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ABSTRACT-

Chaucer's *Physician's Tale* has long presented a bit of an interpretive quandary. The only agreement that scholars have come to regarding the *Physician's Tale* is that it was, as the *Riverside Chaucer* so succinctly put, "poorly written and motivated" (902). This general dissatisfaction with the tale has led to many scholars attempts to "analyze the problems with the tale, providing a variety of diagnoses" (Farber 151).

This dissatisfaction rests in the insistence to read the *Physicians Tale* as a story in isolation. Jill Mann's article, "The General Prologue and Estates Literature," discusses the General Prologue as a form of Estates Literature. Working from the definition created by Ruth Mohl's seminal work, Mann shows how the General Prologue establishes the moral natures of each pilgrim based on his *profession*, creating an environment of moral relativism by establishing morality on a sliding professional scale. The pilgrims, Mann argues, exist solely as their professional identities in the General Prologue. While each pilgrim exists as a stereotype of his profession in the GP, they are divorced from their professions to a degree in the tales proper. My paper will attempt to explore this distinction.

The conflict between professional morality as established in the GP and personal morality as seen in the tale is at the heart of *The Canterbury Tales*. My paper will offer a reading of the *Physician's Tale* with these elements in mind, discussing a narrative of healing and hurt told by a character whose profession would make him well-versed in both.