

Questions for *Canterbury Tales*

Our questions this month concern the women's issues raised by the two tales under examination, "The Wife of Bath's Tale" and "The Clerk's Tale."

Interpretive Questions

1. What common, timeless themes reflecting life and reality appear in both the "Wife of Bath's Tale" and "The Clerk's Tale"?
2. Does Chaucer's portrayal of the Wife of Bath (in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue") reflect a perceptive view of women (cf. pp. 17, 23, 31)?
 - a. The Wife of Bath and Griselda, at least on the surface, seem to have very different ways of relating to men and the power structure. Which does Chaucer seem to favor (p.40, 80)?
3. What is Chaucer's attitude towards the clergy? Towards religion in general (p.65)?
4. Is Griselda's submission to the king a metaphor for the submission of God's creatures to God (p.62)?

Evaluative questions

1. Can it be said in general that Chaucer liked women? People in general?
2. Do you agree with the moral of the Wife of Bath's Tale, i.e., what women want most is "sovereignty"?