioration with time and reformation of the friars over whom William despaired. Chaucer's characters, though highly imaginative creations, are more importantly people with the human ambivalence towards good as well as evil. His friars are no exception.

## APPENDIX

Born in Jura, France, ca. 1200, William of St. Amour studied at Paris where he had become by 1228 master of arts and by 1238 a doctor of the university. In 1247 while still a student of theology, he was assigned the task of caring for souls in Granville. He began his attack on friars after becoming regent master in theology about 1250. Through his efforts Dominican masters were suspended from the university on February 4, 1254. In the same year he succeeded in persuading the Papal Curia to condemn the work of the Franciscan Spiritual Gerard.

In response to bulls such as Quasi lignum vitae issued by Alexander IV in December, 1254 and April, 1255, William organized a resistance movement among the seculars and launched further attacks on mendicants. In June, 1256 Alexander deprived William of his benefice and requested that King Louis expel him from France. Although William promised to amend his teachings, he prepared the De periculis and merited the Pope's increased wrath.

In spite of his defense of the De periculis, William was twice more denounced and finally exiled from France in 1257. Both the Pope and King Louis denied his appeals and the appeals of friends in his behalf. In 1266 Pope Clement granted a reprieve and William returned from exile to live in his native village where he died on September 13, 1272.

NOTES

Chapter I: THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

<sup>1</sup>John Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon Leff, Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 37. I follow Leff's discussion from pages 37-43 throughout the next few paragraphs of this chapter.

<sup>4</sup>The friars received their vote in somewhat underhanded fashion by opening their school to secular students during the university's suspension of lectures in 1229 and by retaining their chairs in theology when the university reopened in 1231. Leff, pp. 36-37.

<sup>5</sup>Leff, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup>Moorman, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup>The first such letter was granted in 1254. Moorman, p. 120.

<sup>8</sup>Leff, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup>Moorman, p. 117.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 116-117.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>12</sup>Moorman, p. 115. I am indebted also for this discussion to Marjorie Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy

in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969).

<sup>13</sup>William of St. Amour and the enemies of the Franciscans "succeeded in getting the infamous book ascribed to John of Parma, the General of the Order, thus causing his downfall." Reeves, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup>The work is cited by the seculars in a letter dated October 2, 1255. H.H. Lucas, Rutebeuf: Poèmes Concernant l'Université de Paris (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1952), p. 19 and footnote no. 56.

<sup>15</sup>Penn Rodion Szittyá, "'Caines Kynde': The Friars and the Exegetical Origins of Medieval Antifraternalism," Diss. Cornell, 1971, p. 23. I follow Szittyá's pages 38-39 and his ensuing argument in the next few paragraphs of my thesis.

<sup>16</sup>Szittyá, p. 45.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63. See also II Tim. 3:2; I Tim. 6:5; II Peter 2:1; Jude 1:16, 18; and II Cor. 11:7-15.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-67.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>21</sup>The pamphlet war between William of St. Amour, Gerard of Abbeville and Nicholas of Lisieux on the side of the seculars, and Thomas Aquinas, Thomas of York, Bonaventura and John Pecham on the side of the friars, is carefully documented by Moorman, pp. 128-130.

<sup>22</sup>Leff, pp. 47-48, 264.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 105. I borrow Leff's findings from pages 105-106 throughout this paragraph.

<sup>24</sup>Aubrey Gwynn, The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 81-82.

<sup>25</sup>Moorman, p. 342.

<sup>26</sup>Szittyta, p. 91.

<sup>27</sup>Robert Worth Frank, Jr., Piers Plowman and the Scheme of Salvation (n.p.: Archon Books, 1969), p. 110, footnote no. 6.

<sup>28</sup>Szittyta, pp. 15-16.

<sup>29</sup>William Langland, Piers the Plowman in Three Parallel Texts, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 594, B-text, Passus XX, l. 267.

<sup>30</sup>Szittyta, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup>Katherine Walsh, "Archbishop FitzRalph and the Friars at the Papal Court in Avignon, 1357-60," Traditio, 31 (1975), 236. I follow this discussion throughout the remainder of the paragraph.

<sup>32</sup>Moorman, pp. 343-344.

<sup>33</sup>Herbert B. Workman, John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), II, 30-41. Wyclif scoffs, "but nowe freris trowen noþer þat þis oost is brede ne þe bodye of crist," in "Of Faith, Hope and Charity," The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted, ed. F.D. Matthew (EETS, no. 74) (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1880), p. 349.

