

Condemnation of Corruption in the Canterbury Tales

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ABSTRACT

In *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer assembles twenty-four stories of people going on a pilgrimage. As the title suggests, the main theme in the text is religion. In the tales, different attitudes towards religion and the church can be discerned. And the attitudes of the characters mostly revolve around corruption within the churchmen. Hereby, the tales reveal the corruption in the order, but four different characters, who are the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar and the Pardoner convey the message considerably clear. Since four of the characters belong to the Medieval church, they seem to reflect the moral decay of the order quite notably. They are presented in a way that reflects the corruption of not only the church, but also the society and its elements all together. Moreover, Chaucer's method is a reminder of Aristotle's teachings, as he embraced the idea of literature as an instrument to enable the reader -or rather the audience- to be enlightened through the delight of the literature. The faulty aspect of the people and the Medieval Church are shown through the characters that are distorted from their true purpose. In that sense, it is possible to create or rather observe a correlation between Aristotle and Geoffrey Chaucer. For sure it can be said that Chaucer does not follow the classical ideology entirely in his writing, but there are certain aspects in the tales that enable the reader to recognize some similarities with Aristotle.

Keywords: *Catholic Church, Corruption, Immorality, Medieval Era, Moral Teaching*

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ÖZ

Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Hikayeleri*'nde hac yolculuğuna çıkmış yirmi dört karakterin hikayesini bir araya getirir. Yolculuğun sebebinden anlaşılacağı üzere metnin ana konusu din denilebilir. Hikâyelerde karakterlerin dine ve kiliseye karşı tutumları anlaşılabilir. Karakterlerin bu yaklaşımları çoğunlukla kilise mensuplarının yozlaşması üzerine gelişir. Böylelikle hikâyeler de günün kilisesindeki yozlaşmayı açığa vurur. Chaucer anlatımında birçok karakteri ele alır, fakat the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar ve the Pardoner'dan oluşan dört karakter bu durumu oldukça belirgin şekilde göstermektedir. Dört karakter de Orta Çağ kilisesine ait olduğu için buldukları kilise mensuplarının ahlaki değerlerini epey açıkça yansıtmaktadır. Aksettirildikleri yön itibariyle sadece kilisenin değil, toplumun bütün elementleriyle bir yansımasıdır. Buna ek olarak, Chaucer'ın seçtiği metot, edebiyatı haz aracılığı ile insanları aydınlatmak için bir araç olarak kabul eden Aristoteles'in de öğretilerini hatırlatmaktadır. İnsanların ve Orta Çağ kilisesinin kusurlu yönleri esas amaçlarından sapmış karakterler aracılığı ile gösterilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Geoffrey Chaucer ve Aristoteles arasında bir bağlantı yaratılabilir veya gözlemlenebilir. Tabii ki Geoffrey Chaucer yazımında tamamen klasik ideolojiyi takip etmemiştir fakat hikâyeler belirli açılarla incelendiğinde Aristoteles ile benzerlikler bulmak oldukça mümkündür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yozlaşma, Katolik Kilisesi, Ahlaka Aykırılık, Orta Çağ, Ahlaki Öğreti*

INTRODUCTION

Geoffrey Chaucer lived in the years between 1342 and 1400. In those days along with the Europe, Britain was living under the tyranny of the Catholic Church (Coghill, 2003, p12). The Church in the Medieval Era was powerful, and it dominated everybody's life since people back then were more devoted to Christianity, their lives passed believing in the idea of the road to hell and heaven lied within the judgement of the members of the institution.

The general conception of the middle ages as an age of faith, in the main, correct. However, notorious the iniquities of the clergy, whatever failings of the church, that institution was the greatest force for good in the life of a people whom existence was often full of hardship, and they yielded their minds to its guidance. The vast majority looked to the Church for this spiritual food and accepted it unquestioningly. (Thomas, 1971, p3)

In the quotation cited above from *Medieval Skepticism* and Chaucer, the position of the Church is clearly stated. People living in the Medieval Era had to follow clergymen's instructions without any further inquisition. Due to its power, the Church guided the followers of the religion in the direction that they would see fit. Lack of education among common people was the main reason behind this deficit. So, the followers' choices in their lives depended on the moral values of the clergy. As a result of this power, misinterpretation and manipulation was unavoidable.

Even if people were aware that the clergy were corrupt, they were helpless because, thanks to the power of the Church, members of this institution were above the law. Therefore, common people were to obey their judgement without any objection.

In such an era, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* by combining reason with satire and criticism towards the Church. In his narration, he intentionally chooses April when people go on a pilgrimage to thank Saint Thomas Beckett. This journey enables the criticism to be set upon a group of people who are following the path of Christian teachings, especially the clergy. He aimed to change the attitude and the perception towards them. Considering the immense competence of the ecclesiastical order, Chaucer's initiative is invaluable, and he can be defined as a reformer for his age. As Ruth Ames states (1984): "Like all reformers, Chaucer saw that the very success of the Church in the world had corrupted it by placing the clergy among the mighty and giving clerics privileges." (p31). Thus, Chaucer was not necessarily disturbed by religion, the main issue was the people who were using religion for their personal gains. Such entitlement in the hands of the wrong people led inconvenience, in this matter Ames goes on describing: "Chaucer was neither an atheist nor a heretic, but a catholic who desired the reform of the Church in an orthodox way." (p23). In other words, he did not mean to change Christianity all together. His aim was to draw attention to people conveying the message of the Bible with a personal approach, "his sharpest words are in criticism of the immorality of clergy and laity." (Ames, p3). Thus, this paper focuses on members of the ecclesiastical order in *The Canterbury Tales* in order to analyse Chaucer's criticism on corruption within the order of the Church.

Moreover, Geoffrey Chaucer utilizes satire in his narration. He uses comedy as a tool to draw attention on how the clergy misbehave. Such an approach creates an opposition between the serious conception of the Church and the characters. He was "a moral artist whose milieu was ironic humor" (Ames, p2). Chaucer uses this specific tone in narration as a base. By doing so, he creates a theme which pursues the classic tradition's approach to literature. Especially Aristotle's thoughts on comedy overlap with Chaucer's methods in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Comedy, as we have said, is an imitation of persons worse than average. Their badness, however, does not extend to the point of utter depravity; rather ridiculousness is a particular form of the shameful and may be described as the kind of error and unseemliness that is not painful or destructive. Thus, to take a ready example, the comic mask is unseemly and distorted but expresses no pain. (Aristotle, trans. 1982, p103)

As Aristotle describes in *Poetics*, comedy shows characters who have low values in life unlike the decent portrayal of characters in tragedy. The depiction of such characters in this genre is inconvenient in the means of moral values. However, while satirising them, no pain or destruction is reflected on the stage. Hence, no

matter how bad or low the characters are, their downfall is not arduous. At this point, such manner in narration is chosen by Chaucer as well. In the tales there is no downfall, but corrupted and immoral characters of the Church are shown in a satirical aspect. As Andreas states in *The Rhetoric of Chaucerian Comedy: The Aristotelian Legacy* (1984) "Comedy, as conceived by Aristotle, is decidedly more realistic than tragedy, and its sense of justice is more distributive." (p59). Even though satire makes a mild criticism on the surface, the effect of the depiction of characters and events has a more realistic side. Also, the keyword to be focused on is 'justice' in this quotation. As Chaucer wanted to make a reform throughout his narration, he aimed to serve justice and make people aware of the corruption within the Church. "Stories such as his were the communications of the time through which minds and consciences could be awakened." (Ames, 61). So, the purpose behind while depicting such immoral characters in the tales was to dispense justice in the narration with a satirical manner, and to make people aware of the immense power that the clergy had.

In brief, this study not only explores the criticism of the corruption within the era in *The Canterbury Tales*, but also aims to analyse the technique used in the process in the means of classical approach of Aristotle.

CONDEMNATION OF CORRUPTION IN *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

In *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer uses a religious pilgrimage to present the characteristics of Medieval England. In order to do that he includes 29 pilgrims in total, along with the Narrator -who could be viewed as Chaucer himself- and each of them are individuals with different occupations and they belong to various classes and orders in medieval English society. These segments in the social and, economical forms can be divided into three; The feudal order, the merchant class and the ecclesiastical order (the members of the Medieval Church). In *The Prologue*, the narrator describes almost all members of those orders in detail, including their jobs, clothing, accessories, behaviours, the way they speak. And through each of them, Chaucer provides a social commentary on the society, with its values and customs. Even though each character is different from one another, there is one common interest that they share, and it is going to Canterbury on a pilgrimage, to practice their religion. And that is how this social commentary, or rather the criticism's base is set. They are all described and satirized in detail but among all the groups, perhaps the ecclesiastical order can be considered as the focus of all other characters and all other tales, since the setting is based on a holy journey. As Thomas (1971) states: "four of the five churchmen sketched in the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* (the Monk, the Prioress, the Friar, the Pardoner) were in greater or less degree false to their profession." (p5). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that through his stories and with satirical language that he uses, Chaucer expresses the inconveniency caused by the Medieval Church, especially the members following the order. The satirical way that the characters are depicted and the stories that they tell, eventually turn into a condemnation, yet it is not done directly. Satire

and humour are used for the criticism, rather than expressing plain facts. Since the poet is not a historian, he chooses a path which creates an alternative to truth. All in all, the stories aim to give the reader a warning or rather a sense of discomfort about the distorted and the worldly practices of the churchmen.

To begin with, in *The Prologue* the speaker starts to introduce the people that he encounters. One of the first people that he describes is a Prioress, who is a nun. Her behaviour and appearance give the reader the first glimpse of the criticism of the Medieval Catholic Church. Considering the main problem is that the Church seeks wealth rather than devotion to the religion hence to the god, through the depiction of the Prioress, Chaucer creates a similar image in the reader's mind. In the practices of Christianity, followers of the order are expected to be humble and modest, whereas the Prioress focuses on her social image along with her appearance and her behaviour "and her order of priorities is not quite that of the founder of her religion" (Ames, p46). When her physical image is considered, she wears "a golden brooch of brightest sheen" (Chaucer, p7) which suggests that her appearance and the luxurious details are a priority in her life. This could be interpreted as a reminder of the churches which are decorated full of golden ornaments. As an active member of it, the Prioress is extravagant in the way she desires to live, just as the community does, which she belongs to. "We are frequently reminded of her failings: she keeps pets, wears jewels bares her forehead, goes on pilgrimages-all practices forbidden nuns." (Hawkins, 1964, p559). Here it is shown that, the Prioress is boastful. She tries to act as a lady who belongs to upper-class by wearing jewels, keeping pets and the way she acts, instead of having a low profile, and a humble life. Also, "Amor vincit omnia.", the phrase in Latin should be mentioned here, as it is another reminder of her lack of devotion. The phrase can be translated as "Love conquers all." which shows her dreams in life are not expected of a typical nun. It is an indicator of loose moral codes in the sense of Christianity, especially when nuns are not to be married part is taken into consideration. Also, even though, in a sense of social status, the Prioress stands on a higher point related to other pilgrims on road to Canterbury, she is one of the most unrelated passengers on the road to devotion. And, just as the Medieval Church, as a follower, she is expected to fit certain standards set by the Holy Bible and the founder of Christianity, Christ, which commands and orders the believers to be modest and humble, whereas the Prioress acts in a complete opposite way. To be more specific, her keeping pets should be highlighted, since as a follower of the Church, hence the God, she is supposed to be sharing her food with the people in need within her society, not with the dogs. "And she had little dogs she would be feeding / With roasted flesh, or milk, or fine white bread." (Chaucer, p7). She spoils her dogs with food just as she spoils herself. If in the text her connection to the Church was not described, it would be quite possible to perceive her as a noble lady. Overall, the Prioress is described as a compassionate woman in sarcastic tone. Along with her appearance, her actions suggest that, the Prioress actually tries to imitate courtly behaviour, rather than someone who follows the modest Christian teachings. With each detail given, it becomes clearer that even though she is expected to be devoted to the god as a

nun, she is more interested in worldly pleasures and concerned about satisfying her ego more than her moral deeds.

