

**Chapter 1 : Describe the role of women in the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale. | eNotes**

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Later on, the Host accuses him of being silent and sullen. The Knight represents the ideal of a medieval Christian man-at-arms. He has participated in no less than fifteen of the great crusades of his era. Brave, experienced, and prudent, the narrator greatly admires him. Read an in-depth analysis of The Knight. Though she is a seamstress by occupation, she seems to be a professional wife. She has been married five times and had many other affairs in her youth, making her well practiced in the art of love. She presents herself as someone who loves marriage and sex, but, from what we see of her, she also takes pleasure in rich attire, talking, and arguing. She has traveled on pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times and elsewhere in Europe as well. Read an in-depth analysis of The Wife of Bath. Many pardoners, including this one, collected profits for themselves. The Pardoner has long, greasy, yellow hair and is beardless. The Pardoner also has a gift for singing and preaching whenever he finds himself inside a church. Read an in-depth analysis of The Pardoner. Indeed, the Miller seems to enjoy overturning all conventions: Her table manners are dainty, she knows French though not the French of the court, she dresses well, and she is charitable and compassionate. He is large, loud, and well clad in hunting boots and furs. Always ready to befriend young women or rich men who might need his services, the friar actively administers the sacraments in his town, especially those of marriage and confession. This Summoner is a lecherous man whose face is scarred by leprosy. He gets drunk frequently, is irritable, and is not particularly qualified for his position. He spouts the few words of Latin he knows in an attempt to sound educated. He mediates among the pilgrims and facilitates the flow of the tales. The pastor of a sizable town, he preaches the Gospel and makes sure to practice what he preaches. He is everything that the Monk, the Friar, and the Pardoner are not. The Squire is curly-haired, youthfully handsome, and loves dancing and courting. Having spent his money on books and learning rather than on fine clothes, he is threadbare and wan. He speaks little, but when he does, his words are wise and full of moral virtue. Despite his lack of education, this Manciple is smarter than the thirty lawyers he feeds. This particular franklin is a connoisseur of food and wine, so much so that his table remains laid and ready for food all day. However, he steals from his master. A member of the peasant class, he pays his tithes to the Church and leads a good Christian life. English guilds were a combination of labor unions and social fraternities: All five Guildsmen are clad in the livery of their brotherhood. The narrator mentions that his dress and weapons suggest he may be a forester. His story of Chanticleer, however, is well crafted and suggests that he is a witty, self-effacing preacher. Brave, strong, and sworn to everlasting friendship with his cousin Arcite, Palamon falls in love with the fair maiden Emelye, which brings him into conflict with Arcite. Though he loses the tournament against Arcite, he gets Emelye in the end. Fair-haired and glowing, we first see Emelye as Palamon does, through a window. Nevertheless, when Arcite wins the tournament, she readily pledges herself to him. Egeus gives Theseus the advice that helps him convince Palamon and Emelye to end their mourning of Arcite and get married. She is bright and sweet like a small bird, and dresses in a tantalizing style—her clothes are embroidered inside and outside, and she laces her boots high. She willingly goes to bed with Nicholas, but she has only harsh words and obscenities for Absolon. He wears red stockings underneath his floor-length church gown, and his leather shoes are decorated like the fanciful stained-glass windows in a cathedral. He curls his hair, uses breath fresheners, and fancies Alisoun. John is jealous and possessive of his wife. She could order them around, use sex to get what she wanted, and trick them into believing lies. She loved him, but he was a reveler who had a mistress. She had fun singing and dancing with him, but tried her best to make him jealous. She fell in love with her fifth husband, Jankyn, while she was still married to her fourth. His stories of wicked wives frustrated her so much that one night she ripped a page out of his book, only to receive a deafening smack on her ear in return. Once he does so, and shows that he has learned his lesson by letting his old ugly wife make a decision, she rewards him by becoming beautiful and submissive. When she tells him he must marry her, the knight begrudgingly agrees, and when he allows her to choose

whether she would like to be beautiful and unfaithful or ugly and faithful, she rewards him by becoming both beautiful and faithful. All three indulge in and represent the vices against which the Pardoner has railed in his Prologue: Gluttony, Drunkenness, Gambling, and Swearing. These traits define the three and eventually lead to their downfall. The Rioters at first appear like personified vices, but it is their belief that a personified concept—in this case, Death—is a real person that becomes the root cause of their undoing. The old man answers that he is doomed to walk the earth for eternity. He has been interpreted as Death itself, or as Cain, punished for fratricide by walking the earth forever; or as the Wandering Jew, a man who refused to let Christ rest at his house when Christ proceeded to his crucifixion, and who was therefore doomed to roam the world, through the ages, never finding rest. One day, he has a prophetic dream of a fox that will carry him away. Chanticleer is also a bit vain about his clear and accurate crowing voice, and he unwittingly allows a fox to flatter him out of his liberty. She is his equal in looks, manners, and talent. When Chanticleer dreams of the fox, he awakens her in the middle of the night, begging for an interpretation, but Pertelote will have none of it, calling him foolish. When the fox takes him away, she mourns him in classical Greek fashion, burning herself and wailing. Eventually, Chanticleer outwits the fox by encouraging him to boast of his deceit to his pursuers. When the fox opens his mouth, Chanticleer escapes.