<sup>34</sup>Szittyta, pp. 60-61. Leff explains on p. 260: "As St. Paul had said (Romans 10:15) only those who had been sent could preach; but this could only be if they were first elected. The friars were not, and therefore were usurping the office of the truly ordained priests."

<sup>35</sup>Wyclif, "De Officio Pastoralis," English Works, pp. 428, 443.

<sup>36</sup>See "Of the Leaven of Pharisees," pp. 8, 10, 16; "The Rule of St. Francis," p. 50; "Of Confession," p. 343; and "De Officio Pastoralis," p. 445; all in Wyclif, English Works.

<sup>37</sup>Wyclif, "De Officio Pastoralis," English Works, p. 449. The acronym "Caim" referred collectively to the

fraternal Orders of Carmelites, Austins, Iacobins (Jacobins being the French equivalent of Dominicans) and Minorites (Franciscans). See "The Orders of Cain" in Historical Poems of the XIV<sup>th</sup> and XV<sup>th</sup> Centuries, ed. Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 160, ll. 109-116.

<sup>38</sup>Workman, p. 246.

## Chapter II: THE TRANSFER

<sup>1</sup>Ronald Sutherland, ed., The Romaunt of the Rose and Le Roman de la Rose: A Parallel-Text Edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968). References in the thesis will be made solely to the Middle English text and will be documented parenthetically by the appropriate line numbers. While Chaucer certainly knew the French work and translated part of it, Sutherland contends that the extant Fragment C was not Chaucer's work.

<sup>2</sup>Harry W. Robbins, trans., The Romance of the Rose (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962), p. 223.

<sup>3</sup>Szittyá, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup>G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1961), p. 93.

<sup>5</sup>Robbins, p. 247, ll. 19-20; p. 307, ll. 18-20. These sections of the Roman do not appear in Sutherland's text.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 210, ll. 24.

<sup>7</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed., ed. F.N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), p. 19, ll. 218-220. All subsequent references to this edition will be indicated parenthetically within the text of the thesis by the line numbers of the appropriate prologues and tales.

<sup>8</sup>Szittyá, p. 51.

<sup>9</sup>David Lyle Jeffrey, "The Friar's Rent," JEGP, 70 (1971), 600-606.

<sup>10</sup>See p. 22 above. The Romaunt of the Rose, ll. 6685-6766 summarizes William's argument concerning the need for mendicance. See also Robert Frank's discussion of the allegorical figure Need in Piers Plowman and the Scheme of Salvation, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup>Szittyta, pp. 66, 67.

<sup>12</sup>Moorman, pp. 5, 77-78.

<sup>13</sup>Richard FitzRalph, "Defensio Curatorum," trans. in Trevisa's Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum, Sermon by FitzRalph, and be Bygynnyng of be World, ed. A.J. Perry (EETS, no. 167) (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 72.

<sup>14</sup>Charles Muscatine, "The Name of Chaucer's Friar," MLN, 70 (1955), 171.

<sup>15</sup>"La Confession de Renart," Le Roman de Renart, Branches XII-XVII, ed. Mario Roques (Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age) (Paris: Editions Champion, 1960), p. 49, ll. 14601-14605. Subsequent references to this edition will be indicated by line numbers given within the text of the thesis.

<sup>16</sup>John Flinn, Le Roman de Renart dans la littérature française et dans les littératures étrangères au Moyen Age (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 96.

<sup>17</sup>Szittyta, p. 66.

<sup>18</sup>John H. Fisher, trans., John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 266.

<sup>19</sup>Wyclif, "Of the Leaven of Pharisees," English Works, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup>"Song Against the Friars," in Political Poems and Songs, ed. Thomas Wright (Rolls Series, no. 14, vol. I) (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), p. 264. Also printed as "The Orders of Cain" in Historical



Poems, ed. Robbins, pp. 157-162. The poem dates ca. 1382.

<sup>21</sup>Szittyta, p. 41.

<sup>22</sup>Jill Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 45.

<sup>23</sup>"Nicholas Bozon, the Franciscan [writer of sermon exempla], accordingly exhorts young men to flee minstrelsy as the hare flees at the sound of the huntsman's horn." In Owst, pp. 12-13. For a discussion of the satire connected with musical instruments see also Kenneth Varty, Reynard the Fox: A Study of the Fox in Medieval English Art (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1967), p. 79. This notion is pictorialized as late as the fifteenth century in the satiric figure of the nun who plays a stringed instrument, which has sexual overtones, in "The Ship of Fools" by Hieronymus Bosch.