After the portrayal of the Prioress, the Monk appears, and just as she is, it is not quite possible to think of him as a man of devotion. He is more committed to the earthly pleasures, whereas monks are expected to be practicing and studying the religion. Instead of these, he willingly chooses to neglect his responsibilities and instead goes on hunting which is an activity befitting the higher status people. In the lines below, his description suggests that he acts more like a person from an upper-class than a monk who is supposed to be reading, studying and practicing the Christian order; "This Monk was therefore a good man to horse, / Greyhounds he had, as swift as birds, to course." (Chaucer, p8). His expenses and leisure time activities are not very much suitable to his so-called profession. Besides that, he is portrayed as a man who wears "fine grey fur" and again the extravagancy comes to the surface. "He prefers to have horses, greyhounds, expensive clothes, and a fat swan. This is the way he 'serves the world'." (Ames, p44). These lines can be read in correlation with the Prioress's case, which shows the corruption in the Medieval Church and how materialistic it is. As a follower of the order, the Monk is corrupted. His spiritual bond to the religion is replaced with his keenness on the riches of the world. The attention is focused on his laxity and slackness in the sense of practicing religion. Moreover, he is described as a man with plump body which suggests that the Monk is a representative of gluttony which is another indication of his worldliness. Feeding his bodily appetite and satisfying his hunger are his priorities compared to helping the poor, which again is a reminder of the Prioress here. Also, as one of the seven deadly sins, Chaucer adjusts his character to the relation between the corruption and moral criticism "There the mishandling of his exemplary material, particularly events in biblical history, reflects his wasted opportunities as a cloisterer and thereby links tale with teller to a degree of congruency which at one time went unappreciated." (Wurtele, 1987, p191). This creates an evident juxtaposition between being a monk and his actions. and it is evident that as a person of religion, seeking joy in superficial riches of the world comes before the duties of a monk.

Also, the Friar sets a good example to greediness along with implications of lust in *The Prologue*. To begin with, in the Medieval Era, friars were mendicants. They were bound to a vow of poverty and dedication to Christ. They set aside the value of property and lived their lives travelling in order to preach. Friars main target in their mission was the poor, and economically they survived on the donations made by the faithful people. But when it comes to the Friar created by Chaucer, his character is built upon an absolute opposite of the definition. While he is supposed to be humble and modest as an ordinary friar, he wants to lead a comfortable life and makes acquaintances with rich people, since he is concerned about profit "he thinks the poor beneath his dignity and prefers rich franklins." (Ames, 44). He distorts the spiritual purpose of his order for his own mundane profits. Instead of committing himself to his order and helping the people in need, he is also dressed

in expensive clothing which is described in detail; “Not then appearing as your cloistered scholar / With threadbare habit hardly worth a dollar, But much more like a Doctor or a Pope.” (Chaucer, p10) In these lines, Friar Hubert is depicted as a man who lives above the standards of a typical modest friar. With the way he is dressed, he resembles a person with a higher status and that person is a pope who is the ultimate figure in Christianity. It is also possible that, with the depiction above, Chaucer is not only portraying a man who goes astray, but he is criticizing the Church as a whole, with being lavish and extravagant as well.

Besides his avaricious interests, the Friar can also be interpreted as a lustful man through the symbolism and the way his appearance is illustrated. In her article, Laura F. Hodges asserts that, the knives and pins that Friar Hubert is wearing are the items used for penetration. And those items are linked to *Piers Plowman*, where a mysterious friar named Penetrans Domos is used to put a disastrous ending to the poem. She links the two characters, considering that Friar Hubert makes his way to the houses “to corrupt women sensually or sexually.” (Hodges, 2000, p6). It is obvious that he is after the fortune as he is a greedy man. Yet, this exchange of gifts is not only a materialistic one, but it is also lustful. His services are the door openers, the knives and the pins function as keys, or as objects of penetration. In order to carry the discussion further, she adds; “[...] implies through his *systrophe* and these symbols that penetration occurs on four levels: The Friar enters the house, he invades a Christian conscience, he gains access to his victim’s purse, and possibly he penetrates sexually.” (Hodges, 2000, p7). So, it can be said that all of Friar Hubert’s motivations in his life are successfully reached through the faux identity he uses. Being a friar is just a tool that enables him to open the doors of people who believe in Christianity and want to listen to him preach. Another thing that he can satisfy is his lust, using this cover that he hides behind. But at the same time, he does not try to pretend he is a poor man of God. With the depiction of the clothes that he wears in The Prologue, it can be said that he is not really a hypocrite in that sense. But it is for sure that, he dresses as someone with an upper social identity. And he perverts the idea of being friar, distorting the main aims of the order, which are helping the poor and living a modest life.

