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# Conducting Women: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Rhetoric of French and English Conduct Literature of the Later Middle Ages

Marisa Sikes

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**CONDUCTING WOMEN: GENDER, POWER, AUTHORITY  
IN THE RHETORIC OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH CONDUCT  
LITERATURE OF THE LATER MIDDLE AGES**

by

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B.A., English, University of South Florida, 2001  
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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
English**

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation primarily to my husband whose support and patience was indispensable to me during the writing process and without whom I would not have been able to complete this project. I also dedicate this dissertation to all the important women in my life—family, friends, and advisors, but especially to my grandmother, Mary, and my mother, Gayle, to whom my grandmother used to say, “be a lady, even if it kills you.”

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I also want to thank the other members of my committee: Helen Damico, Timothy Graham, and Nancy McLoughlin, all of whom were or are members of the community of UNM medievalists. I mention these faculty members as a group because I have found that the medievalist community at UNM has a tremendous capacity for support, friendliness, and appreciation for scholarship. Working with these faculty members in various capacities, not just inside but also outside the classroom, has shown me what intellectual community is about. I would also like to thank my M.A. thesis director, Nicole Discenza, whose advisement and support were crucial to my pursuing a doctorate. Finally I want to thank my family, including my husband, for providing emotional and other forms of support during my graduate career.

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**ABSTRACT**

Conduct and courtesy literature have a long history, its vernacular tradition extending back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We are familiar with modern versions of this literature: Ann Landers' advice column, women's magazines, and even modern books that tell us about etiquette. My dissertation examines English and French conduct literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries addressed to women. These texts build rhetorical authority in various ways. At one end of the spectrum of rhetorical authority there are texts that build credibility through charismatic and familial authority; on the other end there are those that build it through abstract means such as the use of allegory and visionary inspiration. I locate these different approaches in relationship to other medieval literary traditions such as the recording of visions, the generation of mental images as a means of mnemonic practice and meditation, the debate on women, and the use of exempla, a prominent rhetorical feature of pastoral medieval sermons.

My initial chapters explain my theoretical approach and examine conduct literature written by women for women. Christine de Pizan's *Book of the Three Virtues* reveals that medieval pedagogies directed at women are not always concrete and experiential for her text engages in visionary practice, employs allegory, and self-reflective debate. Anne of France's *Lessons for Her Daughter* relies on more familiar constructions of authority but is also part of a family tradition of royal instruction directed at children. In my fourth chapter I analyze the English translations of *The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry* which were produced between 1422 and 1471 and in 1484. This male-authored text adopts a

familiar, familial language of concern, but *The Book* also reflects the rhetoric of pastoral sermons as well as violent misogyny. My fifth chapter considers the anonymous, short Middle English poems narrated by a “Good Wife” along with a Middle Scots and an Anglo-Norman poem. These texts reveal the strictures on middle class female behavior and rely on concrete, specific details of physical objects and exempla; the Good Wife narrator presents herself as the mother of her audience, engaging the familial and charismatic aspects of rhetorical authority. The Anglo-Norman poem provides evidence that authority does not always reside within the mother figure in didactic literature, however, as the daughter in this poem speaks back to her mother. My final chapter considers how, despite the violence present in the Knight’s work, it and the works of Christine and Anne promote gynsocial relationships as a means of survival in medieval courtly society for women. My study questions modern assumptions about medieval understandings of gender and sexuality concerning medieval pedagogies. My work also historicizes the neuroscience debate over differences between the sexes in which Cordelia Fine’s *Delusions of Gender* participates by examining the pedagogical approaches directed at medieval women.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION Courtesy, Rhetoric and Authority: Transacting Gender and Class Identity in Medieval Conduct Literature .....</b>	<b>1</b>
I. Historical Context and Scope of the Study.....	8
II. Rhetorical Spectra, Tropes, and Traditions .....	11
<b>CHAPTER 2 Christine de Pizan: Uncovering the Rhetorical Visionary .....</b>	<b>36</b>
I. Seeing is Believing: Christine the Visionary and Her Allegorical Assistants.....	48
A. <i>Treasury</i> 's Predecessor: Visionary Claims and Boethian Allegory.....	48
B. <i>Treasury</i> 's Allegorical Frame .....	59
C. Rhetoric Fit for a Princess: Allegory and Dialogic Introspection .....	64
D. Authorizing Contemplation.....	75
E. Classed Rhetoric: The Diminution of Allegory and the Risk of Reasoning .....	92
II. Image, Exemplarity, Pedagogy: Christine's Models for Female Behavior.....	119
III. Underwriting Good Behavior: Authorities in the <i>Treasury</i> .....	150
IV. Conclusion .....	159
<b>CHAPTER 3 The Tradition of Familial Advice and Writing Female Cooperation: Anne de France's <i>Les enseignements à sa fille</i>.....</b>	<b>162</b>
I. Anne at Amboise and in Politics .....	164
II. Family Traditions and Parental Advice from the Monarchs: Louis IX.....	177
III. Charisma, Experience, and the Rhetoric of Female Cooperation in <i>Les enseignements</i> .....	187
<b>CHAPTER 4 Exempla, Image, Parental Authority in Caxton's Translation of <i>The Book of the Knight of the Tower: Teaching Daughters the Results of Exercising Their Will</i> .....</b>	<b>218</b>
I. Paternal Narration and the Acquisition of Authority.....	222
II. Tautological Tales: Punishing Women and Other Exempla .....	244
A. To Shame or To Maim? .....	246
B. Visions and the Supernatural: Good and Bad .....	312
C. Shining Pearls: Exemplars to Follow .....	325
III. Images and Imagery .....	332
A. The Imagery of Beasts: Naturalizing Behaviors .....	345



IV. Authorial <i>Auctoritas</i> , or Making Your Sources Your Own.....	351
V. Conclusion .....	355
<b>CHAPTER 5 Good “Wives” Giving Good Advice: Verse Didacticism in England</b>	<b>357</b>
I. Proverbs and Experience as Context .....	361
II. Visual Pedagogies and Proverbs .....	374
III. Combining the Parental Narrator with Proverbs and Images .....	380
IV. The Daughter Speaks: Mother-Daughter Debate in Anglo-Norman Lyric .....	390
<b>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION Mapping Out Gynosocial Spaces in Conduct Literature: Reputation is Everything.....</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>Appendix 1. “Chier[s] filz” occurrences in Ashley’s edition of <i>Enseignement a Philippe</i> .....</b>	<b>429</b>
<b>Appendix 2. “Chiere fille” occurrences in Ashley’s edition of <i>Enseignement a Ysabel</i> .....</b>	<b>430</b>
<b>Appendix 3. “Ma fille” occurrences in Chazaud’s edition of <i>Les enseignements</i>....</b>	<b>431</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>434</b>

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. Rhetorical Authority. ....	12
Figure 2. Rhetorical Tropes and Approaches. ....	12
Figure 3. The Rhetorical Structure of Section XIX of <i>Les enseignements</i> by Anne of France. ....	201
Figure 4. The Relationships between sections VII and XIX of <i>Les enseignements</i> . ....	204

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

Courtesy, Rhetoric and Authority: Transacting Gender and Class Identity in Medieval  
Conduct Literature

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,  
 Lat noon humylitee youre tonge naille,  
 Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence  
 To write of yow a storie of swich mervaille  
 As of Grisildis pacient and kynde,  
 Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hire entraille!

Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,  
 But evere answereth at the countretaille.  
 Beth nat bidaffed for youre innocence,  
 But sharply taak on yow the governaille.  
 Emprinteth wel this lesson in youre mynde,  
 For commune profit sith it may availe.

Ye archewyves, stondeth at defense,  
 Syn ye be strong as is a greet camaille;  
 Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offense.  
 And sklendre wyves, fieble as in bataille,  
 Beth egre as is tygre yond in Ynde;  
 Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille.

Ne dreed hem nat; doth hem no reverence,  
 For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,  
 The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence  
 Shal perce his brest and eek his aventaille.  
 In jalousie I rede eek thou hym bynde,  
 And thou shalt make hym couche as doth a quaille.

From Chaucer's Envoy following *The Clerk's Tale*<sup>1</sup>

Chaucer's ironic advice for wives provides an amusing counterpoint to most of the advice that I discuss in this dissertation, and as his envoy comes at the conclusion of his re-telling of the Griselda story,<sup>2</sup> perhaps to ironize the medieval model of the patient

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Clerk's Tale*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. Ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 152-53, ll. 1183-1206.

<sup>2</sup> On Griselda as a medieval literary figure see: Nicole Nolan Sidhu, "Weeping for the Virtuous Wife: Laymen, Affective Piety, and Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*," in *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing, and Household in Medieval England*, ed. Maryanne Kowaleski and P. Jeremy P. Goldberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 177-208; Andrea Denny-Brown, "Povre Griselda and the All-

wife, it is a suitable text with which to begin this investigation of conduct literature of the later Middle Ages directed toward women. Chaucer's Envoy points out the transactional nature of exemplary models of behavior: they might be imitated but likewise they might be held up to ridicule or manipulated for self-interest. The conduct literature that I investigate in this dissertation is likewise transactional. Juanita Feros Ruys points out complex relationships a medieval audience could have with texts when she quotes

Charles F. Briggs:

[t]he text could be read from beginning to end or partially, once or repeatedly; it could be recited to a group of listeners, a practice common to both the university classroom, the monastic or college refectory, or the royal or noble hall. Someone might have possessed but not read it, using it rather as a kind of talisman or symbol of status or power, or indeed not using it at all.<sup>3</sup>

Ruys and Briggs make clear the complexity of parsing out how we can understand audience responses to conduct literature, and that there is not a simple formula by which scholars can calculate audience consumption of the text. Louise M. Rosenblatt's ideas about transactional reading may be helpful here. Rosenblatt contends that "The reader has tended to remain in shadow, taken for granted, to all intents and purposes invisible" by

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Consuming *Archewyves*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 28 (2006): 77-115; Tara Williams, "'T'assaye in thee thy wommanheeds': Griselda, Chosen, Translated and Tried," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 27 (2005): 93-127; Mary-Catherine A. Bodden, "Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*: Interrogating 'Virtue' through Violence," in *A Great Effusion of Blood? Interpreting Medieval Violence*, ed. Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Tiery, and Oren Falk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 216-40; Gail Ashton, "Patient Mimesis: Griselda and the *Clerk's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 32, no. 3 (1998): 232-38; Takami Matsuda, "Griselda and Her Virtues," *Geibun Kenkyu: Journal of Arts and Letters* 73 (1997): 27-47; Lesley Johnson, "Reincarnation of Griselda: Contexts for the *Clerk's Tale*?" in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, ed. Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London: Routledge, 1994), 195-220; Charlotte C. Morse, "The Exemplary Griselda," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 7 (1985): 51-86; Denise K. Filios, "Rewriting Griselda: From Folktale to Exemplum," *Mediaevalia* 24 (2003): 45-72; Christine M. Rose, "Glossing Griselda in a Medieval Conduct Book: Le Ménagier de Paris," in *The Propur Langage of Englische Men*, ed. Marcin Krygier, Liliana Sikorska, et al. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), 81-103; Lynn Shuttters, "Griselda's Pagan Virtue," *Chaucer Review* 44, no. 1 (2009): 61-83; and Amy W. Goodwin, "The Griselda Game," *Chaucer Review* 39, no. 1 (2004): 41-69.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Juanita Feros Ruys, "Introduction: Approaches to Didactic Literature—Meaning, Intent, Audience, Social Effect" in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, *Disputatio* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 1-38, 10.

literary critics up until the rise of reader-response critical theory, which she acknowledges inverts the problem of not acknowledging the reader at all by “insisting on the predominance of the reader’s personality” in interpreting a text.<sup>4</sup> Rosenblatt argues for a more complex understanding of the reading process that recognizes it as involving a “shuttling back and forth as one or another synthesizing element—a context, a persona, a level of meaning—suggested itself to” the reader, who also “pa[id] attention to the images, feelings, attitudes, associations, and ideas that the words and the referents evoked.”<sup>5</sup> Rosenblatt further describes the reading process in these terms “The text, [...] patterns and delimits, but it ultimately functions like a chemical element: it itself is merged in the synthesis with the other elements to produce a particular event”—here a piece of conduct literature.<sup>6</sup> Rosenblatt’s other elements are simply the reader and the personal context that he or she brings to the work, but for medieval texts, the chemical equation, to continue with Rosenblatt’s simile, is a bit more complex: “the author and the eventual recipient/s of a text were by no means the only potential makers of didactic meaning in the medieval and early-modern periods, for we must take into account the great array of intermediary parties involved in a text’s transmissions, such as copyists, redactors, annotators, glossators, illustrators, translators, publishers, patrons, and booksellers.”<sup>7</sup> So in addition to these often lost layers of possible interpolations, the medievalist who considers conduct literature must recognize yet one more difficulty in assessing its role: we cannot ascertain the degree to which it reflects actual social practice because “texts are merely the petrifications of practices that were learned rather through

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<sup>4</sup> Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader The Text The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 1, x.

<sup>5</sup> Rosenblatt, *The Reader The Text The Poem*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Rosenblatt, *The Reader The Text The Poem*, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Ruys, “Introduction,” 10.

imitation than from a book.”<sup>8</sup> These challenges to reading medieval conduct literature can best be dealt with by allowing oneself to recognize multiple and competing meanings for these texts and by acknowledging that these readings cannot be unequivocally asserted as univocal.

Deborah McGrady offers pertinent characterization of the late medieval lay reader that is helpful to this investigation. First, McGrady discusses art history and reading in conjunction in her case study of Guillaume de Machaut; she shows that increasingly in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries there were more portrayals of private reading in manuscript iconography, and she argues persuasively that such illustrations point to the “ambitions of late medieval vernacular writers” who wanted to “be viewed as equals to wise men or the *auctores* and” who wanted “their books [to] be approached as the most effective remedy against human ignorance.”<sup>9</sup> Such observations of authorial ambition suggest that a careful examination of the rhetoric and constructions of authority present in conduct literature from the later Middle Ages is sorely needed. Further, such ambitions ascribed to authors generally, not just female authors, further makes significant the works of Christine de Pizan and Anne de France who both worked to preserve their own words for future audiences, and this observation additionally suggests the assertions of authority and the rhetorical choices in Christine’s text were made all the more carefully. McGrady also describes two types of medieval readers. I propose that we read Christine’s *Treasury* as a text produced by the second type of reader McGrady outlines:

[1.]Intermediary readers are individuals who fulfill an intercessory role when producing a material rendition of a work. These readers include the many individuals conveniently grouped as bookmakers, such as editors,

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<sup>8</sup> Ruys, “Introduction,” 19.

<sup>9</sup> Deborah McGrady, *Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and His Late Medieval Audience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 5-6, 7.

scribes, artists, and limners, but can also include public lectors and translators. [... 2.] Inventive readers are distinguished from their intermediary counterparts by the degree to which they appropriate the text as material for new creations. [...] They intercept the master text and proceed to reshape and redefine the works as a means of creating new distinctive writings. Inventive readers, functioning as writers while sometimes working under the guise of editor or performer, use previous compositions as fodder for new, fully distinguishable works. They relocate the concepts and structures of earlier texts into their own imaginative landscape thereby staking out new territories at the same time that they radically alter our perception of earlier works.<sup>10</sup>

Christine is not an editor, and she is not literally translating a text, but *City of Ladies* is most definitely a sort of translation of the stories and histories of women, not just according to the sources, but also sometimes against them, and against the meta-narrative of misogyny. Further, Christine's rhetorical performance in *Treasury* is a performance of female intellectual co-opting of so-called male rhetoric; *Treasury* is also a guide for other women to engage in their own sort of transvestism—it tells women how to behave so that they might acquire some power, but it paradoxically asks that women perform accepted medieval mandates for female behavior in order to exert that power.

The Middle Ages were a period defined by power contests among wielders of authority—secular, economic, political, or religious, and thus it is not surprising to find a genre of texts flourishing in this period that aims to restrict and shape behaviors of various persons of disparate socio-political, class, gender, and religious identities. While these attempts to mold behavior might be made by individuals as distinct as archbishops or mothers, the records of those attempts survive for the modern scholar in what has come to be known as the conduct or courtesy book, a genre in its incipient vernacular stages in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but that steadily developed and currently forms the object of study for a large number of early modern and nineteenth-century

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<sup>10</sup> McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 9-10.

scholars. It is also necessary to acknowledge that contemporary scholarly understandings of the conduct or courtesy book are further complicated by the fact that when we discuss these works, we are discussing as a genre “a much more organic literary form” that had multiple audiences, uses, and intergeneric relationships with other texts and genres.<sup>11</sup> Acknowledging this complexity allows us to remain aware of the fact that to a certain extent authors writing in this mode that modern scholars have identified may not have conceived of their literature solely as conduct guides but as texts that participate in a multiplicity of genres: sermon, allegory, memorial, etc. Yet conduct literature records more than an author’s ideological attempt to assert control over behavior; it also reveals the author’s own modes of developing his or her own rhetorical authority. In the repetitive commands issued by many conduct texts, the observant scholar can also find points of resistance where the audience presumably does not receive or accept the expected behavior, and therefore must be continually corrected.

My interest in conduct literature of the European Middle Ages is in how its authority is rhetorically structured in the text; how it makes its pedagogy clear to its audience; and finally, how these rhetorical moves interact with other medieval literary traditions. My basic approach in this investigation is to consider conduct literature texts comparatively and as a genre which can allow scholars to see sites of struggles in the medieval past—the author/narrator with the announced audience (e.g., Christine de Pizan to women), the author with an unannounced audience (e.g., Christine to university men), and the audience’s response to hegemonic or ideological cultural attitudes such as patriarchal family structures or sumptuary laws. Such comparisons highlight some of the varieties of conduct literature and illustrate that the audiences of conduct texts are not

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<sup>11</sup> Ruys, “Introduction,” 22.



uniformly passive or active, but may use the conduct literature they consume in different ways. Examining these sites of struggle benefits medievalists by providing another means by which the medieval scholar can assess problems of gender and class, as well as how those portions of identity may affect the construction of rhetorical authority and power within a text.

My investigation is a comparative analysis of how medieval authors of conduct literature construct authority for their audiences' benefit. Thus, my primary interest is in rhetorical authority and rhetorical approaches or tropes. Overlaid with this concern with both authority and mode of approach are concerns with gender and class, and what, if any difference, can be identified between the rhetorical approaches of male and female conduct text authors who address women. My dissertation extends current scholarship in two significant ways. First, I am considering multiple works of conduct literature in both English and French; current scholarship tends to analyze texts in these languages in isolation from one another. Second, I engage conduct literature with questions about visionary rhetoric and authority. I have found very little to suggest an intellectual interaction has taken place between conduct literature scholars and scholars who work on visionaries; my dissertation provides such interaction, specifically in my chapter on Christine de Pizan. Though much recent scholarship on visionaries has considered questions of their authority, no one has considered how the types of authority that a visionary has access to might be employed in conduct and didactic literature. My research demonstrates that Christine de Pizan was familiar with and deployed authorized modes of contemplation in her piece of conduct literature; it also shows that Christine and Anne de France and Geoffroy de La Tour Landry all have multi-faceted and complex rhetorical

schemes in their behavioral manuals. From both Christine's and Geoffroy's work classed rhetoric and tensions between the classes are readily apparent; Anne's work provides less evidence of social class tension, but does deal with issues such as envy and court politics. Both Christine and Anne cite named authorities more frequently than the Knight who often adapts his source without mentioning that he is employing one. Finally, I read the rhetorical acts of both Christine and Anne as radical acts that sponsor gynosomal, or female-female relationships that have positive outcomes. Such a reading is not possible for the Knight's work, but I do identify within it a simultaneous desire to protect women from and warn them against the dangers of court life.

### **I. Historical Context and Scope of the Study**

The fourteenth century saw a number of crises in Europe from plague, to war, to labor shortages, increased taxation, social unrest, the reorganization of economies in favor of money rather than barter systems, and the rise of a new merchant class that was neither necessarily noble by lineage nor reliant upon land for its income. In the midst of such a tumultuous time, it is hardly difficult to imagine the need for a literature that might “inculcat[e] the etiquette of court,” but also “systematiz[e] a society's codes of behavior.”<sup>12</sup> Juanita Feros Ruys also notes particularly the difficulties of approaching conduct literature, and in her edited volume the essays address didactic literature, which she defines as “a text [...] created, transmitted, or received as a text designed to teach, instruct, advise, edify, inculcate morals, or modify and regulate behavior.”<sup>13</sup> My

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<sup>12</sup> Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark, “Medieval Conduct: Texts, Theories, Practices” in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L.A. Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), ix-xx, ix, x.

<sup>13</sup> Ruys, “Introduction,” 5.

dissertation adopts a narrower interest and focuses upon vernacular Western European texts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries addressed to women that can be read as attempts to control behavior but also that simultaneously open windows for one social class audience (e.g. the merchant class) to mimic appropriate behaviors of another social class (e.g. the nobility). Part of my interest in the writings devoted to women is to parse out some of the ambivalences and complexities that are part of the medieval concept of gender. Ruys states contradictions in attitudes toward women may function as an attempt to handle the “competing Aristotelian and Galenic medieval traditions used to explain sexual difference, combined with the contrary creation narratives of Genesis.”<sup>14</sup>

The conduct literature primary sources I examine in detail include: some short English and Scots texts, which I refer to collectively as the Good Wife texts (“The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” and “The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgrimage”), an Anglo-Norman lyric (“Débat entre mere et fille”); *Le trésor de la cité des dames / Le livre des trois vertus* (*The Treasury of the Book of the City of Ladies, or the Book of Three Virtues*), and *Le livre de la cité des dames* (*The Book of the City of Ladies*), by Christine de Pizan; *Les enseignements d’Anne de France, Duchesse de Bourbonnois et d’Auvergne à sa fille Susanne* (*Lessons for My Daughter*), by Anne de France; and Caxton’s translation of *Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry*, by Geoffroy de La Tour Landry.

The Good Wife texts have a complex manuscript history, but all appear in the late fourteenth through the fifteenth centuries. “The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” survives in six texts, five of which are verse; one version is prose from the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The four manuscript verse traditions date to the mid-fourteenth century, the first half of the fifteenth century, the second half of the fifteenth century and

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<sup>14</sup> Ruys, “Introduction,” 6.

the end of the fifteenth century. The fifth verse version is taken from a Norfolk manuscript and appears also in a 1597 printed edition.<sup>15</sup> “The Good Wife Wold a Pylgrymage” is much simpler in terms of dating as it survives in only one manuscript, which Mustanoja dates to the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The date of the Anglo-Norman poem, preserved in BL Additional MS 46919, is uncertain, but the compilation of the manuscript in which it exists is likely to have been done between 1300 and 1333.<sup>17</sup> Both works by Christine de Pizan were written in 1405. The date of Anne of France’s work is uncertain, but the most recent English edition produced by Sharon Jansen argues for a date of 1497-98 for composition, rather than the dates between 1503 and 1505 suggested by the nineteenth-century editor of the French text, Chazaud.<sup>18</sup> There were three printed editions of her work: an edition printed in the years between 1517 and 1521, of which only one copy is extant, a second edition in 1534, and a third in 1535.<sup>19</sup> Geoffroy de La Tour Landry produced his work in the years 1371-72, and it survives in twenty-one French manuscripts.<sup>20</sup> Two English translations of La Tour Landry’s work exist, one from the reign of Henry VI (1422-71) in an anonymous manuscript, and Caxton’s 1484 printed translation.<sup>21</sup> The texts range from the late fourteenth century to the early sixteenth in date, a time frame which spans early conduct literature after its

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<sup>15</sup> Tauno F. Mustanoja, ed., *The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter, The Good Wife Wold a Pylgremage, The Thewis of Gud Women* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran, 1948), 92.

<sup>16</sup> Mustanoja, ed. *The Good Wife*, 134.

<sup>17</sup> David L. Jeffrey and Brian J. Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric: An Anthology Edited from the Manuscripts with Translations and Commentary*, Studies and Texts 93 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 2, 14.

<sup>18</sup> Sharon L. Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France: Lessons for My Daughter*, Medieval Women (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 9.

<sup>19</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, viii.

<sup>20</sup> Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, ed. M. Y. Offord, trans. William Caxton, Early English Text Society, supplementary ser. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), xxi-xxii.

<sup>21</sup> Mustanoja, *The Good Wife*, 41.

arrival as a genre in the vernacular but before it became popular and printed in the early modern period and later.

## II. Rhetorical Spectra, Tropes, and Traditions

My investigation of individual texts notes their various rhetorical features. First, of each piece of conduct literature I must ask how the narrator comes by his or her rhetorical authority or power. Second, I must ask what types of rhetorical figures the narrator employs. Third, I also investigate the ramifications of the rhetorical act of writing the conduct literature. When the texts are longer and more complex, their rhetorical structures reflect that fact. There are two chief rhetorical spectra that I employ in this investigation to help make comparisons for these more complex texts (see Figures 1 and 2 above). The first spectrum (Figure 1) considers the type of rhetorical authority adopted by or imbued into conduct literature through the source of the text, i.e. the narrator, and asks whether that authority is distant from its audience or familiar. The distant rhetorical authority may be allegorical or visionary and connect the text to a distant authority such as God or another divine personage.

The opposite, or familiar, rhetorical authority might be understood as what C. Stephen Jaeger has termed “charismatic” and connects the text to a parental, spousal, or teacher figure, someone literally closer to the audience.<sup>22</sup> Jaeger describes charismatic culture as that which “makes the body and physical presence into the mediator of cultural values. The controlled body with all its attributes—grace, posture, charm, sensuality,

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<sup>22</sup> C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 4.

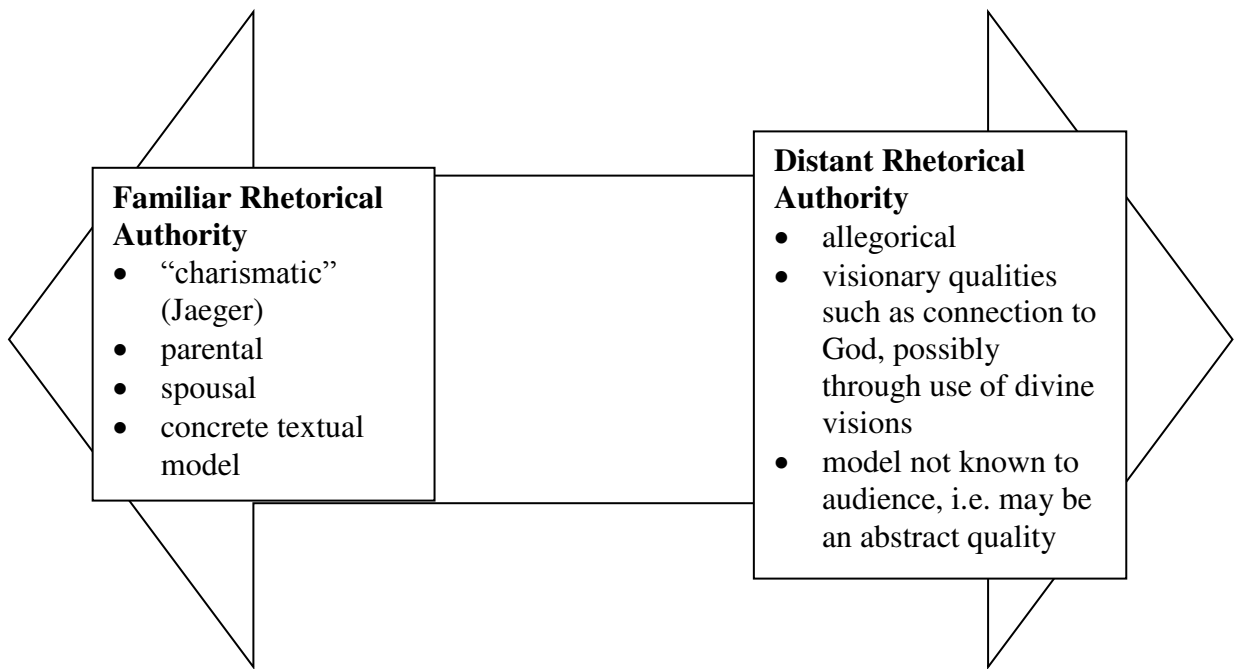


Figure 1. Rhetorical Authority

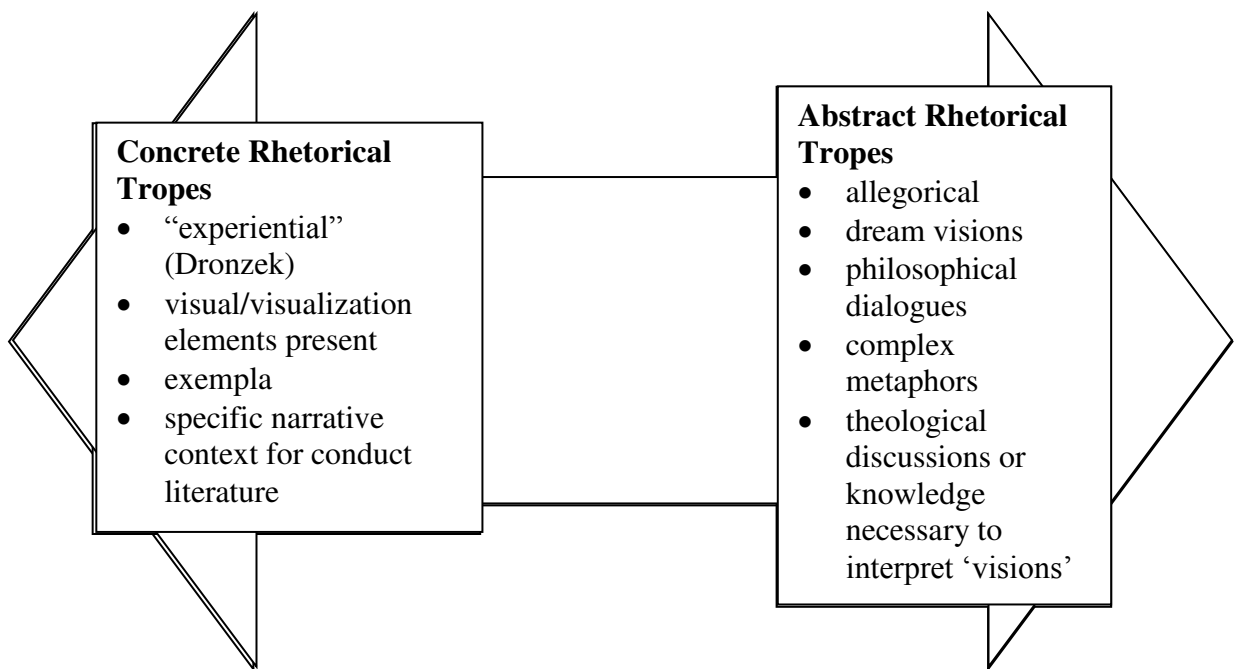


Figure 2. Rhetorical Tropes and Approaches

beauty, authority—is the work of art.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, charismatic culture understands a well-ordered human presence to be indicative of a well-ordered human interior and focuses on the *cultus virtutum* such discipline instilled.<sup>24</sup> Jaeger shows that as cathedral schools decline in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, so does charismatic learning. Charisma “becomes enfabulated, an object for study and reading.”<sup>25</sup> Jaeger posits that representatives of charismatic learning leave the cathedral schools to find work at various courts; in the writings of such persons the ideals of the *cultus virtutum* become enshrined, producing “the literature of courtly education: handbooks of courtesy and ‘mirrors of princes.’”<sup>26</sup> I argue that the social ideals in twelfth-century courtly literature survive in fifteenth-century conduct literature written for women, and that the charismatic culture that Jaeger describes has mutated into an encoding of spousal or parental authority in the conduct literature recorded for women. The rhetorical parent-spouse then operates in the audience’s mind as the absent presence of a real, remembered parent. Thus, charismatic conduct literature presents an authority-laden exemplar for the student to mimic in text form rather than as a physical, bodily model.

Further, Jaeger suggests conduct literature authors imbue themselves and their texts with the language of love and friendship that shaped the language of learning for cathedral schools.<sup>27</sup> I suggest that this language of friendship becomes the language of parental concern and authority in conduct literature. Additionally, authors of conduct literature exhort the audience to act as charismatic examples for others to spread the

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<sup>23</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, *passim*. While I discuss the enfabulated version of this authority for the narrator, all three full-length guides I examine contain prohibitions on women looking about too much or otherwise giving off a restless appearance as such behavior poorly affects their reputation for virtue.

<sup>25</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 14.

<sup>26</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 292-94.

<sup>27</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 316.

behavioral and social ideals contained within the conduct literature to those without access to the literature. In this way conduct literature reproduces itself charismatically, i.e. on the body of its readers—provided they accept its dictates—thereby, reaching those who do not read it through the behavior of those who do. Yet charismatic and textual authorities are not absolute over their audiences; the audience is free to adopt and adapt their exemplars. Such responses to conduct texts are evident in the various monastic reforms that take place throughout the Middle Ages during which relatively permissive orders revise their rules of behavior ever so frequently; thus, the exemplar is always that, an exemplar, which at times may be rejected or reshaped by its audience.

The second spectrum (see Figure 2 above) considers the quality of rhetorical approach a given conduct text adopts, or how the conduct literature goes about reaching its audience. Distant rhetorical authority is often combined with a rhetorical approach that educates its audience through drawn-out allegories and complex visions or figurative language which need explication. At the other end of this spectrum is the rhetorical approach that presents sensory-rich, often visual, exempla that require relatively little interpretation in order to be understood. One might term such rhetoric “experiential,” as Anna Dronzek does in her article “Gendered Theories of Education in Fifteenth-Century Conduct Books.”<sup>28</sup> Rather than rely upon women’s abilities to grasp information presented abstractly, conduct literature directed at women often uses concrete experience to explicate abstract qualities such as virtues through literary tropes such as exempla. Additionally, experiential learning can affect the form or structure of a text; lessons occur within narrative frames that place them in a specific, concrete context. Anna Dronzek

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<sup>28</sup> Anna Dronzek, “Gendered Theories of Education in Fifteenth-Century Conduct Books,” in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L.A. Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 135-59, 148.



locates the pedagogical justification for teaching women experientially in conduct books in the medieval attitude toward women's differences from men. For example, Dronzek notes that "a number of medieval medical theories" assert that women are "physically inferior to men," and that "this physical inferiority contribute[s] directly to intellectual inferiority."<sup>29</sup> Additionally, Dronzek points out that women were "associated with the corporeal and sense perception," so that frequently, "authors believed . . . that girls needed knowledge tied to the physical, to the world of the body that was at the very center of their nature."<sup>30</sup> These ideas establish some basis for experiential pedagogy directed at women in conduct literature, and suggest a theoretical basis for the gendering of conduct literature, though it is not without its disputants. Juanita Feros Ruys, for example, challenges in part the degree to which women were particularly taught via experience because she demonstrates that "The notion of 'experience' was both under construction and a focus of contention from late antiquity into the early-modern period, and the emergence of personal experience as a pedagogic resource in didactic texts from parents to their children is part of a larger story of an epistemological revolution that took place in the Middle Ages."<sup>31</sup> Ruys notes that in the Late Antique period Augustine's epistemological system damages the credibility of experience because he "suggested that knowledge gained through human personal experience could only be knowledge of evil and that knowledge of good came from God and from following divine commands. He contrasted *prudentia boni* (discernment of good) with *experimentum mali* (experience of

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<sup>29</sup> Dronzek, "Gendered Theories," 142-43.

<sup>30</sup> Dronzek, "Gendered Theories," 143.

<sup>31</sup> Juanita Feros Ruys, "Didactic 'I's and the Voice of Experience in Advice from Medieval and Early-Modern Parents to their Children," in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, Disputatio 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 129-62, 129.

evil) [...].”<sup>32</sup> As the high and late medieval concerns about the discernment of spirits for visionaries illustrates, this sense of unreliable experience is not easily remedied, and Ruys suggests that “late-medieval scientific revolutions and the rise of mystical piety” were necessary for the “recuperat[ion of] the idea of experience as a valuable and authorized mode of knowledge [...].”<sup>33</sup> Ruys’s theorization of the devaluation of experience may explain why both Christine de Pizan and Anne de France pepper their conduct manuals with overt references to authorities, though I would argue that Ruys’s stipulation that “the more highly theorized experiential mode committed to writing was overwhelmingly a product of paternal authors and directed primarily towards male children” is perhaps a misapprehension of how experience manifests itself within conduct texts such as Christine’s and Anne’s works.<sup>34</sup> For Christine, at least, her experience of misogyny, presented in the earlier work (*Le livre de cité des dames*) to the conduct guide (*Le livre de trois vertus/Le trésor de la cité des dames*) I explore here, becomes a driving force behind the rhetorical act of her conduct literature. Additionally, the recourse to citing authorities repeatedly that Anne indulges in is something that might be properly understood with a brief consideration of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s revision of Harold Bloom’s concept of the “anxiety of influence”:

she [the female author] must confront precursors who are almost exclusively male, and therefore significantly different from her. Not only do these precursors incarnate patriarchal authority [...], they attempt to enclose her in definitions of her person and her potential which, by reducing her to extreme stereotypes (angel, monster) drastically conflict with her own sense of her self—that is, of her subjectivity, her autonomy, her creativity. On the one hand, therefore, the woman’s precursors

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<sup>32</sup> Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 130.

<sup>33</sup> Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 130.

<sup>34</sup> Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 131. Christine’s conduct literature is not a part of Ruys’s investigation of parent-authored conduct literature, but I discuss the role of her experience in relation to the visionary qualities of her text in greater detail below.

symbolize authority; on the other hand, despite their authority, they fail to define the ways in which she experiences her own identity as a writer. [...] Thus the ‘anxiety of influence’—that a male poet experiences is felt by a female poet as an even more primary ‘anxiety of authorship’—a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a ‘precursor’ the act of writing will isolate or destroy her. [...] Her [the female author’s] battle, however, is not against her (male) precursor’s reading of the world but against his reading of *her*. In order to define herself as an author she must redefine the terms of her socialization. Her revisionary struggle, therefore, often becomes a struggle for what Adrienne Rich has called “Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction ... an act of survival.”<sup>35</sup>

Anne’s text is not, per se, a literary creative text, but nonetheless this “anxiety of authorship” might be read in her continual shoring up of her own observations about appropriate behavior at court with written authorities. My chapter on Anne develops fully that her advice manual draws on her experience as regent and her fight to secure her own and her family members’ power and position at court. I read her inclusion of multiple citations of authorities not as an expression of her devaluation of her own lived experience, but rather as a way to shore up that experience with approved authorities and to cover over the manipulative tactics she advocates in her advice to her daughter with moral adages, sometimes contradictory with her own advice.

Anne’s lacing of her text with such authorities can also be seen as a manifestation of a complex didactic intention, which Ruys describes: “a didactic intention can be located in an author who explicitly identifies him- or herself as an educator or moralist to offer advice, constructing and employing a didactic persona throughout the text. Yet an explicit intention to teach does not necessarily have as its corollary a unified, self-coherent didactic persona, and we must be aware both of the efforts (successful and

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<sup>35</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “From *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, 2nd ed., (New York: Norton, 2010), 1926-1938, 1929-30.

otherwise) made towards construction of a holistic didactic persona by an author, as well as of competing intentions evident within these didactic authors.”<sup>36</sup> Anne’s own uncertainty—her anxiety of authorship—results in her didactic voice being what modern scholars might consider fragmented; that is, she may appear to rely on authority rather than personal experience in her advice guide. I suggest she instead deploys authorities to relieve her authorial anxiety and also to authorize her work, to allow it to appear less controversial and less problematic since it is already the product of a woman writer.<sup>37</sup>

Aside from the power of charismatic parental authority and experiential rhetoric, conduct literature also employs the literary trope of the exemplum. Joseph Albert Mosher’s study of the form in England defines the exemplum as “a short narrative used to illustrate or confirm a general statement,” and he notes that “the term ‘example’ was pretty generally applied to figures of speech and analogies, even after the exemplum had become a well-defined form in religious and didactic literature.”<sup>38</sup> I find evidence of this in the variation of detail and length that are found in the exempla present in all three

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<sup>36</sup> Ruys, “Introduction,” 5-6.

<sup>37</sup> Ruys herself notes that contradictions within a text may reflect “a deliberate attempt to teach through dialectic contradiction” or “unresolved, even unacknowledged, competing intentions in the author.” Ruys, “Introduction,” 7. While I find the latter almost impossible to determine, I would conjecture that what I have suggested is Anne’s “anxiety of authorship” expressed through her reliance on citations of authorities is part of her realized rhetorical plan to work through the difficulty of providing her daughter advice for survival at court in a socio-historical context that strongly disapproved of women with political power, which is all the more ironic given Anne’s regency for her brother.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Albert Mosher, *The Exemplum in the Early Religious and Didactic Literature of England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 1, 5. See also on the exemplum: Joseph Thomas Welter, *L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du moyen âge* (Paris: Lapie, 1927). Joan Young Gregg offers this description of exempla: “they are persuasive and didactic in aim and tone; they teach lessons of good conduct not only as a means to earthly happiness but, more importantly, as the means of eternal salvation; and they are told on the authority of recognized spiritual leaders as ‘true’ events, either historical or contemporary, which supposedly took place as narrated.” Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories*, SUNY Series in Medieval Studies, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 4. I use Gregg’s work peripherally for its discussion of exempla, but I find her analysis of the sermonic evidence she recounts in terms of psychological response unreliable and her presentation of medieval attitudes toward women monochromatic, or at least representative of a mere caricature of the Madonna/whore binary that texts such as those in Christine de Pizan’s oeuvre belie.

known authors' works; the short poems included in this study eschew exempla as a trope because they are verse rather than narrative. G. R. Owst notes that such neat distinctions between the types of exempla that Mosher suggests (he differentiates example from narration from figure from fable among others) are not upheld in "restriction of usage [...] even among the latest medieval homilists."<sup>39</sup> More generally, Mosher identifies two essential traits of exempla: "(1) a brief narrative; (2) human characters."<sup>40</sup> These traits distinguish the exemplum from the fable, and further assisting in such are the various purposes that Mosher identifies as the cause for employing exempla: "(1) to furnish a concrete illustration of the result of obeying or disobeying some religious or moral law; (2) to give proof or confirmation of the truth of an assertion; (3) to arouse fear in the sinful or to stimulate the zeal of the godly; (4) to make clear the meaning of some abstruse statement; (5) to revive languid listeners, evoke interest or laughter; (6) to eke out a scant sermon by 'farsing' it with tales."<sup>41</sup> Clearly not all of these uses are employed by Christine, Anne, and the Knight, but the first four uses can generally be found in all of them, and the fifth can be found in the Knight's work as it incorporates moralized fabliaux. Mosher distinguishes the exemplum as a mode of teaching that is associated with "the apologue, the concrete illustration" rather than with "the symbolic method [of teaching], the explanation of scripture according to its moral, historical, or spiritual significance."<sup>42</sup> Early justification for using the exemplum is found in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, but even then, Mosher notes that teaching by exemplum does not become particularly popular until "the time of Cardinal Jacques de Vitry [(c. 1160-1240)]

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<sup>39</sup> G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 151.

<sup>40</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 9, 10.

and the preaching friars,” when it became “a prominent element of sermons,” which were constructed by Vitry and the friars to “appeal to the masses.”<sup>43</sup> The status of the exemplum peaks and then begins to decline because of the “tendency in favor of indelicate and even vicious narratives” within the exempla such that by Dante’s time he himself wrote in opposition to their use within sermons.<sup>44</sup> However, “those treatises which aimed to inculcate civic and moral rectitude [i.e. conduct literature] employed exempla constantly. [...] The vogue of exempla was so great by the end of the fourteenth century that they were interpolated with impunity into the most revered monuments of former days; wherever morals were discussed, our type was almost sure to be present. In books of princely instruction, historical themes are dominant; in the more popular treatises, monkish legends and fabliau themes morally turned are most prominent.”<sup>45</sup> Exempla tend to be experiential in nature, demonstrating a scenario that either could happen or has happened to a young woman who hears the narrative, but depending upon the level of the detail evoked in the tale, such stories might conform to the principle of *enargeia*, which is an ancient rhetorical technique essential for scene-setting and that can also have ramifications for the audience’s memory.

Ruth Webb explains that “*enargeia* is therefore far more than a figure of speech or a purely linguistic phenomenon. It is a quality of language that derives from something beyond words: the capacity to visualize a scene. And its effect also goes beyond words in that it sparks a corresponding image, with corresponding emotional associations in the

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<sup>43</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 10, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 16. Owst discusses this trend too though in a manner that reduces it to satire of “certain well-marked sources in the community.” Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 163.

<sup>45</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 136.

mind of the listener.”<sup>46</sup> Mary Carruthers describes this element as “‘bringing-before-the-eyes,’ that much-prized quality of vividness which takes hold of a reader’s imagination and, [...] enables one to experience the events as though they were happening before one’s very eyes and ears.”<sup>47</sup> *Enargeia* is an essential quality of memorable writing because “the ‘house of memory,’ which holds all human knowledge of the past” can be accessed through visual means as well as verbal according to Carruthers, and these visual means “include[e] the mental images which it [the text] raises in its readers’/listeners’ minds.”<sup>48</sup> Such rhetorical features would help the late medieval lay reader to engage in an interaction with the text; as Rosenblatt’s ideas of transactional reading are important, so is McGrady’s observation that “like professional readers, the laity was called upon to add to and enhance the vernacular text through meditative reflection.”<sup>49</sup> The conduct literature I examine employs exempla and *enargeia* (not always in conjunction) in order to create both a more memorable and more interesting narrative lesson for the audience; such encourages audience investment in the texts being read.

Another aspect of the use of the exemplum is not merely its connection to the generation of memory and emotion through *enargeia*, but also its probable adaptation into conduct literature from sermons and preaching materials. The use of exempla in conduct manuals as an example of the “infiltration into other genres of sermon-related themes and forms, help[s] measure through a two-way commerce the extent of the

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<sup>46</sup> Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, (Abingdon, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009), 105.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 278.

<sup>48</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 277.

<sup>49</sup> McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 8.

cultural reach that medieval preaching had.”<sup>50</sup> For example, Owst notes that “In English sermons recorded in the vernacular, a regular practice can be detected of ending the discourse of the day with one or two *narrations* [...]”<sup>51</sup> As I have argued for the use of exempla by conduct literature authors to generate *enargeia*, so Owst notes, that preachers would have used a similar sort of elaboration within their exempla to make them more interesting: “many stories are enlivened in the process by touches of local colour and a contemporary setting.”<sup>52</sup> Joan Young Gregg agrees with Owst: “the sermon exemplum was characteristically grounded in a contemporary reality and often depicted realistic figures in ordinary situations. Theology was made vivid, and palpable life was given to the concepts of sin, contrition, and penance by descriptive—and often gory—details of the devil, hell, and the punishments meted out to the damned [...]”<sup>53</sup> Gregg also provides a brief discussion of pastoral theology—or rather the key texts that make it up and notes that “The two streams of exempla literature, pious and secular, melded with each other in eclectic encyclopedias of narratives compiled to benefit succeeding generations of popular preachers.”<sup>54</sup> Gregg makes two more useful points in relation to the exemplum: “The exemplum’s didactic purpose impelled every aspect of it in the direction of concreteness. Narrative action became particularistic and anecdotal, limning recognizable instances of sinful conduct and scenarios of vice.”<sup>55</sup> This statement illustrates the

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<sup>50</sup> Alan John Fletcher, *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland: Texts, Studies, and Interpretations* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 274.

<sup>51</sup> Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 153. Margaret Jennings’s appendix that provides a breakdown of the typical structure of *ars praedicandi* (art of preaching) manuals confirms such placement as exempla are listed only at the very end of a section that details the division of the sermonic theme. Margaret Jennings, “The *Ars componendi sermones* of Ranulph Higden,” in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 112-26, 125-26.

<sup>52</sup> Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 155.

<sup>53</sup> Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 7; on the topic, see 7-11.

<sup>55</sup> Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 12.



importance of the exemplum not just for sermonic teaching, but for the conduct manual as well; in the chapter on the Knight below the multiple permutations of all the possible vices of woman are considered numerous and repeatedly, and sometimes in sharp contrast to their virtues—making the difference between virtuous and sinful action painfully, sometimes literally so, clear. Gregg also notes that “the exemplum was intended to be not a multilayered, densely populated social narrative but rather a focused, linear unrolling of action shaped to illuminate a specific theological precept. Its scheme opposed good and evil in simple terms [...]”<sup>56</sup> The binary character of the exempla is all too clear in the chapters below: the Knight is fond of using a Good Sister/Bad Sister binary to illustrate the just deserts of good and bad behavior, and Anne’s single well-developed exemplum makes virtuous behavior a matter of life and death.

The final two tropes of rhetoric that remain to be discussed occur only in Christine’s works and constitute allegory and visionary rhetoric, but these two traditions are not necessarily entirely separate traditions as Christine de Pizan deploys them. I also intend to layer into this discussion Mary Carruthers’s discussion of visual memory formation as a concomitant part of understanding visionary rhetoric as Christine deploys it. Carruthers has worked extensively upon medieval memory and writes that the “orthopraxis of monastic memory work [...] often begins with meditation upon a ‘picture,’ either materially or verbally painted in (or for) the mind’s eye.”<sup>57</sup> Carruthers connects the medieval rhetorical practice of engaging in “*visiones*” that “meet a composer’s needs to get started and then sustain the crafting of a particular composition” with “traditions of prophetic vision [...]. Monastic visions, [...], take pains to pay their

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<sup>56</sup> Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 13-14.

<sup>57</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditations, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 171.

intertextual respects to the master visionary narratives of Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, John, Peter, and Paul, among others. Though prophetic vision has certainly included the foretelling of future events, the role of prophet has also always included that of interpreter, the Christian teacher-orator's role of speaking God's word to people in present societies. [...] A true prophecy understands truly, as demonstrated by his [the prophet's] immediate power of moral discernment and judgment."<sup>58</sup> My chapter on Christine demonstrates her rhetorical adoption of the status of visionary, but I wish to stress additionally that Christine's role as visionary also contains elements of the prophetic that Carruthers notes. Christine does not mirror her visionary experience on any of the biblical examples above, but she models her experience that occurs at the opening of *City of Ladies* upon the Annunciation to Mary.<sup>59</sup> No one claims prophetic status for Mary, nor do I wish to, but she does help to create Christ, who is notably often identified with *Logos*, or the word of God. If we read Christ allegorically here, as standing in for the word, we can see that Christine's creations are parallel: a book of female exemplars of virtue followed by a book (*Treasury of the City of Ladies*, or *The Book of Three Virtues*) that reveals how women ought to behave if they too wish to become pillars of virtue.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 172.

<sup>59</sup> See also on Christine's use of the Annunciation Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 21-22.

<sup>60</sup> By the time Christine was writing, "Marian iconography [had] under[gone] fundamental changes in the thirteenth century, when we see the systematic replacement of her spindle by a book in Annunciation scenes." Such altering of her iconography situated Mary as a careful reader, and in my chapter on Christine below I note how scholars such as V. A. Kolve have made striking arguments for Christine's casting of herself in the role of Mary. The importance of this confluence for me is that Christine is not just using Mary as an authorizing, female virtue, but she is using Mary to make a prophetic claim, which may very well have been less controversial a reading of Mary given the alteration in her iconography, which is also characterized by "the frequent repositioning of Gabriel in Annunciation scenes so that he stands before Mary as if his presence was predicated on her meditative reading." McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 32. Thus, the confluence of reader-related Marian iconography with both contemplative reading and visionary experience makes her an extremely viable and potent rhetorical structure within Christine's writing. Briefly, McGrady also explains "Scholars link the appearance of the book in Marian iconography with the

Thus, we can read Christine as “speaking God’s word to people in present societies,” particularly if we consider that present society’s flaw to be misogyny.<sup>61</sup> My chapter on Christine argues that she engages in a rhetorical transvestism, cloaking her advice for women in learned intellectual tradition as well as in the rhetoric of visionary experience. I layer onto those claims that Christine’s self-authorization via the claim of visionary status is also a bid to claim to be God’s prophet, speaking the truth of women’s virtue in the face of misogyny. Carruthers’s explanation of monastic memory work presents monastic visions as somewhat different from how someone familiar only with the epiphanic visions Julian of Norwich or Margery Kempe might expect: “They do not come from some unanticipated divine seizure, but are built in a consciously remembered, highly ‘literary’ manner, from the matter he [i.e. the monk, or in this application of the quotation, Christine] has just been reading.”<sup>62</sup> What Carruthers describes here is the “weak distinction (from our [modern] standpoint) between meditative reading and visionary experience”; I will try to clarify further the issues at hand by introducing Barbara Newman’s category of speculative theology as a means of parsing out how exactly I understand the genre and rhetorical strategies of Christine’s conduct manual.<sup>63</sup> Carruthers further points out that “In our psychology, a vision is close kin to, if not quite the same thing as, a figment of the imagination: it still has no corporeal reality. A vision to us differs from an act of imagination only because we define it either as an unmediated

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writings of Pseudo-Bonaventure who first suggested that the virgin was reading Isaiah’s prophecy of the Incarnation when the angel appeared to her.” McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 254, n. 21. On the Annunciation and its role in Christian attitudes toward vision in the Middle Ages, see Janet Soskice, “Sight and Vision in Medieval Christian Thought,” in *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, eds. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York: Routledge, 1996), 29-43, especially 31-35 on the Annunciation.

<sup>61</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 172.

<sup>62</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 182.

<sup>63</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 184.

intuition sent directly into our mind by a paranormal agent, or as an unconscious and thus uncontrolled effect of a mind-altering experience [...].”<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, Carruthers describes accurately and a bit more specifically the problem of understanding allegory in medieval writing that Barbara Newman addresses; Carruthers writes that such visionary experiences—i.e. Christine’s vision of the Three Virtues—“exists neither psychically nor objectively but socially, within the ethos of [the] recognizing and recollecting audience.”<sup>65</sup> Newman’s category of speculative theological writing agrees with Carruthers’s sense of the realness of such visionary experiences, and Newman’s category of writing results from striving “not [to] assume the alternative to an ‘authentic vision,’ [...] to be a ‘fictional construct’ in the sense we now understand fiction.”<sup>66</sup> Now I turn to Newman’s discussion of allegory and her definition of speculative theology, a category of generic classification I readily apply to Christine’s *City of Ladies* and in part to *Treasury* as well, for though I still place *Treasury* under the larger heading of conduct literature, it shares in elements of speculative theology because it is the continuation of *City of Ladies*.

Barbara Newman’s *God and the Goddesses* understands female allegorical figures as a third pantheon in medieval Christianity, and Newman argues persuasively, as does Carruthers, in favor of being able to imagine the import of visionary experiences, that if we seek to understand allegory only as rhetorical figures “we run the risk of blunting their emotional force and trivializing their religious import.”<sup>67</sup> I am less concerned to present Christine’s religious belief in her Three Virtues—the daughters of God: Reason,

<sup>64</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 186.

<sup>65</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 188.

<sup>66</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 27.

<sup>67</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 2. For a more traditional literary understanding of the allegory, see Virginie Minet-Mahy, *Esthétique et pouvoir de l’oeuvre allégorique à l’époque de Charles VI: imaginaires et discours*, Bibliothèque du XVe Siècle 68 (Paris: Champion, 2005).

Rectitude, and Justice—than I am in her strategic rhetorical implementation of them. That is, I do read her allegories as rhetorical tropes, but as tropes that have tremendous powers of authority that they confer onto her own written work that is engaged in the process of overturning misogyny.<sup>68</sup> Newman writes that “they [female allegories] add an irreducible fourth dimension to the spiritual universe. As emanations of the Divine mediators between God and the cosmos, embodied universals, and not least, ravishing objects of identification and desire, the goddesses [Newman uses this term along with the epithet “daughter of God” to describe the female allegories] substantially transformed and deepened Christendom’s concept of God, introducing religious possibilities beyond the ambit of scholastic theology and bringing them to vibrant imaginative life.”<sup>69</sup> The Three Virtues substantially change the possibilities for Christine to write against misogyny in a culture fairly well steeped in it—I do not wish to claim medieval society as a whole entirely denigrated women or approved of misogyny, but it was a fairly strong cultural current, and Christine’s use of the allegorical daughters of God allows her to write against that current. Newman agrees with this assessment, stating that “Christine takes seriously [...] not only the goddesses’ gender but also the divine source of their authority.”<sup>70</sup> Newman also reads onto Christine’s writing a quasi-religious ethic that I think fits well with an understanding of her self-construction as a prophet in the pair of

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<sup>68</sup> I do not ascribe feminism to Christine, but her project in both *City of Ladies* and *Treasury* is fairly clear in its attempt to challenge that good and virtuous women exist nowhere; this fact does not mean that she does not in other ways justify or approve of patriarchal power structures within her work. I discuss this issue in more detail in my chapter on Christine.

<sup>69</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 2-3. Newman also clarifies that she finds only certain female allegories worthy of the title of goddess: “the figure’s centrality to the conceptual scheme of the text; expressions of awe, love, and reverence on the part of the narrator; the appropriation of biblical and liturgical language to give the figure a numinous aura; the predominantly serious, rather than ironic or parodic, character of the figure’s discourse; and [...] the presumption of an intimate relationship between the figure and God” (33-34).

<sup>70</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 20.

texts *City of Ladies* and *Treasury*: “Christine tends to be read as a purely secular author, a ‘professional woman of letters,’ [...] yet philosophical piety is piety all the same, and Christine’s works are suffused with Boethian Christianity—a high-minded, almost stoic resignation to Providence, coupled with a reliance on God as guarantor of the moral and political order.”<sup>71</sup> Further, Christine-as-prophet coincides well with Newman’s description of the project of *City of Ladies* (though she never discusses *Treasury*, I would include it here too) as “a theological project.”<sup>72</sup> While I acknowledge the theologically oriented aims of Christine’s writings, I envision her allegories as “not just ornament” but also not just “serious theological claim” as Newman does, but additionally as rhetorically serious constructions with puissant authorizing powers that Christine exploits in order to perform her act of rhetorical transvestism, her adoption of unabashedly so-called masculine and intellectual modes of writing.<sup>73</sup> In my chapter on Christine I demonstrate that her advice manual incorporates elements of Boethian rhetoric side-by-side with the rhetoric of visionary experience. The combination of these two rhetorical traditions marks her text as obviously and carefully rhetorically constructed as a performance to demonstrate that good, virtuous *and* intellectual women exist.

I want to consider now how Newman’s understanding of allegory coincides with visionary writing. First, like Carruthers who discusses monastic vision as similar to the memory work of composition, Newman explains: “While most scholars today hold visions to be exceptional events, medieval visions were in some contexts not only encouraged but expected. We now know them to have been embedded in an elaborate nexus of religious practices, including the devotional use of images and the technique of

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<sup>71</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 20.

<sup>72</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 20.

<sup>73</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 23.

visualization [...].”<sup>74</sup> This aspect of medieval visions creates a quandary for scholars: “‘authentic’ visions, no matter how real the experience they record, necessarily become constructed visions when they come down to us as texts, while ‘fictional’ visions, whether they originate in a religious meditation [...] or a poetic act like Christine’s, may convey impassioned and articulate belief by means of allegorical personae.”<sup>75</sup> The “realness” of such allegorical visions becomes all the more problematic when we consider that “medieval allegory—not always everywhere, but more often than not—had its grounding in philosophical realism” so that these named entities—the allegories—were real “in much the same solid-feeling way as things were.”<sup>76</sup> The reality of allegorizations and the failure to establish clear distinguishability between real and literary visions allows one to suggest that “the act of literary production might itself be the stimulus [for visionary experience], and imaginative vision the response. The construction of allegory and the cultivation of visions could, in fact, serve as parallel modes of religious exploration, similarly free from the rigorous dogmatic and logical constraints of scholasticism. Unlike the disputations of the schools, both of these forms of religious expression were open to laypeople, including women.”<sup>77</sup> Newman’s assessment here is entirely correct, but I would like to add that despite the fact that allegory was an open mode of writing for women, it still had a very long and respected intellectual history, and thus while it is a form available to women, I still urge the reading of Christine’s adoption of it as part of her rhetorical transvestism.

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<sup>74</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 29.

<sup>75</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 33.

<sup>76</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 30-31.

<sup>77</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 30.

Allegory becomes an essential tool for the writer of speculative or imaginative theology, but first we ought to consider what Newman means by this designation: “‘imaginative theology’ [...] crosses traditional genre lines because it is defined not by language, audience, or literary form so much as by method. Imaginative theology is the pursuit of serious religious and theological thought through the techniques of imaginative literature, especially vision, dialogue, and personification.”<sup>78</sup> Newman defines this category against those of scholastic theology, monastic theology, pastoral theology, mystical theology, and Bernard McGinn’s category of vernacular theology.<sup>79</sup> I have tried, through my reading of Carruthers, to suggest some parallels between the monastic theology and its memory-driven compositional practices and Christine’s writing of *City of Ladies*. Some of Newman’s further descriptions of imaginative theology might make these parallels more clear: “the hallmark of imaginative theology is that it ‘thinks with’ images, rather than propositions or scriptural texts or rarefied inner experiences—although none of these need be excluded. The devices of literature—metaphor, symbolism, prosopopoeia, allegory, dialogue, and narrative—are its working tools,” and “Imaginative theology is characterized by certain rhetorical devices that double as exploratory techniques, enabling both writer and reader to visualize, conceptualize, and interact with emissaries of the Divine.”<sup>80</sup> These qualities are all qualities that Christine’s *City of Ladies* and *Treasury* meet, as I establish in my chapter on Christine below.

