**Reading Group 3 – *The Canterbury Tales* – Creative Connector**

**Connection 1 – The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring**

* Even though in the Canterbury tales, those who travel together aren’t on a quest to save the world. The rag tag group of 27 individuals including a Summoner, a Knight, a bowman, and many other people reminds me of the Fellowship of the ring. In which a group of misfits and unlikely partners all become friends through traveling together across great distances. This connection shows the theme of an unexpected mutual friendship that is displayed in the Canterbury tales. A friendship that is shared by many random and very different people for no other reason that they traveled a long distance with each other, talking and speaking along the way. **Traveling long distances together brings people closer together, as well as sharing stories.** This theme can also be found somewhat in our in class movie “*The Seventh Seal,”*, when all of the wanderers travel through the forest together and are close friends by the end.
  + Discussion questions designed to display or to capture this theme
    - What do you guys think about the connection between friendships and road-trips? (Traveling together can build friendships, etc.)
    - What’s another story of unlikely characters that travel long distances and become close? What’s another tale in which everyone tells stories?
      * Almost every TV show has at least one episode in which all the characters tell different stories about themselves, whether they are stuck in a room together or out at a campfire, etc.
    - Have you ever traveled with a group of friends or sat around the campfire telling stories? What did that do for your friendship? Was it valuable?

**Connection 2 – The Beauty and the Beast**

* At the end of the wife of Bath’s tale, the old and ugly woman is loving and tender to the knight, who then decides to choose her actual love and inner beauty over her outer beauty, even though the old woman gave him a choice to stay with her or to leave for a younger girl who might not genuinely love him the old woman did, promising that she’d be faithful forever. In realizing the old woman genuinely loves him and that looks are not as important as what is on the inside, the Knight chooses to let the woman choose whether or not he should stay or leave, because he realizes that she is truly beautiful and deserves to make the choice. Upon being loved despite the fact she is old and ugly she transformed into a young girl again, with the outer beauty finally reflecting the beauty within. (lines 1245-1262 – to some this interpretation may be different, but to me it appeared that a physical transformation had occurred from an old lady to a beautiful young women, so I am basing this connection around that interpretation of these lines)
* This story is incredibly similar to the popular Disney story of *The Beauty and the Beast*. At both the beginning and the end of the story the Beast is transformed on the outside to match what is beneath him. At the beginning he is transformed from a beautiful prince into a hideous beast to reflect the evil within him. But it isn’t until *someone loves him despite his ugly appearance* and sees who he truly is beneath – a good, changed man – that he transforms into a beautiful prince again. **Both of these stories express the importance of inner beauty far above the value of the physical beauty.**
  + Discussion questions designed to display or to capture this theme
    - In the Wife of baths tale at the end of the story, we see what can be interpreted as a physical transformation from an old woman to a young woman - what other stories do you know that involve a transformation of some kind in the characters and what do they represent?
    - What do you think this transformation of the Woman (whether it be an actual transformation or just a shift in the nights thinking) represents?
    - “What other stories carry this idea or theme of inner beauty versus physical beauty? What value do you think our current culture places on physical versus outer beauty, how do we even define “beauty” as a culture?”

**Connection 3 – Boccaccio’s Decameron, Day 2 Story 7 + Marie de France’s Lanval**

* This connection is less about themes found in the book that are specifically the same, versus two different views that stress the same idea. **The importance and honor of a physically beautiful wife.** In Decameron, Day 2 Story 7, we see a story about a beautiful women who keeps enduring suffering because she is so beautiful. Every man wants her and kills her prior partner so he can claim her as his own. During the middle of the story we see the Prince of Morea who was speaking to a friend of his the Duke of Athens, who had traveled such a distance just to see the beautiful aforementioned woman, who at this time was the prince’s. The prince took great pride in his woman’s beauty, and the Duke became very jealous of the prince for having such a beautiful wife, and plotted the prince’s death so he could have the woman for himself. Later ironically the exact same thing happens to the duke, he shows another man his beautiful woman and that man plots the duke’s death in the same way. Everyone wants the beautiful wife for their own.
* In the wife of bath’s story, when it is the knights turn to do what the woman asks him, the Knight is completely appalled by the idea of having an old and physically ugly wife, begging the old lady to ask for anything else but something so shameful, and offers to give her everything he has instead of this terrible request. This part of the story emphasizes how important it is to the knight that his wife is physically beautiful, which the old lady is not. This theme being displayed at this point in the tale is important as it gives more strength to knight’s later decision to love the old woman anyways and the aforementioned theme found at the end of the story concerning the importance of Inner beauty being greater than outer beauty.
* This theme can also be found in the story of the knight Lanval, where the knight takes great pride in having the most beautiful woman of all, and ends up losing his love because he wasn’t able to keep the secret that he was the owner of the most beautiful woman ever, he was too proud. After which everyone demands proof of his claim otherwise he is to be killed, clearly the physical beauty of a wife is an important idea in these stories.
  + Discussion questions designed to display or to capture this theme
    - What did the knight do when the old woman said that the knight must marry him? What was his reaction?
    - What other stories involve a similar trope about the importance of a beautiful wife?
    - Do you think that physical beauty at the time was maybe some sort of a symbol of honor or status versus not just pleasure? What about in Lanval and Decameron?

**Passage – Lines 1219-1270**

* These lines at the end of the Wife of Bath’s tale are so important because they express the knight’s decision to love the old woman despite her physical appearance. And also explain her transformation and their “happily ever after.” This one passage expresses the value of Inner beauty over physical beauty most, but also emphasizes the importance, value, and great joy that is found in a pure and simple love between two people. It is also the punchline to the whole story which inherently makes it important. But I think that this passage is important as it shows a bit of the mindset of the author and even the times they were written in perhaps. It shows the romance and the joy found in the love of two people who love each other for who they are on the inside, not because of what they look like on the outside. And the love of two people who love each other and trust each other regardless of other people think, especially how the knight decides to love and trust the old woman.