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### Reflections of Tales

Sometimes, the stories one tells usually stem from an experience or a reflection that one introspects. Through his many tales and prologues, Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" displays a personality reflection upon each of his characters through his or her stories. As the frame tale explains at the beginning, all travelers have to tell a total of four tales, two on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. Whoever tells the best tales will receive a marvelous dinner paid by the rest of the travelers. Correlating to the characters' prologues, both individual and general, each of the characters' tales exemplify the core flaws of his or her human nature. Although Chaucer never finishes his whole "Canterbury Tales" story, some of his standout characters epitomize their significant personalities in the stories they tell to exquisitely demonstrate the currency of the medieval period.

From one of Chaucer's many eccentric characters, the Miller is a clear example of a person embodies the personality of a short-temper and idiotic child through both his prologue and his tale while conveying the message of middle-class nobility. As the narrator lists off the characters on the pilgrimage, he explicitly describes the Miller to be, "short-shuldred, brood, a thikke knarre./ Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of hare,/ Or breke it at a renning with his heed"(Chaucer 207). The depiction of the Miller being short and broad resembles an image of a kid, implying him to be a reckless character in the story. Plus, The Miller using his head to break

the door showcases the behavior of a foolish child demonstrating his strength. While illustrating the unwise actions, Chaucer also includes the notion that the Miller is “a thikke knarre,” signifying the uprising of middle class in the medieval time. Stating the Miller to be well-financial, Chaucer reveals the general knowledge of the middle class gaining wealth in medieval social system, resulting in him to be a little reckless with life. Connecting to his tale about the lust between a carpenter’s wife and his clerk, the drunken Miller further demonstrates his childishness when his story reaches ridiculousness. In the Miller’s tale, after Absolon, one of the character that attracted to Allison, the young carpenter’s wife, asks her for a kiss, “Nicholas anon leet flee a fart/ As greet as it hadden been a thonder-dent/ That with the strook he was almost yblent”(Chaucer 229). Using fart as a weapon in his story, the Miller clearly possesses the mentality of a child. By composing a fart joke, the Miller corresponds with foolishness and unsophistication that attached to his behaviors. Exaggerating the fart to be a “thonder-dent” that blinds a man additionally portrays the Miller’s childish mentality, proving that he is just like a ten-years-old kid. Thus, Miller exhibits a child-like personality through his background and his fable tale while contributing to the middle-class uprising.

Another outstanding character stemmed from Chaucer’s mind is the religious Wife of Bath, and her empowered representation of women during the medieval period. As she continuously talking about her husbands, the Wife of Bath states, “Gap-tooth was I, and that bicam me weel;/ I hadden the prente of Sainte Venus seel./ As help me God, I was a lusty oon,/ And fair and riche and yong and wel-bigoon”(Chaucer 244). As Chaucer portrays her as a strong woman, Wife of Bath demonstrates herself to be young and powerful as well. With using “yong” and “rich,” the Wife of Bath establishes herself to be powerful in the medieval social system. Plus, she is also a “lusty oon,” proving that the Wife of Bath is capable of being seductive and

empowered through her charms. With the inclusion of her “Gap-tooth” in her speech, Chaucer implies that she is attractive and wanted by all types of men. Correlating to her empowered personality, the Wife of Bath tale exhibits the powerful ideology she carries in her soul. With her tale revolves around the concept of what a woman really wants in life, the Wife of Bath contributes her own desire, expressing through the knight’s answer, “’Woman desire to have sovereigntee/ As wel over hir housbonde as hir love,/ And for to been in maistrye him above”(Chaucer 253). Presenting with her own opinion, Wife of Bath evidences the empowerment of women in both a household and society. Stating that a woman craves power over man, Wife of Bath continues her delegation about women's role in society. Even mentioning the idea of a man is not above a woman in any way, the Wife of Bath proves herself to be a woman of power in the time where some women are portrayed as lustful troublemakers.

On a final note, Chaucer has crafted tales with a tale to illustrate medieval society through the usage of both his characters and his innovative stories. With Miller being a well-financial middle-class child in the form of an adult and the Wife of Bath being a powerful religious woman, Chaucer displays his ideal and satirical commentaries on the social system. Along with the uprising of the middle class, Chaucer magnificently portrays his character’s personality to fit with the currency of the medieval period. While most of his characters are not realistic as they should be, Chaucer is still able to comment on society’s flaws as well as its civilians. In the end, Chaucer captures the truth in the medieval period to expose the corruption of the nobility as well as shining a light on the middle class betterment.