Chapter 2 : The Prologue by Anne Bradstreet Analysis and Summary | Artsolumbia

*The Wife of Bath begins the Prologue to her tale by establishing herself as an authority on marriage, due to her extensive personal experience with the institution. Since her first marriage at the tender age of twelve, she has had five husbands. She says that many people have criticized her for her.*

He knew of them more legends and more lives Than are of good wives written in the Bible. For trust me well, it is impossible That any cleric shall speak well of wives, 15 Unless it be of saints and holy lives, But naught for other women will they do. By God, if women had but written stories, As have these clerks within their oratories, They would have written of men more wickedness 20 Than all the race of Adam could redress. Therefore no woman by a clerk is praised. Lo, here plainly of woman may you find 35 That woman was the ruin of mankind. Then read he out how Samson lost his hairs When sleeping, his mistress cut them with her shears; And through this treason lost he either eye. Give me a graft of that same blessed tree And in my garden planted it shall be! And some had driven nails into the brain 60 While husbands slept and in such wise were slain. And some had given them poison in their drink. He told more evil than the mind can think. And therewithal he knew of more proverbs Than in this world there grows of grass or herbs. Then he got up as does a wild lion, And with his fist he struck me on the head, 80 And on the floor I lay as I were dead. And when he saw how limp and still I lay, He was afraid and would have run away, Until at last out of my swoon I made: Kiss me before I die, and let me be. But all the same, forgiveness now I seek! And so He put the bridle reins within my hand To have the governing of house and land; And of his tongue and of his hand, also; And I made him burn his book, right then, oho! And when I had thus gathered unto me By mastery all sovereignty, And he had said: God help me so, I was to him as kind As any wife from Denmark unto Inde, And also true, and so was he to me. Now will I say my tale, if you will hear. The Wife and her husband have switched roles: However, notice that in her personal story, she need to both use and endure violence in order to gain her authority, while the character in the story does not. Arrius asks for a slip of the tree because he wants to plant the tree in his yard in order to test his wife. She posioned her husband after the idea had been planted in her head by Sejanus, an ambitious soldier and friend of her husband. Lucia was the wife of Lucretius, a famous Roman philosopher. She prepared a potion that she believed would make her husband love only her. Unfortunately, the potion ended up killing him. In one, she kills him because he brings home a concubine from the Trojan War; in another she kills him because he sacrifices their daughter Iphigenia. In the account that the Wife seems to refer to here, Clytemnestra murders Agamemnon so that she and her lover Aegisthus can take over his rule. His power comes from his long hair. His love for a woman named Delilah causes his downfall. Delilah allows his mortal enemies, the Philistines, to shave his head while he is sleeping, rendering his strength non-existent before a major battle. The "vow of marriage" was traditionally thought of as a vow of fidelity between a man and his wife. However, with this statement, the Wife seems to be suggesting that the "vow of marriage" is physical intimacy. Rather than women being the unfaithful ones when they search for intimacy outside the marriage, she argues that men break the vow when they become old and cannot please their wives. She notices that because stories about women are written by men, women are perceived as wicked. In this acknowledgement, the Wife denies that women are by nature evil or deceitful. This acknowledgement is interesting coming from a female character written by Chaucer, a male author. Valeriu was his wife. The book that her husband reads to her is about the most deceitful wives that great men have had throughout history. Alison, the Wife of Bath, is talking about tearing a page out of a book that her husband owns. He initially doubted that Christ had been resurrected after his crucifixion. This caused him to travel as far as India preaching the gospel and baptizing converts.

**Chapter 3 : Women in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales – NEOEnglish**

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In all the Orders Four is none that can Equal his friendliness and fair language. He had arranged full many a marriage 5 Of young women, and this at his own cost. Unto his order he was a noble post. Well liked by all and intimate was he With franklins everywhere in his country, And with the worthy women of the town. He was an easy man to give penance When knowing he should gain a good pittance; For to a begging friar, money given 15 Is sign that any man has been well shriven. For many a man there is so hard of heart He cannot weep however pains may smart. His tippet was stuck always full of knives And pins, to give to young and pleasing wives. And certainly he kept a merry note: At balladry he bore the prize away. His throat was white as lily of the May; Yet strong he was as any champion. In towns he knew the taverns, every one, 30 And every host and gay barmaid also Better than beggars and lepers did he know. For unto no such solid man as he Accorded it, as far as he could see, To have sick lepers for acquaintances. He was the finest beggar of his house; A certain district being farmed to him, None of his brethren dared approach its rim; For though a widow had no shoes to show, 45 So pleasant was his In principio, He always got a farthing ere he went. He lived by pickings, it is evident. And he could romp as well as any whelp. For he was not like a cloisterer, 50 With threadbare cope as is the poor scholar, But he was like a lord or like a pope. Of double worsted was his semi-cope, That rounded like a bell, as you may guess. He lisped a little, out of wantonness, 55 To make his English soft upon his tongue; And in his harping, after he had sung, His two eyes twinkled in his head as bright As do the stars within the frosty night. This worthy limiter was named Hubert. The General Prologue - The Monk Footnotes

