

Courtney love in the night's tale and the wife of bath's tale

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Task: Courtly love in the Night's Tale and the Wife of Bath's Tale During the middle ages when the Canterbury Tales were compiled and written, the society transformed and became captivated with love. The thought of debonair and courtly love was the central or the governing part of all the existing relationships. It commanded and dictated how love should be handled and conducted. The principles revolutionized literature completely and led to the creation of a new genre, which was dedicated to the brave and lovers. This essay will look into the succinct analysis of the two mentioned stories, and come up with comparison and contrast using courtly love as the core theme in the two tales. Similarities To begin with, the Night's Tale tends to relate the story of two prisoners of war; that is, Palamon and Arcite, as well as, the existing mutual infatuation between them and Emily, a maiden radiant beauty. Palamon and Arcite enter into a bloody battle with an aim of seeking Emily's hand for love. Palamon becomes victorious in the struggle. The author of the tale, Geoffrey Chaucer chooses him as the winner since he is trying to instill the value of courtly love into the readers' minds. This is because Palamon's love for Emily is a courtly one while that of Arcite is an erotic one. This is because Palamon is from a noble family. The author, in this sense, brings to the light of the readers that courtly love is nobler than erotic love. In the Wife of Bath's Tale, there is love between a noble man and a poor woman. The wife of Bath is a woman who saved the life of her desperate husband after her bright and right answer to the question, which was asked to her husband in the court. He was to answer the question correctly or be decapitated. In the two cases, courtly love is portrayed in a manner that the male lovers are from noble families and they

are seeking the hands of beautiful women from other families. In both cases, physical attraction of the women is what attract and arouse the interest men. In the Knight's tale, it is portrayed by Arcite's love for Emily. He is attracted by the physical looks of the woman rather than her characters and social status as expected of noble individuals. According to the author, this is what makes him lose the woman. The battle described in the book is a representation or a revelation of the struggle between courtly love and the erotic one. In the Wife of the Bath's Tale, the ugliness of the old woman irritates Knight making him decline, at first, her proposal to marry him. He tells her that he could hardly bear the shame of having such an ugly woman as his wife. This is evidence, that the love between couples in the two tales is largely defined by the physical look or attractiveness of the women. The issue of remarriages exists in the two tales. Differences/ Contrast In the Knight's Tale, there is a struggle between the erotic love and courtly love. The result as shown by the author is that courtly love is more stronger, and cannot, in any way, be compared to erotic love, which is ruled and governed by the principles of outward looks and lusts. Courtly love, however, in this tale is governed by individual's social status in the society, as well as the characters of the two lovers involved. Palamon says, " I am not one of those," prays Palamon, " who brag and yelp / of victory, nor ask for it tomorrow / [...] but would fully have possession of Emily" (Chaucer 63). This excerpt reveals that Palamon's interest in Emily is not under the influence of her physical beauty only, but also her characters. He does not show off, brag like other suitors, for instance, Arcite who approaches Emily with materialistic show offs rather than the overall outlook or behavior. There is

no struggle or fights between the two types of love revealed in the Wife of the Bath's Tale. The Wife of the Bath's Tale talks of an element of divinity in courtly love. The argument, of the Wife of the Bath, concerning serial remarriages is considered by the author as sound, in the theological concept and cogent rationalities. Ironically, her accounts of marriages depict an unwillingness to offer submission to divine will leading to " sin, gracelessness, and loss of charity" (Chaucer 54). In addition, she refuses to make union of her with any of her spouses; instead, she focuses sin what can benefit her. In the Knight's Tale, there is no mention of divinity in marriage; courtly marriages are conducted in a legal manner; following the legal rules, and not the divine ones. The female characters in the two tales differ in the manner they choose their spouses. In the Wife of the Bath's Tale, they regard the outlook of their suitors rather than their behaviors. This is in contrast to what happens in the Knight's Tale where the woman takes into consideration the character of her suitors in making her decisions on who to marry or to fall in love with. Conclusion In general, Canterbury tales have certain features and aspects common in them. These features revolve mainly around the themes portrayed by the tales, as well as, the literary styles used by the tales. In addition, the tales have differences too. Like with the similarities, the differences also occur in the thematic messages and the styles used by the author in relaying his message to the readers. The above two tales are examples of Canterbury tales compiled by Chaucer Geoffrey. The tales have been compared and contrasted, in an analytical manner, to derive the author's intention at the time of his writing. Work Cited Chaucer,

Geoffrey. *The Canterbury tales*, Volume 4. Lausanne: University of Lausanne Press, 2008. Print.