

Chaucers satire in the middle ages assignment

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Satires in Medieval Times. In Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, he uses satire to poke fun in order to show flaws and encourage change. The Squire, a military fool, the Friar, a church shame, and the Merchant, the town idiot, are all being satirized in his work. In society there are models in which we all want to be like, from long ago even in our modern societies. The Squire, the son of a knight, does not possess the traits of a knight. He does not uphold the code of chivalry, nor the courtly love. He was "a lover and cadet, lad of fire, with locks as curly as if they had been pressed" (Chaucer 82 & 83). He does not live to serve his king or his country, he lives for himself and the ladies. He is always more worried about his appearance than fighting on the battle field although he does respect his father he is not at all a good squire. The knight, our model, however "to ride abroad had followed chivalry, truth, honor, generousness and courtesy," is the example that Chaucer set of what the military class should be. The squire's model shows that some people join the military only to show off not to truthfully fight for their country. That is also still true today. The Friar of their church is "a wanton one and merry," (Chaucer 212) he is very extravagant and unrestrained. He was a professional beggar you could say. "But anywhere a profit might accrue courteous he was and lowly of service too," (Chaucer 253-254) He was all about money and making himself a living, he would rather help the rich over the poor. The more money you had the sorrier you were. He also had a lisp in which he thought made his words sweet. The parson was the man to be. He knew his gospel and preached it to everyone he knew. He did not care of money as long as everyone had what they needed. "There was a Merchant with a forked beard and girt," (Chaucer 270), the merchant was the worst one out of all of Chaucer's examples. His forked beard

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could say that he was a snake, with a forked tongue. He is supposed to be the one supplying to his community. Although he is supplying to them he is charging them outrageous prices and makes it hard for them to just simply get by. He also lends out money and expects a lot more back than what was borrowed. Through all this money he is charging it would be the best bet to say he was a wealthy man, " Upon his head a Flemish beaver hat, his boots were fastened neatly and elegantly," (Chaucer 274-275). However in all reality he is just s much in debt as the next one. The plowman now that is our chief example of what Chaucer thinks the laity, or middle class, should be. He knows his place in society, he never tries to cheat anyone in fact " a true worker was he, living in peace and perfect charity. "(Chaucer 534-535) In conclusion, satires are a good way of showing someone what they ought to be no matter what consequences you are under. Chaucer did a good job at his satires, and it is easy to understand what he is satirizing in his works. He sets up one example of a prime person and then tells us the bad.