

"HUMBLEMENT SOUFFRIR DE SON SEIGNEUR":
HIERARCHIES AND EMOTIONS IN THE BOOK OF
GEOFFROY DE LA TOUR LANDRY

A Master's Thesis

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August 2025

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BILKENT UNIVERSITY 2025



To Progress

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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

BEKİR ALP AKÇAKOCA

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

THE DEPARTMENT OF
HISTORY
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
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By Bekir Alp Akçakoca

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope
and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History

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ABSTRACT

"HUMBLEMENT SOUFFRIR DE SON SEIGNEUR": HIERARCHIES AND EMOTIONS IN THE BOOK OF GEOFFROY DE LA TOUR LANDRY

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This thesis aims to examine a fourteenth-century work written by Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, a knight from Anjou. The book was written between 1371 and 1372 CE, and was meant to educate the knight's daughters in religious and noble matters, and also to teach them how to read. The knight's book is composed of various stories some of which are from his own experience while most are Biblical or stories with no particular setting. This thesis employs close-reading methods to understand the knight's perspectives of social hierarchies, his attitudes towards social groups. The thesis applies the methods of the history of emotions to explore the knight's emotional world and what lessons he teaches to his daughters by focusing on two emotions: love and fear. The knight shows deep devotion to religious matters and to charity towards lesser orders, despite the turmoil of the fourteenth-century, while having a moderate

amount of distrust towards the highest orders of society especially in regards to his daughters. The knight also utilizes emotions in his book and by combining love and fear, constructs an emotional framework for his daughters that ensures that they will obey their husbands at all costs. Earlier works on the knight's book have mostly focused on pedagogical aspects. This thesis reexamines the knight's book from two perspectives to reintroduce a valuable vernacular work from the Middle Ages into academic discourse. This book can contextualize late medieval society from the perspective of a knight in two regards: social and emotional life.

Keywords: education, fear, history of emotions, love, social groups, social hierarchy, women

ÖZET

"EFENDİSİNE SABIRLA KATLANACAKTIR": GEOFFROY DE LA TOUR LANDRY’NİN KİTABINDA HİYERARŞİLER VE DUYGULAR

Akçakoca, Bekir Alp

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Ağustos 2025

Bu tez Anjou’lu bir şövalye olan Geoffroy de La Tour Landry tarafından yazılmış ondördüncü yüzyıla ait bir eseri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. M.S. 1371 ile 1372 yılları arasında kaleme alınan bu kitap, şövalyenin kızlarını dini ve soylu konularda eğitmek ve onlara okuma yazma öğretmek amacıyla yazılmıştır. Şövalyenin kitabı, bir kısmı kendi deneyimlerinden, çoğu ise İncil’den veya belirli bir mekâna bağlı olmayan hikâyelerden oluşmaktadır. Bu tez, şövalyenin toplumsal hiyerarşilere bakışını ve sosyal gruplara yönelik tutumlarını anlamak için yakın okuma yöntemlerini kullanmaktadır. Ayrıca, duygular tarihinin yöntemlerinden yararlanarak şövalyenin duygusal dünyasını ve kızlarına öğretmek istediği dersleri iki temel duyguya, sevgi ya da aşk ve korku, odaklanarak incelemektedir. Şövalye, on dördüncü yüzyılın çalkantılarına rağmen, dini meselelere ve alt sınıflara yönelik hayırseverliğe derin bir bağlılık göstermektedir; ancak özellikle kızları söz konusu

olduğunda, toplumun en yüksek sınıflarına karşı belirli bir ölçüde güvensizlik beslemektedir. Şövalye ayrıca kitabında duyguları kullanmakta ve sevgi ya da aşk ile korkuyu birleştirerek, kızlarının her ne pahasına olursa olsun kocalarına itaat etmelerini sağlayacak bir duygusal çerçeve inşa etmektedir. Şövalyenin kitabı üzerine yapılan önceki çalışmaların çoğu, eserin pedagojik yönlerine odaklanmıştır. Bu tez, söz konusu eseri bu iki bakış açısından yeniden inceleyerek, Orta Çağ'a ait halk diliyle yazılmış değerli bir eseri akademik söyleme yeniden kazandırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu kitap, bir şövalyenin bakış açısından geç Orta Çağ toplumunu iki şekilde bağlama oturtabilir: toplumsal yaşam ve duygusal yaşam.

Anahtar Kelimeler: aşk, eğitim, duygular tarihi, kadınlar, korku, sevgi, sosyal gruplar, sosyal hiyerarşi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Paul Latimer. His patience with me has been incredible, as I tried to study several different eras and fields of history and eventually landed on this strange mixture of socioeconomic history, gender history and history of emotions.

I would like to thank Dr. Nil Tekgül who accepted me into her history of emotions course as an auditor and introduced me to a side of history that I had never thought of before. I would also like to thank Dr. David E. Thornton for all of his help, especially for his Middle English course. I could not read most of my primary sources here otherwise.

Thanks to my friends and family members for their support and reassurances.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Medieval Europe, contrary to popular belief, witnessed a continuation of intellectual works from Late Antiquity. Most written works of the Middle Ages were written in Latin, the ancient language of the Romans that, by the High Middle Ages at the latest, had almost no mutual intelligibility with contemporary Romance languages. However, progressively increasing from the twelfth century onwards, writing in vernacular languages also became common which in turn eventually led to the nobility being able to convey their ideas in written form to the upper orders, and also being able to be understood by the more educated members of the middle orders. One of these vernacular writers from the nobility is a knight from Anjou, Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, henceforth referred to as “the Knight” unless specified and capitalized like so to avoid confusion with many others of his profession. The Knight wrote a book for the education of his daughters. It is heavily concerned with how his daughters will interact with their suitors, their eventual husbands, and also how to manage their reputation and their households, and how they can be good and pious women. As the title of the thesis implies, most of the Knight’s ideas can be summarized as a woman having to “humbly suffer of her lord” or to patiently endure him, that lord being her husband.

1.1 Origins and History of the Book of La Tour Landry

The Knight wrote the book between 1371 and 1372.¹ The full title of the book in French is “*Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles*”,² meaning “The Book of the Knight of la Tour Landry for the education of his daughters”. While we can never be fully certain, the Knight says that he wrote the book himself in his prologue with the help of his two priests and two clerks, and made them read various materials to him, these being the Bible, “*the gestes of the kynges*”, chronicles of France and England, and many other “strange” histories, in his words, and he says he made use of all of them in this book. Towards the end of the prologue he says that he had also written another book for his sons,³ no copies of which have survived to this day,⁴ and its contents can only be presumed from the brief mentions it gets in the book for his daughters.

The Knight’s book for his daughters enjoyed popularity in the following centuries: 21 French manuscripts, 3 French prints, 2 English versions and one German version have been found so far.⁵ William Caxton, the first English book printer, translated the book in the late fifteenth century⁶ and published it. In regards to the

¹ Didier Lett, “Comment Parler à ses Filles?”, *Médiévales*, no. 19 (1990): 77.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43027723>. (Accessed August 11, 2025)

² Rebecca Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower: Manners for Young Medieval Women*, (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 20.

³ Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, *The booke of thesenyngmentes and techynge that the Knyght of the Towre made to his doughters*, ed. Gertrude Burford Rawlings, (London: G. Newnes Ltd., 1902) 14–16. [Hereafter: CT (Caxton’s translation)]

⁴ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 13.

⁵ Anne Marie De Gendt, “Aucuns Petis Enseignemens: ‘Home-Made’ Courtesy Books in Medieval France”, In *Centres of Learning*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1995), 283, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004247154_023 (Accessed August 11, 2025)

⁶ A.M. De Gendt, “Sens et Fonction du Prologue Dans ‘Le Livre du Chevalier de La Tour Landry’” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 95, no. 2 (1994): 196. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43345983>. (Accessed August 11, 2025)

CT, 197. Caxton says he finished translating the book on “*the fyrst day of Iuyn, the yere of oure lord mccccxxxiii*,” and that he printed it on “*the last day of Ianyuer the fyrst yere of the regne of kynge Rycharde the thyrd*.” This means that the translation was finished on June 1st, 1483, during the brief reign of Edward V, and since the translation has to be completed before the book is printed, this means that the book was printed on January 31st, 1484. Any other claim is simply false and does not take into

quality of Caxton's translation, his skills would have been more than sufficient, as he had translated and published nine other major works at the time.⁷

As mentioned, there was a copy in German in the fifteenth century.⁸ This German translation was done by a German knight and the book is titled: "*Der Ritter vom Turn von den Exempeln der gotsforcht und erberkeit*",⁹ meaning "The Knight of the Tower on the Examples of Fearing God and Respectability". The German knight in question is Marquard vom Stein, Lord of Blumenberg in Alsace and Landvogt of Mömpelgart (Montbéliard), the latter of which was accepted into the Free Swiss Federation within the lifetime of vom Stein. He was an active soldier and a diplomat, and had two daughters: Elsa and Jakobea. The book was published in 1493, two or three years before his death, by one Michael Furter for Johann Bergmann von Olpe in Basel.¹⁰ There is some evidence to suggest that the book continued to be known into the sixteenth century. For example, in the 1534 work *Book of Husbandry* by Sir Anthony Fitz-Herbert, an English judge, the author suggests that the Knight's book provided men with the tools to seduce women by trying to tell women about how men do such things, which is why he says he will avoid such advice in his own book.¹¹ Regardless of its intentions or failings, the book had remained popular.

account English regnal years and Old Style dating with which the legal year started on March 25th. Caxton knowingly avoids using regnal years in his first given date, as by the time he printed the book, the short reign of Edward V would have been a controversial topic; who mysteriously "disappeared" and his uncle, Richard of Gloucester, took the throne on June 26th 1483, twenty-five days after Caxton finished his translation of this book. Caxton shows some political savviness and avoids ever mentioning the missing king and acknowledges Richard as the third of his name, for what it is worth. With modern dating styles Richard III's first regnal year is: June 26th, 1483 to June 26th, 1484.

⁷ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 30.

⁸ De Gendt, "Sens et Fonction du Prologue," 195.

⁹ Anne Simon, "Framing Lives: The Narratives of Behaviour in *Der Ritter vom Turn*," *Daphnis* 28, no. 1 (1999): 35–59, 35. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18796583-90001144>. (Accessed August 11, 2025).

¹⁰ Anne Simon, "Framing Lives," 36–37.

¹¹ Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, *Le livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles*, ed. M. Anatole de Montaiglon (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint & Co., 1982), li. [Hereafter: FM (French manuscript)]

The English excerpts used in this thesis will be Caxton's version and another English translation, a manuscript that predates Caxton by almost half a century.¹² All French quotations from the book are from Anatole de Montaiglon's edition that has them in Old French, and unless unrecognizable compared to its modern French counterpart or to an English cognate, they will be displayed in Old French with no notes. Translations or modernizations from any version of the Knight's book are done by me and I have kept French quotations verbatim.¹³ The Knight's book is composed of chapters, or a "*chappitre*" in French. The French version that is used in this thesis consists of 128 chapters,¹⁴ while the English manuscript has 144 chapters.¹⁵ Caxton's version has had some of its content removed due to what the editor thinks is obscenity,¹⁶ and also lacks chapter numbers, but by my count there are 89 chapters, as in distinct headings that correspond to chapters in other versions. There are broad groupings of stories in the book such as fasting, punishment, Biblical stories, or contemporary stories. However, it is sometimes difficult to categorize the book due to the unpredictability of morals that the Knight might derive from a story. Finally, towards the end of the book the Knight engages in a dialogue with his wife on various aspects of love and piety, from which I will use examples throughout this work.

This thesis will attempt to compare these editions' usage of certain words, but, as will be evident, the differences are minor and usually do not change the main themes and lessons of the chapter in question. That being said, I will draw attention to and try to explain some small quirks in Caxton's translations that I have not seen any other researcher notice.

¹² Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 8, 10–11.

¹³ As with all medieval vernacular text, spelling varies throughout the book. For example, the word "aussi" meaning "too, also, as well" in Modern French appears as both "aussi" and "aussy". I have simply kept them as they are. I also have not modernized most English excerpts but have provided footnotes if the words are too far removed from daily or academic use.

¹⁴ FM, lxiv.

¹⁵ EM, xxxvi.

¹⁶ CT, 202.

1.2 Audience(s) of the Book

It is well-known that reading was usually not a silent activity in the Middle Ages. There were three types of “*legere*”, “to read” in Latin, and these included: To read aloud, which implies the existence of an audience; to be read to, which implies being part of the audience while someone performs the first type of “*legere*”; and the third type which is to read alone, silently.¹⁷ And there are examples of women having secluded places for reading, with words such as “*kemenate*” and “*heimlich*” in Medieval German.¹⁸ “*Kemenate*” is derived from Late Latin “*camera caminata*” meaning “a room with a fireplace”; and “*heimlich*” is still the modern German word meaning “secret”. In most cases, reading was a performance to a group where one literate person, who was rare, would read the book out loud. While it is impossible to know whether or not this was the case for the manuscript of the Knight’s book, there is some evidence to suggest that this book was read in this manner as well. The Knight, in Caxton’s translation, says that he wrote a “*litil book for to lerne to rede*”,¹⁹ so that his beloved daughters may learn and understand the good and evil of this world. By simple logic, this implies that when he was writing the book, his daughters were illiterate.

¹⁷ D. H. Green, *A Room of Their Own? Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, H. M. Chadwick Memorial Lectures 17 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 2006), 1.

¹⁸ Green, *A Room of Their Own?*, 1.

The word “*heimlich*” had started to evolve into its modern meaning of “secret” by the mid-11th century and gradually lost its meaning of “homely, relating to the domestic” etc.

DWDS, *heimlich*, <https://www.dwds.de/wb/heimlich>. (Accessed August 11, 2025)

DWDS, *kemenate*, <https://www.dwds.de/wb/Kemenate?o=kemenate>. (Accessed August 11, 2025)

The current German word for “homely” in the British sense is “*heimelig*”.

¹⁹ CT, 15.

Despite the fact that he uses vocatives towards his daughters throughout the book, such as “*mes chières filles*” (“my dear daughters” in English), in the prologue he does not speak to them directly and mentions his purpose of writing the book without vocatives. If the intended audience for the book was simply his daughters, presumably he would have written the prologue just as the rest of the book and spoken to them directly.²⁰ Perhaps the Knight thought the book would be copied for use by other noble families, or intended it to be passed down to his granddaughters, but this is impossible to know as the book itself contains no such commentary. However, it ended up being a good introduction for a general audience despite whatever his intention was.

Assuming that he would not bother with one-on-one lessons as his daughters grew up — he was an active soldier at times, and this book was written during the early years of the second phase of the Hundred Years War — it is safe to say that he taught all his three daughters simultaneously. This, at the very least, suggests that the Knight read the stories together with his daughters. In the medieval French text, the passage is “*je leur feroye un livret pour aprendre à roumancer*”.²¹ The medieval French verb “*roumancer*” specifically refers to storytelling in a vernacular language rather than in Latin; the etymological link to the word “romance” as a genre is self-evident. “*Livret*” is the diminutive of “*livre*” and “*aprendre*” exists in modern French as “*apprendre*”, which means “to learn”. Caxton’s translation is perhaps slightly misleading compared to the original context, as the Knight implicitly acknowledges that teaching them to read in a vernacular language will bar them from a vast and critical corpus of works in Latin, but this does not detract from my overall point that the book was highly likely to have been read aloud, possibly by taking turns.

²⁰ De Gendt, “Sens et Fonction du Prologue,” 195.

²¹ FM, 3–4.

Further evidence is seen by reading between the lines. In one story, the Knight advises that his daughters should not be the first to take up new fashions and at the end of this story, he says that he speaks not to women that actually quickly embrace new fashions and does not speak against them, but speaks to his own daughters, women, and servants, to whom he may say as it shall please him.²² In the French version, this is further clarified by the Knight, as he refers to “*mes femmes servantes*”, meaning “my serving women”.²³ It is highly unlikely that the Knight also intended to teach his servants how to read, adding to the possibility that the book was read aloud to them. Moreover, this implies that the Knight might have thought that this book would reach a wider audience than just his household, not across the continent as happened in reality, but to his colleagues’ and neighbors’ households. In one example, when relaying a story where the Knight himself turned down a marriage candidate, he uses the words “*mes chières filles et nobles pucelles*” to address his audience,²⁴ meaning “my dear daughters and noble maidens”. Perhaps this is one occasion where he calls out to other young women in the audience, from other noble families. Admittedly though unlikely, this also could be construed as him referring only to his daughters, whom he knows are both noble and maidens. The question of the audience will be discussed again in the second chapter, especially in regards to the social groups that the book was read to.

The famed nineteenth-century English editor of medieval texts, Thomas Wright, wrote the introduction to the English manuscript which has a strange and simple error that must have gone unnoticed. At one point he says that the Knight’s daughters “had been left motherless” when the book had been compiled,²⁵ yet earlier

²² CT, 55.

²³ FM, 49.

²⁴ FM, 29.

²⁵ Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, *The book of the knight of La Tour-Landry*, ed. Thomas Wright, (London, Trübner & co., 1906), xi. [Hereafter: EM (English manuscript)]

he correctly says that the Knight's first wife Jeanne de Rogue was alive as of 1383,²⁶ which is over ten years after the Knight finished composing the book. This misunderstanding stems from a few lines in the Knight's own prologue, where he says that "...deth, that on all makithe werre, toke her from me, the which hathe made me haue mani a sorufull thought and gret heuinesse. And so it is more than .xx. yeere that I haue ben for her ful of gret sorugh."²⁷

Indeed, Anatole de Montaiglon, a French editor and a contemporary of Thomas Wright, says that Lady de Rogue was alive in 1383, despite leaving a will on October 20th, 1379.²⁸ Even in the latter scenario, if she had died, her death would be over six years after the book was finished, and presumably most of her daughters would have already been adults or in their late teens, assuming they started reading the book in their early teens. The possible exception is their youngest child, Marie,²⁹ who was married on November 1st, 1391.³⁰ In late medieval and early modern Western and Northern Europe, arranged marriages resulted in both individuals being younger than those who picked their own partners for marriage; and even those who selected their partners were usually married before the age of twenty-two.³¹ If Marie were twenty-years-old in 1391, she would have been born in 1371. With this in mind, it can be suggested that Marie was left without a mother very early in her life, though this cannot be so for the Knight's other two daughters, who would have been well into adulthood by the time Jeanne de Rogue died assuming they were at least around ten-years-old when the Knight compiled his book. It is safe to say that Jeanne de Rogue

²⁶ EM, viii.

²⁷ EM, 1-2. FM, 2. "*Mais la mort qui tous guerroye, la prist, dont mainte douleur en ay receu et mainte tristour. Si a plus de xx ans que j'en ay esté triste et doulent.*" in French.

²⁸ FM, xv-xvi.

²⁹ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 5-6.

³⁰ FM, xx.

³¹ Jan Luiten van Zanden, Sarah Carmichael, and Tine De Moor, *Capital Women: The European Marriage Pattern, Female Empowerment and Economic Development in Western Europe 1300-1800* (New York, 2019), 53-57.

was alive and well when the book was first produced, and that most of her children were not motherless while reading it. Unfortunately, this error had a cascading effect where someone reading only Wright's version would be misled, such as Ruszkiewicz's 2018 article on didactic narration in the Knight's book, where the author repeats Wright's mistake.³²

With this in mind, the rest of Chapter 1 will cover other prescriptive medieval texts for women. Chapter 2 will focus on the Knight's attitudes towards different social groups, both high and low, and how he perceives and portrays his hierarchical society. Chapter 3 will use methods of the history of emotions to understand the emotional aspects of the Knight's book and perhaps those of the book's various audiences. As will be shown, the question of emotions cannot be divorced from perceptions of rank and social status. A survey of similar material will be next.

