

Sample essay on the canterbury tales: the knight's tale and the miller's tale

[Life](#), [Love](#)



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The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer is one of the most famous works not only of the 14th century English literature but of the history of Literature in general. It is the literary creation which is of high importance to the studies of literary criticism as its author managed to create a piece of art which at his time could be understood by all social classes. Actually it was Chaucer's main aim and we should admit that he did succeed. All the tales from the above mentioned cycle are quite original and interesting but we will try to analyze a few aspects of two of them: " The Knight's Tale" and " The Miller's Tale".

First of all, speaking about " The Knight's Tale" we should admit that it is one of the most romantic tales in the given collection of Chaucer's tales; however, there are quite a lot aspects incorporated in it besides the courtly love and we are going to dwell upon the theme of universal balance which is called the Fortune's wheel in the text.

Thanks be to Fortune and her treacherous wheel,

There's none can rest assured of constant weal (Burgess,

" The Knight's Tale, Modern").

The above given lines can help us to understand that this tale is based on the principles of fairness and justice. People believe that there is nothing permanent in this world and everything changes. However, at the same time we should point out that it can be understood from the text that there are always two opposite parts and they are on the opposite sides of this wheel of Fortune. That means that both counterparts cannot be happy and prosperous simultaneously, for example, at the very beginning of the tale we can see that Creon is on the “light” side of the Fortune’s wheel while dishonored widows are on the “dark” side of it. Thanks to Theseus everything is changed and he moves the wheel of Fortune: he returns the bodies of these old women’s husbands and at the same time two men, the representatives of the opposite side, became imprisoned by Theseus. There are many such examples in the texts showing that everything is changing and that once your fortune gives you a smile, you should never get proud of it because it can turn to another person. This is one of the lessons we can take from this particular tale of Geoffrey Chaucer.

Another tale we have to speak about is Chaucer’s “The Miller’s Tale”. It has to be mentioned that this tale is the subsequent tale in the given collection; it means that it follows “The Knight’s Tale”. It should be admitted that there are some common themes in both these tales, for example, as it has been mentioned before it is the theme of courtly love; however, “The Miller’s Tale” is a kind of parody on this subject. That is why it would be good to discuss the main peculiarities of this theme in the given tale as it is expressed in a quite unusual way. First of all, we must say that we have a lot

of elements of real courtly love in the text, for example, we can see the description of Alisoun who is depicted in a very poetic manner:

Fair was this youthful wife, and therewithal

As weasel's was her body slim and small

An apron, too, as white as morning milk (Burgess,

" The Miller's Tale, Modern").

All in all, it has to be mentioned that there are many ideas and lessons we can take from the above mentioned Chaucer's tales and that is why there is much material to investigate.

Works cited

Burgess, Adam. " The Knight's Tale, Modern - Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400)." About. com Classic Literature. Web. 27 July 2015.

Burgess, Adam. " The Miller's Tale, Modern - Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400)." About. com Classic Literature. Web. 27 July 2015.