

## Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric

Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: Lenka Šlechtová

Title: Nature, Humor in the Canterbury Tales

Length: 31

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<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding <b>Very good</b> Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding <b>Very good</b> Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding <b>Very good</b> Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

Final Comments & Questions

While the diploma is clearly written there is a lack of precision and proportion when it comes to the overall project. Indeed, this diploma work is more of a summary rather than an analysis. The References page is mislabeled Bibliography and this is a telling mistake as it is rarely clear where the student is getting her ideas or even her information. She almost never uses a citation with an actual page number. This alone I am afraid is enough for a recommendation of the mark of 3. In addition to this major flaw, often there seems to be a missing context in the diploma, especially in the first half where the author should be more careful to help the reader understand Chaucer's elaborate and richly detailed project with its medieval world view and feudal class markers. I appreciate when the author did incorporate these details, but it felt too little too late.

As this was a diploma on comedy, I was surprised for instance that *The Knight's Tale* was discussed at such length where *The Miller's Tale* seemed somewhat overlooked. Most readers find *The Knight's Tale* dull and didactic where *The Miller's Tale* is usually embraced as actually funny. Few of the secondary texts in the "bibliography" seem to address comedy in Chaucer specifically. If one is interested in *The Knight's Tale* as comedy it would probably be worth one's time to look at comedian and Monty Python member Terry Jones' book *Chaucer Knight: Portrait of a Medieval Mercenary* (1980). Otherwise *The Miller's Tale* is one of the longest and funniest in the collection and I am left wondering why it isn't more fully explored.

I think it would be worth the author's time in the introduction to discuss the kind of things Chaucer found funny as well as a more clinical definition of the terms "irony" and "satire". Who is he satirizing, and why? Remember Chaucer lives in a world where offending an aristocrat could get him killed. Exactly what was Chaucer satirizing, and what would have been the impact on his community and him as a poet? A broader discussion of the dual themes of spiritual and sexual fertility also seems warranted. In more recent times sex and spirituality seem to exist in separate spheres and if one impinges upon the other we see this a violation of genres, and perhaps we are even offended. Chaucer is much more bawdy and vulgar than many English writers who follow him. Why is it that Chaucer can use language that is taboo even today? A broader discussion of medieval mores is warranted to help us fully understand what he is up too. To understand the medieval sense of the sacred and profane consult a book such as *Holy Sh\*t: A Brief History of Swearing* (2013) by Mellissa Mohr.

Supervisor/Reviewer:  Brad Vice, Ph.D.

Date: 04.09.2017

Signature:

