

# "canterbury" by marufa sultana essay sample

[Profession](#), [Poet](#)



Chaucer begins the Prologue with a beautiful announcement of spring. This introduction is the voice of the Poet, polished, elegant, and finished. He tells us that just as Nature has a predictable course through the seasons, so does human nature follow a seasonal pattern, which causes people to want to break out of winter's confinement and go traveling in the spring.

Thus the stage is set for Chaucer, who is the Narrator of this poem. Twenty-nine travelers meet at the Tabard Inn in London before undertaking a journey to the Shrine of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury. The group is assembling as Chaucer arrives and, as he observes the group and interacts with some of them, he decides that he will join their party. From his vantage point as anonymous Narrator, Chaucer describes the scene and the pilgrims as they arrive.

In the prologue, *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer is about the pilgrimage of many different characters to Canterbury. Chaucer writes about the characters' personalities and their place on the social ladder.

In discussing Chaucer's collection of stories called *The Canterbury Tales*, an interesting picture or illustration of the Medieval Christian Church is presented. However, while people demanded more voice in the affairs of government, the church became corrupt — this corruption also led to a more crooked society. Nevertheless, there is no such thing as just church history; this is because the church can never be studied in isolation, simply because it has always related to the social, economic and political context of the day. In history then, there is a two way process where the church has an influence on the rest of society and of course, society influences the church. This is

naturally because it is the people from a society who make up the church.... Moreover, those same people became the personalities that created these tales of a pilgrimage to Canterbury.

The Host: He is the proprietor of the Tabard Inn where the pilgrims to Canterbury stay and travels with them on their journey. It is the Host who devised the scheme of the tales, proposing that each tell two tales on the way to Canterbury, and he frequently mediates arguments between pilgrims and suggests who shall tell the next story.

The Knight: A noble fighter who served in the Crusades, he travels with his son, the Squire. The Knight tells the first tale. The Knight is

The squire: Accompanying the Knight is his 20-year-old son, the Squire, who is very much in contrast to his father. While he has been in a few skirmishes, "to impress his lady," the Squire is obviously still young and inexperienced. He is dressed in the height of fashion with carefully arranged curls. Devoted to the rituals of courting, the Squire appears to be in love with love.

introduced first, which is appropriate as he is the highest-ranking character socially. This old soldier has spent a lifetime fighting battles for Christianity all over the world and has consistently distinguished himself. He is dedicated to the knightly ideal of chivalry, courtesy, truth, honor, and generosity.

The Yeoman is a servant to the Knight. He is a forester, in charge of the Knight's woodlands and appears to be the ideal simple, loyal peasant; yet he is so well equipped with elaborate weapons and perfect arrows that his simplicity is suspect. When the Narrator adds that the forester understood all

the tricks of woodcraft, he seems to be suggesting that the Yeoman is profiting in some way as he manages forests, which are not his.

The prioress: The next group of pilgrims arrives with the Prioress, Madame Eglantine. While obviously intelligent and able, the Prioress is described as being very concerned that others view her as ladylike and refined. She is apparently tenderhearted to the point of sentimentality.

In the reading "The Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer, there is a detailed description about the nun Prioress in the "General Prologue". Chaucer uses physical and spiritual relationships to show the characteristics of a person. When we see the nun in relationship to other characters, for example the Knight, Chaucer makes the reader see two types of people. On the other hand the nun who gives much importance to minor things. On the other hand, the Knight who gives much importance to things that really matters. To describe how the nun was Chaucer writes with irony the description of the nun Prioress, everything that Chaucer says about her means the opposite.

A nun should be modest, had to have poverty, and pity. Chaucer describes the nun in the opposite way to show us, how the nun Prioress had all the characteristics that a nun should not have. She was a nun modest, well educated and with good manners. She also had tender feelings, and a strong love for God and his creations. The author connects the relationship between how she sang and with her nose. He is sarcastic when relating her physical and spiritual beauty. "She spoke French well and properly" in this quote properly means with good manners, not with slang words or with the popular

language used in France. " For the French of Paris was unknown to her."(124) All of these characteristics show how the nun Prioress was focused on things that should not be important for a nun.

Among her minor things, the nun in the tale actions was cautious and splendid. Her manners were unique, and practiced with perfection. (133) The author makes us understand that her behavior with such perfection was not because she was obligated to act in this way. It was because having manners and being educated gave her joy, something that is wrong for a nun. Having manners for her was like giving a candy to a little boy. Also the author describes with a lot of details her manners to show us how important her behavior was for herself, a nun's behavior should be reflected on other people not on herself.