<sup>24</sup>Moorman, p. 358.

<sup>25</sup>J. Edwin Whitesell, "Chaucer's Lispng Friar," MLN, 71 (1956), 161.

<sup>26</sup>Wyclif, "Tractatus de Pseudo-Freris," English Works, p. 308.

<sup>27</sup>Moorman, p. 86.

<sup>28</sup>Muscatine, p. 172.

<sup>29</sup>Muriel Bowden, A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, 2nd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 130.

<sup>30</sup>P.L. Heyworth, "Jack Upland's Rejoinder, a Lollard Interpolator and Piers Plowman B. X. 249f.," Medium AEvum, 36 (1967), 247 and footnote no. 22. Besides the application of the blind buzzard image to Friar Daw in Jack Upland's Rejoinder and its use by Langland in Piers Plowman, the image also appears in one of the Chester plays, a medieval carol, and most importantly in the work of Wyclif, in "Of Mynystres in þe Chirche" and "Vita Sacerdotum," "the latter referring specifically to friars," writes Heyworth.

Chapter III: THE FRIAR'S TALE

<sup>1</sup>Wyclif, "Of the Leaven of Pharisees," English Works, p. 16; "De Officio Pastoralis," English Works, p. 445.

<sup>2</sup>Paul E. Beichner, "Baiting the Summoner," MLQ, 22 (1961), 367-376.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 368.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 376.

<sup>5</sup>T.A. Stroud, "Chaucer's Friar as Narrator," The Chaucer Review, 8 (1973), 66.

<sup>6</sup>Fred Norris Robinson, "Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature," in Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 6. I borrow Robinson's ideas, pp. 5-7.

<sup>7</sup>Przemyslaw Mroczkowski, "The Friar's Tale' and Its Pulpit Background," English Studies Today, 2nd series (1961), 119.

<sup>8</sup>Robinson, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Mroczkowski, p. 119.

<sup>10</sup>A.C. Cawley, "Chaucer's Summoner, the Friar's Summoner, and the Friar's Tale," Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 8 (1957), 175.

<sup>11</sup>Tom Hatton, "Chaucer's Friar's 'Old Rebekke,'" JEGP, 67 (1968), 269.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>13</sup>Mroczkowski, pp. 109-119.

<sup>14</sup>Robert A. Pratt, "Three Old French Sources of the Nonnes Preestes Tale," Speculum, 47 (1972), 422-444, 646-668.

<sup>15</sup>Le Roman de Renart le Contrefait, 2 vols., ed. Gaston Raynaud and Henri Lemaitre (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1914), II, 119-120, ll. 33923-34036. Subsequent references to this edition will be given within the text of the thesis by the appropriate line numbers.

<sup>16</sup>Cawley, p. 176.

<sup>17</sup>Hatton, p. 268.

<sup>18</sup>Raymond Carter Sutherland, "A Note on Lines D1645-1662 of Chaucer's Friar's Tale," PQ, 31 (1952), 436.

#### CONCLUSION

<sup>1</sup>Charles Muscatine, Poetry and Crisis in the Age of Chaucer (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Wyclif, "Of the Leaven of Pharisees," English Works, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard S. Levy, "Biblical Parody in the Summoner's Tale," Tennessee Studies in Literature, 11 (1966), 45-60. See also Szittyá, pp. 197-214.

<sup>4</sup>Levy, pp. 54-55.

<sup>5</sup>G.G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, vol. II: The Friars and the Dead Weight of Tradition 1200-1400 A.D. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), p. 183.

<sup>6</sup>See Szittyá, pp. 197-233; Penn R. Szittyá, "The Friar as False Apostle: Antifraternal Exegesis and the Summoner's Tale," SP, 71 (1974), 19-46; John V. Fleming, "The Antifraternalism of the Summoner's Tale," JEGP, 65 (1966), 688-700; and R.H. Bowers, "A Middle-English Anti-Mendicant Squib," ELN, 1 (1963-64), 163-164, which is printed below:

He that harborythe a ffrere harboryth fesyke,  
 And he p<sup>t</sup> harborthe a farte harborthe the colycke.  
 But what he be p<sup>t</sup> wyll leve in helthe & good quarte,  
 Loke wel p<sup>t</sup> he harborow neythyr frere nor farte.

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