Understanding imaginative theology as a category, however, is centrally important for it allows the scholar to set aside the rubric of dream vision—though I

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<sup>78</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 292.

<sup>79</sup> On vernacular theology see Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998), 19-30.

<sup>80</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 298, 299. I should note here that Newman freely admits: “Many of the texts I have designated as imaginative theology would not have been deemed ‘theological’ by their authors, insofar as theology was viewed as a formal, professional enterprise” (297).



should note that Christine distinctly wakes up before her encounter with the Three Virtues—and allows us to read Christine’s allegorical vision as more than mere literary performance. Newman explains:

Central to [...] imaginative theology is the technique of the dream or waking vision. [...] Fictional visionary poems [...] might be fruitfully compared with vision narratives that claim to report their authors’ personal religious experience. [...] D]evout exercises such as prayerful meditation and visualization [...] could procure results not unlike those of self-conscious literary scene-painting or rhetorical *inventio* (as practiced by Christine de Pizan). [...] If visions could inspire a devout soul to write, the desire to write could also inspire a poet to construct visions. [...] V]isions, so ubiquitous in medieval literature, could function as both rhetorical device and theological method.<sup>81</sup>

By making the dream vision a part of the mode of imaginative theology, which can also encompass allegory and other rhetorical figures, Newman’s classification allows readers to see *City of Ladies* as more than a dream vision of a utopian, feminine society but as a radical, faith-based act. Concomitantly, *Treasury*, which is part of the same project, becomes a radical utterance of how to perform female virtue, and one that is backed not by Christine, a mere writer, but by the allegorical daughters of God; in the face of what Christine presents as overweening misogyny, one cannot but view a guide to the achievement of virtue as a radical written gesture.

Briefly, I would like to note some of the causes for the popularity of the dream vision laid out by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton:

1. the popularity of the form, both in secular (romance, political, polemical), and religious writing;
2. its inherent provision of an excuse or reason to write, especially in an age of obligatory humility, having a figure of otherworldly authority commission the writing was liberating;
3. the literary freedom of the dream or vision form, allowing for sudden shifts in plot, or plot movement by symbolic association rather than by determinacy of realism;

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<sup>81</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 299-300.

4. the possibility of allegorical complexity, as, for example, when dramatic allegorical personifications can act independently or can be mixed with ‘real’ people in the narrative;
5. the potential for freer treatment of symbolism, especially as everything in visionary landscape becomes potentially symbolic, it is easier to use symbolism than in a strictly realist setting;
6. the political, polemical, or intellectual freedom and safety the form seems to guarantee.<sup>82</sup>

I have said that Christine’s writing is not a dream vision, but it has often been described or at least treated as such—mere literary invention, so I feel Kerby-Fulton’s reasons for using the dream vision are important here because they do overlap with some of the reasons I note Christine engages in her visionary experience in her texts. The first reason Kerby-Fulton notes goes directly to my claim that Christine engages in rhetorical transvestism: her use of visionary tropes in conjunction with allegory (4 above) place Christine within a clear tradition of literary precedent, marking her rhetorical act as one that points out that women too can perform in these ways. The second reason above is also significant: Christine is easily able to deflect criticism that she is writing by declaring she has been impelled to write; likewise the sixth reason seems to offer a similar type of cover.

I would like to end this portion of my introduction by returning again to the issue of types of visionary experience. Newman describes:

An epiphanic vision can be defined as a spiritual or imaginative experience, often mysterious and unexpected, whose meaning can be teased out by meditation, theological reflection, and exegetical practices such as allegoresis. A heuristic vision, on the other hand, is a rhetorical means to explore the implications of an idea and express it more vividly. The epiphanic vision is the mainstay of the sole medieval genre dominated by women—the visionary recital or book of revelations. Heuristic visions,

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<sup>82</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 21.

frequently cast in the form of dreams, are the mainstay of allegorical and theological fiction.<sup>83</sup>

I argue that within this dichotomy Christine's vision is heuristic, but as I demonstrate in the chapter, she takes every step she can to ensure that it is perceived as a legitimate epiphanic vision. Her vision carefully conforms to principles of "discerning the spirit," a practice used to evaluate the spiritual quality of epiphanic visions, and yet Christine's work is obviously literarily constructed.<sup>84</sup> Kerby-Fulton explains that "claims to vision made in accordance with the 'rules' of *discretio spirituum* could acquire for writers the right to treat freely [...] new or contentious material."<sup>85</sup> Newman notes that "the stakes vested in visionary claims were very high, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as an increasing fear of false visionaries subjected all claimants to exacting and perilous scrutiny, and in the most extreme cases, to torture, imprisonment, or death."<sup>86</sup> Newman also explains that the constructed sorts of visions in literature, such as, for example, the dream vision in William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, were not in danger of being declared heretical or prosecuted.<sup>87</sup> So technically, Christine should have no real fear of heresy charges being brought against her, and yet, she carefully observes the rules of epiphanic vision discernment, and I would suggest that this observation reveals her desire to have her visionary experience read as epiphanic rather than heuristic because it is the epiphanic type of visionary experience that would link her to prophet figures such

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<sup>83</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 300. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton notes that "'literariness' was not necessarily a mark of fictionalization for medieval readers." Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 20.

<sup>84</sup> On popular manuals for the discernment of spirits and why the need for such arose, see Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 24-29. Kerby-Fulton also addresses the reception of Hildegard and her visionary claims in the milieu of late medieval England, see 188-204.

<sup>85</sup> Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 24.

<sup>86</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 300.

<sup>87</sup> I am perhaps here glossing over much of the complexity of Langland's work and its deployment in the Uprising of 1381. For a much more nuanced and thorough investigation of heresy and prosecution in England at the time, see Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*.

as Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, and through such linkage give her written works more radical authority in the claims they make about women's capacity for virtue. Newman agrees with this reading of Christine's motivations:

Since the authentic visionary recital could be regarded as more prestigious (if also more dangerous) than the allegorical fiction, it is not surprising that imaginative writers imitated mystics when they wished to advance deeply serious truth-claims for their work. One way to do this was to eschew the convention of the dream vision, a surefire sign of fiction. [...] Christine de Pizan [...] used the distinction between heuristic and epiphanic visions with considerable skill. [...] Christine] begins *The Book of the City of the Ladies* with a carefully literal account, devoid of allegorical details and persuasively grounded in real time and space, so that when Lady Reason and her sisters finally break in through closed doors, they shatter the confined mental universe of misogynist writers with the force of epiphany.<sup>88</sup>

This discussion of imaginative theology in conjunction with allegory and visionary rhetoric explains that Christine's conduct manual is in some ways starkly different from other such manuals, whether written by men or women. I wish to end this introduction by noting the overall structure for the following chapters. The first chapter returns to the more commonplace aspects of medieval conduct literature that is less absorbed with intellectual and theological performances than Christine's work; it considers only the short verse works of conduct literature and displays the close reading I employ on the larger texts in the remaining chapters. The second chapter discusses the various rhetorical traditions in which Christine's *Treasury* participates, including an argument for reading *Treasury* as a radical performative act that works to challenge misogyny. The third chapter considers the role of the parental narrator in Anne de France's *Les enseignements* and places her writing within a royal, masculine tradition of writing as a performance of her own authority. The fourth chapter is an evaluation of the various types of exempla

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<sup>88</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 303-04.

and other rhetorical features of Geoffroy de La Tour Landry's conduct manual; this chapter highlights the violence and punishment directed at disobedient women as a means of contrasting the Knight's mode of instruction with the pedagogical and rhetorical models Christine and Anne deploy. My conclusion draws parallels between the rhetorical modes of the texts I examine, while also noting the differences that exist between their tropes, their attitudes toward female-female relationships and social class differences.

## Chapter 2

## Christine de Pizan: Uncovering the Rhetorical Visionary

“Sum proferyd hir to wrytyn hyr felyngys wyth her owen handys, & sche wold not consentyn in no wey, for sche was comawndyd in hir sowle þat sche schuld not wrytyn so soone. & so it was xx 3er & mor fro þat tym þis creatur had fryst felyngys & reuelacyons er þan sche dede any wryten. Aftyward, whan it plesyd ower Lord, he comawnded hyr & chargyd hir þat sche xuld don wryten hyr felyngys & reuelacyons & þe forme of her leuyng þat hys goodnesse myth be knowyn to alle þe world.”<sup>1</sup> (“Some offered to write her feelings with their own hands, and she would not consent in any way, for she was commanded in her soul that she should not write so soon. And so it was twenty years and more from that time this creature had first feelings and revelations before she had any written. Afterward, when it pleased our Lord, he commanded her and charged her that she should have written her feelings and revelations and the form of her living so that his goodness might be known to all the world.”)<sup>2</sup>

Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*

Margery Kempe is a well-known medieval visionary, and the quotation above provides a brief glance at a common type of rhetorical authority available to medieval women, that of the visionary. This type of authority is not unchallenged or simple to understand in the Middle Ages, yet Christine de Pizan claims this visionary identity wholeheartedly and uses it as a frame for two related works, one of which is an explicit conduct manual. Christine de Pizan’s *The Treasury of the City of the Ladies*, or *The Book of Three Virtues* (1405), embraces a complicated, multi-faceted rhetorical model that utilizes medieval visionary rhetoric, and the learned allegorical tradition in conjunction with dialogue-driven, Boethian self-examination, and to a much lesser extent, draws upon

<sup>1</sup> Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, Early English Text Society, Original Ser. 212, ed. Sanford Brown Meech (London: Oxford University Press, 1940; reprint 1961), 3-4, ll. 25-32, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe: A New Translation, Contexts, Criticism*, trans. and ed. Lynn Staley (New York: Norton, 2001), 4.

the charismatic parental tradition, authorities, and exempla. Exempla form a fairly less original portion of Christine de Pizan's rhetorical performance in the context of conduct literature, but are important to her rhetorical effects of her work because they generate an experiential moment for her audience.<sup>3</sup> Christine's strategies reflect that there were literate and educated women, but also acknowledge that they were in the minority, or at least that such women were present for the most part in the higher social classes only. Her sensitivity to her audience's needs—both perceived and traditionally conceived, i.e. that women—or at least women of the lower classes—needed concrete examples and illustrations in order to learn—is evident in the diverse rhetorical nature of the *Treasury*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Experiential pedagogy underlies much fifteenth-century conduct literature, especially that directed at working and lower class women. In part this rhetorical approach was employed because of the frequent association of women's learning not through the university or books, but more often through their lived experience and direct guidance from parents or other authority figures. On experience and conduct literature see Anna Dronzek, "Gendered Theories of Education in Fifteenth-Century Conduct Books," in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark, *Medieval Cultures* 29 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2001), 135-59 and Juanita Feros Ruys, "Didactic 'I's and the Voice of Experience in Advice from Medieval and Early-Modern Parents to Their Children," in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, *Diputatio* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 129-62.

<sup>4</sup> The use of images in education, especially religious education, of laity and religious women is well-attested, but how specifically images were viewed as particularly useful for women's education is of some debate. Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz, largely drawing on Jeffrey Hamburger's work on the *Rothschild Canticles*, perhaps overstates the importance of women in the popularization of teaching with images: "Whereas the latter [male novices] abandoned the use of images in their devotional practices after a certain time, the women [nuns] remained permanently attached to devotional imagery. Medieval theologians explained this continued need for the support of images in their devotions as resulting from the more sensual and corporeal nature of women, which rendered them incapable of intellectual prowess. [...] The use of images from the twelfth, perhaps even the eleventh century onwards by the confessors and spiritual advisors in the context of the *cura monialium* [...] of nuns, corresponded to a real demand on the part of the women and was not simply forced upon them. [...] Women were therefore in large part responsible for the promotion of works of visual art to the status of objects which were greatly treasured as helping the soul in its efforts to find the way to God." Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz, "Gender and Medieval Art," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph, Blackwell Companions to Art History (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 128-50, 139. Herbert L. Kessler, however, writing in the same volume discusses the long tradition of employing images in education that stems back to Gregory the Great's letter to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles in 600, and he finds a broader tradition of the use of images by the High Middle Ages: "his [Gregory the Great's] dicta enabled the makers of pictures to teach the entire community of believers many important things that 'they could not read in books.'" Herbert L. Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory in Northern Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, 151-72, 163. For a discussion of Christ as a symbol in late medieval Europe, not just for women but for people generally, see: Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993). See also: Madeline

Christine's conduct guide is a lengthy tome; it is a stylistically complex work intended for consumption by women of diverse socio-economic and cultural statuses.

The *Treasury's* structure is as follows: Book One of its three books deals with the roles and duties of a princess, Book Two with court ladies, and Book Three with various lesser classes of women, including prostitutes. Book One is nearly twice the length of the other two books. Such length suggests that the women addressed in the final two books would have less time to read in leisure and/or that the allegorical references filling the first book might be unintelligible or uninteresting for less educated women. However, Christine repeatedly makes references to earlier chapters in later portions of her book, suggesting that all women should read or be exposed to all the advice, even if it is not originally penned for women of their social class. Thus, in this respect, the *Treasury* attempts to eliminate class differences, but as this chapter will show, these class differences also help to drive the rhetorical variations in the three sections and become overt when Christine's allegorical figures harshly harangue some women for misbehavior while engaging other women of higher social status in dialogues that consider moral and

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Harrison Caviness, "Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers," in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, 65-85; Jeffrey Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Margaret M. Manion, "Women, Art and Devotion: Three French Fourteenth-Century Royal Prayer Books" in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 21-66; Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours*, The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2003); Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, eds., *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology Princeton University and Princeton University Press, 2006); Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Robert Suckale, "Between this World and the Next: The Art of Religious Women in the Middle Ages," in *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti, trans. Dietlinde Hamburger (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 76-108; Barbara Newman, "The Visionary Texts and Visual Worlds of Religious Women," in *Crown and Veil*, 151-71; and Joanna E. Zeigler, "Reality as Imitation: The Role of Religious Imagery among the Beguines of the Low Countries," in *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics*, ed. Ulrike Wiethaus (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 112-26.



ethical matters while encouraging the women to engage their powers of reason.<sup>5</sup> Before discussing the visionary elements of Christine's work it is necessary to consider her relationship to the allegorical tradition and her place within the milieu of medieval intellectual writing.<sup>6</sup> I do this by offering an analysis of a passage from the *Treasury* in conjunction with a consideration of its commonalities with Boethius.<sup>7</sup>

The allegorical tradition Christine's work encompasses finds its roots for the medieval period most famously in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* (524/525); within this work an imprisoned Boethius fated to die is comforted by the allegorical figure of Lady Philosophy who teaches him to trust in Christian reasoning rather than fickle Fortune. Thus, while on the literal level Boethius is visited by a woman who recalls his ability to reason properly, allegorically the work functions to show that philosophy

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<sup>5</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant writes in agreement: "emphasis on rational choice in determining the significance of one's own life is fundamental to Christine's teaching in the *Trois Vertus*, and [...] to her defence of women as a whole, [...] based on the premise that females are as capable of rational thought and behaviour as their male counterparts." Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading Beyond Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 180. Similarly Earl Jeffrey Richards acknowledges: "It is little wonder that Christine repeatedly appeals to Reason, in order to build the case for women's rationality, and that she speaks not of women's rights [...] but of the importance of *droiture* (which can best be translated as 'claims secured by contract') to ensure a place for women underwritten by legal contract." Earl Jeffrey Richards, "Jean Gerson's Writing to His Sisters and Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*: An Intellectual Dialogue Culminating in Friendship," in *Virtue Ethics for Women*, 81-98, 86.

<sup>6</sup> That Christine was aware of and worked with various intellectual and literary traditions needs little proof aside from an examination of her text, but I do not explicitly discuss her involvement with theological concepts here. For a discussion of Christine as a "poet-theologian" or "*poeta theologus*" see Earl Jeffrey Richards "Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos: Christine de Pizan and Medieval Theology," in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady, Routledge Medieval Casebooks (New York: Routledge, 2003), 43-55, 45, 46. Richards also comments on Christine's skillful use of allegory, 45.

<sup>7</sup> While I do not privilege Boethius's political value as a source in my reading of *Treasury* Kate Langdon Forhan, in her discussion of Christine as political theorist, rightly notes that Boethius in the Middle Ages was understood as a "philosopher-statesm[a]n who counseled unjust kings and then paid for [his] integrity with [his] li[fe]." Such a reading of Boethius compliments Christine's rejection of rewarding fools at court and provides a political cast to the *Treasury*, especially Book One. Kate Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2002), 33.

and the exercise of reason lead to faith in God and rejection of the material world.<sup>8</sup>

Christine's *Treasury* constructs an entire chapter, the final chapter, around such a principle in her discussion of the lives of poor people in Book Three. The chapter opens with an acknowledgment of the suffering that the poor face, but Christine abruptly introduces an allegorical figure in order to protect the poor from despair, just as Lady Philosophy helps to reeducate Boethius. According to the final chapter of the *Treasury*, "Lady Hope" will "come armed by Patience, with the shield of Faith, who fights powerfully against impatience" and who can "vanquish it [impatience] and give you [the poor] the victory" with her "five spears" ("viegne Dame Esperance, armee de Pacience a tout l'escu de Foy qui fort se combatte contre elle, si que la desconfisse et que la victoire en soit bien; et l'envaïsse fort par telz ·v· dars").<sup>9</sup> These five spears are rationalizations for the acceptance of perpetual poverty, an attempt to force the impoverished to accept their fate. The first spear is an annexation of affective piety and the popular concept of *imitatio Christi* wherein the poor are told they should exult as they wear the likeness of God in their body and soul.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Christine's first spear wielded by Lady Hope draws

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<sup>8</sup> That Christine also allows the Three Virtues to instruct Christine that misogyny is a theological error as presented in *City of Ladies* ties Christine's text to another learned concept: "*anamnesis* or recollection, a Platonic doctrine which Philosophy employs with her disciple Boethius to help him recall the knowledge he once had but has forgotten." Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 153. See also Margaret Brabant and Michael Brint, "Identity and Difference in Christine de Pizan's *Cité des Dames*," in *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 207-22.

<sup>9</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of Three Virtues*, trans. and ed. Sarah Lawson, rev. ed. (Penguin: London, 2003), III.13.165. I give the citations for English versions of Christine's text to this edition, unless otherwise noted and my citations will always provide Book, Chapter, and page, the last referring to the Lawson translation unless otherwise noted. At times, where the French seems to be more accurately represented by another translation, I have elected to use: Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, trans. Charity Cannon Willard, ed. Madeleine Perner Cosman (New York: Persea Books, 1989). Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de Trois Vertus: édition critique*, ed. Charity Cannon Willard with Eric Hicks (Paris: Champion, 1989), III.13.222, ll. 26-28. All French citations for Christine's text are to this edition unless otherwise noted and the citations include Book, Chapter, page, and line numbers.

<sup>10</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson. III.13.166. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.13.222, ll. 28-35.

sharply upon the Genesis 1 passage: “And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.”<sup>11</sup> Biblical authority is supposed to console the poor because despite their material existence, they are still like God in their form. The second spear moves away from the authority of scripture and claims that the suffering of the poor will magnify their merit.<sup>12</sup> The third, fourth, and fifth spears all suggest that the impoverished should adopt an attitude of *contemptus mundi*: friends are unimportant while God is important, one’s material “dunghill” (“un pou de fiens”) or dwelling place is only temporary and will be replaced by Paradise, and one should glory in the scorn of the world because the world is sinful.<sup>13</sup> Christine arranges allegorical appeals to affective piety and biblical authority into a rational argument in her address to the poor, thereby aligning her conduct literature with the somewhat expected attempt to solidify class structures found in much other conduct literature as well as with a rhetorical tradition that prizes allegory, reason, and the Socratic method of argumentation. It is significant that Christine’s advice for the poor also reflects acceptable, i.e. non-heretical writings on contemplation. Her advice to the poor reflects, for example, Jean Gerson’s description of the final step that one must take in order to experience a contemplative relationship with God. In his “The Mountain of Contemplation,” he writes: “strong perseverance is that which elevates and places the person in the height of contemplation. It prepares her for a perfect state in which she can be said to be living from love, for then she receives the comfort of divine love without feeling the trials of the world and the flesh. Nothing remains for this person but to serve

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<sup>11</sup> Gen 1:27 (DV). “et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam ad imaginem Dei creavit illum masculum et feminam creavit eos.” Gen 1:27 (Vulg.)

<sup>12</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.13.166. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.13.223, ll. 54-56.

<sup>13</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.13.165-67. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.13.223, l. 64.

and love God, to think and to speak of him. Through this love she flees the foolish pleasures of the world and derives joy from its troubles.”<sup>14</sup>

Christine’s use of visionary rhetoric mimics the rhetoric employed by many practitioners of affective piety who recorded their experience of visions from God or Christ. The Middle Ages are rife with such writings. Though they pre-date the medieval period, they became particularly popular when affective piety became fashionable and accepted, something that can be dated back to the eleventh-century tract *Cur Deus Homo?*, or *Why the God-Man?*, written by St. Anselm (1033-1099), but which continued and amplified through the High and Late Middle Ages in texts such as the fifteenth-century *Book of Margery Kempe* (1436-38).<sup>15</sup> Christine-the-narrator appropriates the

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<sup>14</sup> Jean Gerson, “The Mountain of Contemplation,” *Early Works*, trans. Brian Patrick McGuire (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 75-127, 106-07. “forte perseverance est celle qui met et loge en la hauteur de contemplation, et ordonne la personne en estat parfait ou quel elle peut ester ditte vivre d’amours, car adoncques elle reçoit consolation de l’amour divine sans sentir les tribulations de la char et du monde; car riens ne li est que server Dieu et l’amer et d’y penser et d’en parler.” Jean Gerson, “*La Montaigne de Contemplation*,” *Jean Gerson: Œuvres Complètes*, vol. 7 *L’œuvre Française*, ed. Palemon Glorieux (Paris: Desclée and Cie, 1966), 16-55, 40-41.

<sup>15</sup> Aside from Margery Kempe, some other popular medieval female visionaries include: Julian of Norwich (1342-c.1416), Christina of Markyate (1096-1160), Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), Elisabeth of Schönau (1129-1165), Marie d’Oignies (1177-1213), Christina Mirabilis or Christina the Astonishing (1150-1224), Hadewijch (first half of the thirteenth century), Mechthild of Madgeburg (1207-82), and Marguerite Porete (d. 1310). On female visionaries see: Emilie Zum Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*, trans. Sheila Hughes (New York: Paragon House, 1989); Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378-1417* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe*, *Studies in Medieval Mysticism* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004); Anne Clark Bartlett, Thomas H. Bestul, Janet Goebel, and William F. Pollard, eds. *Vox Mystica: Essays on Medieval Mysticism in Honor of Professor Valerie M. Lagorio* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995); Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, trans. Bernard Standring (London: Routledge, 1981); Monica Furlong, *Visions and Longings: Medieval Women Mystics* (Boston: Shambhala, 1996); Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, *Medieval Women’s Visionary Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Catherine M. Mooney, ed., *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and their Interpreters*, *The Middle Ages Series* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, *Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); John W. Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, *New Cultural Studies Series*

identity of visionary for herself in the *Treasury*, largely as a way to claim authority. Christine's sex allows her particular access to this identity, as frequently visionary experience was associated with women and was a way for women without theological educations to found and explore a relationship with God. The adoption of this identity is not without criticism or danger as a number of female visionaries were accused of heresies, some even executed for them.<sup>16</sup> Here is not the place to offer a discussion of the complexity of the authority female visionaries occupied in the medieval period, but Christine's adoption of this identity follows a safe tradition in her use of visionary rhetorical elements, which I demonstrate below.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, Christine does not propose radical social change in the *Treasury* through the use of visionary rhetoric, which further cushions her from critique and censure on account of her visionary claims.

Christine is a rhetorical polyglot, drawing on a number of traditions simultaneously and thereby accruing various types of authority that appeal to a broad spectrum of audiences. Karen Green's article that compares Christine's work to an earlier

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(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Denis Renevey and Christiana Whitehead, *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000); and Ulrike Weithaus, ed., *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> At least some scholars have posited the possibility that such religious women, particularly in the Low Countries, may have had quasi-instructional, informal relationships with the citizens of the urban centers in which their reclusoria were located. If Christine were aware of such a function for female recluses, her appropriation of the identity may be even more poignant, but I cannot assert her knowledge of practice in the Low Countries. See Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, "The Recluserium as an Informal Centre of Learning," in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 245-54.

<sup>17</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the balance of power between religious men and women, see John W. Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*. Studies more purely focused on female spirituality and visionary experience include Elliott's *Proving Woman* and Caciola's *Discerning Spirits*. On the dangers of revelatory and visionary writing, see Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*. Bernard McGinn notes that by 1290 women were not entirely blocked from communicating with authority even by scholastic disputations. McGinn writes that "Women were excluded from the former [teaching *ex officio*], but" he cites the disputation that says: "teaching from divine favor and the fervor of charity, it is well allowed for a woman to teach just like anyone else, if she possesses sound doctrine." The disputation is from Henry of Ghent and is quoted in McGinn. Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998), 21.

conduct manual states that Christine's "treatment of rhetoric, prudence, and reputation make up three interconnected themes—which guide and structure her work."<sup>18</sup> Green's assessment is accurate and suggests the importance with which Christine considered and was aware of rhetoric.<sup>19</sup> Christine writes to her stated female audience but is also keenly aware of a male intelligentsia with which she has engaged in the past. For example, her rhetorical sophistication reflects her participation in the *Querelle de la Rose* (1400-02), an epistolary debate in which the merits of the *Roman de la Rose* were defended or denied. Here she wrote in refutation of male scholars such as Jean de Montreuil, Provost of Lille and royal notary and secretary, and Gontier and Pierre Col, also royal notaries and secretaries, whom she would have had to impress with her mastery of traditionally masculine modes of writing.<sup>20</sup> Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski identifies Christine's participation in the debate as an essential part of her formation of an authorial identity:

"The years on the Debate on the *Rose* (1401-1402) are thus a pivotal moment in

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<sup>18</sup> Karen Green, "From *Le Miroir des dames* to *Le livre des trois vertus*," in *Virtue Ethics for Women, 1250-1500*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews, *The New Synthese Historical Library Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy* 69 (London: Springer, 2011), 99-113, 106.

<sup>19</sup> Green explains, and this has ramifications for Christine's adaptation of a Boethian tenor in her work, that "Rhetoric appears twice in Christine's schema: once [...] in accord with her sources, as part of that aspect of politics that pertains to speech; but also, unusually, as a part of theology. We will be most concerned with the political function of rhetoric, but it is worth noting how Christine's location of rhetoric within theology is consistent with her conception of the concord of philosophy and theology. This theoretical stance gets its practical expression in the doctrine of the *Livres des trois vertus*, where it is argued that seeking an active life, which requires application of practical reason, counts as a perfectly good expression of one's charity or one's love of God." Green, "From *Le Miroir*," 106.

<sup>20</sup> See Blumenfeld-Kosinski's "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*" for a detailed timeline of the debate, the participants, the general sense of their replies, and for a sense of the hostility and contempt that some of Christine's opponents expressed toward her. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*," in *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition, vol. 3 (Boston: Brill, 2006), 317-56. 319. See also: Helen Solterer, "Christine's Way: *The Querelle du Roman de la rose* and the Ethics of a Political Response," in *The Master and Minerva: Disputing Women in French Medieval Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 151-75; Rosalind Brown-Grant, "The 'Querelle de la Rose': Christine's Critique of Misogynist Doctrine and Literary Practice," in *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defense of Women: Reading Beyond Gender* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7-51; Marilynn Desmond, "The *Querelle de la Rose* and the Ethics of Reading," in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady (New York: Routledge, 2003), 167-80; and Douglas Kelly, *Medieval Imagination: Rhetoric and the Poetry of Courtly Love* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

Christine's career, and her masterminding of this intellectual joust must be seen in the context of her shaping herself into a serious author, modeled on the clerks, including undoubtedly Jean Gerson, who surrounded her."<sup>21</sup> Thus, part of Christine's rhetorical complexity derives from her participation in intellectual debates. The allegorical mode was an accepted, traditional, and popular mode of writing for Christine to employ. This does not mean, however, that Christine was readily and happily accepted into intellectual debate. For example, as Blumenfeld-Kosinski demonstrates, de Montreuil disparages Christine in a letter to a famous author by first suggesting that she "bark[s]" against the *Roman de la Rose*, a statement that reduces her personhood and humanity to the merely animal, and second by comparing her to "the courtesan Leontion who dared to write against the philosopher Theophrastus."<sup>22</sup> That Christine had dealt with such "arguments *ad feminam*,"<sup>23</sup> as Blumenfeld-Kosinski describes them, suggests that Christine would have been especially vigilant in preventing her work from being overtly problematic in terms of its rhetoric. While the allegorical mode might be considered an essentially safe mode of discourse, Christine's sex and her choice to write in the visionary mode as well could be problematic because of the increase in the later Middle Ages of concern about

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<sup>21</sup> Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*," 321-22. Brown-Grant also notes that "Christine's views on women were formed in a constant engagement with Jean de Meung's *Rose*." Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 206.

<sup>22</sup> Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*," 331. Green also notes that "Male authors often cast rhetoric as immodest when practised by a woman; and women who pursued it were in danger of vicious attacks." Green, "From *Le Miroir*," 112. These quotations also point out that in some ways Christine's *Treasury* was a less problematic engagement than the *querelle* had been, for, as Kerby-Fulton explains, Thomas Aquinas "stresses that there is a distinction between the private and public 'sermo'—and it is the private that befits women (women are allowed to teach in the home, but normally only children and other women)." Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 302. Thus, Christine's project is less problematic in her teaching women how to behave than in her challenging masculine authority; the rub comes when one considers how Christine's encouragement of other women to enact performative virtue challenges the prevailing misogyny in medieval culture. That is, her project seems less problematic, but it seems so because of her very careful choice of instruction, none of which openly challenges masculine authority and all of which she derives from the daughters of God, who is the ultimate patriarch.

<sup>23</sup> Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*," 331.

the veracity of visionary experiences. I demonstrate Christine's careful adherence to acceptable visionary rhetoric below, but before doing so I would like to theorize another way of understanding Christine's decision to write as a visionary, and to a certain extent it contradicts the suggestion that she has special access to visionary writing because of her sex.

Helen J. Swift's *Gender, Writing and Performance* lays out the complexities of considering authorial transvestism in the context of the *querelle des femmes*, i.e. when a male author writes in the narrative voice of a female character.<sup>24</sup> Swift writes that "Strategies of impersonation are equally open to the female author, and Christine [de Pizan] provides a striking example of masculine transvestite ventriloquism which anticipates and complements the feminine verbal cross-dressing practiced by *querelle* writers."<sup>25</sup> Swift specifically cites the moment in *Livre de la mutacion de fortune* (1403) when Christine writes about the "sexual transformation that she experienced following the death of her husband: 'Fort et hardy cuer me trovay, / Dont m'esbahi, mais j'esprouvay / Que vray homme fus devenu.' (I found in myself a strong and bold heart, which amazed me, but I felt that I had become a real man)".<sup>26</sup> This incident is reminiscent of a passage from the *Treasury* that I discuss below, but more than that I would like to discuss how through Christine's careful appropriation of the learned masculine tradition

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<sup>24</sup> Helen J. Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France, 1440-1538*, Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance*, 185.

<sup>26</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance*, 186. Richards connects "*vray homme*" to "a common patristic characterization of Christ." Richards, "Somewhere between Destructive Glosses," 48. Judith L. Kellogg reads this passage as making manifest Christine's realization "that in order to negotiate the world alone, and especially since she will support her family by writing, she must acquire the discursive authority available almost exclusively to men in her society." This type of reading is very much what I am claiming should be made of *Treasury* where Christine's rhetoric is a powerful statement of how a woman can perform intellectually. Kellogg, "*Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge and Reimagining Gendered Space*," in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady, Routledge Medieval Casebooks (New York: Routledge, 2003), 129-46, 133.



of rhetoric along with her adoption of approved visionary writing, she solidifies her authority and credibility in her conduct book. These rhetorical appropriations amount to a type of transvestism; whereas Swift discusses Christine's widowed sex change as "an instance of creative play with categories of gender, voice, and the linguistic formulation of gendered identity," I suggest that we consider Christine's complex rhetorical style as a means of confounding masculine understandings of female capabilities.<sup>27</sup> Her rhetorical performances in the *Treasury*, by engaging with, entertaining, and even appropriating the expectations of male intellectual traditions of rhetoric, point out that the intellectual and clerkly bias with which women are treated, and with which Christine herself was treated in the *Querelle de la Rose*, are not tenable positions precisely because intellectual acuity is a performance that Christine, and any other woman able to gain access to books and an education, could achieve. This intellectual performance neatly dovetails with the opening scene of *City of Ladies*, so as I discuss the scene of Christine's rejection of clerkly misogyny below, I ask that the concept of intellectual transvestism and performance inform the reading of that scene. Indeed, Christine's written performance spectacularizes the idiocy of misogyny by demonstrating her own intellectual qualities. While there is no overt "transvestite ventriloquism" as Swift discusses, Christine's rhetorical techniques essentially suggest that the *Treasury* is in part "a fictional experiment in speaking 'like a man' which figuratively represents her entry upon her new career as a writer in the world of men," yet with this later work, Christine need not claim masculinity overtly, just perform it rhetorically through her systematic demonstration of her knowledge of various types of rhetoric and how and when to deploy them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance*, 186.

<sup>28</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance*, 187.

## I. Seeing is Believing: Christine the Visionary and Her Allegorical Assistants

### A. *Treasury's* Predecessor: Visionary Claims and Boethian Allegory

Christine de Pizan's *The Treasury of the City of the Ladies* or *The Book of Three Virtues* is her second work that justifies itself by claiming Christine writes at the behest of "three sisters, daughters of God, named Reason, Rectitude, and Justice" ("nous trois suers, filles de Dieu, nommees Raison, Droicture et Justice").<sup>29</sup> The first work, though not a conduct manual, has an opening that more explicitly encompasses a clear union of the allegorical and visionary rhetorical modes than does the *Treasury's* opening.<sup>30</sup> This first work is called *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), and *Treasury* is a sequel to it.<sup>31</sup> *City of Ladies* opens in a manner strikingly similar to *Consolation of Philosophy*. As Boethius is struck with despair, so is Christine de Pizan, who has just experienced a moment of cognitive dissonance after reading a text that denigrates women, overcome with dejection in the *City of Ladies*.<sup>32</sup> Her reaction is to "think [...] deeply about these matters" and "to examine my [Christine's] character and conduct as a natural woman" ("Ces choses pensant a par moy tres profondement, [...] a examiner moy meismes et mes meurs comme femme naturelle").<sup>33</sup> Yet this mental exercise of considering her own experiences does not solve Christine's problem:

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<sup>29</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.5. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.2.10, ll. 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant makes the case that *City of Ladies* and *Treasury* share similar goals, which is a revision of many scholars' positions that *Treasury* is a more conservative and less important work. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 177.

<sup>31</sup> Forhan discusses the city itself as allegorized in the context of political theory, which lends *Treasury* a political cast. Forhan, *The Political Theory*, 47.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of Christine's writing for other women in order to prevent such intellectual shock from happening to other women, see Sheila Delany, "Rewriting Woman Good: Gender and the Anxiety of Influence in Two Late-Medieval Texts," in *Chaucer in the Eighties*, ed. Julian N. Wasserman and Robert J. Blanch (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 75-92.

<sup>33</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, rev. ed., trans. Early Jeffrey Richards, (New York: Persea, 1999), I.1.4. I give the citations for English versions of Christine's text to this edition, unless otherwise noted. My citations provide Book, Chapter, and page. At times, when the translation is preferred

To the best of my knowledge, no matter how long I confronted or dissected the problem, I could not see or realize how their [the antifeminists'] claims could be true when compared to the natural behavior and character of women. Yet I still argued vehemently against women, saying that it would be impossible that so many famous men—such solemn scholars, possessed of such deep and great understanding, [...]—could have spoken so falsely on so many occasions that I could hardly find a book on morals where, even before I had read it in its entirety, I did not find several chapters [...] attacking women [...]. (Mais nonobstant que pour chose que je y puisse congnoistre, tant longuement y sceusse viser ne espluchier, je ne apperceusse ne congneusse telz jugemens estre vrays encontre les naturelz meurs et condicions femenines, j'arguoye fort contre les femmes, disant que trop fort seroit que tant de si renommez hommes—si sollempnelz clerics de tant hault et grant entendement, [...]—en eussent parlé mençongieusement et en tant de lieux, que a paine trouvoye volume moral, qui qu'en soit l'otteur, que avant que je l'aye tout leu, que je n'y voye aucuns chappitres [...] au blasme d'elles.)<sup>34</sup>

This passage shows the mental distress that Christine, a lone person, experiences before her visionary encounter begins (just as Boethius loses himself in despair and emotion before Lady Philosophy comes to his rescue in the *Consolation*)<sup>35</sup> and illustrates that Christine, as author, is keenly aware that her work opposes the male canon of antifeminist literature so that here she privileges the experiential over written authorities, though, Christine does employ authorities to support her points.<sup>36</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant points

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I will use Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. and ed. Rosalind Brown-Grant, (London: Penguin, 1999). The French edition I use is Maureen Cheney Curnow, "The *Livre de la cite des dames* of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1975), I.1.618.

<sup>34</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.1.4. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.1.618-19.

<sup>35</sup> *Consolation* opens with verse penned by Boethius that recounts his many woes and about which he writes: "These were the silent reflections which I nursed in my heart. My dutiful pen was putting the last touches to my tearful lament, [...]." Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3. "Haec cum mecum tacitus ipse reputarem querimoniamque lacrimabilem stili officio signarem," Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 94, ed. Ludovicus Bieler (Turnholt: Brepols, 1957), 2.

For a comparison of Christine's rhetoric in various works with the rhetoric of Jean Le Fèvre's rhetoric in his translation of *Lamentationes Matheoluli*, see Karen Pratt, "Analogy or Logic; Authority or Experience? Rhetorical Strategies for and against Women," in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Cultural: Selected Papers from the Seventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, 27 July – 1 August 1992*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 57-66.

<sup>36</sup> Forhan agrees with this assessment: "the very structure of the work [*City of Ladies* ...] implies an emphasis on experience and observation over the authoritative statements of *auctores* of the past." She also

out the theological implications for Christine's experience of misogyny, which Brown-Grant acknowledges is portrayed in a "somewhat hyperbolic" manner.<sup>37</sup> Christine's experience that leads her to regard her sex as vile borders upon "theological error" that "explicitly contradicts Genesis 1:31: 'And God saw every thing he had made, and behold, it was very good.'"<sup>38</sup> The implication is that misogyny is thus aligned with theological error, and Christine's defense of women thereby becomes an authoritative work advocating for theological truths rather than a simple catalogue of women penned by a woman in their defense. Brown-Grant aligns this theological underpinning with her reading of Christine's self-presentation as Mary within *City of Ladies*, outlining the commonalities, the most significant of which I note below.<sup>39</sup>

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reads the rejection of these authorities as "subversive" but does not relate it to questioning or subverting gender roles. Forhan, *The Political Theory*, 56. Experience in the *Treasure* is not so obviously and overtly referenced as in the opening of *City of Ladies*, but in Book Three when Christine addresses elderly women, she says explicitly that "before she [the elderly woman] undertakes anything she ought to be guided by her experience" ("aucune chose veult faire ou entreprendre doit ouvrir par l'exemples d'ycelles [i.e., 'choses que veues a avenir en son temps']"). Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.6.147. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.6.197, ll. 16-17, 14-15.

<sup>37</sup> Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 141. See István P. Bejczy's argument that "the evidence from Christian theology and the evidence from Aristotelian philosophy concerning the moral status of women are in conflict, [... which] accounts for the debate on female virtue that we find in scholastic writing from the second half of the thirteenth century." The article situates Christine's *City of Ladies* within this context and demonstrates that she did have sources to draw on in her composition, namely Christian in nature. Bejczy further claims: "Despite, then, the opposite impression conveyed by Christine de Pizan which some of her modern commentators follow, no universal tradition of derogating female virtue existed in the Middle Ages. In fact, Christianity introduced the idea of the moral equality of the sexes in the West, as a result of its understanding of virtue as a divine, salvific gift extending to male as well as female believers. The recovery of Aristotelian moral and political thought in the thirteenth century actually brought a setback in medieval culture for the recognition of women as moral subjects on a par with men. Even in an Aristotelian context, however, the female capacity for virtue was sometimes defended, while virtuous women continued to be recognised in late medieval theological and religious literature." While Bejczy's point is important to acknowledge in order to formulate accurate assessments of medieval intellectual attitudes toward women, it is still an assessment that relies on scholastic documents to assess medieval misogyny, and thus I would caution that we should not use it as a basis to estimate or contradict women's expressed experience of misogyny, though we may well note that this experience may be exaggerated for rhetorical purposes. István P. Bejczy, "Does Virtue Recognize Gender? Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* in the Light of Scholastic Debate," in *Virtue Ethics for Women, 1250-1500*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews, The New Synthese Historical Library Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy 69 (London: Springer, 2011), 1-11, 1-2, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 142.

<sup>39</sup> I am less concerned with the concept of Christine as Mary in *City of Ladies* because this work is not my primary text for analysis and because the topic has been covered. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the*

To return to the comparison to *Consolation*, Christine's misery so overwhelms her "that it was as if I had sunk deep into a trance" (que il sembloit que je fusse si comme personne en etargie), and shortly thereafter, she experiences a vision.<sup>40</sup> Christine relates that she "saw a ray of light fall on my lap, as though it were the sun. I shuddered then, as if wakened from sleep, for I was sitting in a shadow where the sun could not have shone at that hour."<sup>41</sup> And as I lifted my head to see where this light was coming from, I saw three crowned ladies standing before me, and the splendor of their bright faces shone on me and throughout the entire room" ("soubdainement sus mon giron vy descendre un ray

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*Moral Defence*, 146-47. See also V. A. Kolve, "The Annunciation to Christine: Authorial Empowerment in *The Book of the City of the Ladies*," in *Iconography at the Crossroads: Papers from the Colloquium sponsored by the Index of Christian Art Princeton University 23-24 March 1990*, Index of Christian Art Occasional Papers 2, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton: Index of Christian Art Department of Art and Archaeology Princeton University, 1993), 171-96. Kolve's article also investigates how this comparison extends into the illumination cycles in some of the manuscripts of *City of Ladies*. Again, with the claim to prophecy, we can understand Christine's initial distress in *City of Ladies* as similar to "*Compunctio cordis*," which is "grief and fear induced to begin the memory work of prayer, [...] and] an early element of inventional practice in monasticism," but "Many of the Jewish prophets had their visions in fear and illness; some then also fell prostrate as a posture of readiness to see and remember." Christine's grief and fear over being a vile woman precipitate her memorable visionary experience, which is also begun with her kneeling in obedience to the Three Virtues. Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditations, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 175.

<sup>40</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, I.1.6. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.1.619. Simon Goldhill discusses the Epicurean understanding of *phantasiai*, which are "'presentations' [...]" wholly involved in the soul's desire to see, to believe, to interpret." Simon Goldhill, "Refracting Classical Vision: Changing Cultures of Viewing," in *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, ed. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York: Routledge, 1996), 17-27, 23. I would like to suggest that if we understand the visionary impulse in this manner, i.e. the seeing subject is also a desiring subject, we can conclude that Christine's visionary experience is a manifestation of her actively looking for and seeking out evidence of the female goodness and virtue that she has experienced as true. This longing on her part might explain what Sheila Delany has described as a "tedious performance" in *City of Ladies*, with its "relentless recital of female excellence, and Christine's legal-bureaucratic style;" Christine's primary goal is to overturn her position as "spoken object" and "enable herself to work: to confirm woman's intellectual and moral capacity." Delany, "Rewriting Woman Good," 86, 76, 84. Her rhetorical transvestism allows Christine to transcend spoken objectification and become a speaking subject able to turn the rhetoric of male clerks back at them.

<sup>41</sup> This posture is "among the postures that were commonly thought to induce the mental concentration necessary for 'memory work,' recollective, memorable composition. [...]" Sitting or standing at a lectern pensively, head in hand or staring into space, eyes open or closed, with or without a book, are also common postures of meditative memory work. In classical as in monastic rhetoric, withdrawal to one's chamber indicates a state of mind, the entry to the 'place' of meditative silence which was thought essential for invention." To recall my introduction, I wish this coincidence to suggest the claim of prophet be applied to Christine's rhetorical styling of her narrative persona. Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 174.

de lumiere si comme se le soleil fust. Et je, qui en lieu obscure estoye, ouquel a celle heure soleil rayer ne peust, tressailly adoncques si comme se je feusse resveillee de somme. Et dreçant la teste pour regarder dont tel lueur venoit, vy devant moy, tout en estant, trois dames couronnees, de tres souveraine reverence, desquelles la resplendeur de leurs cleres faces enluminoit moy meismes et toute la place”).<sup>42</sup> Christine crosses herself to ward off evil, an important gesture for the time given that visitations might be either good or bad, and one of the three women speaks to her, telling her she is being foolish for accepting the word of men of authority: “For where has the husband ever been found who would allow his wife to have authority to abuse and insult him as a matter of course, as these authorities maintain? I believe that, regardless of what you might have read, you will never see such a husband with your own eyes, so badly colored are these lies. [...] Come back to yourself, recover your senses, and do not trouble yourself anymore over such absurdities” (“Car ou fu oncques trouvé le mari qui tel maistrise souffrist avoir a sa femme que elle eust loy de tant luy dire de villenies et d’injures comme yceulx mettent que femmes dient? Je croy que, quoyque tu en ayes veu en script, que oncques nul de tes yeux n’en veis, si sont mençonges trop mal coulourees. [...] Or te reviens a toy meismes, reprens ton scens et plus ne te troubles pour telz fanffelues”).<sup>43</sup> Experience is again privileged in Christine’s text, yet her account of her visionary experience stipulates some other important information. First, she awakes. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski has noted that “the waking vision [...] appears more rational than the dream vision, while still hinting at a supernatural component,” and I would add that Christine would have known about this particular choice of having waking visions as Gerson employs it in his 1402

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<sup>42</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.1.6. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.1.621-22.

<sup>43</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.2.7-8. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.2.625.

tract *Traictié d'une vision faite contre Le Ronmant de la Rose* along with morally virtuous allegorical figures, another element Christine employs in her *Treasury* with the daughters of God, Reason, Rectitude, and Justice.<sup>44</sup> Christine's awakening also has subtle indications that she is turning away from sin when she experiences the vision, as sleeping is something often associated with sinful behavior in the Middle Ages.<sup>45</sup> Second, these ladies are associated with light, symbolically for Christians something that is associated with the acceptance of Christ but also traditionally indicative of enlightenment or knowledge, as in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Christine is employing both meanings, for she follows the allegorical tradition of Boethius in that Christianity and reason or philosophy are mutually reinforcing—that is, if one reasons properly, one cannot but accept the truth of Christianity.<sup>46</sup> *Treasury* is therefore a conduct guide, but one that has

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<sup>44</sup> Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*," 334.

<sup>45</sup> See Proverbs 10:5. On medieval attitudes toward sleep see: Charles J. Metteer, "Distraction or Spiritual Discipline: the Role of Sleep in Early Egyptian Monasticism," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2008): 5-43; Pierre-Antoine Fabre, "Sleep of the Flesh: the Agony of the Visible at the Limits of the Frame in the Iconography of the Prayer of Christ in the Garden of Gesthsemane," in *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Reindert Falkenburg, Walter S. Melion, and Todd M. Richardson, Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 163-94; Jean Verdon, "Dormir au Moyen âge," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 72, no. 4 (1994): 749-59; Jeremy Cohen, "'The Guardian of Israel neither Doses nor Sleeps': Exegesis, Polemics, and Politics in the Late Medieval Jewish-Christian Encounter," in *Transforming Relations: Essays on Jews and Christians in Honor of Michael A. Signer*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 285-309; and F. N. M. Diekstra, "Jonah and *Patience*: the Psychology of a Prophet," *English Studies* 55, no. 3 (1974): 205-17.

<sup>46</sup> David Chidester writes on St. Augustine's *Confessions* that "Augustine understands this journey of self-discovery to be motivated by his intense love of God. He represents his dramatic experience of the divine presence in his life as a light shining upon him and as a word striking him—illuminating him with knowledge and impelling him to love." David Chidester, "Symbolism and the Senses in Saint Augustine," *Religion* 14 (1984): 31-51, 32. Similarly, Christine has light pour in on her and then commences her writing at the behest of the daughters of God, which aligns her *City of the Ladies* with masculine religious experience, thereby authorizing her own vision. Chidester also develops a discussion of the triune nature of vision for Augustine that involves "(1) 'the object itself which we see,' (2) 'vision, or the act of seeing,' and (3) 'the attention of the mind.'" Chidester, "Symbolism and the Senses," 39. Chidester explains "the consubstantial nature of vision, in the union of subject and object, is common to both the eye and mind" and Augustine "declares that the three components not only persist, but as God becomes the object of contemplative vision, the human seer becomes the image of God," and "as human consciousness is directed toward eternal and unchanging realities, the object of vision becomes God, the act of vision becomes contemplation, and the love of God becomes the unifying force which joins them together." Chidester, "Symbolism and the Senses," 41. Thus while Christine may not overtly claim her visionary experience

been created with rationality and faith, just as *Consolation* is a rational guide toward faith through reason that subordinates the material world to the afterlife.

Also aligning the *City of Ladies* with Boethius's *Consolation* is the effect of this vision upon Christine the character: "The famous lady spoke these words to me, in whose presence I do not know which one of my senses was more overwhelmed: my hearing from having listened to such worthy words or my sight from having seen her radiant beauty, her attire, her reverent comportment, and her most honored countenance" ("Ces parolles me dist la dame renommee, a la presence de laquelle je ne sçay lequel de mes scens fu plus entrepris: ou mon ouye, en escoutant ses dignes parolles, ou ma veue, en regardant sa tres grant biauté, son atour, son reverent port et sa tres honnouree contenance").<sup>47</sup> As I have noted in relation to St Augustine, Christine is following an accepted script for her behavior that also appears in Boethius's *Consolation*.<sup>48</sup> Like

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marks a particular union with God, her construction of this vision is rhetorically powerful because it places her experience within a masculinized, intellectual religious tradition that she co-opts in her response toward misogyny. On Augustine's three types of vision see also Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 21.

<sup>46</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, On Hildegard's experience of her visions as "the infusion of a new kind of knowledge," that mimics the revelations of the Three Virtues in Christine's situation, see Barbara Newman, "Hildegard of Bingen: Visions and Validation," *Church History* 52, no. 2 (1985): 163-75, 166.

<sup>47</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.3.8. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.3.625. This description of the confusion of the senses is akin to what Chidester has described as synesthesia: "In collapsing the visual and verbal models, the imagery of symbolic synesthesia achieves a simultaneous apprehension of the continuous and discontinuous associations that define the symbolic power of imagery derived from visual and auditory sensory processes. [...] When this appears in religious language, the human realm is simultaneously acknowledged to be continuous and discontinuous with the sacred by means of the very tension present in the language." Chidester, "Symbolism and the Senses," 48.

<sup>48</sup> Others have noted Christine's indebtedness to Boethius: Glynnis M. Cropp, "Boèce et Christine de Pizan," *Le Moyen Âge* 87 (1981): 387-417, Jöel Blanchard, "Artefact littéraire et problématisation morale au XVe siècle," *Le moyen français* 17 (1985): 1-47, and Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*. I do not discuss in this chapter the comparisons made between Dante and Virgil and Christine and Reason that other scholars have made: Y. Batard, "Dante et Christine de Pisan (1364-1430)," in *Missions et demarches de la critique: mélanges offerts au Professeur J. A. Vier*, Publications de l'Université de Haute Bretagne (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973), 345-51; Earl Jeffrey Richards, "Christine de Pizan and Dante: a Re-examination," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 222 (1985): 100-11; Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Christine de Pizan and the Misogynistic Tradition," *Romanic Review* 81, no. 3 (1991): 279-92; Maureen Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan's Cités des Dames* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Glenda K. McLeod, *Virtue and Venom: Catalogues of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); and Anna Slerca, "Dante, Bocacce, et le *Livre de la cite des dames*," in *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge: Etudes*



Christine, Boethius finds his visitor “most awe-inspiring to look at, for her glowing eyes penetrated more powerfully than those of ordinary folk, and a tireless energy was reflected in her heightened colour.”<sup>49</sup> Additionally, like Christine, Boethius is “struck dumb” and unable to identify Lady Philosophy at first.<sup>50</sup> This script is present not only in *Consolation*, but is parallel to other visionary women’s descriptions of ecstatic union with God—or even just a vision of Him. Consider, for example, this quotation from Margery Kempe that describes her earliest vision of Christ:

[...] as sche lay a-loone and hir kepars wer fro hir, owyr mercyful Lord Crist Ihesu, eyr to be trostyde, worshypd be hys name, neuyr forsakyng hys seruawnt in tyme of need, aperyde to hys creatur which had forsakyn hym in lyknesse of a man, most semly, most bewtyuows, & most amyable þat eyr mygth be seen wyth mannys eye, clad in a mantyl of purpyl sylke, syttyng up-on hir beddys syde, lokyng vp-on hir wyth so blyssyd a chere þat sche was strengthyd in alle hir spyritys [...]<sup>51</sup>

Margery is in the throes of a possessive state, ill, malicious, and violent toward herself and others when Christ appears to her, and she, like Christine and Boethius, is also overcome by the majesty of the visitor who arrives to provide her with comfort. Yet, unlike some female visionaries, Christine-the-character is not enrapt and wholly removed from her material surroundings. She instead has enough presence of mind to stand “out of respect for the ladies’ noble appearance” (“pour leur reverence”) though she was “far too dumbfounded to utter a single word” (“comme personne si enterprise que mot ne scet

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*autour de Christine de Pizan*, Medievalia, Etudes Christiniennes 16, ed. L. Dulac and B. Ribémont (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995), 221-30.

<sup>49</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 3. “uisa est mulier reuerendi admodum uultus, oculis ardentibus et ultra commune hominum ualentiam perspicacibus, colore uiuido atque inexhausti uigoris,” Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 2.

<sup>50</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 4. “obstupui” Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech, 8, ll. 11-19. “as she lay alone and her keepers were away from her, our merciful Lord Christ Jesus, ever to be trusted, appeared to his creature, who had forsaken him, in likeness of a man, most seemly, most beautiful, and most amiable that ever might be seen with man’s eye, clad in a mantle of purple silk, sitting upon her bedside, looking upon her with so blessed a countenance that she was strengthened in all her spirits,” Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe: A New Translation, Contexts, Criticism*, 7-8, Book One, 1.

sonner”).<sup>52</sup> Christine is also curious about who the women are while simultaneously experiencing a sense of unworthiness: “I considered myself unworthy” (“je me reputasse non digne”).<sup>53</sup> These elements of Christine’s reaction to the vision are typical of female visionaries who may be afraid of God’s visitation or overwhelmed by it. Her curiosity is also a suggestion that before she supplicates herself to these figures she will ascertain who they are, a mark of her discretion.

The remainder of the opening of *City of Ladies* involves the three women introducing themselves and explaining the tokens that they carry with them. Reason describes the trio’s parentage: “God whose daughters we three all are and from whom we were born” (“Dieu toutes trois sommes filles et de luy nee[s]”).<sup>54</sup> She also explains why she carries “a shiny mirror [...] in place of a scepter” (“in lieu de cepstre [...] resplandissant mireuoir”): “no one can look into this mirror, no matter what kind of creature, without achieving clear self-knowledge” (“n’est quelconques personne qui s’i mire, quel que la criature scit, qui clerement ne se congnoisse”) and with the mirror “the essences, qualities, proportions, and measures of all things are known” (“les essances, calités, proporcions et mesures de toutes choses sont congneues”).<sup>55</sup> Rectitude introduces herself and explains that the “splendid rule that you [Christine] see me [Rectitude] holding in my right hand like a scepter is the yardstick of truth which separates right from wrong and distinguishes between good and evil. [...] It is the rod of peace, used by the just who rally to its cause, and which also strikes down those who do evil” (“lieu de septre tenir me vois en ma main destre, c’est la rigle droite qui depart le

<sup>52</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, I.3.9. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.3.626.

<sup>53</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.3.8. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.3.626.

<sup>54</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.3.9. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.3.627.

<sup>55</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.3.9. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.3.627, 628.

droit du tort et demonstre la differance d'entre bien et mal: [...]. Ce'est le baston de paix qui reconsillie les bons et ou ilz s'apuyent, qui bat et fiert les mauvais").<sup>56</sup> The final sister introduces herself as Justice, whose "task is purely and simply to judge and repay everyone according to their just deserts" ("office seulement est jugier, departir et faire la paye selonc la droite desserte d'un chascun").<sup>57</sup> Justice carries a "vessel of pure gold [...] like a measuring cup, given to me [Justice] by God my father, which I use to share out to each person exactly what he or she deserves. It is engraved with the *fleur de lys* of the Holy Trinity and, since it never gives out wrong measure, there are no grounds for anyone to complain about their lot" ("Cestuy vaissel de fin or [...] fait en guise d'une redonde mesure, Dieu, mon pere, le me donna, et sert de mesurer a un chascun sa livre de tel mesure commil doit avoir. Il est signé a la fleur de lis de la Trinité, et a toutes porcions il se rent juste: ne nul de ma mesure ne se puet plaindre").<sup>58</sup> The cumulative effect of these allegorical identifications is to provide an immense amount of rhetorical authority to Christine's *City of Ladies* since she has claimed its inspiration in these three daughters of God who rightly guide her through its construction. Barbara Newman describes their presence as an indication that Christine's writing "derives not merely from

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<sup>56</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, I.5.13-14. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.5.633-34.

<sup>57</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, I.6.14. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.6.635.

<sup>58</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, I.6.14-15. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.6.636. Interestingly, Christine draws in a bit of Platonic Forms in her description of the cup for Justice: "Yet the men of the Earth have other measures which they claim depend upon and derive from mine, but they are mistaken. Often they measure in my shadow, and their measure is not always true but sometimes too much for some and too little for other" ("Mais les hommes de terre ont autres mesures que ilz dient despendre et venir de la mienne, mais fausement. Main/tes fois soubz ombre de moy ilz mesurent, ne tousjours n'est mie leur mesure juste, ains est trop large aux aucuns et trop estroite aux autres"). Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.6.14. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.6.636.

Kolve makes an explicit argument that the Three Virtues represent a female version of the Trinity by "invit[ing] us to think of them as three-in-one and one-in-three"; also, she notes the "tradition" of portraying the Trinity as "three identical or near-identical men" "flourished particularly in the fifteenth century." Kolve, "The Annunciation to Christine," 181, 183, 182, 183. Barbara Newman agrees with this assessment. Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 22.

her own reasoning, her own sense of what is right, her own cry for justice, but from the will of God who can, when occasion demands, choose to be manifest in the form of a feminine Trinity.”<sup>59</sup> The explication of attributes also reflects the influence of Boethius’s Lady Philosophy who, among other attributes, has a robe marked with Π and Θ, which hint at her identity.<sup>60</sup>

To return to questions of authority, however, in Book III of *City of Ladies* the sisters’ claim for authority is powerfully voiced by Justice herself after discussing the last of the holy women: ““These final examples will act as the gates and portcullises of our city. Although I haven’t cited the names of every single holy lady who has ever lived, or is still living, or is indeed yet to come, [...] they can all none the less take their place in this City of Ladies, about which we can say: ‘*Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei*’”” (“Et cestes derrenieres serviront de portes et de clostures en nostre cité. Et nonobstant que je ne nomme, [...] les saintes dames qui ont esté, qui sont et qui seront, elles puent toutes estre comprises en ceste Cité des Dames. De laquelle se puet dire: Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei”).<sup>61</sup> Thus, when we come to the *Treasury*, Christine has already

<sup>59</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 23.

<sup>60</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 4. Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 2. The explication of the tools—mirror, measure, and cup—tie the allegorical figures to the real world and to quotidian items that on a very basic level a woman can associate with proper behavior once she has read their significance in Christine’s *City of Ladies*. That is, the physical mirror may prompt an evaluation of the woman’s interior status, a real ruler can prompt her to estimate her good and bad qualities, and a cup can remind her of the reward or punishment that her actions earn her.