This attention to detail about the way in which the Friar speaks suggests that the Friar carefully constructed this attribute. The Friar is therefore not only hypocritical, but intentionally manipulative. Scholars remain puzzled and divided as to why Chaucer decided to name this character. It demonstrates that the Friar dresses well. Since the cloistered monk is his point of comparison for poor clothing, the comparison also suggests that the Monk who was [previously described] [http:](http://) The Friar is concerned primarily with money rather than his vocation, and he takes advantage of everyone, rich and poor alike. Francis, the founder of the Franciscan Friars, dedicated his life to preaching to lepers and keeping only their company. In making this statement, the Friar demonstrates not only his aristocratic mindset but his defiance of the very order he represents. In it, someone convicted of a particular crime had to fight another man to the death in order to prove his innocence. In other words, if the accused was innocent he would win, and if he were guilty, he would lose. However, in Catholic Church doctrine, it is not confession and payment for confession that relieves sin but honest repentance for that sin. If the Friar sweetly hears confessions and forgives them pleasantly, then the people confessing are not doing true penance for their sins and will not get into heaven. Notice also that the company he keeps, franklins, rich landowners, and women, must be "worthy," meaning wealthy. Friars are part of mendicant orders, groups of religious people who vow to live in poverty and travel the world preaching their beliefs. They avoided owning property and survived off the charity and good will of the people to whom they preached.

### Chapter 4 : The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

*Prologue By Anne Bradstreet About this Poet Anne Bradstreet was the first woman to be recognized as an accomplished New World Poet. Anne Bradstreet was the first.*

Since her first marriage at the tender age of twelve, she has had five husbands. She says that many people have criticized her for her numerous marriages, most of them on the basis that Christ went only once to a wedding, at Cana in Galilee. She says that men can only guess and interpret what Jesus meant when he told a Samaritan woman that her fifth husband was not her husband. With or without this bit of Scripture, no man has ever been able to give her an exact reply when she asks to know how many husbands a woman may have in her lifetime. God bade us to wax fruitful and multiply, she says, and that is the text that she wholeheartedly endorses. After all, great Old Testament figures, like Abraham, Jacob, and Solomon, enjoyed multiple wives at once. She admits that many great Fathers of the Church have proclaimed the importance of virginity, such as the Apostle Paul. But, she reasons, even if virginity is important, someone must be procreating so that virgins can be created. Leave virginity to the perfect, she says, and let the rest of us use our gifts as best we may—and her gift, doubtless, is her sexual power. At this point, the Pardoner interrupts. He is planning to marry soon and worries that his wife will control his body, as the Wife of Bath describes. The Wife of Bath tells him to have patience and to listen to the whole tale to see if it reveals the truth about marriage. She laughs to recall the torments that she put these men through and recounts a typical conversation that she had with her older husbands. He would then feel guilty and give her what she wanted. All of this, the Wife of Bath tells the rest of the pilgrims, was a pack of lies—her husbands never held these opinions, but she made these claims to give them grief. Worse, she would tease her husbands in bed, refusing to give them full satisfaction until they promised her money. She admits proudly to using her verbal and sexual power to bring her husbands to total submission. Yet, despite her claim that experience is her sole authority, the Wife of Bath apparently feels the need to establish her authority in a more scholarly way. She imitates the ways of churchmen and scholars by backing up her claims with quotations from Scripture and works of antiquity. This interpretation is weakened by the fact that the Wife of Bath herself conforms to a number of these misogynist and misogynist antimarriage stereotypes. For example, she describes herself as sexually voracious but at the same time as someone who only has sex to get money, thereby combining two contradictory stereotypes. Despite their contradictions, all of these ideas about women were used by men to support a hierarchy in which men dominated women.

