

Canterbury tales an ancient writer geoffrey chaucer essay sample

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Canterbury Tales are stories written and told by an ancient writer called Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer was telling a story of a set of thirty men who were traveling to Canterbury in England. The pilgrims narrated the stories to pass time as they are still on their journey. It was expected that each man will give two stories. However, this target was not met by all the pilgrims including Geoffrey. Chaucer ends up with only twenty nine stories named together as the Canterbury Tales. Examples of the stories in book include; General Prologue, The Knights Tell, The Wife of Bath, The Pardoner's, and The Miller's Prologue. The stories by Chaucer have both similarities and differences. To identify the comparisons and contrasts in the stories by Chaucer, this paper aims to analyze two stories; "The Knight Tale" and "The Wife on Baths Tale."

One of the notable comparisons while analyzing the two stories from the Canterbury Tales is the thematic development by Chaucer in his literature works. "The Wife on Baths Tale", is characterized by themes such as poverty, old age, appearance, personal principles, rules and order, power, and women and feminism (Chaucer 159). However, "The Knight Tale" themes are built on love, friendship, competition, suffering, death, rules and order, fate and free will, and strength and skill (Chaucer 161). The two stories give the reader a diverse view of the different themes outlined by the author. Though, the themes in the two tales are different, few of them are similar such as the theme of rules and order which is present in both stories.

In "The Wife of Bath's Tale," the theme of rule and power is shown by giving an account of the queen going against the set laws regarding traditional punishment for a knight who committed a crime of rape. The queen asks for <https://assignbuster.com/canterbury-tales-an-ancient-writer-geoffrey-chaucer-essay-sample/>

the knight to have the advantage of judgment with the aim of rehabilitating rather than the traditional punitive actions (Allen 245). The knight's life is in the hands of the queen and his other ladies if he does not find answers to the quest chosen for him by the queen. The tale gives emphasis on power of the law over individuals and denying them chance to determine their fate once they break it. Rule and power also illustrated women demands as some kind of a rule and therefore they demand cession of men's autonomy. This portrays women as an important force to consider in making a complete society.

"The Knights Tale," also advocates for the theme of rule and power but it takes a different approach to the subject compared to "The Wife of Bath's Tale." Power in this story is believed to originate from the gods and for one to achieve anything; such power has to be upon him. Arcite and Palamon are both in love with Emily, but for one to win her, then they have to do it through contest (Andrew 72). The two men have equal power as knights with equal abilities to organize strong armies, but they need 'the gods to be on their side' for them to win the combat. Power is in the gods and an individual's strength plays a minimal role to secure a win as portrayed by the tale.

In terms of character development, the two tales take different approaches.

"The Knights Tale" has a well outline of characters such as Emily, Theseus, and Palamon and Arcite. However, "The Wife of Bath" character development is not well outlined like in the other tale, but it gives emphasis on character of a woman (Mann 355). "The Wife of Bath," gives an

outstanding woman character compared to the rest of the tales by the pilgrims. The character in this story portrays the other side of women as being strong. The character goes against the Christian definition of women through her choice of clothes and her body physique such as her legs, hips, feet, and her gap-tooth. Alison illustrates the control of women. She showcases her dominance and strong-will by achieving what she desires.

In "The Knights Tale," Palamon and Arcite play the same role as one personality. The only difference is they are in different bodies but all the rest between them is similar. They are also used to depict how knights ought to be (Chaucer 162). Companionship theme is clearly demonstrated by the two characters as they take a brotherhood oath. Theseus is another character in this tale who is displayed as just and wise, one who brings rules and order, and a literary interpreter. The two tales have a different structure of characters where one has well distinct characters displays various themes, while the other tale use one woman more to give light to its theme.

Conclusion

The Canterbury Tales are made of twenty nine stories told by pilgrims who were traveling to Canterbury in England. Among the told stories told, "The Wife of Bath" and "The Knights Tale," give different accounts in terms of thematic development and its choice of characters. "The Wife of Bath," demonstrates issues such as women and feminism, rule and power, old age, and poverty while "The Knights Tale," main themes include competition, rules and order, fate and free-will, and friendship.

References

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