1.3 A Survey of Prescriptive Medieval Literature for Women

This thesis owes some of its theoretical background and starting point to another English language work. There is a 2006 book by Rebecca Barnhouse that discusses the Knight's book in detail. The author has done rigorous research into the Knight's book, and paints a vivid picture of the times of the Knight and of Caxton by imagining contemporary women, such as the Knight's daughters, as reading the book and implementing this advice in real life. I have enjoyed and made good use of her work, especially in regards to some older literature on the Knight's book that I could not obtain. Furthermore, Barnhouse herself in her foreword says that her book is

³² Dominika Ruszkiewicz, "'To Teach, to delight, and to change': Didactic Narration in *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*," *Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education*, Vol 7 No 1, 2018: 74. <https://doi.org/10.35765/mjse.2018.0713.05> (accessed August 11, 2025).

aimed towards general readers and undergraduate students,³³ and it has certainly succeeded in that regard. This present thesis aims to study this book further, concentrating on particular aspects described below. The other major work, this time in French, is Anne Marie de Gendt's 2003 monograph on the Knight's book: *L'art D'éduquer Les Nobles Damoiselles*. Her monograph is heavily interested in the pedagogical aspects of the Knight's book,³⁴ and I believe it is critical to anyone wishing to study female education in the Middle Ages. However, despite my background in education, other aspects of the Knight's book were far more interesting to me. I have used de Gendt's articles in this thesis, but the monograph will not be frequently cited.

What I believe I can add to the work of others, and especially these two authors, is introducing elements of history of emotions into the Knight's book and to more specifically examine the social life of the Knight and perhaps that of Caxton. This can be further supported by examining two other primary sources. Patterns in the ways of thinking of these medieval writers may reveal more about their worldviews.

Introducing the history of emotions into the Knight's book is one of the central premises of this thesis. The history of emotions is a relatively new subfield and is currently lacking in regards to the Knight's book, or perhaps even in regards to late medieval France. The book contains many stories about love, fear, anger, pleasure, sexual intercourse and more; which ought to provide insight into how late medieval French people and early modern English people saw and expressed their emotions. I believe that the Knight's book contains many nuanced words that other historians of emotions have examined in their works and that this thesis will be valuable for the field.

³³ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, v–vi.

³⁴ Anne-Marie De Gendt, *L'Art d'éduquer les nobles damoiselles: Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry* (Paris: Champion, 2003), EMA 28, passim.

To see what sets the Knight's book apart, I would like to compare it to other medieval texts aimed at women or written by women. I have two texts for this purpose. The first is Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*, which contains *exempla* from various women across history and myth. The other is an anonymous work called *Hali Meïðhad*, (henceforth referred to as "Holy Maidenhood", a modernized spelling) a twelfth-century text for religiously motivated recluse women. These two texts will act as foils to the Knight's book: Holy Maidenhood was written by a member of the clergy, possibly male, for women who adopted an ascetic lifestyle, and its purpose was to instill that lifestyle by which these women are expected to live without interruptions. Whereas Christine de Pizan's work is written by a lay noblewoman for a much broader audience, and with a conviction to prove herself against detractors, the Knight's book in contrast is not trying to instill an ascetic lifestyle in his daughters, nor does it try to prove anything to a large audience. The Knight is simply trying to provide examples of good women for his daughters and other women, presumably younger ones, of his household. Starting chronologically, there will be a comparison of Holy Maidenhood and the Knight's book in terms of audiences and goals of the texts.

Holy Maidenhood was written at some point between 1190 and 1220 with the latter half of that range seeming more possible.³⁵ If Holy Maidenhood was written at Wigmore Abbey, which is derived from its linguistic similarities to the "Katherine group" of English texts that also includes *Ancrene Wisse*, the author of Holy Maidenhood was most likely an Augustinian friar.³⁶ The audience was a group of women who had taken some kind of vow of virginity and not much else is known.³⁷

³⁵ *Hali Meïðhad*, ed. Bella Millett (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1982), xvii.

³⁶ *Hali Meïðhad*, ed. Bella Millett, xviii–xix.

³⁷ *Hali Meïðhad*, ed. Bella Millett, xxii–xxiii.

Although the text speaks to the reader (or listener) with *þu*, the second-person singular pronoun that would later evolve into *thou* in English, this is most probably an impersonal way of addressing an unknown audience rather than addressing a known and single person.³⁸ With this basic context in mind, it will be prudent to start with examples from the text. Further context will be provided as necessary. I will try to compare Holy Maidenhood to what the Knight thinks of similar matters, if he reserves space for these at all. As expected, the virtue of maidenhood is the main point that the text wants to instill:

Maidenhood is a treasure that once it is lost, it can never be found again. Maidenhood is a blossom that once fully cut, sprouts never again (although they wither somewhere with various thoughts, they may never grow green ever the later). Maidenhood is the star that once it has gone down out of its seat and into the west, never again rises. Maidenhood is a gift, gifted to you from heaven; if you push it away once, never shall you acquire it again. Because maidenhood is pleasing to heaven, and the world's salvation through which we are redeemed, it is a power above all powers and pleasing to Christ.³⁹

The Knight rarely mentions maidenhood. On one occasion, as mentioned above, he speaks to his audience as “*mes chières filles et nobles pucelles*”.⁴⁰ There is one usage of the verb “*despucella*” (commonly translated as “deflower” in English) as a euphemism for rape,⁴¹ but other than these occasions few and far between, the Knight is more focused on chastity than virginity. Despite sounding similar or the same to modern ears, these words had different connotations in the Knight's world. There were three categories of these words that have lost their importance in the

³⁸ *Hali Meidhad*, ed. Bella Millett, xxiii.

³⁹ *Hali Meidhad*, ed. Bella Millett, 5. “*Meidhad is þet tresor þet, beo hit eanes forloren, ne bið hit neauer ifunden. Meidhad is þe blostme þet, beo a eanes fullliche forcoruen, ne spruteð ha eft neauer (ah þah ha faleui sumchere mid misliche þonkes, ha mei eft grenin neauer þe leatere). Meidhad is þe stor'r'e þet, beo ha eanes of þe set igan adun i þe west, neauer eft ne arisð ha. Meidhad is þet an [zeoue] iztet te of heouene; do þu hit eanes awei, ne schalt tu neauer nan oðer [al] swuch acourin. For meidhad is heouene cwem, ant worldes alesendnesse þurh hwam we beoð iborhen, mihte ouer alle mihtes ant cwemest Crist of alle.*”

⁴⁰ See above pg, 7.

⁴¹ See below pg, 74.

modern world. A vow of celibacy required one to not marry, a vow of chastity required one to not have sex. For example, clerics would have to take both of these vows.⁴² Furthermore, virginity was distinct from both of these, and married female saints, mothers or even couples could claim or have claimed a reconstituted virginity that represented spiritual wholeness rather than any physical one.⁴³ In *Holy Maidenhood*'s case, the anonymous author does make it very clear that lost virginity can never be found again. It is best to interpret this text as radical and not applicable to wider society, since if everyone thought this way in the Middle Ages, we would not be here.

As mentioned before, and as will be evident throughout this thesis, one of the major concerns of the Knight is who his daughters will marry and how to keep that marriage intact, one way or another. *Holy Maidenhood*'s approach to this issue of marriage entertainingly direct:

Ask these queens, these rich countesses, these proud ladies of their own lifestyle. Truly, if they think rightly and acknowledge the truth, I have them as witnesses, they lick honey off of thorns.

When this is of the rich, what do you think of the poor, who are weakly provided for and badly set out? — as gentlewomen mostly are in the world now, have nothing with which to buy themselves a bridegroom fit for them, and give themselves into the bondage of a nobleman with all that they have. Woe! Jesus, what an unworthy bargain! Better would it be for them to have been born on the day of their bridelock, and buried the same day. Therefore, blessed maiden, forget your people, as David bids: that is, do away with the thoughts that prick thine heart through bodily lusts, and lead you and urge you toward foul slavery for fleshly filths.⁴⁴

⁴² William Burgwinkle, "The Marital and the Sexual," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 225–37, 229.

⁴³ William Burgwinkle, "The Marital and the Sexual," 229–30.

⁴⁴ *Hali Meidhad*, ed. Bella Millett, 4. "[Easke] þes cwenes, þes riche cuntasses, þeos modie leafdis of hare lijfade; soðliche, 3ef ha biþþencheð ham riht ant icnawlecheð soð, ich habbe ham to witnesse, ha lickið honi of þornes. Hwen þus is of [þe] riche, hwet wenest tu of þe poure, þe beoð wacliche i3euen ant biset uuele?—as gentile wumm[e]n meast alle nu on worlde þe nabbedð hwerwið buggen ham brudgume onont ham, ant 3eouð ham [in]to þeowdom of an oðeluker mon wiþ al þet ha habbeð. Weilawe, Iesu Godd, hwuch

The text is deliberately hostile against marriage in general. In fact, it acknowledges that poor women have it even worse. It diverts from maidenhood and implores the audience to think practically. It outright says that “gentlewomen”, which meant noblewomen in this period though one of unspecified rank and hierarchy,⁴⁵ are suffering more than they are happy in their marriages, and that there is no reason to get married. In contrast, the Knight does not even consider it a possibility that his daughters might not get married. There are stories about wives high and low: Wives of merchants are mentioned, and also a wife of a supposed Roman senator. The wives of knights; widowed women and adulterous wives of lower class men are found all across the book. As this book is explicitly written for the Knight’s daughters who eventually got married, there is no reason to think that these examples are meant to dissuade them from marriage. And as will be discussed throughout this thesis, at least as described by the Knight, happy marriages were not impossible but simply demanded more from women. Of course, there were other happy marriages roughly around the Knight’s time, although only noted as such after either partner’s death. Christine de Pizan, for example, wrote laments over her husband’s death in *Cent Ballades*.⁴⁶

Having mentioned Christine de Pizan, her *City of Ladies* will be the other point of comparison. The late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century writer needs very little introduction. Having been widowed with three children at the age of twenty-five,

unwurde chaffere! Wel were ham weren ha on hare brudlakes dei iboren to biuriën. Forþi, seil meiden, forzet ti folc as Dauid bit: þet is, do aweii þe þonkes þe prokið þin heorte þurh licomliche lustes, ant lea[ðie]ð [þe] ant eggið toward pullich þeowdom for fle[sch]liche fulðen.”

⁴⁵ Frédéric Godefroy, “Gentil-femme,” *Dictionnaire de l’ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX^e au XV^e siècle*, accessed August 11, 2025, <https://micmap.org/dicfro/search/lexique-godefroy/gentilfemme>.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “Gentlewoman, n.,” accessed August 11, 2025, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/gentlewoman_n?tab=meaning_and_use#3087683.

⁴⁶ William Burgwinkle, “The Marital and the Sexual,” 236.

Christine turned to writing poetry as a means of living. Her novelty as a female poet brought attention, which also brought patrons.⁴⁷ The work that I will consider here is her *Livre de la cité des dames*, written in 1405. This was two years after *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, where in an attempt to address concerns over her gender, Christine, as a narrator, states that she has been turned into a man by Fortune.⁴⁸ The City of Ladies takes a completely different approach, and Christine is unapologetic of her gender.⁴⁹ The book starts with Christine, as narrator, reading a work that does not speak highly of women. She drops the book, but after some time she wonders “why... so many men... continue to say and write such awful, damning things about women and their ways.”⁵⁰ She continues to read what these great men have written about the female sex, and eventually she feels disgust and sadness in her womanhood and feels like an abomination. She cries out to God, and that is when three ladies appear out of a blinding light.⁵¹ These are the ladies of *Raison*, *Droiture* and *Justice*.⁵² Christine’s prose is delightful to read, and almost makes one forget that these ladies of abstract ideas are not real. *Raison* tells Christine, the narrator:

The female sex has been left defenceless for a long time now, like an orchard without a wall, and bereft of a champion to take up arms in order to protect it. Indeed, this is because those trusty knights who should by right defend women have been negligent in their duty and lacking in vigilance, leaving womankind open to attack from all sides.⁵³

⁴⁷ Marilynn Desmond, “Christine de Pizan,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 123–135, 123.

⁴⁸ Marilynn Desmond, “Christine de Pizan,” 123–25. “But in order to better explain the purpose of this process, I will tell you who I am, who speaks, who from female became male by Fortune, who willed it so; she changed me, both body and face into a perfect, natural man; while I was formerly a woman, I am in reality a man. I do not lie.”

⁴⁹ Marilynn Desmond, “Christine de Pizan,” 128–29.

⁵⁰ Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Rosalind Brown-Grant (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 6.

⁵¹ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 6–7.

⁵² Reason, Rectitude and Justice.

⁵³ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 11.

Christine's womanhood is now immutable and her goals are clear. This book will be a defense of womanhood, or rather, of good womanhood. Women who are lacking in virtue will not be admitted to the City of Ladies.⁵⁴ Also, "trusty knights" are also the target of criticism, perhaps those like Geoffroy. From this point onward the three ladies and Christine, the narrator, start to build the city, and I would like to compare *exempla* her book has in common with the Knight's book. Starting with Christine's order in her book, the first one will be that of Queen Esther.

Esther's husband Ahasuerus had enslaved the Jews, and being a powerful king, had taken Esther as a wife for her beauty and virtuousness. A traitorous advisor goads the king into killing all the Jews, and when Esther learns of this she wears her finest clothing and prostrates herself in front of the king. This impresses the king so much that he says she can wish anything from him, and she wishes to dine with him and the traitorous advisor. She impresses him so well that he once again grants her a wish, to which she replies that she wants her people to be spared. The king is confused, and Esther reveals to him that his advisor was planning to have them all killed. The advisor is hanged, the Jews are spared and are given the most honorable status amongst all races.⁵⁵ Esther is shown as beautiful and virtuous, but also smart and daring. She is proactive in the story and outwits a traitorous man, and causes his death while still remaining loyal to her husband. In the Knight's book, however, Esther is described as in "love and fear" of her husband, where she avoids anything that would upset him and keeps the peace of her house. She is inactive and irrelevant, other than being a good woman. This will be further developed in Chapter 3 with the help of the methods of the history of emotions.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 11.

⁵⁵ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 133–34.

⁵⁶ See below pg, 84–87.

The second common *exemplum* that I am choosing will be the story of Saint Catherine. Christine and Geoffroy are mostly in agreement in regards to Catherine. While Christine is more verbose in her retelling of the story of Catherine, Geoffroy simply says that she “*vaynquysshed the wysest men of al grece*”⁵⁷ through her wisdom and education, and that she was granted martyrdom after her death. What differs is how Geoffroy says nothing about the saint’s physical features, but Christine returns to it time and again. In Christine’s retelling, Emperor Maxentius hears Catherine speak, who is a “beautiful and noble maiden”, and stares at her in amazement. After his philosophers are defeated and they all convert to Christianity, Maxentius orders them to be burnt. The converts are saved from pain by some miracle and Maxentius is described as “inflamed with desire for the beautiful, holy Catherine”.⁵⁸ He imprisons her and withholds food, yet by an act of God she is nourished and when the emperor checks on her, he finds her “healthier and lovelier than ever”.⁵⁹ Even when she dies by decapitation, her body sprouts milk by a miracle instead of blood.⁶⁰

A 2020 Master of Arts thesis in French on passiveness and activeness in Christine de Pizan’s works, by Evelyn Ives Mills suggests that the medieval writer, in this retelling of Saint Catherine’s martyrdom, “utilizes the demeaning male gaze to underscore the active identity of her heroine”.⁶¹ The author’s claim captured my imagination and I must follow the idea. Mills has identified that in Christine’s works she uses feminine characteristics to describe and glorify passive characters, such as Catherine’s virginity and beauty; or the softness of body or of character and loyalty to a male figure in other cases.⁶² However, when describing active characters or

⁵⁷ CT, 129–30.

⁵⁸ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 204.

⁵⁹ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 205.

⁶⁰ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 205.

⁶¹ Evelyn Ives Mills, “Christine de Pizan’s Passive Heroines: Recoding Feminine Identities in *Le Livre de la cité des dames* and *Le Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*” (Master’s Thesis, Portland State University, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.7426> (Accessed August 11, 2025), 60.

⁶² Mills, “Christine de Pizan’s Passive Heroines,” 13–14.

formerly-passive characters, she uses traditionally male vocabulary such as mentioning the “courage” of the Sabine women.⁶³

Mills further develops the idea by suggesting that the maternal body is an instrument of rebellion and war, and gives some examples. One is from the Sabine women again, who stand between two armies to stop their own men from engagement, as the only way to engage is through the bodies of their own women. Some of these women are pregnant, some already have their children in their hands, all in a nurturing state. The women here are still subordinate to the men, but they use their bodies to “reinstate” their authority, in Mills’s words,⁶⁴ though I might suggest “bargain” or “wrestle back some of their authority” if Mills’s words indeed imply what I understood. Mills later uses the famous story of *Roman Charity* from Christine’s book (though Christine does not call it as such), where a young woman breastfeeds her imprisoned father and mother.⁶⁵ Central to Mills’s examples are the acts of nurturing and nursing, and that women in Christine’s works use their bodies into and out of passivity.⁶⁶

While Mills does not mention it, I must note how Saint Catherine’s dead body sprouts milk after having converted so many people, and thus symbolically having nourished their souls and saved them. Not to mention Catherine being described as a maiden, meaning she is not capable of producing milk naturally, but perhaps capable through maternal guidance to Christianity. Finally, Maxentius cuts off the breasts of his wife when she converts and speaks in favor of Catherine.⁶⁷ Milk, nursing and breasts seems to have been deliberate themes by Christine to show up in multiple

⁶³ Mills, “Christine de Pizan’s Passive Heroines,” 14.

⁶⁴ Mills, “Christine de Pizan’s Passive Heroines,” 29–32.

⁶⁵ Mills, “Christine de Pizan’s Passive Heroines,” 34.

⁶⁶ Mills, “Christine de Pizan’s Passive Heroines,” 35–37.

⁶⁷ Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 205.

examples as strongly as this, and perhaps a sign of her pride in the female body after her struggle with womanhood in the prologue.

Having diverged deeply into literary studies territory, I will return to topic by emphasizing that Geoffroy's retelling has none of this. Saint Catherine is not said to be beautiful, nor are we told that she converted so many men, nor did she sprout milk from her dead body. In the Knight's retelling she actually sprouts "*holy oyle*" after death.⁶⁸ Geoffroy's Catherine is simply praised for her wisdom against pagans and for her posthumous oil. Meanwhile, Christine's Catherine manages to resist in apparent passivity, and glorify the female body (or the maternal body) through its unique capabilities such as producing milk.

I wish not to be too harsh on the Knight, as his undertaking of such a book for his daughters speaks volumes about how much he cared about them, in his own medieval way. There were not many books like his. The late thirteenth-century letters of Louis IX of France, also known as Saint Louis, to his son Philip and daughter Isabelle could be one example.⁶⁹ This type of literature is typically called "mirrors for princes", which is advice literature for rulers, and deliberately focuses on young candidates for leading roles in his or her society.⁷⁰ The Knight's book stands out as his book is meant only for his daughters and he has no expectation of them becoming as important as a prince or a princess. Interestingly, King Louis calls Isabelle "*chiere fille*" meaning "dear daughter", the same as the Knight's preferred vocative, except in the singular for obvious reasons.⁷¹

⁶⁸ CT, 129. "holy oil"

⁶⁹ Kathleen Ashley, "The French *Enseignement a Phelippe* and *Enseignement a Ysabel* of Saint Louis," in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3.

⁷⁰ Kathleen Ashley, "The French *Enseignement*," 5.

⁷¹ Kathleen Ashley, "The French *Enseignement*," 17.

Amanieu de Sescás, a Gascon or Catalan writer, had authored two instructional poems, *Enssenhamen de l'escudier* ("Instruction for a Squire") and *Essenhamen de la donzela* ("Instruction for a Young Lady"), in the late thirteenth-century. These were in the Occitan language and strongly mirror the old troubadour traditions.⁷² His advice for women consists of model speeches to be made to suitors, and concludes with *exempla* of contemporary good women, yet all of this has no religious grounding.⁷³ Whereas, as will be demonstrated through this thesis, almost everything in the Knight's book has a religious justification. It is interesting that both *Essenhamen de la donzela* and the Knight's book open with a thoughtful spring morning:

*En aquel mes de mai, / cant l'auzelo son gai / e chanto pels boissos, / estava cossiros / d'amor quem destrenhia*⁷⁴

And Geoffroy's opening lines:

*L'an mil trois cens soixante et onze, en un jardin estoye sous l'ombre, comme à l'issue d'avril, tout morne et tout pensiz*⁷⁵

Early thirteenth-century German works *Der Winsbecke* and *Die Winsbeckin*, are father-son and mother-daughter dialogue poems respectively. These were anonymous works and little can be surmised from their names. *Der Winsbecke* simply means "the man/knight from Winsbach" and *Die Winsbeckin* means "the woman/lady from Winsbach"; and scholarship has long debated whether or not a "knight of

⁷² Mark D. Johnston, "The Occitan *Enssenhamen de l'escudier* and *Essenhamen de la donzela* of Amanieu de Sescás," in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 23–4.