<sup>61</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, III.18.237. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” III.18.1031 (underlining in original). Justice’s words include the biblical phrase “Glorious things are said of thee: O city of God” (Psalms 86:3 DV) and Christine is also making a comparison between her City of Ladies that is constructed with the help of God’s daughters and St. Augustine of Hippo’s *Civitas dei*, as Brown-Grant notes as well as suggesting that the comparison “makes the city into the classic symbol of the ideal community held together by its common pursuit of virtue.” Brown-Grant also finds symbolic weight in the city because of the argument made in the work that “women have contributed to the development of civilization.” Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defense*, 134. Constant J. Mews in the context of the *Speculum dominarum* suggests that the image of a woman building on her house may relate to “Prov.14:1, ‘The wise woman builds her house’—a text that never attracted patristic attention, but was once used by Bonaventure to contrast the achievements of Eve and Mary.” While Christine’s city is not a house, it seems plausible to view her *Treasury* then as an extension of this principle not to one woman but

spent a significant amount of time establishing the visionary and allegorical authorities in her rhetoric. Readers familiar with both works know who the daughters of God are, and Christine's participation in both visionary and allegorical traditions of rhetoric are established.

## B. *Treasury's* Allegorical Frame

The first chapter of Book One of the *Treasury* explains why Christine is writing another work:

After I [Christine] built the City of Ladies with the help and by the commandment of the three Ladies of Virtue, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, [...] and after I, more than anyone else, had worked so hard to finish the project and felt so exhausted by the long and continual exertion, I wanted only to rest and be idle for a while. But those same three ladies appeared to me again, and all three lost no time in saying the same kind of thing to me: "What, my studious daughter, have you already put away the tool of your intelligence and consigned it to silence? [...] Do you intend to

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to women commonly who can use the guide's principles to build their own houses within her city. Constant J. Mews, "The *Speculum dominarum* (*Miroir des dames*) and Transformations of the Literature of Instruction for Women in the Early Fourteenth Century," in *Virtue Ethics for Women*, 13-30, 24. Richards associates Christine's construction of the city instead with Peter 2:4-5, but also states "her City of Ladies is provocatively intended as a rigorous allegory of the Heavenly Jerusalem, extending the possibilities of identification with the joys and sorrows of women, Christine dresses this allegory with what appears to be contemporary political reflections on the rights and privileges of Italian city-states, for she chooses the city as an autonomous corporation rather than the convent as a model of her female community." See Richards, "Somewhere between Destructive Glosses," 45-46, 52. Kellogg suggests that "a city was the political space that afforded the most fluid social possibilities for its citizens," but that "in the medieval world, space is increasingly divided by gender," and so Christine's construction of a city is an attempt to re-write female space. Kellogg, "*Le Livre de la cité des dames*: Reconfiguring Knowledge," 137. Carruthers describes yet another context in which we might understand Christine's construction of a city, and though she is here discussing another text entirely, we might apply her words to Christine's building of the City of Ladies: "This map-like configuration of places joined up by paths, among which a guide [Three Virtues] leads the visionary [Christine], with commentary 'attached' in each place [the bricks, or ladies that construct the city], is a major organizational commonplace of early medieval otherworld journeys. It is an obvious application of the mnemotechnical principle of a *locus* with *imagines agentes* [...]." Carruthers also notes that "'construction dream[s]'" were popular and "conventional in later monasticism." Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 182, 193. Deborah McGrady discusses the image of the Three Virtues appearing before Christine at her study table and then of Christine and Reason engaged in building the City of Ladies as being representative of modes of secular and monastic reading: "*lectio* to *meditatio*" in the first half of the illumination and movement "between *operatio* and *contemplatio*" in the portion of the image showing construction. Deborah McGrady, *Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and His Late Medieval Audience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 38-39. The image is on folio 290r of the Harley 4431 manuscript and is accessible electronically at <http://www.pizan.lib.ac.uk/gallery/pages/290r.htm>.

take seriously the propaganda of Laziness [...]?” (“Après ce que j’oz ediffiee a l’ayde et par le commandement des troys Dames de Vertus, Rayson, Droicture et Justice, [...], je, comme personne traveillie de si grant labour avoir accompli et mis sus, mes membres et mon corps lasséz pour cause du long et continuel excercite estant en oyseuse et querant repos, s’apparurent a moy de reschief, gaires ne tarderent, les susdictes troys glorieuses, en disant toutes trois parolles d’une meismes substance en telle maniere:

Comment, fille d’estude, as tu ja remise et fichié en mue l’outil de ton entendement, [...] Veulz tu doncques donner oreille a la leçon de parece [...]?”<sup>62</sup>

Thus, the entire conduct book is embedded in an allegorical frame, a rhetorical move that links Christine’s writing to the well-respected masculine tradition exemplified by the *Consolation*, but which also simultaneously links it to a large body of visionary writing. By presenting the *Treasury* as a type of vision or dictation from God’s daughters, Christine makes an assertive grab for authority—for what Christian would reject advice revealed by God’s very daughters? Christine also simultaneously defends herself and creates a buffer between her own identity and the contents of her advice manual. Should anyone dislike what she has written, she has already displaced that content from herself by one remove by claiming its source of inspiration in the daughters of God.<sup>63</sup> Likewise,

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<sup>62</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.1.3. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.1.7, ll. 5-16; 17-19.

<sup>63</sup> While allegory may provide an initial buffer between Christine and the words she writes, if she wrote in a manner that attacked people, her contemporaries may not have accepted the defense that the allegories were attacking, not Christine. For example, in Gerson’s attack on the *Roman de la Rose*, he overturns a point that many of Jean de Meun’s defenders made:

that it is not Jean himself who propagates these possibly pernicious doctrines but the allegorical personages he created. “*C’est trop petite deffence pour si grant crime*” (this is too puny a defense for such a great crime; 72; 7.1.308) [...]. For Jean de Meun does not distance himself sufficiently from what his characters say, nor does he have them speak appropriately, that is, according to their nature. [...] For Gerson, the intricacies of allegory do not matter: if you defame someone it is immaterial in whose voice you do so. At the same time, of course, Gerson endorses allegory, since his entire text is cast in this form and he demonstrates through his characters of Chastity and Eloquence Theologienne how allegorical figures can and should speak appropriately.

Blumenfeld-Kosinski, “Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*,” 338-39. While allegory may provide a distancing of text from author, the author is unable to express whatever opinions or ideas he or she wishes to express without being open to criticism. This situation further establishes that Christine de Pizan, even though employing the popular rhetorical mode of the allegory, would need to restrain the

Christine's claim that the daughters come to her and demand that she write deflects accusations of unfeminine pride that might be leveled at Christine should she have undertaken this writing without such a request or commandment; this element of her vision again recalls Margery Kempe who explains in the quotation at the opening of this chapter that she did not record her visionary experience until she was commanded to do so. Christine's rhetoric is varied. As may be expected, the first book of *Treasury*, which addresses princesses, picks up the allegorical-visionary rhetoric that Christine employs in her frame for the conduct literature.

In the opening of Book One Christine turns the flow of her advice manual over to her allegorical inspiration entirely. At the start of Chapter 2, after Christine relates that she has been coerced into continued writing, the following *capitulum* appears: "The three Virtues urge all princesses and great ladies to come to their school." ("Ci dit comment les ·III· vertus enorterent a toutes princepses et haultes dames que elles viengnent a leur escole"), which completely removes Christine from the narrative.<sup>64</sup> This excision of the

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content of her writing so that she might not be attacked for intellectual hypocrisy: that is having the allegorical figures in her works speak inappropriately as she claims those in the *Roman de la Rose* do. While Christine speaks almost entirely through allegories in *Treasury* there are relatively few instances where the sisters are explicitly referenced by name rather than with the first person plural pronoun "we." Most often the named occurrences come at the beginning of the books and when Christine wants to express particular outrage or praise of bad or good behavior. The occurrences include: Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.5, I.20.56, II.1.87, II.2.88, III.1.128. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.2.10, ll. 5-6; I.20.75, l. 79; II.2.123, l. 6; III.1.172, l. 31.

Brown-Grant agrees that "Christine presents herself in the *Cité* as a receiver rather than as a dispenser of wisdom," but Sheila Delaney makes an important point that questions Christine's use of allegory as a distancing mechanism, though one I think it is problematic to assert unequivocally: "Christine's Lady Reason [...] is explicitly portrayed as an aspect of the author's self: her own capacity for reason, as well as the personification of human reason at large." Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 140. Delany, "Rewriting Woman Good," 83. I would suggest that one read Lady Reason first as an allegory and only secondarily as a figure representing Christine's own personal reason. Lady Reason is more acceptable as representative of the reasoning capacity of all women than if read as a component of Christine's own identity because such a reading strips *Treasury* of Christine's rhetorical transvestism. If we reduce the allegory to being a mere portion of Christine's personality, the performative nature of her rhetoric is lost, which vastly oversimplifies her writing.

<sup>64</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.5. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.2.10, ll. 1-3. Note that this time in *Treasury* Christine is effectively excised from the text, whereas in *City*

author-narrator occurs much earlier in the *Treasury* than in *City of Ladies*, and I would suggest it functions to pull the audience into the world of allegory quickly, to drive the audience to perceive more emphatically the presence of the allegories, and to allow Christine's identity as author to slip from the narrative structure of the guide. Ruth Webb discusses the ancient art of *enargeia* as "the quality of language that appeals to the audience's imagination," and as such can be, according to Quintilian, "a figure of speech which has the particularly vital role of ensuring the listener is swayed by the speaker's case."<sup>65</sup> As such, Christine's deployment of the allegories as an established framework for the entirety of *Treasury* functions as a type of *enargeia*, displacing the text onto her allegories and accruing greater authority thereby as well as setting before her audience the fiction that the three Virtues are teaching them directly.<sup>66</sup> The *capitulum* is also

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of *Ladies*, Sheila Delany finds a more cooperative relationship between Christine and Lady Reason: "Lady Reason gives no orders. She suggests and supervises and works along with Christine as a constant presence throughout the text, engaging in frequent dialogue with her." Delany, "Rewriting Women Good," 84. The relationship in *Treasury* is quite different with no real interlocution between Reason and Christine, but rather this is displaced onto the readers and the allegories that encourage their self-analysis. Charity Cannon Willard finds that in *Treasury* the Three Virtues are of less importance because she says the lessons are "conducted by Worldly Prudence, who is of primary importance." Willard, "Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?" in *Ideals for Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan*, Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series 1, ed. Diane Bornstein (Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1981), 91-116, 101. I discuss Prudence in the conclusion of this dissertation, but I do not agree that Prudence is more important than the Three Virtues; both play different but rhetorically significant roles in *Treasury*, though in terms of Christine's thought, Prudence may very well be the more significant concept.

<sup>65</sup> Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, (Abingdon, U. K.: Ashgate, 2009), 88.

<sup>66</sup> Christa Grössinger describes an illumination from one of the manuscripts of the works: "The half-page miniature is divided into two, one half showing the three Virtues appearing to Christine de Pizan in a vision, the other, right side, showing a group of ladies taught in the school of these virtues. In the visions, the Virtues grab Christine by the arm, while she is lying in bed, sleeping; in the School of Virtues, Virtue is raised high on a chair above the encircling women, including queens, whom she faces." Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, Manchester Medieval Studies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 50. Willard describes the Three Virtues as similar to "allegorical figures in Italian frescoes and murals." Charity Cannon Willard, "A Fifteenth-Century View of Women's Role in Medieval Society: Christine de Pizan's *Livre de Trois Vertus*," in *The Role of Woman in the Middle Ages. Papers of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 6-7 May 1972*, ed. Rosmarie Thee Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 90-120, 97. The frontispiece of Mathilde Laigle's early study on the *Treasury* reproduces an illumination in black and white: "L'Apparition des trois dames de vertu: Raison,



followed by salutations from the sisters, further setting the scene, as an opening for the chapter: “From us three sisters, daughters of God, named Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, to all princesses, empresses, queens, duchesses and high-born ladies ruling over the Christian world, and generally to all women: loving greetings.” (“De par nous trois suers, filles de Dieu, nommes Raison, Droicture et Justice, a toutes princepces, c’est assavoir empereris, roynes, ducheces, et haultes dames regnans en dominacion sur la terre crestienne, et generaument a toutes femmes, salut et dilection”).<sup>67</sup> The rhetorical effect of this removal of Christine is again to emphasize the real presence of the allegories in the narrative as well as to displace the source of the contents of the rather lengthy treatise from Christine’s pen to the inspiration of the three daughters of God. That is, these allegorical women have taken over the conduct guide, and they are unafraid to claim both their position as authorities (e.g. self-identification as “daughters of God”) and to make clear prohibitions and recommendations for female behavior. Diane Bornstein remarks on another function of the allegory in Christine’s work, and though she is discussing the *Epître d’Othea à Hector*, I believe her comments on allegory are applicable to *Treasury*:

Christine rationalizes the social position of the aristocracy, which is presented as the support of order, religion, morality, and culture. One of the devices by which she does this is the use of allegory. The formal characteristics of allegory convey an autocratic, hierarchic view of society. The picture presented is that of a changeless world order in which human personality, social class, appearance, and manners are fixed according to divine decree. The physical and spiritual worlds are described in terms of

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Justice, Droicture.” It shows Christine seated and slumbering in a chair, her eyes closed and her head propped up in her hand that rests on the chair’s armrest. There are books on shelves in the background of the scene. Christine wears simple clothing, while before her stand three women in more elaborate dress. These women are the Three Virtues, and each is distinguishable as holding her separate iconographic symbol: a measure, a mirror, and a pouring vessel. Mathilde Laigle, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus de Christine de Pisan et son milieu historique et littéraire* (Paris: Champion, 1912). Charity Cannon Willard also discusses the illuminations briefly in connection with their portrayal of the Three Virtues’ symbols. Willard, “Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des trois vertus*: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?” 94. See also Kellogg, “*Le Livre de la cité des dames*: Reconfiguring Knowledge,” 131.

<sup>67</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.5. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.2.10, ll. 5-9.

static levels. Abstract qualities are associated with concrete images that suggest particular social types.<sup>68</sup>

I do not wish to say that the world in *Treasury* is systematically and unrelentingly represented in such a fashion—certainly there are hints that the world is *not* stable and static, as when Christine excoriates merchant women for their extravagant dress, but the ideas that her allegorical figures present absolute authorities, and that this authority is classed and religiously marked, are significant. I demonstrate later in this chapter how the disappearance and minimalization of the allegories reflects Christine’s own classed rhetoric.

### **C. Rhetoric Fit for a Princess: Allegory and Dialogic Introspection**

Book One begins with a chapter that states princesses must love and fear the Lord, a common enough beginning for a conduct manual. The audience is exhorted to adopt this behavior through a series of chapters that deploy allegory and Boethian self-reflection.<sup>69</sup> For example, the first of these chapters provides a detailed description of the “Temptation” (“temptacion”) which can “assail” (“l’assauldra”) a princess, but Christine begins her exhortation for the princess to beware such temptation not with a commandment to avoid sin but with a highly descriptive scene:

When the princess or high-born lady wakes up in the morning, she sees herself lying luxuriously in her bed between soft sheets, surrounded by rich accoutrements and everything for bodily comfort, and ladies-in-waiting around her focusing all their attention on her and seeing that she lacks for nothing, ready to run to her if she gives the least sigh or if she breathes a word, their knees flexed to administer any service to her and to

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<sup>68</sup> Diane Bornstein, *Mirrors of Courtesy* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 54.

<sup>69</sup> Brown-Grant classifies what I call Boethian self-reflection “a simplified form of psychomachia,” and she summarizes that which the princess undergoes in Book One. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 189-92. Karen Green calls it “lively inner dialogue” and contrasts it to the “scholastic sequence of points, reasons, and sub-arguments” employed by some earlier conduct literature. Green, “From *Le Miroir*,” 105.

obey all her commands. (“Quant la princepce ou haulte dame sera en son lit au matin veilliee de somme et elle se verra couchiee en son lit entre souefs draps, avironnee de riches paremens et de toutes choses pour aise de corps, dames et damoiselles entour elle qui l’ueil n’ont a aultre chose fors a avisier que riens ne lui faille de tous delices, prestes de courir a elle se elle souspire tant soit petit ou se elle sonne mot, les genoulx flechis pour lui administrer tout service et obeir a tous ses commandemens [...].”)<sup>70</sup>

Such a description ties Christine’s conduct manual to more experiential traditions of rhetoric, perhaps reflecting the concern to invoke a physical image to which a female audience may relate; indeed such a waking scene must necessarily have been familiar to the nobility in her audience. This experiential mode also encourages the use of one’s own reasoning ability and continues the stated privileging of experience over authority that Christine employs in the opening of *City of Ladies*. Here Christine associates a common experience (i.e. waking up in bed) with the adoption of proper behavior so that the behavior she promotes will come to mind whenever the audience engages in the given experience. Further, the descriptive aspects of the scene fulfill the principle of *enargeia*, which Webb has discussed in conjunction with “forensic oratory” in the ancient world, suggesting that *enargeia* “has the additional function of making the audience into virtual witnesses by making them ‘seem to see’ the events described by the speaker.”<sup>71</sup> This conception of *enargeia* is relevant to Christine’s goal as an author of conduct literature who wishes her readers to engage in self-analysis and judgment.

A more vivid example of *enargeia* occurs later in Book One without the context of allegory, but is nonetheless perhaps a noteworthy example that can further illustrate how this rhetorical concept functions in *Treasury*. Christine offers the princess’s guardian

<sup>70</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.3.7. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.3.12, ll. 11, 3-10.

<sup>71</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 90.

advice on what to do should the princess ignore and actively mock the guardian's advice about consorting with men or engaging in an extramarital affair. Rather than simply speak in hypotheticals and advise the guardian to leave the court in order to avoid the blame should the princess's misdeeds be uncovered, Christine makes the possibility of the princess being hostile to her governance a reality by including these words:

And perhaps the lady [the chaperone] will hear that she [the princess] sometimes says privately to some of her young attendants [...], "The devil take the old bat! What a sourpuss! We're stuck with her until she fries in Hell!" And another will reply, "So help me God, Madam, you should scatter peas on the steps so that she'll break her neck!" (qu'elle dira aucunes fois a part a aucune de ses femmes qui mieulx sera en sa grace: Que deables ferons nous de ceste vieille? Elle ne fait que rechingner: feu d'enfer l'arde! Ja n'en serons delivres. Et l'autre respondra: M'aïst Dieux, Madame, il faut semer des pois sur les degréz, si se rompra le col [...].)<sup>72</sup>

This description starkly reveals the reality of the difficulties that the chaperone may face with an intractable princess, and it demonstrates to her clearly the type of hostility she may need to confront in her daily existence if she is to perform her guardianship faithfully. The vivid insults included in this interlude function as a rhetorical jolt to wake the chaperone-reader and drive her to take seriously the advice that Christine provides. They also prepare her emotionally for what may be a very stressful and unpleasant experience: receiving the scorn of the young lady she is supposed to look after and help to shape into a morally responsible noblewoman, and thus is the function of *enargeia*.

Later Christine discusses the principles underlying the opening image of the bed scene and the spiritual problems such behavior can engender. Such discussion takes place in a dialogic manner that recalls Boethian debate with Lady Philosophy in *Consolation*. For example, Christine guides her audience with words that do not come from her, but

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<sup>72</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.26.75. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.26.105, l. 44; I.26.106, ll. 45-48.

from allegorical figures such as Temptation and the semi-allegorical love and fear of Our Lord. The princess, like Boethius, is shown contemplating her own fate; “she will say to herself: ‘Now, you see and recognize by the grace of Almighty God the terrifying perils in which you have put yourself all because of this damnable pride! What are you going to do about it? Has it become such a habit? Do you want to be damned?’” (“elle dira a soy meismes: or vois tu et cognois par grace de Dieu les tres grans et espouventables perilz ou tu t’es fichee, tout a cause de ce dampnable orgueil? Que feras tu doncques? Le continueras tu ainsi? Veulx tu estre dampnee?”).<sup>73</sup> This dialogic presentation of behavioral guidelines grounds the principles presented in the book within the experience of mental deliberation, of thought, and conversation with one’s self. Additionally, Christine calls to mind experiences various women might have through descriptions and scene-setting, and then she allows that same audience of women to see how speculation and reason can lead one to the conduct principles that the book supports. Christine’s introduction, then, balances both an experiential rhetoric with allegory and privileges the princess’s reasoning abilities.<sup>74</sup>

This exercise of reason is perhaps the most radical difference between Christine’s rhetoric and that of other conduct literature and is related to her stance that women can reason and be virtuous, which is perhaps most forcefully voiced through her participation in the *Querelle de la Rose* (1400-02). Christine’s *Treasury* is particularly, I would argue,

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<sup>73</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.5.13. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.5.20, ll. 7-10. For elements of these dialogic discussions and reform of self in *Consolation*, see Book I, Chapter 6, where Lady Philosophy begins to ask Boethius questions in order to ascertain his mental state. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 16. Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 14.

<sup>74</sup> Brown-Grant suggests that the “shifting from direct discourse delivered by the authoritative voice of the three Virtues to that offered by the personifications in the psychomachia and thence to the dialogue of the beleaguered princess with herself, the *Trois Vertus* demonstrates the various stages involved in exercising one’s free will and rationality.” Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 192.

an exception to the female education Anne Marie de Gendt describes as “essentially practical and moral: it was preparation for life. This concept of education is reflected in the didactic writings addressed to young girls and women, which we find all over Europe. These works never aim to improve the scholarly knowledge of their audience; on the contrary, they are normative texts, which propose and impose models and values, and which sometimes contain practical advice for everyday life.”<sup>75</sup> To be fair, Gendt does not use this description in an article considering Christine’s *Treasury*, but that she would make such a strong statement about conduct manuals particularly designed for women makes Christine’s singularity all the more impressive.<sup>76</sup> Christine’s emphasis on rationality and reason also tie her work closely to that of Boethius so that in the way that Boethius is guided by Lady Philosophy, the audience of the *Treasury* is guided by the Three Virtues, who formulate all the principles of behavior that Christine presents. In Book I, Chapter 5, of the *Consolation*, for example, Lady Philosophy says these words, seeking to draw Boethius back toward reason and faith after he has just decried his fate as unfair: “But this distance that you [Boethius] have travelled from your native land is the outcome not of expulsion, but of your going astray; if you wish to regard it as expulsion, such expulsion was self-induced, for no other person could lawfully have imposed such

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<sup>75</sup> Anne Marie de Gendt, “*Aucuns Petis Enseignements*: ‘Home-made’ Courtesy Books in Medieval France,” in *Centres of Learning in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 279-88, 279.

<sup>76</sup> Carolyn P. Collette describes the rhetoric of these portions of *Treasury* as reflecting “the lady’s own will and desire which underscores that the project of mediation [or whatever other activity is being deliberated] originates with her, arises from her own will, and is accomplished by her own agency” and demonstrates that the advice in Christine’s work “is [...] designed to enable women to achieve voice, power, and centrality in the domestic and public spheres in which they move through the **application of circumspection and power.**” (my emphasis) I would modify this description so that it applies specifically to the women of royalty and upper nobility addressed in the early portions of *Treasury*, for there the rhetoric is at its most dialogic and encourages active reading to foster circumspection, and I would argue, intelligence. Carolyn P. Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping the Routes to Agency,” in *Performing Polity: Women and Agency in the Anglo-French Tradition, 1385-1620*, *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 21-39, 29, 22.

exile. You must reflect on the land from which you are sprung.”<sup>77</sup> This address to Boethius is one of Philosophy’s early attempts to recall Boethius to himself and to have him overcome the “welter of disturbed emotions” that “weighs heavily upon” him; Christine’s semi-allegorical love and fear of God function similarly, though with a more overt focus on sin, specifically pride.<sup>78</sup> Yet reasoning ability is not uniformly assumed by Christine for all women, which will be obvious during the analysis of extracts from Book III especially, which primarily addresses women of the lower social classes.

The visionary and allegorical elements of Christine’s rhetoric remain prominent in the first book of the *Treasury*. The allegorical elements in Book One primarily consist of the presentation of various abstract concepts such as sins or virtues as allegories; these allegorical figures, such as Prudence, are often put into conversations with the imagined princess reading the work—and these conversations reflect the contemplative Boethian dialogue found in works such as *Consolation*, including their interrogative mode.<sup>79</sup> For example, just as above the semi-allegorical figure pricks the princess’s conscience with a series of questions, Lady Philosophy bluntly dismisses Fortune as something one should look toward as being faithful or a true aid, and in the process of doing so, she asks a series of questions of Boethius, trying to bring him around to her reasoned position on Fortune through the Socratic method. She says of Fortune:

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<sup>77</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 14. “Sed tu quam procul a patria non quidem pulsus es sed aberrasti ac, si te pulsum existimari mauis, te potius ipse pepulisti; nam id quidem de te numquam cuiquam fas fuisset.” Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 13.

<sup>78</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 15. “affectuum tumultus” “tibi [...] incubuit.” Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 13.

<sup>79</sup> Collette notes the importance of prudence as a concept that became associated with female governance. See Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping,” 33-37. Mews also notes wisdom is an important concept for *Speculum dominarum* as the author makes “continuous appeal [...] to the prudens domina (noble et sage dame in the French translation), who builds her house in wisdom. The model he develops for the queen is like that of an exemplary Queen of Sheba, imagined bride of Solomon. The effect of his argument is to construct an active ideal of virtue, to which the queen is enjoined to approach through her queenly conduct.” Mews, “The *Speculum dominarum*,” 28-29.

“If you approve of her [Fortune], enjoy the way she behaves, and do not complain. If her treachery appalls you, despise her and cast her off as she plays her destructive games [...]. Why? Because she has abandoned you, and none can ever feel sure that she will not abandon them. Surely you do not believe that purely ephemeral happiness is of value? Are the attentions of Fortune dear to you, when you cannot trust her to remain, and once she parts she will cause you grief? If you cannot keep her with you as you would like, and her swift departure spells a man’s undoing, what else does her fleeting future signify but a portent of future disaster?”<sup>80</sup>

This example from Boethius shows not a moral pricking of the conscience, but a pricking of the reason—acknowledge the truth of the matter that if Fortune is not bound to protect one, as she is not, then it is safest not to look for her aid. Christine’s allegorical and semi-allegorical rhetorical debate in the *Treasury* draws on long accepted and influential texts’ rhetorical tropes, such as those found in Boethius’s *Consolation*. Further, Christine’s rhetorical tropes also coincide with the rhetorical force of contemplative literature. For example, Christine’s rhetoric seems to support the type of contemplative reading I. van’t Spijker finds in Richard of St Victor’s *Benjamin Major*, that is, unlike the brief Good Wife poems addressed to middle- and lower-class women, when Christine discusses moral principles in Book I, she does it “not in haste but slowly, after the manner of the contemplative, according to the nature of contemplation, repeating and explicating things over and over again,” and like Richard, Christine “appeals to the reader to participate in this process,” but rather than directly, she does so indirectly through her allegorical figures.<sup>81</sup> Spijker also says of Richard of St. Victor’s writings:

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<sup>80</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh, 20. “Si probas, utere moribus, ne queraris. Si perfidiam perhorrescis, sperne atque abice pernicioosa ludentem; [...], haec eadem tranquillitatis esse debuisset Reliquit enim te quam non relicturam nemo umquam poterit esse securus. An uero tu pretiosam aestimas abituram felicitatem et cara tibi est fortuna nec praesens manendi fida et cum discesserit allatura maerorem? Quodsi nec ex arbitrio retineri potest et calamitosos fugiens facit, quid est aliud [fugax] quam future quoddam calamitatis indicium?” Boethii, *Philosophia consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, 18.

<sup>81</sup> I. van’t Spijker, “Learning by Experience: Twelfth-Century Monastic Ideas,” *Centres of Learning in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 197-206, 201.



The dynamic of the learning process is reflected in the structure of the text as Richard presents it. [...] This circling around is enacted in the repetition of the text. By reading, ruminating on, and digesting these processes, one is actually taking part in them, imitating them, and in this way, in imitation of the composition which is the text, one is in fact composing the inner person.<sup>82</sup>

The same description might be applied to Christine's conduct manual, which makes it much more than simply a list of instructions for practical living rather than a means of improving one's knowledge.<sup>83</sup> And lest one think I make this claim of similarity too quickly, Deborah McGrady's case study of reading practice in the later Middle Ages describes Hugh of St Victor's (1096-1141) *Didascalicon* that was used to teach laity who entered into the monastic life how to achieve private study successfully. McGrady writes that "Secular texts allow a reader to move from *lectio* to *meditation*, but Scripture permits advancement to higher stages: [...] the student of Scripture must then proceed to *oratio*, *operatio*, and *contemplation*. These three additional stages—prayer, performance, and contemplation—underscore the active relationship that binds readers and

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<sup>82</sup> I. van't Spijker, "Learning by Experience," *Centres of Learning*, 201.

<sup>83</sup> The *Speculum dominarum*, translated into French as *Miroir des Dames* in the early fourteenth century, employs a similar contemplative mode and even quotes Hugh of St. Victor at length on self-evaluation. Lynette R. Muir points this use out, and her book also reproduces an image from an illuminated manuscript of the French text showing five noblewomen arranged in front of a pair of kneeling monks who present the women a book while in the background a large mirror displays a skeleton figuring death. Clearly the contemplative nature of Christine's conduct manual is not wholly without precedent, but that she creates the atmosphere of contemplation through her own writing rather than solely on cultivating contemplation of self through references to authorities is significant. Lynette R. Muir, *Literature and Society in Medieval France: The Mirror and the Image, 1100-1500*, New Studies in Medieval History (London: Macmillan, 1985), 163-64 and plate 7. For more commentary on *Miroir des Dames*, and specifically an assessment of it as "mark[ing] a significant shift in the character of religious writing for women, in moving away from a purely interior focus to one that combines spiritual advice with ethical discussion, of a sort traditionally conducted in a scholastic milieu and addressed only to men;" see Constant J. Mews, "The *Speculum dominarum*," 14. These ethical discussions also provide "principles that should underpin the queen's public life," 20. There are additional essays on *Miroir* in the same volume: Rina Lahav, "A Mirror of Queenship: The *Speculum dominarum* and the Demands of Justice," 31-44, Janice Pinder, "A Lady's Guide to Salvation: The *Miroir de dames* Compilation," 45-52, and Green, "From *Le Miroir des dames* to *Le livre des trois vertus*," 99-113. Green's article is less optimistic about the *Miroir*'s focus on the public life of women and emphasizes its *contemptus mundi* aspects when comparing it with *Treasury*.

contemplation.”<sup>84</sup> Christine seems to play with these categories in her *City of Ladies* and *Treasury* where she has the experience of writing the *Treasury* partly as a result of her writing of *City of Ladies*, and in *Treasury* there is a real performance of the virtuous, intellectual female rhetorician—a good woman speaking well, to revise Quintilian a bit. Further, *Treasury* encourages other women to contemplate the advice that it provides. McGrady even notes that

In the late Middle Ages, few authors exhibit such indebtedness to Hugh’s reading method as Christine de Pizan. [...] In the *Livre de la cité des dames*, Christine again draws liberally from the *Didascalicon* to determine the structure of her work. Clearly inspired by Hugh’s comparison of the reader to the mason who must start with a firm foundation upon which he then places each stone to build his palace, she details the digging undertaken to assure a secure foundation for her city before describing the smoothing out of each faulty misogynist account to construct the city wall.<sup>85</sup>

McGrady’s discussion of Christine demonstrates her familiarity with and knowledge of monastic reading practice, but I would also suggest that part of the performative power of *Treasury* is not just its negotiation of intellectual and spiritual rhetorical practices but also that it mirrors Hugh’s *Didascalicon* in another important manner. As *Didascalicon* was “one of the earliest efforts to instruct the laity in monastic reading practice,” so is Christine’s *Treasury* an attempt to encourage not only monastic reading practice, as say other conduct manuals for women such as the *Miroir des dames / Speculum dominarum* do, but also to teach women how to understand virtue as a practical part of their lived experience.<sup>86</sup>

These contemplative elements allow for the princess to have, if not a visionary experience in the epiphanic sense that Margery Kempe and other visionaries did, then a

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<sup>84</sup> McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 25.

<sup>85</sup> McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 28.

<sup>86</sup> McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 25.

visionary experience in a way that was more conventionally acceptable. Christine's rhetoric favors the use of her audience's reasoning and own interior debate on ethics and morality, but some of her *capitula* imply that not only do these interior dialogues come from the function of a princess's reasoning capabilities, but also from a less tangible and more immediate inspiration from God. Chapter 4 of Book One, for example, is titled "How the good princess who loves and fears Our Lord can resist temptations by means of divine inspiration." ("Ci devise comment la bonne princepe qui aimera et craindra nostre seigneur pourra resister aux temptacions par divine inspiracion").<sup>87</sup> This chapter does not present the princess recounting a visionary experience, but rather the princess having a conversation with the semi-allegorical love and fear of God, who addresses the princess with questions and reasoned arguments in order to help her to avoid temptation and pride. Thus the type of divine inspiration Christine is referring to, is something like the function of the divine within the individual person, or one might suggest it is something like the contemplative mind when turned toward faith. This conception of visionary contemplation is much less troublesome in the Later Middle Ages than a woman experiencing full-blown visionary revelations of Christ.<sup>88</sup> For example, even Jean Gerson (1363-1429), Chancellor of the University of Paris who wrote tracts arguing for the careful examination of ecstatic visionary experiences, also wrote *The Mountain of Contemplation* or *La Montaigne de contemplation* (1397) for his sisters, to assist in their

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<sup>87</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.7. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.14, ll. 1-3.

<sup>88</sup> This type of divine inspiration is also evident in Chapter 5's *capitulum*: "The good and holy reason and knowledge that comes to the good princess through the love and fear of Our Lord." ("Ci devise le bon avertissement et congnoissance qui vient a la bonne princesse pour l'amour et crainte de nostre seigneur"). The divine source for this development in the princess's ethical status is made more explicit in the first sentence of this chapter: "Thus the good princess, **admonished by God**, who loves and fears Our Lord, will come to her senses." (my emphasis) ("Ainsi la bonne princepe, **de Dieu amonestee**, qui aimera et craindra Nostre Seigneur, se revendra a soy, [...]") (my emphasis). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.5.12. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.5.20, ll. 1-3, 4-5.

cultivation of a contemplative attitude toward religion, though he makes a sharp distinction between contemplation reliant upon knowledge and affective contemplation, which requires no special theological training.<sup>89</sup> Christine's inclusion of elements of the visionary in her rhetoric and in her recommendations for female behavior is similar to Gerson's discussion of affective contemplation.<sup>90</sup> Gerson does not argue that everyone can reach the same heights of connection with God, but he does encourage a devotion to attempting to commune with God. For example, he writes that affective contemplation "concentrates principally on loving God and enjoying his goodness without trying to acquire clearer knowledge than that which faith has inspired and given. To this type of contemplation, ordinary people can come, in leaving behind the cares of the world and in keeping their hearts pure and spotless."<sup>91</sup> Additionally Gerson dedicates the whole first chapter of "The Mountain of Contemplation" to explaining why he is writing, first, not in Latin, and second, to women: "Some persons will wonder and ask why, in a matter so

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<sup>89</sup> See Wendy Love Anderson's analysis of Gerson's writings that re-evaluates his stance on women broadly, with an emphasis on female visionaries. Anderson demonstrates that while much contemporary scholarship on female visionaries by scholars such as Dyan Elliot, Nancy Caciola, and others discusses Gerson as "a leader in the late medieval ecclesiastical backlash against politically powerful women in general and female visionaries in particular," this perception stems from reading Gerson without proper context and full consideration of all his works, which together reveal and stipulate his "much more nuanced attitudes" toward women and female visionaries. Wendy Love Anderson, "Gerson's Stance on Women," in *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire, Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition, vol. 3 (Boston: Brill, 2006), 293-315, 293, 294. See also Brian Patrick McGuire, "Late Medieval Care and the Control of Women: Jean Gerson and His Sisters," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 92 (1997): 5-36; Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005); Yelena Mazour-Matusevich, "From Monastic to Individual Spirituality: Another Perspective on Gerson's Attitude toward Women," *Magistra* 6 (2000): 61-88; Yelena Mazour-Matusevich, "La position de Jean Gerson (1363-1429) envers les femmes," *Le moyen âge* 112 (2006): 337-53; and Nathalie Nabert, "Christine de Pizan, Jean Gerson et le gouvernement des âmes," in *Au champs des scriptures: III<sup>e</sup> Colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. Eric Hicks, Diego Gonzalez, and Philippe Simon (Paris: Champion, 2000), 250-68.

<sup>90</sup> On the possibility of Christine and Gerson having a spiritual friendship see: Richards, "Jean Gerson's Writing to His Sisters," in *Virtue Ethics for Women*, 81-98.

<sup>91</sup> Jean Gerson, "The Mountain of Contemplation," *Early Works*, trans. Brian Patrick McGuire (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 78. "tient principalement a amer Dieu et assavouer sa bonté sans grandement enquerir plus clere congnoissance qu'est celle de la foy qui leur est inspirée et donnée. Et a ce puent simples gens venir en laissant les cures du monde et en gardant leur cuer pur et net." Jean Gerson, "La Montaigne de Contemplation," *Jean Gerson: Œuvres Complètes*, 18.

lofty as that of the contemplative life, I choose to write in French rather than in Latin. To this challenge I respond that the matter has been dealt with in Latin. [...] Clerics who know Latin can make use of such texts. But it is different for ordinary people, and especially for my sisters. For them I want to write about this way of life.”<sup>92</sup> Given this attitude, Christine’s impulse to both encourage young women of various social classes to engage in contemplation and Boethian self-examination as well as to employ visionary rhetoric herself, is not particularly shocking.<sup>93</sup>

#### D. Authorizing Contemplation

The conventional and conservative bent of Christine’s take on the contemplative and visionary experience also emerges in her chapter that discusses the contemplative and active lifestyles:

The contemplative life is a manner and condition of serving God in which a person so ardently desires Our Lord that she entirely forgets everyone else—father, mother, children, and even herself—for a very great and passionate concentration on her Creator. [...] She goes before God to contemplate and consider by holy inspiration the blessed Trinity, the heavenly host and the joys of Heaven. In this condition the perfect contemplative is often so ecstatic that she does not seem to be herself. The consolation, peacefulness and joy that she then feels cannot be described, neither can any other joy be compared to that one, for she is tasting the glories and joys of Paradise—that is, she sees God in spirit through

<sup>92</sup> Gerson, “The Mountain of Contemplation,” 75. “Aucun se pourront donner merueille pourquoy de matiere haulte comme est parler de la vie contemplative, je veuil escrire en francois plus qu’en latin, et plus aux femmes que aux hommes, et que ce n’est pas matiere qui appartiengne a gens simples sans letter. A ce je respons qu’en latin ceste matiere est donnée et traittée tres [...]. Si peuent avoir clers qui scevent le latin, recours a tells livres. Mais aultrement est des simples gens, et par especial de mes seurs germaines, ausquelles je veuil escrire de cest estat;” Jean Gerson, “*La Montaigne de Contemplation*,” *Jean Gerson: Œuvres Complètes*, 16.

<sup>93</sup> Christine’s rhetoric toward labor class women does not, as I show below, encourage mental deliberation, but in her chapter on widowed commoners she suggests the following regarding religious meditation: “The contemplation of God will also protect you in these circumstances if you put your heart into it, for you little realize the ways of the world, and you are about to learn how changeable are the things of this world.” (“et vous conduira en point se a droit y mettez le cuer, que pou tendrez de compte du pris et l’onneur du monde: car or primes pourrez aprendre comment les choses du siecle sont tournables.”) Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.4.141. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.4.189, ll. 36-39.

contemplation. She burns in her love and has perfect contentment in this world, for she neither wishes nor desires anything else, and God comforts her, for she is His servant. He sets before her fragrant dishes from His holy Paradise; they are pure and holy thoughts which come from Heaven and give confident hope of joining that happy company. There is truly no joy like it. Those who know it have tried to describe it. I regret that I can only talk about it in this indirect way, as a blind person might discourse upon colours. That this [contemplative] life is more agreeable to God than any other has often been made clear to the world. It has been demonstrated and written by various men and women contemplative saints who have been seen in the contemplation raised above the earth by a miracle of God, as though the body wished to follow the thoughts that had mounted to Heaven. Of this most holy and exalted life I am not worthy to speak nor to describe it as it deserves, but there are many sacred writings that describe this fully, and so my attempt would be unnecessary anyway. (“La vie contemplative est une maniere et un estat de server Dieu, ouquel la personne qui y est aime tant et si ardemment Nostre Seigneur que elle oublie entierement pere, mere, enfans, tout le monde et soy meismes, pour la tres grant et embrasee entente que elle a sans cesser a son Createur; [...] elle va devant Dieu contempler et regarder par sainte inspiracion la Benoitte Trinite, la court du Ciel et les joys qui y sont. Et en cel estat est la parfait contemplative souventes foios tellement ravy que il semble que il no soit mie en soy miesmes, et la consolacion, douceur et joye il sent adonc ne pourroit estre racomptee ne nulle aultre joye mondaine ne pourroit estre a celle compare; car il sent ja et gouste des gloires et joyes de Paradis, c’est assavoir il voit Dieu en esperit par contemplacion. Il art en son amour, si a souffisance parfaicte en ce monde, car il ne veult ne desire autre chose. Et Dieu, le reconforte, car il est son servant; et le repaist des doulz metz de son saint Paradis, c’est de pures et saintes pensees des choses qui sont ou ciel et de parfaicte esperance de aler en celle joyeuse compagnie: si n’est nulle joye parelle a celle. Ceulx le scevent qui l’ont essayé, combien que parler n’en puis—don’t il me poise—, ne mais ainsi que l’aveugle des couleurs. Et que ceste vie soit sur toutes autres agreable a Dieu est apparu maintes foiz au monde visiblement, si que il est escript de pluseurs saints et saintes contemplatifs qui ont esté veus quant ilz estoient en leur contemplacion eslevéz dessus terre tres hault par miracle de Dieu, si que il sembloit que le corps voulsist suivre la pensee qui montee estoit ou ciel. De ceste sainte at tres esleue vie ne suis digne de assez a son droit parler ne la descripre, si que a sa dignité apertient, mais de ce treuve l’en assez les Saintes Escriptions pleines, qui plus en voudra veoir.”)<sup>94</sup>

This passage describes the rare visionary experience that can result from contemplative

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<sup>94</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.6.14-15. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.6.22, l. 7; I.6.23, ll. 19-35; I.6.24, ll. 36-44.

meditation on religious subjects. Christine describes only what a “perfect” contemplative would feel, while ending the discussion in a statement that undercuts her own descriptions by referring the reader, though only obliquely, to authorities on the subject. Christine also disavows for herself the title of perfect contemplative, or visionary, but does so while couching the whole of her narrative within an allegorical-visionary framework, which suggests that the vision Christine-the-character is experiencing is not one that is purely contemplative, but one in which her reasoning abilities are also functioning; that is, Christine’s visionary rhetoric is partly intellectual, and partly an act of rhetorical transvestism, not merely affective. On the one side, this reading of the visionary rhetoric may suggest that as an intellectual function, her vision is more reliable than one which is purely affective, but because of her sex, such claims to intellectual activity could be challenged by male contemporaries.<sup>95</sup> Despite her reservations about such experiences, Christine does not bar princesses from attempting a contemplative life, though this long passage is followed by a description of the active life, primarily dominated by charitable good works for a princess. Active or not, Christine continues to engage in allegorical dialogues she has used up until this point. That is, allegories turn up and encourage the princess to obey their advice, and because often these allegories are divine in nature, this type of allegorical dialogue mimics a contemplative attitude toward God. For example, Christine writes that “The good princess who has been inspired by God says to herself [...]” (“ce dit a soy meismes la bonne princepce de Dieu inspiree”)

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<sup>95</sup> I compare Christine de Pizan’s rhetorical vision more closely to Hildegard of Bingen’s visionary experiences, which Barbara Newman stresses were written “not to relate her subjective experience of God, but rather to teach faith and morals on the authority of this experience.” Barbara Newman, “Hildegard of Bingen,” 163-64. See also Newman’s article that discusses in addition to other elements of visionary experience, their “aesthetic.” Further Newman notes that often women were “deemed too ‘simple’ to speak of the things of God unless they became direct channels of his Word.” Barbara Newman, “What Did it Mean to Say ‘I Saw’? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture,” *Speculum* 80, no. 1 (2005): 1-43, 3, 5.

that “Holy Inspiration comes to the good princess and speaks to her,” (“Sainte Informacion a la bonne princepe, qui lui dit en telle maniere”) and that “The good princess will have these [...] ideas by divine inspiration.” (“Toutes ces choses, [...] pensera la bonne princepe par divine informacion”).<sup>96</sup> Thus, for Christine, who avows not to be a visionary but who has nonetheless written a rhetorically visionary conduct guide, spiritual self-examination becomes very much like spiritual contemplation that can lead to a visionary experience of God.

Admittedly, Christine’s choice to incorporate and situate her own advice manual within the realm of the visionary is unique for practical advice manuals. Yet she is careful to have her manual provide no controversial advice, and if one compares it to the qualities Gerson suggests one use to test the goodness of a particular visionary experience, one sees that Christine de Pizan has been mindful of the possibility that visionary rhetoric can open her writing up to special scrutiny.<sup>97</sup> In his “On Distinguishing True from False Revelations,” or *De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis* (1401), Gerson suggests that visionary experiences are “like gold, [...] to be examined mainly on five points [...]. Humility provides weight; discretion malleability; patience durability; truth conformability; charity provides color.”<sup>98</sup> Christine’s rhetoric meets all these

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<sup>96</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.7.16, 17; I.8.18. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.7.25, ll. 3-4; I.7.27, ll. 39-40; I.8.28, l. 3-4.

<sup>97</sup> Anderson has shown that Gerson’s writings do not preclude a woman from receiving a valid visionary experience and interpreting it correctly: his “On Distinguishing True from False Revelations,” or *De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis*, “seems relatively open to the possibility of women not merely having visions, but also judging correctly visions based on experience rather than formal theological training.” Anderson also points out that “Gerson’s commonplace linkage of women with the unlearned or the unlettered lead him to imply that their form of knowledge—experiential, affective, even mystical—is repeatedly validated, though not unconditionally.” Anderson, “Gerson’s Stance on Women,” 301.

<sup>98</sup> Jean Gerson, “On Distinguishing True from False Revelations,” *Early Works*, trans. Brian Patrick McGuire (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 338. “tanquam aurea, in quinque principaliter examinanda [...] Humilitas dat pondus; discretio flexibilitatem; patientia durabilitatem; veritas configurationem; caritas dat colorem.” Jean Gerson, “*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*,” *Jean Gerson: Œuvres Complètes*, vol. 3 *L’œuvre Magistrale*, ed. Palemon Glorieux (Paris: Desclée and Cie, 1962), 36-56. 39.



criteria, and would thereby be acceptable as visionary content to Gerson and other men concerned with the quality of visionary experiences; I would also like to emphasize equally with Christine's rhetorical conformity the importance of her choice of audience. Her works are addressed to women, written particularly for them. Wendy Love Anderson has shown that Jean Gerson, a contemporary intellectual who has been accused by some modern historians of failing to accept or view positively women with political power or claims to visionary status, does not take issue principally "with women, or even with women who teach, but with women who presume to teach their superiors, that is, men."<sup>99</sup> Additionally, Christine's declaration of self-loathing in *City of Ladies* is all the more significant now, for the claim that she is unworthy and a vile woman allows her to participate in a humility topos, an essential quality for a valid visionary, according to Gerson. Gerson cautions that "if you know anyone who because of arrogant curiosity and vain praise and presumption of sanctity is eager to have unusual revelations, if he thinks himself to be worthy of them and delights in boastful telling of such matters, then know that he deserves to be fooled. Do not pay attention if he affirms in boast that he has had some revelation or other. [...] It is therefore a most healthy counsel against demons to take into account the weight of humility, and to consider oneself in terms of intellect and affectivity to be the most unworthy among all people to receive a revelation or ever be visited miraculously by God."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Anderson, "Gerson's Stance on Women," 310. Blumenfeld-Kosinski provides evidence that Christine de Pizan would have faced such discrimination first hand in the writing of Pierre Col, who in a letter addressed to Christine writes: "'O tres fole oultrecuidance! O parole trop tost yssue et sans avis de bouce **de fame**, qui condampne home de si hault entendement . . .'" (Oh, foolish presumption! Oh, the words rashly and without deliberation issuing from a **woman's** mouth, which condemn a man of such superior wisdom; 100 [...])." (Emphasis in the original.) Quoted in Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*," 344.

<sup>100</sup> Gerson, "On Distinguishing True from False Revelations," 338, 339. "...si cognoveris aliquem qui per superbam curiositatem et vanam laudem atque praesumptionem sanctitatis cupidus sit habere revelations

The sense of humility in Christine's *Treasury* is concomitant with her discretion. Gerson writes: "some people completely lack discretion. They do not allow themselves to be convinced so that they can follow advice. [...] One is to do all things with counsel, and there will never be any regrets."<sup>101</sup> Christine does not disobey the three sisters. She follows their orders, writing down the information they provide her as they provide it: "Then I, Christine, hearing the soft voices of my very reverend mentors, filled with joy and trembling, immediately roused myself and knelt before them and offered myself in obedience to their noble wishes" ("Lors moy, Cristine, oyant les series voix de mes tres venerables maistresses, remplie de joye en tressaillant tost me dreçay, et agenoillee devant elles m'offry a l'obeissance de leurs dignes vouloirs").<sup>102</sup> And so, her works are indeed written with counsel.<sup>103</sup> Likewise Christine has suffered patiently until the three daughters of God reveal themselves to her at the opening of *City of Ladies*—she suffered

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insolitas, qui se dignum istis reputet, qui in talibus de se narrandis gloriabundus delectetur scito quoniam illudi meretur, neque magnipendas si aliquam habuisse revelationem jactanter affirmet: [...]. [...] Est igitur homini saluberrimum consilium contra tales daemonum illusions pondus humilitatis observare, se reputare intellectu partier et affect indignissimum qui super alios homines revelationem accipiat, qui prae aliis a Deo mirabiliter visitetur." Gerson, "*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*," 39, 39-40.

<sup>101</sup> Gerson, "On Distinguishing True from False Revelations," 344-45. "quantae est in quibusdam discretionis defectus, qui non permittit flecti ad credendum consilio. [...] omnia agat cum consilio et in aeternum non poenitebit." Gerson, "*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*," 43.

<sup>102</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.1.4. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.1.9, ll. 51-54. A similar scene appears in *City of Ladies* that aligns Christine-the-character with the Virgin Mary: "both women submit themselves in humility to God's wishes, Christine's words being an almost verbatim quotation of those of the Virgin. Mary states: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word' (Luke 1:38), whilst Christine echoes: 'Et voycy vostre chamberiere preste d'obeir. Or commandez, je oberay, et soit fait de moy selonc voz parolles.'" Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 147. "Behold your handmaiden ready to serve. Command and I will obey, and may it be unto me according to your words." Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.7.15-16.

<sup>103</sup> Like Gerson who devotes a lengthy passage to a negative account of a woman who fasts until she is ravenous and then devours food while refusing to take counsel with a religious advisor about her behavior, Christine also warns against excessive demonstrations of faith that may endanger their practitioners: "work for God also includes fasts and abstinences, but done using some discretion; they should not be so strict that the women cannot bear them or continue them, nor so harsh that their brains can be addled by it, for nothing of too great stringency ought to be undertaken without good advice." ("et aussi en jeunes et abstinences faites par discrecion, non mie si aspres que elles ne les puissant porter ne continuer, ne que leur cervel en puist estre troubléz, car riens de trop grant aspreté ne doit estre entrepris sans bon conseil.") Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.5.144-45. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.5.194, ll. 17-21. For the passage from Gerson see Gerson, "On Distinguishing True from False Revelations," 343-44 and Gerson, "*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*," 43.

the shame of being a woman, a creature most clerics disparage. And thus, when she begins her writing, because she has suffered these “insults and reproaches,” in a manner commensurate with those who Gerson describes as patient; also because Christine, like the patient sufferers, has “sp[oken about] nothing but [treatment with] degradation, ridicule, and insults, then” she can be “more easily [...] believe[d] [...] than in a situation where there is good reason to suspect that [she is] trying to get hold of empty praise.”<sup>104</sup>

The fourth quality of good visionary experiences, truth, will be discussed more specifically in the section below on authorities or *auctores* in the *Treasury*; Gerson writes that “Holy Scripture is the location or workshop where the royal mold of [the] spiritual mint is kept.”<sup>105</sup> Christine meets this attribute by incorporating biblical references and paraphrases from theologians into the *Treasury*. The final quality Gerson specifies is “charity or divine love,” and Christine’s writings also fulfill this quality.<sup>106</sup> The charity of Christine’s works is readily evident in their introductory and concluding sections. Reason describes the purpose of the Three Daughters’ work in *City of Ladies* in this way:

“from now on, ladies and all valiant women may have a refuge and defense against the various assailants, those ladies who have been abandoned for so long, exposed like a field without a surrounding hedge, without finding a champion to afford them an adequate defense, notwithstanding those noble men who are required by order of law to

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<sup>104</sup> Gerson, “On Distinguishing True from False Revelations,” 348. “Si quis itaque ex manifestation illorum quae sibi dicit fuisse revelata, reportet non nisi dejectionem, irrisionem, et opprobria, facilius inducit credere sibi, quam ubi suspicio de vanae laudis captatione rationabiliter suboritur.” Gerson, “*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*,” 46.

<sup>105</sup> Gerson, “On Distinguishing True from False Revelations,” 348. “Est namque sacra Scriptura locus vel officina ubi cunus regius monetarii spiritualis reconditur;” Gerson, “*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*,” 46.

<sup>106</sup> Gerson, “On Distinguishing True from False Revelations,” 356. “caritas seu divinus amor” Gerson, “*De distinctione verarum revelationum a falsis*,” 51. Kerby-Fulton, in an analysis of a portion of Julian of Norwich’s short text wherein she justifies her ability (as a woman) to teach discusses two points in her justification that are relevant to Christine’s use of allegory and charity: there is an “incremental logic” that “carefully build[s] the case: first, that her knowledge comes from divine revelation, second, that she is speaking out of charity for her fellow Christians [...]” Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 302. The parallel method Kerby-Fulton notes in Julian’s justification makes the possibility of reading Christine’s rhetorical choices as self-authorizing movements all the more compelling.

protect them, who by negligence and apathy have allowed them to be mistreated. It is no wonder that their jealous enemies, those outrageous villains who have assailed them with various weapons, have been victorious in a war in which women have had no defense. [...] And the simple, noble ladies, following the example of suffering God commands, have cheerfully suffered the great attacks which, both in the spoken and the written word, have been wrongfully and sinfully perpetrated against women by men who all the while appealed to God for the right to do so. Now it is time for their just cause to be taken from Pharaoh's hands, and for this reason, we three ladies whom you see here, moved by pity, have come to you to announce a particular edifice built like a city wall, strongly constructed and well founded, which has been predestined and established by our aid and counsel for you to build, where no one will reside except all ladies of fame and women worthy of praise, for the walls of the city will be closed to those women who lack virtue." ("les dames et toutes vaillans femmes puissant d'ores en avant avoir retrait et closture de deffence contre tant de divers assaillans, lesquelles dites dames ont par si longtemps [esté] delaissies, discloses comme champ sans haye, sans trouver champion aucun qui pour leur deffence comparust souffisantment, nonobstant les nobles hommes qui par ordenance de droit deffendre les deussent, qui par negligence et nonchaloir les ont souffertes foller, par quoy n'est pas merueille se leurs envieux annemis et l'outraige des villains, qui par divers dars les ont assaillies, ont eu contre elles vittoire de leur guerre par faulte de deffence [...] Et les simples debonnaires dames, a l'exemple de pacience que Dieu commande, ont souffert amyablement les grans injures qui, tant par bouche de plusieurs comme par mains escrips, leur ont esté faites a tort et a pechié, eulx rapportant a Dieu de leur bon droit. Mais or est temps que leur juste cause soit mise hors de mains de Pharaon, et pour ce nous trois dames que tu vois cy, meues par pitié, te sommes venues adnoncier un certain edifice fait en maniere de la closture d'une cite fort maçonnee et bien ediffiee, qui a toy a ffaire est predestine et establie par nostre aide et conseil, en laquelle n'abitera fors toutes dames renommee et femmes dignes de loz: car a celles ou vertu ne sera trouvee, les murs de nostre cite seront forclos.")<sup>107</sup>

This announcement of purpose spells out clearly that this act's, or vision's, purpose is to benefit a class of people who have been routinely victimized and made to suffer: women. Reason identifies pity as her chief motivation, but the actual metaphor of architecture employed for the writing or building of the City of Ladies further suggests an impetus to provide for those who cannot provide for and protect themselves. This impetus is a basic

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<sup>107</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.3.10-11. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.3.629-30.

tenet of Christian charity.<sup>108</sup> Christine reiterates this charitable end at the closing of *City of Ladies* as well, after the Daughters of God have withdrawn themselves from construction: “for this city has been founded and built to accommodate all deserving women” (“car pour toute dame honnorable est faitte et fondee”).<sup>109</sup>

The charity of Christine’s vision is overtly announced in *Treasury by Reason, Rectitude, and Justice*: “Be it known that as charitable love prompts us to desire the well-being and spiritual development, the honour and prosperity of all women, and to wish the downfall and destruction of everything that could prevent them, we feel moved to address some words of instruction to you” (“Savoir faisons que comme amour charitable nous contraingne a desirer le bien et accroissement de l’onneur et prosperité de l’université des femmes et a vouloir le decheement et destruction de toutes les choses qui y pourroyent empeschier, sommes meues a vous declairier et dire paroles de doctrine”).<sup>110</sup> This message comes at the beginning of *Treasury* and makes explicit the motivations for writing the work, and while these are not precisely echoed at the conclusion of the work,

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<sup>108</sup> On charity see: Daniel Le Blévec, “Fondations et œuvres charitables au Moyen Âge,” in *Fondations et œuvres charitables au Moyen Âge: Actes du 121e congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, section histoire médiévale et philologie, Nice, 1996*, ed. Jean Dufour and Henri Platelle (Paris: CTHS, 1999), 7-22; R. H. Helmholz, “The Law of Charity and the English Ecclesiastical Courts,” in *The Foundations of Medieval English Ecclesiastical History: Studies Presented to David Smith*, ed. Philippa Hoskin, Christopher Brooke, and Barrie Dobson, *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion* 27 (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 2005), 111-23; Francine Michaud, “Le pauvre transformé: les hommes, les femmes et la charité à Marseille, du XIIIe siècle jusqu’à la Peste noire,” *Revue historique* 311, no. 2 (2009): 243-90; Susan McDonough, “Impoverished Mothers and Poor Widows: Negotiating Images of Poverty in Marseille’s Courts,” *Journal of Medieval History* 34, no. 1 (2008): 64-78; John Hine Mundy, “Charity and Social Work, 1100-1250,” in *Studies in the Ecclesiastical and Social History of Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2006), 45-110; Robert L. A. Clark, “Charity and Drama: the Response of the Confraternity to the Problem of Urban Poverty in Fourteenth-Century France,” in *Le Théâtre et la Cité dans l’Europe Médiévale. Actes du Vème Colloque international de la Société internationale pour l’étude du théâtre médiéval (Perpignan, juillet 1986)*, ed. Jean-Claude Aubailly and Edelgard E. Dubruck (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag, 1988), 359-69; and Daniel Le Blévec, “Le rôle des femmes dans l’assistance et la charité,” in *La Femme dans la vie religieuse du Languedoc (XIIIe-XIVe s.)*, ed. Marie-Humbert Vicaire et al (Toulouse: Centre d’Études Historiques de Fanjeaux, 1988), 171-90.

<sup>109</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant, III.19.237. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” III.19.1031.

<sup>110</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.5. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.2.10, II.9-13.

Christine couches the circulation and publication of her work in terms that present it as a charitable act. The advice the Three Virtues have provided is

very profitable for the good, the improvement of virtuous habits, and the increase of honour of ladies and the whole world of women, present and future, wherever this book can reach and be seen. And therefore I, their [the Three Virtues'] servant [Christine ...], thought to myself that I would distribute many copies of this work throughout the world whatever the cost, and it would be presented in various places to queens, princesses, and great ladies, so that it might be more honoured and exalted, for it is worthy of it, and it might be spread among other women. This idea would ensure its being issued and circulated in all countries. [...] It will endure in many copies all over the world without falling into disuse, and many valiant ladies and women of authority will see and hear it now and in time to come. (tres prouffitables au bien et augmentation de meurs vertueux en accroissement d'onneur aux dames, et a toute l'université des femmes presens et a venir, la ou se pourroit ceste dicte oeuvre estendre et estre veue. Et pour ce, moy, leur servant, [...] me pensay que ceste noble oeuvre multiplieroye par le monde en pluseurs copies, quell qu'en fust le coust: seroit presentee en divers lieux a roynes, a princepsces et haultes dames, afin que plus fust honnoree et exaucee, si que elle en est digne, et que par elles puest estre semmee entre les autres femmes; laquelle dicte pensee et desir mis a effect, si que ja est entrepris, sera ventillee, espandue et publiee en tous païs [...]. qui durera au siecle sanz decheement par diverses copies. Si la verront et orront maintes vaillans dames et femmes d'auctorité ou temps present et en cil a venir [...].)<sup>111</sup>

This passage demonstrates Christine's perception that or presentation of the idea that the content of her writing can benefit womankind unequivocally and that without concern about the material costs of reproducing the work, it ought to be copied and distributed widely. Despite that a contemporary audience may be far more suspect of an author professing charitable intention in the distribution of his or her work, Christine did not have a percentage to earn from her book sales; she may have been employing a claim of charity in order to make her work more appealing and interesting to women, but she might simultaneously have felt the call to provide women with genuine advice on their

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<sup>111</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.13.167-68. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre* ed. Willard, III.13.225, ll. 10-19, 22-24.

behavior that might have aided them in successfully navigating their life situations. Thus, despite the possible equivocation of charitable motive in Christine's writing, her visionary experience still professes charity over personal profit or self-interest.