All of Chaucer's nun actions as behaving and acting as nun were excellent, in an ironic way. Her physical description was described with perfection nun showing the irony in these minor details. " Her nose well-shaped; her eyes bright as glass; her mouth very small, and soft and red; an indeed she had a fine forehead." (153-155) The description of her beauty reflects how she was from her inside. When he wrote about her fine forehead. To most people the forehead is not an important aspect of the physical characteristics of a person, only in some cases where the forehead is tremendously big or very small. However, the author talks about her fine forehead with sarcasm because he is telling us how this small characteristic, were reflected so well in the nun Prioress. Every small detail is what made her perfection as a whole, perfection meaning the opposite.

One thing the nun had that showed irony in her behavior was her tender feelings. The author is sarcastic when he uses the example of her feelings for a mouse and that she was so charitable and full of pity. Another example that illustrates the irony and how the author was sarcastic is by showing her big actions on animals rather than to human beings. " She had a few small dogs that she fed with roast meat, or milk and fine bread; but she wept indeed if one of them died, or if someone hit it smartly with a stick-she was feeling tender heart." (150) This example illustrates how soft she was, and also that she gave great importance to little things rather than great importance to big ones.

The Knight is one example of a person in the general prologue, which gave importance to great things, which fought for big reasons. In contrast the author illustrates the nun Prioress, as a person with the opposite view of the world. The knight would never give better food to some dogs rather than to the people who needed it. On the other hand the nun gave great importance and attention to her dog, or a mouse that was bleeding, rather than to people. That is why the author does not give examples of the nun helping people, or doing well.

Chaucer here criticizes this character bitterly. Maybe he knows this character.

The nun: Nun, who is her chaplain, accompanies the Prioress a plain. The reader is told nothing about the Nun or about the Priest who is also with the Prioress. The monk is her estate manager.

The monk: the Monk, however, is vividly described. He is very careless of his religious vows, devoting all of his time and energy to the management of the Prioress's estates. He manages them to prosper, though, so that he himself may be denied none of the pleasures and luxuries of the hunt. The Monk is self-centered, while the Parson cares for the sick and poor. In The Canterbury Tales, the Monk acts like he is part of the upper class of society. He is very tan, he likes to hunt, and he has horses. All of these traits are symbols of wealth and prestige.

The Monk was also lazy and disliked working. Monks, in general, are hard working and are willing to help the less fortunate. The Monk also ignored the monastic rules set up by St. Benedict This shows that the Monk is interested in the pleasures of life, and not his duty as a monk. He is worthless in the eyes of Chaucer and he dislikes the Monk very much.

Chaucer, on the other hand, dislikes the Monk, tremendously. Chaucer displays him as self-righteous, pompous, and ignorant toward the feelings of others. Chaucer shows his opinions by writing about the characters' lifestyles and their personalities

The friar: The third priest in company with the Prioress is the Friar, wanton, merry, and quite irreligious. Supposedly sworn to helping the poor, Hubert grants absolution to anyone who gives him money, much of which he pockets rather than distributing it to the poor.

The merchant: Socially, the middle class ranked third behind the nobility and the clergy; thus, the third type of character Chaucer presents is a successful

and very busy Merchant who is representative of the rather recent prosperity and importance of his class. The Merchant talks of nothing but business and thinks himself an expert on all matters related to trade.

Then clerk: Following the Merchant, the Cleric arrives. He is very, very poorly dressed and mounted in stark contrast to other members of the clergy previously introduced. Unlike them, he is completely devoted to scholarship and unaware to material wealth. He speaks primarily on moral themes.

The lawyer: The Man of Law is another sterling representative of the middle class who comes next under the Narrator's analysis. All of the Man of Law's great skill in legal matters is detailed; his wealth is reported; yet the Narrator confides that although the man brags constantly about how busy he is with his cases, his "busy-ness" may be more imagined than real.

The Franklin: With the Man of Law is the Franklin, who is a wealthy landowner who lives for his own sensual pleasure. The delights of the table obsess this gentleman. As an aside, the reader is told that he has served as a justice of the peace and a member of Parliament, but these are only incidental as far as he is concerned.

Grouped together next are five wealthy and important craftsmen, all officials in their guilds. These include the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer, and the Tapestry-Maker. It is implied that all of these men curry favor with their wives who would have been highly unpleasant had not their husbands prospered.



The cook: The guildsmen have brought his or her own Cook. Apparently, he is quite able and experienced, but repugnant to the Narrator because he has a large sore on his leg. To medieval observers such an affliction rendered a person unclean and to be avoided.