⁷³ Mark D. Johnston, "The Occitan *Enssenhamen*," 24.

⁷⁴ Mark D. Johnston, "The Occitan *Enssenhamen*," 41. "In that month of May, / when the little birds are happy / and sing through the woods, / I was pondering / the love that tormented me"

⁷⁵ FM 1. "The year 1371, in a garden I was under the shadow, as at the end of April, all gloomy and all pensive."

Winsbach” actually existed and recently discarded the idea.⁷⁶ Once again, I wish to focus on the text for the young women, *Die Winsbeckin*, which like the Occitan *Essenhamen*, is about love and courtly norms. Unlike the Knight’s book, it is not concerned with women’s religion.⁷⁷

A fifteenth-century anonymous Castilian work “*Castigos y dotrinas que un sabio dava a sus fijas*” (“Teachings and doctrines that a wise man gave to his daughters”) is one work that might resemble the Knight’s attempts more than the others. The father in this work had apparently written it for urban housewives of high social standing and focuses on the duties of married women,⁷⁸ very similar to the Knight’s work, rather than the aforementioned examples of “dating advice” or discourses on love. The anonymous father even gives advice for dealing with bad husbands,⁷⁹ as I will show Geoffroy’s attempts at the same, later in this thesis.

Having surveyed the late medieval prescriptive literature for women, the question of the Knight’s status and his views returns. Clerics have written scathing criticisms of marriage. Widows have defended womenkind by *exempla*. Kings have written letters to their daughters who are future rulers. Fathers and sons have engaged in debates of religiosity while mothers and daughters have talked about love. Anonymous urban men have written about the duties of urban married women. Amongst these distinct groups trying to carve out a space for their daughters or women, — whether that be religious, literary, political, amorous or marital space — who was Geoffroy de La Tour Landry and what was his status in his world?

⁷⁶ Ann Marie Rasmussen and Olga Trokhimenko, “The German *Winsbecke*, *Winsbeckin*, and *Winsbecke Parodies* (Selections),” in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 65.

⁷⁷ Rasmussen and Trokhimenko, “The German *Winsbecke*, *Winsbeckin*,” 65–66.

⁷⁸ Emily C. Francomano, “The Castilian *Castigos del rey don Sancho* (Selections) and *Castigos y dotrinas que un sabio dava a sus hijas*,” in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 186–87.

⁷⁹ Francomano, “The Castilian *Castigos*,” 188.

CHAPTER 2: HIERARCHIES AND ATTITUDES IN THE BOOK OF LA TOUR LANDRY

The Middle Ages were hardly known for its social equality. For most of the period the society had a hierarchy of social groups even if its thinkers did not see it this way. The elites of the nobility and of the clergy were at the top; and the unfree peasants, if applicable, were at the bottom. Those who belong to neither were somewhere in the highly amorphous middle. This middling group is where we might find Geoffroy de la Tour Landry and his household, though for all intents and purposes the Knight himself would consider himself to be part of the upper orders. It is absolutely certain that one of the main focuses of the book is about how his girls will interact with other social groups as noblewomen, since, as mentioned before, the girls would likely remain as nobles for their lives. However, reading between the lines can provide a perspective of how a knight from fourteenth century Anjou saw those of lower and higher pedigree than him, and how young girls should act around and towards them. While reinforcing the expected hierarchies of his society, Geoffroy de La Tour Landry's book believes in and makes peace with this society. The Knight completes his paternalistic obligations towards upper and lower orders and expects others, regardless of status, to complete theirs. He has no anxiety about the place he or his household have in society or the future of said society, despite the turmoil of the second half of the fourteenth century.

It is worth mentioning at this point that this thesis tries to categorize people of this medieval society into broad but practical social groups and then examine how the Knight perceived and portrayed them. This obviously cannot fully reflect the truth of how these people actually lived, nor can these categorizations be as rigid as this thesis might unwillingly imply. It is also paramount to note that the Knight writes to his daughters for prescriptive purposes. These stories are not meant to be accurate retellings of real events, except in some rare cases where the Knight relays his own experiences, but rather they are stories that he had heard before and edited according to the message he wants to convey, as we have seen with the comparison of similar *exempla* from Christine de Pizan's book.

2.1. The Knight and His Household

This effort to understand the Knight's views must be prefaced by understanding his household's status, and who was included in it. This deals with the status of the Knight's household specifically and not of his extended family or the statuses of his antecessors or predecessors. The Knight frequently appears in contemporary documents as a "*chevalier banneret*". He sent his men to the unsuccessful Siege of Cherbourg in 1378, but did not go himself.⁸⁰ He is also described as a banneret in April 1380 during the English *chevauchée* in Brittany, and also as such in September 1383 with another knight banneret, eight knight bachelors, and thirty-five squires.⁸¹ Being a *chevalier banneret* had its privileges and

⁸⁰ FM, xv.

⁸¹ FM, xvi.

expectations, and surveying these will be helpful to form a baseline for the Knight's household's status.

A *chevalier banneret* was, as the name implies, a knight with a banner. These knights had other knights under their banner, just as Geoffroy did in 1383 where he and another banneret had more than forty mounted men under their banners. These banners, physically, could be used to signify status, but this practice ended where baronial status started.⁸² Indeed, it seems that these two ranks of the military aristocracy were evolved from the ranks of wealthier knights who wished to distinguish themselves from landless knights or those with not much land.⁸³ The title of "baron" would not become a formal title until the late thirteenth-century.⁸⁴ Thus arose the *chevalier banneret* or knight banneret, in the late 1100s, in both France and England at the same time.⁸⁵ This intermediate group of landowners might be similar to the English gentry, whose responsibilities and powers in local governance only grew after the Black Death, making them contemporaries of Geoffroy.⁸⁶ However, David Crouch notes that this idea of "gentry" was entirely foreign to France,⁸⁷ despite similar developments of superior knighthood ranks. In this context, Geoffroy had a moderately well status in the hierarchy of military aristocracy, though he had a long way to the top: Barons, dukes, princes and only then kings. He also had a short way to the bottom: knights, squires, and then non-nobility.

Earlier I have grouped knight bachelors and squires into "mounted men", which deserves a deeper examination, not least of which being the fact that Geoffroy's two sons were squires when his book was written. In the twelfth-century,

⁸² David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900–1300* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014). 211.

⁸³ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 247.

⁸⁴ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 247.

⁸⁵ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 247–48.

⁸⁶ Robert C. Palmer, *English Law in the Age of the Black Death, 1348-1381 : A Transformation of Governance and Law*. (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 19.

⁸⁷ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 183.

squires (or to use contemporary words: *escuier*, *damoiseil*, *vaslet*) were mostly seen as the men and the boys who assisted the knight. Not all of these people would be expected to become knights, nor would all of them have the money to afford it.⁸⁸ By the thirteenth-century, the occupation of squirehood started to turn into a social group unto itself. The biography of William Marshal, who is perhaps the most famous and accomplished knight of all time, reports that in the 1170s squires asked very little from their master while by the 1220s they demanded both a warhorse and a pack horse. Squires even had their own hairstyles: cropped haircuts to distinguish themselves from long-haired knights.⁸⁹ By the middle of the century squires were demanding to be called “*domicellus*” and their wives to be called “*domicella*”, mirroring the words “*dominus*” and “*domina*” that a knight and his wife were called.⁹⁰

However, Geoffroy’s sons were not just squires, they were in fact the squires of Pierre de Craon,⁹¹ famous for his 1391 failed assassination attempt on Olivier de Clisson, one of King Charles VI’s favored advisors.⁹² De Craon’s assassination attempt and later escape to Brittany might be the reason for the onset of Charles VI’s still-undefined mental illness, as the following Brittany campaign was the first time he had his infamous episodes where he attacked his own men.⁹³ The king’s mental situation led to a shaky regency during a factional dispute, which then led to the Armagnac-Burgundian Civil War, described as “the damned war” by Bertrand Schnerb.⁹⁴ Since this had not happened yet, Geoffroy seems quite proud of having Pierre de Craon as someone above him. For example: “...*my lord of Craon, whiche ought wel to be honoured and to be preysyd for his curtosye aboue all other knyghtes*

⁸⁸ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 249–50.

⁸⁹ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 250.

⁹⁰ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 250–51.

⁹¹ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 6.

⁹² Bertrand Schnerb, *Les Armagnacs et les Bourguignons: La maudite guerre* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1988), 17, 47.

⁹³ Schnerb, *Les Armagnacs et les Bourguignons*, 18–20.

⁹⁴ Schnerb, *Les Armagnacs et les Bourguignons*, *passim*.

that I know".⁹⁵ Indeed, de Craon's courtesy knew no bounds, whether that be the King of France's court where he tried to kill the king's favored advisor or the Duke of Brittany's court where he escaped after his failure to kill said advisor. Regardless of the hindsight we have today, the Knight's sons occupied a respectable situation in society; and the La Tour Landry family must have been a family envied by lesser ones.

To further examine the Knight's status amongst peers, perhaps a survey into that very word will be useful. There were "peers of France" and "peers of England", with rights to speak first in council and who had more favor with the king, and thus were "*potentes*" which can be translated as "men of influence".⁹⁶ Even the tiny marquisate of Namur, in modern-day southern Belgium, had its admirably self-confident "peers" in the early thirteenth-century.⁹⁷ Geoffroy makes no claim of being a peer of anywhere, but these examples show the gradual rising steps of social groups. That being said, eleventh and early twelfth-century writers had no concept of a hierarchy of classes other than the king at the very top and the unfree peasant at the very bottom. This does not mean that they could not distinguish between the wealth and influence of individuals, but that they simply did not put one "class" above or below another.⁹⁸

This idea would be replaced with some form of class distinction by the late 1200s, such as Andrew the Chaplain who had three orders of the world, in ascending status: *plebeius*, *nobilis* and *nobilior*. *Plebeius* is the urban merchant, *nobilis* is the knight, and *nobilior* is the count.⁹⁹ However, once again, with all we know about bannerets in mind, it is hard to fit Geoffroy into either *nobilis* or *nobilior*. He is not

⁹⁵ CT, 34.

⁹⁶ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 233–34.

⁹⁷ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 234.

⁹⁸ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 238.

⁹⁹ Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 240.

just a knight, he is a *chevalier banneret* with five parishes to his name. Neither is he a baron or a count with hundreds of manors, and thousands of levied men and hundreds of knights at his command. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the rise of money economies threatened the old guard of nobility such as Geoffroy. There are even examples of *fabliaux* that can be read as these old ideas withering or reasserting themselves. Such as a *fabliaux* where an impoverished knight, who spent all his money on tournaments, gets an ability from the fairies where he can make genitalia and anuses speak. This is lucrative for business but not fitting of his rank, perhaps showing the lower ranks of the aristocracy struggle with the money economy.¹⁰⁰ With all this said, I want to reiterate that we find Geoffroy and his household in this “amorphous middle” of social groups and continue with examples from the text on his perceptions of hierarchies and attitudes towards these orders.

At the end of one story the Knight says that he intends to “*not... speke ageynst*” other “*ladies*” (or “*sur nulles en parler*” and “*damoiselles*” in French) just to his own household including the servants.¹⁰¹ As previously mentioned, this perhaps strengthens the possibility that the Knight realized his work could reach a broader audience, like nearby noble families, or at least thought that the manuscript could be used in his family after his death. This could have been his way of avoiding offending some people that he knew personally. One can imagine Geoffroy lounging with his colleagues, mentioning that the book he wrote for his daughters was very useful for their education and his peers asking for a manuscript copy or to borrow the original

¹⁰⁰ James R. Simpson, “Feudalism and Kingship,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 206.

¹⁰¹ CT, 55, FM, 49. [Hereafter, when a citation has two sources of the Knight’s book, they are in order that they appear in the footnoted text. For example “*not... speke agenyst*” is CT and “*sur nulles en parler*” is FM, as it is in this current footnote. Occasionally, either one of the English versions will be paraphrased but the French version will be used verbatim. In these cases I have still put CT or EM before FM.]

for a time. Books, especially for entertainment, were shared between families in the Middle Ages.¹⁰²

Another story is about a woman in service of a lady who tells a knight that her lady will do his bidding in exchange for a hood and some gifts that the woman would receive. The lord finds out about this and has the knight killed, and the lady imprisoned. The lady says that the woman put her up to this, despite the fact that the Knight of La Tour Landry relays this affair as consensual, and the lady dies in prison. The lord questions the woman and decides that, since she betrayed him, her hood and her neck will be cut off together.¹⁰³ While a modern audience's response to this dramatic story would be different, the Knight of La Tour Landry's is as follows: "Now you can see how important it is to keep good company, including your servants - take good and true ones who won't be blamed by any living man."¹⁰⁴ Interacting with those of a comparatively lower status would be expected of the knight's daughters. Indeed, this is the only paragraph about the moral of the story. It is not quite about chastity or punishment for betrayal, both of which are generally important of course, rather it is about how to pick good servants.

However, it seems like the Knight's household might have struggled to apply this advice, or were concerned about its reliability. In the mock argument between the Knight and his wife, at one point Lady de Rogue says that if a married woman is seen to act amorously towards a man other than her husband, "*her seruaunt, or ony other body*" ("*soient de ses servans ou servantes ou autres de eulx*" in French, meaning "be they her male or female servants or others among them") may see it and speak of it to

¹⁰² P. R. Coss, "Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: The Early Romances, Local Society and Robin Hood," *Past & Present*, no. 108 (August 1985): 35–79. 54–56, *passim*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/650573>. (Accessed August 11, 2025).

S. C. Kaplan, "Women's Libraries in Late Medieval Bourbonnais, Burgundy and France," *Liverpool University Press Blog*, December 7, 2022, https://liverpooluniversitypress.blog/2022/12/07/womens_libraries/ (Accessed August 11, 2025).

¹⁰³ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 147–48.

¹⁰⁴ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 148.

other people, which would then dishonor the married woman in question and cause her to lose the love of her lord.¹⁰⁵ This does not strictly mean that the Knight or his wife were constantly suspicious of their own servants. They probably realized that their daughters might be married off to households where they do not have the chance to familiarize themselves with the moral character of their servants and how this might cause their daughters to be slandered by their new servants.

The morals of servants reflected on the household, and both the clergy and the nobility were aware of this. These servants were not equivalent to the nineteenth century notion of anonymous labor; they lived with the noble family and, to a certain extent, benefited from their qualities of life. As a result, they had to be held to a certain standard. Gilbert of Tournai, a thirteenth century French Franciscan friar, suggested that wives, which is implied to mean wives of propertied men, were to use their intellectual and moral education to govern the household; to guard the chastity of both their female and male servants.¹⁰⁶ Gilbert also relays a story where a matron casts a maidservant into a river because she told the matron about a man who was sexually interested in her, which is quite similar to the Knight's story about the servant woman with the hood, except in this case the matron seems to have managed the situation well.¹⁰⁷ Humbert of Romans, a contemporary of Gilbert of Tournai and a French Dominican friar, says in one of his sermons that maidservants that commit sexual sins because they lived in the same household as other servant men, and not only this, but other servants are guilty for procuring or not stopping this behavior.¹⁰⁸ Chastity was taken seriously, not just for the upper orders, but for anyone that happened to be close to them. The Knight's emphasis on selecting good servants is better understood when

¹⁰⁵ EM, 181–2, FM, 259.

¹⁰⁶ Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). 112.

¹⁰⁷ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 113.

¹⁰⁸ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 110.

considering that he must have come across such sermons and knew that one day his daughters would be managing households. Barnhouse notes that ladies-in-waiting could be just as noble as others.¹⁰⁹ However, I see no emphasis put on the nobility or middling status of the treacherous woman in the aforementioned story, which implies the lack of either. She definitely is not another noblewoman, as the Knight makes sure to mention the importance of a woman when the condition applies.

As is always the case, education of children begins in the household at an early age, and the Knight's book has chapters about the education of children and women. In a chapter titled "*How the fathers and modern ought to praye for theyr children*" the Knight gives the example of biblical Jacob and his well-raised and pious sons, and then he starts a different story about a woman who was "*yrous and euylle, and... angry*" and so was her husband. As a side note, this is a rare appearance of female anger in the book and it is accompanied with male anger. Regardless, one time this couple argued with their son, who escalated the situation and which ended up with the couple giving the child to the devil, which immediately appeared in the premises, and burnt the child's hand, rendering his hand useless forever. Evidently the devil did not take the child.¹¹⁰ The Knight's moral in this story is to "*better... to bete [one's child] an honderd tyme... than to curse them ones*". Corporal punishment was simply a part of parenting and education, and the moral at the end shows this. The Knight is suggesting that corporeal punishment is the better version of correcting a child's behaviour, since the only alternative is apparently giving him to the Devil.

However, The Knight does have more to say about corporal punishment. There is a story about three merchants ("*marchans*"¹¹¹)men who bet on whose wife is the most obedient and then beat their wives when they don't obey. The third man's

¹⁰⁹ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 148.

¹¹⁰ CT, 118.

¹¹¹ FM, 41–43.

wife turns out to be the most obedient one. The story revolves around a pun in Old French, where the third man tells his wife simply “*saul sur table*” (“salt on the table”, the phrase lacks a verb, but the table is lacking salt in return) which the wife confuses with the imperative of “to leap” which is “*sail sur table*”. She jumps on the table and is proven to be the most obedient by not questioning why she would do it, and is not beaten. The moral of this story is that:

...moyen peple chastysen theyr wyues by buffettys and strokes, but gentyl wymmen ought to be chastysed by fayre semblaunt and by curtoyse, for other wyse ought not to be done to them. And therfore euery gentyl woman sheweth whether he haue gentyll courage or none; that is to wyte, that she sheweth by faire semblaunt and by curtoyse that she obeyeth and hath euer doubte to disobeye, leste ony harme come or myght happen or falle to her.

The French version is slightly different, yet the idea remains:

*...car gens voitturiers sy chastient leurs femmes par signes de cops; et aussy toute gentil femme de son droit mesmes doit l'en chastier et par bel et par courtoisie, car autrement ne leur doit l'en faire. Et, pour ce, toute gentil femme monstre se elle a franc et gentil cuer ou non, c'est assavoir qui lui monstre par bel et par courtoisie, de tant comme elle aura plus gentil et franc cuer, de tant se chastie elle mieulx, et obeist et fait plus debonnairement et commandement de son seigneur, et a plus grant doubte et paour de luy desobeir.*¹¹²

It seems that the Knight believed corporal punishment was not the first option, especially for adult noblewomen, but that it was definitely one of the options. It implies that even noblewomen could be proven to not have a “free and gentle” heart which means they are to be corrected as the “carter-people” (“*gens voitturiers*”¹¹³) or merchants do. This shows how the Knight thought of marital relationships and social hierarchies; his class of women were to be treated much differently from women who

¹¹² Translation: ...for merchants (“carter-people” or “*gens voitturiers*”) chastise their wives with strikes; and similarly all gentlewoman, by their own right, ought to be chastised; but nicely and courteously, for other ways should not be done to them. And, for this, all gentlewomen demonstrate if she has a free and gentle heart or not, that is to say, when someone corrects her nicely and courteously, the more she has a gentle and free heart, the more she will chastise herself, and obeys and is more easy-going and obeying towards her lord, and has greater dread and fear of disobeying him.

¹¹³ FM, 43.

were lower in class. This point will be reiterated in the next chapter in regards to emotions as well.

At the end of a story about the biblical Deborah and Saint Catherine who are both women famous for their intellectuality, the Knight mentions that “*somme folke*” say that they do not want their wives or daughters to know anything about “*clergye* [or] *of wrytynge*”. The Knight refutes them, saying that there is no reason to force a woman to write if she cannot benefit from it, but that he believes all women can benefit from being able to read since it would give them a greater understanding of the “*peryls of the sowle*” and how they can save their souls.¹¹⁴

Indeed, the Knight is not alone in thinking this. Francesc Eiximenis, a Catalan Franciscan friar and a contemporary of the Knight, believed that women could better serve God, their husbands and their households if they were literate.¹¹⁵ It does seem that the ideas of female literacy were in flux in the high-to-late middle ages. A thirteenth century Italian cleric named Thomasin wrote that an educated and intelligent woman should not display it, because it would concede authority to her. Philip of Novara, another thirteenth century Italian man and a chronicler, believed that women should not be literate as he feared they would be able to better deceive their husbands and read unsuitable romances.¹¹⁶ However, Vincent of Beauvais, a thirteenth century French Dominican friar, believed that young girls should read the Psalter specifically against such worldly pleasures as romances.¹¹⁷ Bernardino of Siena, a fifteenth century Italian priest and chronologically the most modern, argues even further than all of these men. He believed that, compared to early Christianity, in his

¹¹⁴ CT, 129–130.