To further illustrate that Christine's visionary experience conforms to contemporary expectations of visionary literature, Gerson's ideas about how to have visionary encounters properly need to be considered. In "The Mountain of Contemplation," Gerson imagines the process of contemplation as a stairway one must ascend, but this stair has a three-part structure: the base is made of "humble penitence," the next piece of "secrecy of place in silence," and the last of "strong perseverance."<sup>112</sup> Christine's visionary rhetoric in both *City of Ladies* and the *Treasury* suggests that Christine's narrative has come out of a properly contemplative experience. For example, early in *City of Ladies*, Christine is troubled and distraught over the opinions of women expressed by so many clerks:

And I finally decided that God formed a vile creature when He made woman, and I wondered how such a worthy artisan could have deigned to make such an abominable work which, from what they [antifeminists] say is the vessel as well as the refuge and abode of every evil and vice. As I was thinking this, a great unhappiness and sadness welled up in my heart, for I detested myself and the entire feminine sex, as though we were monstrosities in nature. (Et en conclusion de tout, je determinoye que ville chose fist Dieux quant il fourma femme, en m'esmerveillant comment si digne ouvri[e]r daigna oncques faire tant abominable ouvrage qui est vaissel, au dit d'iceulx, si comme le retrait et herberge de tous maulx et de tous vices. Adonc moy estant en ceste penssee, me sourdi une grant desplaisance et tristesse de courage en desprisant moy meismes et tout le sexe feminin, si comme ce ce fust monstre en nature.)<sup>113</sup>

The daughters of God even come to her aid in order to "bring you out of the ignorance which so blinds your own intellect that you shun what you know for a certainty and

<sup>112</sup> Gerson, "The Mountain of Contemplation," 88. "humble penitence, secret lieu et silence, et forte perseverance;" Gerson, "*La Montaigne de Contemplation*," *Jean Gerson: Œuvres Complètes*, 26.

<sup>113</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.1.5. Curnow, "The *Livre*," I.1.619-20.

believe what you do not know or see or recognize except by virtue of many strange opinions” (“te gitter hors de l’ingnorence qui tant aveugle ta meismes congnoissance que tu deboute de toy ce que tu scez de certaine science et adjoustes foy ad ce que tu ne scez, ne vois, ne congnois autrement fors par pluralité d’oppinions estranges”).<sup>114</sup> This initial trouble that Christine experiences prior to her visionary contemplation fits well with the process of becoming contemplative that Gerson describes:

One does not perfectly attain virtues all of a sudden; one acquires them as in nature, in which the perfect emerges from the imperfect. Fire begins with smoke, and then becomes flame together with smoke, and finally becomes pure flame, clear and bright in the coals. [...] Similarly, the person who wants to live in the contemplative life does not have perfection at the start. She must first get rid of the smoke that makes her weep and troubles her, providing hardly any consolation. Then the flame of love will appear together with the smoke, and finally the fire will be pure and devoid of smoke.<sup>115</sup>

Given this description, Christine’s self-loathing and despair can be read as both the humility and the penitence with which one must begin climbing the stairway of contemplation; the flame that comes to her are the daughters of God who stay with her long enough to make sure all the smoke has cleared from her vision. We can recognize in her continued obedience to Reason, Rectitude, and Justice in her writing of the *Treasury* that Christine is persevering against temptations to cease her work. Her silent, solitary place is her chamber where she writes and reads, alone, until the Daughters of God come to her and demand her service. Thus Christine’s portrayal of her visionary experience carefully conforms to advice given to those who would develop contemplative

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<sup>114</sup> Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, I.2.6. Curnow, “The *Livre*,” I.2.622.

<sup>115</sup> Gerson, “The Mountain of Contemplation,” 88. “On n’est mie parfait soudainement en virtus, mais s’acquiert en semblance que nature fait son ouvraige que d’imparfait vient a parfait. Le feu commence par fumée, puis est flambe ensemble fumée, puis est feu pur, cler et luisant en charbon. [...] Pareillement en la personne qui vault vivre en vie contemplative n’a mie sa perfection ou commencement; ains luy fault premierement getter fumée de desplaisance de sa vie, qui le fera plorer et troublera, sans gueres de consolation; puis viendra flambé d’amour avecq fumée; puis sera pur feu sans fumée.” Gerson, “*La Montaigne de Contemplation*,” *Jean Gerson: Œuvres Complètes*, 26.



relationships with God. This reduces the possibility of Christine's advice and work being critiqued for claiming divine inspiration, and thus, helps to reinforce her authority as author.

I would now like to turn back briefly to the episode above in which the Three Virtues cast the act of building the City of Ladies as one "a champion" should undertake, transforming the activity into something masculine and requiring courage, but it is far from a simple recasting of women into virile figures; rather this is a "performance, with a political edge" that "accord[s women] a measure of [...] authority that was denied women at this time."<sup>116</sup> I return to this issue because I believe that Christine's use of such rhetoric, which redefines this very female-oriented and originated project into a quasi-masculine activity, is also a bid for authority.<sup>117</sup> Scholars have discussed *City of Ladies* in ways that are suggestive of its radical project, but I view *Treasury* as more rhetorically

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<sup>116</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 190.

<sup>117</sup> Roberta L. Krueger has written on Christine's tendency to challenge masculine scripts and plots while engaging in rhetorical transvestism, though she does not use this terminology. Specifically she analyzes the letter that makes up Chapter 27 of Book One, which is a sample letter for a princess's chaperone to consult in the case that she uncovers the princess engaging in an extramarital affair. In its original context, in the romance *Livre de Duc des Vrais Amans*, the letter is "inserted into the seduction plot" and "strongly counters the masculinist love ethos in a female voice." The romance itself is composed as "the first-person voice of the duke" who is actually written by Christine, but with the letter's insertion into the middle of the romance—it is written by the lady's female confidante—Christine makes a rhetorical "rejection of the first-person voice of the desiring male subject" that allows her to consider the "woman's place in a genre [romance] that casts her as object." Ultimately Krueger is unconvinced of a total undoing of the script of romance because it "resists masculine duplicity [i.e. courtly love] yet complies with patriarchal dominance" through its discussion of "ideal feminine comportment." Roberta L. Krueger, "A Woman's Response: Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre du Duc des Vrais Amans* and the Limits of Romance," in *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance*, Cambridge Studies in French 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 217-46, 224, 227, 234. Brown-Grant also notes Christine's compliance with patriarchal values in *City of Ladies* and *Treasury*: "Raison explains that male and female have complementary functions for which God has fitted them, an explanation which may be derived from Aristotle's *Economics* where he stresses the need for men and for women to play different roles in order to assure the smooth running of human society. [...] This concept of a sex-specific division of labour is fundamental to the type of defence of women offered throughout the *Cité*, one in which Christine seeks to convince misogynists of women's intellectual and moral potential for exercising virtue rather than to propose the reform of society so as to grant women equal access to all social roles. It therefore allows her to encourage women to pursue personal virtue within their existing social conditions, a lesson which she will propound more directly in the *Trois Vertus*." Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defense*, 152-53.

and theoretically radical than *City of Ladies* because Christine's rhetorical transvestism is not a passive acceptance of patriarchy's conception of how women should perform femininity. That is, the assertion that the Virtues perform a champion's task "raises question marks around the very notion of 'true' or 'real' gender," by indicating that indeed women can perform the actions typically associated with men.<sup>118</sup> And what is more, this claim that women can perform men's actions recurs in *Treasury*, in Christine's chapter on widows. In writing about how a widow must protect her rights and property through legal proceedings, Christine declares:

If it is necessary for her to do these things, and if she wishes to avoid further trouble and bring her case to a successful conclusion, she must take on the heart of a man. She must be constant, strong, and wise in judging and pursuing her advantage, not crouching in tears, defenseless, like some simple woman or like a poor dog who retreats into a corner while all the other dogs jump on him. (Si lui convendra bien pour ces choses faire, et pour resister a tous les autres enuis se a chief en veult venir, que elle prengne cuer d'omme, c'est assavoir constant, fort et sage, pour avisier et pour poursuivre ce qui lui est bon a faire, non mie comme simple femme s'acroupir en pleurs et larmes sans autre deffense, comme un povre chien qui s'aculle en un coignet et tous les autres lui cuerent sus.)<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 191. Swift further explains that "the extradiegetic author and the diegetic persona are not presented in a binary opposition of real versus apparent gender identity. The literary embodiment that speaks as *je* [more often as *nous* in Christine's *Treasury*] manoeuvres [sic] in a malleable field of play which critiques essentialized gender presuppositions in the very act of constructing its own performance." Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 191.

<sup>119</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. Willard, III.4.199-200. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, III.4.191, ll. 93-95; III.4.192, ll. 96-99. Further suggesting Christine's troubling of the masculine/feminine dichotomy is her refusal to privilege the masculine uniformly. For example, she rebukes cowardice by writing "The knight who leaves the field of battle before the moment of victory is deeply shamed, for the laurel wreath belongs to those who persevere" ("Male honte ait le chevalier qui se depart de la bataille ains la fin de victoire, car a ceulz apertient la couronne de laurier qui perseverent"). Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.1.3. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.18., ll. 23-26. Another example of negative masculinity is her portrayal of men who vie for women's favor: "They make jokes behind the backs of women, whatever polite manner they may have adopted towards them to their faces and however gracious they appear to be" ("en derriere s'entrerigolent, quelque chiere que aux dames et damoiselles facent en devant ne quoy qu'ilz se monstrent bien gracieux"). Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.3.95. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, II.3.131, ll. 34-36. The danger of this duplicity is that "these jests and comments are reported in towns from mouth to mouth in taverns and other places" ("lesquelz rigolages et parolles sont raportéz en la ville de bouche en bouche [ar les tavernes et ailleurs]). Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.3.95. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, II.3.131, ll. 37-38. This further elaboration draws out the commonality of being known by too many men: such women will be on the tongue tips of numerous men in numerous taverns, places most women are cautioned not to frequent by conduct guides.

Here the positive model (masculine heart) and the negative model (feminine weakness and doggish cowering) form a sharp dichotomy, but this dichotomy is perhaps false. Clearly the language is meant to push the widow to choose which role she will perform: the man's or the whipped dog's, but Christine is clear that the widow can indeed choose to perform the man's role. Swift explains the difficulties of Christine's ability to diffuse these dichotomies: "Christine appears to be trying to disrupt this matrix of coherent binaries which oppose masculine to feminine [e.g. strong/weak, etc....] Christine engages with the matrix's terminology in order to effect from within a critique of this culturally predetermined binary thinking and its manifestations in language. Her stumbling block is a lack of alternative gender vocabulary outside the *masculine-féminin* opposition to break down this dichotomous matrix," but I would suggest that Christine's employment of these images and behavioral choices here in her advice to widows radically challenges the constraints of language by engaging with performativity.<sup>120</sup> And Christine does not employ this idea only here, but also when she advises baronesses on how they should conduct themselves: "the philosopher says that a person is not wise who does not know a little something about everything. It is also fitting for her to have the spirit of a man. This means that she ought not to be educated entirely indoors, nor in only the great feminine virtues" ("dit le philosophe que celui n'est pas sage qui ne cognoist aucune part de chascune chose. Et aussi lui apertient a avoir si come courage d'omme, si n'est mie a dire que elle doye estre norrie trop en chambres ne soubz grants et femmenines mignotises").<sup>121</sup> Again, Christine's co-opting of "normatively masculine virtues" and

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<sup>120</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 199.

<sup>121</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson. II.9.109. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.9.150, ll. 33-37.

placement of them “into a discursive space of femininity [...] opens up femininity to new semantic possibilities that are determined by the woman’s ability and potential to perform a broader range of gestures than previously deemed ‘proper.’”<sup>122</sup> These two textual instances directed at Christine’s audience are also parallel to her own act of rhetorical transvestism; her coding of the Three Virtues’ work (and her own) as masculine makes an overt contradiction against the misogynists she meets with at the beginning of *City of the Ladies*. Christine’s rhetoric in *Treasury* performs masculine, intellectual tradition and as such draws into question the masculinity of those traditions by illustrating that a woman, too, can write for and about women and can appropriate masculine means of authority. Carolyn P. Collette also notes the importance of performance in *Treasury*, but her reading of it is slightly problematic for she ignores Christine’s own rhetorical performance to investigate only that “Performance, the ability to play the role circumstances require, and the control of any aspect of will that does not lead directly to the achievement of one’s object are central principles in her [Christine’s] advice about how to succeed in an honour culture which reads bodies in performance as indices of power.”<sup>123</sup> Collette’s focus on the portrayal of women’s possible actions leads her to describe the situation as a promotion of “social androgyny,” that is, that women “function as surrogate men when the occasion requires.”<sup>124</sup> While she certainly demonstrates that such was the historical expectation for certain classes of women, her use of the word androgyny seems critically imprecise, leading her to make statements such as this, which almost wholesale discount that female leadership was not accepted easily or without difficulty, as my chapter on Anne de France below illustrates:

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<sup>122</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 201.

<sup>123</sup> Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping,” 22.

<sup>124</sup> Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping,” 25, 23.

Social androgyny appears as a culturally supported practice that mitigates anxiety about women's rule: if women are to rule men, they must in effect be men. Women born to be princesses and baronesses are trained in the skills of social androgyny from birth, without choice. For these women, gender must be redefined. [...] they [powerful women] must be trained to function as men, rather than as women, from their youth.<sup>125</sup>

While the concept of redefining gender here is appropriate, this description of the education of women seems to sweep away any tensions that female leadership engendered by making the solution seem pat and simple: educate women as men. In fact, Swift's understanding of Christine's attempt to revise the binary structure of masculine-feminine works better here because it points out that these concepts are not naturalized categories, but ideological constructions of gender performance. Collette gives too little credence to performance in her critical engagement with the text, but she does point out some important medieval medical conceptions about sex and gender that are relevant here: "Classic medieval medical theory held that the source of the masculine sex is physiological, rooted in the heart, 'the first organ to develop, which produces both the masculine complexion (the defining characteristic of maleness) and the masculine parts of the rest of the body.'"<sup>126</sup> This has important ramifications for Christine's suggestion to her readers that they assume a masculine heart, and if we combine this knowledge with Swift's terminology, we might say that Christine's advocacy of transvestism—the performance of activities typically gendered masculine—radically challenges the medieval scientific definition of masculinity, suggesting that performance can override physiology.

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<sup>125</sup> Collette, "Christine de Pizan: Mapping," 26.

<sup>126</sup> Collette, "Christine de Pizan: Mapping," 27. Richards notes that Christine revises the "Thomist concept of corporeally based knowledge" that "implied the fitness of men for science and learning and the corresponding unfitness of women." Richards, "Somewhere between Destructive Glosses," 48.

### E. Classed Rhetoric: The Diminution of Allegory and the Risk of Reasoning

*Treasury* and *City of Ladies* are both front-loaded with allegorical and visionary elements, yet in the later books of *Treasury*, the presence and frequency of reference to the Three Daughters of God lessens slightly. Book Two of the *Treasury* begins with a summary of Book One from the perspective of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice. These allegorical figures again directly appear in the second chapter of Book Two when they begin providing principles of behavior for their new audience: “ladies and maidens and ordinary women, both those who dwell at the courts of princesses, having their position conferred upon them by their service, and those who live on their own lands in castles, manors, walled towns and fortified cities” (“dames et damoiselles et femmes, tant a celles [qui demeurent a court de princepe pour leur service et estat comme a celles] qui demeurent sur leurs terres et chasteaulx, manoirs, villes fermees et bourgs”).<sup>127</sup> The sisters also reintroduce themselves as “we three sisters, daughters of God, named Reason, Rectitude and Justice” (“trois seurs filles de Dieu nommees Raison, Droicture et Justice”).<sup>128</sup> Yet, unlike in Book One wherein the *capitula* of Chapters 1 and 2 name the Three Virtues and other appearances of the sisters occur in the chapter contents while other allegorical figures such as Prudence exist both in numerous chapter *capitula* and contents, Book Two reduces all references to Reason, Rectitude and Justice after Chapter 2 to the plural first person pronoun of “we.” Additionally, there are far fewer instances of discussion or dialogue between the audience and allegorical figures excluding the Three

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<sup>127</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.1.87. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.1.121, ll. 10-14.

<sup>128</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.88. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.123, ll. 5-6.

Virtues—in fact there is only one such discussion in all of Book Two.

However, I would like to point out that the dialogic structure, while there is less overall emphasis on the allegorical sisters, is still present in Book Two. We can find an example of this self-reflective and dialogic rhetorical stance in Chapter 2 of Book Two. After presenting a principle of conduct, namely that a servant ought to love her mistress, the three rhetorical sisters posit their audience may inquire: “‘But truly, if my master or mistress is a bad person or doesn’t treat me very well, am I still obliged to love her?’” (“voire, mais se mon maistre ou maistresse est mauvaise personne, ou ne me fait gaires de bien, suis je doncques tenue l’amer [...]”).<sup>129</sup> Rather than respond in a prose explanation that provides an answer, Christine provides an immediate dialogic answer that is only then followed by a prose explanation: “We [the three sisters] answer you, ‘Yes, certainly.’ For if you think that your employers are bad and that it is not to your advantage to work for them, you must leave them” (“nous te respondons que ouil, sans faille: car se il te semble que ilz soient mauvais ou mauvaises ou que n’y faces ton profit, tu t’en dois partir [...]”).<sup>130</sup> This emphasis on the dialogue encourages self-inquiry and a rational approach to considering one’s behavior that Christine encourages in Book One through the use of the same type of semi-allegorical Boethian debates. Further, couching the response in a direct address from the Three Virtues to the audience for part of the chapter emphasizes the visual element of the allegorical vision, that is, by accentuating

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<sup>129</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.89. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.124, ll. 34-36.

<sup>130</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.89. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.124, ll. 36-38. Another example of this type of rhetorical structure is: “You may say to us, ‘But I see something I have reason to talk and gossip about, [...].’ We answer you: ‘Go away if you do not like it, but if you need to be employed as a servant and cannot go away, [...] just keep quiet’” (“car se tu nous dis: je voy de quoy j’ay cause d’en parler et d’en mesdire, [...]—, nous te respondrons, si t’en va s’il ne te plaist, et s’il t’est besoin de servir, par quoy ne t’en peusses aler [...] si t’en tais a tout le moins”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.7.106. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.7.145, ll. 73-77.

that the audience might pose a question and that the sisters would respond conjures a mental image of author-audience exchange, again creating a deeper sense of allegory and fashioning *enargeia*. However, these references to the Sisters as “we” are all that occur in Book Two.

There is one other particular rhetorical oddity in Book Two that is worth noting: in Chapter 12 Christine interrupts Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, who appear in Chapters 11 and 13 as the first person plural pronoun. Chapter 12 consists of a description of contemporary social situations wherein pride is both dangerous and distinctly—for Christine—unchristian. Yet part of the way through this chapter and its pronouncements against pride, Christine’s first person singular pronoun (“I have described”)<sup>131</sup> becomes a first person plural pronoun (“We have already mentioned”)<sup>132</sup> that remains in effect for the remainder of the chapter. The best explication for this pronoun shift is that early in the chapter Christine, a person who lives in the real world and has witnessed actual misbehavior at court and church associated with pride, must provide the testimony about people engaged in such behavior while it is more fitting that the shift back to the Sisters occurs once Christine points out that “merely talking about the disease [pride] does not affect it, nor does mentioning the remedy cure it” (“Mais pour ce que il ne souffist mie a dire de la maladie, qui ne touche et parle du remede a la curer [...]”).<sup>133</sup> After this pronouncement, the Three Virtues launch into a sermonic dilation condemning the

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<sup>131</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.117. In the French the expression of first person appears only in the title and the first sentence of the chapter becomes a sort of indirect statement: “Cy parle contre l’orgueil d’aucunes” is followed by “Mais l’orgueil des ces habiz dessusdiz fait un autre outrage, certes moult desplaisant a Dieu a qui y vise, [...]”Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.160, ll. 1-3.

<sup>132</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.119. “ja avons cy devant touchié” Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.162, l. 68.

<sup>133</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.119. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.162, ll. 63-65.



prideful, something that could be perceived as inappropriate for Christine *qua* narrator to do or that might be more rhetorically effective if placed into the mouths of her allegorical characters who must speak according to their natures.<sup>134</sup> The sermonic interlude asserts:

As for those who arrogantly wish to raise themselves in such great pomp—certainly great follies lead them to that! For you, Man, if you really want to contemplate the wretchedness of your beginnings, where you are and where you are going to be, you have no reason to be proud of yourself. If you argue that your nobility impels and leads you to desire such honours, let us [the Three Sisters] inform you that no one is noble if he does not have other noble qualities, virtue and good manners. If you do not have these qualities in you, no matter who you are, you are not noble. And if you think you are, you are deceiving yourself. (aux creatures qui se veulent par arrogance eslever en si fais boubans, certes grant folie les y conduit. Car home, se tu veulx bien aviser la misere de ton commencement, ou tu es, et ou tu yras, tu n’auras cause de toy orgueillir. Et se tu veulx dire que ce fait gentillece qui te conduit et meine a desirer celz honneurs, nous te faisons assavoir que il n’est noblece ne aultre gentillece ne mais de vertus et de bonnes meurs, et se tu ne les suis et as en toy, qui que tu soyes, tu n’es pas gentil ne gentille; et se tu le cuides estre, fole opinion te deçoit.)<sup>135</sup>

This sermonic condemnation of pride and those who would use nobility to excuse it takes on a different tenor than much of the moral correction in Book One. Book One’s moral education has a distinctly more dialogic feel as the princess has a debate with herself over allowing pride to enter into her thoughts and behavior; her thoughts are presented more fully, as are the thoughts that come to her from fear and love of God. The above passage

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<sup>134</sup> Christine expresses this attitude in one of her letters in the *Querelle de la Rose*; she is horrified that “Reason, whom he [Meun] even calls the daughter of God, should be [shown] to propound such a dictum as [...] ‘In the amorous war, it is better to deceive than to be deceived.’ [...] I dare say that Reason denied her heavenly father in that teaching, for He taught an utterly different doctrine.” Christine de Pizan, “Christine de Pisan to Jean de Montreuil,” in *La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents*, ed. and trans. Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 1978), 46-56, 49. “Raison, laquelle il mesmes dit fille de Dieu, [...] elle dit a l’Amant que en la guerre amoureuse vault mieulz deceuor que deceu estre. Et vrayement je ose dire que la Raison [...] renia son pere a celluy mot; car trop donna autre doctrine.” Christine de Pizan, “Christine to Jean de Montreuil,” in “The Epistles on the *Romance of the Rose* and Other Documents in the Debate,” Charles Frederick Ward (PhD Diss. University of Chicago, 1911), 17-28, 19, l. 95, ll. 99-101. Barbara Newman suggests that Christine’s employment of allegories in her own writings is “the strategy of [...] undo[ing] the damage she believed Jean [de Meun] to have done in his.” Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 115.

<sup>135</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.119. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.162, ll. 72-74; II.12.163, ll. 75-80.

is not a dialogic moment. That is, the Three Virtues do not break in on the prose and say “you may ask this,” but rather, they simply state if one argues that nobility is an excuse for pride, one is grossly mistaken. This rhetorical favoring of sermon-like tirades over answer-and-question dialogue increasingly proliferates in Books Two and Three of *Treasury*.<sup>136</sup>

Book Three’s allegorical content is further lessened than Book Two’s. For example, the first chapter begins again with the first person plural announcement of the audiences: “we must now (as we have promised) speak to the women of rank in towns and cities, that is, to those who are married to clerks, counsellors of kings or princes, administrators of justice, or men in various offices. We shall also speak to those who are married to the citizens and merchants of cities and fine towns, who in some countries are called nobles when they are of ancient lineage. Following that, we will address the other classes of women” (“nous convient, si que nous prometmes, parler aux femmes d’estat des citéz, c’est assavoir a celles qui sont mariees aux clerics, gens de conseil des roys ou des princes, ou gardans justice ou en divers offices, et aussi a celles qui sont mariees aux bourgeois des citéz et bonnes villes, qui en aucuns païs sont appelléz nobles quant ilz sont de lignages ancians; et après dirons aux aultres estas des femmes [...]”).<sup>137</sup> Note that in this quotation the Three Virtues are not identified; this revelation comes later in the chapter but is not elaborated upon enough to even include their individual names; instead,

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<sup>136</sup> I have not generally made this chapter on Christine concerned with the illuminations that accompany her work, but for a discussion of the illumination of her presentation of her works to Isabeau of Bavaria and for an argument about how “these enhanced presentation scenes” show “the vernacular writer” as providing “the transference of the learned traditions of scholastic and monastic cultures to the laity” see McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 34, 6-7, 34-36. All the images McGrady discusses can be found online at <http://www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/gallery/index.htm>.

<sup>137</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.1.127. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.1.171, ll. 7-13.

they simply self-identify as “We three Virtues” (“nous trois Vertus”).<sup>138</sup> The lack of emphasis on what have been steadily employed allegorical figures up until Book Three is also evident in the *capitula*, which include no references to the Three Virtues and do not indicate the topics and contents of the chapters as much as they did in Books One and Two. Rather, the chapters of Book Three have been organized according to their immediate audience with little expression of their contents in their titles: “Of the wives of merchants” (“Ci devise des femmes des marchans”), “Of young and elderly widows” (“Ci parle des femmes veuves, vieilles et joennes”), “Of the instruction for both girls and older women in the state of virginity” (“Ci parle pour les pucelles”), “How elderly ladies ought to conduct themselves towards young ones, and the qualities that they ought to have” (“Ci devise comment les ancianes femmes se doivent maintenir vers les joennes, et des meurs que avoir doivent”), “How young women ought to conduct themselves towards their elders” (“Comment les joennes femmes se doivent maintenir vers les anciennes”), “Of the wives of artisans and how they ought to conduct themselves” (“Ci parle des femmes des mestiers, comment gouverner se doivent”), “Of servant-women and chambermaids” (“Ci parle des femmes servans et chamberieres”), “Of the instruction for prostitutes” (“Ci parle a l’enseignement des femmes de fole vie”), “In praise of respectable and chaste women” (“Ci parle en louant femmes honnestes et chastes”), “Of the wives of labourers” (“Ci parle des femmes des laboureurs”), and “Of the condition of poor people” (“Ci parle de l’estat des povres”).<sup>139</sup> While the decreased references in Book

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<sup>138</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.1.128. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.1.172, l. 31.

<sup>139</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.3.136; III.4.140; III.5.144; III.6.147; III.7.150; III.8.153; III.9.154; III.10.158; III.11.160; III.12.163. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.3.183, l. 1; III.4.188, l.1; III.5.194, l.1; III.6.197, ll.1-2; III.7.201, ll. 1-2; III.8.205, ll. 1-2; III.9.207, l.1; III.10.211, l.1; III.11.215, l.1; III.12.218, l.1; III.13.221, l.1. These are the *capitula* of only chapters 3 through 13; chapters 1 and 2 have titles more in line with those in Book One and Two. Chapter 1 is titled “How

Three are evidence of a less allegorical rhetoric, allegorical content that is not related explicitly to the Three Virtues still exists in the book.

In Book One, Pride, the non-Virtue, is allegorized as one of the roots of the princess's ill behavior, and Christine presents us with an example of interior dialogue that the thoughtful and contemplative princess who fears God will engage in so that she may best Pride:

“O Pride, root of all evil, certainly I know that from you spring all the other vices, and I can recognize this in myself, for because of you and not for any other reason I often fly into a rage, desiring vengeance, as I recently did. Pride makes me imagine that I ought to be feared and

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everything that has been said before can apply to one woman as much as to another. Of the system and control that a woman of rank ought to maintain in her household” (“Ce premier chapitre parle comment tout ce qui est dit devant puet aussi bien touchier les unes femmes que les autres, et la maniere du gouvernement que femme d'estat doit tenir ou fait de son mainage”). Chapter 2 is titled “This describes how women of rank ought to be conservative in their clothing, and how they can protect themselves against those who try to deceive them” (“Comment femmes d'estat et bourgoises doivent estre ordonnees en leurs abis, et comment se garderont de ceulx qui taschent a les decevoir”). These first two chapters are directed primarily to the highest social class treated in Book Three, which may explain the more content-oriented titles these chapters receive rather than the later chapters that are more audience-oriented. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.1.127; III.2.132. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.1.171, ll. 1-4; III.2.177, ll. 1-3. For brief comparison I provide a few sample titles from Books One and Two here. Book One: “The beginning of the three Virtues' book of instruction for ladies” (“Le premier chapitre parle comment les vertus par lequel commandement cristine fist et compila *Le livre de la citédes dames* s'apparurent de rechief a elle et lui commirent a faire ceste presente oeuvre”), “How temptations can come to a high-born princess” (“Ci devise la maniere des temptacions qui peuent venir a haute princepe”), “How the good and wise princess will make every effort to restore peace between the prince and the barons if there is any discord” (“Ci devise comment la sage et bonne princesse se penera de mettre paix entre le prince et les barons s'il y a aucon descort”), and “The fifth teaching of Prudence, which is how the wise princess will try her best to be in favour with, and have the good wishes of, all classes of her subjects” (“Ci devise le v<sup>e</sup> enseignement de prudence, qui est comment la saige princepe mettra peine comment elle soit en la grace et benivolence de tous les estaz de ses subgiez”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.1.3; I.3.6; I.9.22; I.17.46. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.1.7, ll. 1-4; I.3.12, ll. 1-2; I.9.33, ll. 1-3; I.17.66, ll. 1-4. Book Two: “This begins the second part of this book, which is addressed to ladies and maidens, and first, to those who live in the court of a princess or a great lady. The first chapter describes how the three ladies, that is, Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, recapitulate briefly what has been said before” (“Ci commence la seconde partie de ce livre, laquelle s'adrece aux dames et damoiselles, et premierement a celles qui demeurent a court de princepe ou haulte dame. Le premier chapitre parle comment les trois dames, c'est assavoir raison, droicture et justice recapitulerent en brief ce que di test devant”), “More of this same teaching to women: how they will take care not to have the vice of envy among themselves” (“Ci dit encore de ce meismes, et enseignement aux femmes de court comment se garderont en elles du vice d'envie”), “How it is unbecoming for women to defame each other or speak evil” (“Cid it comment il n'apertient a femmes de court diffamer l'une l'autre n'en dire nul mal”), and “This describes those who are extravagant in their gowns, head-dresses and clothing” (“Ci devise de celles qui sont oultrageuses en leurs abiz, atours et abillemens”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.1.87; II.5.98; II.8.107; II.11.115. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.1.121, ll. 1-3; II.5.135, ll. 1-3; II.8.146, ll. 1-2; II.11.157, l. 1-2.

esteemed above all others, and that I ought always to have my own way, and for this reason I ought not to put up with anything that displeases me, but immediately avenge myself, however small the insult might be. O perilous vanity, bloated wilfulness, carbuncle full of poison and putrefaction, the flesh that harbours you is at greater risk than that which contains a plague bubo.” (O orgueil! racine de tous maux, certainement je cognois que de toy viennent tous les aultres vices. Et ce puis je cognoistre en moy meismes, car pour cause de toy, et non pour autre achoison, je suis souvent embatue en yre, desirant vengeance, si comme je pensoy nagaires; et me fais sembler que je doy estre redoubtee et prisee sur toutes les aultres et chascun suppediter, et que pour ce je ne doy riens souffrir qui me desplaie, mais tantost men vengier, tout soit le mesfait petit.

O vent perilleux! enfleure de courage! boce pleine de venin et de poureture! La char ou tu es fischee est en plus grant aventure que celle ou est la boce qui vient d’epidemie.)<sup>140</sup>

Thus Christine’s princess encounters allegory through her own interior dialogues. Here the princess who possesses “the unshakeable love and fear of Our Lord God Jesus Christ” (“sauldra en place l’amour et craintte de Nostre Seigneur”) confronts her own faults, embodied in the allegorized Pride, and she, along with the semi-allegorized love and fear of God, excoriates herself for possessing such faults.<sup>141</sup> Part of this excoriation occurs with the final image presented in the quotation: the princess is disgusted with her own faults, and Christine employs the ripe image of a pestilence pustule to indicate the princess’s spiritual corruption. But aside from the actual use of allegory this passage also illustrates the type of self-reflection that Christine expects princesses and other ladies of high rank to be able to engage in, a type of reflection that is again reminiscent of the debate, discussion, and self-examination that Lady Philosophy prompts in Boethius. Here, however, rather than having a clearly allegorized debate partner, Christine describes the princess as largely engaged in an interior debate, though this debate is

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<sup>140</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.9. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.15, ll. 44-53; I.4.16, l. 54.

<sup>141</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.8. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.14, ll. 7-8.

brought about by “Love and fear of Our Lord” who “will sing her a different lesson” (“sauldra en place l’amour et crainte de Nostre Seigneur, qui lui chantera aultre leçon en disant”).<sup>142</sup> This love and fear speaks from within the princess, so it is both at once an aspect of her own personality and also a virtue that is externalized, for it is the entity that speaks the words to her to prick her conscience and it is also the entity that addresses Pride in the excerpt above.

Another example of the allegorical that is not associated with the Three Sisters occurs in Chapter 11 of Book One, where the allegorical figure of Prudence is introduced. This figure provides a long series of instructions for the princess, including the contents for the eleventh through the nineteenth chapters. The first of these chapters introduces Prudence as a concept and provides some description of the moral principles and teachings that are expanded upon in the following chapters. Worldly Prudence, as Christine sometimes refers to this allegory, presents “teachings and admonitions [that] are not separate from those of God but come from them and are based on them” (“lesquelx enseignements et amonitions ne se different ne departent de ceulx Dieu, ains en viennent et dependent”).<sup>143</sup> Christine couples authority and allegory in order to justify her principles for behavior, and significantly, the first principle of behavior that Prudence provides is that “above all things in this base world she [the princess] ought to love honour and a good reputation” (“sur toutes choses terrestres n’est nulle qui autant affiere a haulte gent que fait honneur”).<sup>144</sup> Indeed, the remainder of the first book of the

*Treasury* molds itself and shapes itself around this theme, even when the section on

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<sup>142</sup> Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman’s Mirror*, trans. Willard, ed. Cosman, I.4.73. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.14, ll. 7-8.

<sup>143</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.41, ll. 8-9.

<sup>144</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.41, ll. 22-23.

Prudence ends, for at that point the topic turns to how a lady in waiting might discourage her mistress from engaging in conduct that might harm her reputation. The subjects of honor and reputation are considered for the length of Chapter 11, but as with the earlier self-exploration through interior dialogue, we again find the rhetorical approach of a dialogic praise of honor recurs. Unlike Anne of France, who insists upon honor and reputation through emphatic assertions of their necessity and exempla that show the horrid results of girls who have been stripped of their reputations (i.e. they become unmarriageable and shame their mother to an early death), Christine's rhetorical approach again pushes for an analytic and contemplative reaction from the princess. Christine's Daughters of God expect a reasoning, thinking creature—they do not simply count upon parental authority to make their advice a rule; they encourage the princess to come to the same conclusion as they have by reasoning, i.e., by acting in a manner to preserve her honor and her reputation that she will be acting in the best possible manner and that to act differently could have disastrous results. To return to allegory, Books Two and Three of the *Treasury* also possess allegorical content aside from that related to the Three Daughters of God. Chapter 5 of Book Two addresses how dangerous and powerful envy can be at court through a semi-dialogic discussion between the self-overcome-by-Pride and the self-recovered-by-proper-faith. First, Envy is described as difficult to avoid:

the darts and stings in her [a lady's servant at court] heart from this foul envy may lead her to say to herself, 'How is it possible that my lady holds this or that person more in favour than you? How can she want her around her more and let her in on her secrets more? Aren't you of her lineage or more noble than this person is; how can she be better suited to it? [...] Is it right that my lady should advance her so much and make her as welcome as she does or give her such finery and grant her such rank? She is already more advanced in this short time that she has lived here than you who have been here from childhood! [...] But I will put obstacles in her way if I can, whatever the outcome may be, and whatever the lengths I must go

to! I can't stand it any longer! Now she even wants to take *my* place, and my lady tolerates it and encourages her and wishes her to go before the others, but she will not get away with it!' (nonobstant que les aguillons et pointures en courage de celle fausse envie soient en tel cas telz: Et pour quoy puet ce estre que ma dame a plus en grace ceste cy ou ceste la que toy, et plus la veult et appelle en ses secrez et environ soy? N'es tu de son lignage ou plus noble que celle n'est, si en fust mieulx paree? [...] ne aussi que ma dame la doye tant avancier ne faire tel chiere qu'elle lui fait, ne tel harnois, et lui baille tel estat. Et ja est plus avancie en ce pou de temps qu'elle y a demouré que toy qui y es des ton enfance. [...] mais je y mettray barres se je sçay, quoy qu'avenir en doye ne quelque peine que je y doie mettre: j n'en pourroye plus souffrir. En mon renc meismes se veult elle mettre, et ma dame lui sueffre et la porte et veult qu'elle voise devant les autres, mais ainsi n'yra mie.)<sup>145</sup>

After this lengthy invective, which clearly displays the psychological difficulty of fighting off envy because it unabashedly reveals a number of thoughts a jealous serving lady might have, Christine presents a self-remedy for envy. Self-examination and reasoning, attributes aligned by Christine with faith, can help the prudent serving woman to overcome her jealousy:

by good counsel and a just conscience the wise lady or maiden of the court will reject them [the ideas presented by envy]. She will be her old self again, saying, "O foolish dreamer, what can you be thinking of? What do you care about all these treacherous things? What does it matter if you do what you can loyally in all things and you don't have such great rewards for it in this world as somebody else? God, who alone is a just, true judge and who knows all hearts and from whom nothing can be hidden, knows very well what you have done. He will not fail to repay you for it" (mais tantost par bon avis et juste conscience les boutera arriere la sage dame ou demoiselle de court, qui se revendra a soy en pensant: Ha! fole musarde! et de quoy t'es tu avisee? Mais, pour Dieu, de quoy te chault il de toutes telz fanfelus? Se tu fais le mieulx que tu pueux et le plus loyaument en toutes choses, et tu n'en as si grant guerdon en ce monde comme un autre, Dieu, qui seul est juste et vray juge, qui cognoist tous courages at a qui riens ne puet estre cellé, le scet bien: si le te rendra, et n'ya fault point.)<sup>146</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.5.98-99. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.5.136, ll. 14-19, 23-26, 33; II.5.137, ll. 34-37.

<sup>146</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.5.99. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.5.137, ll. 38-47.



The self, guided by faith and trust in God's justice, continues to speak and justify why envy is unacceptable for the remainder of the chapter. This allegorical exchange is noteworthy and different from those in Book One in several ways. First, while the exchange between the self and pride and in Book One is semi-allegorical, with the love and fear of God speaking to the princess, here we have the lady in waiting speaking to the allegorical Envy. Thus, the level of allegorical abstractions is somewhat reduced and simultaneously *enargeia* is increased, for surely one can picture a serving maid more easily than the Three Virtues. Yet, the level of self-debate and self-examination remains high in this chapter; Christine is again encouraging the use of reason in conjunction with faith in order for her audience to arrive at the proper type of behavior. However, this chapter is especially cautious about making sure the short speech of Envy is fully overcome by that of the reasoning self guided by God's justice, which is much lengthier in its argumentation than is Envy; that is, while debate and dialogue still exist, the opposing views receive less and less space in which to make their points. In Book Three the speech allowance for the "other" voice, or the voice of the negative behavior decreases again. Christine seems to allow for the reasoning of ladies at court, but less so than she does for princesses, and she presumes a further reduced capacity among ladies of lesser social stature.

In Book Three the only self-debate is not properly self-debate, but rather self-chastisement that is not presented in any sort of allegorical framework.<sup>147</sup> The emphasis

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<sup>147</sup> I would like to point out that while scholars such as Brown-Grant have acknowledged the importance of "Christine[']s consistent [...] appeals to her female readers to exercise their own rationality" in *Treasury*, those same critics either overstate Christine's attribution of reason to all women or understate the classed valuation women in the lower social status receive via the rhetoric with which Christine approaches them in *Treasury*. For example, Brown-Grant misleadingly writes "from princesses to prostitutes and from nuns to artisans, she treats *all* her readers as rational beings." More problematic is Brown-Grant's tendency to read this adjustment of rhetoric not as a reflection of class tensions manifest in *Treasury*, but rather as "in line

is on overturning the lady's own thoughts, not in presenting an authoritative allegorical figure who will challenge the lady's own thoughts or on presenting an allegory of temptation that the lady must outfox with her wit and faith. Absent from this chapter is the objectionable argument, which in this case, would be that old women are justified in rebuking and maligning young women. Instead of hearing the justifications, we hear only an objection to them, and one which is devoid of allegory:

the wise woman ought to reflect on this matter so that when she feels like criticizing young people because of some intolerable fault of their youth, she should say to herself, "My Lord, but you were young once; cast your mind back to the things you got up to in those days! Would you have liked people to talk about you this way?" [...]

One ought to correct young people and reprove them firmly for their follies, but not, however, hate or defame them, for they are not aware of what they are doing. [...] ... you are, however, not without sin; rather you perhaps have more of it and worse than you had at that age or than many young people have. If those particular vices have left you, other worse ones have taken their place, like envy, covetousness, anger, impatience and gluttony (especially of wine, in which you often overindulge). You, who ought to be wise, do not have the power to resist them, because the inclinations of old age attract, tempt and encourage you. And you want these young people to be wiser than you and do what you are unable to do yourself, that is, to resist temptations that youth puts into their heads. [...] If the vices of youth have left you, it is not because of your virtue, but because nature no longer inclines you to them, and for that reason they seem to you so abominable that you cannot bear them. (la sage ancienne femme doit estre sur ce avisee en telle maniere que quant aucun mouvement lui venra en pensee ou en parole contre joennes gens pour leurs joenneces que elle ne puisse pas bien souffrir, pensera en soy meismes: Beau sire Dieux! Tu as esté jeune: avise toy bien quelz choses tu faisoies en ce temps. Eusses tu voulu que on parlast ainsi de toy? [...] On doit joennes gens reprendre et tencier voirement de leurs folies, mais non mie pour tant les hair ne diffamer, car ilz ne scevent que ilz font ne ne se cognoissent: [...]. [...] tu n'es mie pour tant sans pechié; ains en as par aventure de plus grans et de plus gros que tu n'avoies de cel aage, ou que assez de joennes gens n'ont. Et se ces vices la te ont delaissie, d'autres

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with the orthodox *artes predicandi* which stipulate the need to adjust the style of a sermon to suit a particular audience." These two ways of reading *Treasury* need not be mutually exclusive, but the classed nature of Christine's discourse ought to be fully acknowledged rather than simply erased by discussing it only as typical of pastoral rhetoric. Brown-Grant does acknowledge that "Christine most clearly demonstrates women's capacity for making rational choices and thus their full humanity" in the sections addressed to the princess. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 188, 181, 188, 189.

plus mauvais t'ont accuiellie, come envie, convoitise, yre, impacience, gloutonnie, par especial de vins, en quoy tu fais souvent de grans deffaultes. Et toy qui dois estre sage, n'as pas puissance d'y resister parce que l'inclinacion de vieillesce t'y tire, tempte et ammoneste,— et tu veulx que yceulx joennes soient plus sages que toy, c'est assavoir que ilz resistent aux temptacions que joennesce leur met en courage, et facent ce que tu ne pueux faire! [...] Et se les vices de joennece t'ont laissie, ce n'est mie par ta vertu, mais parce que nature plus ne t'i encline; et pour ce te semblent ilz si abhominables.)<sup>148</sup>

This excerpt of a mature woman's self-excoriation, while engaged in a rational rejection of sin, presents a monochromatic depiction of the old woman. If the tone, especially in the closing, is considered adjacent to the debate with envy in Book Two, there is a much greater sense of somberness, and the gravity of the mature woman's sin is provided with no levity or excuse. No effort is made to understand why an older woman may experience so-called irrational distaste for youth, which is a near inversion of the discussion of the pride that can assail a princess in Book One. Unlike the princess whose pride may be jolted into activity through her daily experience of fineries and unlike the lady in waiting who may be goaded into jealousy by being snubbed, the aged woman is not allowed to have her feelings displayed or credited. Rather, these sentiments are clearly labeled as incorrect, unjustifiable, hypocritical, and perhaps most humiliatingly, as the product of drunkenness. Above I discussed the shift in speaker from Christine's voice to that of the Three Virtues, which occurs in Chapter 12 of Book Two and is followed by a pastoral episode. That episode, in conjunction with the self-chastisement discussed here, reflects a subtle shift in the rhetorical content of the *Treasury* that moves away from a debate and discussion toward sermonic rhetoric that allows for little explanation or discussion of the feelings or motivations of the ill-behaved or sinful parties. Christine's rhetorical authority

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<sup>148</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.6.148-49. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.6.199, ll. 70-76; III.6.200, ll. 78-80, 88-98, 100-02.

and dominance, then, are becoming more overt; there is less of a reading partnership encouraged by the rhetoric in Books Two and Three.

This rhetorical change from Boethian debate and discussion toward a more straightforward sermonic command is partially due to the change in the social status of the women that Christine's *Treasury* addresses. Book One addresses those ladies at the top of the social chain, while Books Two and Three speak to those further and further beneath the princesses. One reason social class emerges as a major reason for the alteration of Christine's rhetoric is suggested by her extreme concern over the abuse of the upper classes by their servants that coincides with Christine's advice to serving women, again couched in a sermonic condemnation of wicked behavior. Chapter 9 of Book Three addresses servants and chambermaids, and specifically expresses a concern for their souls. First revealed is that in order to be saved a servant "ought to understand that God, who knows and sees everything, asks only that she have a good heart towards Him [...] She will be loyal in deed and in word to master and mistress and will serve them with care, and even while doing her duties she will be able to say her Our Fathers and her devotions" ("doit savoir que Dieu, qui tout cognoit et voit, ne demande que le cuer: [...] elle se gardera de tous laiz et mauvais pechiéz, portera loyaulté en fait et en dit a maistre et a maistrese, et soingneusement les servira; et meismes en faisant sa besoigne pourra dire ses paternostres et ses devocions").<sup>149</sup> Yet the specifications for the type of behavior a good servant engages in is only one-quarter the length of the prohibitions specified for serving-women. That is, the servant's salvation and good behavior is dealt with handily in one paragraph whereas the remainder of the chapter, four paragraphs,

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<sup>149</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.9.155. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.9.208, ll. 35-36, 38-41.

consists of warnings against cheating one's master and mistress. The condemnatory tone and sense of debauched evil cast upon bad servants makes quoting at length a necessity:

But to behave as some debauched and wicked women do is the road to damnation! [...] there are some dishonest chambermaids who are given great responsibility because they know how to insinuate themselves into the great houses of the middle classes and of rich people by cleverly acting the part of good household managers. They get their position of buying the food and going to the butcher's, where they only too well 'hit the fruit basket', which is a common expression meaning to claim that the thing costs more than it really does and then keep the change. [...] For they put to one side a little titbit, have a pie made and baked, charging it up to their master, and then when their master is at court or in town, and their mistress at church hearing high Mass, a delightful little banquet is spread in the kitchen, and not without plenty to drink, and only the best wine! The other housemaids in the street who are part of the crowd of cronies turn up, and God knows how they plunder the place! Someone takes the pie to the room she has in the town and her paramour comes over, and they have a merry time together.

There may be women who frequent the house and help to do the laundry or scour the pots who are in cahoots with the housemaid, and so they do the work of the household while she [the housemaid] loafs, so that the master and the mistress find everything in order when they come home, but God knows how cheated they are of wine and food! [...]

If such a woman serves in some place where there is a young newly arrived mistress who is a bit silly, she is on to a good thing. She will know how to flatter the master and speak to him as an equal and fawn on him so that he has confidence in her about his wife and about everything else. [...] On the other hand she will also flatter the girl, so that in this way she will have them both believing she is practically the Messiah! [...] and if the master sometimes says that the provisions run out too quickly, she will have her answer ready, saying that it is because they give too many big dinner parties and invite so many people to drink. But if some gallant promises to give, or does give, her a cloak or a gown for taking a message to her mistress, if she does not do it discreetly, the mistress could be burnt! [...]

So you ladies who have servants, watch out for these tricks so that you are not deceived. And to you who serve, we [Three Virtues] say this so that you may regard doing such things as an abomination, for inevitably those who do them damn themselves and deserve death of both body and soul, for because of people like this, many are burnt or buried alive who do not deserve it. (Mais tenir la maniere que aucunes goliardes et mauvaises font est chemin dampnable [...]. Il est aucunes fausses gloutes chamberieres que, parce que elles scevent assez du bas vouler et bien server pour mieulz flater et grans hostieulz des bourgeois et riches gens, on

leur baille grant gouvernement pour ce que elles scevent bien faire les bonnes mainagieres. Si ont ycelles office d'acheter la viande et aler a la char, ou trop bien batent le cabaz—qui est un mot communement dit, qui est a entendre: faire acroire que la chose couste plus que elle ne fait, et retenir l'argent. [...] Et plus font, tel jour est, car elles apportent a part de la boucherie un morsellet de friandise, si font faire un paste, et sus la taille de leur maistre le comptent au four, et puis quant leur maistre est au palais ou en la ville et leur maistresse au moustier a la grant messe, la desjunerie est faicte en la cuisine a bon gaudeamus, et n'est pas sans bien boire, et du meilleur. Et la viennent les autres chamberieres de la rue, qui sont du flo et convine, et autres commeres: et Dieux scet comment la se fourrent! Et aucunes foiz est porté le paste en la chambre que celle a en la ville, et la vient le gentil chaland, et ainsi se rigolent. Si y a femmes qui repairent en l'ostel qui aident a les lessives et a escurer les poz, celles sont de la cordelle de la chamberiere, car elles font la besoigne de l'ostel tandiz que ycelle va jurer, afin que le maistre et la maistresse treuvent tout prest quant ilz venront. Si les en envoie assez a heure, mais Dieux scet comment hordees de vins et de viandes! [...]

Mais se il avient que tel femme serve en lieu ou il ait joenne maistresse nouvelle mariee et un pou nycete, elle est bien arrivee. Car bien se sara pener de flater le maistre, et de parler a lui bien en pruede femme et dire fy de fatras, afin qu'il se fie bien en elle de sa femme et de tout. [...] car d'autre part reflatera la joenne femme, si que par telle maniere les tendra tous deux, qu'ilz ne croiront en autre dieu. [...] et se le maistre dit aucunes foiz que les garnisons y faillent trop tost, incontinent ara sa responce preste, disant que c'est pour ce qu'il fait trop de grans disners et semont tant les gens de boire; mias s'il avient que aucun galant lui promette ou donne chapperon ou robe pour faire un message a sa maistresse, se elle ne le fait de bonne maniere, que elle soit arse.

[...] Si vous en prenez garde, entre vous qui serviz, que deceus n'y soiez; et a vous qui servez, le disons afin que abhominacion aiez de tieux choses faire. Car sans faille celle qui le font se dampnent et desservent mort d'ame et de corps, car de tells sont arses ou vives enfouies qui tant ne l'ont desservi.)<sup>150</sup>

Christine's attack on bad servants emphasizes two key points: the manipulation of the wealthier classes by servants and the possibility that such manipulations can work grave harm against the mistress of a house who must guard her reputation religiously. Also noteworthy of discussion is the turning aside of the stated audience in the first sentence of the final paragraph of the chapter in order to provide a clear and succinct direct address to

<sup>150</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.9.156-57. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.9.209, ll. 49-58, 62-74; III.9.210, ll. 75-77, 86-100; III.9.211, ll. 108-12.

their masters: be wary of servants. The passages that follow are also far more condemnatory in tone than the passages of temptation that occur in Books One and Two. The sense here is that servants are not well-educated, cannot be trusted to reason well, and need the threat or promise of damnation and salvation in order to secure their proper behavior. This is a marked and radical shift in rhetorical approach from that of Book One. Finally, the chapter on prostitutes from Book Three further illustrates the drastic shift in rhetoric from an allegorical, Boethian debate involving reason toward a sermonic condemnation of bad behavior.

Chapter 9 of Book Three provides a parallel passage that details the *via negativa* for servants as Christine again excoriates those who abuse their masters and mistresses through squandering their wealth; this chapter more than any other suggests that the audience is not perhaps the servants directly but the masters of the servants who may read selections of the chapter to them or speak to them about some of the ideas in the chapter.<sup>151</sup> This is particularly obvious in the last paragraph of the chapter wherein

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<sup>151</sup> Felicity Riddy demonstrates how shorter conduct texts such as “What the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” were probably used by urban elite tradespeople to ensure the respectability of their household, which was both a domestic space and one in which business was conducted: “women in a quasi-maternal relation to their servants or female apprentices” might have used the text to “learn to train young girls” in their household. Riddy further notes that young women would be a site of instability in the household because servants were “hired by the year, sometimes even less, and thus would come and go with much greater frequency.” While Christine’s text is far too long in its entirety to have been used in this manner, it is plausible, especially in the shorter sections that if the text were not to be orally presented to an audience of women of the lower echelons, it might at least serve as an inspirational text on which burghesses could draw in their education of the young persons of their households. Felicity Riddy, “Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text,” *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 66-86.

The theme of the false laborer is remarked in the examination of English sermonic literature by G. R. Owst who notes that sermons could attack “two separate types of offender—the skilled workman of the towns and the rustic serf and labourer on the manor.” Owst quotes a number of passages that accuse laborers and merchants of defrauding but most do not contain the same condemnatory tone of Christine’s passage, or the open threat of damnation. Owst’s evidence suggests that laborers may be accused of falsity, of being “lukewarm” and fickle in their service, and more harshly those who slacken their work are called thieves, but only one example associates crafty laborers with the diabolical: “if workmen are knowingly and negligently lukewarm, and artificers false in their tasks, they are the servants of the Devil.” G. R. Owst, *Literature and the Pulpit Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 362; see also 362-70.

Christine warns the masters and mistresses against being duped by bad servants, a passage I have discussed at length above.<sup>152</sup> Chapter 12 also focuses on the practical devotion found in Chapter 9, but it also includes an interesting passage on serving one's masters well. First in Chapter 12, the wives of laborers are excused from fasting, and Christine provides some basic religious instruction that lacks detail and complexity, which suggests her understanding that the laboring classes are not and need not be educated particularly well, even on spiritual matters: "You ought to know first of all that there is one all-powerful God, all-good, all-just, and all-wise, from whom nothing is hidden, who rewards every person, either with something good or with something bad, according to what he has deserved. He alone must be perfectly loved and served" ("Si devez savoir tout premierement que il est un seul Dieu tout puissant, tout bon, tout juste et tout sage, a qui nulles choses sont cellees; qui rent guerredon a toute personne ou de bien ou de mal selon qu'il a desservi. Et cellui seul doit estre parfaictement améz et serviz [...]").<sup>153</sup> After this religious instruction, however, the advice to the wives shifts. Instead of being given practical advice on how they should behave, the wives are told to remind their husbands to behave properly:

when they are working on the land for another person, they should do it as well and as faithfully as if they were doing it for themselves. If it is harvest time, they must pay their master with the wheat that has grown on the land (if that is the arrangement) and not mix rye with the wheat and claim that it is otherwise. They should not hide the good lambs nor the best sheep at the neighbours' or elsewhere so that they can pay the master with the worst ones when he comes for the sharing-out; nor should they pretend his sheep are dead nor show him the hides of other animals, nor pay him with the worst fleeces. The men must not render false accounts for the master's waggons, or his fowl or anything else of his. The wives

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<sup>152</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.9.157. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.9.209, ll. 49-74; III.9.210, ll. 75-103; III.9.211, ll. 104-107.

<sup>153</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.12.163. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.12.219, ll. 19-24.



should remind their husbands not to cut wood to build their houses from somebody else's forest without permission. When they tend the grapevines, they must be diligent to do the work thoroughly and at the right time of the year. When they are entrusted by their masters to engage other workers, if they are hired for six *blancs* per day, they should not pretend that the rate was seven. The good wives should advise their husbands about all such things, so that they may avoid them, for otherwise they will be damned. (que se ilz labourent terres pour autrui, qu'ilz le facent bien et loyaument comme pour eulx meismes feissent; et se c'est a moison, paient leus maistre du froment qui ara esté creu en la terre se tel le marchié, et non mie mesler seigle avec et faire entendant que autre n'a creu; ne mucent pas les bonnes berbis ne les meilleurs moutons chieux les voisins pour paier le maistre, quant vient au partage, des pires, ne facent acroire que mortes soient par lui monstrier les peaulx d'autres bestes, ne paient des pires toisons des laines; ne mauvais compte ne lui rendent de ses voitures ne de ses choses ou de sa voulaille; et ne voise couper en autrui bois sans congié pour lever leurs maisons; et quant vignes prenent a faire, soient diligens de les faire de toutes façons et en bonne saison; et quant ilz sont commis par leurs maistres de prendre des autres ouvriers, se ilz les louent ·vi· blancs de jour, ne facent mie acroire que ·vii· coustent. Et ainsi de toutes telles choses les bonnes femmes doivent accointer leurs mariz que ilz s'en gardent, car ilz se dampneroient [...]).<sup>154</sup>

This passage presents a mountain of practical information, but it also expresses a great deal of anxiety, as does Chapter 9 on serving women, about the lower and laboring classes taking advantage of and despoiling the people they serve. Such lurking concerns reflect Christine's own sense of class, which appears in the varying and complex rhetorical styles she employs at different points in her *Treasury*. Being mindful of the concept of class can be an important part of understanding fully the ramifications of a text, and so I would like to take a moment to consider class as David Aers presents Christopher Dyer's thoughts on it:

'The inequalities of the middle ages were not an incidental by-product of economic activity but an inherent feature of society. The great wealth of the aristocracy derived from their military, political and judicial domination of the subordinate peasantry. [...] Nor were extractions [of wealth] and the various mechanisms of extraction effected without

<sup>154</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.12.164. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.12.219, ll. 35-44; III.12.220, ll. 45-55.

coercion. And this coercion was confronted with widespread resistance, which took many forms. These forms ranged from symbolic ones, to actions such as the evasion of taxes and the non-performance of services, to poaching, to defiance of labor legislation, to, in the last resort, violence, whether hidden or in open riot.<sup>155</sup>

I suggest that Christine's compulsion to discuss servant misbehavior reflects uneasiness about servant-class resistance to the extraction of wealth and products from the lower classes by the upper classes, and that as such her text occupies a position wherein she argues against crossing class lines, and yet simultaneously invites these lines to be crossed by providing the merchant class with information about how to act nobly.<sup>156</sup>

Also of note in this chapter is the erasure of sex distinctions. The title of Chapter 12 explicitly names the "wives of labourers" as its audience, yet as much as one-third of the chapter is devoted to telling the wives to regulate their husbands lest they be damned. After the discussion of what behavior the wives should monitor in their husbands, other precepts are given, such as not allowing livestock to graze in other people's fields and not damaging hedges, but the principle point of the chapter is that "By doing their [laborers'] work well and faithfully, they will have grace in their lives, and they will undoubtedly be saved; their lives will be good and acceptable to God" ("et par bien faire loiaument leur labour prendre en gré, leur vie sans faille ilz se sauvent, et est vie bonne et agreable a

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<sup>155</sup> First portion of the quotation is Christopher Dyer's *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* quoted in David Aers, "Class, Gender, Medieval Criticism, and *Piers Plowman*," in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections*, ed. Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 59-75, 60.

<sup>156</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan notes that "during Christine's life the social body was completely disordered. Population losses, economic stress, public uprisings and the growing independence of the bourgeoisie precipitated much debate and many attempts to control change." Forhan, *The Political Theory*, 60. Christine's *Treasury* clearly manifests signs of such attempts. Brown-Grant explains that "the *Trois Vertus* seems to have appealed more to a middle-class audience at the end of the fifteenth century than to Christine's immediate patrons, the royal families of Orléans, Burgundy and Berry, since no luxurious presentation copy of the text survives, whereas there is an unusually high number of paper manuscripts that were presumably owned by a less wealthy readership." Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 176. Willard notes that *Treasury*'s "greatest popularity would seem to have been nearly a hundred years after it was written, when three printed editions were published between 1497 and 1536." Charity Cannon Willard, "A Fifteenth-Century View," 115.