Furthermore, this case becomes more solid with The Pardoner. As a man of the church, he is -likewise the other characters mentioned above- expected to be humble and honest but he is full of deceit and proud to be so “So the Pardoner begins. He is a vicious man, he owns and to tell lies is his profession.” (Tuckwell, 1973, 67). Also, the Pardoner does not do anything in secret “the honest Pardoner brags of how he exploits the religion of others in his single-minded devotion to money.” (Ames, p57). Furthermore, it could even be said that he carries most of the seven deadly sins within his character and Ames depicts him as “the antithesis of Christ himself” (p58). Since he is a pardoner, he is only supposed to be paid by the Church, without accepting penitents’ donations, or without having any other occupations. Yet, he even goes beyond accepting the donations and starts running his own business of trade. He carries with him some items to sell other pilgrims on

the road. Among these items he has a sack of false relics, which can be interpreted as pseudo-spiritual goods. Being a man of God who follows Christian teachings, he is expected to lead people to the path of righteousness, whereas he actually tricks them for his small business. He converts the pilgrimage into a tourist industry.

Moreover, the Pardoner corrupts religious elements and uses them with the purpose of feeding his appetite. With his overdone pursuit of pleasure, the Pardoner sets an example of spiritual degeneration. In his article, Joseph M. Millichap mentions A.L. Kellog, and says that he studies the Pardoner's character and interprets it as a eunuch, who is both physically and spiritually impotent (Millichap, 1974). He makes this assumption in relation to the Host's reaction when the Pardoner tries to sell him some relics after his tale is finished.

Also, apart from being focused on making a fortune over the trade goods, the Pardoner is also incompetent in practicing his own religion, Christianity. Millichap creates a relation between the Mass, which symbolizes Christ's redemptive act of sacrifice, and the Pardoner, and states: "In traditional Christian terms, the Pardoner, unable to participate in Christ's sacrificial act through the transubstantiation rite of the Mass, transforms his works into meaningless material successes only, not into spiritual achievement." (Millichap, 1974, p102). It is also asserted that, his financial gains must be somehow related to the congregation's donations to the Church. It is highly possible that the Pardoner takes a portion of the offerings for his own selfish and materialistic purposes. This charitable work done by the faithful Christians is misused and twisted by him, since his devotion lies only within worldly possessions. Millichap also mentions the failure of the Pardoner in the terms of Christian morality. Even though he criticizes bad manners such as gluttony, gambling so on and so forth, he possesses all of these sinful habits. It almost sounds as if this is a sort of religious mockery, as the things that come out of his mouth do not match with the actions that he takes. To illustrate, the Pardoner says: "but first I'll have to think; I'll ponder something decent while I drink." (Chaucer, p240). In the story that the Pardoner tells, he harshly criticizes drunkenness yet when it comes to his own habits, the Pardoner is not much different from the people that he reviles. Furthermore, according to Millichap's argument, the worldly pleasures, in this case the wine, is abused by the Pardoner. In the context of Christianity, the wine symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ, whereas the Pardoner uses it for his selfish purposes. In other words, here Geoffrey Chaucer uses the Pardoner as an example of the church's corruption and immorality.

Considering all of the characters and the satirical criticism of them, *The Canterbury Tales* reflects the classical approach as it aims to represent the issues of its time through literature while giving delight to the reader through comedy. The tales are instructive in the means of traditional morality. In each tale it is possible to discern the message and again each of them focuses on a different moral lesson. So, it can be said that Geoffrey Chaucer embraces the idea of Aristotle to a certain extent

as *The Canterbury Tales* does not fit in the classical tradition and the expected form of tragedy. Yet, in the tradition of comedy, it is believed that the humankind can be improved through literature, especially morally. The portrayal of immoral characters in a humiliating way dispense justice in narration and that gives a relief to the reader. As all of the improper use of religion is mentioned above, Chaucer aims to teach some moral lessons to the reader with a sarcastic tone, which enables reading the stories with delight too. So, some objectives of Aristotle and Chaucer in literature go in correlation. Especially with the way the characters are built and shaped. In her thesis Clarice Asbury includes Aristotle's definition of comedy as "an imitation of characters of a lower type, not, however, in the full sense of the word bad, the Ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly." (Asbury, 1951, p9). According to Asbury, a man with true morals does not fit into a comedy. In fact, Aristotle would not accept people of religion as subjects of a satire, as they do not fit the concept of ridicule. In fact, he preferred comedy with characters who have lowly, defected or deformed characteristics. Their personalities are supposed to be minimized. But, in *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer's characters do not fit into this limited or restricted profile of the characters. On the contrary, he utilizes fundamental pieces of the Medieval Church, which are constantly in relation with the people. It is not possible to consider them as limited or generalized, as Chaucer's main object in writing the tales was to create a juxtaposition between the distorted personalities of those people of the religion and their missions as parts of Ecclesiastical Order. It is also possible to assert that, since those people are mainly interested in materialistic values, there is a very highly chance they might be suitable for the concept of Aristotle's ideal comedy. Their assimilation can be interpreted as being lowly characters, who are misusing the power in their hands. They all present a sort of masquerade, being wolves in sheep's clothing. Their profession gives an idea of divinity and devotion, whereas their moral state and actions do not match together, making them simply impostors, therefore degraded human beings by choice. Since Aristotle considers impostors with low characters suitable for comedy, almost all the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury can be perfectly used as tools for satire.