¹¹⁵ Deborah Youngs, “Women as Educators in Medieval Europe: Learners, Teachers, Mentors,” in *A Cultural History of Christianity*, ed. Laura Kalas and Roberta Magnani (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, December 10, 2024), 139.

¹¹⁶ Green, *A Room of Their Own?*, 4.

¹¹⁷ Green, *A Room of Their Own?*, 4.

time it was men who were ignorant and unable to religiously instruct their wives; and thus, it fell upon women to teach their husbands about religion which would require them to be literate.¹¹⁸ In this context, the Knight's views fall on the side of arguing for women's literacy and has historical and contemporary precedents.

As mentioned frequently before, feudal society was deeply hierarchical and furthermore, the hierarchy also applied to both men and women; while the Knight absolutely loved all his children, he did think of them as boys and girls. His approach to raising them would be different than what a modern person might expect. Evidently, he did not write a single book for the education of all of his children, he wrote one book for the education of his sons and another for the education of his daughters, implying that they ought to learn different morals or adopt different habits. However, schools were not always separate for boys and girls. Jean Froissart grew up in a town in northern France where he went to school with girls and they learned to read French, like the Knight's daughters and not Latin, to do arithmetic and to be pious.¹¹⁹

As noticeable, the Knight indeed wants his daughters to be pious and know how to read vernacular writings. However, compared to Froissart, arithmetic does not take any space in his book, which is intriguing since his daughters would eventually be running the household which would require some arithmetic. This might have been included in another book or these arithmetic lessons could have been given without any traces left for us today. Moreover, it is not entirely surprising that he wrote a book for their education in specifically noble matters; common formal education would not suffice for him if indeed it only covered the areas that Froissart was educated in.

¹¹⁸ Green, *A Room of Their Own?*, 4–5.

¹¹⁹ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 108.

Female education in Medieval Europe spanned a broad spectrum. Most women could not read, and an even smaller number of them could write.¹²⁰ Philip of Novara believed that there was little reason for a woman to be literate unless she were to become a nun, and as mentioned before, lay women reading romances was undesirable to him. Christine de Pizan was told by a man that “it ill suits a woman to be learned”. Deborah Youngs states that even with vernacular and didactic texts, the boys would read it while the girls would listen,¹²¹ which is surprising to me because the Knight explicitly states that he wants his daughters to learn to read in the prologue, and it is hard to imagine someone learning to read while listening, and without seeing and interpreting the graphemes into the vernacular language that they already know. Youngs’ statement must be broadly applicable, yet not always true.

Since the Knight was writing in the late Medieval period, it would be prudent to examine how perceptions of female formal education was in that period and in regions close to the Knight. Joanne M. Ferraro, in the Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World, states that in the late Medieval and early Modern period, in some Germanic regions of Europe both boys and girls could get educated in basic literacy in backstreet schools but it is unclear if where these regions are. Ferraro notes that only a tiny part of all children could get educated in Latin, and that while boys could use this knowledge in various areas of life - such as in governmental or religious jobs - girls who knew Latin had no public use for it since they were practically barred from the types of jobs that boys could get.¹²² Indeed, Christine de Pizan, whose works has been mentioned earlier in this thesis, says that she only had the opportunity to educate herself when she was widowed.¹²³ Had her life gone

¹²⁰ Youngs, “Women as Educators in Medieval Europe,” 137.

¹²¹ Youngs, “Women as Educators in Medieval Europe,” 140.

¹²² Ferraro, “Childhood in Medieval and Early Modern Times,” 70.

¹²³ Youngs, “Women as Educators in Medieval Europe,” 141.

differently, she could have been too busy with child-rearing and household management, both of which were a woman's primary duties; rather than educating herself.

2.2. The Knight's Attitudes Towards Lower Orders: The Peasants, The Bourgeoisie, and The "Poor"

It is notable that the Knight was writing this twenty or so years after the Black Death, not to mention at the start of the second phase of the Hundred Years War and two decades after the Jacquerie revolt, all three of which had hurt France and French society severely.¹²⁴ There must have been many orphans in need of a guiding hand at the time. A question can be raised about whether or not doing this for practicality defeats its purpose. Should one expect every good deed to be rewarded in this lifetime? Regardless of what the Knight thought of this, he has more stories that have much broader implications in terms of medieval social groups.

There are many stories about charity especially towards lower class orphans, the Knight puts great emphasis on this. There is no doubt that he does this because he expects his daughters to be in the position of giver rather than of the needy. One of these stories is simply titled "Of charyte" in Caxton's translation and "*Cy parle de charité*" in French. In the story we are told that a woman, who had only one child, a boy, was charitable to God and to Saint Elizabeth, a saint who took care of orphans. One day the woman's boy falls into a pit while bathing himself in the river, and he survives there by the grace of Saint Elizabeth for eight days. On the eighth day the

¹²⁴ Michael Prestwich, *Yüz Yıl Savaşları (A Short History of the Hundred Years' War)*, tr. Samet Özgüler, (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2022). 8, 54.

woman sees where her boy is in her dream and Saint Elizabeth tells her to prepare and get him out.¹²⁵ A straightforward story about helping those in need will end up with good things happening to oneself as well. Even though the woman in this story is not part of the nobility, and is simply described as a “good woman”¹²⁶ or “*bonne dame*”¹²⁷. The Knight is indeed nobility; and the nobility have to provide for the needy and this must have been an important moral for the Knight to teach to his daughters. The status of these people as lower than the Knight’s status are derived from an earlier statement in the same story where the Knight says Saint Elisabeth made orphaned children learn a craft to earn a living (“...*les faisoit apprendre aucun mestier*”¹²⁸ meaning “made them learn some craft”), suggesting that they had no passive income from land ownership.

There is a story about a woman who gave meat to her dogs. She frequently gave “fleshe and good morsels”, “dayly dysshes of sowpes”¹²⁹ to them. One day a mendicant friar (“*frère mendiant*” in French) told her that she should not feed her well-fed dogs and instead should feed the “poure peple of god” who were “lene and drye”.¹³⁰ The moral of this story is also very straightforward, but another moral comes in towards the end. The Knight says that it is every good woman’s pleasure to feed the motherless and the fatherless as the Countess of Mains did who had thirty orphans in her protection.¹³¹ In the same story, he also gives an example from Queen Blanche, the mother of Saint Louis, who gave food to the needy.¹³² Compared to the last story, the orphan theme returns yet this time good examples of womanhood are from the nobility, that is to say a countess and a queen.

¹²⁵ CT, 122–23.

¹²⁶ CT, 122.

¹²⁷ FM, 170.

¹²⁸ CT, 123, FM, 170.

¹²⁹ “flesh and good bits of meat” and “daily dishes of soups”

¹³⁰ CT, 51.

¹³¹ CT, 52.

¹³² CT, 51.

In another story about the biblical Martha, the Knight says that this woman always accommodated the “*prophetes and the seruaunts of god*” (“*prophètes et les sergens de Dieu*” in French) which got her soul accepted into heaven, and that every good woman should also try to accommodate the “*the seruauntes of god... also the pylgryms and the poure peple of god*” (“*les sergens de Dieu... aussi... les pelerins et les povres de Dieu*” in French) which will save their souls on Judgment Day.¹³³

There are other stories from the Knight that more clearly demonstrate similarities across social stratas. The Knight tells the story of a woman who frequently argued with her burgess husband. The husband warned her three times, and she kept doing the same behavior. Eventually the husband punched her to the ground and kicked her in the face to the point that her nose was permanently disfigured. The Knight tells his daughters that they should never argue with their husbands, and only reprimand and advise him when they are alone, even if he is wrong.¹³⁴ The “*sail sur table*” story from the previous subheading also proves that physical violence towards women was an option for men across all social groups, but that the Knight thought noblewomen should be given more chances to correct themselves.¹³⁵ These chapters show the rare class similarity: All wives are subordinate, or are at least supposed to appear to be subordinate, to their husbands regardless of status.¹³⁶

It is clear at this point that even though the Knight most definitely noticed socioeconomic differences in his society, he did not see class conflict as an inseparable part of the society he lived in. He has many examples of good and bad people from all groups in his society. For example, he has a story of a fat prior who lies with a married woman. The woman’s husband, a ropemaker, ends up killing them

¹³³ CT, 144, FM, 197–9.

¹³⁴ CT, 46–7.

¹³⁵ See above pg, 31–32.

¹³⁶ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 92.

both and faces no consequences.¹³⁷ Emphasis is also put on the rotund ugliness of the prior and the fit handsomeness of the ropemaker, which can be looked into, if not for the scope of this chapter.

The Knight mentions poor people directly as such many times, with some nuances in these descriptions that can help us construct his views about them. On one occasion he advises his daughters to show their courtesy towards “*mene and smal peple*” because they will revere it more than great people, because the respect that one displays to great people are their right, but respect unto “*smal gentylmen and gentyl wymmen and to other of lasse degre*” (“*aux petits gentilz hommes et aux petites gentils femmes et autres maindre*” in French¹³⁸) comes from one’s own heart. This, in turn, leads these people to return the courtesy, and then to a person like Geoffroy’s status to earn renown that grows day by day and for him to have “*the loue of alle peple*” (“*l’amour des grans et de petits*” meaning “*the love of the great and the small*” in French)¹³⁹ The chapter implies the existence of a very kind and courteous group of people of middling status that gives and receives respect, initiated by the people of comparatively higher degree. It is imperative to notice that the Knight speaks of being kind to “small” but still “gentle-people” (noblepeople, as mentioned before)¹⁴⁰ and not everyone; but this act makes one beloved by “all people”. I believe that he is not suggesting that his daughters should be too kind towards people of very low status, but to earn their love through being kind to people whose status is between very low and of the Knight’s status.

A story about a knight who had three consecutive wives involves one of the wives having more clothing items than she needed, and the knight requests his hermit

¹³⁷ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 191–93.

¹³⁸ FM, 23.

¹³⁹ CT, 35, FM, 23–24.

¹⁴⁰ See above pg, 14.

uncle to scry into the afterlife to see how she is faring. The hermit, in his dreams, sees Michael the Archangel and the Devil weighing her deeds in the afterlife, and the Devil says that with the value of her excessive clothes fifty poor people could have been protected from cold yet she never took pity on them. Her evil deeds are weighed heavier than her good ones, so the Devil takes the knight's wife and dresses her in her valuable gowns, which are now on fire, and the woman suffers in Hell. The hermit wakes up, and tells his niece to donate her clothes to poor people for God's sake.¹⁴¹

The Knight also relays a story from his childhood, when he was “*not about ten yere old*” (“*si n’avois-je que environ ix. ans quant elle morut*” in French, meaning “if I had not been around the age of 9 when she died”¹⁴²), about a widowed noblewoman by the name of Cecyle of Balleuylle in English or Olive de Belle Ville in French. This woman lent her jewels to any “*poure gentyll wymmen*” (“*povre gentil-femme*” in French) who was getting married, and went to the funerals of such women as well. If she knew of any sick people or pregnant women, she visited them and had meat brought for them. She held a feast on Christmas every year, invited neighbors and she “*honoured eche one after his degree*”. She heard Mass multiple times daily, and regularly fasted. The Knight says that he knows of her because she died in a manor in La Galonnière¹⁴³ that she held in dowry that pertained to Geoffroy's father; and the Knight and his sisters even lived in that manor for some unspecified time.¹⁴⁴

Geoffroy mentions pitying the poor at the end of a story about a knight fighting and dying to save a slandered woman who was going to be burnt at the stake. The details of the story are irrelevant, but the knight wins a duel in the name of the slandered woman. However, he dies of the five wounds he suffered during combat,

¹⁴¹ CT, 93, FM, 106.

¹⁴² FM, 277.

¹⁴³ La Galonnière is within five kilometers of modern La Tourlandry.

¹⁴⁴ CT, 180–82, FM, 274–77.

which Geoffroy compares to Jesus' death on the cross, also with five lethal wounds. Just as Jesus died for humanity's sins, this knight died to rescue a woman from slander, says Geoffroy; and the moral of this story is that "*euery man and woman*" ("*tout homme et femme*" in French¹⁴⁵) should pity and weep for the misery of their parents, neighbors and the poor ("*de ses parens, de ses voysins, et des povres*" in French).¹⁴⁶

It is possible to read between the lines for the Knight, but how did the peasantry see this inequality? In the late Middle Ages, the distinction between the peasantry became less about free and unfree and more about the peasant families who had enough land for subsistence and those who did not.¹⁴⁷ In that respect, any peasant could think that he is higher comparatively than his neighbor. Furthermore, it is almost impossibly difficult to find a source, let alone an unbiased one, written by the "lower classes".

Some evidence might be found relating to the Jacquerie uprising, which would have been much closer to home for the Knight. A recent article and book by Justine Firnhaber-Baker has examined the social background of the individuals and communities who were involved with the Jacquerie revolt but were later pardoned by royal decree.¹⁴⁸ A brief summary of the revolt is that it started in Picardie on May 28th of 1358 and lasted around two months until it was crushed by the nobility in a pitched battle with a coordinated effort from the French and Navarran crowns. The revolt mostly consisted of stealing nobles' property, attacking their forts and houses, with at

¹⁴⁵ FM, 208.

¹⁴⁶ CT, 152–53, FM, 208.

¹⁴⁷ Rodney Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism*, (New York: Verso, 1990), 68.

¹⁴⁸ Justine Firnhaber-Baker, "The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358", *Speculum* 95, no. 3. (2020): 691. <https://doi.org/10.1086/709361> (Accessed August 11, 2025).

least fifteen records of noblemen being killed and two records of women being raped.¹⁴⁹

Some of these rebels were granted pardons. Over forty percent of these pardons are formulaic. However, the majority describe the actions clearly.¹⁵⁰ Siméon Luce's book on the revolt, which is over a hundred and fifty years old, suggests that the reason for the sudden outbreak of peasant violence was because of a political struggle in Paris. The French King Jean II had been captured in battle in 1356; and two factions were vying for power in Paris. The dauphin, meaning the French heir and later king Charles V, was supported by the nobility while another faction was made up of the merchants of Paris with close ties to the King Charles II of Navarre who was from a rival dynasty. Luce even speculated that the revolt was secretly supported by Étienne Marcel, a Parisian merchant, who was being blockaded in Paris at the start of the revolt as the dauphin assembled an army. Indeed, it was auspicious for him and his faction that a third party rose up.¹⁵¹

The Hundred Years War had been as harsh, if not harsher, on the French peasantry as it was on their English counterparts who would rise up in 1381. Luce suggested that the revolt was a response to the dauphin's new army, which would pillage the countryside and only make life worse for the peasantry. Jules Flammermont's rebuttal against Luce claimed that the peasantry would need people capable of thinking and that the Jacques were definitely not capable of that in his opinion.¹⁵²

Given the historical and historiographical context, Firnhaber-Baker's analysis of pardons suggests that the sixty percent of unique pardons show that those who got

¹⁴⁹ Firnhaber-Baker, "The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358", 689.

¹⁵⁰ Firnhaber-Baker, "The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358", 692.

¹⁵¹ Firnhaber-Baker, "The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358", 693.

¹⁵² Firnhaber-Baker, "The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358", 693.

this sort of treatment must have spent considerable money on it alongside having connections and an understanding of the legal system.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the Jacques had a leader called the general captain of the *gens du plat pays*¹⁵⁴ who is known by the name of Guillaume Calle. He and his “top brass” must have been men of wealth, as Calle’s possessions were given to a nobleman by the name of Robert Garitel which suggests that it was worthy of being owned by the nobility, and Calle’s widow tried to take them back by suing Garitel,¹⁵⁵ which can suggest that these items were worthy of a legal battle and that these items were not looted, but legally owned. Simon Doublet and Arnoul Génelon, both Jacques captains, both owned more than one house.¹⁵⁶ The article gives further examples that show how the revolt was not a revolt of the *misère*, and that these men were also educated as well.¹⁵⁷ Such men of middling status were also found amongst the “rank and file”.¹⁵⁸

It is worth noting that these pardons do not and cannot represent the entire Jacquerie revolt. On this occasion a group of rural and relatively well-off people, such as moderately wealthy men like Cale, seem to have risen up and led the lower orders against a real or perceived threat. Moreover, if the Jacquerie leadership did collude with Marcel, the Parisian merchant, they would have taken a side during a political standoff between two rival factions seeking to take control over the country, which can suggest an ideological motivation against the upper groups by the aforementioned amorphous middle ranks, though a weak one. The time frame is also interesting compared to the popular revolts that took place in the fourteenth century — the Zealots of Thessalonica, the local unrest preceding English Peasants’ Revolt of 1381,

¹⁵³ Firnhaber-Baker, “The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358”, 696.

¹⁵⁴ *people of the flat country*, in reference to the flatlands of northern France.

¹⁵⁵ Firnhaber-Baker, “The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358”, 697.

¹⁵⁶ Firnhaber-Baker, “The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358”, 697–98.

¹⁵⁷ Firnhaber-Baker, “The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358”, 698.

¹⁵⁸ Firnhaber-Baker, “The Social Constituency of the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358”, 701.

the Tuchin revolt in southern France, the Ciompi revolt in Florence — which no doubt influenced the worldview of the Knight of La Tour-Landry or those who utilized and distributed his books.

While most of these revolts took place after the Knight wrote his book for his daughters, as a nobleman he must have noticed that certain groups in his society were more ill-tempered compared to how they were in his youth. Revolts do not happen overnight, they brew for years, even decades. Despite this, the Knight still believed in his paternalistic obligations and passed them down to his daughters in writing. Furthermore, since this book was widely copied and printed, these obligations must have still resonated with some of the members of the upper orders.

That being said, the Knight might have thought that revolts like these are well outside of the domestic sphere, and irrelevant to women. While some household management duties were deferred to women and these women could potentially have been threatened by such rebels, it perhaps seemed too pessimistic for the Knight to warn his daughters about peasant uprisings or war. Indeed, the actual act of waging war has little to no space in the book. As a point of comparison, Jean le Bel and Jean Froissart, both fourteenth-century chroniclers of France and roughly contemporaries with the Knight, both describe the final battle of the revolt, which resulted in the Jacquerie being slaughtered “like pigs”.¹⁵⁹ Conceivably, the Knight’s lost book, written for his sons, might have had a view on such matters, but to his daughters the Knight gave no advice about the possibility of a world turned upside down.

¹⁵⁹ Justine Firnhaber-Baker, *The Jacquerie of 1358: A French Peasants’ Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). 202.

2.3. The Knight's Attitudes Towards Higher Orders: The Nobility and The Clergy

In a story about the “Emperor of Constantinople”, who had two daughters, one devout and the other sinful, one can see that the story does not correspond to any historical event in Byzantine history. In the story, the emperor’s two daughters have two lovers, translated as “knights” by Caxton,¹⁶⁰ and “chevaliers” and also “amourettes” in French¹⁶¹ and the sinful daughter accepts her lover into her room at night, while the devout daughter is protected by a thousand men in shrouds, that is to say dead men, or *mille hommes en suaires* in French,¹⁶² whom she had been praying to, which scares off her own lover when he tries to do the same. When the emperor finds out about the sinful daughter’s actions, he has her drowned and her knight lover flayed.¹⁶³ (“*noyer*” and “*escorchier*” respectively,¹⁶⁴) This is not meant to be interpreted as a threat from the Knight of La Tour Landry to his daughters. It seems that the Knight did not need to resort to horrifying threats to educate the girls. This story is similar to the familiar formula of “Once upon a time” stories which intend to teach children a moral in a distant, exotic setting.¹⁶⁵ In my opinion, it is interesting that the emperor, who holds the highest secular office possible, is capable of such cruelty, perhaps showing how the Knight viewed those above him or maybe even foreign cultures. Indeed, during a different story Caxton’s translation refers to “Roman justice” where men and women are beheaded or their throats are cut open as punishment. That being said, the story notes that it does not happen here in France but

¹⁶⁰ CT, 19.

¹⁶¹ FM, 7.

¹⁶² FM, 7

¹⁶³ CT, 19–20.

¹⁶⁴ FM, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 47.

elsewhere in the world, in “Romania”,¹⁶⁶ most definitely what we now call Byzantium; and in Spain or in Aragon,¹⁶⁷ neither of which are too far from the Knight’s domain in Anjou. Furthermore, the specific phrase “Roman justice” is not found in the French original. The knight simply refers to this kind of justice as “*justice*” with no adjective.¹⁶⁸ He does note that it does not happen in France anymore.

The Knight’s moral stories are not just about earthly matters, they are just as much interested in the daughters’ spirituality as well. The religion of Late Medieval Europe was well-organized and had traditions going back over a millennium. It should be no surprise that the Knight intended to pass down what he knew about religion and about men and women of religion, with whom his dear girls would interact with almost on a daily basis. One of these stories is about a knight who caused his local area to miss Mass, which can provide some insight into how the Knight views the lower orders of the clergy as a nobleman and well-off knight.

The story is about a couple, a knight and a lady, who slept until noon and missed Mass regularly. Their parish priest (“*parson*” in English or “*personne*” in French¹⁶⁹) dared not speak against the knight, so the entire parish missed Mass as well, as the story goes. The people of the parish were angry at this and let it be known to the priest. One night the priest had a vision where he wished to lead a flock to pasture to have them fed, but two horned pigs, or in Caxton’s words “a black swine and a sow”, forbade him from reaching his flock.¹⁷⁰ The knight and the lady had a similar vision where they were turned into a black swine and a sow and then a group of hunters approached on black horses with packs of hunting dogs whom they were

¹⁶⁶ See Anthony Kaldellis’ enlightening book *Romanland* on the usage of the word “Romania” in reference to the Byzantine Empire.

¹⁶⁷ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 220.

¹⁶⁸ FM, 232.

¹⁶⁹ CT, 68, FM, 66.

¹⁷⁰ CT, 68.

slain by, and this nightmare repeated for two nights.¹⁷¹ The knight then tells this nightmare to the priest, and the priest says that there is a holy hermit close by who can interpret this dream; despite it seeming very clear in its implications. Indeed, the hermit interprets the dream as expected and tells them that they will be damned if they do not mend their ways. The knight and the lady confess to the hermit, and the hermit says that the knight should kneel to the parishioners for three Sundays in penance and cry for their mercy, and from that day forward they were the first at the church and the knight repented as told.¹⁷²

There is more to this story than meets the eye. It imposes a strict top-down hierarchy that falls upon everyone involved to keep up, and also bottom-up demands that those at the top have to provide. The knight is supposed to always attend Mass, not only because of the salvation of his soul, but also because it otherwise prevents the priest's flock from salvation as well. It is also worth noting that the Knight of La Tour Landry says the priest dared not to speak up against the knight. It perhaps shows, from his perspective, how society is ordered: The parish priest, a representative of the clergy, is depicted as hierarchically below the knight, a representative of the nobility. Finally, the parishioners are below both, but they can still make demands and be angry, especially if salvation is at risk, and a knight may even kneel and cry in front of them in such a case. It is impossible to know if this story had a real-life origin and how most knights, priests or parishioners would act in a similar situation but it is incredibly valuable for seeing society from the Knight's eyes. Salvation and penance is above any class distinction for Geoffroy de la Tour Landry.

¹⁷¹ CT, 69.

¹⁷² CT, 69–70.

Mass was indeed a serious matter in the Middle Ages. There are other stories about it as well, including a miserly noblewoman for whom no Mass was held after her death. The story goes as such: There was a widowed woman who had been the wife of a baron (“*un grant baron*” in French¹⁷³) She only had one daughter, who was married to a great lord (“*grant seigneur*” in French¹⁷⁴). In the widow’s final days, she demanded her treasury chest be brought to her and she hid the key to it. After her death, her daughter searched the room and found the key under her body. The chest held more than thirty thousand pounds worth of items. Everyone was shocked by this as the lady frequently asked for money from her servants, saying that she had no money. The daughter takes the treasure and does not give anything in her memory to the church or elsewhere.¹⁷⁵ The Knight ends the story by telling his daughters that if God sends them a treasure, they should give most of it to the poor. The Knight notes that they should not leave the treasure to the hands of their heirs, because the widowed woman’s children did not hold Mass in her honor.¹⁷⁶

One wonders if the Knight or his daughters see the irony in this moral at the end. He is implying that he intends to not leave much to his dear daughters as he suspects they will not hold Mass in his honor. Of course, the Knight had two sons who were both squires,¹⁷⁷ that might be why he is concerned about the possibility of leaving most of his money to his daughters and tries to instruct them in this regard. This was a time of war, and considering the fact that the Hundred Years War saw a great percentage of French nobility die in battles such as in Crécy, he could be thinking that his sons or himself would die untimely and that his daughters would inherit most, if not all, of his possessions. The Knight had been active at the time of

¹⁷³ FM, 271.

¹⁷⁴ FM, 271.

¹⁷⁵ CT, 177–79.

¹⁷⁶ CT, 179.

¹⁷⁷ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 6.

the Battle of Crécy, though he was not involved in the battle directly.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, the battle must have been such a landmark event for him that he uses it for reference on one occasion. To elaborate, he refers to a lady who is the wife of a knight undeserving of her. The lady had been widowed since the “*tyme and Iourney of Crecy, the which is xxvj^{ti} wynter agone*”¹⁷⁹ or “*qui est vefve dès le tems de la bataille de Crécy, il y a xxvj. ans*”¹⁸⁰ suggesting that this lady’s husband died during the Crécy campaign and might have been someone that the Knight had been acquainted with. The catastrophic loss at Crécy with its high casualties for the French nobility must have influenced the Knight’s views on untimely death and inheritance. This story might be an occasion where it is visible; where one would not expect it to appear, in a book mostly about women’s lives.

2.4. The Knight’s Views on Gender, Work and Marriage

Another story is about a “common” woman in Caxton’s description or “evil” woman in the manuscript, also “folysshe” or “fole” in Caxton’s and French descriptions. This woman went to see her lover and fell into a pit. Despite being unchaste she regularly fasted on Friday in honor of Jesus Christ and on Saturday in honor of the Virgin Mary. On one dark night while going to see her lover, she stumbles and falls into a pit and she yells out “Lady, help!” to which a voice answers “In honor of the Virgin Mary, and of her son, for whom you have fasted, you are saved. And henceforth keep your body clean from the sin of your flesh.” Indeed, the

¹⁷⁸ EM, vii, FM, xii–xiii.

¹⁷⁹ EM, 154.

¹⁸⁰ FM, 221. Translation: who has been a widow since the time of the Battle of Crécy, twenty-six years ago.

woman does so. She starts taking care of the church and gets baptized again for her sins.

The Knight gives the unchaste woman a chance at redemption. It is interesting that he sees the possibility of being saved through simple acts such as fasting two days a week even if this woman commits a sin that the Knight frequently warns against. The woman in this question is not explicitly called a prostitute, but the context of the story is implying it, such as an unchaste woman staying out during dark and going to see her “lover”; and Barnhouse interprets “common woman” as a prostitute as well.¹⁸¹ Regardless, the Knight’s text is quite realistic regarding prostitution. Later in the book the Knight engages in a mock argument with his wife. The wife, speaking through the Knight’s stylus of course, talks about the kind of married women who “set their love on someone of a lower degree than themselves”, which according to her are not worthy of being called women at all and are greater harlots than actual prostitutes themselves. This point about lower degrees is worth returning to. However, in regards to prostitution she says that they are often driven into this sinful line of work “out of need or poverty” or they were tricked into it,¹⁸² compared to noble adulteresses who have no such excuse. In another story about the biblical Delilah, who betrays her husband Samson in exchange for gold, the Knight says that covetousness makes bad people out of good ones, such as making “*maydens & wydowes to become harlottes*” or “*il fait... les pucelles et les mariées putains*”.¹⁸³ It is worth noting that the French version uses “*les mariees*” instead of widows, which implies adultery as well, similar to the noble adulteresses above.

Lady de Rogue’s observation that women prostituted themselves out of need was quite on point. Prostitution in Medieval France was common amongst working

¹⁸¹ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 61.

¹⁸² Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 164.

¹⁸³ CT, 111, FM, 145.

class single or widowed women, especially laundresses.¹⁸⁴ This was mostly a second line of work for desperate women, and Humbert of Romans reports that there were women in villages who did sex work since there were no prostitutes in the village.¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, single or widowed working women might have increased in number in the world that the Knight lived in, due to the Black Death. In England, while it is almost impossible to know the exact numbers, there is evidence from post-Plague Herefordshire that female employment could have been as high as 28 percent.¹⁸⁶ The independent female worker had become visible in society. In fact, it seems that a significant portion of women chose not to marry at all. Perhaps due to the fear of the plague, bringing children into a world with such high death rates must not have been acceptable to some.¹⁸⁷ Widowed peasant women had less to worry about, since there was less pressure, and less options, to remarry. Husbands were more likely in this period to hold joint tenancies with their wives, due to the value of their labor, thus giving the woman more freedom if the husband had an untimely death.¹⁸⁸ While this data comes from England, since the Black Death had very little concern about borders, perhaps similar figures can be suggested for France as well. The Knight might have had to overlook many pre-Plague social transgressions, such as a greater number of women in the workforce, that his antecessors would not tolerate in his youth.

Prostitution was apparently so common — and perhaps frustrating for noblewomen— that a *béguinage*, an institution for lay religious women who live in a community without retiring from the world, was founded by the countesses of

¹⁸⁴ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 138.

¹⁸⁵ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 111.

¹⁸⁶ Simon A. C. Penn and Christopher Dyer, “Wages and Earnings in Late Medieval England: Evidence from the Enforcement of the Labour Laws”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Aug., 1990), 361. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2596938> (Accessed August 11, 2025)

¹⁸⁷ Jim Bolton, “‘The World Upside Down’ Plague as an Agent of Economic and Social Change” in M. Ormrod and P. Lindley (eds.) *The Black Death in England*, (Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2003). 71–73.

¹⁸⁸ Bolton, “‘The World Upside Down’”, 75.

Flanders and Hainault for women who begged or resorted to “shameful means” to get by.¹⁸⁹ It must be emphasized that the *béguinage* was founded by noblewomen, which might indicate an extension of the household moral duties that they took up or were assigned to. Regardless, the Knight’s book, especially when his wife is talking, has a realistic outlook on what drives someone to sell their bodies, though of course, it is still not acceptable for their own household under any condition.

Indeed, there are many instances where prostitutes or unchaste women are derided in the book. There is a story where three ladies accuse a knight of lying and at one point even draw their knives to kill him. This knight cleverly says that as his dying wish he wants the “greatest whore” “greatest whore” (“*plus pute*” in French¹⁹⁰) among them to strike first. This causes a hesitance amongst the women and the knight escapes in the confusion.¹⁹¹ In another instance the Knight of La Tour Landry decries the “lemmans of thenglysshe men, [and] of the peple of companies”¹⁹² who bring new fashions into France. The phrase “the people of companies” refers to the prostitutes who followed armies.¹⁹³ The word “lemman” can have many meanings in Caxton’s Middle English, including “lover”, “wife” or “unlawful lover or mistress”.¹⁹⁴ In context this probably also refers to some kind of unchaste woman that followed English armies across France; or perhaps a nationalistic insult, where he calls the wives of the English unchaste, as well as the women that accompanied their armies. Considering the fact that the Knight fought against the English in the Hundred Years War, we can assume that he is not speaking highly of English women. Indeed, he does

¹⁸⁹ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 129.

¹⁹⁰ FM, 54.

¹⁹¹ FM, 54-55.

¹⁹² CT, 53.

¹⁹³ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 119.

¹⁹⁴ Middle English Compendium, s.v. “lemman.” (Michigan: University of Michigan Library, 2024). <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25097/> (Accessed August 11, 2025)

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “Leman, n.,” https://www.oed.com/dictionary/leman_n?tab=meaning_and_use#39658279. (Accessed August 11, 2025)

not like the English. At another point the Knight relays a story that when talking to a lady in his youth, he said to her that being her captive, as in her lover, would not be worse than the “prison of Englishmen”.¹⁹⁵

Prostitution is a difficult line of work and it was even more difficult in the Middle Ages. Lady de Rogue, speaking through the Knight again, notes that hardly anyone willingly goes into this line of work. In the years leading up to the English Peasants’ Revolt in 1381, a group of rebels massacred Flemish artisans and prostitutes in Southwark, probably caused by long-standing grudges between the city’s elite and the rest.¹⁹⁶ Though, on one occasion in Norwich in 1312 one man assaulted the bailiffs who were driving out the prostitutes from the town.¹⁹⁷ While these two examples were from England, the our Angevin knight cannot assign moral blame to the English so quickly, as during the Hundred Years’ War French armies were often accompanied by prostitutes as well.¹⁹⁸

Returning to the conversation the Knight has with his lady, Jeanne de Rogue, this part also contains some veiled social commentary on Lady de Rogue’s behalf. The Knight of La Tour Landry asks her if her daughters should keep to their own social strata, and the lady responds with: “Sir, I do not want them to take pleasure with those who are of lower estate and degree than they are. No unmarried woman should set her love on a man of lower rank than she is.” and also “And therefore, Sir, I, their mother, forbid them to set their love on one of a lower degree than their own. Nor should they have as their lord one of higher estate, for the great lords won’t take

¹⁹⁵ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 81.

¹⁹⁶ Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., *Popular Protest in Late Medieval English Towns*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). 179.

¹⁹⁷ Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360*, (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2005). 488.

¹⁹⁸ Prestwich, *Yüz Yıl Savaşları (A Short History of the Hundred Years’ War)*, 114.

them as wives, but they deceive them to have the delights and pleasures of their bodies, and to bring them to the folly of the world.”¹⁹⁹

Lady de Rogue is blatantly advising against moving up or down the social ladder, that being said this could not have been everyone’s point of view. Of course, it is hard to know how strict she intends to be with these class distinctions, but she definitely does not think marriage between the dauphin or a peasant, and one of her daughters is likely or desirable. One interesting aspect is that she gives a reason to avoid men of higher status: They will simply take pleasure in their bodies and thus dishonor them. However, she gives no direct reason to avoid men of lower status. It is presumably a foregone conclusion that they should avoid those men, but she either has nothing to actually accuse them of, or she has too many of them. However, the couple seem to have more overt distrust of higher lords. The one actual use of the word “*violer*” (“to rape”, in both Old and Modern French) occurs in a story about a “*grete lord*” or “*grant seigneur*” to tries to rape a devout noblewoman. Indeed, the lower classes are never mentioned to attempt this.²⁰⁰ Presumably this is because the Knight could easily deal with lower-class men if they attempted such a thing, but one wonders how he would “humbly suffer” his lords if someone above him attempted it.

Marriage was critical to status in the Middle Ages and the Knight of La Tour Landry has more stories whose morals focus on marriage. Another story about marriage is about the “many good ladies of tyme presente”. The Knight gives examples of a young widow who refused to remarry and, as the Knight puts emphasis on it, brought up her children honorably. More interesting to the Knight is the fact that the woman had loved and respected her husband who was a hunchback and a goggle-eyed small man. Another good woman is a lady who takes care of an incontinent old

¹⁹⁹ Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 163.

²⁰⁰ CT, 21, FM, 9–10.

man of good lineage. These women are examples of those who dismissed the pleasures of the world and “have held their good estate”. The Knight says that those who get married without the counsel of their friends and family, and for pleasure are doing themselves wrong.²⁰¹ It is important to note that the Knight will get married again later in his life, and his second wife will not be of lower status,²⁰² perhaps showing that these expectations around remarriage apply to both sexes, though it would be difficult for him to be reprimanded if he did not take his own advice.

2.5. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has attempted to reconstruct the Knight’s perspective of the society he lives in, what sort of responsibilities he has towards others, and what responsibilities others have towards him. What is his place in the world, and why is it as such. What is his relationship with the Church, as a member of the secular nobility. The Knight certainly did not intend his book to be examined in this way, in fact, as mentioned before, he might not have even thought that his book would be widely published in France, let alone printed more than a century later in England and Germany. Perhaps this is better for a researcher, as we can assume all he wrote is sincere, because he thought only his household or maybe some other close families would see it.

Further research on this subject can delve deeper into the mind of the medieval nobility. There are many other courtesy books from the late medieval and early modern European world and one can perhaps apply the same methods used here for

²⁰¹ FM, 221–24, EM, 154–57.

²⁰² Barnhouse, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, 209.

these books as well. The historiography of the Knight's book is also interesting, as it caught the attention of editors in the nineteenth century. Having mentioned the nineteenth century, the comparison of Victorian moralistic writings to medieval ones, and effects of medieval morals on Victorian ones, can be thought-provoking though it is beyond the scope of my current interests.



CHAPTER 3: LOVE AND FEAR IN THE BOOK OF LA TOUR

LANDRY

Emotions play a critical role in the book of Geoffroy La Tour Landry. The book contains emotions throughout. The Knight even sets out his purpose for the book with emotions in mind. He says that he wrote his book so that his daughters “*serue*” and “*loue*” God, and that they will have the love and grace of their neighbors and of the world.²⁰³ The French version uses the words “*servir et amer*”, and “*avoir l’amour et la grace de leurs voysins et du monde*”.²⁰⁴ Caxton’s translation is very direct on this occasion, making use of cognates in the French and English languages such as “*servir*” and “*grace*”.²⁰⁵ More examples will be provided throughout the chapter.

It is quite a sincere book, as it was originally written to be read by the Knight’s household only, with the Knight leaving little room for a larger audience as mentioned previously. It shows the father’s side of father-daughter relationships in late medieval France, or at least of a father who had a tower and several parishes to his name. Regardless, I believe that the book gives incredibly valuable insight into late medieval Western European society. This insight can be refined by understanding the works of those who have a greater knowledge of the history of emotions and of the medieval world, which I will now survey and try to apply their methods to the

²⁰³ CT, 15.

²⁰⁴ FM, 4.

²⁰⁵ The letter *a* in the word *grace* has a circumflex in modern French (*grâce*) but evidently not so in Old French.

Knight's book. I believe that some of these methods do not fit this book neatly, but I will attempt to apply them for posterity and explain my skepticisms.

3.1 Methodology and Literature Review

The modern study of the history of emotions has its roots in the work of Lucien Febvre. He was influenced by the events of his time, as he was writing before, during and after the Second World War, and the rhetoric of Nazism makes one think of how emotions such as fear and hate work.²⁰⁶ His call for a historical psychology led to a period of "psychohistory" in the 1970s, which can perhaps be summarized as a discipline that is unduly attentive towards the real or perceived psychological issues of historical actors.²⁰⁷ This line of thinking had fallen out of favor by the time modern historians of emotions such as Peter N. Stearns, William Reddy and Barbara Rosenwein had started to publish their profound contributions to the field.²⁰⁸ Their work will be explained in detail as I intend to apply their methods, but other works focusing on emotions in medieval Europe, and those focusing on love and/or fear will be reviewed first.

Medieval Sensibilities: A History of Emotions in the Middle Ages by Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy is a 2015 book, translated into English in 2018, that surveys emotions across Europe in the Middle Ages and Late Antiquity. As with anything in Medieval Europe, it is largely concerned with religious aspects of emotions, but the book also covers laypeople's emotions as well. In this context, when speaking of

²⁰⁶ Thomas Dodman, "Theories and Methods in the History of Emotions," in *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, ed. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N. Stearns (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2020), 15.

²⁰⁷ Thomas Dodman, "Theories and Methods in the History of Emotions," 22.

²⁰⁸ Thomas Dodman, "Theories and Methods in the History of Emotions," 15.

“love” in late medieval France, one has to acknowledge the long shadow that “courtly love” casts. This term is a modern invention by Gaston Paris in the 1880s, and the patterns through which he defined it were the idea of a limited romance between a married noblewoman and a knight of lesser status than him.²⁰⁹ Courtly love was an adulterous relationship that rarely ended up satisfied.²¹⁰ The ideas of sorrow, joy and the unreachability of the desired were a driving force in these relationships, and if it ever came to be satisfied it would have been defined by the Occitan motif of *fin’amor*, an ideal of loving harmony between the *domna*, the lady, and her lover.²¹¹ While the Knight’s book has little to do with this genre directly, he does have a mock argument with his wife about “paramours” that reflects these motifs occasionally. However, this argument consists of the Knight himself suggesting that their daughters should take paramours, probably for the sake of argument, and ends with his wife condemning the idea and forbidding their daughters from it. While it engages with these tropes, it eventually rejects them. This will be examined in depth.