Dieu”).<sup>157</sup> This statement is essentially recapitulated at the end of the same paragraph: “By keeping to these paths, good people may be saved, both men and women” (“Et par ces voyes tenir se pourront les bonnes gens sauver, tant hommes comme femmes”).<sup>158</sup> Thus at this point, it appears for Christine that sex difference ceases to be as important as social class difference in terms of its effects on people’s lives and which characteristic, sex or social class, ought to delineate more of the person’s behavior.<sup>159</sup> This collapse of the distinctions between the sexes is maintained in the final chapter of the *Treasury* wherein Christine addresses poor people generally, rather than poor women. We must, however, not just consider how the passages in Chapter 12 reflect Christine’s various attitudes toward the classes, but also their rhetorical aims. All the quotations provided promise either salvation for honest and faithful work or damnation for dishonesty and failure to toil. The laborers’ concerns are wholly unaddressed here. While Christine makes provisions to allow other people in her text—particularly princesses—to engage in debate with and reasoned consideration of rules, the laborers are voiceless and approached with a simple carrot-or-stick pedagogy. Christine even permits prostitutes to postulate a defense of their lifestyle—which she then immediately rejects—but the

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<sup>157</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.12.164. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.12.220, ll. 55-57.

<sup>158</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.12.165. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.12.220, ll. 70-71.

<sup>159</sup> A similar collapse of sex difference is suggested in the final chapter of Book Two as well, where advice is given to women in religious orders. Christine writes that, “Although our words are addressed to those among you in religious orders, it ought to be understood that all women can equally lend an ear to them and take away whatever they can profitably apply to themselves. And also if any jot or tittle of this can find its way to men, please do not scorn it and throw it to one side, for good precepts can be compared to the good and loyal friend who, when he cannot help, at least does no harm” (“Et d’yceste, nonobstant que nostre parole s’adrece a entre vous, religieuses, doit estre entendu que semblablement y peuvent tender l’oreille toutes femmes et en prendre ce qui puet touchier a leur prouffit,— et aussi, se aucune gouste ou miete en puet cheoir sur les hommes, ne le vueillent par pas despris escourre ne gicter la aval; car bonne doctrine se puet comparer au bon et loyal ami, lequel quant il ne puet aidier, au moins ne nuit il pas”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.121-22. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.166, ll. 27-34. This passage suggests that righteous behavior for men and women is not all that different.

laborers are provided with no space wherein the troubles they may face are discussed. For example, will one still be damned if one keeps aside a single sheep from one's master in order to feed one's starving family? Christine's text brooks no moderation or compromise; laborers' sins are absolute—they obey proper behavior or are damned. Such pedagogical approaches are a mode of indoctrination that prepares the poor to accept their status without question because to do anything about changing their status would violate codes of proper behavior, which would result in damnation. Because the rhetoric of these passages is so stark, they also discourage thought, debate, and questions from the laborers. Christine's rhetoric reflects an anxiety about servants cheating masters but also reflects unease at the possibility of laborers being presented with any ambiguities about their proper roles and behavior.<sup>160</sup> To put this differentiation of rhetoric differently, Kreuger suggests that this episode demonstrates that “the high-born woman enjoys authority over others; the low-born woman reinforces her husband's subordination.”<sup>161</sup>

In Book Three, Christine's classism again does not allow the same degree of speculation to the prostitute as to the princess, but the chapter acknowledges a three-pronged argument that prostitutes might use to refute her call to abandon the profession; Christine rapidly contradicts these objections, leaving the prostitute no freedom to

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<sup>160</sup> I suggest here a reading of Christine's rhetoric comparable to David Aers's reading of Chaucer's *Criseyde* in which Aers finds Chaucer's portrayal “an exploration of the ways in which individual action, consciousness and sexuality, the most intimate areas of being, are fundamentally related to the specific social and ideological structures within which an individual becomes an identifiable human being.” I believe that we must examine Christine's rhetoric for how it shows not her individuality but her response to the social and ideological structures within which she operates. David Aers, *Chaucer, Langland and the Creative Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 118. Further, Kreuger notes the close alignment of sex and class in other of Christine's works, saying of *Livre de Duc des Vrais Amans* that “it reflects the circularity of class and gender in social organization. Even as she [Christine] transforms romance conventions to reflect on a noblewoman's condition, [...] she reinforces class privileges which depend, in turn, on a hierarchical gender system.” Kreuger, “A Woman's Response,” 238.

<sup>161</sup> Kreuger, “A Woman's Response,” 236.

consider her actions and choices.<sup>162</sup> Also notable is that Christine's refutation of the supposed prostitute's argument follows only after Christine spends nearly half of the chapter berating with high-handed morality those women who are prostitutes.

Contrastingly, Christine does not directly address the idle princess and rebuke her for her pride, but allows allegorical figures to chide her and encourage her to reform herself.

Christine is abrupt with the prostitutes, dispensing with naming the allegories and simply reducing the Daughters of God to the pronoun "we":

We say this to you: you miserable women so indecently given to sin, open your eyes with recognition. Go back while you have the light of day and before you are surprised by nightfall, in other words, while life remains in your body and so that death does not assail you and seize you in sin that leads you to Hell, for no one knows the hour of his end. Consider the great filth of your way of life, so abominable that besides your being the object of God's wrath, the world also disdains you. All decent persons flee from you as an excommunicated thing, and in the street look away so that they will not see you. Why does such a foul character exist in you that people talk of such abomination? You thus sunk in sin, how can a woman degenerate into such vice, who by her nature and upbringing is decent, mild and modest? (dirons ainsi: Ouvrez les yeux de cognoissance, entre vous, miserable femmes donnees a pechié tant deshonestement; retraiez vous tandis que la lumiere du jour avez et ainsi que la nuit vous surpregne: c'est a dire tandis que vie ou corps vous dure, que mort ne vous assaille et pregne en pechié qui vous conduise en enfer, car nul ne scet l'eure de sa fin. Avisez la grant ordure vostre maniere de vivre tant abhominable que avec ce que vous estes en l'ire Dieu, le monde tant vous desprise que toute personne honneste vous fuit comme chose escommeniee, et en rue destourne sa vue que ne vous voye. Et pour quoy dure en vous tant aveugle couraige que ou palu de telle abhominacion vous tenez plungees? Comment puet estre remené a tel vilté femme, qui de sa nature et condicion est honneste, simple et honteuse, qu'elle puist endurer tant de deshonesteté: vivre, boire et mengier entre homes plus vilz que pourceaulx—ne d'autre gent n'avez cognoissance—qui vous batent, traient et menacent, et desquelz tous les jours vous voiez en peril d'estre occises? Helas! pour quoy est simplece et honnesteté de femme ramenee

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<sup>162</sup> Charity Cannon Willard defers in opinion on the matter: "She [Christine] is no more indulgent to the lazy queen than to the prostitute." Willard, "Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?" 103.

en vous a si faicte paillardise?)<sup>163</sup>

Christine's Three Virtues ask questions that are much more pointed of the prostitute, and instead of allowing the whores to come to their own moral realization and ask questions of themselves, Christine presumes her allegories will have to do it. Christine also inserts passages that recall the daily experiences of the prostitute in the same way the bed chamber scene recalls the daily experiences of the princess. For example, the statement "All decent persons flee from you as an excommunicated thing, and in the street look away so that they will not see you" must have had resonance with some prostitutes, who would not have enjoyed high social status despite that prostitution was regulated and not outlawed.<sup>164</sup> Even Christine's berating and bewailing the prostitute's sinfulness may have been a familiar quotidian experience for a prostitute who had been publicly ridiculed or

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<sup>163</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.10.158. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.10.211, ll. 13-15; III.10.212, ll. 16-32. Simply as a point to emphasize the degree of difference I note in Christine's rhetoric for the prostitute in comparison with that she uses for the princess, consider what the Book of the Knight of the Tower says of unchaste women: "Allas a woman ought wel to hate her self and to curse her euylly whanne she is put oute of the nombre of the good and trewe women" Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, ed. M. Y. Offord, trans. William Caxton, Early English Text Society, Supplementary Ser. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 157, ll. 31-33. The passage does not appear in the Harley translation. While Christine does postulate a way for the prostitute to reform herself, she engages in a similar attempt to get the prostitute to loath her current life, as does the Knight here.

<sup>164</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.10.158. On medieval prostitution see: Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide, eds., *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Vern L. Bullough, "The Prostitute in the Early Middle Ages," in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1982), 34-42; Jacques Roussiad, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988); Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Sharon Farmer, "Down and Out and Female in Thirteenth-Century Paris," *American Historical Review* 103 (1988): 345-72; Tom Clegg, "Bawds, Pimps and Procurers: Images of the Prostitute in Medieval England," *Medieval History Magazine* 5 (2004): 38-45; Ruth Mazo Karras, "Sex, Money, and Prostitution in Medieval English Culture," in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 201-16; Ruth Mazo Karras and David Lorenzo Boyd, "Ut cum muliere: A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London," in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (New York: Routledge, 1996), 101-16; and Ruth Mazo Karras, "Holy Harlots: Prostitute Saints in Medieval Legend," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 1 (1990): 3-32.

who had heard sermons against fornication.<sup>165</sup> Finally, Christine's allegorical daughters of God ask questions that prompt the prostitute to consider the dangers she faces on a daily basis in her particular profession: "How can she tolerate the indecency and living, drinking and eating entirely among men more vile than swine—men who strike her, drag her about and threaten her, and by whom she is always in danger of being killed?"<sup>166</sup>

While such speculative questions receive chapter-long speculative meditational answers in Book One for the princesses, here Christine cuts off these questions that encourage speculation and does not indicate that the prostitute might reflect as the princess does. Instead, Christine immediately says that the prostitutes ought to "Take as [...] example" ("Si prenez exemple") St Mary of Egypt and St Afra, both of whom were reformed prostitutes, but no sooner does Christine proclaim this than she anticipates that prostitutes will claim that they are forced into prostitution, loathed by the world, and lack the skill to do any other type of work.<sup>167</sup> So, rather than presume that these women of a lower social station are capable of moral reasoning, Christine presumes they are incapable or entirely unwilling. The prostitute is voiceless in Christine's *Treasury* save for the voice Christine predicts she will use in order to reject the idea of moral and spiritual reform. The second half of the chapter overturns the prostitute's objections to reform entirely, rejecting any possibility that truth could be in any of the prostitute's explanations for why she is

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<sup>165</sup> According to Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski "prostitutes made many appearances in medieval sermons and town ordinances," and she notes that by "the twelfth century" efforts at prostitute reform became an option rather than "categorical condemnation." Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Christine de Pizan's Advice to Prostitutes," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 27, no. 1 (1999): 9-15, 9, 10. Reform meant either marriage or becoming a nun, but these efforts dwindle in the later Middle Ages, and thus Blumenfeld-Kosinski views Christine's advice positively because she recommends the reformed prostitute seek out an honest job rather than commit to marriage or a religious life. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Christine de Pizan's Advice," 9.

<sup>166</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.10.158.

<sup>167</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.10.159. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.10.212, l. 38. For a discussion of how Saints Afra and Mary of Egypt are models of penitence rather than imitable exemplars in Christine's address, see Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Christine de Pizan's Advice," 12-13.

engaged in sexual trade. In this way the elderly woman of Book II and the prostitute are treated similarly.

Rather than relying strongly upon allegory in her address to prostitutes, Christine minimizes the presence of the Three Virtues to the pronoun “We” and instead builds an introductory justification for why the Daughters of God might want to instruct whores. First, Christine offers this biblical echo from the Sermon on the Mount: “Just as the sun shines on the just and on the unjust” (“Et tout ainsi comme le soliel luist sur les bons et sur les mauvais”), in order to suggest that all women must be the recipients of the Daughters’ education.<sup>168</sup> As we have seen, Christine’s approach toward the prostitute has taken into account the prostitute’s quotidian experiences to some degree. Why then does Christine prohibit the prostitute from the sort of speculative reasoning that she allows the princess to engage in? The *Treasury* reflects a rhetorical form that varies according to Christine’s perceptions of the needs of a socially diverse audience. For example, the merchant class and working class people who may have heard pithy poems such as “The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” may not have had the time or the patience to read through the allegorical opening of Christine’s book, yet the princess who turned to Christine’s advice would be confronted not with a simple rhyme, but a more expansive text that echoes rhetorical structures that she might very well be familiar with from learned texts but which also encompass certain aspects of the experiential in deference to

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<sup>168</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.10.158. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.10.211, ll. 2-3. See Matthew 5:45: “That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad and raineth upon the just and the unjust.” [follows Christ’s direction to love one’s enemies.] (DV) “ut sitis filii Patris vestry qui in caelis est qui solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos et pluit super iustos et iniustos.” Matthew 5:45 (Vulg.).



her female sex.<sup>169</sup> Possibly Christine did not expect prostitutes to be well-educated or moral ladies, and as a mother has a certain authority over her child, Christine may have felt some social and moral authority over prostitutes. This consideration of Christine's rhetorical choices in addressing prostitutes in the *Treasury* crystallizes the variable rhetoric of Christine's conduct book: women of the upper classes are encouraged to engage in a speculative, reasoned discourse to determine proper behavior while women of the lower classes are increasingly relegated to a strictly audience-identified position in the *Treasury*. The tone of the passages that treats women of lesser social statuses than princesses has been shown to be more confrontational, less equivocal, and more harshly critical. The shift in both rhetorical approach and tone of the treatise indicates an attitude toward the stated audiences of Books Two and Three that disregards their ability to reason and suggests that the sinfulness of the lower classes is more horrific or dangerous than that of the ruling class.

## II. Image, Exemplarity, Pedagogy: Christine's Models for Female Behavior

Christine's use of classed rhetoric, including the use of visionary and contemplative rhetoric along with Boethian dialogue and allegory, is clear. Another aspect of *Treasury's* rhetorical profile involves the presentation of exempla; the construction of specific, concrete imagery that makes clear an abstraction; and the use of contextual specificity as a way of aiding the reader's ability to engage in imaginative

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<sup>169</sup> Blumenfeld-Kosinski remarks that "Christine clearly hopes that some charitable and literate upper-class person will read this chapter to a prostitute and convert her to a decent life." Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Christine de Pizan's Advice," 10.

speculation of situations that require a proper moral or ethical response. From the discussion of the opening of *City of Ladies*, we know that Christine and the allegorical Daughters of God favor experience over blind acceptance of authority, and so, Christine's inclusion of a more experience-driven rhetoric that deals less with speculative debates is fitting.<sup>170</sup> The least overt is Christine's frequent building of a concrete context within which she provides examples of how to behave properly. More concretely and narrowly, exempla, or short stories that provide models of behavior (sometimes positive, sometimes negative) that Christine uses in order to illustrate a principle of behavior also occur. Additionally, images and sensory imagery that recall physical memories for the audience are present and can sharply affect an audience's ability to grasp an idea, forcing them to think of an abstract concept in a much more immediate manner. Finally, Christine occasionally suggests particular persons as examples or models of proper behavior.

Book One's use of experiential rhetoric and imagery is not proportionally in excess of that used in Books Two and Three. The first image that Christine erects in the *Treasury* is not particularly associated with a type of behavior, but rather describes the entire project of her conduct guide. The Three Virtues speak to Christine, describing her writing as a type of snare to catch women and install them in the City of Ladies:

“We hope that just as the wise birdcatcher readies his cage before he may take his birds, so, after the shelter of honoured ladies is made and prepared, devices and traps may be set with your [Christine's] help as before. You will spread fine and noble nets and snares that we will provide you throughout the land in the places and localities and in all the corners where ladies and generally all women can be grabbed, taken and snared in our nets so that no one or very few who get caught can escape and all or the largest part of them may be installed in the cage of our glorious city, where they may take up the sweet song of those who are already sheltered

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<sup>170</sup> Collette writes of *Treasury* that it reflects “Christine's own experience of the intellectual and social landscape of her time” and “provides an invaluable, detailed guide to the strategies and compromises women had to negotiate in order to leverage power.” Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping,” 22.

there as sovereign ladies and who unceasingly sing hosannas in harmony with the blessed angels” (d’ycelle nous plait que tout ainsy comme le sage oiselleur apreste sa cage ains que il prengne les oisillons, voulons que après ce que le herberge des dames honnourees est faicte et preparee, soient semblablement que devant, por tan ayde pour-penséz, fais et quis engins, trebuchiez et roys beaulz et nobles, lacéz et ouvréz a neux d’amours que nous te livrerons, et tu les estendras par la terre es lieux et es places et es angles par ou les dames, et generaument toutes femmes, passent et cuerent, afin que celles qui sont farousches et dures a dominer puissant estre happees, prises et trebuschees en noz laz, si que nulle ou pou qui s’i enbate ne puisse eschapper, et que toutes, ou la plus grant partie d’elles, soyent fichees en la cage de nostre glorieuse cite, ou le doulz chant apprennent de celles qui desja y sont hebergees comme souveraines, et qui sans cesser deschantent *alliluya* avec la teneur des beneurez angelz.)<sup>171</sup>

This image is foregrounded as a means of presenting the whole of Christine’s purpose in writing the *Treasury*—i.e. gain citizens to continue filling her City of Ladies that she erected with the help of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice. The “prey” discussed here is avian; like birds the women will sing once they have been placed in their gilded towers, and like birdcatchers, the Three Virtues must carefully draw in their audience with rhetoric and advice that appeals to them, just as the nets and traps ensnare birds. Additionally engagement in the sport of falconry was a pastime open to most social classes by the later Middle Ages, with the prestige of the sport being determined by the rarity and expense of the type of bird one had.<sup>172</sup> The widespread nature of falconry

<sup>171</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.1.4. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.1.8, ll. 36-43; I.1.9, ll. 44-50.

<sup>172</sup> Robin S. Oggins, “Falconry and Medieval Social Status,” *Mediaevalia* 12 (1989): 43-55, 50. See also on falconry: David Scott-Macnab, “Hawking Information in the Tollemache *Book of Secrets*,” *Notes and Queries* n.s. 51, no. 4 (2004): 348-50; Dafydd Jenkins, “Hawk and Hound: Hunting in the Laws of Court,” in *The Welsh King and His Court*, ed. Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen and Paul Russell (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2000), 255-80; Maurice Keen, “Nobles’ Leisure: Jousting, Hunting and Hawking” in *Il tempo libero: Economia e società (loisirs, leisure, tiempo libre, Freizeit) secc. XIII-XVIII. Atti della Ventiseiesima Settimana di Studi, 18-23 aprile 1994*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1995), 307-22; Richard Almond, “Medieval Hunting: Ruling Classes and Commonality,” *Medieval History* 3 (1993): 147-55; Robin S. Oggins, “Falconry and Medieval Views of Nature,” in *The Medieval World of Nature: A Book of Essays*, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury, Garland Medieval Casebooks 5 (New York: Garland, 1993), 47-60; Gale R. Owen-Crocker, “Hawks and Horse-Trappings: The Insignia of Rank” in *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991*, ed. Donald Scragg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 220-37; Dafydd Huw

suggests the image is one that can be readily grasped by a varied audience. Christine avoids mentioning bird types, but this image may still particularly appeal to a noble or royal audience, suggesting that acceptance into the City of Ladies is prestigious because the so-called birds are in the company of angels, which implies the birds are rare and precious.<sup>173</sup> This image connects prestige in the real, material world and the prestige posited as available through exposure to Christine's behavioral manual, i.e. virtue that will admit one to heaven. In this manner, the passage engages women's experiential knowledge of falconry, encouraging women to elide the prestige associated with falconry with their attitude toward Christine's *Treasury*. That is, the simile provokes a mental equation that predisposes the audience to receive *Treasury* favorably. This image, however, is also strongly ambivalent in its attitude toward female freedom. *Treasury* is configured as a means of entrapment that restricts its audience's freedom. After the capture, these women are permitted to engage in a prestigious activity that would seem to express happiness and contentment, yet the voices of individual women are silenced until they join in a chorus with others, and this chorus has a monochromatic message and function, praise of God. While the image is at first appearance appealing, it simultaneously reveals the restrictive aims of *Treasury* to produce women who are less than free to behave as they will and to promote conformity to a specific type of behavior.

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Evans, "The Nobility of Knight and Falcon," in *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood III. Papers from the Fourth Strawberry Hill Conference 1988*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 1990), 79-99; and Robin S. Oggins, "Falconry in Anglo-Saxon England" *Medievalia* 7 (1984): 173-208.

<sup>173</sup> Pauline Matarasso notes the popularity of animals at courts, specifically in the household of the young Marguerite of Austria (1480-1530) when she was in the care of Anne de France. Marguerite had "ponies, dogs and falcons specially trained for her." Matarasso notes that beyond this household, "Caged birds were very popular," and Marguerite inherited one from her mother that traveled Europe with her as "princes competed for the most exotic inmates" to their "fashionable [...] menageries." Pauline Matarasso, *Queen's Mate: Three Women of Power in France on the Eve of the Renaissance* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2001), 36.

Carolyn P. Collette has described the image as “benevolence develop[ing] overtones of compulsion” and “introduc[ing] a note of menace and constraint” around women’s actions “that recurs throughout the work.”<sup>174</sup> The image is not negative enough to justify an immediate connection to Michel Foucault’s discussion of the carceral in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975, 1977 trans. into English), but in my chapter on *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, I demonstrate that there are some underlying connections between the images of the bird cages and Foucault’s concepts of behavioral surveillance and regulation.

Aside from creating her own imagery, Christine also draws upon imagery from various authorities, deploying their imagery to support her principles of behavior. For example, after providing a series of authorities that support patient suffering, Christine turns to an image from Gregory: “In praising patience St Gregory says that just as the

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<sup>174</sup> Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping,” 37, 38. Richards notes this context for the image of the birds and fowler: “The fowler’s use of deception to catch birds was proverbial in the Middle Ages and the Psalms speak twice of how the Lord can free the souls of faithful from the snares of the Devil,” as well as stating that “La Vieille speaks of the power of nature by comparing women’s desire for freedom (when they have been trapped into marriage, that is) to that of birds who have been trapped in a cage.” Richards, “Jean Gerson’s Writing to His Sisters,” 90, 91. These contexts suggest that Christine is indeed interested in co-opting control of women through the rhetoric in *Treasury*, which will engage them in proper behavior. Brown-Grant is more unequivocally positive in her reading of this image: “The image [...] of birdcatcher laying snares for women to lure them into the cage of the City, is an ironic echo of the image of the traps (‘laz’) laid by misogynist slanderers cited at the end of *Cité*. Whereas these traps set by men have only a malevolent purpose, Christine’s methods are benevolent [...] since they lead to the good of women’s souls [...]. The purpose of entrapping women in this fashion is not to exploit their predicament, [...] but to enable women to produce their own ‘song’, one about them inspired by the deeds of their virtuous fellow dwellers in the City: [...] this metaphor of women as creators of their own song anticipates one of the major themes of the *Trois Vertus*, namely the need to empower women by encouraging them to construct meaning of their lives for themselves rather than allowing slanderers to do so for them.” This reading of the image and of the voices of the women in it is quite positive, and while I do not wholly disagree with it, I must state that I disagree with the attribution of the individual woman producing her own song—it is significant that Brown-Grant employs the plural for women producing their own song because indeed, they are not allowed to produce individual songs. *Treasury* remains a prescriptive text that attempts to codify female behavior; it does not allow for idiosyncracies or for individuality, and thus I tend to read it less positively than Brown-Grant who nonetheless acknowledges the limitations of the text for modern feminists. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 179. Tracy Adams offers a positive reading of the image that I can more readily concur with: “Luring prey into a trap, then, is the metaphor Christine chooses for the method she employs in her courtesy book, and it is precisely this talent for persuading an initially unwilling audience [i.e. the people at court] that she will pass on to the women she captures.” Adams, “Appearing Virtuous,” 121.

rose flowers sweetly and is beautiful among the sharp thorns, the patient person is also victoriously resplendent among those who strive to harm him” (“Et en louant les paciens, dit cellui meismes saint [Gregory] que tout ainsi que la rose flaire souef et est belle entre les espines poingnans, la pacient creature resplendist victorieusement entre ceulx qui s’esforcent de lui nuire”).<sup>175</sup> This image crystallizes and materializes the virtue of patience; it is beautiful and delicate as a rose among thorns. Likewise the image flatters the princess by comparing her—should she practice patience—to a lovely flower who remains resplendent in the face of danger (thorns) through her virtuous conduct. Thus, Christine transforms the abstract principle into a concrete image and combines with this image the authority she has cited all along, creating a rhetorically puissant moment in the text wherein authority and concrete imagery deliver a rhetorical lure.

One peculiar aspect of this last image is its appeal to something that Christine has otherwise castigated: pride. For the princess to associate herself with a beautiful rose must in some way imply a praise of her character and beauty that might easily lead her into prideful moments. Yet, later in Book One Christine appeals even more strongly to a princess’s sense of importance and desire to be liked by her people, if not to her pride. At the end of the chapter that discusses how a princess must do her best to make peace between her husband and any dissenters or enemies, Christine says that the fate of princesses who arrange such peace and avoid wars is that her subjects “pledge themselves to her, not only because she is their mistress, but because she seems to them a goddess on earth in whom they have the highest hope and faith” (“affuient a elle a refuge, non mie seulement comme a leur maistresse, mais ce semble a leur deesse en terre, en qui ilz ont

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<sup>175</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.20. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.31, ll. 71-74.

souveraine esperance et fiance [...]”).<sup>176</sup> Thus Christine rhetorically dangles the carrot before the princess she leads down the path of peaceful accord; she promises that women who make peace will be viewed favorably, but more so, be perceived as nearly divine by her subjects.

This last image approaches a key concept in *Treasury*, a woman’s reputation. Christine writes that “Prudence teaches the princess or great lady how above all things in this base world she ought to love honour and a good reputation” (“Prudence tout premierement enseignera a la princepce ou haulte dame comment sur toutes les choses de ce bas monde doit aimer honneur et bonne renomnee [...]”).<sup>177</sup> Christine presents a dialogue between the princess and Prudence that involves the explanation of how important reputation is, during which Prudence makes the following comparison:

“A lady’s good reputation is like a great odour from the body of some creature that spreads abroad throughout the world in such a way that all people may smell it. In just this way by the odour of the good reputation, which everywhere flows out from a good person, all people can have the scent of a good example.” (Et est ainsi de bonne renomnee en une personne comme se il estoit possible que du corps d’une creature ysist si grant odeur qu’elle s’espandist par tout le monde, si que toutes gens la flairassent: tout ainsi par l’odeur de la renomnee qui par tout court d’une valable personne, toutes gens peuent avoir le goust et le flaire de bon exemple.)<sup>178</sup>

This simile taps into a quotidian experience that anyone with the sense of smell has experienced, though perhaps the metaphor is a bit unsettling in its association of a good reputation with the smell of a body, but in a medieval context the scent of a body being

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<sup>176</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.9.24. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.9.36, ll. 75-77. Sharon L. Jansen notes that Christine actually wrote to Isabel of Bavaria, Queen of France, in 1405 to encourage the princess to try to work for peace between the dukes of Burgundy and Orléans. Sharon L. Jansen, *Debating Women, Politics, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 127-28.

<sup>177</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.41, l. 11-14.

<sup>178</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.29. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.42, ll. 46-51.

good may have been readily recognizable to Christine's audience through saints' lives that feature miraculous good smells emanating from martyrs and saints during their torture or the incorruptibility of their bodies post mortem.<sup>179</sup> The image also touches upon a frequent theme in Book One, that the princess must be a mirror or idealized version of behavior that her citizens can copy.<sup>180</sup> Likewise, this imagery develops the most important tenet in Christine's *Treasury*: a lady must maintain her reputation.<sup>181</sup> In fact, so

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<sup>179</sup> See for example, "The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna" whose burning body produced "a most sweet perfume, like the breath of frankincense or some other precious spice." Mary-Ann Stouck, ed. *Medieval Saints: A Reader* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1999), 7. Karen Green notes that Christine may be referring to Ecclus. 49:1. Green, "From *Le Miroir*," 110, n. 34.

<sup>180</sup> Such notions are common in conduct literature: those in power are able to influence those beneath them to behave righteously if they behave righteously themselves. This idea recurs in Christine's chapter on Prudence's teaching that a wise princess will keep her court in order: "We say generally to all women of all countries that it is the duty of every lady and maiden of the court, whether she be young or old, to be more prudent, more decorous and better schooled in all things than other women. The ladies of the court ought to be models of all good things and all honour to other women, and if they do otherwise they will do no honour to their mistress nor to themselves" ("nous disons generaument a toutes de tous pais qu'il apertient a toute dame et demoiselle de court estre plus sage, plus rassise, et meïux moriginee en toutes choses—soit joenne ou vieille—que autre, car elles doivent estre exemple de tout bien et de tout honneur aux autres femmes; et se autrement le faisoient point ne feroient d'onneur a leur maïstresse ne a elles meïsmes"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.18.51-52. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.18.73, ll. 40-46. See also this, which is said of women who are humble and accept Christine's behavioral guidance: "they will be a good example to other women. And it will be said of them what is said in the common proverb: 'He who is good, prudent, and wise smells sweet as a rose'" ("elles seront de bon exemple aux autres femmes, et dira l'en d'ycelles ce qui est dit ou proverbe commun: Qui des bons est, souef flaire"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.121. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.164, ll. 124-26.

Brown-Grant notes that Christine is familiar with the concept of a mirror as inspiration for "its readers to imitate virtuous forms of behaviour which they should then disseminate by their own deeds" since she had already "applied" it "in her earlier 'mirrors for men.'" Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 180. Forhan discusses the mirror generally, suggesting it is "part of the process of self-examination. Just as we look in the mirror to inspect ourselves, so too a mirror allowed the reader an opportunity for self-reflection. [...] A mirror also provides a model for comparison with examples of virtuous behaviour." Forhan, *The Political Theory*, 30-31. See also Ritamary Bradley, "Backgrounds of the Title *Speculum* in Medieval Literature," *Speculum* 29 (1954): 100-15 and Benjamin Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1985).

<sup>181</sup> A sample letter that a princess's chaperone can write to an unfaithful princess includes another image of a good reputation: "O God, if all great ladies (and indeed all women) only knew how becoming good manners are in them, they would put more effort into having them than some other adornment, for there is no precious jewel that can adorn a lady so well!" ("Ha! Dieux! se toute grant maïstresse, voire toute femme, savoit bien comment beau maintien lui est avenant, plus mettroit peine a l'avoir que quelconques aultre parement, car il n'est joyau precieux qui tant la peust parer"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.27.83. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.27.117, ll. 206-09. Compare also advice given to ladies at court in Book Two in the course of suggesting overfamiliarity with men is dangerous:

the more a thing is worthy, noble and precious, the more it ought to be valued for its rarity and held in great esteem. And so it is that each honourable, good and wise woman



important is this precept that the latter portion of Book One (Chapters 24 through 27) is addressed to women charged with guardianship of a princess. In the first of these chapters Christine employs a set of double images in order to impress upon the guardian the importance of aiding the princess in maintaining her reputation, mainly by making sure that she engages in “wise conduct and high moral standards, such that no voices may be raised nor words spread against her honour” (“sage gouvernement et bonnes meurs, et tellement que nulle voix ne parolles puissent sourdre contre son honneur” [...]).<sup>182</sup> Christine’s imagery emphasizes the point that once good conduct is habitual and expected, it is less traumatic for the princess both in terms of consequences from the outside world and in terms of how she responds to her guardian’s wise counsel. Christine writes:

It is a very much more difficult thing to put out a fire when it has ignited and engulfed a house than to see to it that it never gets started. Therefore, the wise housewife, constantly on her guard to avoid any possible danger, often checks over the house, especially in the evening, for fear that some careless servant may have left a candle or wick or something else lying around that might prove dangerous. In just the same way a young lady’s chaperon, considering what she will have to do in the way of bending the twig when it is young, will want to try as best she can to bend her mistress in such a way that she may ever after remain so. Therefore, gradually and not suddenly, lest the twig snap, she will seek the means to attain her ends and the desired result. (C’est trop plus forte chose d’estreindre le feu quant il a esprise et embrasee une maison que ce n’est a garder qu’il ne s’i

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ought to have the reputation for being an excellent treasure and a notable and singular person, worthy of honour and reverence. Since she is like this and wishes to be considered so, it is not appropriate that she be too generous with her greatest treasures, that is, with the intimacy of her most honourable person. (chascun scet que tan test une chose plus digne, plus noble et de greigneur value, plus doit estre tenue en grant chierté et moins commune. Or est il ainsi que toute femme honourable, bonne et sage doit estre repute comme un beau tresor et une notable et singuliere chose digne d’onneur et de reverence. Doncques, puisqu’elle est telle et y veult estre tenue, il n’apertient point que trop grant marchié ne largece face de ses tres grans tresors—c’est assavoir de l’acointance de son honnourable personne—)

Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.3.96. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.3.133, ll. 84-92. As with the images of the rose and goddess on earth, this image appeals to pride.

<sup>182</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.24.65. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.24.92, ll. 50-51.

esprengne, et pour ce la sage mainagiere, qui a toutes heures est sur sa garde d'eschiver les perilz qui peuvent avenir, cherche souvent par sa maison—par especial au soir—de paour que aucune maisgnee malsoingneuse ait laissé chandoile ou mocheron ou autre chose en voye dont damage puisse venir: tout ainsi ceste sage dame, pourvue de ce qu'elle aura a faire, en la maniere que on ploye la verge quant elle est joenne si comme on veult, avisera a son pouoir de mettre en tel ploy sa dicte maistresse qu'a tousjours mais y puisse demourer. Et pour ce de loing, et non mie tout a coup que la verge ne brise, yra querre ses commencemens pour venir et atteindre a ses conclusions et ad ce qu'elle voudra mettre a fin [...])<sup>183</sup>

The first image recapitulates a Middle French proverb: “‘To guard against something as against fire’ (*Il faut se garder comme du feu*).”<sup>184</sup> The proverbial nature of the image forces the princess’s guardian to think about and apply the proverb to the situation of the princess’s reputation—i.e. Christine encourages the chaperone to consider that it is easier to maintain a good reputation than try to overcome rumors that assail a bad reputation. The risk and danger involved are solidified by the real life concerns over fire. The proverb and the physical nature of this imagery suggest that Christine’s tone has shifted at the end of Book One: her rhetorical needs are addressed to a slightly less educated group of women—no longer princesses but their guardians. There is less need for insightful self-examining allegorizations; instead a direct metaphor conveys to the chaperone the importance and seriousness of her duties, which are overtly connected to tangible dangers.

The second image, likewise presents the chaperone with an easily grasped concept—that of a twig that can bend more readily than a branch.<sup>185</sup> Thus, the somewhat

<sup>183</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.24.65. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.24.92, ll. 56-63; I.24.93, ll. 64-69.

<sup>184</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, 178, n.3.

<sup>185</sup> Christine also suggests that women of court regulate themselves and guarantee good behavior through habit. Specifically she discourages familiarity with men and she anticipates a disagreement from the court ladies by providing the following image: “although it is unpleasant, submission is good when it prevents a greater wrong, just as the bridle annoys and displeases the horse, but nevertheless keeps it from stumbling

abstract behavior of the princess who is malleable early in her development is made concrete in the image of the twig; allegory and debate are replaced with tangible images. The image of the twig has obvious connections to a well-tended garden overseen by a dutiful gardener, which is an implicit comparison between the work of the Three Virtues and the chaperone's guardianship of the princess, but as with the bird cage imagery, the bending of the twig suggests the use of power and authority to shape and control the princess.<sup>186</sup> These types of images reveal the subtle program of control in Books One and

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into a ditch" ("ad ce que la subgection est bonne, quoy qu'elle desplaise, quant elle garde de plus grant inconvenient, tout ainsi que la bride anuye et desplaist au cheval, mais nonpourtant elle le garde aucunes fois de trebuchier ou fossé"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.3.95. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.3.132, ll. 62-66.

Though not an image, Christine also specifically refers to St Jerome on the issue of self-control: "one can overcome nature by virtuous diligence. So that the great benefits may not escape you, you must master even bodily sleep and all your senses, which you can do through Diligence, for even nature can be mastered and controlled by this virtue, that is, by a great desire to attain control over one's own body by the spirit. This is very necessary for a good nun" ("dist il, et suppedite nature par vertueuse diligence, afin que les haulz biens ne te soient empechiéz, —c'est que tu faces tant que tu maistrises meismes sommeil corporel et tous tes sens, lesquelles choses tu puez faire par diligence; car meismes nature puet estre maistrisse[e] et domptee par celle vertu, c'est a dire par grant cure de vouloir atteindre a gouverner selon l'esperit son proper corps, lesquelles choses sont neccessaires a bonne religieuse"). This passage is reliant on an authority but also promotes the self-regulation that the remainder of *Treasure* also supports, though much more overtly. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.123. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.168, ll. 90-97.

<sup>186</sup> An authority-provided image occurs in Book One, Chapter 9 that employs the same sort of logic as the twig image, i.e. changing someone's opinion can take time: "Solomon says in Proverbs, in the twenty-fifth chapter: 'By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.' That is, gentle speech softens and breaks its hardness just as the water by its moisture and coldness extinguishes the heat of the fire" "Et ad ce propos dist Salemon es *Proverbes*, ou 'xxv' chapitre: Douleur et humilité assouagist le prince et la langue mole (c'est a dire la douce parole) fleschit et brise sa durté, tout ainsi comme l'eaue par sa moisteur et froidure estaint la chaleur du feu". Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.9.24. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.9.35, ll. 62-66. Similar images recur in *Treasure*, especially in Chapter 13 of Book Two wherein Christine deploys many authorities such as this one, mostly to support her claims for how nuns should behave, but also explicit quotations from sources that employ imagery: "St Ambrose in the first book of the *Offices* says: 'Benevolence is like the common mother of all, for it so couples and joins people together that they are brothers, loyally loving each other's welfare and sad at another's misfortune. Removing Benevolence from an assembly of people would amount to taking the Sun away from them.' And then he says, 'Benevolence is like a fountain who refreshes those who are thirsty. Benevolence is a light that lights both itself and others. Benevolence engenders Peace and breaks the sword of Anger. It makes many into one and, to sum up, it is of so great power that it can prevail over nature'" ("saint Ambroise ou *Premier livre [des Offices]* dit: Benivolence, fait il, est ainsi que la commune mere de tous, car elle couple et aunist tellement gens ensemble que ilz sont comme freres et loyaulz, amans le bien l'un de l'autre. Elle les fait joyeux du bien l'un de l'autre et tristes du contraire. Et qui osteroit benivolence d'une assemblee de gens, autant vouldroit que on leur ostast le soleil. Et puis dist il: Benivolence est ainsi comme une fontaine qui rassasie ceulz qui ont soif; benivolence engendre paix, brise le glaive de courroux; elle fait tout un de plusieurs,—et a tout dire, elle est de si grant poissance que elle

Two that becomes more overt in the increasingly sermonic style of Book Three. This shift in rhetorical approach reflects the shift in announced audience, yet other imagery that appears in the *Treasury* is similar in nature to the proverbial fire imagery above even though it is addressed to a hypothetical princess. That is, as part of the section of Book One that addresses the chaperones of princesses, Christine includes a sample epistle that can be copied, letter for letter, and given to her mistress should that mistress engage in questionable conduct such that her reputation has fallen into question. In this letter Christine includes exempla as well as two images of fire, one distinctly proverbial, and the other not. The first image is: “neither men nor women may be so sure of themselves that they can be certain always to love in moderation and prevent the affair from becoming known, as I have said before. Indeed it is impossible, for there is no fire without smoke, although there is quite often smoke without fire” (“ne soit nul ne nul[le] si assure de soy qu’elle se rende certaine de soy, quelque bon propos qu’elle ait de garder tous-jours mesure en si faicte amour. Et qu’il ne soit sceu, comme j’ay devant dit, certes c’est chose impossible: car feu n’est point sans fume, mais fume est souvent sans feu”).<sup>187</sup> This first image is fairly direct: love can be difficult to hide, all the more so because it is sometimes suspected where it is not (earlier in this letter Christine has the chaperone direct the princess’s attention to ladies who have lost their honor or lives because they were suspected of adultery). This image is readily accessible both to the direct audience of the letter—the unfaithful princess—and to the pseudo-author, her chaperone who could easily have been familiar with the Middle French proverb: “*Nul feu*

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puet par sus nature”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.124. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.169, ll. 129-33; II.13.170, ll. 133-39.

<sup>187</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.27.82. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.27.140, ll. 155-59.

*sans fumée* ('No fire without smoke')."<sup>188</sup> The second fire image in this letter comes in response to a predicted objection that the unfaithful princess may make: her actions are justified by an unhappy marriage. Christine's sample letter rejects this argument with the unequivocal logic in the direct statement that "The person who sets fire to his own house in order to burn down his neighbour's commits a very great folly!" ("car trop fait grant folie cil qui met le feu en sa maison pour ardoir celle de son voisin [...]").<sup>189</sup> Again, the imagery in the letter underscores the seriousness and danger involved with extramarital affairs—Christine literally implies marital affairs are like playing with fire.<sup>190</sup> This image also encapsulates the sexual double standard for women in the Middle Ages; they were to accept patiently their husband's infidelities and were not to seek out their own sexual gratification.

As this last image demonstrates, not all imagery in Book One is positive. In Chapter 4, in the context of correcting the pride of princesses, Christine's allegorical figure love and fear of God asks the princess: "What advantage do you have over any one else? What advantage would a pile of earth covered by finery have over one that was under a poor rag?" ("Quel avantage as tu, ne que un aultre? Neant plus que aroit un tas de terre couvert d'un parement de celui qui seroit soubz une povre flossoye").<sup>191</sup> This image directs the princess away from her material possessions—the coverings she may put on

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<sup>188</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, 180, n. 3.

<sup>189</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.27.82. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.27.116, ll. 177-78.

<sup>190</sup> The letter also includes another negative image of extramarital affairs: "you may be sure that one could as easily plumb an abyss as enumerate all the perils and evils in this kind of amorous adventure, and do not imagine otherwise, for it is exactly as I have said" ("Soiez certaine que aussi tost on espuiseroit un abisme comme on pourroit raconter tous les perilleux maulz qui sont en ycelle voye amoureuse."). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.27.85. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.27.119, l. 265-67.

<sup>191</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.8. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.14, l. 13-15.

her body—and toward the corporeality of her own body and encourages her to reject pride and recall her created nature, as specified in Genesis 2:7: “And the Lord God formed man of the slime [clay] of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”<sup>192</sup> The imagery asserts that the princess, like all humanity, is nothing but dust and therefore ought to eschew pride. The recourse to biblical authority in the imagery and exempla that Christine employs is not unusual. In the same chapter she refers to Augustine’s image of the ladder of virtues and claims that he is “speaking especially to you [the princess]” (“nommeement parlant a vous”) when he writes about the importance of humility being the first virtue that allows the princess “to go as high as [she] wish[es]” (“yrez tant hault que vous vouldrez”).<sup>193</sup> Additionally, again in the chastisement of pride she asks the princess, “Have you forgotten how Our Lord punished for his pride Nebuchadnezzar, who was king of Babylon and so great a prince that he feared no one?” (“As tu oblié comme Nostre Seigneur puni par son orgueil Nabugodonozor, qui estoit roy de Babiloine, et si grant prince que il ne redoubtoit tout le monde?”)<sup>194</sup> Biblical allusions are multi-functional for Christine: she employs biblical

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<sup>192</sup> Gen 2:7 (DV). “formavit igitur Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae et factus est homo in animam viventem” Gen 2:7 (Vulg.). See also Gen 3:19 (DV): “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.” Gen 3:19 (Vulg.): “in sudore vultus tui vesceris pane donec revertaris in terram de qua sumptus es quia pulvis es et in pulverem revertis.” Gen 3:23 (DV): “And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken.” Gen 3:23 (Vulg.): “emisit eum Dominus Deus de paradise voluptatis ut operaretur terram de qua sumptus est.”

<sup>193</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.119-20. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.163, l. 84, 95.

<sup>194</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.11. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.19, ll. 151-53. Christine also occasionally references non-biblical, historical figures as models of behavior—good or bad. For example, after discussing Nebuchadnezzar, she mentions “the great king of Persia, Antiochus [...] and also the Emperor Xerxes” (“le grant roy de Perse, Anthiocus, et aussi l’empereur Xerces”) as further examples of overly prideful humanity. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.11. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.19, l. 154. Later she offers a positive example: Titus, the first-century emperor who was so generous that he “was known as the benefit, the relief, and the help of all persons” (“renommee par sa largece que on l’appelloit le bien, le secours de toute personne, [...]”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.20.54. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.20.77, ll. 18-19. She also offers as a model to young widowed princesses: “The most noble

echoes in her imagery at times and recalls to mind the stories of well-known biblical figures in order to persuade her audience of the wisdom of behaving properly. Christine also views envy, not just pride, as a problem women must combat inwardly, and so warns women in Book Two to “so well govern [their] heart[s] with wise and good reason that [they] will never have in [themselves] the fatal worm of this treacherous envy, which destroys the soul of the one who harbours it and gnaws at and kills the heart and the will” (“pourverra si bien son courage de sage et bon avis qu’elle n’aura ja en soy le mortel ver de celle fausse envie qui destruit l’ame a qui la porte, et runge et deffruit le ceur et

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widowed queens and princesses of France [...]. That is, Queen Jeanne, Queen Blanche, the Duchess of Orleans [...] and likewise others who conduct themselves according to such goodness and wisdom that they may always be examples of good and wise living to those women who come later” (“les tres nobles roynes de France et princepses en leur veuvage [...] la royne Jehanne, la royne Blanche, la duchece d’Orliens, [...] et semblablement d’autres, qui en celle maniere se gouvernoient et en toute bonté et sagece qu’a tousjours mais pourront estre exemplaire de bien et sagement vivre a celles a venir”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.23.62. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.23.88, ll. 58-63; I.23.89, l. 64. Christine cites a number of holy royal figures in praise of the contemplative life: “St Louis, King of France, [...] the wife of king Clovis of France and St Badour and St Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary.” (“Saint Loys de France, [...] la royne femme du roy Clovis de France, aussi sainte Baudour, sainte Helibeth royne de Hongrie”) Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.7.18. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.7.27, l. 57; I.7.58, ll. 65-67. Christine also praises the Countess of Eu in her chapter addressed to women who live on estates as she was “a wise estate manager who felt no shame in occupying herself in the perfectly respectable work of household duties, to the extent that the profit that resulted was worth more annually than all the income from her land” (“la sage et prudent mainagiere, [...] qui n’avoit point de honte de s’emploier elle meismes en tout honneste labour de mainage, tant que plus valoit le prouffit qui en yssoit que toute la revenue de sa terre”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.10.115. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.10.156, l. 116, ll. 117-20. Esther is cited as an example of a woman’s patience with her husband. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.13.37. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.13.53, ll. 31-33. St Nicholas is also an exemplar of those who practice charity. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.10.25. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.10.38, ll. 42-43. Judith is cited as a model of chastity for nuns; see Judith 15:9-10. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.124. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.169, l. 123. In Book Three the only exemplum of any length concerns praise for the Greek king Lycurgus who held that “young people should honour and revere the elderly,” (“les joennes gens portassent tres grant honneur et reverence aux anciens”) and thus this rule is recommended to young people as appropriate behavior. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.7.150. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.7.201, ll. 17-18. Additionally, in Book Three she recommends “Our Lady, St Catherine, and all virgins” (“Nostre Dame, vers sainte Katherine et toutes vierges”) as examples to follow and whose “biographies” (“les vies”) virginal women should “eagerly read” (“lise volentiers”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.5.146. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.5.196, l. 63, 64. In Book Three Christine suggests that young women respect their elders because “they [elders] have within them (in their common sense and knowledge) a rod of correction for you [young women]” (“ilz ont avecques eulx, en leur sens et savoir, le baston de correction qui vous appartient: [...]). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.7.151. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.7.203, ll. 55-56.

l'entencion").<sup>195</sup> Sin is transformed into a literal parasite that can destroy one from within, suggesting again Christine's increasing propensity in Book Two to clarify abstract sin through tangible image. Additionally, this image carries the implications of shame associated with disease and contagion, much like the images of mangy sheep representing the infectious gossip of women at court that I discuss below and of the plague pustules of pride affecting the individual princess that I discuss above. These images render intangible faults and sins into specific conditions understood through the humiliating lens of disease and sickness. The cumulative effect of these images is to shame the reader into avoiding the sins so described lest that reader succumb to the soul sicknesses that these images describe.

To return to Christine's imagery that draws upon accepted authorities, as the imagery from St Gregory's praise of patience above flatters the princess into proper behavior, Christine also draws upon the imagery of authorities in order to shame the princess into right action. For example, her chapter on charity immediately jumps into a quotation from St Basil which ends with a shame-instigating image: "You are a thief and you steal from God if you are able to go to the aid of your neighbor and yet you do not help him" ("Si es larron ou laronnesse et embles a Dieu, se tu puez secourir ton prouchain et tu ne le secours").<sup>196</sup> Here the potent example of a thief becomes identified with the uncharitable princess, an identity no princess would wish to adopt.<sup>197</sup> The visual appeal of this image is not such that it overwhelms the more obvious cognitive

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<sup>195</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.4.98. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.4.135, ll. 38-41.

<sup>196</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.10.25. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.10.37, ll. 19-20.

<sup>197</sup> Christine underscores the principle of wise spending in Book Two by cautioning baronesses and the like to avoid dressing to excess and not to give in to fashion "Just as sheep follow each other" ("ainsi que les berbis suivent l'une l'autre"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.11.116. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.11.158, l. 28.



dissonance of a noble personage (i.e. princess) being identified as a thief, especially when nobility are enjoined to provide charity and, at times, largesse. The thief-princess is therefore a deeply shaming image not because it is associated with physical degradations such as disease but because it is a patent attack on a princess's very identity, reputation, and honor. It is indeed an inversion of her identity, suggesting her spirit does not match her material status. Such negatively striking images supported by authorities are also directed at women of lower station. For example, in Book Two Christine warns the women of court to avoid flattery for "a doctor of the Church said quite rightly that the flatterer by his talk might as well drive a nail into the eye of his master or mistress; that is, he blinds him or her by his flatteries" ("dit trop bien un saint docteur que le flatteur par sa parole fait tout ainsi que se il fichoit un clou en l'ueil de son maistre ou maistresse, c'est a dire qu'il l'aveugle par ses blandices").<sup>198</sup> The rhetorical effect of this comparison is a jarring juxtaposition of physical violence with poor behavior. That is, a good servant may well never think about physically attacking his or her mistress, but may occasionally turn a blind eye to her follies or encourage them with flattery; Christine's image argues that such blindness also blinds the mistress to her faults and while not overtly violent, as is the image, flattery does indeed damage the mistress.<sup>199</sup> Another layer of meaning in

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<sup>198</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.91. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.127, ll. 104-07.

<sup>199</sup> Christine also faults those servants and ladies in waiting who would cover up or hide her mistress's misbehavior: "But whatever cause prompts you to do it, you do wrong, and in so doing you resemble the blind man who leads another blind man and both stumble into the ditch" ("mais quelque cause qui t'y meuve, tu fais mal et en ce faisant tu ressembles l'aveugle qui meine l'autre aveugle, et tous deux trebuchent en la fosse"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.92. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.128, ll. 126-28. This passage echoes the biblical parables found in Matthew 15:14 ("Let them alone: they are blind and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit" (DV). "Sinite illos caeca sunt duces caecorum caecus autem si caeco ducatum praestet ambo in foveam cadunt" (Vulg.)) and Luke 6:39 ("Can the blind lead the blind? Do they not both fall into the ditch?" (DV). "numquid potest caecus caecum ducere nonne ambo in foveam cadent" (Vulg.)).

this image is its sense of treachery—the betrayal of a flatterer is explicitly made equivalent to the servant who lacks fealty and violently attacks his or her lord. This concept of the unfaithful servant recurs in *Treasury*, as we have seen, in Christine’s vivid portrayal of servants and cooks who manipulate their masters and steal from them. Similar to the treasonous flatterer is an image with which Christine describes court gossips in Book Two:

the consequences of slander are well expressed by what is written of the man who decided to declare war on heaven and drew a bow against the sky, and the arrows returned on to his own head and wounded him. In just the same way the slander that the person who bears a grudge speaks of his enemy rebounds on to him and wounds his soul and his honour (fut trop bien comparee par exemple a mesdit ce qui est escript d’un qui vouloit prendre guerre au ciel, et traioit d’un arc au ciel contre les nues, et les fleches retournoient sur son chief et la navroyent: tout ainsi le mesdit que le haineux fait de son adversaire retourne sur lui et navre son ame et son honneur)<sup>200</sup>

Christine creates a concrete metaphor that suggests the consequences for someone who is careless with the reputations of others: the rebounding arrow neatly implies how through

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Despite the imagery that discourages flattery and conspiracy to commit ills, Christine does provide examples of servants who aid their mistresses under certain circumstances and deems these actions to be charitable:

the good servant ought [...] to protect her mistress in all dangers and defend her as she would her own child. This is just what happened in the case of a lady whose maid prevented her from being surprised in a compromising situation by which she might have lost her honour. As soon as she learned of the situation the maid shrewdly went to the barn and started a fire so that everyone would rush there, and her mistress meanwhile could get away. Another maid found her mistress in despair and wanting to kill herself for shame of being with child without being married. She comforted her and dissuaded her from this wicked wish and let it be known that she herself was pregnant so that when the child came she could say that it was hers. Since the deed [infidelity] is already done [...] in order to protect another person from despair or from taking the wrong course of action, provided that one is not an accomplice to the act of sin, it is not wrong to do this sort of thing, but a very great charity (la bonne servante [...] la conforta et osta de ce mauvais vouloir, et elle meismes, afin que quant l’enfant venoit qu’elle peust dire que il fust sien, fist entendre qu’elle estoit grosse; et par celle voye la sauva de mort et garda de deshonneur. Et telz choses faire puis que la chose est faicte et le conseil en est pris pour garder autrui de desesperacion ou de prendre mauvaise voye—mais que au fait du pechié on ne soit consentant—, n’est pas mal, mais tres grant charité).

Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.93. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.128, ll. 149-50; II.2.129, 169-76.

<sup>200</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.6.103. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.6.142, ll. 64-65; II.6.143, ll. 66-69.

gossip one can lose one's own reputation and be considered less trustworthy.

Additionally, like the treasonous servant who blinds her mistress with flattery, the gossip is aligned with the proud who turn against God. The sin of the mouth is elevated to the level of the most serious sin: pride. The rebounding of the arrows also neatly joins the violence gossip can do to a victim's reputation with the social betrayal and thus spiritual violence it does to the gossiper's soul.<sup>201</sup>

The motif of the unfaithful servant is also apparent in Chapter 7 of Book Two where Christine says that the ladies who gossip about their mistresses and hide this gossip from the mistress "will be just like the bad sheep that is mangy and infects the others" ("feront tout ainsi que la mauvaise berbiz qui est roingneuse donne et depart de sa roingne aux autres").<sup>202</sup> The gossip-oriented servant is dangerous because she will spread her bad behavior; the invisible corruption of the lady's court is rendered visible with this image of a sick and contagious animal. This image is something both physically familiar to anyone who has seen flocks of sheep and also shame-inducing, as is the image of the uncharitable princess labelled a thief discussed above. This image, however, is also rhetorically balanced by an image of a positive model of how a princess's court ought to function that discusses specifically women who gossip about other women. In condemnation of such practices Christine states:

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<sup>201</sup> Another image that marries violence with the elaborations of sin is Christine's discussion of Envy: Christine says, "never was serpent's sting, thrust of sword or other wound so envenomed or so dangerous as is the tongue of an envious person, for it strikes and often kills both itself and another, and sometimes in both soul and body" ("oncques morsure de serpent, cop d'espee ou autre pointure ne fut tant venimeuse comme langue de personne envieuse, car elle frappe et tue souvent soy et aultre, et aucunes fois en ame et en corps"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.8.108. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.8.148, ll. 44-47. This statement and image derives from a French proverb: "'Worse than a stroke with a sword is one with the tongue' (*Pieur est coup de langue que d'espee*)." Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, 181, n. 3.

<sup>202</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.7.105. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.7.144, ll. 42-43.

the court of a princess ought to be like a well-regulated abbey where the monks have an oath that they will say nothing to outsiders about their secrets or anything that may happen among them. In just the same way ladies and women of court ought to love and support each other like sisters. They ought not to quarrel with one another in the ladies' apartments, nor betray each other behind their backs like fishwives, for such things are extremely unbecoming at the court of a princess, and they ought not to be allowed. (court de princepce en tel cas doit estre tout ainsi comme une abbaye bien ordonnee, dont les moynes ont serment que aux seculiers ne dehors ne diront riens de chose qui aviegne entre eulx ne de leurs secrez. Tout ainsi se doivent amer et porter l'une l'autre comme suers, dames et femmes de court, non mie tencier ensemble es chambres des dames ne detraire en derriere come feroient harengieres, car telz choses cont trop malseans a court de princepce et ne le devroit on souffrir.)<sup>203</sup>

This set of images combines a positive model image with a degrading image that relies on class perception in order to attempt to control the behavior of women at court. That is, those who accede to Christine's proper description of behavior are like disciplined and holy monks; those who do not are considered shrill, unworthy occupants of the court. Thus Christine's addresses to women of court, like those to the princess, manipulate the audience's own self-image and sense of station. This sensitivity to station and position is also keenly at work in Christine's condemnation of religious women who "want to dance, caper, or play improper games": "Those of you who are guilty of this behave as if the devil himself were among you" ("veulent dancier, baler, jouer a jeux esbaluffrez": "celles qui se treuvent en tel estat ne pensent le contraire que l'anemi d'enfer ne soit entre elles").<sup>204</sup> Christine takes the most pointed rhetorical position she can by condemning poorly behaved religious women by inverting their status: rather than holy they are "abominable" ("abominable") when they mingle with the opposite sex or act without due

<sup>203</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.8.107. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.8.147, ll. 23-30.

<sup>204</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. Willard, II.13.182. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.168, I.108; I.13.169, ll. 110-12.

discretion.<sup>205</sup> Christine's use of imagery, then, functions along an axis of shame and praise. Positive images tend to stray dangerously close to encouraging prideful sentiments and also imply that a princess who achieves a laudable reputation can employ that reputation to her advantage in order to maintain social control.<sup>206</sup> Conversely, negative images offer portraits of shame that may operate through the inversion of a princess's nature or through a more visceral association of negative, shameful behavior with disease, contamination, and social class inferiority.<sup>207</sup>

Alongside the vivid imagery Christine employs in *Treasury* appear a number of exempla that praise and blame the same types of behavior she praises and blames with

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<sup>205</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.124. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.169, l. 109. In her chapter on virginity Christine again reiterates the importance of proper behavior for virgins, though in Chapter 5 of Book Three she addresses both girls who are yet to marry and women who intend to remain virgins for the purpose of religious devotion. Christine presents the shocking message that it is not enough to avoid some sin because someone who acts appropriately in one way and says prayers and devotions but sins secretly is like the person who "would present the King with an excellent and beautiful dish all mixed up with filth and garbage" ("presenteroit au roy une tres belle et bonne viande toute entremeslee d'ordure et de punaisie"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.5.145. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.5.195, ll. 27-28.

<sup>206</sup> My discussion of Christine's *Treasury* has not privileged her discussion of the rhetorical skill that women, particularly at court, must be possessed of. I have discussed her devotion to the maintenance of reputation, but there is another aspect of her instruction that joins with this concern for reputation that I discuss more thoroughly in my chapter on Anne de France, but it is necessary to note here that while these images seem rather stark in their moralizations, Tracy Adams's work on Christine and Anne stresses the need for "*juste ypocrisie*" or "the art of projecting a virtuous persona in order to enhance one's reputation and therefore one's effectiveness." Adams, "Appearing Virtuous," 116.

