

Literary Terms and Definitions

MEDIEVAL ESTATES SATIRE: A medieval *genre* common among French poets in which the speaker lists various occupations among the three estates of **feudalism** (nobles, peasants, and clergy) and depicts them in a manner that shows how short they fall from the ideal of that occupation. In the late medieval period, the *genre* expanded to discuss the failings of *bourgeois* individuals as well. The *genre* was not unknown in England. John Gower's *Vox Clamantis* and *Confessio Amantis* have passages similar to those in continental estates satire. Jill Mann suggests in her famous book, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, that the General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* is itself an example of this *genre*. See also **satire**, **anti-fraternal satire**, and **three estates**.