**Chapter 5 : Feminist Analysis of the Prologue for the Wife of Bath (Canterbury Tales) - Page 2**

*Anne Bradstreet's poem, "The Prologue," portrays the struggles of being a woman in a Puritan society. She realized that in a Puritan society, women were not meant to speak their mind and have strong opinions.*

And all were worthy men in their way. That I should be wedded but once. Spoke in reproof of the Samaritan: Was no husband to the Samaritan? How many might she have in marriage? A definition of this number. That gentle text I can well understand. Should leave father and mother and take to me. Why should men then speak evil of it? I believe he had wives more than one. To be refreshed half so often as he! What a gift of God he had because of all his wives! No man that in this world is alive has such a gift. With each of them, so well things went for him in his lifetime. Blessed be God that I have wedded five! Both of their lower purse scrotum and of their strongbox. Welcome the sixth, whenever he shall appear. For truly, I will not keep myself chaste in everything. It is better to be wedded than to burn. Of cursed Lamech and his bigamy? And many another holy man also. I pray yow, telleth me. I pray you, tell me. Or where commanded he virginity? He said that he had no precept concerning it. But advice is no commandment. Then had he damned marriage along with the act of procreation. Then from what should virginity grow? A thing of which his master gave no command. But where God desires to give it by his power. All is nothing but advice to adopt virginity. Without objection on the grounds of bigamy. You know what this example may apply to. More perfect than wedding in weakness. Would lead all their life in chastity. Though maidenhood may have precedence over a second marriage. Some are of wood, and do their lord service. Some this, some that, as it pleases Him to provide. And in such wise follow him and his footsteps. And gentlemen, by your leave, I am not that. In the acts and in fruit of marriage. And by so perfectly wise a Workman wrought? Trust right well, they were not made for nothing. And for no other cause -- do you say no? The experience knows well it is not so. Of procreation, in which we do not displease God. That man shall pay to his wife her debt? If he did not use his blessed instrument? To purge urine, and also for procreation. To go and use them in procreation. Then should men have no regard for chastity. Yet lived they ever in perfect chastity. I will envy no virginity. Our Lord Jesus refreshed many a man. I will persevere; I am not fussy. As freely as my Maker has it sent. If I be niggardly, God give me sorrow! When it pleases him to come forth and pay his debt. Upon his flesh, while I am his wife. Over his own body, and not he. And commanded our husbands to love us well. You are a noble preacher in this case. I was about to wed a wife; alas! Why should I pay for it so dearly on my flesh? Before I go, which shall taste worse than ale. Of that same barrel that I shall open. For I shall tell examples more than ten. For my intention is only to amuse. Now, sir, now will I tell forth my tale. Three of them were good, and two were bad. In which they were bound unto me. You know well what I mean of this, by God! How pitifully at night I made them work! And, by my faith, I set no store by it. To win their love, or do them reverence. That I reckoned little of their love! To get their love, yes, when she has none. Unless it were for my profit and my pleasure? That some men have in Essex at Dunmowe. To bring me gay things from the fair. For, God knows it, I cruelly scolded them. You wise wives, that can understand. Swear and lie, as a woman can. Unless it be when they are ill advised. But herkneith how I sayde: Who is in league with her. But listen how I spoke: I sit at home; I have no decent clothing. Is she so fair? Art thou so amorous? What do you whisper with our maid? Sir old lecher, let thy tricks be! If I walk or go unto his house to amuse myself! And preach on thy bench, bad luck to you! To put up with her pride and her angry moods. Who is assailed on every side. Thus goes all to the devil, according to you. It may so long be assailed on all sides. Until she find some man to buy take her.

**Chapter 6 : The Canterbury Tales Full Text - The General Prologue - The Friar - Owl Eyes**

*"The Prologue" focuses on the trials of a female poet trying to make her voice heard in the world (in the days before feminism or microphones). In a bigger sense, though, it's about men and women, and how they relate to each other.*