<sup>207</sup> Christine is fond of such associations, especially when she addresses nuns. There are two references to authorities she gives back-to-back, both viewing chastity as a means of preserving not just the body but the soul from physical and spiritual contamination: "St Ambrose says in the *Book of Virginity*, praising it [chastity], 'Chastity makes an angel of man, for whoever practices it is an angel, and whoever loses it is a devil. He who keeps it is a citizen and burgess of heaven.' Of this St Bernard says that just as balm has the property of preserving the flesh from decay, so Chastity preserves the soul without corruption and maintains it in cleanliness and confirms it in renown and good odour" ("de laquelle dit saint Ambroise ou *Livre de Virginité* en la louant: Chasteté, dist il, fait d'omme ange, car qui la garde, il est comme ange, et qui la pert, il est deable; qui la garde est citoien et bourgeois de Paradis. De ceste, dist saint Bernart que tout ainsi que la bosme a propriété de garder char de porriture, chasteté garde l'ame sans corrupcion et tient en netteté et conferme la renommee en bonne odeur"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.124. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.169, ll. 115-22. In Book Three, when she addresses virgins, Christine again refers to Ambrose and Bernard, returning to the image of people made angelic through chastity, but again associating unchastity with corruption: "chastity [...] can make an agreeable dwelling for God out of a human being conceived of semen and vile matter and in sin" ("chasteté, qui de creature humaine conceue d'orde semence et en pechié puet faire un tres net et plaisant habitacle a Dieu"). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.11.161. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.11.216, ll. 31-32.

imagery.<sup>208</sup> The first extended exemplum that Christine employs in the *Treasury* is one that praises the frugal princess who does not overspend and thereby can exercise charity once her debts are acquitted. The exemplum develops slowly, avoids shocking imagery, and is explained after she concludes it:

She [the frugal princess] can be compared to the wise man who was once elected to be governor of a city. He was circumspect and noticed that several other men who had been elected to this same office had afterwards been deposed and banished, poor and deprived of all their possessions, in exile in a certain poor country where they died of starvation. He said to himself that he would provide for just such an emergency [...] In the end what happened to the others happened to him, but the provision that he had wisely put aside saved him and kept him from need. Likewise the wealth that is tied up in needless fripperies ought to be used for giving to the poor and doing good. It is the treasure that is set aside in your holy coffer that supplies you after death and keeps you from the exile of Hell. (Elle puet par exemple estre comparee a un sage home de qui il est escript que une fois il fut esleu pour maistre gouverneur d'une cite: lui, qui estoit prudent et sage, avisa que pluseurs aultres homes qui avoient esté mis et esleus en ce meismes office en avoyent après esté deposéz et banniz, et envoyéz povres et nuz de tous biens en exil en une certaine povre contree ou ilz moroient de faim; si dist a soy meismes que il pourverroit tellement a celui inconvenient [...] Si fut a la perfin fait de lui comme des aultres, mais le sage provision qu'il avoit espargnee la suava et garda de necessité. Tout ainsi l'avoir que l'en restraint de superflu estat pour donner aux povres et bien faire est le tresor qui est mis a parten sainte huche, qui sert après la mort et garde de l'exil d'enfer.)<sup>209</sup>

The exemplum praises wisdom and forethought in the material world and transfers that praise to the immaterial world in order to promote charitable giving and frugal spending among princesses. However, at the close of the exemplum, after it has been explained, the threat of damnation is also ushered into the narrative in order to emphasize the spiritual

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<sup>208</sup> Brown-Grant argues that Christine's rhetorical choices in *Trois Vertus* depart from the typical conduct book and that "Christine switches genre from catalogue [in *City of Ladies*] to courtesy book [in *Treasury*]" and thus teaches "not by the use of *exempla* but by the inculcation of moral and practical precepts." Brown-Grant notes that this is a "significant break with other works in the same genre by male contemporaries," and while I agree that the number of and detail in Christine's *exempla* is far less in degree than in male-authored texts, I still find the form to be a significant part of her overall rhetoric. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 181.

<sup>209</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.10.27. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.10.39, ll. 88-92; I.10.40, ll. 93-95, 99-104.

necessity of charity. Thus, this first extended exemplum is neither purely positive nor negative but blends praise for right behavior with condemnation of bad. The narrator also supplies the princess with a model of spiritual justice that is to be meted out at the Last Judgment, i.e. as she acts on earth, so shall she be spiritually rewarded or punished.

A second major exemplum is also concerned with issues of money and spending.

The Three Virtues tell this exemplum about appropriate rewards for servants of the court:

A person was summoned there [to a court] who was considered wise, so that the court might hear and learn his knowledge. He attended court several times and everyone felt greatly satisfied with his deeds and counsel. As a result of his knowledge he did the ruler certain just, good, and laudable services that were worthy of commendation and reward. At the same time another person frequented this same court who had the reputation of being a buffoon and was in the habit of entertaining [...] with worthless chatter in the way of mockery and jokes. It was decided that they both be remunerated [...]. A gift was given to this buffoon that was valued at forty *écus* and to the other a gift worth twelve *écus*. When we three sisters, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, saw this, we hid our faces with shame at seeing such improper valuation and such blind ignorance in a court that is supposed to be famous.<sup>210</sup> [...] The wise princess will not emulate such behavior toward fools, gossips, or other such worthless people. She will not even cultivate them. Rather she will lavish gifts upon the virtuous and those who will appreciate them and use them well. (une personne que on reputeoit a sage pour ouïr et cognoistre de son savoir; si y frequenta pluseurs fois, et se tenoit on tres content de ses faiz et diz et de l'effect de son savoir, duquel dit savoir avoit fait au dit prince ou princepe aucuns services et plaisirs bons, justes et loïsibles, dignes de remuneracion et dessertes. En ycellui mesmes temps et espace frequentoit a ycelle court une aultre personne que on reputeoit a fole, qui acoustumé avoit de server les seigneurs et dames de bourdes, [...] et de paroles de nulle valeur, si come par maniere de truffes et de faire rire. [...] un don a la dicte fole qui fu extimé a la value de ·xl· escus, et a l'autre un don de ·xii· escus, — de laquelle chose, quant ce veismes entre nous trois seurs, Raison, Droicture et Justice, muçames noz faces de honte de veoir si deconvenable extimacion et tant aveuglee decognoissance en court [...] Si ne fera mie ainsi la sage princepce qui de folz ou de foles, ou qui le contrefont, ou de rapporteurs de paroles de bourdes et de choses de nulle value; gaires ne s'acointera, ne la n'estendra mie ses dons, mais aux

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<sup>210</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.20.55-56.

vertueux bons et a ceulx qui le valent et a qui est bien employé.)<sup>211</sup>

This narrative functions in conjunction with the allegorical authority of the Three Sisters to present the outrageousness of the anonymous court in its favoring of buffoonery over wisdom; the first exemplum above relies instead upon the audience's fear of damnation, but here Christine loads allegory into the equation in order to deepen the sense of shame a princess who has paid money for frivolities might feel upon reading this example of a foolish court. The exemplum is also a negative example for the princess to note and avoid modeling her own court after. The episode also clearly privileges rationality and the function of reason at court; court is for good governance, and so it follows, the exemplum argues, that advisors who allow for such good governance to occur deserve the greatest rewards. The playfulness and social distractions of court are valued minimally, if at all in this narrative transaction, and the story suggests again that the best courts are sober and serious, not unlike the image of the well-regulated abbey used to describe a woman's court free of gossip.

Positive exempla also appear in *Treasury*, as in Chapter 16 of Book One where Christine discusses Prudence's lesson that one should not treat persons she suspects of malice toward her with malice. Christine writes:

Let us imagine a person who is altogether perfect—he would not suffer the despicable resentment that fixes itself in the human heart when he was pleasant to everyone but still not loved by everybody. We can see this principle in the person of Jesus Christ, who alone was perfect, yet Envy killed Him, as it has many good and valiant people I could mention. The better and more virtuous a lady is, the greater the war Envy very often makes against her. There is no man or woman so powerful (nor ever was, except God) who could avenge himself for every affront. (car posons que une creature fust toute parfaicte, si ne souffreroit point la despiteable envie

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<sup>211</sup> I have chosen to use a different English translation for the second portion of this quotation as it more accurately reflects the French. Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman's Mirror*, trans. Willard, I.10.117. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.20.79, ll. 59-69, 72-75; I.20.80, ll. 76-77, 79-83.



qui se fiche ou cuer humain que la personne fust au gré de tous ne amee de chascun. Et ce pouons nous veoir par la personne de Jhesu Crist, qui fut seul tout parfait, et toutevoies envie le fist mourir; et si elle fait mains autres bons et vaillans que je pourroye traire a exemple, et de tant que la personne est meilleur et plus vertueuse, tant lui fait envie, souvent avient, greigneur guerre: et si n'est nul ne nulle tant puissant ne oncques fut, fors Dieu qui de tous se peust vengier.)<sup>212</sup>

Here Christine points to Christ's life as an example of the dangers of being noticed, powerful, or important, namely that one has enemies and that often they will plot to destroy one. This comparison of life at court with the persecution of Christ unequivocally highlights what Christine considers to be the real dangers of court life for women. The overall sense of the passage implies that the patience and humility of women are not merely valuable for their ability to help them achieve spiritual salvation, but also that these same qualities will make women's existence in the changeable and flattery-driven social matrix of the court survivable.

Another negative exemplum that the Three Virtues employ appears in the first chapter of Book Three wherein the sisters insist that the instruction in the *Treasury* "is said as much for one woman as for another, so each one can take whatever part that she sees pertains to her" ("dit pour les unes que pour les autres, si en puet chascune prendre telle piece qu'elle voit qui lui apertient").<sup>213</sup> The sisters entreat their audience:

Please do not do as some foolish people do who are very comfortable when they are listening to a sermon and the preacher is talking about the obligations of some group which does not concern them. They pay close attention to it and note it carefully and say that the preacher is quite right and that it is well said, but when it comes to something that has some bearing on them, they bow their heads and close their ears, and they fancy that they are being badly wronged by being talked about. (Et ne vueillent mie faire comme aucuns folz ou folles, qui sont trop aises quant ilz sont au

<sup>212</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.16.44. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.16.62, ll. 26-35.

<sup>213</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.1.128. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.1.171, ll. 18-20.

sermon et le prescheur parle sur la charge de aucun estat qui ne leur touche, et trop bien le notent et dient que il dit voir et que c'est bien dit, mais quant ce vient ad ce qui leur puet touchier et apertenir, ilz baissent la teste et cloent les oreilles, et leur semble que on leur fait grant tort d'en parler [...]).<sup>214</sup>

This exemplum critiques improper and even hypocritical piety, adjuring women not to be blind to their own faults and sins. There is very little in the way of an actual narrative exemplum, as is often the case with Christine's exempla. Rather there is a negative exemplar of behavior. In fact, this "exemplum" represents a certain failure of the text to live up to the elaborate snares and traps proposed by the Three Virtues to be used in *Treasury* to capture their audience. Further, as I discuss below, such exempla are also near inversions of the pedagogical advice Christine provides to the chaperones responsible for the moral education of princesses.

Aside from employing exempla directly herself, Christine also advises, in Chapter 24 of Book One, that a princess's chaperone ought to use exempla to instruct the princess.<sup>215</sup> Christine, however, has some fairly strict rules about such instruction. The guardian should tell the princess "certain stories about ladies and maidens who conducted themselves very well, and how they were well received and gained honour by it, and conversely, how trouble followed those who conducted themselves foolishly" ("en leur devis de dames et de damoiselles qui se sont bien governees, comment il leur en est bien pris et l'onneur qu'elles en ont eu, et par le contraire, comment mal est ensuivi a celles

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<sup>214</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.1.127-28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.1.171, ll. 20-21; III.1.172, ll. 22-26.

<sup>215</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.24.66. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.24.93, ll. 83-90; I.24.94, ll. 95-99. See also Chapter 25 of Book One on the use of negative exempla as a mode of discouraging the princess from infidelity. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.25.72. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.25.102, ll. 167-70.

qui folement se sont portees”).<sup>216</sup> This bit of advice for the chaperone seems normal, but she is told she must also claim to have been an eye witness of the examples, to make sure the stories are “lively and interesting,” and she must insist “that she does not tell these stories for any other reason but to entertain her with their adventures” (“nouveaulx [...] ne fera pas semblant qu’elle le die pour autre chose fors ainsi que l’en compte des aventures”).<sup>217</sup> Christine’s instructions for the chaperone indicate she ought to become a skilled storyteller in order to influence her charge subtly and while simultaneously entertaining her. In fact, Christine’s instructions to the chaperone mimic the advice of Horace (65-8 BCE) to poets in *The Art of Poetry* (c. 20 BCE):

The aim of the poet is to inform or delight, or to combine together, in what he says, both pleasure and applicability to life. [...] The elders of Rome censure poetry that lacks instruction; the young aristocrats, on the other hand, scorn austere poetry. He who combined the useful and the pleasing wins out by both instructing and delighting the reader.<sup>218</sup>

I do not suggest that Christine proposes to transform a princess’s chaperone into the poetical equivalent of Horace, but she is adapting classical intellectual ideas about art, enjoyment, and composition to her pedagogical advice for those chaperones. That is, their moral instruction is not to be rote, boring, and composed of a list of didactic principles. Rather, Christine wants the princesses to absorb those principles through a diverting and exciting narrative matrix provided by the chaperone. It is also worth noting that the image of collecting women with rhetorical nets discussed above also conforms to this Horatian

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<sup>216</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.24.66. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.24.93, ll. 86-90.

<sup>217</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.24.66. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.24.94, ll. 91-93.

<sup>218</sup> Horace, “*Art of Poetry*,” trans. Walter Jackson Bate in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev. ed., ed. Hazard Adams (London: Thomson Learning, 1992), 67-74, 72. Green notes Christine’s discovery of this mode of writing when she encounters poetry in *La Mutacion de Fortune* and argues that “rhetoric, including preaching, serves to teach ethical and political truth and to win over the public” in Christine’s discussion of it. Green, “From *Le Miroir*,” 107.

principle, though not as explicitly, i.e. the rhetoric of *Treasury* ought to be like a delicate snare that will attract women to good behavior and similarly the pleasing aspect of the Three Virtues' rhetoric will draw in the princess's attention while simultaneously propounding a moral lesson.

Aside from her Horatian storytelling advice, Christine further provides a sample letter, word for word, that a chaperone who has failed to be able to prevent her charge from damaging her reputation can write to her mistress once scandal and rumor have erupted. The letter, Christine tells us, is actually from her *Book of the Duke of True Lovers* and she has simply reproduced it in *Treasury* as a model for chaperones to consult, but she notes "it is good and profitable to hear and take note of for all ladies" ("soit bonne et prouffitable a ouïr et notter a toutes haultes dames et autres").<sup>219</sup> In this sample letter, Christine provides a negative exemplum: "Take a lesson from such great ladies as you have yourself seen in your time who, for merely being suspected of such [extramarital] love without the truth of it ever being proved, lost their honour and lives from it, for there were such ladies. I swear on my soul that there was no sin, nor guilt, nor wickedness, but yet you have seen their children reproached and held in less esteem because of it" ("Prenez exemple a de telles grandes maistresses avez vous veu en vostre temps, qui pour seulement estre souspeçonnes de telle amour, sans que la verité en fust oncques atteincte, en perdoient honneur et la vie. De telles y ot, et si tiens sus mon ame que pechié ne coulpe ne villaine n'y avoient, et leurs enfans en avez veu reprouchiéz et moins prisiéz").<sup>220</sup> This exemplum is simultaneously vague and specific. No women are

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<sup>219</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.26.7. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.26.109, ll. 139-41.

<sup>220</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.27.80. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.27.113, ll. 92-97.

directly named, yet the consequences of their actions are clearly delineated. The rhetorical effect of this passage must be considered from two angles: how it affects the chaperone and how it may affect the ill-behaving princess. For the chaperone the letter and the exemplum provide a pre-set, concrete response to this specific situation. As such, they are a security against her confusion and emotions, so that rather than having to agonize over what she ought to do, Christine has supplied her with a ready-made answer: provide the princess with this letter. On the other hand, this specific exemplum may invite the chaperone's hand to innovate with the letter by adding in names, or hints of them, that are familiar to her princess. Such alteration would transform the exemplum's vagueness into an immediate and familiar story that could prompt the princess to reconsider her actions, especially if she herself has witnessed the mistreatment of a disgraced lady's children first-hand. Such an elaboration on Christine's letter would then enhance and deepen the experiential quality of the exemplum by pulling the princess's own memories of negative past events into stark contrast with her (and her children's) possible future(s), lest she reform her behavior.

For a moment, I would like to consider the overall rhetorical effect of the entirety of the specific letter provided to the chaperone. In terms of the rhetorical value to the entirety of the *Treasury*, the letter acts as a sort of beacon of aid that may be needed in a time of stress and worry for the chaperone. Essentially, this sample letter becomes an easy way for the chaperone to access received advice and implement it, and because it is so easily accessible, it makes Christine's advice all the more likely to be followed. Rather than advise the good chaperone to write a letter to reprove her mistress and warn her about the danger she is inflicting upon her reputation, Christine provides the letter so that

the chaperone merely needs to modify it to fit her circumstances. Christine's choice to provide such specific and easily employable responses to situations women may encounter renders her guidance immediately accessible and utilitarian, especially for women who may not have an excess of free time to compose letters to their mistresses; it also provides women such as these with an open pathway to rhetoric—Christine's time has been spent in constructing a rhetorically appealing letter, and "Christine [...] see[s] the art of rhetoric (qua 'speaking well') as an essential part of prudence," which she wants chaperons to have access to and by which she wants princesses to be guided.<sup>221</sup>

Rosalind Brown-Grant has also made another important analysis of the letter, and the figure of the chaperone as presented in *Treasury*, within the context of Christine's entire oeuvre: "Christine's advice against adultery which she gives to the princess [...] centres on rewriting one of the key figures in the courtly narrative of 'fol'amour': the corrupt duenna or governess character who is meant to chaperone the lady by who traditionally acts as go-between for her and her lover, of which the most famous example is [...] La Vieille."<sup>222</sup>

Chapter 2 of Book Three also explores the concepts of chastity and reputation. Within this chapter the women of rank are given much the same advice other women have been provided: dress appropriately and act sedately. Yet, as the chaperone receives a specific letter to provide her mistress and a specific rebuff for the lady's would-be lover

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<sup>221</sup> Green, "From *Le Miroir*," 109.

<sup>222</sup> Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 207. For her discussion specifically of the letter, see 210. Brown-Grant also specifies that in its original context in *Le Livre de Duc des Vrais Amans* its author, "Sebille de Mont Hault, Dame de la Tour [...] is also, by her very name, an anti-Vieille: whereas the corrupt duenna in the *Rose* betrays her mistress to the amorous host and causes the tower of her chastity to be penetrated, the Dame de la Tour is intended to be a foresighted and devoted guardian of the tower of her princess's virtue." Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 211. Willard has also made this point of the "lady-in-waiting" inverting "Jean de Meun's duenna." Willard, "Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?" 108.

in Book One, Christine provides a speech to the lady of rank who needs to rebuff a suitor. Christine offers a direct and unequivocal sample speech: ““Sir, if you have been thinking about me, please stop it! For I promise you and swear by my faith that I have no intention of embarking on such a love affair, nor will I ever have” (“Sire, se vous avez a moy pensé, veuillez vous en retraire. Car je vous jure ma foy qu’en tel amour n’ay mon entencion ne n’aray jour de ma vie [...]”).<sup>223</sup> Christine’s words here are invaluable because they are something that a lady can commit to memory and access upon the situation that she needs them. They do not, however, like the letter to the chaperone, enjoin the audience to consider them or engage in a speculative meditation on the ethics of extramarital affairs. These types of easy-to-use pieces of dialogue, like the letter to the chaperone, are at once helpful, but also clearly meant to inscribe the lady’s response within a narrow range of accepted reactions. Thus, it is appropriate that the letter at the end of Book One is lengthy, filled with imagery and dialogic questions that attempt to get the lady to reconsider having an affair, but in Book Three, what we have is a simple canned response for a woman being pursued by a suitor to provide to him in order to turn his attentions away and require fairly little reasoning or thought on the part of the lady.

The images, exempla, and pedagogical approaches Christine advocates in *Treasury* operate in complicated ways. Some images simply reinforce points she has established, some are from recognized authorities and so imbue her points with extra respectability, some provide concrete anchors of intangible principles or concepts so that their consequences are made more immediately comprehensible to the audience through comparisons, e.g. metaphors and similes. Christine’s exempla do not always live up to her pedagogical expectations for the princess’s chaperone’s moral stories, but they do

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<sup>223</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.2.134. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, III.2.180, ll. 80-82.

provide exemplars of behavior, positive or negative, to which a woman can refer once she is in a similar situation. Christine's rhetoric also increasingly allows for the inclusion of literal word-for-word responses in difficult situations, which are both useful for women who are without the time to construct morally sound advice for their charges, but which also act in a coercive manner, delimiting the parameters of acceptable responses that a good woman may have to various situations.

### **III. Underwriting Good Behavior: Authorities in the *Treasury***

The other chapters in this dissertation demonstrate a common rhetorical principle found in conduct manuals, both long and short, i.e. the use of parental or pseudo-parental authority as a charismatic influence within the text that encourages the adoption of the conduct manual's behavioral principles. Christine de Pizan's *Treasury* is, however, fairly removed from the parental relationship that commonly exists between author and audience in many works of conduct literature, but there is still a sense of removed parenthood in the *Treasury* as Christine adopts the fiction that she is writing at the behest of God's Daughters. As God is humanity's common Father, the allegories of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice are at one remove from this parent, and Christine who does their work at yet another remove. One might argue that Christine writes *in loco parentis*, not for just a single woman or group of daughters, but for *all* women.

Despite her limited use of parental charisma, Christine willingly deploys written authorities in *Treasury*. Christine's use and incorporation of *auctores* is also common for most longer treatises on conduct. With the rise of scholasticism in the twelfth century, the citation of authorities became a popular method of garnering support for and



demonstrating the rightness of one's thoughts. One need only to look at Abelard's *Sic et Non* (1120) or Geoffrey Chaucer's *Melibee* (1373-90s) in order to find examples of such argumentation according to authority.<sup>224</sup> Both the allegorical and *auctor* rhetorical traditions, then, are longstanding and learned, and Christine de Pizan's *Treasury* is indebted to both. Relatively speaking, however, Christine's treatise is fairly sparse in its use of sources, most of which are either unmarked biblical echoes or biblical citations. The *auctores* cited in Book One tend to be religious authorities when they occur early on in the Book as it deals first with religious education and then more practical matters, where there is a shift to the use of more secular authorities. Book Two's incorporation of authorities is much sparser save in the chapter directed toward religious women wherein the number of references to famous theologians and church figures peaks. Otherwise, however, Book Two is nearly devoid of named citations or even the naming of the Gospels as the source of information. Instead, Christine employs phrases such as "God says" to indicate biblical references. Book Three has by far the fewest references to authorities, with only three of nine being specifically named authorities. This structuring of the use of outside authorities suggests that Christine is keenly aware that princesses and women of the upper class and within religious orders will have more access to books and learning than laboring women, and so their knowledge of who the authorities are, beyond the Scriptures, will be more precise and written authorities may hold relatively more sway over women who have heard of them or read them than over those who have not.

Oddly, the first *auctor* in the *Treasury* is actually rejected and overturned by the

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<sup>224</sup> Karen Green expressly states that "Christine looked forward to the later growth of Renaissance humanism, and transcended medieval models of didactic literature" in her deployment of rhetoric. Green, "From *Le Miroir*," 113.

Three Virtues, just as the Three Virtues instruct Christine to reject the misogynist image of women propagated by clerks in *City of Ladies*. In their address to Christine the Three Virtues tell her that even though “Seneca says that [...] after great labour the wise person rests his mind, now is not the time to abandon good work” (“Seneque dit que quoy que l’entendement du sage après grant labour se repose, si n’est il nul temps remis d’aucune bonne oeuvre”).<sup>225</sup> After this initial rejection of authority, perhaps parallel to that same rejection of Matheolus and other antifeminist clerks that appears in *City of Ladies*, Christine employs only written authorities in support of her own behavioral principles. The next three occurrences in Book One are biblical echoes. In praise of humility, Christine notes that “according to the word of God, whosoever humbles himself will be raised up” (“selon la parolle de Dieu, qui se humiliera sera exaucié”).<sup>226</sup> This sentiment appears multiple times in the Gospels and so sets a strong precedent for the reader; Christine employs a principle repeated multiple times in the Bible, and through her adoption of the biblical idea, her own principles of conduct accrue prestige.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.1.3. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.1.7, l. 20; I.1.8, ll. 21-22. Christine does later value Seneca as a source twice: “the teaching of Seneca, [...] says, speaking of princes and princesses or powerful persons, that it is a very great merit in God’s eyes, praiseworthy to the world, and a sign of noble virtue to dismiss easily the wrong that one might easily avenge, and it sets a good example to the common people” (“l’enseignement de Seneque qui dit, en parloit aux princes et princepses ou poissans personnes, que c’est moult grant merite vers Dieu, louenge au monde et signe de noble vertu que de laisser aler legierement le mesfait de quoy on se pourroit aisement vengier; et est chose de bon exemple aux petites gens”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.20. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.30, ll. 61-62; I.8.31, ll. 63-66. The second example draws on his work *De Ira*: “which says that although it may be good for everyone to practise kindness, it is especially advisable for the prince to exercise it towards his subjects” (“qui dit que il soit bien seant toute personne d’avoir benigeté, par especial est aduissant a prince l’avoir vers ses subgiéz”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.22. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.33, ll. 129-31.

<sup>226</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.5. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.2.10, ll. 16-17.

<sup>227</sup> Matthew 23:12: “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (DV). [“Qui autem se exaltaverit humiliabitur et qui se humiliaverit exaltabitur” (Vulg.)]. Luke 14:11: “Because everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (DV). [“Quia omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur et qui se humiliat exaltabitur” (Vulg.)]. Luke 18:14: “I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (DV). [“dico vobis

Additionally, her choice of phrase so often appearing in the New Testament increases the likelihood that even a woman without a solid biblical education or literacy may have heard the phrase from a confessor or a in a sermon. The next biblical allusion is a direct quotation: “as He Himself says in the Gospel: ‘My father’s lambs love me and I watch over them’” (“si comme il meismes dit en l’Euvangile: Les oveilles qui sont de mon parc m’aiment et je les garde, [...]”).<sup>228</sup> Christine glosses this passage to indicate that the princess who loves God will be cared for by him in return. The third biblical reference occurs in a passage wherein the semi-allegorical love and fear of God chides the princess for pride: “‘Don’t you know what God says in the Gospel, that the poor are blessed and that theirs is the kingdom of heaven? And elsewhere He says that a rich man can no more enter paradise than a laden camel can go through the eye of a needle’” (“Ne sces tu que Dieux dist en l’Euvangille que les povres seront beneuréz, et que le Royaume des Cieulx est pour eulx? Et ailleurs il dist que neant plus que un chamel charge entroit ou pertuis d’un aguille, n’yroit un riche Paradis”).<sup>229</sup> Thus all three of these authorities are

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descendit hic iustificatus in domum suam ab illo Quia omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur et qui se humiliat exaltabitur” (Vulg.).

<sup>228</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.2.6. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.2.11, ll. 44-46. See John 10. Willard’s edition notes that two manuscripts contain the variation “de mon pere” rather than “de mon parc,” which would agree with the English translation I have chosen to accept here. The French translation of “de mon parc” would be something such as “of my flock” in this context.

<sup>229</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.8. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.15, ll. 30-34. Luke 6:20: “And he, lifting up his eyes on his disciples, said: Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God” (DV). [“Et ipse elevates oculis in discipulos suos dicebat beati paupers quia vestrum est regnum Dei” (Vulg.)]. Matthew 19:24: “And again I say to you: it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven” (DV). [“et iterum dico vobis facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire quam divitem intrare in regnum caelorum” (Vulg.)]. Mark 10:25: “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (DV). [“facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire quam divitem intrare in regnum Dei” (Vulg.)]. Christine makes a similar point when she references Chrysostom later in Book One: “‘Whoever wishes to have riches in Heaven should cultivate earthly humility, for in the eyes of God the one who is most grand and elevated in honours here below is not the greatest, but the one who is most just on earth is the greatest in Heaven’” (“qui veult avoir la princepté celeste, il lui convient ensuivre humilité terrestre, car envers Dieu n’est pas celui le plus grant qui est yci le plus hault eslevé en honneurs, mais celui qui est le plus juste en terre est le greigneur ou ciel”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.18-19. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.29, ll. 11-15. Similarly she quotes Paul in

employed in winning the reader over—the first and second examples with promised rewards for faith. The third example offers instead the threat of damnation as a deterrent to pride; this third example is also presented in an interrogative, discursive manner, as if prompting the princess to return to a memory she may have of these biblical lines, but also encourages her own self-testing.<sup>230</sup> So again, authority is employed by Christine to encourage self-assessment and probing of the moral conscience, as well as the support of her own behavioral precepts.

Rhetorical questions occur in another of Christine’s uses of authorities, this time in her discursive discussion of the rewards of heaven, a passage that employs an authority in conjunction with the descriptive detail associated with *enargeia* and deployed to encourage the audience to engage in imaginative contemplation of heaven as an inducement to behave such that the audience will be able to enter heaven. Christine refers to St Gregory’s homily and returns to the interrogative style:

“Where is the tongue and understanding that can comprehend or say what or how great are the joys of Paradise, to be always in the company of angels with the blessed saints in the glory of our Creator, to see the glorious visage of God and the Holy Trinity face to face, to see and look at and feel His incomprehensible light, to be relieved of all desires, to have knowledge of all learning, to be in eternal rest, never to be afraid of death, and to be assured of remaining in this blessed glory forever?” (Qui est la langue ne l’entendement qui peust comprendre ne dire quelles ne comment

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praise of charity, “charity does not seek even what is its own” (“charité ne quiert pas meismes ce qui est sien”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.19. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.30, ll. 48-49. Even in Book Three, charity remains important and there she quotes Pope Leo who describes charity as the virtue that will lead the procession of the saved into heaven: “On the day of the Last Judgement it [charity] will be carrying the banner before all the other virtues for those who in this world have loved it and lived by it. It will conduct them to Paradise” (“jour du Jugement elle sera portant la baniere devant toutes vertus pour ceulx qui en ce monde l’aront acomplie, portee et amee, qui les recevra en Paradis; [...]”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.3.139-40. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.3.187, ll. 124-26.

<sup>230</sup> The interrogative style appears again: “Do you not know that a holy doctor of the Church says that the slower the vengeance of God is in coming, the more perilous it is when it does come?” (“Mais ne sces tu que un saint docteur dit que de tant que la vengeance de Dieu plus retarde a venir, de tan test elle plue perilleuse quant elle vient, [...]?”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.4.11. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.4.19, ll. 147-49.

sont grandes les joyes de Paradis? Estre toujours present en la compagnie des angelz avec les benois saints fichiéz en la gloire de Nostre Createur; veoir le visage plein de gloire de Dieu et la Benoite Trinité face a face; regarder, veoir et sentir sa lumiere incomprehensible; estre assovy de tous desirs; avoir cognoissance de toute science en repos eternel; n'avoir jamais paour de la mort et estre assureé de a tousjours sans partir remaindre en celle glorieuse beneurté.)<sup>231</sup>

Christine's recounting of Gregory's words offers a vision of the reward that awaits those who behave righteously. The inclusion of this quotation also provides an overwhelming sense of hope; while someone may be able to fathom the pits of hell or fear damnation, the suggestion here is that one cannot fathom salvation, an infinity of being forever in the presence of a loving God, and that at best an understanding of heaven can be conveyed through the use of light as a mediating matrix of one's experience of God. The *enargeia* principle of rhetoric, however, is also at work, much as in a contemplative text the religious subject is made into a desiring subject, here *enargeia* aims at pathos to create within the audience a longing for the experience of heaven, which promises security and happiness. Both of these things stand in overt contrast to another passage in which Christine deploys *enargeia*, but this time to illustrate hell, and with only a very vague attribution to authority at first:

Holy Scripture says that it [hell] is to be deprived always and eternally of the sight of God and to be in the terrifying darkness in the company of horrible devils, the enemies of human beings. The souls of the damned wail terrible lamentations, cursing God and their parents and themselves in unimaginable torment in burning fire. In short, as Job says, it is to be in indescribable fear and in perpetual horror, and furthermore, what makes it even worse is the hopelessness of ever escaping from it. (La Sainte Escripiture dit que c'est estre privee a tousjours sans fin de la vision de Dieu, en tenebres espouentables en la compagnie des horribles deables, anemis de nature humaine, avec les ames dampnees qui gettent voix et cris et plains terribles, maudisant Dieu, leurs parens et eulx meismes en tourment inextimable en feu ardent, et a brief dire, comme dit Job, en

<sup>231</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.5.13. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.5.21, ll. 35-43; I.5.22, l. 44.

pueur merveilleuse et en perpetuelle horreur; et avec ce, qui plus enracine le mal, en desesperance de jamais en yssir.)<sup>232</sup>

The *enargeia* of this passage is even more acute than in the passage describing heaven as it is not just descriptive of the visual elements of the experience, but of the visual, the auditory, the tactile, and the emotional torments of hell. These combine together to generate audience fear, thereby encouraging the audience to eschew negative or sinful behaviors that would result in damnation. At the most basic level when Christine employs authorities they function as names to underwrite her principles of conduct,<sup>233</sup> but this role

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<sup>232</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.5.13. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.5.21, ll. 20-28.

<sup>233</sup> Examples of nominal references to authorities include:

1. the allusion to the two modes of life that are presented in Luke 10:38-42, the active and contemplative life, claiming that “Scripture mentions two paths that lead to Heaven” (“L’Escripture fait mencion de deux voies qui meinent au ciel”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.6.14. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.6.22, l. 4;
2. an excerpt from St Gregory’s *Moralia in Job*: “he says that no one is perfect if he has not patience in the face of the evils that his neighbors do him” (“dit que nul n’est parfait s’il n’a pacience sur les maulx que ses prochains lui font”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.20. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.31, ll. 68-69;
3. Solomon’s “praise of the virtuous woman” (“que recite l’epistre de Salemon de la sage femme”) is cited as justification for Christine’s praise of the Countess of Eu. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.10.115. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.10.157.22, ll. 121-22;
4. “St Paul says that charity does not seek even what is its own” (“saint Pol dist que charité ne quiert pas meismes”) Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.19. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.30, l. 48;
5. “St Paul says that if someone has all other virtues [...] and yet does not have charity in himself, all this will profit him nothing” (“saint Pol dist que qui aroit en soy toutes les autres vertus [...] et n’auroit en soy charité tout ce ne lui prouffiteroit neant”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.20. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.31, ll. 76-80;
6. in maligning women who wear too fancy headdresses Christine claims “St Paul had the very same view when he said that hair is the glory of women” (“Et ce meismes tesmoigne assez meismement saint Pol, qui dit que cheveux est le parement des femmes”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.11.117. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.11.160, ll. 80-81;
7. “Saint Augustine [...] says that two things are necessary to live well: conscience and a good reputation” (“saint Augustin [...] dit que deux choses sont necessaires a bien vivre: c’est conscience et bonne renommee”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.41, ll. 16-18;
8. John of Salisbury’s *Polycraticus* is cited as a source advocating rulers’ generosity. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.20.54. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.20.77, ll. 14-17;
9. Christine refers to Augustine and Origen in her support of the virtue of sobriety. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.123. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.167, l. 75, 79;

is also often accompanied by the source conveying an image or an *enargeia*-rich textual description for her audience; further, as I discuss below, this *enargeia* may occur in conjunction with rhetoric that encourages audience interaction with the text.

Aside from using authorities in passages that also exemplify *enargeia*, Christine uses them in passages that encourage active reading. For example, Christine posits that the princess in seeking balance between the active and contemplative lifestyles will “try hard to strike a happy medium, as St Paul counsels, and take as much as I [the princess] can from both lives according to my ability” (“je mettray peine a tout le moins de tenir le moyen, si comme saint Pol le conseille, et prendray de l’une et de l’autre vie selon ma possibilité le plus que je pourray”).<sup>234</sup> This citation of authority displays the audience resorting to the authority rather than Christine herself employing it directly, fostering a sense of reading as active process. It also constructs Christine’s audience in Book One as educated, i.e. as knowing of Paul as an *auctor* that the audience could turn to for guidance. Such occurrences of thought-stimulating authorities do not appear late in *Treasury*, only in Book One.<sup>235</sup> Louise M. Rosenblatt has argued that reading is a

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10. Christine refers to Machaut in the rejection of women dressing extravagantly. Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.6.148. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.6.199, ll. 56-57.

<sup>234</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.7.18. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.7.28 ll. 73-75.

<sup>235</sup> There is only one other occurrence of such a use of a named authority. St Basil, whose image of the thief-princess I discuss above. The citation of Basil is, however, much longer, and constructed in the second person, encouraging the princess who reads it to take to heart the ideas and thoughts presented in Basil’s writing and use them as fodder for her own thinking about charity and how she can “deserve [her] wealth from God” (“tu puisses desservir Dieu le te rende”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.10.25. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.10.36, l. 12. In Chapter 5 of Book Two, a proverb occurs in the context of a dialogic presentation of why one ought to avoid envy: “If you think that someone else has more wealth and better luck than you in this world, which is only a journey like a pilgrimage, what right do you have to complain or be mournful about it?” (“Et pour tant se un aultre a bien en ce monde—qui n’est que un petit trespas comme un pelerinage—des dons de fortune plus que toy, ce te semble que t’en apertient il a murmurer n’en avoir dueil?”). Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.5.99. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.5.137, ll. 49-52. In her edition Lawson notes: “It was commonplace to compare life to a pilgrimage, [...]. The expression had become proverbial by the

transactional process, and argues that reading a text draws to it a similar attitude that perception does: “what is perceived involves both the perceiver’s contribution and the stimulus.”<sup>236</sup> Christine’s use of authorities in this situation is the stimulus, but they take on even greater rhetorical weight because these types of authorities invite reader participation in contemplation of sin, devotion, or whatever topic is being treated. The reader’s contribution in this reading event is amplified, promoting the self-reflection Christine so earnestly wishes to instill in the women of the upper classes that she addresses in Book One.

Christine’s final type of source use is the least complex, and to an extent I have mentioned it already. This implementation of authorities occurs simply and quickly with only a vague reference to a written authority—no one is explicitly named, and if the authority is biblical, no specific passage is referenced. Note, however, that for many of the authorities she does refer to in works that do not include the Bible, Christine often gives book and chapter numbers as if using the authority not just as a means to support her own behavioral principles, but also to encourage the audience to engage in further reading on the subject. Most of these sorts of references occur in Book One or in Book Two, Chapter 13, where Christine addresses nuns who would presumably have the time and access to books to engage in further reading. But to return to the more vague formulations of authorities, Christine sometimes refers to a “wise doctor of the church,” “wise men,” or a “philosopher.”<sup>237</sup> All of these references occur in either an added bit of

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time Christine used it, and the comparison of life to a pilgrimage was a favorite device of Christine’s friend and mentor, Jean Gerson.” Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, 181, n. 2.

<sup>236</sup> Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader The Text The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>237</sup> Such references appear: Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.8.20. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.8.31, ll. 85-86; Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.2.91. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.2.127, l. 105; Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed.



support for an idea that Christine praises or blames in her work, or as an opening justification in her chapter's introduction that claims she will treat the subject according to these authorities. Often when this is the case, she provides more specific, named citations later in the chapter. Lawson's English translation edition of *Treasury* provides full notes on the biblical passages that Christine both references and paraphrases, and so there is no need to do more than state that they occur, much like these unnamed authorities do, in the context of creating support for points Christine has already made, and sometimes, as I have discussed above, to provide exemplars, both positive and negative.<sup>238</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Christine's rhetorical framework in *Treasury* is complex. It is part visionary text, drawing thereby authorization from God, and more directly his daughters. It is partly a guide that encourages, at least for some of its audience, active reading and rational

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Lawson, II.12.119. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.163, l. 81; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.121. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.165, l. 13; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.5.101. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.5.139, l. 112; II.5.140, l. 125; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.9.109. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.9.150, l. 33.

<sup>238</sup> Additional biblical references appear: Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.10.27. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.10.40, l. 105; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.32. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.46, l. 139; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.6.103. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.6.142, l. 46; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.3.139, III.3.140. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.3.187, l. 109; III.3.188, l. 128; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.141, l. 19; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.12.120. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.12.164, l. 113; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.5.100. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.5.138, l. 87; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.5.101. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.5.139, l. 97; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.8.154. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.8.206, l. 34; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.6.102. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.6.141, l. 17; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.7.105. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.7.145, ll. 63-64; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.8.107. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.8.147, ll. 13-14; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.123. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.167, l. 72; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.7.151. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.7.202, l. 36; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.7.152. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.7.203, ll. 75-76; Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.13.123. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.13.167, l. 67, II.13.168, l. 84.

evaluation of one's behavioral choices, particularly through the implementation of allegory and dialogic discussion of sins. It also relies upon *enargeia* to convey the severity of certain states of sin, particularly of pride, and deploys imagery, authorities—sometimes with very specific citations, and exempla to add more critical mass to the authority with which the precepts in *Treasury* are received by its audience. That audience falls into a broad spectrum, and Christine's rhetoric also permits the higher end of the social spectrum more speculative involvement with their behavior than she does the laborers and servants she addresses in Book Three. The complexity of this rhetorical performance reflects Christine's own position in late medieval intellectual circles: precarious. Christine's *Treasury* is at pains to demonstrate repeatedly her own intellectual masculinity through its repeated and frequent adaptations of male intellectual modes of rhetoric. But at the same time, Christine's polyglot rhetorical performance is a performance that radically challenges the misogyny of the men who prompted her writing of *City of Ladies*—that is, that she performs a literary feat that masters these various rhetorical strains demonstrates the intellectual prowess of woman. Additionally, while her advice is not particularly revolutionary, there are ruptures in her advice to women that suggest that it is sometimes acceptable not to be the woman defined by typically categorical female values: patient, silent, and such. These places are in the control of her lands if she is a burghess and in the securing of her rights and property if she is a widow. Tracy Adams finds the complexity of performances open to women in Christine's description of motherhood in *Treasury*: "Christine's conduct book views motherhood [...] as one aspect of the larger mediating role women play in society. Fraught with contradiction, the role is manageable by those with a high degree of social intelligence—

sharp skills of observation and the ability to dissimulate, immense tact and rhetorical ability.”<sup>239</sup> I suggest we might apply this description directly to Christine herself, who in writing *Treasury* is writing a conduct manual but is also writing a mediating handbook that helps other women combat and question misogyny as a natural understanding of women. Christine’s *Treasury* does not overtly challenge norms, but it does make the case that women are capable of virtuous action—i.e. action traditionally coded as masculine—and yet it does this through a matrix of advice that recapitulates masculine rhetoric and expectations of female behavior.<sup>240</sup> Thus while her act of writing is radically empowering in terms of speaking back to misogynists, her actual advice relies on strategies that I show below are similar to those of male conduct authors who address their children, and as such, the manual privileges attempts to control women and essentialize them into virtuous creatures that can be trapped within cages and put on display as a sort of rejection of the virulent misogyny circulating in some medieval intellectual circles and movements.

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<sup>239</sup> Tracy Adams, “Medieval Mothers and Their Children: The Case of Isabeau of Bavaria in Light of Medieval Conduct Books,” in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 265-89, 272.

<sup>240</sup> Collette might have a more open view of Christine’s text as she states that Christine “authorizes a variety of marginally virtuous behaviors” provided that these behaviors “defend the common good.” Collette, “Christine de Pizan: Mapping,” 30-31.

## Chapter 3

The Tradition of Familial Advice and Writing Female Cooperation:  
Anne de France's *Les enseignements à sa fille*

“Experience, though noon auctoritee  
Were in this world, is right ynogh for me  
To speke of wo that is in mariage”

Alisoun of Bath

*The Wife of Bath's Prologue*

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*<sup>1</sup>

Chaucer's Wife of Bath and her *Prologue* champion lived experience as an ultimately more joyful and practical basis upon which to build one's life than written authorities that berate and belittle women. The decision to live by one's experience for historical women of the Middle Ages is a significant one, and as this chapter argues, subtly disputes conservative written authorities that restrict female behavior. Anne de France (1461-1522), sometimes referred to as Anne de Beaujeu in recognition of her marriage to Pierre de Beaujeu, was the daughter of Louis XI and Charlotte of Savoy.<sup>2</sup> Anne blends family tradition, socially accepted expectations for her sex as well as frequent references to male authorities, and her own personal experience in the advice she leaves to her daughter, Suzanne. This chapter locates Anne de France's *Les enseignements à sa fille* (1497/98)<sup>3</sup> on the spectrum of rhetorical authority close to the

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. Ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 105, ll. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> She was also known during her own time as Madame la Grande and Madame la Vieille as well as the Duchess of Bourbon. She worked tirelessly to have her husband and herself receive the lands and titles of Bourbon after her regency. I should also note that Anne de France writes her own work of conduct literature only after rejecting one proffered to her by Symphorien Champier; for discussion of his texts see Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) and Helen J. Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France, 1440-1538*, Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> I quote the following French edition: A[lphonse]-M[artial] Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France, Duchesse de Bourbonnois et d'Auvergne à Sa Fille, Susanne de Bourbon, ...* (Moulins: C. Desrosiers, Imprimeur-Éditeur, 1878). I use Sharon L. Jansen's English translation throughout, modifying

charismatic, familial narrator. In terms of rhetorical tropes, Anne de France's *Les enseignements* is more overtly familiar, concrete, and experiential rather than allegorical, philosophical, or abstracted despite its embracing allusions to authorities as a means of justifying its advice. Anne uses traditional citations of authorities and familial charisma to create a text that implicitly questions the assumptions about women found in the written authorities she quotes.<sup>4</sup> Anne writes in a tradition but also resists it. While she quotes authorities who dictate conservative values in female behavior, Anne also writes as a powerful woman following a family tradition of rulers addressing their children; Anne's authorial identity is partly defined by her lived experience of having possessed great political power as a pseudo-regent, officially a guardian for her younger brother, Charles. Furthermore, Anne's advice also conveys a strong sense of the importance of family, particularly of female family members, and one's relationships with them. This focus on female relationships distinguishes Anne's text from male-authored conduct literature for women, and it also obliquely encodes some of Anne's own experiences for her daughter's benefit.

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and noting modifications if the need arises. Sharon L. Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France: Lessons for My Daughter*, Medieval Women (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004). In English the work is usually called *Lessons for Her Daughter*. I adopt Sharon L. Jansen's perspective on the dating of *Lessons*, which is a revision of Chazaud's dating of 1503-05. Neither scholar offers definitive proof for their dating, but Jansen argues persuasively that after Anne's illness of late 1497 and her brother's death in 1498, she may have felt compelled by the possibility of death to write to her daughter. For the full argument see Jansen, *Anne of France*, 8-10. There is also a 1935 French edition of Anne's work, which I avoid as it rearranges the text, provides a partial translation into modern French, and includes lengthy quotations from Chazaud's work, though not without error; see Jansen, *Anne of France*, 100-01 for the source of this evaluation. Joseph Viple, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France* (Moulins: Crepin-Leblond, 1935). I cannot confirm Jansen's evaluation of Viple because I have been unable to secure a copy through interlibrary loan.

<sup>4</sup> Jansen has compared the work to Niccolò Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (*The Prince*, 1505, pub. 1515) and reads the work in a decidedly political framework. See Jansen, "The Princess and *The Prince*: Gender, Genre, and *Lessons for My Daughter*," in *Anne de France: Lessons for My Daughter*, 69-90. Pauline Matarasso has not described the work as such but describes Anne's actions in a similar manner: "In government a Machiavellian pragmatism had guided her decisions." Pauline Matarasso, *Queen's Mate: Three Women of Power in France on the Eve of the Renaissance* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2001), 289.

## I. Anne at Amboise and in Politics

Anne's early life is largely undocumented, but Louis XI placed her in a female community at Amboise during her childhood. Jansen reports that Louis arranged to have "his mother [Marie of Anjou (1404-63)], his wife [Charlotte of Savoy (1439-83)], and his child" live in the "chateau of Amboise" where Anne was in the company of "a *demoiselle d'honneur*, at least two chambermaids, several nurses, and a woman hired to rock her cradle."<sup>5</sup> Jansen also notes that most of Anne's biographers view this arrangement negatively, "as a prison, an isolated fortress, or as a 'royal gynecium,'" but Jansen herself offers a more positive reading: "we might instead regard it [Anne's life at Amboise surrounded by women] as a kind of 'city of ladies,' a remarkable environment that made possible the development of a remarkable woman."<sup>6</sup> While Jansen's reading of Anne's early life is perhaps too positive given our lack of knowledge about it, I posit that Anne's early life and education among women is partially reflected in her later teachings for her daughter, which emphasize the importance of female-female relative relationships. However, Pauline Matarasso also notes that unlike her elder sister Jeanne, "The king was content to have this daughter [...] in his entourage, and she herself spent her growing years observing through her heavy-lidded eyes that most astute of political manipulators, her royal father."<sup>7</sup> We can also look to Amboise as a place for Anne's education: "For girls in any case formal lessons ceased on marriage and Anne was only thirteen when she left the schoolroom. However, there were books at Amboise—Queen Charlotte had a considerable library—and all Anne's actions and interests in later life suggest that she

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<sup>5</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 11.

read them and continued to read widely in maturity.”<sup>8</sup> Tracy Adams writes of the situation of young girls in the Middle Ages generally rather than at Amboise, but her points make excellent background within which to consider Anne’s conservative rhetoric in *Les enseignements*:

Noble girls of the late medieval and early modern periods, [...] often were sent to different households to be raised in a type of patronal allegiance-fostering, a practice that created very strong networks which could be exploited to promote families and contacts. Such networks relegated women to a secondary position; and moreover, political life of the late medieval and early modern periods was grounded in family relationships, which reinforced the secondary position of women. But while limited relative to their male counterparts, women could become powerful: if they were able simultaneously to present an appearance of moral impeccability and to grasp the psychology of those they were trying to influence.<sup>9</sup>

Adams’s comments make clear the limitations placed on women in court, but I wish to make clear that Anne’s work, along with Christine’s, tends to foster positive female-female relationships, and that such relationships were also central to the maintenance of both one’s reputation and one’s standing in court, which may perhaps be viewed as inextricably the same. As Adams says, Christine and Anne “were fully aware of the necessity of developing *juste hypocrisie* [the projection of virtue to improve one’s reputation and increase one’s social efficacy], but were cognisant of its hazards, as well. They offer their female readers, dependent upon their cleverness for success, psychological insights that allowed them to exercise influence effectively, all the while carefully guiding them away from the pitfalls of rank hypocrisy.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, these guides in

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<sup>8</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Tracy Adams, “Appearing Virtuous: Christine de Pizan’s *Le Livre de trois vertus* and Anne de France’s *Les Enseignements d’Anne de France*,” in *Virtue Ethics for Woman, 1250-1500*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews, *The New Synthese Historical Library Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy* 69 (London: Springer, 2011), 115-31, 117.

<sup>10</sup> Tracy Adams, “Appearing Virtuous,” 117. Adams also describes Christine’s and Anne’s methods as encouraging the use of “‘cunning intelligence’, the basis of which is a fine grasp of the hidden motives of one’s opponent along with the ability to anticipate their moves and adapt,” 118.

effect function as a way to manipulate and circumnavigate the troubles and dangers of court; they are active attempts to even the playing field, so to speak.

The feminine space of Amboise from Anne's early life recurs after her pseudo-regency when, as Jansen describes, Anne "recreated the 'city of ladies'" through her embrace of educating young women at the Bourbon court. Pierre de Brantôme (c. 1540-1614) writes of Anne that

she held her Court, which was always, as I have heard my grandmother [Louise de Daillon, one of Anne's pupils]<sup>11</sup> say, very fine and grand, she being accompanied by great numbers of ladies and maids of honour, whom she trained very wisely and virtuously. In fact she gave such fine educations (as I know from my grandmother) that there were no ladies or daughters of great houses in her time who did not receive lessons from her, the house of Bourbon being one of the greatest and most splendid in Christendom.<sup>12</sup>

Charity C. Willard, a modern scholar, also points out that Anne was respected as an educator of court ladies; she aided in the education and arrangement of the marriage of Diane of Poitiers to Louis of Brézé as well as the instruction of Mary Tudor "in the '*modes et façons*' of her new country" when she was selected to marry Louis XII in 1514, a significant appointment considering that Louis XII and she once fought over control of Charles VIII's, her brother's, regency.<sup>13</sup> Anne also assisted in the education of Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor as well as Anne of

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<sup>11</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre de Bourdeille and C.-A. Saint Beuve, *The Illustrious Dames of the Court of the Valois Kings*, trans. Katharine Prescott Wormeley (New York: Lamb Publishing, 1912), 218.

<sup>13</sup> Charity C. Willard, "Anne de France, Reader of Christine de Pizan," in *The Reception of Christine de Pizan from the Fifteenth through the Nineteenth Centuries: Visitors to the City*, ed. Glenda K. McLeod (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 59-70, 62. See also Élodie Lequain, "La maison de Bourbon, 'escolle de vertu et de perfection': Anne de France, Suzanne de Bourbon et Pierre Martin," *Médiévales* 48 (2005) : 39-54. Lequain discusses Anne's tutelage of other young women but emphasizes the importance of her education specifically in the context of its importance for the House of Bourbon.



Brittany and Louise of Savoy.<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting, however, that while Anne did engage in the raising and enculturation of young women, particularly for marrying them off to suit her own political needs, Matarasso presents this less as a positive female-female experience than as a burden that partially explains the emotional reservation in Anne's text for Suzanne: "Madame had had other people's children foisted on her, willy nilly, since the age of twenty-two, and was herself the product of a culture that saw education largely in terms of 'spare the rod and spoil the child.'" <sup>15</sup> We can never know the truth of Anne's feelings about having to deal with the education of so many charges, but there is probably some sort of middle ground here wherein we need not imagine Anne as a sort of central maternal figure for a circle of young ladies both willing and acquiescent to take her guidance, but neither do we have to view Anne's role as educator of young women as something wholly distasteful and burdensome on her; at the least she would have seen the practical value involved in educating these young women for marriage as she was able to employ them as "bait to win [the] loyalty" of men she found necessary during her regency.<sup>16</sup>

While clearly Anne's capabilities included the education of young women, her abilities at court should not be underestimated as her biographers have noted the skill

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<sup>14</sup> J. H. M. Salmon, "The Regent and the Duchess: Anne de Beaujeu and Anne de Bretagne," *History Today* 16 (1960): 341-48, 345. Matarasso's *Queen's Mate* is actually a political biography of Anne de France and her two pupils and it traces the political machinations of all the women, including Anne de France's eventual loss of power, titles, and riches when she survives Louis XII and sees the Bourbon titles returned to the crown and favoritism turned to Louise rather than herself. On the losses see particularly Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 286-91. On her willingness to cede 100,000 *livres* in penalty for changing Suzanne's betrothal to a different man who would further secure the Bourbon title within Anne's line of descendants, see Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 234.

<sup>15</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 194.

<sup>16</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 29. Here, specifically, appears the discussion of her training of Gabrielle de Bourbon-Montpensier for Louis de la Trémoille, the man who would be essential to her putting down rebellions of lords, particularly in Brittany during her brother's youth.

with which she handled the kingdom after the death of her father, Louis XI.<sup>17</sup> For example, Willard discusses the skill with which Anne maneuvers in various situations and notes that she was able to maintain power as a pseudo-regent because “Anne’s husband [Peter of Bourbon] was willing to second her ably in her undertakings” during the guardianship that lasted from 1483 to 1491.<sup>18</sup> One might add to this that her own brother supported her involvement for, when Louis XII wrote to Charles objecting to the Beaujeu guardianship, implying that his sister and her husband were perhaps keeping him hostage, Charles responded thusly:

And as for the nub of your letter, if we wish to have constantly beside us our very dear and much loved sister the Lady de Beaujeu, and if we place our confidence wholly and entirely in her, it should occasion no surprise, in view of the fact that by birth there is none closer to us than she, nor any whose friendship is more trustworthy ... And we know beyond all doubt that there is nothing in the world by which our sister sets more store than us; and should something untoward happen to our person, which God forbid, it is she who would suffer the greatest loss and grief.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For biographies and discussion of the political career of Anne de France see Hedwige de Chabannes and Isabelle de Linarès, *Anne de Beaujeu: “Ce fut ung roy”* (Paris: Crépin Leblond, 1955); Jehanne D’Orliac, *Anne de Beaujeu, roi de France* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1926); Marc Chombart de Lauwe, *Anne de Beaujeu: ou la passion du pouvoir* (Paris: Librairies Jules Tallandier, 1980); Pierre Pradel, *Anne de France, 1461-1522* (Paris: Editions Publisud, 1986); Salmon, “The Regent and the Duchess”; Sharon L. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 54-65; Pauline Matarasso, *The Queen’s Mate: Three Women of Power in France on the Eve of the Renaissance* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2001); Henry Montaigu, *La Guerre des dames: La Fin des féodaux* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1981); John S. C. Bridge, *A History of France from the Death of Louis XI*, vol. 1 (1926; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1978); Paul Pélicier, *Essai sur le gouvernement de la Dame de Beaujeu, 1483-1491* (Chartres: Imprimerie Édouard Garnier, 1882); J. Russell Major, *The Deputies to the Estates General in Renaissance France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960); Elizabeth A. R. Brown and Richard C. Famiglietti, “*Lit de Justice*, Apparatus and Institution, in the Fifteenth Century,” in *The Lit de Justice: Semantics, Ceremonial, and the Parlement of Paris, 1300-1600*, Beihefte der Francia 31 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1994), 31-44, with only 43-44 being relevant to Anne.

<sup>18</sup> Willard, “Anne de France, Reader,” 61. See also Jansen, *Anne of France*, 4-7 on the regency and Anne’s political engagements.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 26. Matarasso’s translation. “Et, pour venir particulièrement au contenu en icelles, si nous voulons avoir continuellement emproz nous nostre très chiere et très amée seur la dame de Beaujeu, et si nous prenons toute entiere confidence en elle, personne ne s’en doit merveiller, veu que plus prouchaine ne nous pourroit estre par lignaige ne plus feable par amictié, [...]. Et, pour certain, nous savons bien qui n’est riens en ce monde dont nostredicte seur aye plus grant cure comme de nous, aussi sa perte et son dueil seroient plus grans que de tous autres que à nostre personne adviendrait quelque sinistre, que Dieu ne vueille.” Charles VIII to Duc d’Orléans, 20 January 1485, in *Lettres de Charles VIII: Roi de France*, ed. P. Pélicier, 5 vols. (Paris: Renouard, 1898-1905), 1:60.

Willard also describes one of Anne's most important achievements: the unification of Brittany with France through marriage of Anne, the daughter and heir of François II, Duke of Brittany, to her brother, Charles, which brought under the French crown "the last remaining independent feudal state, which was fighting to maintain its independence" and which had harbored Louis of Orléans (who later becomes Louis XII) and "other dissident nobles" who had been engaged in treasonous activities such as "plott[ing] to kidnap the king."<sup>20</sup> Such descriptions establish Anne's political importance to France, but one must also note that her husband, Pierre de Beaujeu, "became one of the most trusted servants of the Crown" during Louis XI's reign, and J. H. M. Salmon's description of the Beaujeu marriage is perhaps the one that least minimizes Pierre's role: "the marriage was firmly based on an understanding of mutual advantage. [Pierre] Beaujeu had strength and consistency of purpose, but recognized the forceful character and political acumen of his wife, whom Louis XI delighted to call 'the least foolish woman in France.'"<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Salmon notes that Pierre "seemed to direct affairs at Tours, [but] it was his imperious wife who, once assured of her authority, turned her attention to the pressing diplomatic issues of the time, and resumed the policies of her father."<sup>22</sup> Salmon's understanding of Anne's actions places her within a familial governing tradition, a tradition I argue carries over into her writing about proper female behavior.

Anne's political influence, however, was not unchallenged. In 1483 Louis XI

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<sup>20</sup> Willard, "Anne de France, Reader," 63-64, 63.

<sup>21</sup> Salmon, "The Regent and the Duchess," 342, 343.

