

To what extent do you  
see the wife of bath  
as a feminist or  
masaganist essay



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To what extent do you see the wife of bath as a feminist or misogynistic caricature Throughout the prologue, The Wife of Bath is often shameless of the way she has exploited herself in a sexual manor and how she gains power and status. However, by doing these things, she confirms negative stereotypes about women and shows them to be deceitful. Although at some points her actions may seem to be justified as they are a rebellion against a male dominated society, little of what she does is actually truly empowering for women of her time.

The wife of bath uses her sexual traits for personal gain rather than trying to prove equal status. (quote) The Wife of Bath's character could be seen as a parody as she embodies many negative female characteristics stupidity, arrogance and deceitfulness (quote). Although the wife of bath seems to be striking back at men, it becomes apparent that it is not for any other reason other than personal gain. Perhaps Chaucer wants the reader to find this character amusing rather than admirable for her feminist views.

If the Wife of Bath is meant to disregard misogynistic stereotypes of women, then the reader might imagine the wife of bath to hold intelligent conversations with some of the people joining her on the pilgrimage.

However, the closest she comes to having an intellectual conversation is when she offers her rather strange interpretation of the bible: " Men may divine and glosen up and down...but wel woot I express withouten lie...God bad us for to wexe and multiplie...that gentil text can I wel understone" (lines 26-30). While it can be found in the bible that humans should procreate, it is clear here that she is only trying to justify her loose behaviour with the word of God. The wife of bath confirms herself as a misogynistic

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character since she presents herself as little more than what can quite technically be called a whore. Instead of being a revolutionary feminist with feminist intentions, she merely seeks husbands.

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