The Wife of Bath begins her lengthy prologue by announcing that she has always followed the rule of experience rather than authority. Having already had five husbands "at the church door," she has experience enough to make her an expert. Instead, she prefers the biblical command to go forth and multiply. To defend her position, the Wife refers to King Solomon, who had many wives, and to St. Having shown a knowledge of the Bible, she challenges anyone to show her that God commanded virginity. Furthermore, sexual organs are made both for functional purposes and for pleasure. And unlike many cold women, she has always been willing to have sex whenever her man wants to. The Wife of Bath then relates tales about her former husbands and reveals how she was able to gain the upper hand "sovereignty" over them. Unfortunately, just at the time she gains complete mastery over one of her husbands, he dies. Then she explains how she gained control over her fifth husband. As soon as the honeymoon was over, she was disturbed to find that Jankyn spent all his time reading, especially from a collection of books that disparaged women. One night, he began to read aloud from this collection, beginning with the story of Eve, and he read about all the unfaithful women, murderers, prostitutes, and so on, that he could find. Unable to tolerate these stories any longer, the Wife of Bath grabbed the book and hit Jankyn so hard that he fell over backwards into the fire. He jumped up and hit her with his fist. She fell to the floor and pretended to be dead. When he bent over her, she hit him once more and again pretended to die. He was so upset that he promised her anything if she would live. And this is how she gained "sovereignty" over her fifth husband. From that day until the day he died, she was a true and faithful wife for him. Her tale, which follows, reiterates her belief that a happy match is one in which the wife has control. The queen then gives the knight a year to discover what women most desire. The year passes quickly. As the knight rides dejectedly back to the court knowing that he will lose his life, he suddenly sees 24 young maidens dancing and singing. As he approaches them, the maidens disappear, and the only living creature is a foul old woman, who approaches him and asks what he seeks. The knight explains his quest, and the old woman promises him the right answer if he will do what she demands for saving his life. When the queen bids the knight to speak, he responds correctly that women most desire sovereignty over their husbands. Having supplied him with the right answer, the old crone demands that she be his wife and his love. The knight, in agony, agrees. On their wedding night, the knight pays no attention to the foul woman next to him. When she questions him, he confesses that her age, ugliness, and low breeding are repulsive to him. The old hag reminds him that true gentility is not a matter of appearances but of virtue. She tells him that her looks can be viewed as an asset. If she were beautiful, many men would be after her; in her present state, however, he can be assured that he has a virtuous wife. She offers him a choice: The knight says the choice is hers. The Wife of Bath uses the prologue to explain the basis of her theories about experience versus authority and to introduce the point that she illustrates in her tale: The thing women most desire is complete control "sovereignty" over their husbands. Because she has had five husbands, the Wife feels that she can speak with authority from this experience, and, in the prologue, she tells how she got the upper hand with each of them. Women were frequently characterized as almost monsters; they were sexually insatiable, lecherous, and shrewish, and they were patronized by the church authorities. Women were not allowed to participate in church doctrine in any way. And her knowledge of scripture although confused at times reveals that she is not simply an empty-minded woman. Nowhere, she confesses, can she find a stricture against more than one marriage, save the rebuke Jesus gave to the woman at the well about her five husbands. But this, she confesses, she cannot understand. After the Wife of Bath departs from the holy scriptures, she appeals to common sense "if everyone remained a virgin, she offers, who would be left to give birth to more virgins? Even more basic, she maintains that the sex organs are to be used for pleasure as well as for procreation: She admits that she is a boisterous woman who enjoys sex and is not ashamed of it "a violation of the medieval view that saw sex as justified only for procreation. She also denies the popular belief that women should be submissive,

especially in matters of sex. She is a woman of great vitality, a woman who is wonderfully alive and responsive. And after five husbands and hardships "she has lost her beauty and her youth" she has survived. She has the power to enjoy life with a zest denied the other dour pilgrims, and she has the will to enjoy what she cannot change. In this case, the tale is to provide an answer to the question "What do women most desire? At the beginning of the tale, King Arthur submits to the rule of Guinevere thus abandoning both his headship of the state and his headship of the family ; the ladies of the court, instead of the men, serve as justices; and the authority of books and scriptures gives way to experience. Finally, in the choice the hag offers the knight, both choices are intolerable. Dunmow Fliatcah a prize awarded to the married couple in Essex who had no quarrels, no regrets, and, if the opportunity presented itself, would remarry each other. The Wife is still establishing the right of more than one marriage. Three Misfortunes, Things Three reference to Proverbs xxx, Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiaste See xxv: Valerie and Theofraste a work attributed to Walter Map, a minor satirist who disparaged marriage. All the writers the Wife of Bath quotes have written something either antifeminist, satiric, or unpleasant about marriage. Valerius, Tullius, Boethius, Seneca writers who espoused that gentility comes from within and not from outward appearances.

Chapter 7 : The Wife of Bath's Tale - Wikipedia

*There are two primary women introduced in the General Prologue of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales. The first woman to be introduced is the Prioress. Her given name is Madame Eglentyne.*