<sup>22</sup> Salmon, "The Regent and the Duchess," 344. See also Matarasso who describes Pierre's role as being present in the Council and at the Estates General, where Anne could not go because of her sex. Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 18-19. Further, "Ambassadors, too, were always received by Anne, and it is 'Madame' who figures in their reports home. She is the one whom foreign governments are advised to woo; it is she who must be won over if any scheme is to succeed, and she whom they attempt, on occasion, to bribe." Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 20.

died, and almost immediately Louis, duke of Orléans, pursued the regency as Charles's uncle. The resolution of the controversy over the regency required the summoning of the Estates-General at Tours, and while almost all of the biographical sources that deal directly with Anne de France claim her success, they also seem to downplay that despite the Estates-General awarding her and Pierre the guardianship of the king, in order to secure her rule and the safety of her brother, she had to pursue a program of war, known as the Mad War or *La Guerre Folle*, in order to prevent the abduction of the king and finally remove Louis d'Orléans from the immediate political picture. This war was ultimately successful, and eventually Anne is reconciled enough with Louis that he appoints her, as I have mentioned, to be his English wife's instructor in French customs. Katherine Crawford's description of the historical events provides more of a sense of the struggle for power that Anne faced:

When Louis XI died, a coalition of nobles and the ranking prince of the blood, Louis, duke d'Orléans, who was next in line for the throne, challenged the arrangements. Orléans and the duke of Bourbon (Pierre of Beaujeu's older brother) challenged Anne on the grounds that uncles were the traditional regents. [...] Despite the absence of a written testament, the Parlement of Paris confirmed Pierre and Anne as guardians until the king was twenty. Orléans [...] reject[ed] the parlement's decision. While Anne and Pierre retained custody, they lost control of the royal council to Orléans. Anne and Pierre responded by allowing the convocation of the Estates General. Once seated, the deputies dismissed the noble factions and expressed the belief that the Estates General should be responsible for the minor king and the composition of his council. After weeks of negotiations, the Estates confirmed Anne and Pierre's custody of the king, but the challenging nobles, headed by Orléans, controlled the administration. The Estates decided 'that My lord the duke d'Orléans, who is the second person of the realm of France, ought to preside and conclude the said council [of the king].' Orléans remained disgruntled because he was not awarded the regency outright. [...] The Parlement of Paris, the royal council, and the Estates General had all weighed in, producing the confusing precedent. Neither the precedent nor the manner of its making

calmed the volatile situation.<sup>23</sup>

This volatile situation, eventually becomes the Mad War of 1485-89, but for this Anne is prepared as she oversaw the marriage of her niece to Louis de la Tremoille, the general who takes command of her forces and captures Louis d'Orléans in July of 1488, though the remainder of his allies fight until the death of Francis II, duke of Brittany in 1489.<sup>24</sup> Anne was unafraid of war and “accompanied her armies in the pacification of Guyenne” before moving north toward the Breton frontier in February of 1487.<sup>25</sup> Matarasso’s discussion of the war is more nuanced, indicating that war for Anne was “a policy to be pursued, or not, and one which, if pursued, would further complicate her situation” as women generally ought not be perceived as instigating and maintaining wars; Anne had also seen the destruction that the Hundred Years’ War had wrought on the French countryside and was well aware of her father’s struggles to overcome that destruction.<sup>26</sup> Later, though, as troubles continued, Matarasso describes Anne’s decisiveness on the program to split the crown’s enemies as being “her campaign” and quotes one seventeenth-century history that says “my lady of Beaujeu, sister of the king, was always at his side and the care and charge of his person were ever hers; nor was anything

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<sup>23</sup> Katherine Crawford, *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France*, Harvard Historical Series 145 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 18-19. The final decision from the Estates General on the king’s guardianship is that “The king [...] has been gently nurtured and brought up. Let him thus continue and have about his person those who are wise, virtuous, of good repute and conversation.” Quoted in Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 21. Matarasso also notes: “Saint-Gelais says [...] ‘M. and Mme. de Beaujeu were to be always close to his person and were to have the chief care and charge [gouvernement] of his person.’” Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 21, n. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment*, 55, 56. Salmon, “The Regent and the Duchess,” 345.

<sup>25</sup> Salmon, “The Regent and the Duchess,” 345. Matarasso also discusses the war at length, but is more conservative in her portrayal of Anne’s role, casting her less as a martial figure and more as a guardian for the young king: “She did not ride to war; she accompanied her brother. Anyone wishing to exercise the king’s authority had to stay with the king’s person and, since he was the supreme talisman, the source of victory, where the troops went, he went too, like a standard held aloft, and the Lady of Beaujeu was the one who held it.” Further, Matarasso notes that Anne was described as “another Semiramis, a new queen of the Amazons arisen in our time to win us peace.” Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 29. For a discussion of the complex connotations such descriptions have in the description and praise of women see Helen J. Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 172-73, 194-217.

<sup>26</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 28-29.

undertaken that concerned the king or the realm save with her knowledge, by her wish, and with her full consent.”<sup>27</sup>

Anne’s fearlessness and determination to govern placed her in an awkward position both socially and politically. Matarasso provides a description of Anne from a contemporary Latin chronicle by N. Barthélemy de Loches:

She was truly a heroic woman [virago] with skills and knowledge and nerve that went beyond the feminine, a match for men in deliberation and daring, a paragon in all respects and born to the heights of sovereignty had nature not begrudged her the appropriate sex. One could hardly credit such natural ability in a woman were it not that the present witness gives his full and entire assurance of all these things.<sup>28</sup>

It is clear here that the chroniclers appreciate her strong will but that there were some who viewed it as wholly inappropriate since it belonged to a woman.<sup>29</sup> Even more problematic was the perception that she presided over her husband, Pierre: “‘By nature he [Pierre] was kind and easy-going, with nothing of the severity of his wife [bien esloigné des rigoureux procedez de sa femme] ... but his wife was master and always retained over him the authority of a king’s daughter.’ Chroniclers almost without exception focus

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<sup>27</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 33.

<sup>28</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 20. For a discussion of historical and scholarly reception of Anne de France’s biography and actions, see also Jansen, *Anne of France*, 69-80. Tracy Adams also points out that “Paul Pélacier writes, while her contemporaries perceived Anne as exercising genuine regency power during her brother’s adolescence, overt signs of her work were few. Anne ‘a si bien dissimulé son action politique: elle s’est retranchée si complètement derrière l’autorité du roi, du comte de Clermont et de leurs ministres que son intervention dans les affaires est restée à peine sensible pour nous’ (‘hid her political action so well; she buried herself so completely behind the authority of the king, the Count of Clermont, and their ministers that her intervention in those affairs has remained barely visible to us’).” Adams, “Appearing Virtuous,” 127.

<sup>29</sup> I do not have the room to develop this at length here, but Helen J. Swift develops a nuanced discussion of the portrayal of women in masculine terms that finds the following, and in which I place Anne’s description by chroniclers in the first category: “Four possibilities [for identifying women in gendered terms] are, however, identifiable: first, and most frequently, this feminine excellence is depicted in terms of a heroic, masculine model of virility; secondly, woman’s achievements are often defined as surpassing the expectations of either sex; thirdly, intelligible gender categories are sometimes broken down to incorporate culturally defined masculine virtues into a femininity that defines woman more as it were on her own terms, [...]; fourthly, a writer may reinstate the positive value of essential feminine qualities as wellsprings of supreme virtue that are uniquely woman’s prerogative, and which elevate her rank in the hierarchy of the Creation as a model of good conduct.” Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 221.

on her, while Pierre de Beaujeu is regularly passed over.”<sup>30</sup> Louis d’Orléans early on in his opposition to Anne and Pierre reportedly discussed “getting rid of the said lady [Anne] and sending her back to her house at Gien to busy herself with her household duties [tenir et faire son mesnaige].”<sup>31</sup> Matarasso also notes that Anne’s relationship to Charles as sister rather than mother was also without precedent for the regency, and thus may have triggered more masculine angst as “it infringed a male prerogative without the justification of precedent.”<sup>32</sup> The anti-female ruler viewpoint was justified by Salic Law’s “development” in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century France, which “specifically excluded women from inheriting the throne of France” because such was “perceived as a particularly dangerous threat.”<sup>33</sup> For example, Claude de Seyssel, a political theorist, writes in his *La monarchie de France* (1515) that

The first special trait that I find good is that this realm [France] passes by masculine succession and, by virtue of the law which the French call Salic, cannot fall into the hands of a woman. This is excellent, for by falling into the feminine line it can come into the power of a foreigner, a pernicious and dangerous thing, since a ruler from a foreign nation is of a different rearing and condition, of different customs, different language, and a different way of life from the men of the lands he comes to rule.<sup>34</sup> (Et la première spéciauté que j’y trouve bonne est qu’icelui royaume va par succession masculine, sans pouvoir tomber en main de femme, selon la loi que les Français appellent «salique», qui est une très bonne chose. Car, tombant en ligne féminine, elle vient en main et pouvoir d’homme d’étrange nation, qui est chose pernicieuse et dangereuse: pourtant que celui qui vient de telle nation étrange est d’autre nourriture et condition et a autres mœurs, autre langage et autre façon de vivre que ceux du pays où il vient dominer.)<sup>35</sup>

Such legal approaches placed Anne de France in a precarious position, though Jansen

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<sup>30</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 19.

<sup>33</sup> Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment*, 57.

<sup>34</sup> I use Jansen’s translation for this quotation. Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment*, 58. For a brief but insightful discussion of Salic Law, see Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment*, 247-48, n. 170.

<sup>35</sup> Claude de Seyssel, *La monarchie de France et deux autres fragments politiques*, ed. Jacques Poujol (Paris: Librairie d’Argences, 1961), 112-13.

does note that “women were [...] preferred to men in the role of regent for a young or an incapacitated king” because they were thought less likely “to take it [role of monarch] for themselves.”<sup>36</sup> We might close this section on Anne’s political career with a return to the words of Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, who writes that Anne was “a shrewd woman and a cunning if ever there was one, and the true image of King Louis [XI], her father. The choice made of her to be guardian and administrator of her brother, King Charles [VIII.], proves this, for she governed him so wisely and virtuously that he came to be one of the greatest kings of France, [...]. As to his kingdom, she administered that in like manner. True it is that because of her ambition she was rather mischief-making [...].”<sup>37</sup> This characterization seems at first relatively unproblematic, but the description develops a contrast between Anne’s actions and the social expectation of a feminine disavowal of power:

She was very vindictive in temper like her father,<sup>38</sup> and always a sly dissembler, corrupt, full of deceit, and a great hypocrite, who for the sake of her ambition, could mask and disguise herself in any way. [...] when the king went to Naples she no longer had the title of regent, but her husband, M. de Bourbon, received it. It is true, however, that she made him do what she had in her head, for she ruled him and knew how to guide him, all the better because he was rather foolish,—indeed very much so.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Jansen, *Monstrous Regiments*, 58. See also on female regency and queenship: John Carmi Parsons, ed., *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993); Pauline Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*.

<sup>37</sup> Pierre de Bourdeille and C.-A. Saint Beuve, *The Illustrious Dames of the Court of the Valois Kings*, trans. Katherine Prescott Wormeley (New York: Lamb Publishing, 1912), 216-17.

<sup>38</sup> For a sole surviving letter from Anne’s childhood, see Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 11. It provides some evidence that she and her father had some affection for one another: “What grieves me [Anne] most when you [Louis XI] are indisposed is not being with you.”

<sup>39</sup> Bourdeille and Saint Beuve, *The Illustrious Dames*, 217. Tracy Adams, in her discussion of Anne de France’s advocacy for cunning intelligence, reads Brantôme’s statement much more positively, and while I do not fully accept it, her comments at the least help to more firmly establish the deep anxiety that a powerful woman at court could generate in those observing her: Brantôme’s comments “fall [...] in the midst of a chapter in which he notes with approval Anne’s governing abilities and her love for her brother. For a courtier like Brantôme, dissimulation was not morally problematic if it were out for a greater good. Indeed, Anne’s ability to dissimulate judiciously would have been perceived as a virtue within the ‘discourse of moral and ethical conduct that focused on the dangers and challenges of the court, that sought to steer the good courtier and the noble prince towards the intertwined goals of political success and spiritual salvation.’” Adams points to works like the *Facetus* texts that were guides to life at court from the



Despite the uncertainties about the power dynamics in the Beaujeu marriage and the precise division of power between Pierre and Anne, it is clear that Anne was a woman who was unafraid to accrue and exercise power. These last reflections on how Anne was perceived in her own time reflect a deep ambivalence toward her—she is virtuous and wise, but also vindictive and apparently willing to overthrow what was then considered the natural law of male supremacy in her control of her husband.<sup>40</sup> Anne must have known how she would have been perceived in her own time, and thus, we must consider *Les enseignements* with a keen awareness of the necessity and irony of her inclusion of prescriptions on female behavior. Constance Jordan's study on Renaissance feminism makes the point that most conservative ideals of female behavior, e.g. "silence and chastity, [...] honesty or lack of deceit," "particularly disqualified women of rank for the court politics they could have expected to engage in were they men."<sup>41</sup> Likewise Colette H. Winn writes of the discourse of Anne's text that it "transmit l'idéologie dominante, la voix féminine se perdant là" (transmits the dominant ideology, the feminine voice getting lost therein).<sup>42</sup> Thus in reading Anne's text we must be aware of the paradox of her being a powerful woman and her need in the socio-political milieu of her day, which Winn has described as "un puissant moyen de pression et d'endoctrinement" (a powerful means of pressure and indoctrination),<sup>43</sup> to create a text that is socially acceptable to her peers and

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twelfth century and promote being "capable of manipulating words to [one's] advantage" in order to "triumph [...] over competitors." Tracy Adams, "Appearing Virtuous," 116, 118.

<sup>40</sup> Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism*, 66.

<sup>41</sup> Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism*, 95.

<sup>42</sup> Colette H. Winn, "'De mères en filles': Les manuels d'éducation sous l'Ancien Régime," *Atlantis* 19, no. 1 (1993): 23-30, 28. My translation.

<sup>43</sup> Winn, "'De mères en filles,'" 28. My translation.

can aid her daughter and pupils in social advancement, despite their being female.<sup>44</sup>

Being aware of the social attitudes toward women and power in Anne's lifetime, Jansen argues that in *Les enseignements* "the reader will see what the reader expects to see," i.e. "a text that conforms to expectations even while it suggests how to subvert them."<sup>45</sup> We are left with the reality of *Les enseignements* not as a simple text that stipulates and demands certain behavior of the young women who read it; instead we are presented with a text that participates in Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia* because while *Les enseignements* participates in the establishment of conservative roles, education, and behavior for women, what Bakhtin might call "processes of centralization, [...] of unification [...]," Anne's text also acts out "decentralization" and "disunification" through its being uttered by a woman who herself defied the strict codes of behavior for women.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Anne's text is "contradiction-ridden, tension-filled," a "unity of two embattled tendencies."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Roberta L. Krueger, in her treatment of class in Anne's text and Christine de Pizan's *Livre de trois vertus*, confirms this general assessment that Winn makes: "women's literacy was viewed as an activity requiring close supervision" and "women's education was a fundamentally conservative program, restricted to the socially privileged; its aims were to reinforce and propagate the twinned hierarchies of class and gender, to make each subject speak, dress, act, behave 'selon son estat' [according to his or her estate]." Krueger, "Chascune selon son estat: Women's Education and Social Class in the Conduct Books of Christine de Pizan and Anne de France," *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature* 24, no. 46 (1997): 19-34, 19, 20. Matarasso also claims "If Anne had followed the precepts she professes in her maturity she would never have ruled a nation in her youth, and France might well have torn itself apart while she did her embroidery." Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 13. Matarasso's take here is somewhat dismissive of the advice that Anne provides to Suzanne, particularly I believe because Matarasso views Anne's giving birth to Suzanne, a daughter who could not legitimately inherit the Bourbon title and lands that Anne worked very hard to acquire for her family, as a bitter event. While this may be the case, it is impossible to know certainly that Anne was disappointed in the birth of a daughter, and to insist that the advice that Anne gives does not lend itself to teaching a woman how to rule misreads, to a certain extent, the strictures placed on a woman who was writing for other women, as I discuss below.

<sup>45</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 79.

<sup>46</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "From *Discourse in the Novel*," *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2010), 1076-1106, 1085.

<sup>47</sup> Bakhtin, "From *Discourse*," 1085.

## II. Family Traditions and Parental Advice from the Monarchs: Louis IX

Before we turn to Anne's own text, we must consider further the tradition in which she writes. Anne de France's *Les enseignements* "carr[y] on" the "paternal work" of her ancestors, Louis IX (Anne's seventh great grandfather) and Louis XI (her father), but they also challenge those ancestral texts by "seem[ing] to be appropriate in [...] form and address."<sup>48</sup> Jansen's reading of *Les enseignements* focuses chiefly on principles of behavior that can be read as sage advice for a woman to act covertly in a political situation to solidify her own power base. I would like to deepen Jansen's argument by claiming that as an author, Anne positions herself as a woman of great power. Jansen notes that even once Anne had been forced to abandon the guardianship as a result of her brother's growing maturity and desire to rule, she still "reigned as sovereign [within the territory of Bourbon], signing acts with the royal formula *Car tel est notre plaisir* ('for such is our pleasure') and reorganizing and codifying the laws of the Bourbonnais."<sup>49</sup> Making this overt connection between Anne's rhetorical self and her text, a connection Jansen does not make, only strengthens the case for reading *Les enseignements* as a politically Machiavellian text and the understanding that Anne's position requires a certain amount of double talk. Such is further suggested by Karen Green, who in writing to compare Christine de Pizan's *Treasury* to an earlier manual for a queen (*Speculum dominarum* or *Miroir de dames*) finds that the earlier manual "represents the queen as actively intervening on her own authority to right injustice" whereas Christine's later text "assumes that the princess's influence will be restricted to cooling the vengeful passions

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<sup>48</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 78-79. Italics in the original.

<sup>49</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 5. On Anne's ruthless acquisition of the title of Bourbon see Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 42-44, esp. 146 on her solidification of the title within her family's line of inheritance with Louis d'Orléans rise to the throne.

of her husband or other men.”<sup>50</sup> Green interprets this difference between the text as “suggest[ing] that the events of the fourteenth century, the scandal of the adulterous wives of Jeanne de Navarre’s sons, and the subsequent exclusion of women from the succession to the French crown, had resulted in a real diminution of the power of French queens. Christine [...] assumes a queen’s power of action to be limited. Her mediation will not be directly between the subjects who are in dispute, [...] but will operate indirectly through her influence over men, and over her husband in particular [...]”<sup>51</sup>

Another critic, Tracy Adams, agrees with my assessment of Anne’s rhetoric and its arising out of her political experiences:

Its [*Les enseignements*]’ approach is instead oblique, examining at length how to manage people. The reason for Anne’s indirectness may be that such a discussion would have been, quite simply, too delicate. Christine was speaking theoretically. She was a widow, and therefore not in a position to manipulate a husband. However, Anne’s husband, Pierre de Beajeu, [...] had served in the eyes of many as a front, behind whom Anne in fact directed the kingdom. His presence had been necessary to her; she could not have wielded such extensive power on her own, either as a single woman or as the wife of a stupid man—or a man who refused to cooperate with her.<sup>52</sup>

Adams rightly describes the situation and keeping these facts in mind makes the case for reading Anne’s rhetoric in the full context of the tradition of writing manuals that she enters into with *Les enseignements* and for being willing to accept a certain amount of circumspection in the directions she provides to Suzanne for achieving her ends.

Anne constructs herself as royally authoritative because her text is part of a tradition of royal advice written for children. To establish the tradition in which Anne participates, we must examine the writings of Anne’s seventh great grandfather, Louis

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<sup>50</sup> Green, “From *Le miroir*,” 105.

<sup>51</sup> Green, “From *Le miroir*,” 105.

<sup>52</sup> Adams, “Appearing Virtuous,” 126.

IX: *Enseignemenz a Phelippe* and *Enseignement a Ysabel* and note that her own father's, Louis XI's, *Rozier de guerres* was a work written for his son of which Anne would have been aware.<sup>53</sup> This comparison is necessary in order to ascertain the connections between Louis IX's texts and Anne's *Les enseignements*, an important step as the few scholars who have written on Anne's work have not been uniformly decided that Louis IX's advice to his children was overtly influential on Anne despite her telling her daughter "to read the small book of the noble Saint Louis"<sup>54</sup> ("lisiez le livret du preudhomme de saint Lis").<sup>55</sup> The placement of the text within a masculine familial tradition extends back to

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<sup>53</sup> Seventh great grandfather is the term I use to describe the paternal line relationship between St Louis and Anne. Going back through her ancestry, after accounting for her father, grandfather, Louis IX is the seventh ancestor: Louis XI of France (father), Charles VII (grandfather), Charles VI (great grandfather), Charles V (second great grandfather), John II of France (third great grandfather), Philip VI (fourth great grandfather), Charles, Count of Valois (fifth great grandfather), Philip III of France (sixth great grandfather), and Louis IX (seventh great grandfather).

I do not here compare Louis XI's writing with Anne's directly as it was written solely for his son, and not a woman, and thus it is outside the scope of this dissertation project. *Rozier de guerres* is nonetheless a literary project that I believe would have influenced Anne's own decision to write for her daughter. My perspective on this is largely owed to Elisabeth van Houts and her demonstration that "The material expression of memories of persons, often rooted in particular places, is crucial evidence for the participation of men and women in the memorial process." Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 2. The *Rozier* and the writings of Saint Louis would both be memorial monuments that held the advice of parents for their children, and as such would have been models for Anne de France to imitate. Further, van Houts's work focuses on an earlier period of history when "The many heiresses in the eleventh- and twelfth-century history of the counts of Boulogne left an interesting and diverse trail of their memorial guardianship. Some passed on information orally, some commissioned biographies of women in the family and some acted as patrons of vernacular written texts on the family." Van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, 73. I see Anne's written work as an extension of this memorialization of self and family memory that also reflects the historical increase in literacy that was taking place because it is not simply an oral preservation of memory but one that has made the transition from oral lesson to written word, and it possibly reflects elements of Anne's own early life when she lived at Amboise in a largely female environment, elements that are largely lost to us now because they were not preserved in writing. Matarasso also points out the link between these writings and Anne's own: "Madame liked precedents, she liked them to be there, without feeling in any way constrained by them. They were to be pointers rather than straitjackets," but Matarasso also claims "The differences between her *Enseignements* and those of Saint Louis, to which she was certainly referring, are far more striking than their similarities." Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 191.

<sup>54</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 28.

<sup>55</sup> Chauzaud, *Les enseignements*, 8. See also Anne Marie de Gendt, "Aucuns Petis Enseignements: 'Home-made' Courtesy Books in Medieval France," in *Centres of Learning in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 279-88. Gendt discusses St. Louis, Anne de France, and the Chevalier de La Tour Landry together, but her discussion is not very comparative or analytical as she simply describes the motives for writing for each of the authors. She does not mention the relationship between Louis IX and Anne at all.

the first modern edition of the work by A.-M. Chazaud in the nineteenth century, who includes Louis IX's text to Isabel in his edition of Anne's *Les enseignements*.<sup>56</sup> Willard is keener to place Anne in the tradition of Christine de Pizan and points out that "if it is true that Anne's outlook reflects a knowledge of Saint Louis' text, in particular, though, the king's mind was primarily on spiritual matters, whereas Anne was even more interested in providing worldly advice to her daughter on how to deal with the pitfalls inherent in life at court."<sup>57</sup> Willard goes on to be somewhat dismissive of what does exist of the spiritual in Anne's text:

The recommendation of both writers [Christine de Pizan and Anne de France] for a pious basis to a woman's life was, of course, entirely conventional, but was also undoubtedly psychologically sound in a world where women were obliged to make so many compromises and accept so many hard realities. One is struck in reading what both of them wrote by the perpetual uncertainties, even in the lives of women who were, in many respects, favored by fortune. There was not only the necessity of making out in a loveless marriage arranged for someone else's political or economic advantage, but for important ladies, in particular, there was constant danger from enemies or from courtiers who could cause endless trouble.<sup>58</sup>

Willard views Anne's references to the spiritual as emotionally expedient for women at court, but her reading also suggests a certain flippancy toward Anne's expression of spirituality in the text, which is unfortunate given that God is explicitly mentioned in

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<sup>56</sup> See Chauzaud, *Les enseignements*, xx-xxvii for the text to Isabel. Jansen says that Louis IX's instructions for his children "are fairly general, and yet in their conception, organization, and presentation, they seem far more likely to have provided Anne a model for her *enseignements* than the conduct books written for women. Most strikingly, they offer Anne a convention that allows her to do what is utterly unconventional—under the guise of a parent offering advice to a princess, she can also incorporate advice appropriate for a prince." Jansen, *Anne of France*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> Willard, "Anne de France, Reader," 65. Jansen and Matarasso disagree with Christine de Pizan's being an influence. Jansen, *Anne of France*, 15, n. 48; Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 194, n. 18. Diane Bornstein reads Anne's *Les enseignements* in terms of their instruction for wives and mothers, but also locates Anne in the tradition of Christine de Pizan: "Anne used Christine's *Livre de trois vertus* as a source." Diane Bornstein, *The Lady in the Tower: Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1983), 71.

<sup>58</sup> Willard, "Anne de France, Reader," 67.

sections II, III, XII, XIX, and XXV [26].<sup>59</sup> Additionally, the inevitability of Anne's death forms the impetus for both Anne's writing ("recognizing the imminent, sudden, and early death that I expect at any moment"<sup>60</sup> ["reconnoissant la très-briefve subdaine et hastive mort que à toute heure j'attens"])<sup>61</sup> and for Suzanne's obedience ("take great care to live well so that you [may] have no reason to doubt the end, and [may be able to] have the grace of God in this world and in the next"<sup>62</sup> ["devez mectre peine de si bien vivre, que n'aiez cause de doubter la fin, et que puissez avoir la grace de Dieu en ce monde, et, en l'autre"])).<sup>63</sup> Matarasso takes a different view of Anne's religiosity: "Brantôme insists that Madame was very devout, by which he probably meant that she was scrupulous in her practice [...] Of the religious currents of her time Madame exemplifies not the deep mystical undertow or the compassion that flowered throughout France in carved and painted Pietàs of the utmost beauty, nor the inward and personal piety of the *devotio moderna*, but the legalism and the sense of dissolution, of impermanence, of the skull beneath the skin."<sup>64</sup> Thus, in contrast to Willard, I find a spiritual concern in Anne's text that makes the work more than just practical advice coated with a thin layer of psychologically comforting religious obedience, but like Matarasso, I believe that there is perhaps not the spiritual significance in Anne's writing that might reflect the devotion of St Louis. Rather, the connections to God are somewhat akin to the portrayal of piety in

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<sup>59</sup> These numbers follow the numbering system in Jansen's translation. She corrects with Arabic numerals in square brackets Chazaud's presentation of *Les Enseignements* as thirty-one sections to reflect the sixteenth-century printed edition's thirty-three sections. According to Jansen, Chazaud's numbering involves "his own error" (e. g., he uses the section number XXV twice) and his examination of an incomplete copy of the sixteenth-century print edition. Jansen, *Anne of France*, 17, n. 58.

<sup>60</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 25.

<sup>61</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 68.

<sup>63</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 132-33.

<sup>64</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 193. Oddly though, Matarasso also makes a dismissive statement about Anne's religious concerns as well: "she was concerned with the here and now and not, despite her protestations, with eternity." Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 192.

*The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, which I examine in a later chapter and whose narrator takes pains to point out that God rewards piety two-hundredfold and punishes impiety in equal measure. Indeed, Matarasso implies a bit of this transactional religiosity when she describes the “private saint” of the French royal family, “Francis of Paola, the hermit Louis XI had imported from Calabria” to whom Anne went “and received the assurance that she would bear a child [...]”<sup>65</sup>

But Saint Louis’s advice to his children is not simply a list of religious dictates; his letters also follow a particular rhetorical pattern that becomes relevant to Anne’s own text.<sup>66</sup> To his son Louis IX writes: “Dear son, since I desire with all my heart that you be well taught in all things, I think I will give you some instruction in this text, because I have heard you say several times that you retain more from me than from others.” (“Chiers filz, pour ce que je desirre de tout mon cuer que tu soies bien enseigné en toutes choses, je pense que je te face aucun ensaingnement par cest escript; car je t’oÿ dire aucunes foiz que tu retendroies plus de moy que d’autrui.”)<sup>67</sup> Likewise, to his daughter he writes: “Dear daughter, since I believe you will retain things more willingly from me, out of love for me, than you would from various others, I thought I would produce some teachings for you, written in my own hand.” (“Chiere fille, pour che que je quit ke vous retenrés plus volentiers de moi pour l’amour que vous avés a moi, que vous ne feriés de

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<sup>65</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 65.

<sup>66</sup> Gendt describes St. Louis’s motivation to write as stemming from “the privileged relationship between father and daughter, based on filial love” and notes that his “main concern is his daughter’s spiritual well-being and—but this is less emphasized—her happiness in the world” but that “he does not announce a specific objective.” Gendt, “*Aucuns Petis Enseignements*,” 285, 286.

<sup>67</sup> Kathleen Ashley, ed. and trans., “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, intro. Roberta L. Krueger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3-22, 7.



plusiours autres, j'ai pensé ke je vous fache aucuns enseignemens de ma main.”)<sup>68</sup>

Kathleen Ashley explains that “documents [...] written by the author’s own hand were given the greatest legal force in medieval society, but Louis also gives a personal reason for producing the two letters, claiming that his children would take the advice more seriously if they knew it came from their father directly.”<sup>69</sup> I would suggest that this decision to provide an autograph copy is also rhetorical, and we might uncover significance beyond the personal in this choice by looking at the work of C. Stephen Jaeger.<sup>70</sup>

Jaeger’s *The Envy of the Angels* traces the changes from cathedral school learning to university learning, which partly involve the charismatic culture found in tenth- and eleventh-century cathedral schools.<sup>71</sup> In that culture, “the body and physical presence” of pupils and teachers become “the mediator[s] of cultural values. The controlled body with all its attributes—grace, posture, charm, sensuality, beauty, authority—is the work of art.”<sup>72</sup> Charismatic culture takes a well-ordered human presence to be indicative of a well-ordered human interior and focuses on the *cultus virtutum*, or cult of virtues, such discipline instilled. Jaeger argues that as cathedral schools decline, so does charismatic learning; charisma “becomes enfabulated, an object for study and reading.”<sup>73</sup> Jaeger posits that representatives of charismatic learning leave the cathedral schools to find work

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<sup>68</sup> Ashley, “The French *Enseignemenz*,” 17.

<sup>69</sup> Ashley, “The French *Enseignemenz*,” 4.

<sup>70</sup> Ashley, “The French *Enseignemenz*,” 4.

<sup>71</sup> C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Jaeger does not discuss charismatic learning as being gendered learning, and I do not wish to indicate that it was the realm of women’s learning exclusively; however, I do discuss it here as it specifically relates to women. Also, Jaeger does allow that women are ultimately subject to courtly social values that are rooted in charismatic learning. See Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 329.

<sup>72</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 14.

at various courts; in the writings of such persons the ideals of the *cultus virtutum* become enshrined, producing “the literature of courtly education: handbooks of courtesy and ‘mirrors of princes.’”<sup>74</sup> Jaeger suggests that “the court[s] valued the *mores*” and that ultimately courtliness developed its own discourse, specifically twelfth-century courtly literature, which “generated social ideals.”<sup>75</sup> I argue that the social ideals in twelfth-century courtly literature survive in fifteenth-century conduct literature written for women (and men).

I apply Jaeger’s ideas of enfabulated charisma to Louis IX’s choice of providing autograph texts to his children as well as his rhetorical choices within the text. Louis IX’s presence in the text, through constant references to the parent-child relationship, becomes an authority-laden exemplar for the child or student to mimic; conduct literature presents the exemplar textually rather than bodily. Jaeger’s cathedral school instructors were authoritative because their students deferred to the instructors’ greater virtue; the teachers cultivated friendship, or “love of virtue in another human being,” among their students in order to promote the virtues that they embodied.<sup>76</sup> This atmosphere for learning was very powerful: “love in pedagogy means control of the student’s will: he surrenders his will to his teacher, who puts his absolute control over the student to whatever purpose he sees fit.”<sup>77</sup> Conduct literature authors imbue themselves and their texts with a similar type of authority; the language of love and friendship that shapes the language of learning for

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<sup>74</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 292-94.

<sup>75</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 296, 324.

<sup>76</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 311.

<sup>77</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 316. This quotation from Jaeger may be a bit overstated to apply to Anne de France’s relationship with her daughter and the other young women she raised; as a mother or guardian Anne’s authority over her charges may not have involved complete subjugation the way a cathedral school or religious order may have mandated obedience. For example, obedience is mandated by the Benedictine Rule, but obedience plays a much lesser role in Hugh of St. Victor’s much later twelfth-century *De institutione novitiorum*, a guide “on the cultivation of virtue.” Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 254-56, 254.

cathedral schools becomes the language of parental concern and authority in conduct literature, as we can see in Louis IX's letters.

When we apply Jaeger's concepts of charisma and love language to Louis IX's teachings for his son and daughter, we come away with the understanding that Louis is doing more than expressing a personal or documentary bias in presenting his children with holograph copies of his advice – he is indeed engaged in presenting himself as a charismatic text. We see evidence of this when we consider how often he recalls himself to his son and daughter in their respective letters. For example, Louis's writing to Philip mentions that Philip is "his dear son" ("Son chier filz")<sup>78</sup> or simply addresses Philip as "dear son" ("chiers filz" or "chier filz")<sup>79</sup> a total of nineteen times. Louis's advice to his son is divided into thirty-three sections in Ashley's edition, each of which is fairly short, varying from one to several sentences. The references to the father-son relationship appear in 57 percent of the sections to Philip. In the letter to Isabel, the percentage is even higher: 81 percent as there are eighteen references in only twenty-two sections.<sup>80</sup> These direct addresses, or apostrophes, both emphasize Louis's relationship with his children and create that relationship as one of closeness, with the epithet of "dear" ("chier" or "chiers") occurring with almost each reference to the children. We might suggest from this that Louis IX is engaging in a rudimentary self-encoding with his texts, something which Jaeger notes Bernard of Clairvaux was able to accomplish, albeit more subtly than

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<sup>78</sup> Ashley, "The French *Enseignemenz*," 7. This phrase occurs in the opening of the letter, appearing in section one of Ashley's edition.

<sup>79</sup> "Chiers filz" appears twelve times in the following sections of Ashley's edition: 2, 3, 9, 11, 15, 16, 21, 23-25, 27, 30. "Chier filz" appears six times in the following sections of Ashley's edition: 7, 8, 26, 28, 31-32.

<sup>80</sup> Isabel is called Louis's "dear and beloved daughter" ("chiere et amee fille") once in section 1, "his daughter" ("sa fille") once in section 22, and "dear daughter" ("chiere fille") sixteen times in sections 2-10, 13-17, 19, and 20.

Louis IX, by “combin[ing] charisma with writings.”<sup>81</sup> For Jaeger, Bernard’s “eloquence is equal to that of his personal presence,” and he argues that Bernard’s contemporaries “noticed this coinciding of charismatic person and charismatic text.”<sup>82</sup> Jaeger offers as proof the words of Geoffrey of Clairvaux, Bernard’s biographer:

We have said these few things concerning the saintly manners and character [*moribus*] of our father. . . . But this is far more distinctly expressed in his books, and it emerges so clearly in his own writings that it seems he had created an effigy and a mirror of himself in them. (“Haec nos quidem de sacris moribus Patris nostri . . . perstrinximus. Caeterum longe eminentius in suis ille libris apparet, et ex litteris propriis innotescit, in quibus ita suam videtur expressisse imaginem, et exhibuisse speculum quoddam sui. . . .”)<sup>83</sup>

As Jaeger suggests, Bernard’s “personal charisma” has been, at least for his contemporaries, “transfused into textual form *by the [writing] skill of its possessor.*”<sup>84</sup> I would suggest that Louis IX’s continual reference to his parental relationship to his immediate audience in the advice he left for his son and daughter acts in a similar manner, constructing an “effigy” of himself for both Philip and Isabel. Likewise this effigy seeks a certain amount of control and power over its audience—again Winn’s and Krueger’s earlier assessments of this culture being one of indoctrination become relevant. Anne adopts this method of address in her *Les enseignements* as well, which I will address in the following section on the charismatic quality of Anne’s writing. Louis IX wrote with both a sense of spirituality and parental charisma, both of which are relevant to Anne’s own text.

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<sup>81</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 275.

<sup>82</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 276.

<sup>83</sup> English is quoted in Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 276. Latin is quoted in Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 466, n. 28.

<sup>84</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 276, emphasis in the original.

### III. Charisma, Experience, and the Rhetoric of Female Cooperation in *Les enseignements*

In this section I shall analyze the three primary rhetorical features of *Les enseignements*: its familial charisma, emphasis on the experiential, and promotion of female cooperation, particularly of women from the same family. I have already partly suggested the importance of the charisma of the narrator in my discussion of Louis IX and C. Stephen Jaeger above, but I would like to elaborate on this point a bit further by turning specifically to the rhetorical effect of having a charismatic parent in the role of narrator. The role of parent is privileged with charismatic power, rhetorically reinforcing the authority of the conduct book. Clella I. Jaffe, who writes on the rhetoric of a genre she calls mother's manuals, discusses the rhetorical power of a parental narrator in the context of Dhuoda's ninth-century *Liber manualis*, or *Handbook for William*. Jaffe reports that Dhuoda's "relationship with her [stated] audience is socially sanctioned; indeed, it is her maternal duty to remind her sons of their moral obligations."<sup>85</sup> I suggest that this assertion of credibility occurs whenever "parents" narrate or commission conduct literature for their children. Thus, parental authority is transferred into the text, which is a conclusion that Juanita Feros Ruys draws about Louis IX's writings for his children as well: "as Louis [IX]'s precepts are not backed by cited *auctoritas*, and on only one occasion by exemplum, wherein could their authority lie but the implicit authority of both parent and king, and his experience in the world? This sense of authority of the parent to teach, *qua* parent, is evident in the opening lines of Louis's instructions to his

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<sup>85</sup> Clella I. Jaffe, "Dhuoda's *Handbook for William* and the Mother's Manual Tradition," in *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women*, ed. Molly Meijer Wertheimer (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 177-98, 184. For further discussion of Dhuoda's *Liber manualis* in the context of experiential parental authority, see Juanita Feros Ruys, "Didactic 'I's and the Voice of Experience in Advice from Medieval and Early-Modern Parents to Their Children," in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, *Disputatio* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 129-62, 131-36.

son, where Louis declares he has written these instructions for Philippe, ‘for I have heard you say several times that you will remember more from me than from another.’”<sup>86</sup> The reader risks offending a textualized, rhetorical parent, not just breaking an abstract principle of behavior when she behaves badly, and this textual parent who is encoded in the text is there as a reminder of that absent parent who becomes present again through the language of the text. Such parental enfabulation “appeals to the reader’s experience and urges the reader to participate in the process: the epistemological process is not opposed to but subsumed within the reader’s *experientia*. The reader constructs his experience in the process.”<sup>87</sup> That is, as the reader experiences the text, there is a simultaneous and complementary remembrance of past experience that is brought into conversation with the reader’s understanding of the text, and if we presume the text meets its intended rhetorical goals and its audience acts to fulfill them, the reading itself can be its own speculative future experience, triggering the reader to think of instances in which advice such as this would be pertinent and perhaps cast the mind back into memories of the personal exemplar [here Anne] who might have followed the dictates described in the conduct literature. One might also compare this absent presence to Jacques Derrida’s concept of the trace, which he elaborates in *Of Grammatology*; “trace [is] that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present.”<sup>88</sup> Just like a trace, the parental narrator becomes a word-level reference to the parental relationship itself and invokes with that the memory of a past parental relationship juxtaposed against the present

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<sup>86</sup> Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 145. Also, of Anne more directly: “Anne adduces her own maternal authority as a site from which to instruct her daughter, formulating her precepts ‘[w]ith all the authority and power that a mother can and should have over a daughter.’” Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 149-50.

<sup>87</sup> Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 137, n. 32.

<sup>88</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 66. Also see for a basic definition of “trace” and “*différance*” David Rutledge, *Reading Marginally: Feminism, Deconstruction and the Bible*, Biblical Interpretation Series 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 74-82.

reading of the word that the conduct literature's audience experiences; these word-level references become traces, inciting memory of past interactions.

Derrida's concept of trace allows us to bring up the question of memory and remembrance, fields that Mary Carruthers has explored with regard to medieval manuscripts. Carruthers has written on memory and mnemonic devices in medieval book illustrations, the theory and psychology of which suggests how the recurrence of the parental narrator can construct conduct literature for its reader as a series of remembered past events. Carruthers writes:

picturing and reading, have as their goal not simply the learning of a story, but learning it to familiarize and domesticate it, in that fully internalized, even physiological way that medieval reading required. But in order to profit from *pictura*, one must understand it rhetorically, as directly referential not to an object but to a narrative (*historia*) and thus to human mental processes involved in understanding (intellect) and persuasion (will). The *phantasm* or *imago* which the mind must shape out of the various data of the senses in order to know at all mediates to our intellects what our eyes take in. Phantasms, which are the materials by which people think, are mental 'impressions' of our sensory experiences, used in constructing concepts that involve other mental materials as well, such as previous memories. [...] Augustine wrote that human memory is never of the actual past because it is the recollection of phantasms.<sup>89</sup>

Carruthers' discussion of the impact of images upon the memory and upon human thought suggests that we can read the daughter references in Anne's *Les enseignements* as *picturae* that stir up phantasms of the audience's past experiences with parents. Because "language has both *painture* and *parole* in its nature" and because medieval authors understood this visual element to language, we can apply these ideas to the word-level references to parent/child relationships that occur in *Les enseignements*.<sup>90</sup> Note also, Carruthers' understanding of language as verbal painting associated with stories, not

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<sup>89</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 276-77.

<sup>90</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 278.

just signifieds or objects, dovetails nicely with Derrida's insistence on trace within language.

Anne de France's text for Suzanne is short, though not as concise as Louis IX's, yet it makes frequent reference to the mother-daughter relationship.<sup>91</sup> There are a total of seventy-eight occurrences of the phrase "my daughter" ("ma fille")<sup>92</sup> in Anne's *Les enseignements*, which is divided into thirty-three sections.<sup>93</sup> These numbers average out to more than two references to "ma fille" per section, a much higher frequency than that included in Louis IX's letters, yet two sections (VII and IX) have no occurrences of the phrase while one section has as many as eleven occurrences (XIX). Despite the less regular appearance of the references to "fille" in *Les enseignements*, I would still postulate that the phrase "ma fille" becomes a marker in Anne's advice, helping to structure the syntax of the lessons. For example, of the seventy-eight occurrences, seventy occur very near the beginning of sentences with only minimal introductory transitional phrases or words preceding them such as "et pour tant" or "aussi." The other eight references either have non-transitional phrases preceding them or are located mid-sentence rather than at the beginning of the sentence. Anne's tone is conversational and dilatory in its reliance on apostrophe, but "ma fille" signals to the reader that the appearance of a concise principle of behavior is about to occur.<sup>94</sup> Applying Carruthers'

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<sup>91</sup> Gendt suggests part of Anne's motivation to write is "the love that every mother feels for a daughter and the fear for the many pitfalls of *la meschante vie presente*" so that Suzanne "will remember her words when she needs them, and that they may prove useful to her." Gendt, "*Aucuns Petis Enseignements*," 286.

<sup>92</sup> In Jansen's translation, she omits the translation of one "ma fille" so that the English translation has only seventy-seven.

<sup>93</sup> See Appendix D: "Ma fille" Occurrences in Chazaud's Edition of *Les enseignements*.

<sup>94</sup> Jansen writes of the structure of *Les enseignements* that  
 there seems to be little organization [...] beyond [its] division into sections [...]. As Anne compiles her list, she seems to move from one topic to another as they suggest themselves to her; "and," and "and also" introduce section after section, sentence after sentence. Her prose seems almost self-propelled as she strings phrases, clauses and sentences together with "and" and "because." She repeats herself. She returns to points



statements about knowing something through an almost physical knowledge of the words demonstrates that “ma fille” also acts as a memory trigger, recalling in the reader or listener all the previous times that person has been addressed as a child by a parent. Accepting these theories about memory and language also helps concretize Jaeger’s conception of enfabulated authority—if the very language of a text calls to mind memories of one’s parent, he or she very well could be considered encoded or painted into the words on the page. Or to put it in Derrida’s terms, the texts contain a parental trace, a voice most scholars of the period would agree is concerned with “initiation, transmission, preservation” (initiation, transmission, preservation).<sup>95</sup> Matarasso finds Anne’s employment of “ma fille” as “cool” in comparison to the more emotional “cheire fille,” found throughout Louis IX’s writing for his daughter, and that beyond “the initial assurance of maternal love [...] the book contains no mention of affection or even friendship.”<sup>96</sup> I hope to show that despite the less endearing form of address that not only does Anne still deploy the mother-daughter relationship as a means to create authority

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she has made previously to reiterate them or to reinforce them. She seems to be composing as she goes—“as I have said above” is an acknowledgment she makes more than once—and as her list of instructions grows longer, her prose seems more hurried and less finished. And yet we can eventually discern the emerging pattern: as Anne compiles her list, she provides a series of lessons for each stage of Suzanne’s life, examining, in turn, what is necessary for her as daughter, as wife, and as widow.

Jansen, *Anne of France*, 18. While I do not disagree with Jansen’s assessment of the seeming disorganization of Anne’s prose, I would suggest that part of the organization of *Les enseignements* relies upon a circular or radiating structure for the work, at least at the chapter level. I elaborate on this later in this section of this chapter, but see also Figure 1 in this chapter. What appears repetitive and disorderly to modern readers, especially academics accustomed to a certain linear, top-down organization, actually helps to unify Anne’s work and tie together the various chapters through verbal and stylistic echoes.

<sup>95</sup> Winn, “*De mères en filles*,” 24. Krueger suggests a similar sense of attempts to control through conduct literature: “the increasingly popular didactic treatises written expressly for noblewomen and bourgeois may have played a significant role in shaping the social identities of their readers.” Krueger, “*Chascune selon*,” 19.

<sup>96</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 194. René de Maulde la Clavière also makes, though much less complexly, the claim that “On this system [of education employed by Anne] the mothers could not form close ties with their daughters, still less enter into their life.” La Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance: A Study of Feminism*, trans. George Herbert Ely (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1905), 89. I hope I demonstrate the faultiness of this understanding of Anne’s involvement in Suzanne’s life and her conduct manual.

within her text, but that she also demonstrates a concern for affection and friendship, even if it is not overtly stated in her *Enseignements*.<sup>97</sup>

Let us consider first section XIX, wherein Anne employs the phrase “ma fille” more than anywhere else, eleven times. Though partly the high frequency may have to do with the relative length of this section, which develops a number of principles for good conduct, I would still suggest that this section concentrates references to the daughter relationship because the topic of the chapter is also significant to the rhetorical figure, i.e., Anne is discussing female-female relationships and so the abundance of references to “ma fille” are appropriate to the topic. Anne’s first words in section XIX are:

Furthermore, my daughter, you must attend to other women in times of childbirth, misfortune, and illness, and, if you have it, send them something you think they might need or that might please them; you should do this at the very least for the women you know, especially for your own relatives and those of your husband, because whether they are poor or rich, you owe them more than anyone else, as long as they conduct themselves honestly.<sup>98</sup> (En outre aussi, *ma fille*, en leurs gésines, fortunes, maladies, vous les devez visiter, et envoyer de vostre hostel quelque chose de nouveau, si vous l’avez, que vous pensez que leur soit neccessaire ou plaisant, au moins à celles de vostre congnoissance, et, par espécial, à voz parentes, ou de vostre mary; car à icelles estes vous plus tenue que aux autres, soient d’honneste gouvernement.)<sup>99</sup>

As this section dilates, the material becomes more conventional: a lament that no one appreciates powerless family members, as well as imperative commands to avoid pride, be attentive at Mass, act as “a mirror, a pattern, and an example for others in all

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<sup>97</sup> To be completely fair to Matarasso, elsewhere she does indicate that “it is prudent to credit Madame with more complex and perhaps tenderer feelings for her daughter than transpire in the *Enseignements*.” Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 196. I demonstrate this below as well, particularly with a discussion of the medieval concept of motherhood.

<sup>98</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 48. La Clavière discusses Anne’s charitable actions for others, including women: “At her expense intelligent children of the lower classes were kept at their studies until they had their degree; orphans learnt needlework or some trade; widows, cripples, beggars, poor folk too proud to beg, the broken-hearted, saw unexpected manna fall from heaven; deserving people were encouraged, sustained, uplifted, ‘cherished and nourished’ by an unseen providence”; “She provided for so many maidens by way of marriage, and had so great care of them, that she deserved to be named their mother.” La Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance*, 69, 69, n. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 61.

things.”<sup>100</sup> (en toutes choses [...] doivent estre, le miroer patron et exemple des autres.)<sup>101</sup>

Nonetheless, the undeniable emphasis in this passage is upon a lady’s relationships with her female relatives; this focus becomes diluted in the development of the section, but Anne begins with it as a practical starting place from which she can develop all her other behavioral advice. That is, one way that noblewomen can avoid pride is to focus their efforts on treating all their female relations well, regardless of their power and status at court or otherwise, so long as those female relations do not engage in dishonest behavior. This codicil implies that showing favor to such relatives may be misapprehended by others at court as approval of unchaste behavior, which could then cast doubt on one’s own chastity, which Anne particularly emphasizes as an unacceptable risk.<sup>102</sup> If we look to Anne’s own life and her relationship with her sister Jeanne, we see a very complicated observation of this principle. Matarasso writes:

Yet although between her [Anne] and her sister there was no close temperamental affinity, each seems to have accepted the other’s position as proper in the circumstances. Feudal society, that complex structure of human relationships, had developed ways of dealing with conflicts of loyalty, thus enabling the duchess of Bourbon to remain deaf to the pleading of the duchess of Orléans [on behalf of her imprisoned husband, the rebellious Louis de Orléans, who despite her devotion to him, had always treated Jeanne with disdain and reproach], while between sisters courtesies and even kindnesses continued.<sup>103</sup>

Matarasso cites a letter from Jeanne to Anne in support of this description of their

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<sup>100</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 48-49.

<sup>101</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 65. This lesson is also in Louis IX’s advice to his daughters, which Ruys notes is advice that is “increasingly associated with female recipients of advice texts through the medieval and early modern periods.” Ruys, “Didactic ‘I,’” 143.

<sup>102</sup> Krueger notes that “Both Anne and Christine [de Pizan] are preoccupied with the fragility of social standing; if one is born into rank, one can ‘fall out’ of it, or at least be impoverished within it, through the death of a parent or spouse, or through social dishonor.” Krueger, “*Chascune selon*,” 28.

<sup>103</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 56. Maulde la Clavière discusses the role of the reserved tie between mother and daughter in education: Anne “desired an education that was spontaneous and in some sort automatic, which would result, not from a perfect intimacy between mother and daughter, still less from a sentiment of equality, but solely from a kindly, frank, and affectionate association, of such nature that the mother would colour her child’s character ‘as a good wine colors its cask.’” Maulde la Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance*, 90.

relationship,<sup>104</sup> and it should be noted that when it is politically expedient and possible to support Jeanne, Anne does by blocking Louis d'Orléans's petitions in Rome seeking a divorce, but later when Louis is the new king, "the first if not the only object of the ducal couple was to give, if not the seal of approval to the divorce they had opposed for so long, at least the assurance that they bore no grudge."<sup>105</sup> Jeanne enters the religious life after her divorce, and so there is one final note on this female-female relationship to be considered: Jeanne

bequeathed to her [Anne] not only lands and chattels, but the oversight and funding of the fledgling order of the Annonciade she had struggled so hard to establish. Madame brought to these responsibilities the right combination of business acumen and solicitude. [...] Now that death had swept away the log-jam of impediments, affection, duty and piety flowed unobstructed. Annually she paid the 600 *livres* that Jeanne had calculated the convent needed, she supported the college her sister had established, and she pursued in Rome the matter of the order's status, securing for it a number of privileges [...].<sup>106</sup>

Anne and Jeanne, then, had a complex relationship, not easily readable through the small number of historical documents testifying to its characteristics. Yet it is clear that respect for her sister's goals and projects at the end of her life are present within Anne's actions in maintaining the order and supporting it financially. This act must indicate some sort of sense of duty owed to her sister if it does not indicate sororal affection.

Before moving on to consider more of Anne's thoughts on those who do not demonstrate respect toward their family, I wish to consider briefly the assertion by

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<sup>104</sup> See Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 56 for the letter.

<sup>105</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 155.

<sup>106</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 235. On Anne's reluctant breaking off of the marriage of her brother Charles and Marguerite (Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian I) possibly because of her emotional connection to Marguerite, see Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 64. Additionally, though not particularly in evidence of female-female family respect except indirectly, Anne bequeaths all her possessions over to her son-in-law, Suzanne having died previously, "in consideration of the 'good, great, praiseworthy and recommendable services and pleasures which my said lord duke Charles rendered to my said lady ... and of the good treatment, great affection and kindness which he showed to the late lady Suzanne, his wife, throughout their married life.'" Quoted in Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 290.

Matarasso that Anne's text is somewhat unmaternal in its emotional connections to Suzanne, and provide some clarifying discussion of medieval motherhood, which Tracy Adams notes is often misunderstood because "historians have generally failed to take account of the constraints and contradictions that marked this medieval concept of motherhood, and thus they have overlooked signs of [the mother's] love for her children, producing a distorted image of her maternal qualities."<sup>107</sup> Adams shows that "one reason for the perception that the medieval mother did not enjoy strong emotional bonds with her children is that noble society constructed her as an intercessor figure with little power of her own, inferior to her children's father, charged with perpetuating the values of her rigidly hierarchical society in her offspring. Much as she might love her children, her first responsibility was to her male superiors [...]."<sup>108</sup> Certainly we cannot claim Anne de France was a weak woman, viewed as dependent upon Pierre, but if we consider her dominant but nonetheless unofficial power during her regency, it becomes more apparent that she was indeed reliant on Pierre during the critical years of her political machinations. This dependence appears again in the rhetoric of her book; she cannot be overt when she discusses politics in her book for Suzanne, and indeed Matarasso claims that Anne's text gives "no suggestion that a public role exists for her [Suzanne] to play, and the only authority envisaged for her is that which she will exercise over her waiting women. [...] Madame's precepts and her practice seem to belong to different people or to different worlds. [...] More likely that the age-old tradition of female subservience dictated the precepts, while her life was the continuing response of instinct to

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<sup>107</sup> Tracy Adams, "Medieval Mothers and Their Children: The Case of Isabeau of Bavaria in Light of Medieval Conduct Books," in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 265-89, 268.

<sup>108</sup> Adams, "Medieval Mothers," 266.

circumstance. No attempt has been made to marry the two, or even to question the teaching in the light of experience.”<sup>109</sup> My reply to these claims is that Anne could not simply write a treatise for her daughter advocating the Machiavellian and personally driven tactics that Anne herself employed; it would not have been acceptable socially. It would have been a disastrous confirmation that all of Anne’s detractors had been correct all along: she was a monstrous woman seizing male power for herself and trying to inculcate the same within her daughter. Rather Anne’s rhetoric can be understood if we look to the subtle ambiguities of the double talk of the work, such as the one I discuss below: be discrete and do not seek any information, but if you have any information, make sure you do not use it. That is, *Les enseignements* can be understood as a rhetorically safe, authorized text that can nonetheless be decoded as providing advice that could lead Suzanne to be clever and powerful at court through the cultivation of the outward virtues of piety, humility, and circumspection; the text provides a “thorough grounding in *savoir-vivre*.”<sup>110</sup> With her mother as her own model for most of her life, Suzanne would have a living exemplar upon which she might pin the point of her mother’s conduct literature, and she would have had a living context and indeed commentary on that very work as well in the actions and choices of her mother, who proved to be both relentless in the pursuit of her own titles and power as well as subtle enough to be able to wield the power of the regency without being defamed entirely in the historical record. “This rhetorical activity or ‘doing’ recalls [...] Butler’s idea of performance” as Anne’s text constructs a safe image of herself by “negotiating with pre-

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<sup>109</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 194.

<sup>110</sup> Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 38.

existing cultural constructions of [women's] identities."<sup>111</sup> A particularly apt description of how I view Anne and *Les enseignements* is given in Tracy Adams's article on medieval motherhood, though there she is analyzing motherhood as portrayed by Christine de Pizan:

[...] motherhood, then, [is] one aspect of the larger mediating role women play in society. Fraught with contradiction, the role is manageable only by those with a high degree of social intelligence—sharp skills of observation and the ability to dissimulate, immense tact and rhetorical ability. [...] The woman depicted in Christine's *Livre des Trois Vertus* is a fearless manipulator of a game whose rules she fully understands, a loving mother, and an example of how to carry out an extremely difficult job. Although Christine ostensibly grounds the role in personal morality, the person she describes is clever rather than good.<sup>112</sup>

Adams encapsulates in this discussion the key features of Anne and her conduct guide: she cannot tell Suzanne to seize power, so she leaves her daughter notes on how to work and manipulate within the court, but in a manner that maintains her outward appearance and reputation as respectable, indeed unimpeachable. This understanding of Anne is even confirmed in Matarasso's description of her political identity, but it is oddly noticeable that Matarasso denies Anne's possession of an equally discerning knowledge about what would and would not be acceptable in the written word:

She learned to mask her natural arrogance and her impatience to get things done. She was no rebel; very quickly she learned to operate within the prescribed limits and turn them to her advantage. No one could play a waiting game better than she. She worked at one remove, through men who were often unaware they were being manipulated. Again and again during her years in power she promised the earth only to renege when she had gained her ends. That she still found takers speaks eloquently for her powers of persuasion. From the outset she applied herself to building up an intelligence network her father could have been proud of, and which proved indispensable to her survival.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 30, n. 42.

<sup>112</sup> Adams, "Medieval Mothers," 272.

<sup>113</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 20. Matarasso is also very clear about Anne's keen sense of what is and is not appropriate and the importance of symbol: "she had put up a clear signal of her intention to respect the law,

Further, when Matarasso considers Anne's text and its position on lies, she writes: "The insistence on exemplary truthfulness sits oddly with Madame's own reputation as past mistress of deception, but lying in politics was presumably different from lying in the context of daily life and personal relationships."<sup>114</sup> Matarasso has made the statement herself, but does not put it together with Anne's writing; she cannot advocate lying to her daughter precisely because it is unacceptable, but she must leave gaps in her text that can be read and then re-read within the gloss and context of her own life, to which Suzanne was witness.

Anne is very specific about duty to one's lineage as she compares those who do not fulfill duty to unnatural heretics: "Such people [those who do not respect their families] are like the infidels who deny our faith—they deny their own blood and lineage, which they should love, advance, honor above all and to the last drop."<sup>115</sup> (Et telz gens ressemblent aux infidels, lesquelz desnyent nostre foy, et avec fuyent leur propre sang et lignaige, lequel ilz sont aymer, avancer, et honorer sur tous autres, et jusques à la dernière goutte.)<sup>116</sup> The severity of this comparison is enough to give one pause over its presence; it suggests a particular type of misbehavior that Anne finds especially loathsome and counter to one's own blood. If we consider her own position as a woman who defended the viability of her regency against upstart nobility as well as her upbringing within a largely feminine household in Amboise and her *post mortem* support of her sister, one may find in this section of Anne's *Les enseignements* not just

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by placing the chancellor, its embodiment, immediately in front of the king when he made his entry into Paris. It was a powerful statement which drew comments at the time and speaks of a maturity unusual even in an age when responsibility often fell on young shoulders." Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 25.

<sup>114</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 193.

<sup>115</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 49.

<sup>116</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 62-63.



conventional advice on how women should behave, but advice that suggests that the fostering and maintenance of strong familial ties between women is natural and beneficial. Jansen's political argument, if extended to this realm, would suggest that such relationships can help preserve the reputation of the lady who fosters such ties because a female network of family members who love and respect a lady, will be less likely to betray her for some personal gain. I would not suggest, as some of Jansen's considerations of Anne's early life might imply, that Anne builds advice to help Suzanne erect a sort of utopian female world, but I would suggest quite strongly that Anne is keenly aware of the value for a lady at court to have strong female relationships, and so while Jansen tends to romanticize this aspect of Anne's life—her childhood and post-regency life among women—I would say that her writing, inasmuch as it advocates respect for relatives, must be viewed with the same Machiavellian lens through which Jansen wants to read the remainder of Anne's advice. Anne does not champion a romantic utopia by advocating good relationships with women; she provides sound advice given the culturally important role female relatives had during the time period. For example, consider Winn's emphasis on the mother: "Une fille était ce que sa mere avait fait d'elle" (A daughter/girl was what her mother had made her).<sup>117</sup>

The key to section XIX is the first principle of behavior listed: treat female relatives well. This principle acts as a central mode of behavior into which all the remaining points of Anne's section can fit, as if the discussion of the later principles, all of which are introduced with "*ma fille*," radiate from first adopting the proper attitude to one's female family members (see Figure 3). In this way, section XIX "begins with clearly and deliberately locating oneself in a place, which may be an actual location, but

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<sup>117</sup> Winn, "De mères en filles," 24. My translation.

is most importantly conceived as a mental position, both a habitation for the mind and a direction.”<sup>118</sup> The place in the case of Anne’s text is the “place” of respecting and honoring female relatives.

My reading of the mental wheel of principles of behavior radiating from the central spoke of proper behavior toward women as part of Anne’s deliberate structure, claims a definitive connection between Anne’s text and medieval rhetoric. We do not have definite proof she read and studied rhetoric but Anne had access to a vast collection of books in her library, and according to Jansen at Anne’s death 135 volumes were counted among her personal possessions, covering a variety of genres from romance to hagiography and other devotional works.<sup>119</sup> Among the texts that may have familiarized Anne with imagery-driven or visually driven rhetoric are multiple copies of *La cité de Dieu*, Augustine’s *Civitas Dei*, including commentaries thereon; Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy*; the sermons of Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris; the *Roman de la Rose*; numerous copies of the Bible or sections thereof; as well as works by Aristotle, Christine de Pizan, Thomas Aquinas, Cicero, Ovid, and Saint Bernard.<sup>120</sup>

Having considered briefly the structuring significance and charismatic impact of the phrase “*ma fille*” on section XIX, I now turn to the sections of Anne’s work that contain no references to “*ma fille*”: VII and IX. Section VII warns Suzanne not to dwell

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<sup>118</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 73.

