

as they would have been if they had been modelled upon the alliterative romance." (p. 168)

"Chaucer's Good Woman. (6)," by Pat Trefzger Overbeck, attacks the problems of Chaucer's art from a sensitive female point of view. As we look at her comments on the Legend, and the individual legends, it is hard not to notice her near radical feminist orientation that is reflected in some harsh adjectives and statements. What she is aiming at is a picture of Chaucer's idealized good woman, which as a twentieth century woman she simply can not accept. She sees Chaucer aiming at moral and religious negative simplicity in the tales. "Oaths and idioms are an anachronistic medley of 'God' and 'Goddess.'" "Supernal authority is largely inoperative in the kind of post-lapsarian, post-animistic, but pre-Christian world Chaucer provided for his Good Woman," and she cares not one little bit for the way Chaucer "chops up" the stories. (p. 77) After Frank's comment it seems she takes narrative art as of little significance, nor does she recognize the type of source material Chaucer had to work with. She is obviously in favor of embellishment and complexity in this next statement. "The Chaucerian narrator makes no explicit moral judgments, allowing the Good Woman the freedom of her nebulous ethical desmesne." (p. 178)

definition needed



Overbeck is interested in moral circumstances and implication while assuming a modern moral basis for comparison, and in many cases misses the imputed hubris inherent in some of the women. "Uncontrolled and uncontrolable, the Good Woman turns into a living libido, in the Augustian sense, in her lust for love." Writing prior to Frank's book she misses all the pathos he sees working for the women in the legends. She sees Chaucer as guilty of making the women "mindless" and "impulsive." "Five of the heroines never have a 'thought.' Thisbe 'thinks' three times,