The Prologue begins like a sermon and then takes on the terms of misogyny and misogamy as the Wife describes her first three marriages, demonstrating her success in manipulating the marriage system to her own advantage as a means to consolidate money and power. When the Wife speaks of her fourth and fifth husbands, however, the Prologue becomes more personal, like a modern autobiography, exploring the role of love in marriage and its relationship to gender hierarchy and domestic violence. Instead, medieval marriage was represented in complex and contradictory ways that combined, for example, an insistence on marital sexuality with a definition of marriage that did not require sex and a demand for both mutual love between the spouses and the rulership of husbands over wives. Perhaps because of the complexity of ideas about marriage in the period, the topic was broadly central to late medieval literature, and a topic through which medieval culture debated topics as diverse as the roles of gender, sexuality, social hierarchy, and the relationship of lay and clerical authority. Can you think of ways that the meaning of marriage is contested in our world today? In what ways do modern political concerns shape our private experiences of marriage? What are examples of social change in the modern world that have been accomplished by reworking existing conventions rather than by radical change? Tools Although the Wife of Bath challenges masculine and clerical authority, she does not challenge a conventional association of marriage with sexuality in the late medieval period. Unlike many contemporary societies, which often place marriage and family values at the center of religious practice, in the Middle Ages marriage was associated with sexual activity and, thus, was considered less spiritual than celibacy, which was required for the clergy. Medieval sermons and theologians often cited St. Paul First Corinthians 7, which recommended continence and linked abstinence from sex to a greater reward in heaven. Paul allowed that those who were not able to abstain from sex were better married than not: In his analysis of this same biblical passage, St. Jerome identified marriage as the lesser of two evils, superior only to fornication Jerome In this view, the limited virtue of marriage lay in its ability to protect the spouses from sex outside of marriage. How do her readings compare to St. To your own reading of the biblical text? Medieval sermons were critical of widows who chose to remarry, especially those who had already had children, suggesting that they were motivated primarily by sexual appetite. How does the Wife use her status as a widow to gain power? Women were frequently identified by marital status in contrast to men, who were often defined by their jobs. Why do you think the Wife is depicted without children? The denigration of marriage was tied to the low valuation of sex in medieval clerical teaching. Despite its bad reputation, sex was considered an obligation in marriage if requested by either the husband or the wife in an effort to avoid fornication. Medieval preachers interpreted this to mean that because there were acceptable reasons to have sex in marriage, being married required constantly resisting the enjoyment of sex. Basing his analysis in the biblical example of Mary and Joseph, St. This vision of marriage as a sacrament based in love dignified marriage as a spiritual practice Lipton Medieval church courts upheld this sacramental definition of marriage as the consent between two parties as expressed in the exchange of marriage vows McSheffrey, Helmholz. Defining marriage in this way meant that the approval of families and presence of clergy was not legally necessary, although families could and did pressure women in their choice of partners Sheehan The idea that marriage was defined by mutual love was juxtaposed in medieval sermons with a seemingly opposite view that husbands should rule over their wives Galloway, Sheehan These paradoxical views were often expressed at the same time in sermons and in handbooks that instructed priests on how to perform confession. The section on lust juxtaposes the importance of mutual love between spouses with the need for a wife to obey her husband. But God made womman of the ryb of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe unto man. In this passage, marriage combines two seemly incompatible virtues: This idea that wives should be controlled by their husbands was integral to medieval legal practice. In medieval courts, wives were represented by their husbands and by their fathers before marriage. All land and goods owned by a wife, including property

inherited during her marriage, was legally controlled by her husband. This meant that widows could potentially be financially and legally independent from men in ways not possible for married women or women still living under paternal control. A widely circulated example of this kind of writing is by Theophrastus who is named as a source for the Book of Wikked Wives that Jankyn reads to the Wife in her prologue. Theophrastus, Blamires; WBP Building on the association of marriage with undesirable sexuality, anti-matrimonial writing depicts wives as sexually voracious, unfaithful, vain, acquisitive, and unforgivably talkative. Refuting a possible practical reason for marriage, this text asserts that wives are inferior managers of the household compared to male servants. In this passage, the Wife not only threatens masculine prerogative, she also challenges clerical authority on marriage both by her experience and her command of the tools and strategies of marriage sermons. The Wife shows that the same passages from St. She also challenges the view that sexual pleasure is problematic. In this passage, the Wife depicts her husband as serving her pleasure, rather than seeing the marital debt as a mutual obligation designed to protect against fornication. Here, she celebrates marital sexuality and asserts her mastery of her husband, inverting the convention of husbands ruling their wives. Questioning the superiority of celibacy over marriage is one of several ways that the Wife challenges the superiority of clerical over lay authority. The Wife is acquisitive, admitting proudly to marrying for money and exhorting land from her husbands before she is willing to sleep with them WBP She reports that she cannot keep secrets. The Wife boasts that she rules over her first three husbands, inverting the conventional hierarchy of husband over wife. At first Jankyn seems to have the upper hand in their marriage as he subjects her to readings from his misogynist book featuring villainous wives from history. Her logic in this passage is similar to the one that shapes curriculum in many English departments with classes by female authors: He also tells her to make her own choices about her life: This passage has been central to the assertion, famously made by George Lyman Kittredge as early as , that the Wife of Bath seeks to rule over her husbands. The Wife of Bath gives up sovereignty right after she get it, and the Prologue ends with an image of marital harmony and partnership. Can we take this ideal of marital love seriously? How does the juxtaposition of love and hierarchy in medieval marriage sermons help us think about the ending? Is it possible to love in a relationship that has not always been mutual? Transformation To what extent should we understand the ending of the Prologue as a fantasy of the Wife? Can fantasy play a role in social change? If we consider the Prologue as a model for social change, can we see the temporary rule of the Wife over her husband in the end as a first step to mutuality in patriarchal society? How can the Prologue help us think about how to respond to stereotypes in general? Do you think the text validates experiential or textual authority? To what extent does the text embrace a stable model of gender, and to what extent does it show gender to be a potentially changeable social construct? The Wife celebrates marriage and links it to sexual pleasure, to love, and to her sense of selfhood. To what extent do you feel she shares familiar values? What perspective can the tale offer us on our own society? On modern ideas about marriage? On our ongoing political debates about the definition of marriage? How does each vision of marriage fit the social values of the teller? Works Cited and Suggestions for Further Reading: University of Chicago Press, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, University of Minnesota Press, University of Wisconsin Press, Edited by Peter G. Boston and New York: Bedford Books of St. Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender. University of California Press, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England*. Cambridge University Press, *Affections of the Mind*: University of Notre Dame Press, *Love and Marriage in Late Medieval London*. Chaucer and the Subject of History. *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages*. University of Toronto Press, *Marriage, Family and Law in Medieval Europe*: Edited by James K. Sources and Backgrounds, Edited by Robert P. *Fifteen Tales and the General Prologue*, Kolve and Glending Olson. *Fifteen Tales and the General Prologue*, ed. Kolve and Glending Olson New York:

**Chapter 8 : Chaucer: The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale -- An Interlinear Translation**

*In the General Prologue, Chaucer describes the Pardoner as feminine and anxious, which makes sense with his nervousness about being wed to a woman much stronger than himself. Active Themes Of her five husbands, the Wife of Bath says, three were good and two were bad.*

Summary Analysis The Wife of Bath announces that she is an authority on marriage because of her experience, having had five husbands. Instead, the Wife of Bath interprets Scripture in her own way. She prefers to go forth and multiply, defending her position by pointing to King Solomon, who had many wives, among other Biblical figures who married often. The Wife of Bath claims authority for her tale from her own experience. She interprets Scripture her own way, reading against the grain to find different meanings in the text than the generally accepted ones. Some literary scholars argue that Chaucer has her misread the Bible, but others argue that Chaucer is actually empowering her, that she deliberately finds new ways to read it. God made sexual organs, she claims, for both function and for pleasure, and she does not envy any maiden her virginity. The Wife of Bath uses her sexual power to control her husbands. The Wife of Bath is unabashedly lustful and physical. Her Prologue takes the form of a literary confession, in which she openly admits and defends her sins. Active Themes The Pardoner interrupts, worried because he is about to be married. The Wife of Bath tells him to shut up and have another drink: In the General Prologue, Chaucer describes the Pardoner as feminine and anxious, which makes sense with his nervousness about being wed to a woman much stronger than himself. Active Themes Of her five husbands, the Wife of Bath says, three were good and two were bad. The first three were good because they were rich, old, and obedient to her every whim. Once they had given her their money and land, she no longer had any use for them. She would make her husbands bring her presents and put them through torments. Women in medieval society could only gain power and money through their husbands. The Wife of Bath both goes against and conforms to stereotypes: The Wife of Bath tells all the wives to listen to her carefully: Always, she says, be mistress in your own household, for women are twice as good as men at lying and cheating. She would launch into a tirade, firing an array of all kinds of accusations. Though men may have all the tangible power in society, women are better at lying and deceiving than men are: Some men, she claims, only want women for their looks, some for their money, some for their figure, some for their gentleness. An ugly woman lusts for any man she sees and will jump on him with animal lust. To the man who claims that he does not need to marry, the Wife of Bath cries, may thunder and lightning strike him down! The Wife of Bath gives a typical rant that she might launch into against one of her husband. She gives a long list of what men want in a woman, which foreshadows the long list of answers to the question of what women want that the knight in her Tale seeks to answer. Active Themes The Wife of Bath rants against the old proverb that women only show their vices after they are married. She also argues against the complaint that the husband is expected to flatter and praise his wife in public. The husband should trust the wife to go wherever she likes. Husbands, she argues, must trust their wives. And in so arguing, she argues against the norms society that gives men the right to believe they can and should control their wives. Ptolemy advises men to mind their own business. What good is it to spy on her? If she will stay, she will stay; if she will stray, she will stray. Not only does the Wife of Bath re-interpret the Bible, she also finds her own textual authorities who agree with her ideas about morality. Active Themes The Wife of Bath boasts that through her sexual and verbal powers, she kept control over her five husbands. If they ever accused her of anything, she would call them drunk, and she could make them admit to crimes they never committed in their lives. The Wife of Bath uses both the power of her physical presence and her verbal skills to make her husbands submit to her will. Active Themes Women, says the Wife of Bath, are born with the tricks of deceiving, weeping, and spying. Again, the Wife of Bath reiterates how women can take control within their households even though men have all the power in medieval society. Active Themes The Wife of Bath tells about her fourth husband, who took a mistress. Back in those days, the Wife of Bath was still a young, lusty maid, and she was so angry that she decided to give the husband a taste of his own medicine and made his life a living hell. Active Themes The Wife of Bath took her fifth husband, a clerk named Jankyn, not for his money but for his looks and