Medieval Sensibilities also examines high-to-late medieval “princely emotion”, that is to say, emotions of rulers who are almost always male. The genre of “mirrors for princes” which is similar to the Knight’s book at least on principle, suggested that vices of a prince were to be culled while his virtues were to be cultivated.²¹² The authority of the prince came from his ability to tame his passions, just as men had reigned over beasts whose excesses they controlled.²¹³ In this context, Giles of Rome, a thirteenth-century scholar at the University of Paris, wrote *De regime principum* (“On the government of princes”) which enjoyed massive

²⁰⁹ Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities: A History of Emotions in the Middle Ages*, trans. Robert Shaw (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018). 110.

²¹⁰ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 111.

²¹¹ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 110–12.

²¹² Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 163.

²¹³ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 162.

popularity and was the most widely disseminated political work in the medieval world, and had a vernacular translation as well.²¹⁴ Giles theorized that the prince had to understand the movements of his heart to rule well, and atop of these movements was love which was the first movement (*“primus motus”*). Then came hate, the second movement. These two were foils to each other as one of attraction and one of repulsion respectively. All other passions were derived from these two, such as: hope and despair, desire and disgust etc.²¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that these movements were not good or bad by themselves. For example, too much fear would empty the heart of blood, thus cause inaction and a failure to rule, while a moderate amount of fear would have one think about what might cause less harm for his kingdom.²¹⁶ While the Knight’s book has very little overt theoretical background such as this and does not cite such people as Giles of Rome; the idea of two core feelings, one that attracts and one that repulses, neither of which are inherently bad, will be utilized under the “Love and Fear” subheading below.

The Knight’s book might lack philosophical background, but any account of emotions and bodily reaction without medieval understandings of human physiology would be incomplete. The prevailing view in the Knight’s world was that of Galenic medicine which takes its name from Galen, an ancient physician of Roman and Greek descent. His views were widely accepted in Europe and adjacent or related parts of the world, up until the birth of modern medicine.²¹⁷ While Galen does not mention emotions, he uses his well-known bodily humours to justify the existence of “passions”, and these humours were widely varied across genders, diet, race and many other factors. The humours were: Blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm; all

²¹⁴ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 163.

²¹⁵ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 163–65.

²¹⁶ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 164.

²¹⁷ Rebecca Maryan, “Humoral Theory Circulating in Religious Literature in England, c.1300–1500” (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 2016). 17.

of which were to be balanced.²¹⁸ Galen himself says that women are colder than men.²¹⁹ His theories were further elaborated on after him, and various texts combine temperament and the seasons: blood is hot and wet which corresponds to spring, yellow bile is hot and dry which is similar to summer, black bile is cold and dry which resembles autumn, and finally phlegm is cold and wet which is winter.²²⁰ Other texts have gone further to describe in detail how people with one dominant humour appear physically. In my case, focusing on “love” and “fear”, I believe the humours of blood and black bile will be useful. These people are described as such in one text:²²¹

Those who are composed of pure blood are always joyous, joke and laugh; and they have a flowery complexion and nice skin.

Those who are composed of black bile are indolent, pusillanimous, sickly, hesitant and cowardly.

Another text describes them as such:²²²

Blood makes men well-intentioned, direct, moderate, attractive, of good humour (or full of moisture).

Black bile makes men deceitful, angry, miserly, fearful, sombre, sleepy, jealous, and frequently having black scars on their feet.

In this context, the emotions of love and fear seem to be in direct opposition in humoral medicine, which might mean it was advisable to have them in balance by opposing them. To have these two emotions at the same time would imply a balance that goes along with accepted medicinal frameworks.

²¹⁸ Rob Boddice, “Medicine, Science and Psychology,” in *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, ed. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N. Stearns (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2020), 68.

²¹⁹ Galen, *Selected Works*, trans. and intro. P. N. Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). 247–48.

²²⁰ Jacques Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise *The Nature of Man*: The Theory of the Four Humours,” in *Greek Medicine from Hippocrates to Galen*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 335–59, 335, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004232549_017. (Accessed August 11, 2025).

²²¹ Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise,” 344.

²²² Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise,” 352.

It is hard to categorize the Knight's book amongst its contemporaries, but it is also hard to deny its prescriptive nature. In Routledge's *Sources for the History of Emotions*, Peter N. Stearns covers prescriptive literature as one such type of source, but most of his examples are from the early modern and modern world. He says that all societies have some prescriptive material, but that this type of literature became very common after the seventeenth century; and that this type of literature also covers manners books which became common in the West during the Renaissance.²²³ This is where we might slot the Knight's book. Evidently the Knight wrote the book before the commonly accepted timeframe of the Renaissance and outside of its birthplace of Italy, but as mentioned above, all societies have this genre of literature to some extent.

Stearns notes that examining prescriptive material from a perspective of emotions "facilitates the identification of change" in the history of emotions.²²⁴ He also talks about the issues of such sources, one being the fact that authors may not fully reflect their own times which would lead us to make inferences that might not apply to society as a whole.²²⁵ The other issue is, again, related to how applicable it is. If advice is being repeated for a long time, it implies that it was not being applied or took some time to be applied by the audience it targets. Stearns's example here is how parenting advice in the United States and Western Europe, starting in the 1820s, frequently warned against using fear as a tool of discipline, yet this advice slowly disappeared over the course of the nineteenth-century. This suggests that the target audience did eventually take the advice to heart.²²⁶ Stearns concludes that prescriptive

²²³ Peter N. Stearns, "Prescriptive Literature," in *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, ed. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N. Stearns (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2020), 53-54.

²²⁴ Stearns, "Prescriptive Literature," 58.

²²⁵ Stearns, "Prescriptive Literature," 59-61.

²²⁶ Stearns, "Prescriptive Literature," 61.

literature offers “a real, often fairly accessible” entry into the emotions of the past. I hope to demonstrate it in this chapter.²²⁷

Emotional communities, as described by Barbara Rosenwein, are groups where people connect over the same display of emotions, and value or devalue the same or related emotions.²²⁸ While it is difficult to determine the exact audience of this book in Geoffroy’s mind, it evidently reached a larger audience. I weakly suggest that the Knight and the women of his household, or whomever happened to be listening (such as Caxton’s patroness’ household, or many other families who had a copy), might have formed an emotional community around the book. This is perhaps similar to another emotional community from Rosenwein’s book on the subject: Pope Gregory the Great’s community of close friends. Rosenwein suggests that the bond between these men formed an emotional community over texts where they struggled with their earthly feelings and sought to use such feelings for their salvation.²²⁹ Despite being separated by several centuries, the Knight also heavily emphasizes the importance of religion to his daughters, though he is not as keen on asceticism of course, compared to Pope Gregory, who shaped his beliefs according to the values of early, ascetic Christianity.²³⁰

That being said, this would imply that any group of people listening to anything that is not a strictly administrative text, à la *Domesday Book*, would form an emotional community around that work, since it is difficult to avoid ever mentioning an emotion. Without knowing what the audience of the Knight’s book thought, I am left with simply what the Knight thought was the correct emotion to value, rather than what the audience collectively valued. I conclude that Rosenwein’s emotional

²²⁷ Stearns, “Prescriptive Literature,” 63.

²²⁸ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, (United States: Cornell University Press, 2007), 2.

²²⁹ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, Chapter 3 passim.

²³⁰ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 97.

communities simply have very little to hang on to in the Knight's book due to a lack of direct responses to its contents from the audience, but that Rosenwein's contributions to the history of emotions were worth the attempt. Thus, this chapter will make greater use of emotionology and emotional regimes as frameworks.

William M. Reddy's concepts of emotives, emotional regimes and its adjacent terminology, outlined and given examples of in his 2001 book *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*, can be useful while examining the Knight's book. While Reddy focuses on the period before, during and after the French Revolution and has a much greater number of sources compared to late medieval France, applying these concepts might be a worthwhile academic endeavour to see if this framework can be used for pre-modern societies. I will mostly make use of the following terms, taken verbatim from Reddy's book:

emotions. Goal-relevant activations of thought material that exceed the translating capacity of attention within a short time horizon.

emotives. A type of speech act different from both performative and constative utterances, which both describes (like constative utterances) and changes (like performatives) the world, because emotional expression has an exploratory and a self-altering effect on the activated thought material of emotion.

emotional management. Instrumental use of the self-altering effects of emotives in the service of a goal. May be subverted by the exploratory effects of emotives.

emotional navigation. The fundamental character of emotional life. Emotions are a sphere of "fugitive instrumentalism," in which the exploratory and self-altering effects of emotives sometimes work in tandem, cooperatively, under the guidance of certain high priority goals and, in other instances, part ways, such that the individual may either sink into "self-deception" or undergo a "conversion experience."

emotional liberty. The freedom to change goals in response to bewildering, ambivalent thought activations that exceed the capacity of attention and challenge the reign of high-level goals currently guiding emotional management. This is freedom, not to make rational choices, but to undergo or

derail conversion experiences and life-course changes involving numerous contrasting incommensurable factors.

emotional suffering. An acute form of goal conflict, especially that brought on by emotional thought activations. Political torture and unrequited love (both in the Western context) are examples of emotional suffering.

emotional effort. Maintaining a goal or action plan in spite of rising suffering due to goal conflict.

emotional regime. The set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime.

induced goal conflict. The effects at a distance (that is, the deterrent or exemplary effects) of policies of punishment, torture, exclusion, or imprisonment which sanction deviance from an emotional regime.

emotional refuge. A relationship, ritual, or organization (whether informal or formal) that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relaxation of emotional effort, with or without an ideological justification, which may shore up or threaten the existing emotional regime.²³¹

The emotions of love, fear, and the combined emotion of love and fear will be examined from an emotionological perspective. Emotionology is defined as such by Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, who coined and made use of the term:

the attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression; ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct, e.g., courtship practices as expressing the valuation of affect in marriage, or personnel workshops as reflecting the valuation of anger in job relationships.²³²

To clarify, love and fear are both used together and separately, so examining them in all contexts can show how emotions function when on their own or when they

²³¹ William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 128–29.

²³² Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (1985): 813–36, 813 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1858841>. (Accessed August 11, 2025).

are combined. These words will be categorized according to their meaning, rather than whether or not they are a verb or a noun. For example, “to fear God” and “the fear of God” will be under the same subheading even though they are grammatically different. The French version will be provided to have complete understanding of the context or to show an editor’s or a translator’s influence on rare occasions.

There are many other emotions and senses in the book, including anger and shame which are also quite important but are beyond the scope of this chapter for brevity’s sake. The book also has an affectively heavy phrase that is frequently used: “foul delight” in Caxton’s translation or “*fol delit*” in medieval French. This is used on multiple occasions to refer to extramarital sex, usually prefaced by a description and condemnation of unchaste love. However, on at least one occasion it is used in lieu of rape (“*violer*” in Old French and “*to violate*” in Caxton’s version) as well.

Having started the chapter with a survey of the methodologies that I intend to use and an overview of what my sources contain in regards to emotions, I believe a good starting point of this analysis can be how “love” is portrayed in the Knight’s book.

3.2 Love

Love holds great importance in the book of the Knight. People are shown to be loving many things: God, dogs, wealth, their husbands, their wives, their nieces, their daughters; so on and so forth. I will closely examine some of these examples to better understand what love is to the Knight. However, three types of love will take precedence over others, mostly because they occupy more space in the text. These

are: How the Knight loves his daughters, how people love God, and how women love their husbands and how their husbands love them back which can perhaps be shortened to “marital love”, but it is critical not to expect modern conventions from this type of love, and also not to expect their love towards each other to function exactly the same. “Marital love” will be a shorthand to avoid re-explaining these nuances on every occasion that the topic is mentioned.

The Knight seems to love his daughters. Various words are used to describe his affinity towards them. In Caxton’s translation of the prologue, we come across the words “*my wel bylouyd doughters*”,²³³ which does not appear in the French original, it simply reads “*mes filles*”, my daughters.²³⁴ Further on, the words “*grete loue*” appear in Caxton’s text, which corresponds to the French “*grant amour*”, in regards to the love that the Knight has towards his daughters.

Furthermore, The Knight clarifies in the prologue that he definitely intended to keep the book simple and concise. He says that he specifically wrote in prose instead of rhyme²³⁵ so that it would be better understood and because he loves his daughters.²³⁶ Caxton’s translation has “*whom I loue as a fader ought to loue them*”²³⁷ which is “*lesquels je ayme comme père les doit aimer*”²³⁸ in French. This implies that, at least to the Knight and perhaps his daughters as well, prose is easier to understand than rhyme and that he is willing to accommodate their preferences because of his love towards them.

²³³ CT, 15.

²³⁴ FM, 3.

²³⁵ “*whiche I wold not fet in rhyme, but al along in prose for to abredge and also for the better to be vnderstonden, and also for the grete loue that I haue to my doughters*” in English and “*que je ne veulx point mettre en rime, ainçois le veulz mettre en prose, pour l’abre/gier et mieulx entendre, et aussi pour la grant amour que je ay à mes enfans*” in French

²³⁶ CT, 15.

²³⁷ CT, 15.

²³⁸ FM, 4.

The words “*my ryght dere daughters*” in Caxton’s translation correspond to “*mes chières filles*”, directly translating to “my dear daughters”. It seems that Caxton has added the word “right” to emphasize the Knight’s feelings for his daughters, however, the rest remains the same. Twice more, when the Knight uses the same phrase, “*mes chières filles*”,²³⁹ Caxton uses a direct translation and simply uses the words “dere daughters”²⁴⁰ In reference to how the Knight sees his daughters physically, Caxton uses the word “*fayre*”²⁴¹ and the French version has “*belles*” for the same, plural of “*belle*”, meaning beautiful.²⁴² These are the occasions that the Knight uses words of affection towards his daughters. To better understand how “love” was seen and depicted in late medieval France and early modern England, comparisons to other kinds of love in the book is necessary.

The love of God is without a doubt one of the most important things that the Knight aims to teach his daughters. It is important to note again that this chapter will also cover fear of God, and love and fear of God, both of which are also heavily emphasized in the book and seem to have different societal functions. The words “*servir et amer*”²⁴³ in regards to God, “*serue and loue*” in Middle English,²⁴⁴ appear as mentioned before. In a chapter about matins, Caxton borrows a verb from a different story and says “*adoure and worshiþe oure lord*”²⁴⁵ while the French version simply says “*si est entrer et dire son service*”²⁴⁶ which means “if he/she has entered and declared his (God’s) service”; Caxton seemingly conflates this with the next story where the French line is “*amoit Dieu et le adouroit*”²⁴⁷ which he translates as “*loued*

²³⁹ FM, 8, 14.

²⁴⁰ CT, 20, 26.

²⁴¹ CT, 22.

²⁴² FM, 10.

²⁴³ FM, 4.

²⁴⁴ CT, 15.

²⁴⁵ CT, 18.

²⁴⁶ FM, 6.

²⁴⁷ FM, 7.

God, and honoured and prayd to him”²⁴⁸ Caxton translates “*que l’on lui fera*”²⁴⁹ as “loue of him”²⁵⁰, while perhaps “service for him” is a better translation. Furthermore, the word service in its meaning as mass, appears frequently. A woman reportedly “*so much loud the seruyce of God*”²⁵¹, “*tant amount le saint service de Dieu*”²⁵² that she heard Mass thrice a day. Strangely, Caxton also emits “*saint*”, which perhaps was missing from his working copy in the first place, as he seems generally to add rather than subtract.

The word “love” in regards to God is also used with the word “honor”, for example: “*thonoure and the loue of God*”²⁵³ and “*pour honneur et amour de Dieu*”²⁵⁴ in French. Among countless examples, only once is the word “*ayme*” used for love of God: “*Et qui aymeront Dieu et ferout bonnes jeunes et bonnes abstynences*”²⁵⁵ meaning “And who will love God and perform good fasts and good acts of abstinence”, Caxton once again translates this as love: “*that shall loue God and doo abstynences*”²⁵⁶ and also omits fasting for an unknown reason. Perhaps the lack of a circumflex above the second *e* in *jeunes* makes him think of the French word for “young”, *jeunes*, rather than its true meaning here, which is the noun “fasting”, and he thought it would be best if he avoided translating it altogether. At one point Caxton translates “*et pour ce fut amie de Dieu*”²⁵⁷ as “*she was loued of God*”.²⁵⁸

It is clear that the love of God comes with its conditions as opposed to fatherly love. The love of God is frequently used alongside words such as service, in both of

²⁴⁸ CT, 19.

²⁴⁹ FM, 172.

²⁵⁰ CT, 124.

²⁵¹ CT, 72.

²⁵² FM, 72.

²⁵³ CT, 61.

²⁵⁴ FM, 60.

²⁵⁵ FM, 195.

²⁵⁶ CT, 141.

²⁵⁷ FM, 46. “and for [fasting] she was a friend of God”

²⁵⁸ CT, 52.

its meanings, honor, adore and worship; not to mention the countless amounts that fear is used alongside it. From the text, it seems that loving God clearly had its requisites while a father can simply and directly love his daughters, at least going by the examples given above. It might be valuable to note that the Knight says he wrote this book in prose rather than rhyme, as mentioned before because he loves his daughters as a father should, implying that a father should not unnecessarily cause trouble for his children. However, this prerequisite is much more subtle compared to how directly the love of God requires actions other than just love.

The love that a woman ought to have towards her husband and the love that her husband has towards her is also critical to the Knight's teachings. Once again, this chapter will also cover fear of one's husband, and love and fear of him; however, all are prominent emotions. In one story, a young married woman is, to use a modern term, flirting with a squire in a church. She ends up seeing visions where her mother and father scold her and give her advice: "*fayre daughter, loo, here thy noretur. Loue and honoure thy husbond and lord*" and "*Fair daughter, why hast thou more plesaunce and gretter loue to other than thyn owne lord and husbond?*".²⁵⁹ In the French version, the mother uses the verb "*aime*" for love while the father uses the noun "*amour*" for the same purpose. In the same story, her partners give advice that "*yf ye loue youre husbond aboue al other, thenne shall your noretur growe & encrece from day to day... grete swetenes, the ioye, the loue, that ought to be in trewe mariage*"²⁶⁰ The French version uses "*amez*" and "*l'amour*" for love, once again showing the two different words. This passage implies that love for the Knight was not always a precedent to marriage, it was something that could grow afterwards.

²⁵⁹ CT, 75.

²⁶⁰ CT, 76.

Furthermore, that “true marriage” should have joy and love, but the love is implied to be initiated by the woman.

Furthermore, the husband is advised, reportedly by Jesus Christ, to leave behind his father and mother, sister and brother and everyone else to live with his wife.²⁶¹ This is most likely in reference to Matthew 19:5–6²⁶² and Mark 10:7–9,²⁶³ both of which are occasions where Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24, which says that “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”²⁶⁴ Perhaps this advice, both by Jesus and by the Knight, is to prevent marriages from falling apart too quickly by husbands who struggle to adapt to married life and cause issues. This would no doubt be useful to the Knight’s daughters if their husbands turn out to act as such.

There are three stories which are about a knight who had three consecutive wives, and loses them all and grieves for them. The knight “*moche loued*” (“*ama à merveilles*” in French,²⁶⁵ meaning “he marvellously loved her”) his first wife and he is told by his hermit uncle that in order to save her soul he has to donate to the poor. This knight does so and saves her soul.²⁶⁶ When his second wife dies, his uncle figures out that she had lied with a squire ten or twelve times but had confessed, for which she will suffer in purgatory for seven years. Interestingly, the hermit does not tell the knight about his wife’s infidelity.²⁶⁷ This might show that the hermit thought the knight’s love ran deep and that this would hurt him with no chance of recourse, which we might perceive as uncharacteristic of the Middle Ages. For the record, the third

²⁶¹ FM, 76.

²⁶² *Bible*, New International Version (NIV), Mat. 19:5–6, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MAT.19.5-6.NIV> (Accessed August 11, 2025)

²⁶³ *Bible*, New International Version (NIV), Mrk. 10:7–9, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MRK.10.7-9.NIV> (Accessed August 11, 2025)

²⁶⁴ *Bible*, New International Version (NIV), Gen. 2:24, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/GEN.2.24> (Accessed August 11, 2025)

²⁶⁵ FM, 105.