Yet in this case, the main impostors are the ones who are related to the Medieval Church. For instance, can it be said that the Friar is capable of meeting Aristotelian ideal comic hero? By being an impostor, he surely does. He uses his "man of religion" status to deceive the people around him, as mentioned in detail above. And, when he was asked to pray for a deceased child, he replies "he had seen the child carried to bliss in heaven." (Asbury, 1951, p49). Here, it is clear that, the Friar is not capable of seeing the child and his state in the afterlife. Yet, his imposturous character is quite prone to mislead.

CONCLUSION

The Canterbury Tales can be seen as a milestone in English literature for it carries the tradition of the classical approach on literature somehow, meanwhile focusing on the issues of the Medieval Era in Britain. It does not only stand as a combination of stories, but Geoffrey Chaucer aims to illustrate the immoral actions of his time while expecting the reader to be awakened through reading them. Arguably, Chaucer ridicules these characters in *The Canterbury Tales* since they were not devoting themselves and adapting their lives to their religious state. By the creation of these characters, it is obvious that Geoffrey Chaucer aims at the Medieval Church, using wit and satire as instruments. Satire and comedy altogether do not only pursue laughter, but the essential part and the function is the correction of the faults for the reader. In the tales, the corruption of the era and the churchmen are constantly criticized and condemned. The faults in the ecclesiastical order and its followers are brought the surface with a humorous behaviour. Each character is written in a form in which they are portrayed as buffoons, and this aspect enables the satire to be read by the classical approach. Historically, shaping the moral vision has been one of the main concerns of the literature and through this work, the reader is introduced to the traditional idea. Even though in the tradition the main genre is tragedy and in a book the reader cannot experience the events directly as an audience can with a play, the purpose behind the setting of the stories does not change. *The Canterbury Tales* as a whole aims to enlighten the reader and compared to the tragedy, it is possible to say that it has a similar outcome. Through the description of the characters with degradation and deformity, the reader is able to draw a lesson from their experiences. None of the Medieval Church followers mentioned above fit the concept of an honourable person, since they are all minimized and abased as a consequence of their actions. The characters are imposters, each one of them is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and they chase different pleasures in life rather than their religious responsibilities to the Church, to the people or the God. As a poet, Chaucer does not try to assert a fact. On the contrary, he leaves the purpose of telling the truth behind, converts it in a way which he interprets the faulty state of the Church. He presents the facts not as a historian but as an artist. And on that point, Chaucer's aim goes in correlation with Aristotle's ideas on literature, even though not in the sense of the artist himself. The main objective comes to the surface, which is directed at revealing false values upon the society. Comedy functions as a correction, with using satire and humour as tools. Therefore, it is possible to say that in *The Canterbury Tales* Geoffrey Chaucer adapts an old heritage to his time and his criticism. They all blend in as a whole and it is not possible to separate one from another, which can be shown as an indicator of Geoffrey Chaucer's success. Another one could be that, just as in the past, today there are people trying to benefit from people who believe in God. The never-ending corruption of the people has never gone away, as far as humankind's history goes back. From the Aristotelian Era to our most recent time. Aristotle came out with an approach in tragedy to teach moral lessons to the audience in his time, which he found essential in a very openly expressed way. Geoffrey Chaucer, similarly, found errors with the Roman

Catholic Church -or The Medieval Church- back in his time and the people of the society along with it. Therefore, he wrote *The Canterbury Tales* aiming just the same purpose with Aristotle, even though their techniques or rules do not match within the literature. But it is true that, both of men of literature embraced an almost identical destination, with the most noble goals. And right on this point, it is the moral approach in literature, which suggests that the reader must be enlightened through art and justice should be distributed within narration.

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