The sailor: The Sailor, or Shipman, is described next. He rides his horse so poorly that it is obvious the man is much more comfortable on the sea than on the land. On board ship, however, the Shipman is expert, knowledgeable, and successful. He has surmounted many storms on the sea, but at the same time he has taken advantage of the merchants who use his vessel to ship their goods. In fact, he is reported to have no consciousness at all.

The physician: There is a Physician among the pilgrims. Chaucer tells the reader of his great learning, yet holds him in contempt because this doctor loves gold so much and overcharges his patients for remedies that do them no good. Also he has an interest about astronomy. For all his great learning, this Physician has not studied the Bible, the implication being that he lacks the concern and mercy of the true healer.

The wife of bath: The Wife of Bath, the third of the female pilgrims, is introduced next. She is quite outrageous and is one of the most famous characters in all of literature. Slightly deaf and with gaps between her teeth, the Wife wears an incredible and ostentatious outfit. The Wife is skilled at weaving and is extremely prosperous. She has survived five husbands and is said to have great knowledge about love. Reportedly good-humored and full of life, the Wife of Bath is going to Canterbury to find her sixth husband.

He had her amorous nature and her habit of going on pilgrimage the main reason for the many marriages is simple that the wife enjoyed the company of men.

The parson: Behind the Wife of Bath comes the Parson, a poor and humble priest who is devoted to his parishioners and serves them faithfully and well. He teaches the Gospel by his example and is never severe with sinners. The Parson was a poor man who gave what little he could to the other poor people of his town. He knew the teachings of the Bible and Christ, and preached to whoever was willing to listen. He followed the Bible in life and he believed that a priest must be trustworthy. He led by example for all of the other people in town by not having a rich life and still living happily. The Parson never looked for recognition or glory for his choice of lifestyle. He was very low key and was willing to help someone no matter what the weather conditions were. The Parson was very generous with what little he had this proves again that he is good-natured and loving. He is a Good Samaritan and has a compassionate soul.

In the Prologue of The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer shows preference toward the Parson because he makes him a wholesome, well-rounded, Sympathetic person.

The plowmen: With the Parson is his brother, the Plowman, a polite and hardworking peasant, similar in nature and goodness to the Parson.

The miller: The burly, red-haired Miller is juxtaposed beside the two preceding, mild-mannered travelers. He is large and exceptionally strong

with a bulbous nose and a generally ugly appearance. His manners and conversation are as coarse as his appearance; in addition, the Miller is none too honest with his customers.

The manciple: The Manciple (Maunciple) is a friendly fellow whose job it is to do the purchasing and keep the accounts for a group of 30 lawyers. This friendly fellow has tricked his employers by misuse this profits in his shady deals for them, leaving them to live carefully as he spends the money he stole from them.

Chaucer's treatment of the manciple is relatively flat and colorless, and we neither admire nor disapprove of him.

The reeve: Next comes the Reeve, a comical looking man who is very skinny with legs like long sticks. Like the Manciple, the Reeve manages the affairs of another man, a wealthy landowner in this case. The reeve is daring in his dishonesties. He has the temerity. The Reeve has grown so rich in this post that the owner of the estate has to come to his employee to borrow money.

The summoner: The Summoner is another corrupt member of the clergy who is presented after the Reeve. He is an official of the Church courts who calls sinners to answer charges before it. For enough money, he will see that sins are not reported. The Summoner has an ugly, pimply face and is a drunk and a lecher.

The pardoner: The Pardoner is as unscrupulous as the Summoner. He is fresh from Rome with a bagful of indulgences (which are pardons from the punishment due to sin), which he will sell rather than grant to those who

have done penance. He also has many outrageous fake relics, which he will gladly sell. The Pardoner even sings loudly and well in church to get people to put more money in the offering, most of which he will retain.

After all these travelers have been described, the Narrator apologizes if any of his descriptions are so crude that they offend the reader, but excuses himself by commenting that Christ Himself was very direct speech. Although the Narrator has joined the group, he tells us nothing of himself.

Above this discussion we find how Chaucer interpret this character.

1—he is a keen observer, which common people don't have and so they can't understand many problems, which is, occur in our society and also the people. Basically he deals about the Christian society.

2—over the social element by this post Chaucer satire this indirectly. Exp-monk, cook.

3—he describes this character by two ways. One is positive and other is a negative. But he didn't indicate this negative side directly.

All the characters we found that Chaucer 1st describe it positive way. But in last discussion he deals it negative way.