²⁶⁶ CT, 92.

²⁶⁷ CT, 94–95.

wife did makeup, and thus will suffer in Hell for a thousand years²⁶⁸ and her story will be mentioned again in the next subheading. In another story, a baroness is mentioned that lived near La Tour Landry, who, out of love of her late lord (*“pour l’amour de son feu seigneur”*²⁶⁹ in French) refused to remarry and stayed a widow for thirty-five years.²⁷⁰ These examples show that love had a power over people that could stay well after their death. It could drive people to make material concessions or remain romantically uninvolved to the point that it is praiseworthy. The fact that the Knight is praising it might also imply that it was rare.

Love is perhaps the most widely applicable emotion in the Knight’s book. There are other stories where love is praised and condemned. In one story a woman feeds meat to her dogs that we are told she loves, examined in the previous chapter, and this type of love is condemned as she should be feeding the poor first. Men are shown to love too, such as the knight who had three wives about whom we are told that he loved them all. God is shown to love too in the same manner, as in someone receiving the love of God. Lastly, when referring to his daughters during the prologue, the Knight uses the words *“whom I loue as a fader ought to loue them.”*²⁷¹ which is *“lesquels je ayme comme père les doit aimer”*,²⁷² showing that the idea of paternal love is common as well. In sum, both men and women are shown to experience a wide range of receiving and giving love, which is either praised or condemned based on context.

²⁶⁸ CT, 95–97.

²⁶⁹ FM, 220.

²⁷⁰ CT, 160.

²⁷¹ CT, 15.

²⁷² FM, 4.

3.3 Fear

Fear is another emotion that occupies space in the affective language of the Knight's book, and just as with love, people are shown to be fearing many things such as fear of dead men in a lover's bed or other dead men protecting a young girl from abuse, fear of nightmares, fear of husbands and more. All of which I am classifying as different from the combination of "love and fear" that function differently than either one of these emotions on their own. Fear's function on its own is much simpler and mostly religious in nature, as the following examples will show.

In the story about the Byzantine emperor's two daughters, summarized and examined from a perspective of social groups in the previous chapter,²⁷³ the lover of the devout daughter tries to lay with her but comes across men in shrouds, indicating dead men. It is told that "*he hadde so grete fere and hydoure that he was al affrayed...*"²⁷⁴ or "*so sore afraid and aferde...*"²⁷⁵ or in French "*Si en eut si grant hideur et si grant paour qu'il en fut tous effrayez*".²⁷⁶ Caxton translates the French word "*hideur*" as "*hydoure*", which does exist as an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary, with only four examples, one being another one from his works.²⁷⁷ What extent his audience was familiar with it is unknown. He also translates "*paour*" as "*fere*" which is just "*fear*" in both languages, while the manuscript uses both "*afraid*" and "*aferde*", which should roughly mean the same thing linguistically. This knight ("*chevallier*") takes up the "*feures*" ("fires") and gets sick. Fear is shown as a moderator and even a disabler of lust and unchaste love; and a sort of divine act, since

²⁷³ See above pg, 44–45.

²⁷⁴ CT, 19.

²⁷⁵ EM, 6.

²⁷⁶ FM, 8.

²⁷⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "hidour," https://www.oed.com/dictionary/hidour_n?tab=meaning_and_use#1578363. Accessed August 11, 2025.

these men are “*Crysten sowles*”²⁷⁸ and that the devout daughter “*praied God*”²⁷⁹ or “*loua Dieu... et pria moult doucement por les mors*”²⁸⁰ once her impious sister is killed by her father when he learns that she is pregnant.²⁸¹

Similarly, fear is used in the same manner in another story explained in the previous chapter where a great lord (called as such by Caxton, “*grant seigneur*” in French or *lorde* in the manuscript) tries to rape (“*violer*”) a young woman.²⁸² The devout girl, called “*damoyselle*” or “*damoiselle*” in Caxton’s and the French versions respectively and “*gentill-woman*” in the English manuscript, was resting in a bush “*for fere of hym*” or “*pour la paour de lui*” and she was saying “*vygylles*” (verbatim in CT, “*vigilles*” in French) or “*dirige*” (verbatim in the EM) to the dead; which was when this lord tried to accomplish his “*foule delit*” or “*fol delit*” in French, and the lord saw more than ten thousand “*prysonners*” (“*x mil hommes*”) near the girl. The lord had “*so grete fere and drede*” or “*si eut paour*”, that he ran away.²⁸³

Once again, fear inhibits unchasteness. However, in this case the girl gives no consent and neither do dead men; but in the previous case the emperor’s daughters can be presumed to give consent to intercourse (both princesses invite the knights to their own chambers: “*they sett a certeyne houre to these knyghtes for to come to them pryuely by nyght*”²⁸⁴) but the dead men that the devout daughter prayed to did not consent to their intercourse. This reframes sexual or abusive acts from the perspective of divine consent, rather than the consent of the individuals. It is irrelevant if two people want to seek intimacy, or to be specific, it does not matter if the female does or does not want it; what matters is how unchaste acts of love or “foul delights” are not

²⁷⁸ CT, 20.

²⁷⁹ EM, 6.

²⁸⁰ “*praised God... and very sweetly prayed for the dead*”

²⁸¹ FM, 8.

²⁸² See above pg, 53–54.

²⁸³ CT, 21. FM, 9–10, EM, 7.

²⁸⁴ CT, 19.

permitted by the Christian souls, especially if the victim is devout. Furthermore, this logic can be flipped to imply that women who do get sexually assaulted should have prayed to these Christian souls to be protected, and if something bad happened to them, it was their own fault.

This interpretation can perhaps be strengthened by the Knight's interpretation of the story of Dinah, the daughter of the biblical Jacob who is one of the most important figures in all Abrahamic faiths. He says that the daughter of Jacob — he does not use her name — due to the “*lyghtnes... of herte*” or “*par sa jolivete de cuer*” left her house and traveled to see the women of “another land”.²⁸⁵ The Knight continues the biblical story as commonly known: Shechem, the son of the lord of that land, rapes Dinah; for which the Knight uses the verb “*despucella*”, and the manuscript uses “*took fro her her maydenhode*”.²⁸⁶ Later, after some negotiation and trickery, her brothers take revenge by killing him and most of his family. The details of the story are irrelevant, what matters here is how the Knight interprets this event. He asks his daughters to see “*how by a follysshe woman cometh many euyllis & domages; for by her yongthe and by her lyght courage was made grete occysion and shedyng of bloode*”²⁸⁷

It is worth noting that even the daughter of Jacob is not safe from rape and victim blaming; nor does she have some sort of divine protection such as the devout Byzantine princess or the devout girl that hid in a bush. Fear and rape seem to be linked, yet it is only the devout women that avoid it and the impious men that suffer from supernaturally induced fear. Fear and unchaste love are also paired, yet the Knight decries the unnecessary bloodshed when Dinah's brothers kill the rapist, but

²⁸⁵ EM, 73–74, FM, 117.

²⁸⁶ EM, 74, FM, 117.

²⁸⁷ EM, 74, FM, 117. In French: “*Or resgardez comment par fole femme vient le grand mal et le dommiage, car par sa juennesce et par son legier couraige advint celle grant occision.*”

does not do so when the impious Byzantine princess and her lover are killed. Both are bloodshed, but the punishment for the consensual one is deserved and the revenge for the rape of Dinah is a great evil. It is clear that the Knight here is not decrying the lack of due process nor is he warning his daughters about the dangers of vigilantism, but rather he is focused on how much one can or cannot blame a woman for something that is not her fault, or for her natural desires.

In the story about the knight and his wife who caused their parish to miss Mass, the priest during his sleep sees a vision and is told to have “*soo grete drede and fere*”²⁸⁸ or was so “*sore aferde*”²⁸⁹ of the horned hogs that represent the lazy couple. The priest then sees the hogs brutally hunted down by riders in all-black armor. In another story about a different knight whose third wife died, mentioned in passing above as the wife that put on makeup, the knight in question goes to his hermit uncle and asks him to scry into how well his wife is faring in the afterlife. The uncle does so and sees that the wife is being tormented in Hell by devils who pick at her face as an allegorical punishment for makeup, and he is told to be “*sore effrayed and trembled for fere*” or that he “*tremeled and was almost oute of his witte for ferde*” or “*en avoit telle paour et hideur qu’il trambloit tout*”²⁹⁰ (“he had such fear and horror that he trembled all over” in English). The description of the way the hogs are hunted down and the torment of the latter knight’s third wife are more visceral than anything else in the book. No doubt the Knight emphasizes the pain and horror of these stories because they involve makeup or a noble couple’s laziness, since this is a book for his noble daughters whom he expects will inevitably marry or try makeup. Fear of corporal punishment is used to regulate behavior to such an extent that makeup justifies a millennia of torture in Hell.

²⁸⁸ CT, 68.

²⁸⁹ EM, 43, FM, 67. “*si avoient sy grant paour*” in French

²⁹⁰ CT, 96, EM, 68, FM, 110.

In one story the Knight speaks of the people of Nineveh and their great sins, and that they would be punished for it. The king and the people of the city had “*grete drede and fere*” or “*moult grant paour*” or “*were aferde*”. They fasted for forty days and nights and then God “*took mercy on them*” or “*had mercy on hem*” or “*il eut mercy d’eulx*”²⁹¹ Another example of religious inhibition, or perhaps atonement, of sins through fear of divine retribution, this time on a collective level.

Fear occurs in another context, in regards to jealousy between husband and wife. The Knight makes a distinction between two kinds of jealousy, one where the husband is jealous for “*without cause*” or with “*nulle bonne raison*”, and another where the wife is jealous when she is *aferde*”²⁹² or that “*elle a grant paour*”²⁹³ (“she has great fear” in English) that another woman has the heart of her husband. The couple are said to be supposed to be bound by the law of God and the Church. One might wonder why a wife alone is afraid of her husband loving another, since the rules of the church ought to apply to both, and the husband should be just as afraid of breaking God’s law as his wife is afraid of him breaking it.

This can perhaps be tied into another story that a wife repeatedly warns her husband against his habit of infidelity. It simply falls upon women to keep the marriage intact, it seems. The dichotomy is interesting since it implies that there is no logical way that a man can be jealous of his wife, and no way that a wife can irrationally be jealous of her husband. It seems to me that if a husband is jealous for a good reason, it ought to be ameliorated immediately lest shame be brought to his name, and if a wife is irrationally jealous of her husband, it is simply irrelevant since she has very little power to use against her husband.²⁹⁴ In Medieval Sensibilities, the

²⁹¹ CT, 32, EM, 13, FM, 21.

²⁹² EM, 24.

²⁹³ FM, 39.

²⁹⁴ EM, 24.

authors suggest that jealousy, in the courtly love genre, appears to be related to the practice of power. Courtly society relies on the nobility of intention, thus requires trust, which is shaken by jealousy. The authors suggest that this is why jealous husbands are always depicted as evil, and why their actions drive their wives away from them, into a non-jealous man.²⁹⁵ There is a story about a jealous husband in the Knight's book, though strangely, his wife seems to be much more loyal than her courtly literary counterparts.

The Knight relays a story about a supposed senator of Rome who was jealous of his wife for no reason and was cruel to her. One day he accuses someone of treason and the accused man challenges him to a duel. The senator is "*aferd*" or "*was a cowarde*" or was "*trop couart et failli*" ("very cowardly and lacking [in courage]" in English); and he tries to send someone on his behalf to the duel saying that he was sick, but he could not find anyone. His wife sees his cowardice and the shame that would be brought to his name, arms herself and goes to the duel. God sees her efforts and grants her strength to win the fight.²⁹⁶ The moral of the story is that wives must "*humbly suffre of her lord*" or "*humblement souffrir de son seigneur*", if they cannot change the behaviour of their husbands.²⁹⁷ Notably, in the Middle Ages, humility towards one's lord, regardless of gender, was an honorable virtue. The affective aspect is interesting since the wife is never depicted as fearful but the husband is depicted as such; and despite her husband's unnecessary cruelty she risks her own life to save her husband's honor, and evidently she was not afraid of mortal combat either, while her husband was a coward. Returning to the concept of jealousy from Medieval

²⁹⁵ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 124–26.

²⁹⁶ As a side note, an interesting translation quirk appears here: In Caxton's translation and the French manuscript, the emperor and the whole town wants to see her face after her victory ("*themperour and alle they of the toune*" or "*l'empereur et toute la ville*") while in the English manuscript "*the Emperesse... & all the ladies of Rome*" do.

²⁹⁷ CT, 131–32, FM, 180–81. EM uses slightly different words. "*Lowly*" for "*humbly*" and "*husband*" for "*lord*". EM, 120–21.

Sensibilities, it is no surprise that the Knight mangles this trope of evil jealous husbands into this story. Instead of losing his wife and his honor, as courtly literature would predict, the senator keeps both. The reason is obvious: Due to the book's prescriptive nature, the Knight does not want to set a bad example for his daughters.

Humbly suffering is not unique to the Knight's worldview, nor adopted only by men in regards to women. Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken, a fifteenth century writer and noblewoman as the name suggests, wrote *Die Königin Sibille*, meaning "The Queen Sibil". This book belonged to a genre that was previously called "*Trivialliteratur*" or "*Unterhaltungsliteratur*"²⁹⁸ by literary scholars, which used to be described as "decadent swan songs of medieval literature" meant to be consumed in bulk by lesser people with extreme violence, perhaps analogous to the modern pulp fiction. But this was not the case for *Die Königin Sibille*, since it was meant to be read at court. Modern scholarship has dismissed this derogatory approach to the genre.²⁹⁹ This book consists of a story where the titular character is accused of committing adultery with a dwarf, a creature that she says she would die rather than lay with. The king does not believe her because the as-of-yet-unknown traitors in his court conclude she is guilty, despite his loyal advisors taking her side, and the king exiles Sibil into the woods.³⁰⁰ Gruesome events happen where the traitors attempt to rape and behead the exiled queen, and have themselves killed by a farmer who defends the queen. Eventually the king is convinced of his wife's pleas and through her suffering she is absolved.³⁰¹ Even female writers seem to have internalized that suffering will lead to absolution, and acceptance by one's husband.

²⁹⁸ "trivial literature" and "entertainment literature" in English

²⁹⁹ Susan Signe Morrison, "Women Writers and Women Rulers: Rhetorical and Political Empowerment in the Fifteenth Century," *Women in German Yearbook* 9 (1993): 25–48, 26–27. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20688776>. (Accessed August 11, 2025).

³⁰⁰ Morrison, "Women Writers and Women Rulers," 32–33.

³⁰¹ Morrison, "Women Writers and Women Rulers," 33–34.

The Knight's story about the senator can be tied into Reddy's concept of emotional regimes. As mentioned above verbatim, an emotional regime is a system of unwritten rules about which emotions are allowed to be felt, and how and when they are felt; which includes practices that sustain them.³⁰² The regime provides space for men to feel a variety of emotions: They can love their wives or be jealous of them and abuse them, fear combat, experience shame (if his wife did not fight). However, women must suffer. Not only that, being a good wife can include fighting on behalf of one's husband if it comes to it, to protect his name from shame. This is the practical aspect of this regime. I do not intend to imply that the Knight thought his daughters should fight in armor to protect their husbands' honor, but that he is showing the logical end-point of this regime. This idea will be further developed during the next subheading with the help of the combined emotions of "love and fear".

Another usage of fear, even though the story also contains an appearance of "love and fear", is during a story where three merchants are in a disagreement over whose wife obeys her husband most.³⁰³ The wives of the first two merchants get beaten when they refuse to obey their husbands. The wife of the third merchant "*hade fere to disobeye hym*" or "*aferde to disobeie*" or "*ot paour de luy desobeir*"; and leaps upon the table instead of putting salt on the table, and the woman does not get herself beaten.³⁰⁴ Fear of the husband in this case, and some others, is a fear of corporal punishment, rather than the fear of losing one's favor and love. To reiterate, this woman is a merchant's wife, and not a nobleman's wife. The Knight heavily emphasizes that a noblewoman does not deserve to be treated like this unless she acts like these lower-class women. This can perhaps portray how emotions are stratified socially, and how they affect the physical world of women.

³⁰² Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 128–29.

³⁰³ See above pg, 31–32.

³⁰⁴ CT, 49, FM, 42, EM, 27.

Fear comes into question in regards to fashion, in two occurrences of “dread” where they appear in regards to social standing. The Knight speaks of two other contemporary knights: Raoul de Lugre and Gieffroy de Lugre.³⁰⁵ These men are brothers, and also well-known and respected knights. The Knight relays a story that he heard from his father, where Gieffroy de Lugre sees a young nobleman dressed in the “*maner*” or in the “*guyse of Almayne*” or “*à la guise d’Alemaigne*”. Gieffroy asks the young man to play an instrument since it seems to him that he dresses like a minstrel, and the young man says he cannot do that, whereupon Gieffroy tells the young man that he knows he is not a minstrel and that he is a nobleman and gets him to change his outfit. Geoffroy de La Tour Landry says that in regards to these two knight brothers that “*yong men dradde them moche*” or that they “*dred hem in all places*” or “*juennes hommes les craingnoient moult*”.³⁰⁶ The other occurrence also has Gieffroy de Lugre, where it is said that when he was riding across the country he would either mark a manor with his sign if the lady of that place was told to be dishonorable, or that he would visit the manor and congratulate the lady if she was told to be honorable. It is said that good women “*drad*” or “*craingnoient*” that they would lose their “*worship and honoure*” or “*leur honneur et leur estat*”.³⁰⁷

The fear of losing status was a strong motivator to keep up appearances, and to not adopt changes too quickly, otherwise one may be branded a foreigner or someone of lower rank. These anecdotes are a valuable addition to the previous chapter on

³⁰⁵ Gieffroy de Lugre is called “Piere de Luge” in the English manuscript for an unknown reason. The editors have not used any footnotes either, which they usually had done in cases where the manuscript is incorrect for any reason, e.g. “wife” misspelled as “wise”. The French original and Caxton’s translation are in agreement in regards to this knight’s name: Gieffroy in French and Geffroy in English. No other “Piere” appears in the vicinity of these stories. The only other notable and contemporary “Pierre” in the book is Pierre de Craon, who is not mentioned in the vicinity of these de Lugre brothers, and is obviously a different person. For consistency, this knight will be referred to by his original French name since the stories across three versions are the same except for this knight’s name. This unmodernized spelling is also helpful to distinguish him from Geoffroy de la Tour Landry.

³⁰⁶ CT, 164–65, EM, 158–59, FM, 227–28.

³⁰⁷ CT, 168, FM, 231, EM, 159. “their honor and their status”

social groups. The people of Medieval Europe had affective aspects to their deeply hierarchical and conservative society; not simply a calculated and materialistic “class interest”.

As these examples have shown, fear’s primary purpose in the Knight’s book is religious in nature, and its secondary purpose is societal. People deeply feared divine wrath, and they also feared the shame that came from cowardice or losing social status. Both men and women had these fears. Young men and women dreaded Gieffroy de Lugre since his reputation as a good knight could make or break their hard-earned (or easily inherited) status. Both men and women feared, or are advised to fear, divine wrath, whether that be dead Christian men stopping unchaste acts or rape; or the threat of torture in Hell for flirting with a squire as a married woman or applying makeup.

3.4 Love and Fear

Having examined love and fear on their own, it will be enlightening to see how these two emotions function when they are used together syntactically. While any of these stories can also contain these emotions on their own, they are not always used together. As demonstrated, these emotions by themselves can be applied to almost anything from the love of God or love of one’s own children to the fear of losing status or the fear of deadly combat. However, when they are used together, they are only used for certain cases and for certain people, those being married or widowed women, in regards to God or men. I propose here that the Knight is preempting his daughters’ potential struggles in their emotional worlds by providing

them with ready-made examples of good women who submit to the emotional regime. This will be elaborated on with the following examples.