charms. Jankyn boarded at the house of a friend whom the Wife of Bath gossiped with. The Wife of Bath wears her special red robes to the house. When she first meets Jankyn, she is still married to her fourth husband and tells Jankyn that she has had a dream in which the fourth husband has enchanted her; however, this is a pack of lies. As the Wife of Bath tells the story of her fifth husband, she loses her place several times, growing lost in reverie as she reacts to her own story. Rather than just a silly, pompous character who brags about her sexual exploits, the Wife of Bath is revealed to have depths to her character. Red is typically the color of lust. The friendship and gossip that the Wife of Bath and the other woman have show glimpses of what the female sphere of medieval society might have looked like. She tears a leaf out of the book. Eve, Delilah, Clytemnestra, etc. Jankyn reads the tales aloud to the Wife of Bath, who hates these stories passionately. The Canterbury Tales are explicitly written to be read, even though the pilgrims tell the stories to each other orally. Active Themes Out of frustration, the Wife of Bath tears three leaves out of the book and punches Jankyn in the face. Jankyn retaliates by smacking her on the head, which causes her to become deaf in one ear. She pretends to be dead so that he will feel guilty and then do anything she wishes. He and the Summoner begin to quarrel. The Friar starts to tell a nasty tale about summoners, but the Host steps in and lets the Wife of Bath tell her tale. The interruption of the Friar and Summoner remind the reader that this is a frame narrative, and the other pilgrims are always present in every tale. Retrieved November 10,

**Chapter 9 : The Canterbury Tales Full Text - The Wife of Bath's Prologue - Owl Eyes**

*The Wife of Bath's Tale (Middle English: the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe) is among the best-known of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. blog.quintoapp.com provides insight into the role of women in the Late Middle Ages and was probably of interest to Chaucer himself, for the character is one of his most developed ones, with her Prologue twice as long as her Tale.*

She wants for women to be accepted as intelligent and opinionated people as well. Thematically, Anne Bradstreet wrote about many different topics that are both extensive and varied. She wrote about things like culture, nature, religion, family, death and history. She realized that even if she had written a good poem, most people would assume that it was either stolen or that she just got lucky. Women were not given any credit for things other than keeping up the house and tending to the children. This poem elicits strangely varied responses regarding the tone and mood. Jane Donahue Eberwein of Oakland University proposes some interesting questions. Is she self-deprecating and self-denigrating, as some readers find, or a pre-feminist champion of her sex? The tone of the poem shows in my opinion some resentment and anger towards the assumed role of a woman along with the humor she portrays so well. Also, the foot and meter of this poem is iambic pentameter. To fully understand the atmosphere and circumstances that Anne Bradstreet wrote this poem, you need to understand the Puritan way of life and its direct effect on women. The Puritan religion believed that women should be mainly stay quiet and take care of the children and the home. More often women were taught to read so that they could read the Bible. Margaret Atwood Essay But there were few who learned to write because it was normal to think that there was no reason a woman should know how to write. At times it was customary for women to be reminded in church by ministers that they were inferior to men. New England Goodwives, To be a Puritan woman during this time proposed many struggles, especially to be an educated writer. Anne Bradstreet was born to a family that believed in her education. She grew up in circumstances that were unusual to women of the time. She was well educated and tutored in the areas of history, language and literature. Wikipedia, At a young age she married and went to the New World. Her husband and father became prominent figures at the Massachusetts Bay Colony as they both ended up serving as governor at one point. Woodlief, According to Ann Woodlief of Virginia Commonwealth University, Anne Bradstreet had a friend named Anne Hutchinson who was a very outspoken woman on the topics of religion and ethics. She eventually was labeled a Jezebel and was banished, then slain in an Indian attack in New York. One would see why Anne Bradstreet was not quick to publish her works, especially her more personal work. Because Anne Bradstreet was a woman, she was not going to be taken seriously and was forced to adhere to her Puritan religion and society. This first stanza shows the irony that is displayed throughout the entire poem. Du Bartas was known to be her favorite poet and she deeply respected him and emulated him at times. The fourth stanza shows Anne Bradstreet apologizing. The fifth stanza is the most honest stanza I think. She is saying that even if she wrote a good poem, most people would think that it was either stolen from a man or even written out of luck. The seventh stanza shows her admittance that men are at the top of the sociological pyramid and women are only there to compliment them. But at the same time she asks for a little recognition as a woman too as shown in these two lines: Response to Poetry Final Draft Essay One line that is so interesting and maybe even humorous is this: She wants her poetry to be recognized, not with the traditional bay laurel. She would rather a richer foliage than a kitchen herb. Eberwein, In ancient Greek times, Thyme symbolized vitality and courage, and was used to honor athletes and dead heroes. Wikipedia, Anne Bradstreet is saying that she wants to be recognized for her work. Anne Bradstreet was an intelligent woman trying to write poetry in a patriarchal, unimaginative world. Even though she grew up having the luxury of an excellent education, she was still expected to live the life of a Puritan woman. She did not agree with the cultural bias towards women in her time. She was harshly criticized for being a female writer and still she kept writing. Her upbringing and her religion had a major effect on her writings and even the ability to release those writings to the public. Choose Type of service.