An instance of “love and fear” appears in a story about a countess (“*bonne contesse*” in French; English lacks the adjective) who heard three Masses every day. On one occasion during a pilgrimage one of her chaplains falls off of his horse and gets injured to the point of not being able to say Mass. God sends the countess an angel in the form of a man and the angel sings Mass, and then disappears. Then the countess realizes that God had sent the angel and she thanks God. The Knight’s moral here is that “*who someuer loueth and dredeth*” or “*who that louithe hym and dredithe hym*” or “*qui l’aime et craint*” God will see and hear more of him.³⁰⁸

In another story, previously mentioned in the Love subheading,³⁰⁹ a young married woman and her lover, a squire, go on a pilgrimage together and her husband allows this, thinking nothing bad of it. The woman and the squire are engaging in public displays of affection during Mass, and for this reason God sends the woman some illness. She faints and sees her mother and father during a vision. Her mother tells her to “*loue and honoure*” or “*loue and worship*” her husband and lord or to “*aime et honneure ton seigneur*” as much as she loved her mother’s breasts that had nourished her, and her father tells her that if she does not, she will fall into the fiery pits of Hell which she can also see next to her. Later, the woman tells of this vision to a holy man (“*hooly man*” or “*saint homme*”) who tells her that she should “*loue & fere*” or “*loue and doute*” or “*doubter et amer*” her husband.³¹⁰ As counterintuitive as it sounds, “*doubter*” in Old French used to have a stronger meaning of “to fear” than “to doubt” as it exists today.³¹¹ Also, it is worth noting that only the English versions

³⁰⁸ CT, 73, EM, 46, FM, 73.

³⁰⁹ See above pg, 69–70.

³¹⁰ CT, 74–76, EM, 47–49, FM, 73–75.

³¹¹ Oxford English Dictionary, “doubt (v.), sense II.5.a,” <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5025586053>. Accessed August 11, 2025.

use the word “husband” alongside “lord” while the French equivalents to husband such as “mari” (from Latin “*maritus*”) or “époux” (from Latin “*sponsus*”) are not used in the original text.

In the mock argument between the Knight and his wife, Lady de Rogue, another instance of this compound emotion appears albeit not in the form that the others are in. The Knight and his wife are debating whether or not their daughters should take paramours. The Knight at one point says that the daughters, once married, should at least take a paramour of no “*extyme* [or] *valewe*” (“esteem or value”) and by their love and respect raise them to be men of great valour. The lady responds that men who “*acquere glorye... by valyaunce in armes*” are to be “*loued, doubted, serued, and honoured*” without taking them as paramours, which would cause the woman in question to be less devout in her prayers and for her to love her lord (that is to say, her husband) less, which would go against God’s laws of marriage.³¹² The French version is different: “*ceulx doit-on plus amer, servir et honnourer*” (“Those [men] are to be loved, served and honored more” in English). The French original seems to imply that these men are not to be “doubted” which as explained before had a meaning of “to fear”. This is the argument mentioned at the beginning of this chapter³¹³ where the Knight and his wife seem to engage with the motifs of courtly love and quickly reject it.

Since the original manuscript written by the Knight is missing, there is a possibility here that there must have been a translator or an editor who decided that women should fear these men just as much as they love and respect them. Furthermore, this person chose to add “doubt” right after “love”, echoing the other

Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX^e au XV^e siècle*, s.v. “douter,” <https://micmap.org/dicfro/search/lexique-godefroy/douter>. Accessed August 11, 2025.

³¹² EM, 179–80, FM, 255–56.

³¹³ See above pg, 56–57.

examples of “love and fear” that I have examined under this subheading. Perhaps this is a conscious choice, since someone familiar with the text would try to replicate its register when adding something, or perhaps it is an unconscious choice where the editor has internalized that the gendered compound emotion of “love and fear” appears only for women, in regards to men.

Multiple “love and fear” occurrences are during a chapter that consists of no story, but rather general advice on being good people. These good people, the Knight says, keep themselves clean against sin “*for the loue and drede*” or “*loue and fere*” that they have for God or “*pour l’amour de la crainte*” (“for the love of the fear” in English). “Love and fear” appears again, halfway through the chapter. Here the Knight says that the “*debonnaires*” (French) or the “*debonaire*” or “*meke*” people keep themselves clean show themselves to be like their master, God, in the “*loue and drede of God and of theyr neighbours*” or “*and of his neighboures*” or “*en la crainte et l’amour de Dieu et de leurs voisins*”. This is definitely one’s own neighbors, as the French version shows, and not God’s neighbors, whomever they may be. Another example of “love and fear” occurs towards the end of the chapter which is a concluding remark and does not add anything new.³¹⁴

There are other examples of loving and fearing God, but the most striking example is about the biblical Esther. It is told that she “*loued and drad*” or her lord, who is said to be the “king of Syria”. Her husband was quite abusive to her, said “*outragyous wordes*” to her and in response she only talked to him with kindness and in private. On one occasion a young lady asks Esther why she does not enjoy herself among peers. Esther responds that the fear of three prisons keeps her from “*gladnesse*” or “*trop joyeuse et trop gaye*”, those three prisons are “*loue*”, “*drede*”

³¹⁴ CT, 81, EM, 54, FM, 83-84.

and “*shame*”.³¹⁵ It is said that these three “*vertues*”³¹⁶ mastered her. Love kept her from doing anything that would displease her lord, fear made her think of losing her honor and becoming sinful, and shame kept her from earning a vile reproach.³¹⁷

Once again, Reddy’s concepts can be useful here. We have four anecdotes, and a later addition, that can help us reconstruct what “love and fear” was to the Knight and perhaps to the people of his world. One where a woman who loves and fears God hears an angel sing Mass to her, one where a woman who does not love and fear her husband is threatened with Hell, one where it is told that good people love and fear God and their neighbors, one where married women love and fear men of the sword, and another one where a woman loves and fears her husband and restricts herself from earthly pleasures. These form a prime example of an emotional regime, and one that completes the regime that was suggested in the previous section.

As the above examples show, “love and fear” is an emotion that is experienced mostly, maybe even only, by women. Even in the chapter where the Knight says that good people experience love and fear towards God, he follows up with his classic vocative that is “my dear daughters” and says that he will continue with examples of good women. This is not entirely surprising since this is a book for the education of women, but no story with “love and fear” involves a man experiencing it directly and by himself. The emotional regime is that, as mentioned in the above section on “Fear”, “wives must humbly suffer of their lords” and only wives, and that mere fear is not enough; they must also love them like they love their mother and father as in the story of the young flirtatious lady.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ “*amours*” and “*paours*” and “*honte*”

³¹⁶ “*vertus*”

³¹⁷ CT, 137–38, EM, 127–28, FM, 189–90.

³¹⁸ See above pg, 69–70.

Emotional suffering, another term coined by Reddy, suggests that a goal conflict arises from the application of these regimes.³¹⁹ The example of the young flirtatious lady and of Esther are useful here. Both are suffering: The young lady is torn between a squire whom presumably she loves more than her husband, and Esther was torn between a life where she can enjoy herself fully as a young lady.

Two paths emerge here, but only one is shown to be taken by these women since this is an instructional book and is prescriptive by nature. The path that the Knight wishes for his daughters is one of emotional effort and suffering, rather than emotional liberty or an emotional refuge. To clarify, Esther outright claims that she could enjoy herself, but the “virtues” of love, fear and shame have mastered her. She has gone through a period of emotional navigation, which Reddy describes as “the fundamental character of emotional life”,³²⁰ where she has chosen the path of “self-deception”. She is not experiencing emotional navigation during the story, but that she said the virtues have mastered her which implies that she went through it in the past, and that she is firmly back in the regime when the Knight tells her story. She uses emotives, a type of speech act that is both constative and performative, to justify this. For example, she reports that she had a fear of those three prisons of love, fear and shame. By claiming this, she reinforces the emotional regime. Finally, Esther chooses, or is forced to choose, the path of emotional effort where she maintains the emotional regime she is in, despite rising suffering. She says that, knowing her abusive lord, she must be afraid and keep the love and peace of her house.³²¹

The other path that emerges is a path of emotional liberty then an emotional refuge, but is quickly averted. The young lady is shown to be displaying love to someone who is not her husband, and thus is not suffering from her lord. She

³¹⁹ Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 128–29.

³²⁰ Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 128–29.

³²¹ CT, 137.

experiences a period of emotional liberty. This is not to say that she is completely free of the regime, but that her emotional contradictions get to such a point that she is finding it hard to navigate.³²² Her emotional refuge, from the regime, is the squire and this experience is divinely interrupted and she is corralled and threatened by her mother and father respectively. An emotional refuge is a place, organization or even a person that provides a respite from the regime. Reddy frequently uses the examples of salons in eighteenth-century France,³²³ but does not exclude individuals as a possible refuge, which I propose to be the case here with the squire. However, as previously stated, this is a prescriptive book and the Knight does not want to set a bad example for his daughters, so the young lady in this situation mends her ways and returns to the fold. Furthermore, with the example of the lady that hears Mass from an angel, women who obey the regime are shown to be rewarded with a return of love from God, an “emotional reward”, if one may suggest a term.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the ideas of Giles of Rome regarding two motions of the heart, love and hate, neither of which are inherently bad, can perhaps be applied to this specific word combination too. While the Knight never says there has to be a balance between “love and fear” nor references Giles of Rome as an inspiration, there is an implication, as I have hopefully made evident, that this combined emotion of “love and fear” is supposed to exist in the background. Wives occasionally love their husbands more than they fear them. For example, such as the widowed woman who stayed unmarried because she loved her late husband so much, and as he is dead there is no practical reason to fear some retaliation. Furthermore, sometimes women feared more than loved their husbands, such as jumping on a table in fear of physical violence.³²⁴

³²² Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 128–29.

³²³ Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 150, Chapter 5 passim.

³²⁴ See above pg, 31–32.

The elephant in the room in applying Reddy's frameworks here is the problem of authorship. All of these stories are written by Geoffroy de la Tour Landry with the help of his scribes and priests, as he reports in the prologue. In comparison Reddy uses letters extensively in his book while this chapter is stuck with the Knight's interpretation of contemporary and Biblical stories. The emotional regime proposed here is not meant to be one that the historical equivalent of the biblical Esther actually applied to herself; it is a prescriptive regime that tries to convince the daughters of the Knight to apply to themselves.

To elaborate, with any prescriptive text comes the presumption that the opposite of the prescription must have been happening with some frequency. For example, there must have been some number of married noblewomen flirting with squires for the Knight to warn his daughters about the dangers of such a thing. What the Knight intends to do, willingly or otherwise, is to preempt his daughters' emotional navigation by offering them an example of good or repentant women who overcome that period of emotional liberty and apply emotional effort and suffering to return to the regime. The same applies to Caxton's patroness who had the book translated into English, or the German knight that translated the book himself for his own daughters. To summarize, this is not how historical women thought of their emotional world in a vacuum, but rather how men would like them to think of it as such. Indeed, Roberta L. Krueger, an expert in prescriptive material such as this, suggests that the book's moral overdetermination points to an instability of such morals; and that the book's structure is a response to anticipated female resistance.³²⁵

³²⁵ Roberta L. Krueger, "Intergeneric Combination and the Anxiety of Gender in '*Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles*,'" *L'Esprit Créateur* 33, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 61–72. 70. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26286482>. (Accessed August 11, 2025)

3.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has aimed to explain how Geoffroy de la Tour Landry experiences and wants his daughters to experience the emotions of love, fear and the combined emotion of love and fear. It is evident that while love and fear on their own can be felt by anyone for almost any reason, when these two emotions are used together they are highly exclusive to women in the Knight's book and try to construct a framework through which they can judge their actions and reinforce their beliefs in the emotional regime, where they must humbly suffer. A parallel between a woman's *seigneur* and God appears here: Just as anyone must obey God, a wife must obey her husband.

Love is possibly the most frequent emotion in the book, as stated before, and the love of God takes absolute precedence over loving anyone or anything else. The love of God, of husbands, of wives, of children and of parents is praised; while unchaste love, excessive love towards pets, the love of wealth is condemned. All of these tie into religion: Wife and husband must love each other as they are bound by God's and the Church's law, and love of wealth is evil, as there are many saints who fed the poor and orphans as given examples in the previous chapter.

Fear is also a common emotion, and its appraisal usually occurs when one fears God or one's husband. Everyone should fear God and by extension his wrath, and everyone does so or is horrifyingly punished. Fear of losing status is perhaps quite normal for such a hierarchical society, and the previous chapter's comments on marriage also reflects how seriously this was taken. There does not seem to be any fear of warfare or rebellions and the destruction it brings, for example, which was surprising to me. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Knight seems to be

confident in his status and the stability of the world he lives in, since he does not seem to fear revolts (or even react to them at all) like the Jacquarie which would have been fresh in his memory.

There is much to be discussed about the emotions in the Book of Geoffroy de la Tour Landry. As mentioned multiple times, there are several other emotions and senses that can be discussed, and placing them in their contexts of late medieval and early modern literature will be no doubt the most promising way for a researcher to follow.

Anger appears frequently and it is almost always men that experience it. For example, there is a story where a beloved and famous man is slandered for having eaten the heart of the son of the Roman emperor, upon the child's disappearance. As he is about to be hanged unjustly, it is told that the women "*beganne to crye, and made suche a sorowe that it was pyte to see*". However, when the emperor had learned of his son's alleged fate he "*bicame ryght angry and sorowfull*"³²⁶ As mentioned before, there are stories of women being beaten, or worse, by their husbands; while, as expected, no stories of the reverse can be found. The only occurrence of female anger, if my memory serves and as I have noted in the previous chapter,³²⁷ is one where husband and wife are both angry at their disobedient son. One can suggest the other side of the coin of this emotional regime: Where women must love and fear, and humbly suffer what they cannot change; and husbands and lords must be rightfully angry on occasion. This can mirror the medieval concept of *ira regis* ("the wrath of the king") where the justified anger of kings was a part of ruling. The example that the authors of Medieval Sensibilities give is the death of Thomas

³²⁶ CT, 188.

³²⁷ See above pg, 31.

Beckett, the so-called “troublesome priest”, who was assassinated upon the angry comments of Henry II.³²⁸

Shame is another emotion that I have carefully sidestepped for brevity, but what little I have mentioned of it should show that it was a social regulator for especially the noble class. The shame of losing status appears as the fear of shame, which can perhaps be further examined with other sources. Shame can perhaps be categorized into two different types, as one that regulates behavior that no one else would otherwise know (what we might call “guilt” today) and another that regulates behavior that others would know (what we still call “shame”).

A re-evaluation of the Knight himself is also perhaps in order. Diane Bornstein, in her 1983 book “The Lady in the Tower” has harsh words for the Knight, and says that he only cares about the marriages of his daughters, that he seeks to make women docile and has no permission for them to go anywhere unaccompanied.³²⁹ I believe that the Knight wishes what is best for his daughters in a deeply patriarchal world. He certainly is no revolutionary and accepts his place in his world but simply the fact that there is not an abundance of books written by knights to their daughters shows that the Knight cared about his daughters in a rare way. In truth, a happy marriage, with all that it entails as detailed throughout this thesis, and a pious life was a good position to attain for all women, if not the best possible position.

The text offers a glimpse into how emotional prescriptions were constructed and gendered in the domestic sphere. It is no doubt written from a male perspective, and by our modern standards, most of its stories would be considered superstitious in regards to religion and strongly disagreeable in regards to social norms about women’s experiences. However, there is no denying that the book has a charm to it:

³²⁸ Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, 169–175.

³²⁹ Diane Bornstein, *The Lady in the Tower: Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women*, (United States: Archon Books, 1983) 12, 49–52.

an almost seven-hundred-year-old manuscript written for humble purposes, to teach one's daughters how to read and to prepare them for a better life. It is a sincere book, which has been and will be valuable to historians especially in the field of the history of emotions.



CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry offers an attentive modern reader a chance to be part of the audience of a French knight in the fourteenth century, and even a part of audiences in fifteenth century England and Germany as translation efforts show. Evidently, the book had struck a chord with parts of the upper and perhaps upper-middle orders of the late medieval and early modern world, meaning that its morals and its portrayal of society were relatable to them. A book written as people recovered from the Black Death was still being read when the Americas were being discovered by the Europeans, with only minor changes as shown with Caxton's translation.

While it may not have the literary merit of the likes of Christine de Pizan's work, nor the radical rhetoric of *Holy Maidenhood*, it is a strange book. There are many "mirrors for princes" books in medieval and early modern literature, that is to say, books written for the most elite young men of the nobility, but there are not many books written for the daughters of a family who had, at most, five parishes to their name. And there are many courtesy books that were written in the early modern period, but a courtesy book functions best when it has a court, and as this thesis has shown, the court of the king of France or even those of high-profile dukes were not common occurrences for the Knight. The supposedly famous knights that Geoffroy mentions, the de Lugre brothers, have seemingly left very little documentation about

themselves or their families, which perhaps shows how much distance there was between the Knight and the highest ranks of French aristocracy. There is an abundance of common etiquette books from the eighteenth century onwards that also target this broad demographic of upper or upper-middle class young women, but the world of those books is completely different from the world of Geoffroy de la Tour Landry and his daughters.

The closest preceding and non-contemporary work is perhaps the likes of Holy Maidenhood, yet even this was written for religious recluses who are required to stay virgins, not for lay noblewomen who are expected to talk with their suitors without losing their chastity. Even the Castilian work "*Castigos y dotrinas*", which I have suggested is most similar to the Knight's work, was published after Geoffroy's book. In this aspect, the Knight's book shows the start of a gradual shift in literature towards also appealing to lay women. There is no doubt that it forms a strong part of the corpus of vernacular works and also forms the kindling of private reading for women that the likes of the Book of Hours had started.

When relaying stories, whether Biblical or contemporary, the Knight is reconstructing his view of society for the reader. Perhaps due to his social standing, one can find almost all social groups that constituted medieval France, from prostitutes to kings, all of whom could feasibly, but most of them not regularly, come into contact with the Knight's daughters and this book is the Knight's way of having a guide for them in their interactions. It is clear that the Knight knew and was at peace with his position in society where he had obligations to those above him and duties to those below him. Even unprecedented events like the Jacquerie revolt seem to have not shaken his belief in the paternalistic order of the world. He would not have been very old when writing this book, though his exact date of birth is not known, but he

also seems to have wrestled with the idea of untimely death as his stories about inheritance shows. I have suggested that this could be related to the disastrous Battle of Crécy that he would have been familiar with.

The Knight is expectedly very religious and wishes for his daughters to be so as well. It would not be an exaggeration to say that almost everything in this book has a religious justification, from why dogs should not be fed good meat to why wives should obey their husbands; with very little that does not actively and directly tie into religion such as adopting new fashions, as in the example of the young man that dressed “like the Germans”.

Caxton’s preface is also useful here since he says that he was commissioned by an English noblewoman “*to thende that it may the better be vnderstonde of al suche as shal rede or here it*”.³³⁰ This implies that the noblewoman had somehow heard of the book, maybe even had the chance of reading it in French, and then commissioned Caxton to translate it. This mirrors the growing interest in literature in the early modern period, and in patronage of the arts.

Affective aspects of the Knight’s book show us how a medieval nobleman wished to construct an emotional regime. There are emotions that everyone can feel, such as love or fear; but there are emotions that are almost exclusive to women such as the combination of love and fear. Furthermore, religion has seeped into every facet of this emotional world. Most stories involving fear are related to fear of divine retribution. Most stories about love are either about loving God, or loving others because of God’s laws. Which ties into the love and fear of one’s lord, whether that lord is a husband or God. Finally, it is imperative to mention that this is a prescriptive text where most of its stories are edited or emphasized according to the moral that the

³³⁰ CT, 5. “so that it may be better understood by all those who shall read or hear it.”

Knight wishes to convey. As mentioned before, the existence of any prescriptive text implies the existence of its opposite, but to what extent we may never know. This emotional regime, and its navigation by women, was evidently not unassailable and the Knight tries to preempt his daughters' possible periods of emotional liberty by writing this book.

Further research in regard to the Knight's book can focus on emotions further. As mentioned before, anger and shame also carry connotations and gender-based distinct applications. Any scholar wishing to continue this would benefit from a deeper understanding of late medieval French literature and law; and if one wishes to see how Caxton's translation fits into early modern England, the same fields of English culture must be thoroughly understood. In this endeavour, court records and sermons with regard to marital relations would be useful.

Geoffroy de La Tour Landry's book is a fascinating piece of medieval literature that shows the world from the perspective of a well-off knight. It does not have an epic narrative nor does it follow larger-than-life figures like a chronicle of Froissart; nor does it have the desire to prove oneself like the writings of de Pizan. In this respect, it stands out in its simplicity and deserves an examination of that simplicity, to grasp fully how this social group of French knights or English noblewomen might have seen the post-Plague world and the realities of wartime France; or of fifteenth century England, from the perspectives of social groups and emotions.

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