<sup>119</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 11.

<sup>120</sup> This list is drawn from the two library inventories published in Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 213-58, which are both from Bourbon libraries: one at Aiguesperce and compiled at Anne’s request in 1507, one at Moulins completed 10 months after Anne’s death. Matarasso is less positive about Anne’s knowledge of these works: “Madame is most unlikely to have read all her sources, even in translation. From compendia and works of piety a useful range of quotations could be gleaned without too much trouble. None the less, to be able to cite so many authorities aptly is proof of a level of culture rare among women of her day, and it is only fair to point out that she had all of these works at her disposal: over 300 volumes in the library at Moulins, half as many at Aiguesperce [...] and no doubt more at Chantelle and her other residences.” Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate*, 196, n. 21.

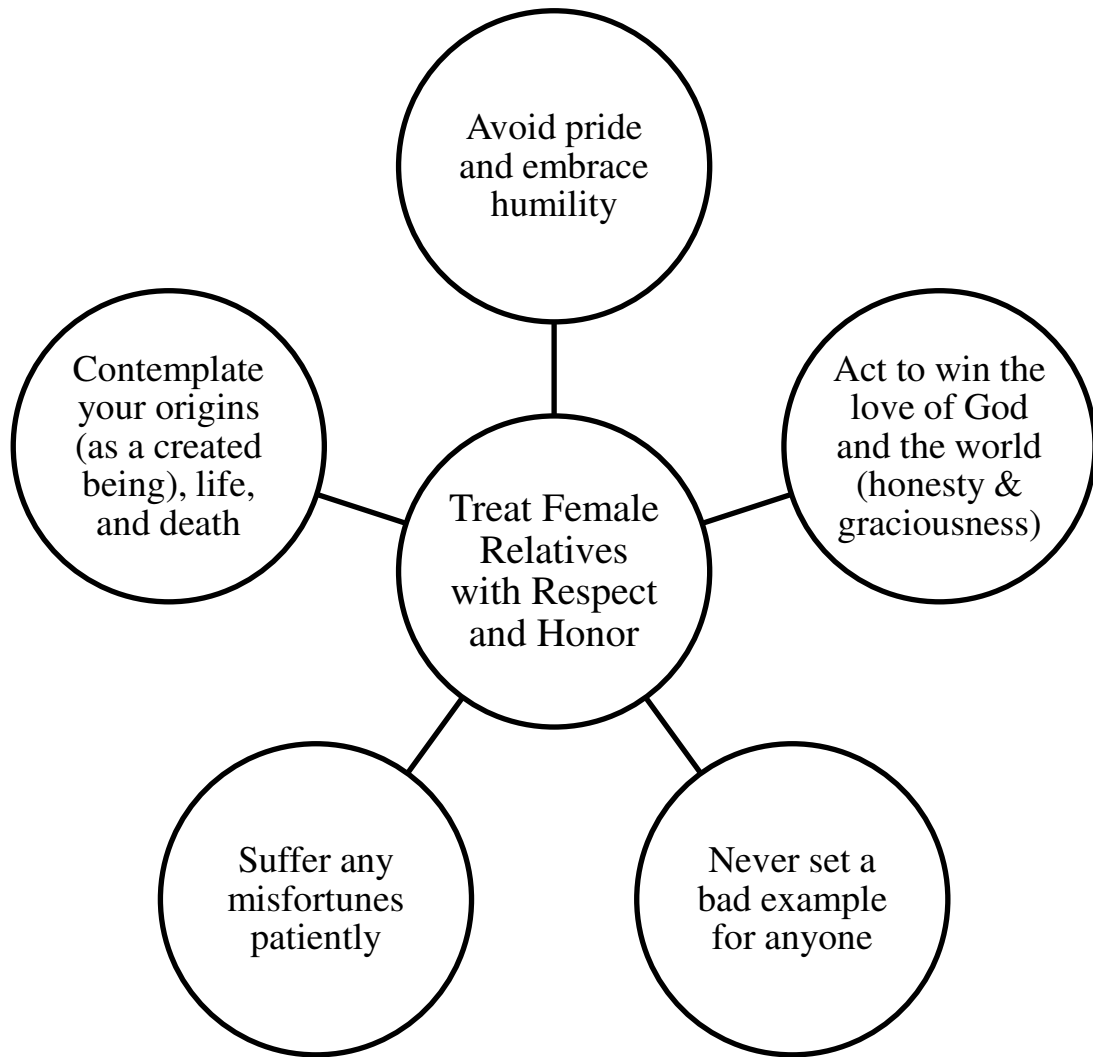


Figure 3. The Rhetorical Structure of Section XIX of *Les enseignements* by Anne of France.

too much on death in conversation, though she should be attentive to it in her own meditations, a topic Anne addresses in section VI; section IX deals with being both humble and patient.<sup>121</sup> References to written and respected male authorities take the place of personal charisma in these two chapters. In section VII she refers to Dr. Lienard and St. Paul the apostle, and in section IX to Lienard again as well as Socrates.<sup>122</sup> It is also important to note that the comparison of those who mistreat female relatives with heretics discussed above occurs earlier in Anne's text, in section VII, but is attributed to Saint Paul in describing those who flatter others' sinful behavior: "foolish people deny the faith and are much worse than infidels and accordingly, they can neither suffer nor bear too great a trial or punishment."<sup>123</sup> ("Saint Pol dit que telz gens dényent la foy, ey sont beaucoup pires que infidels, et ne pourroient, selon la raisonnable loy, souffrir ne porter trop grant pugnition.")<sup>124</sup> I would argue then, that part of Anne's reason for developing references to written authorities is not only to give her text the appearance of a proper manual for behavior, but also in order to transfer some of the rhetorical weight of the authorities to her own specific points, in the instance in section XIX, in order to emphasize the misdeed one does in maligning or refusing aid to female family members. Anne's recycling in XIX of a comparison that Saint Paul makes here in section VII suggests further a circular or enfolding structure for Anne's advice: keeping faith properly is the earlier principle and it enfolds the later chapter that focuses on female relationships but that also includes principles of behavior that will lead back to proper worship, the topic of the enfolding chapter (see Figure 4).

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<sup>121</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 33-34, 34-35. Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 17-18.

<sup>122</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 33, 35. Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 18, 19, 22, 23.

<sup>123</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 33-34.

<sup>124</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 19.

Section IX offers a more complicated use of authorities. I would like to emphasize the *heteroglossia* of the passage in conjunction with its use of authorities:

And if it happens that, out of envy or hatred someone speaks out against you or speaks falsely about you or your honor or something else, suffer it patiently, seeming to think nothing of it and always remaining pleasant. As Doctor Lienard says, anger and envy are never so great that they cannot be softened by the virtues of kindness and humility. Further, take care to tell no tales to anyone at all, because sometimes even those who do so justly, with reason and good intentions, are later hated for it and suffer a great deal. And so that all goes smoothly, I counsel you to mind your own business, without asking about anything or wanting to know anything about the affairs or conduct of others. And if it happens that you know something, take care that you do not reveal it; although someone may ask you about it, do not admit to knowing anything. As Socrates says, a man or woman of great rank should never reveal the secret of another as long as there is no harm in concealing it [...].<sup>125</sup> (Et s'il advenoit que, par envye ou hayne, aucun parlast, ou controuvast quelque chose sur vous, contre vostre honneur, ou autrement, souffrez le pasciemment, faignant de le non croire en complaisant toujours, car, comme dit le docteur Liénard, il n'est point de si grand ire ne envye, que par la vertu de douceur et d'humilité ne soit adoulcie.

Au sur plus, gardez vous, à qui que ce soit, de faire nulz rapportz, car aucunes fois, plusieurs en ont fait de bien justes et raisonnables, et à bonne intencion, quis, depuis, en ont esté hays, et eu beaucoup à souffrir. Pour tant, je vous conseille, se n'est en toute douceur, que ne vous meslez que de vous, sans rien enquerre, ne desirer à sçavoir. Car, comme dit Socrates, oncques homme ne femme de grant fasson ne descouvrist le secret d'autrui, au moins, s'il ne touchoit à trop grant prejudice de le celer.”)<sup>126</sup>

While two references to authorities occur, Anne's syntax undercuts Dr. Lienard's point by claiming one should *appear* to be patient and express the “virtues of kindness and humility.” There is also an undercurrent of contradiction here. This advice seems prudent, practical, in the maintenance of the appearance of a proper lady of court, but there is also a subtle implication that through accruing knowledge of the activities of others, one might be avenged on one's maligners. This reading is very much against the feel of the

<sup>125</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 34-35.

<sup>126</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 22-24.

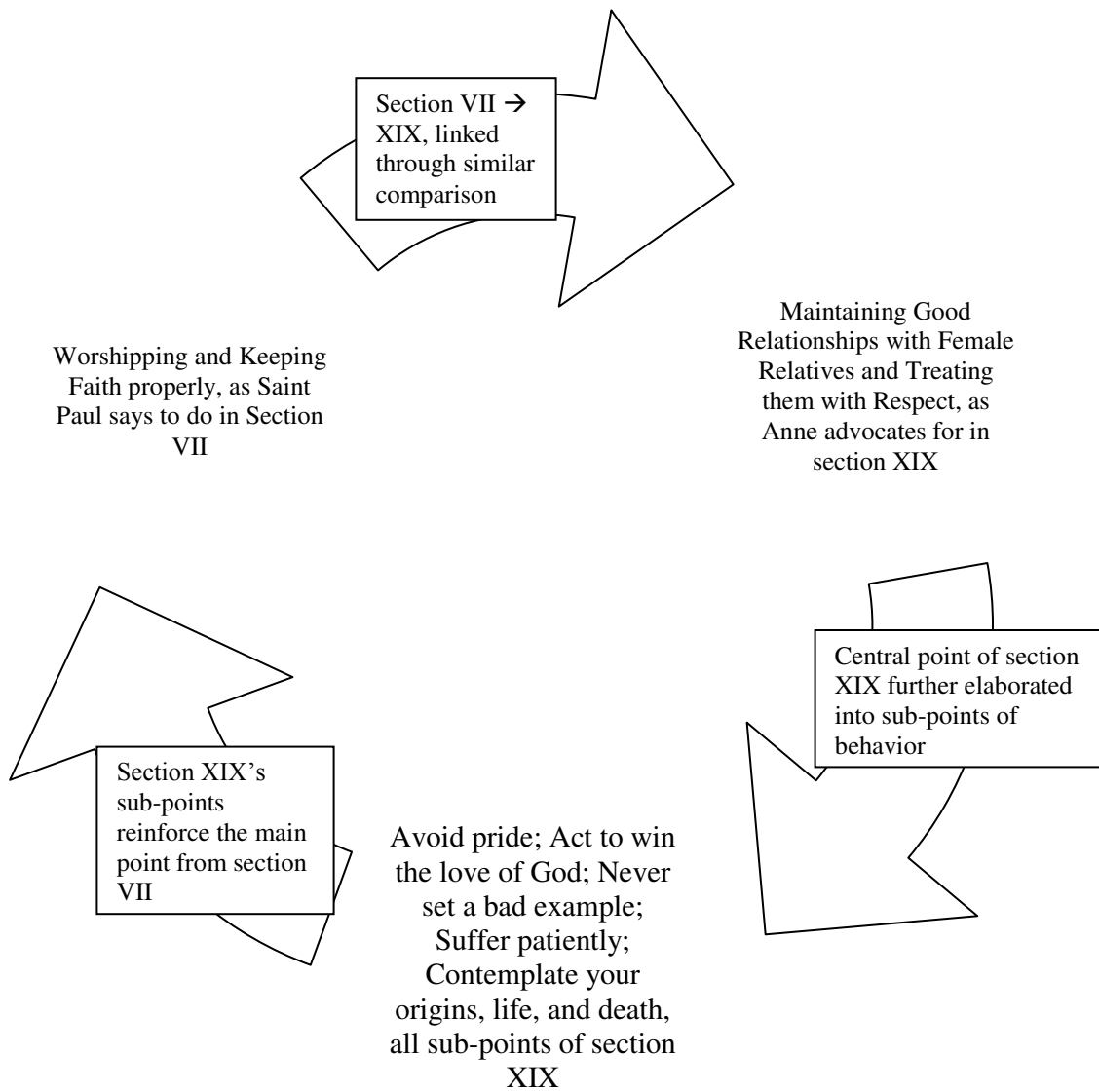


Figure 4. The Relationships between sections VII and XIX of *Les enseignements*

passage, but as soon as Anne has told Suzanne not to dig into the affairs of others, she cautions circumspection concerning any knowledge Suzanne does possess, nearly predicting non-compliance on Suzanne's part. Thus this passage reflects the traditional role of the patient Griselda and the lady in whom one can repose trust, but the undercurrent or centrifugal tendencies of this passage suggest that these behavioral models are simultaneously being problematized by Anne's structuring of the passage.

Anne's structure reflects preoccupation not only with charisma and authority but also with experience-based advice. Ruys reads the passage I discuss above as "the clearest indication of experience in Anne's advice to her daughter" because it contains "a certain pragmatism that would not accord with purely moralistic advice."<sup>127</sup> I am in accord with Ruys's reading, and wish to deepen it by considering the work of Anna Dronzek. Dronzek, a historian of fifteenth-century gender and culture, uses the term "experiential" to describe the mode of learning used to educate girls.<sup>128</sup> Dronzek does not articulate a definition for this mode of learning, but we ought to make explicit her concept; experiential learning involves the use of concrete experience to explicate abstractions, through such means as exempla. Additionally, experiential learning may encompass concrete descriptions of lived experience. Dronzek locates the pedagogical justification for teaching women experientially in the medieval attitude toward women's

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<sup>127</sup> Ruys, "Didactic 'I,'s" 151. I must also note the Ruys reads Anne's text as less experience-driven than I do, and so while she writes that "it would appear that women writers are more inclined to turn to *auctoritas* than personal experience in advising their children," I differ with her reading of Anne's text on this point because the experience in Anne's text is more diffuse and subtle than that which appears in works such as *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, wherein the narrator is free to declare the narrator-I has experienced something and can draw a lesson from it. If we consider Anne's position as a woman operating within a patriarchal and male-dominated political system, we can clearly see her implementation of personal experience is best left subtextual than clearly advertised within her manual.

<sup>128</sup> Anna Dronzek, "Gendered Theories of Education in Fifteenth-Century Conduct Books," in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L.A. Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 135-59, 148.

differences from men. For example, Dronzek notes that “a number of medieval medical theories” assert that women are “physically inferior to men,” and that “this physical inferiority contribute[s] directly to intellectual inferiority.”<sup>129</sup> Additionally, Dronzek points out that women were “associated with the corporeal and sense perception,” so that frequently, “authors believed [...] that girls needed knowledge tied to the physical, to the world of the body that was at the very center of their nature.”<sup>130</sup> These ideas establish some basis for experiential pedagogy directed at women in conduct literature, but in the case of Anne de France’s *Les enseignements*, I would argue that the term “experiential” takes on a more specific meaning: lived experience.<sup>131</sup>

Anne de France’s *Les enseignements* are not, like The Good Wife poems, filled

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<sup>129</sup> Dronzek, “Gendered Theories of Education,” 142-43. See also Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz’s “Gender and Medieval Art” in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 128-50, where she argues that women had a large role to play in the popularization of devotional images among the laity since female religious, because of the perceived weaker intellectual abilities of women, were not expected to engage in religious contemplation and devotion without the image (139). See also Alcuin Blamires, Karen Pratt, and C. W. Mark, eds., *Women Defamed and Women Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), for a number of texts that circulated in the medieval period and shaped perspectives on women. See Jean LeFèvre, *Les Lamentations de Matheolus et le Livre de leesce de Jehan LeFèvre, de Resson*, ed. Anton Gérard von Hamel, 2 vols. (Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1892–1905), for a contemporary French translation of the Latin *Liber de infortunis suis*, which inspires Christine de Pizan’s despair over being a woman in *Le livre de la cité des dames*. See Helen Solterer, *The Master and Minerva: Disputing Women in French Medieval Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) for a discussion of these issues particularly in French culture. See also on medieval attitudes toward women: Ann Marie Rasmussen and Sarah Westphal-Wihl, ed. and trans., *Ladies, Whores, and Holy Women: A Sourcebook in Courtly, Religious, and Urban Cultures of Late Medieval Germany*, TEAMS Medieval German Texts in Bilingual Editions 5 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010); Constance M. Rousseau and Joel T. Rosenthal, eds., *Women, Marriage, and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B.* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998); Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Sarah Hanley, “Identity Politics and Rulership in France: Female Political Place and the Fraudulent Salic Law in Christine de Pizan and Jean de Montreuil,” in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1997): 78-94; Kristen B. Neuschel, “Noblewomen and War in Sixteenth-Century France,” in *Changing Identities*, ed. Michael Wolfe, 124-44; Anne Rosalind-Jones, “Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women’s Lyric,” in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller, Gender and Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 74-95.

<sup>130</sup> Dronzek, “Gendered Theories of Education,” 143.

<sup>131</sup> Charity C. Willard has written that Anne’s *Les Enseignements* “are primarily personal, based on her own experience,” but Willard also ascribes much of the advice in *Les Enseignements* to sections of Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des Trois Vertus*, especially those that treat the life of a woman at court. Willard, “Anne de France, Reader,” 59.



with overt descriptions of concrete, visual objects; there is a focus on clear principles that a daughter ought to follow – these principles are only illustrated once through the inclusion of a short narrative exemplum that is overtly clear about the effects of misbehavior. Thus, Anne’s *Les enseignements* are not as purely concrete and visually expressed in terms of rhetoric as the shorter English texts I have examined. Willard has noted that Anne de France “had to deal with the hard realities of life at court, where rivalries could cause trouble.”<sup>132</sup> Taking into account both Willard’s statement and Jansen’s political reading, I argue that Anne’s inclusion of perhaps seemingly restrictive principles of behavior, particularly with regard to chastity, is not so much evidence of Anne’s simple acceptance of the antifeminism inherent in the reasoning of most men who write to mold the behavior of women but rather, reflective of her first-hand knowledge and experience at court. I wish to examine how the prominently placed exemplum in *Les enseignements* fits into the structure of medieval rhetorical theory and how it takes on a meaning beyond Dronzek’s sexed pedagogy of the experiential, though to be sure, that pedagogy is also simultaneously at work in Anne’s text.

Let us begin the investigation of Anne’s exemplum by turning again to Carruthers, who defines *enargeia*, a certain quality of writing that reflects medieval rhetorical theory, which I identify in Anne’s exemplum. *Enargeia* is:

vivid sensuous word-painting [... that] can be a quality of the language used to describe vivid action, to give vividness to fictive speeches (*prosopopeia*), or for the word-portrait of a person, actual or imaginary (*ethopoeia*). Though it is not the only ornament to do so, *enargeia* contributes greatly to the “picture-making” of literature, and it was taught in the composition exercises in Roman and Byzantine rhetorical pedagogy called *progymnasmata*, which every student practiced assiduously. [...]  
 Quintilian [the Late Antique grammarian] expected that readers normally tried to “see” what they read, that seeing or listening to language

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<sup>132</sup> Willard, “Anne de France, Reader,” 66.

could—and should—involve some procedures of mental imaging. And indeed many moderns, when they can participate in the now-rare activity, reading aloud, will make some sorts of mental images as they listen to the reading. Quintilian, addressing a society where reading aloud was common-place, says that it behoves an orator to tap into this normal human response by providing pictures painted (as it were) with his words, in order to “thrust [his work] upon our notice”<sup>133</sup> and make us raise up a picture in our minds. A primary use of ornament even in Roman rhetoric, in short, is to slow us down, make us concentrate, set up moments of meditation—and so help us to think and remember.<sup>134</sup>

*Enargeia*, as a rhetorical concept, provides a new reading of how Anne’s exemplum functions; the exemplum provides a specific narration and application of Anne’s principles upon which Suzanne can meditate.

Anne’s exemplum opens with a direct warning to Suzanne:

Do not be like the three ladies of long ago, daughters of the very noble and very powerful lord of Poitiers. These young women were so exceptionally beautiful that they were renowned throughout the world, and they were, therefore, sought by many in marriage, in particular by three noble and powerful princes from the region of Germany who, because of the reputation and fame of the three young ladies, were very much in love with them. And secretly, with little fanfare and without one knowing about the intentions of the other, they all three arrived in Poitiers on the same day at the same hour, and so it was that they encountered one another and told one another why they had come there—that is, to see the aforesaid young ladies for themselves. [...] The lord of Poitiers was informed of this news, at which he was very happy, and he quickly went to them and brought them to his castle, where they were honorably feasted by the lady of Poitiers and her three daughters. It so happened that the oldest was very tightly laced and so constrained by her clothing that her heart had been weakened, as she revealed to the first prince when he questioned her. He was very unhappy at the sight of her in such danger and wanted to know the reason; after he was told why, he knew that this had happened because of her arrogance and foolishness. It seemed that, because of this weakness, she would never be able to bear a child, and he concluded in his heart that he would never be able to marry her. The second prince intently regarded the bearing and manner of the second daughter; he found her to be so unpredictable and unthinking that he took her for a fool, so he also concluded that he could never marry her. The third prince was drawn to converse with the youngest daughter, whom he found completely

<sup>133</sup> Square brackets in Carruthers’ text.

<sup>134</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 130-31.

astonishing, speaking to him so boldly, especially about love, that he judged her both foolish and unchaste, and he would rather have died that very hour than ever marry her.

Thus were the three young girls exposed, my daughter, in the way that you have heard, and so they lost their happiness through their follies. The princes immediately took their leave and hastily departed with few words, except that the youngest could not go without saying something to the lady, the mother of these girls, about his ‘nice’ introduction to her daughters and the ‘gracious’ conduct he had seen in them—the meeting had been an honor, worthy of remembering always. The lady understood his words as well as their meaning; she was so embarrassed and so unhappy that she no longer had any joy in life and died not long afterwards.<sup>135</sup>

(Et ne resemblez pas à trois demoiselles, jadis filles au seigneur de Poitiers, qui lors estoit très puissant, lesquelles demoiselles estoient de si excellente beaulté, que par tout le monde estoit renommée d’elles, et, à ceste cause, furent demandées de plusieurs en mariage, par especial de trois nobles et puissans princes du païs d’Alemaigne et marches d’environ, qui pour le bruit et renommée d’elles, en estoient fort amoureux. Et, secrètement, à petit estat, et non saichans du fait ne enterprise l’ung de l’autre, arrivèrent tous trois, sur ung mesme jour et à une heure, à Poitiers, et tant advint qu’ilz s’assemblèrent, et se dirent l’ung à l’autre la cause pourquoy ilz estoient là venuz, c’est assavoir pour veoir les damoiselles devant dictes, car la chose estoit desja bastie, ne restoit sinon que la veue d’elles leur pleust. Et fut le seigneur de Poitiers adverty de ces nouvelles, dont il fut moult joyeux, et prestement alla vers eulx, et les amena en son hostel, où ilz furent par la dame et les trois filles honnorablement festoiez. Advint que l’aisnée s’estoit tant serrée et estraincte de ses habitz que le cueur luy fallit, ainsi qu’elle devisoit à celuy mesme qui la demandoit, dont il fut moult desplaisant de la veoir en ce danger, et voulut sçavoir la cause; de quoy, depuis, il fut adverty, et sceut que, par l’oultrecuidance et folie d’elle, ce luy estoit advenu. Si pensa qu’elle estoit en advanture de non jamais porter enfant, et conclud en son couraige de ne la point espouser. Le second prince regardoit fort le port et manière de la fille seconde, et l’aperceut estre tant volage et ligère qu’il la teint pour folle, par quoy conclud aussi de jamais ne l’espouser. Le tiers prince se print à deviser avecques la fille plus jeune, laquelle il trouva fine à merveilles, at parlant très hardiment, et par especial d’amours, qui la jugea folle, et non chaste de son corps, et eust mieulx aimé morir à celle heure que de jamais l’espouser.

Doncques, *ma fille*, en la manière qu’avez ouy, furent les trois filles deceues, et en perdirent leur bonheur par leurs follies. Car, incontinant, les princes prindrent congé, et se partirent hastivement, et à peu de parolles, sinon que le plus jeune ne se peust tenir de dire à la dame, mère des filles, que la bonne introduction et gracieuse conduite qu’il avoit

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<sup>135</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 41-42.

veu en ses filles, luy estoit une bien grant gloire, et digne de mémoire perpétuel. Lesquelles parolles et reprouches, la dame entendit bien à quel propos elles seruoient, dont elle fut tant confuse, et si desplaisante, qu'elle n'eust oncques puis joye, et ne vesquit guères après.)<sup>136</sup>

This exemplum offers nothing if not a vivid set of consequences for the poor behavior of young women, and further, the behavior of the daughters is directly related to the cause of death of their mother: shame over the behavior that drove off three eligible young men suitable for marriage. The message by the end of the exemplum is clear, but Anne elaborates, explaining that Suzanne should avoid making faces or engaging in other sorts of disorderly conduct, but she brings *enargeia* directly to the enfabulated mother-daughter relationship when she concludes this section with the statement: “my daughter, remember those three aforementioned daughters who were the cause of their mother’s death, and do not behave so that your bad conduct is the cause of mine.”<sup>137</sup> (“ma fille, ne faictes pas tant que par vostre meschant gouvernement vous soiez cause de ma mort, comme les filles susdictes furent cause de celle de leur mere.”)<sup>138</sup> While such may seem melodramatic to our contemporary sensibilities, Winn has written that “Le mariage des filles est le couronnement de l’oeuvre éducatrice de la mère” (Marriage of daughters is the crowning achievement of the educative work of the mother) in the context of discussing not only Anne de France and Christine de Pizan, but also Jeanne de Schomberg, author of *Règlement donné par une Dame de haute qualité à Mxxx* (1698).<sup>139</sup> Thus the mother in Anne’s exemplum has not merely missed out on making good marriages for her daughters, but has failed at her life’s goal and work, and failed terribly, so badly that her daughters are mocked.

<sup>136</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 39-43.

<sup>137</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 43.

<sup>138</sup> Chazaud, *Les enseignements*, 45.

<sup>139</sup> Winn, “*De mères en filles*,” 26. My translation.

The conclusion of this section of *Les enseignements* establishes a clear pictorial referent for Suzanne; in her future actions she will be guided in her remembrance of this *pictura* of someone else's past, and hopefully (from Anne's perspective) that remembrance or phantasm will instill in Suzanne a fear of engaging in disruptive behavior, which the exemplum has shown can have dire consequences. It is likewise important to note that the exemplum mentions the father of the three sisters only in his capacity to allow courtship to begin; we do not hear if he dies of shame, and certainly the suitors do not complain to him of his ill-behaved daughters. Anne's exemplum writes the masculine parental relationship out of the realm of importance by so minimizing the father's role.<sup>140</sup> Rather we see a focus on female concerns; the mother is mocked, mortified to death. Anne's concluding sentence to her section leaves no doubt that the sisters' misbehavior is in some way a violation of the bond between mother and daughter, though perhaps it is a mutual violation as the mother is not characterized as having educated her daughters to behave any differently. This ambiguity is not at all applicable to Suzanne should her own behavior cause a similar series of events to occur; Anne *is* educating her daughter, and doing so with rhetorical techniques that reflect her own knowledge of effective pedagogies. If Suzanne violates this code of conduct and Anne dies of shame, the fault will unequivocally lie with Suzanne for she will have failed to consider and meditate upon the words of her mother. Thus we see that even the most vivid descriptions in *Les enseignements* champion, as does section XIX, a strong commitment to female-female relationships, albeit here Anne provides an example of the *via negativa*.

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<sup>140</sup> Oddly Matarasso finds more affection in the few surviving communications between Pierre and Suzanne than in those between Anne and Suzanne. I am not wholly convinced of such findings given their basis on merely three extant letters. See Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 194-95.

Though not included in Jansen's translation of *Les enseignements*, Anne also incorporated a retelling of an episode from Froissart's *Chronicles*.<sup>141</sup> The story is about a mother whose husband is trapped within a besieged tower without supplies; he gives his son up for ransom and agrees he will surrender if he does not receive relief within a certain time period. The relief arrives but his opponent claims it does not meet the standard for relief, and he threatens to murder the man's son unless he surrenders; the wife learns of this and "attempts to help her husband resolve his dilemma by convincing him that integrity must not be sacrificed, no matter how terrible the cost."<sup>142</sup> This supplemental tale in Anne's work again casts lessons into stark life and death situations, but the real significance, as Matarasso points out, is that this tale also champions "the Classical theme of the woman who rises above the inherent weaknesses of her nature to exhibit a virile courage," which is the manner in which Anne "herself [had] been praised" often.<sup>143</sup> What is the lesson of this tale, aside from its obvious statement that tragedy exists? For Anne its purpose must be exemplary: Suzanne ought to strive to be like the wife in the tale, willing to sacrifice everything for her principles, but I believe there is a subtext as well. This exemplary tale is above all licit and approvable to male eyes; it is almost a recasting of the patient Griselda though here no children are murdered by their father, rather the wife's will is that they be destroyed rather than her husband's good character and duty to arms be violated. If we consider the tale in the context of Anne's relationship with her sister Jeanne, I think we might understand that another lesson is that sacrifices will have to be made, and that while they may be painful, they may be unavoidable. But the final and most important lesson that this story teaches goes hand in

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<sup>141</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 196-97.

<sup>142</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 197.

<sup>143</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 197.

hand with what Matarasso supplies as the main undergirding principle of Anne's work: "behaviour needs to be motivated, but it was no very elevated principle she set before Suzanne to base her conduct on, it was fear. Nothing was certain she assured her, but death, dissolution and judgement."<sup>144</sup> Matarasso does not connect this idea explicitly with the exemplary tale that appears in conjunction with *Les enseignements*, but the principle fits because that tale, like the rest of the conduct manual, reveals the dangers of being a politically elevated woman. That is, such a woman is scrutinized and open for public discussion, as Anne herself was, and the story becomes exemplary only because in it the woman maintains a level of honor and character that places her beyond reproach, for what higher level of stoicism and respect for law could one expect to find than in the renunciation of the pursuit of saving the life of one's child? The wife in the tale becomes an exemplary woman because of her public moral fortitude, but much like Anne's own manual, her private and personal feelings are given no place in the tale. We cannot see into the text and see the anguish which might have been beneath the exterior of her moral convictions, but simply because it is not announced does not mean that Anne rejects emotional connection to her family members or that her conduct manual rejects the maintenance of emotional ties and connections to one's friends and relatives. What the story does unequivocally demonstrate is that one ought to subordinate one's emotions to one's duties, and it is quite obvious that Anne herself had to master her own emotions in order to be politically successful. Diane Bornstein, whose brand of analysis of conduct literature is somewhat dated and occasionally without clarity of expression, nevertheless makes an important point about *Les enseignements*: "She [Anne] also emphasizes the importance of a woman's taking responsibility for herself. She should not be guarded or

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<sup>144</sup> Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 192.

protected but should know how to govern herself in leading a virtuous life. Anne shows how a woman's control of her 'inner space' helps her to function effectively in her outer space, whatever that may be. In Anne's case, her outer space came to be the entire realm of France."<sup>145</sup> I take Bornstein's comments to mean that one's emotions and family feelings may be present but that they must not govern one's outer appearance and that dissembling and manipulation as well as self-sacrifice are key to Anne de France's political career, just as they are the coded truths of her conduct manual and this additional story. The tale acts as an exemplar, a final warning to Suzanne that indeed she ought to be afraid because the perils of court are many and the only means to survive is through a careful program of self-regulation and attention to one's reputation.

The same care of reputation applies to one's self-representation, and in fact these items are obviously intertwined for the woman at court. Among the careful analyses of Anne's *Les enseignements* only one person has noted that in some places Anne does more than simply engage in ambiguous double talk that hints at how Suzanne ought to behave; critics repeatedly claim that Anne advises passivity and submission. While Anne certainly does tailor her instructions, muteness and silence are not what she advocates for her daughter—just like the wife in the closing tale, Suzanne must know when to speak. Helen J. Swift points this out when she declares: "Speech and the ability to communicate appropriately, confidently, and clearly are one of Anne's prime concerns [...]. [...] Moreover, she openly criticizes [...] pitiful, mute, sheep-like women" and makes the case that "a truly honourable woman who wants to fulfil her public role effectively should not resort to foolish feminine behaviour, but should have a tongue in her head for putting her

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<sup>145</sup> Diane Bornstein, "Women's Public and Private Space in Some Medieval Courtesy Books" *Centerpoint* 30 (1980): 68-74, 73.



virtue to use.<sup>146</sup> For example, Anne writes that “The greatest gift that God has given to us is the gift of speech, [...]”<sup>147</sup> (“car la plus noble chose que Dieu aye mise en créature, c’est la parole, [...]”)<sup>148</sup> In the same chapter Anne warns “But neither is it good for a woman of rank to be dull or too silent because, as Ovid says, such a woman, whatever other perfection she has, is like an idol or a painted image, and in this world she is only a mere shadow, a faceless number, an incumbrance [*sic*].”<sup>149</sup> (“Aussi n’est-il pas beau à femme de façon estre morne ne trop peu enlangaigée. Car, comme dit Ovide, telz femmes, quelqu’autre perfection qu’elles aient, ressemblent à ydolles et ymaiges painctes, et ne servent, en ce monde, que d’y faire ombre, nombre et encombre.”)<sup>150</sup> Later in Section XXVI [28] Anne also advises Suzanne “Also, my daughter, wherever you are, do not behave like those foolish women, who in company, have not presence or bearing, who do not know what to say and cannot reply with even one word when someone speaks to them. They pretend to hear nothing, whether something said is to honor them or to amuse them, [...]”<sup>151</sup> (“Aussi, ma fille, en quelque lieu que soiez, ne faictes pas comme ces femmes nyces, qui, en compaignie, n’ont point de maintien ne de contenance, et ne sçavent dire ne respondre ung seul mot, quant on parle à elles, et font semblant d’en rien ouyr, soit à leur honneur, ou pour esbat [...]”)<sup>152</sup> Anne’s advice, then, as Swift demonstrates in her brief discussion of *Les enseignements* is not merely a guide to passive behavior, but to self-representation, and Anne makes room in that guide for Suzanne to be a speaking subject, albeit one who must speak within the delineated

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<sup>146</sup> Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, 180.

<sup>147</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 51.

<sup>148</sup> Chazaud, *Les Enseignements*, 71.

<sup>149</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 50.

<sup>150</sup> Chazaud, *Les Enseignements*, 67-68.

<sup>151</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 63.

<sup>152</sup> Chazaud, *Les Enseignements*, 112.

acceptable speech acts open to women of her social status and position.

I close this chapter by bringing into focus a final section of *Les enseignements* that also takes as its central spoke of instruction the respect that women ought to feel for their female relations. Anne begins section XVII by stating that

Many foolish women have so little understanding that being seated above their own mothers or grandmothers seems to be a glory and honor, and they think nothing of their great-aunts or their older sisters, much less of their position or their honor, nor do they consider their connections or lineage, nor the rank and family of their husbands. I have seen more than one such ‘noble’ woman acting arrogantly in front of her mother and grandmother, not showing them any honor or even speaking to them; do not offend anyone, or those who witness your behavior will deride you for it.<sup>153</sup> (“Combien que à plusieurs folles, qui n’ont guères veu, ce leur semble une bien grant gloire et honneur d’estre assises es plus hault lieux que leurs propres mères ou grans mères, et au regard de leurs grans antes, ou seurs aînées, elles n’en tiennent riens, et moins beaucoup que maindres d’elles, d’estat et d’honneur, qui ne leur tiennent d’acointance ne de lignaige, ne à elles ny a leurs maris. Et ay veu, depuis ung an en ça, en ce cas, nobles femmes, devant leurs mères et grans mères, faire de telles coquardises, sans leur porter honneur, ne dire seulement: ne vous desplaise, au veu de chascun, dont ceulx qui estoient présens réputoient le cas à grant derision”.)<sup>154</sup>

This description of foolish women who do not respect their elders is followed by a miniature exemplum about a lady who does not honor her mother, and who is consequently mocked and snubbed. This passage brings into focus again the rhetoric of cooperation with which Anne imbues *Les enseignements*. I locate this concept as the central idea in Anne’s advice, and I argue that it presents a practicality born of Anne’s own experiences at court, i.e. it is dangerous to be disliked. At the same time I also believe that Anne’s text reflects “an inter-generational laying-on of hands by which the

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<sup>153</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 45.

<sup>154</sup> Chazaud, *Les Enseignements*, 50-51.

transmittal of knowledge to women becomes a family tradition.”<sup>155</sup> In Anne’s case, however, she is not just engaging in the formation of a feminist or female tradition, she is also participating in a masculinized, royal tradition, which further imbues her writing with the charisma of power. Anne employs both the charisma of royal power and that of the parent in *Les enseignements* as well as medieval rhetorical approaches to ensure that her principles of behavior are memorable for her audience. She does not employ an abundance of visually driven metaphors or stories for Suzanne, but that is not to say that concepts of the visual have not shaped her narrative. Her sections sometimes present a subtle familiarity with mnemonic structures of the image wherein Anne presents a single point from which she draws the remainder of the points in the section. Her exemplum also embodies *enargeia*, which makes the tale and its consequences all the more memorable. Finally, consider Jansen’s statement that the “conflicts that the young Suzanne will face [...] are battles she can only win if she does not appear to fight them” and Adams’s assertion that “Women could exercise influence only by carefully manipulating the stereotypes that limited them [...]”<sup>156</sup> Anne’s concern is not only in the shape of her text, which we have demonstrated conforms to some of the standards erected by her grandfather’s, Louis IX’s, epistolary guides for his children, as well as medieval pedagogies aimed at encouraging memory-building, but also in the vision it provides of the ideal daughter. Suzanne is provided with a code in *Les enseignements* that will help her maintain a façade of the disinterested lady of the court; at times that code can be read as repressive, at times as liberating.

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<sup>155</sup> Gerda Lerner, “Female Clusters, Female Networks, Social Spaces,” in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to 1870*, Women and History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 220-46, 229.

<sup>156</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 80; Adams, “Appearing Virtuous,” 121.

## Chapter 4

Exempla, Image, Parental Authority in Caxton's Translation of *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*: Teaching Daughters the Results of Exercising Their Will

“Wommen are born to thralldom and penance,  
And to been under mannes governance.”

Constance

*The Man of Law's Tale*

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*<sup>1</sup>

I begin this chapter with Constance's ineffectual plaint about the plight of women not because the Chevalier de La Tour<sup>2</sup> or Caxton particularly identify with the plight of a woman living under patriarchy, but rather because the rhetorical force of the Chevalier's book suggests without any hint of irony or social critique that Constance's words are the truth. The Chevalier's collection of exempla, exemplars, and imagery make a disturbing argument about the fate of women who desire to execute their will: they are publically shamed or physically maimed and/or murdered, and sometimes the short narratives in *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* include both possibilities.<sup>3</sup> The rhetoric of *The Book*

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Man of Law's Tale*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. Ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 91, ll. 286-87.

<sup>2</sup> I refer to the author of *Le Livre du Chevalier de La Tour* as the Knight, as is common in English scholarship on the work, and as the Chevalier variously throughout the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter I refer to Caxton's translation as *The Book*. Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, ed. M. Y. Offord, trans. William Caxton, Early English Text Society, Supplementary Ser. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971). Citations give page and line numbers. I have elected to employ this version of the text because it is a clearly dated (1484) and complete version of the French *Le Livre du Chevalier de La Tour* (1371). I do provide additional quotations from an incomplete, anonymous translation of the *Livre* as well when they are available; I have not used the incomplete text for my primary study because it is both incomplete and datable only to King Henry VI's reign (1422-61; 1470-71). The anonymous translation exists in a single extant manuscript (British Library, MS. Harl. 1764) which I take to have been less widely circulated and available than Caxton's printed edition. I include quotations from the alternate translation as, according to Offord, the translation in Harley 1764 is more representative of a different branch of the *Livre* stemma (xxx) and according to Thomas Wright, editor of the modern edition of the Harley translation, the Harley translation “displays much more freedom, and is more correct” than Caxton's version as well as providing “a far more elegant and interesting monument to English language in the fifteenth century” (xvii). Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, compiled for the Instruction of his Daughters*; . . . ed. Thomas Wright, Early English Text Society, Original Ser. 33, rev. ed. (1906; repr., Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2000). Citations give page and line numbers. The Caxton and Harley translations do not always follow each other precisely especially with

clearly falls on the familiar and concrete ends of the spectra of rhetorical authority with its parental narrator(s) as well as its reliance on quotidian imagery and exempla. *The Book* also relies upon religious authorities and derives many of its exempla from the Bible, though these are not always interpreted or presented in a way consistent with a fair reading of the Bible itself. There are relatively few named authorities with the exception of Cato and his son, who appear in the final chapters of the text, and male biblical figures such as Solomon and a few saints (male and female) and historical figures mentioned as exemplars rather than proper authorities. This chapter argues that *The Book* reflects within its rhetoric a focus on making its lessons easily and quickly understood while also implying that those who do not follow its advice will be ill-fated. To be clearer, this implication occurs through the repeated violence women face in the text; all those women who oppose the will of men are somehow punished within the text, very often with physical abuse, physical maiming (i.e. permanent physical damage to their appearance), or death/execution, often in manners involving torture. Indeed, I wish to argue that *The Book* presents the reader with what Julia Kristeva would call the abject when it presents the willful woman.

Kristeva writes of the abject that it “has only one quality of the object [as opposed to a subject]—that of being opposed to *I*” and that the abject is in effect “Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A ‘something’ that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of

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regard to chapter breaks and headings. Unless otherwise specified, the chapter references in the prose are always to the Caxton edition. There is also a Modern English translation of Caxton’s edition that intersperses commentary on the Knight’s life and the portions of *The Book* with the translation, including some biographical information as well as discussion of other examples of conduct literature: Rebecca Barnhouse, *The Book of The Knight of The Tower: Manners for Young Medieval Women* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). For a monograph-length discussion of the Knight’s rhetorical choices including a discussion of his personal history see Anne Marie de Gendt, *L’art d’éduquer les nobles damoiselles: le livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry*, Essais sur le Moyen Âge 28 (Paris: Champion, 2003).

meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me.”<sup>4</sup>

Essentially, the abject is that which threatens boundaries, laws, and what we might think of as a rational, discrete identity, but the abject is not simply an object but that which stands in for multiple and ambiguous fears, fears that are connected for Kristeva to the pre-language state of the infant when it is coming to grips with attempting to identify its place in the world. Kristeva identifies that which causes abjection as “what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” because the very act of disturbing and not respecting these boundaries reveals and draws attention to the very fragility of them.<sup>5</sup> As a clarifying moment for what the experience of abjection is like, I offer an image from Kristeva:

In the dark halls of the museum that is now what remains of Auschwitz, I see a heap of children’s shoes, or something like that, something I have already seen elsewhere, under a Christmas tree, for instance, dolls I believe. The abjection of Nazi crime reaches its apex when death, which, in any case, kills me, interferes with what, in my living universe, is supposed to save me from death: childhood, science, among other things.<sup>6</sup>

This experiential narrative of seeing a homely, or familiar, scene or image closely tied to childhood in a place so strongly associated with death as Auschwitz is conveys the horrific element of the abject that stems from its liminal qualities. In *The Book* boundaries of proper and improper behavior are starkly drawn, and yet there are repeated narratives of women who disobey and exercise their individual wills. These women become the abject within the text, marking for the male author the inconceivable and terrifying possibility that women misbehave, but also becoming for the intended female audience the same sort of abject. That is, the Chevalier’s daughters are encouraged to

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<sup>4</sup> Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 4.

read themselves against the women of the exempla in *The Book*, and the willful women become a means by which the readers might police themselves. The readers's reaction to an exemplum in which a horrific fate awaits those who are not charitable might encompass a sudden and visceral experience of horror and the abject—that is, the readers might think, “How horrible—that woman deserved her fate” and then quickly think, “I own many gowns as well, so I must reform and be more charitable lest I too am carried off by devils in hell.” The willful woman haunts the entirety of the conduct book, returning again and again obsessively to warn the reader to control her impulses and to prevent herself from facing a fate like the women in the various narratives face: being burned alive, being beaten, being cut into pieces, being accused of lechery and losing one's reputation, being blinded in one eye, or having one's legs broken and then set by one's husband to prevent one from wandering.<sup>7</sup> The Knight's rhetoric presents a narrating father who is both paradoxically motivated by professed love for his daughters as well as a patriarchal desire to dominate and shape their behavior didactically. Parental authority, exempla, imagery, and the use of authorities come together in *The Book* to reflect male anxieties about female behavior.

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<sup>7</sup> The violence I describe here may not only have been textual. Some editions of the Knight's text, including a 1493 German printed edition (*Ritter vom Turn*) contained woodcuts illustrating many of these scenes. For reproductions of four such woodcuts see Ernst and Johanna Lehner, *Devils, Demons, and Witchcraft: 244 Illustrations for Artists and Craftspeople* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1971), 6-7. A fifth and sixth illustration are described in another source: “St Michael stands in the foreground with her [a sinner's] soul in the scales, when the devil places her clothes on the other side of the scales and makes them sink, damning her” and “The portrayal of a woman who died full of hatred and envy is quite horrific: she has been placed on a bier, and the inside of her body can be seen; there is a large toad sitting where her heart should be [...]” Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, Manchester Medieval Studies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 54. I discuss both of these stories below, but such illustrations are rhetorically significant because they make the threats of textual violence both more immediate and visceral as well as possibly increasing the coercive power of the text for the audience. Another woodcut featuring the presentation of the book by the Knight to his daughters appears on the frontispiece of a modern edition of the German text: Marquard vom Stein, *Der ritter vom Turn, Texte des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* 32, ed. Ruth Harvey (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1988). Additionally, while I have not viewed the Harley translation of the manuscript, it does have illuminations. One of these is viewable on the British Library website. This said, the Caxton translation preserved in the Early English Books Online database contains no illustrations.

## I. Paternal Narration and the Acquisition of Authority

The prologue identifies Geoffroy de La Tour Landry's motive for writing for his daughters:

And also for the grete loue that I haue to my daughters whom I loue as a fader ought to loue them [...] And by cause euery fader and moder after god and nature ought to teche & enforme their children and to distourne them fro the euyll waye and to shewe to them the right weye and true pathes as wel for the sauacion of theyr sowles as for thonoure of the body erthely.<sup>8</sup>

Supposed parental concern drives narrative impulse, and it should be noted that this parental concern is not simply something native to the parents, but it finds its roots in both God and nature. Thus, this prologue reveals that the Chevalier wants to mark his writing as concerned for the welfare of his children, that concern being coded as natural and godly within his writing; the Knight naturalizes his desire to shape and mold the behavior of his daughters. Such claims of religious and natural tendencies lend a degree of authority to the Knight's conduct manual, sanctioning his principles of behavior, a trope with which we are familiar, given the reliance of much conduct literature upon such methods.<sup>9</sup> Like Anne de France, the Chevalier also engages in the use of apostrophe, sometimes mentioning his daughters in the text explicitly. While the density of the usage of phrases mentioning the father/narrator-daughter relationship is less than the density in

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<sup>8</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 13, ll.12-13, 16-20. "And y made this boke for the gret loue that y had to my said doughtres, the whiche y loued as fader aught to loue his child, [...] And therfor all faders and moders after good nature aught to teche her children to leue all wrong and euell waies, and shew hem the true right weye, as wele for the saluacion of the soule as for the worshipe of the worldely bodi." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 3, ll. 34-36; 4, ll. 3-6.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the evolution of the experiential didactic I in parental conduct literature of the early modern period and the Middle Ages, see Juanita Feros Ruys, "Didactic 'I's and the Voice of Experience in Advice from Medieval and Early-Modern Parents to their Children," in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, Disputatio 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 129-62.



Anne's manual for her daughter, there are still frequent occurrences of the phrases. Juanita Feros Ruys has discussed "the rise of the didactic 'I'—the speaking voice that draws upon its own authority to teach—and more significantly, the collocation of this 'I' with the parental voice, which helped render parenthood itself an authorized locus, and not merely a conduit, of advice."<sup>10</sup> I suggest that it is not just the presence of this narrator 'I,' but also the frequent references to the father-daughter relationship that imbue the text with authority. Ruys only hints at this type of authority—the presence of the textual parent—when she discusses Dhuoda's *Liber manualis* (843); I want to claim a similar position for the Knight's work because it too "reflect[s] back" the Knight's "own self [...] and advice."<sup>11</sup>

In the prologue to *The Book*, there are no direct addresses to the audience of daughters, but the word and the parental relationship come up frequently. We are told that the Chevalier thinks on his daughters when they come to him in his garden in the spring, and he desires for them to turn out well and thinks on the Queen of Hungary who "fayre and swetely chastysed her doughters and them endoctryned as is conteyned in her book."<sup>12</sup> The Knight's own drive to control his daughters is justified in his reference to other conduct literature penned by parents for their daughters. There are five references to

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<sup>10</sup> Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 130-31.

<sup>11</sup> Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 135.

<sup>12</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 11, ll. 32-33. "[...] that faire and goodly chastised and taught her doughters, as it [is] contened in her boke." Second set of brackets in the original. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 2, ll. 10-12.

Also, see Offord's note on the conventionality of the prologue: La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 194, n. 11/5-6ff. See also Janet M. Ferrier, *French Prose Writers of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966), 11.

The Queen of Hungary who is mentioned has not been positively identified, but Offord suggests that she may be Elizabeth of Bosnia, "who died in 1382" and who composed a work for her daughters that is no longer extant. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 195, n. 11/31-2. There is a very brief discussion of Elizabeth in Alice A. Hentsch, *Littérature didactique du moyen âge s'adressant spécialement aux femmes* (Cahors: A. Couselant, 1903), 135, and Paul Rousselot, *Histoire de l'éducation des femmes en France* (Paris, 1883), vol.1, p. 63.

the Knight's daughters in the prologue, and an additional reference to the Queen of Hungary's daughters, for a total of six references to parent-child relationships in the context of education. The ones pertaining to the Knight's daughters are as follows: "sawe my doughters coming," "my wel bylouyd doughters," "an examplayre for my doughters," "for the grete loue that I haue to my doughters," and "for my doughters."<sup>13</sup> All of these references cast the writing of the manual into an act of charitable, parental love for the Knight's daughters; indeed, the Chevalier explicitly states that he hopes his book will help them to avoid being deceived by "ouer false men" whom the knight accuses directly: "oftymes ye periure and forswere youre self For ye hold no feythe."<sup>14</sup> The father-daughter relationship is also especially forceful in the first chapter, or capitulum, in which the Knight directly addresses his daughters twice. The first time he further explains why he is guiding them and why they should listen to him: "My ryght dere doughters for as moche as I am old and that I haue sene the world more lenger than ye haue I shall shewe to yow a partye of the world after my science which is not ouer grete[.]"<sup>15</sup> Further, the Chevalier begins the next sentence by reiterating that his love for his daughters drives

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<sup>13</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 11, l. 27; 12, ll. 35-36; 13, l. 5, ll. 12-13, ll. 21-22. The Harley manuscript translation has slightly denser references, with two referring to daughters that are not the Knight's and seven references to the Knight's own daughters.

<sup>14</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 12, l. 19, ll. 20-21. The context is slightly different in the Harley translation: "for y haue herd my felawes suere ofte diuerse fals othes, and y asked hem whi thei forsuore hem, saieng that thei loued euerich woman best that thei spake to." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 2, ll. 31-33.

<sup>15</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 13, l. 37; 14, ll. 1-3. "And, doughtres, y saie this for y am olde, and haue leued longe, and see moche more of the world thanne ye. And therefore a parti, after my science, whiche is not gret, y will shew you, for y haue gret desire that ye turne youre hertis and thoughtis to drede and to serue God." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 4, ll. 20-24. The Harley translation has the same number of references to the daughters, but also omits the adjectives that appear both times in the Caxton translation: "my right dere."

Ruys's reading of this aspect of the Knight's writing motivations focuses on their "personal experience," but I wish to highlight that the text carries weight not just because the understanding and evaluation of experience had become more positive by the Knight's time—Ruys's main argument though more nuanced as she does not ascribe linearity to the evolution of the concept of experience—but also because it is parental experience. Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 145-49.

him to provide the advice he does: “But the grete loue that I haue to yow [...]”<sup>16</sup>

However, after this fairly consistent appearance of the father-daughter relationship, the direct addresses that include the word daughter become more sporadic.

There are fifty-nine total occurrences of the word “daughter” or a variant spelling thereof that refer to the Knight’s daughters in *The Book*.<sup>17</sup> The occurrences appear sporadically, sometimes with gaps of as many as ten chapters without the use of the word “daughter” in this way. The highest number in a single chapter is three,<sup>18</sup> occurring in Chapter 12, which contains two separate exempla. I point out the multiple exempla because generally use of the phrase “my daughters” or “dere daughters” occurs to introduce an exemplum (e.g. “And yet my fayre daughters I shall saye to yow of a fayt that happed me of this mater”)<sup>19</sup> or to warn the Knight’s daughters to take seriously a lesson that has just been shown to them in the text (“Now fayre daughters take ye ensample by the daughters of the kyng of denmarke and late not [...]”).<sup>20</sup> Thus while the Chevalier is not as fond of the rhetorical structure of direct address as Anne de France is, he still employs it throughout *The Book*, and it is reinforced by the less overt parental references that occur at the opening and closing of almost every chapter—that is, the

<sup>16</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 14, ll. 3-4. The mention of love as a motivating source is not included in the Harley translation.

<sup>17</sup> Other occurrences appear in the exempla and once in defense of the partial education of women, specified as “daughters,” in Chapter 89. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 122, l. 20. In the Harley manuscript the number differs; there are fifty-four occurrences of “daughters” that refer to the Knight’s children, but one should recall that the manuscript is incomplete and cuts off entirely after the 120th capitulum. There are 144 sections in Caxton’s complete translation, so in effect, the Harley manuscript seems to have a slightly higher frequency of explicit references to the daughters.

<sup>18</sup> In the Harley translation there are actually up to five occurrences in one section, but that section combines together eight sections from the Caxton translation—that is, the two translations have different chapter breaks and sometimes orders, which has to do with their reliance on different versions of the French source text. The next highest frequency of four uses of direct address occurs in Chapter 21, which is not a chapter that differs in length significantly from the equivalent chapter in Caxton’s translation (20).

<sup>19</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 27, ll. 14-16. “Yet, doughtres, will y tell you an exsample on this matere.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 17, ll. 33-34.

<sup>20</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 27, ll. 4-5. “And therfor, good doughtres, takithe ensample of these .iii. doughtres of the kings of Denmarke, and that you have not [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 17, ll. 21-23.

Chevalier often begins a chapter with a rhetorical structure such as this: “Now I am going to tell you another story.”<sup>21</sup> He often closes chapters by warning the daughters, “Thus you see why you should behave in a certain way”<sup>22</sup> or by previewing the next chapter with a phrase such as “Now I’m going to move on to the next topic” or “Now I will tell you another story about this same topic.”<sup>23</sup> Even though the use of the word “doughters” is fairly low frequency in the text, the first person narrator addressing an announced second person audience is still an important and major rhetorical structure of the work. Thus,

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<sup>21</sup> To provide some samples of this type of opening I provide the opening words of Chapters 75, 76, 78 and 80: “Fayre doughters I wyl that ye knowe thensaumple of [...]”; “An ensample shall I telle yow of [...]”; “I wylle telle yow an Ensaumple of [...]”; “I shall telle you another ensample how [...].” The citations for all of these are as follows: La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 106, l. 11; 107, l. 4; 108, l. 13; 109, l. 22.

From the Harley manuscript: there is no such rhetorical feature in chapters 75 or 76; “I wylle tell yow an Ensaumple of a fals woman”; “I shall telle you another ensample, how [...].” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 100, l. 19; 102, l. 1. The Harley manuscript makes as frequent use of this type of opening, but simply not in the same places all the time as the Caxton translation.

<sup>22</sup> To provide some samples of this type of closing I quote Chapters 3, 5, 14, and 16: “And therefore my dere doughters remember yow ofte of this example alwey [...]”; “And therfore fayre doughters saye your heures and prayers deuoutely [...]”; “And thus ought hit to be done For hit is not honest ne good folke to stryue with fooles”; “And therefore this is a good ensample how the courage & thought ought to be measured.” The citations for all of these are as follows: La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 16, ll. 7-8; 17, ll. 27-28; 31, ll. 10-12; 34, ll. 34-35. The final two examples here are meant to express the type of summing up and clarification of an exemplum’s lesson that occurs without the direct mention of the daughters, which is present in the first two examples.

From the Harley manuscript, sections 3, 5, 14, and 17, which is the same as Caxton’s 16: “And therfor, doughters, be-thenke you on this exsaumple whan ye wake [...]”; “And therfor, good doughtres, saithe your matenis and praiers [...]”; “Faire doughters, kepe you that ye take no striff with no comberous folke, nor foles [...]”; “And therfor it is gret drede to fare foule with hem in such materes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 30-31; 8, ll. 7-8; 20, ll. 23-25; 25, ll. 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> To provide some samples of this type of closing I quote Chapters 17, 22, 29, and 35: “By this ensample the wymmen that ben chydars and rampynge ben not of suche obeysaunce as was a wyf of a marchaunt of whom I shall saye and telle yow.”; “And therefore I wold that ye shold remember an Ensaumple semblable to this matere”; “And I wolde that ye shold knowe and lerne thensaumple of a lady that [...]”; “And yet shall I telle yow an other ensample vpon the same matere which byfelle in the partyes of peytow, which is not past thre yere.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 35, ll. 30-33; 43, ll. 1-2; 52, ll. 30-31; 59, ll. 19-21.

From the Harley manuscript, sections 18 (the equivalent of Caxton’s 17), 23-24 (the equivalent of 22 in Caxton), 31’s capitulum (equivalent to the text at the end of Caxton’s 29), and 35: “And all women that ben gret herted and misansueringe her husbandes, that wolde not do her husbandes comaundement, be not of the obeisaunce that a merchauntez wiff was of, of the wichie y will tell you an example and a tale”; “And therfor it is a gret peril to beginner to haue langage with suche men that canne skill of the world; and therfor here is an ensaumple that no woman shulde take no striff nor words with suche men, for there is mani women that beginnith langage with a man that canne not end it well, [...]”; “I wolde ye knew an ensaumple of the lady that wolde haue alwey a quarter of a day to arraie her”; “And therfor here is an ensaumple that no body shulde do no suche filthe in the chirche, but kepe it clene and worshipe God there inne.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 26, ll. 11-14; 34, ll. 13-17; 45, ll. 1-2; 52, ll. 8-10.

while the father-daughter relationship is not kept center stage as in Anne de France's conduct book, it is still present, even if coded in the same unspecified way that the Three Virtues as allegorical figures are condensed into the plural pronoun "we" in Christine de Pizan's work. Thus, there is an enfabulated father-daughter relationship throughout the text. That relationship conveys to the text of *The Book* a certain amount of the Chevalier's personal charisma, as we have shown in the introduction with the discussion of C. Stephen Jaeger's concept of personal charisma.<sup>24</sup>

Yet the parental narrator in the Knight's book is not stable, by which I mean there are two sets of several chapters that occur at the end of the work that present us with two separate voices, distinct from the Knight's own. The first voice is that of his wife, the daughters' mother. These chapters do not exist in the anonymous translation of *Le Livre* as the manuscript cuts off prior to this content. Capitulum 122 begins a series of chapters (through 133) that present an argument between the Knight and his wife over whether or not their daughters ought to engage in what might be called *fin' amor*. In terms of genre, these sections present a sort of homage to the *débat* poetry that those of the nobility may have been familiar with.<sup>25</sup> Rhetorically, however, this series of chapters presents a voice of dissent, for the Knight's Wife does not agree with him, as the capitulum to the first

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<sup>24</sup> Ruys's view supports such a reading: "the strength and power of the didactic 'I' [...] surfaces repeatedly throughout the text, with both the Knight and the Lady of La Tour-Landry prepared to offer their daughters advice in the voice of first-person experience." Ruys, "Didactic 'I's," 149.

<sup>25</sup> See the following on *débat* poetry: Steven F. Kruger, "Dialogue, Debate and Dream Vision," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature, 1000-1500*, ed. Larry Scanlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 71-82; Kenneth Rooney, "Tradition and Innovation in the Middle English Debates of Mortality," in *Transmission and Transformation in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Kathy Cawsey and Jason Harris (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 157-74; Alan J. Fletcher, "Middle English Debate Literature," in *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, ed. David Johnson and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 241-56; Helen J. Swift, "(Un)covering Truth: Speaking 'proprement' in Late-medieval French Poetry," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 48 (2004): 60-79; Pamela Siska, "The Owl or the Nightingale? Need Debate Mean Opposition?" *English Language Notes* 39, no. 1 (2001): 1-5; and John W. Conlee, ed., *Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991).

section announces: “The Argument of the knyght of the Towre and of his wyf.”<sup>26</sup> These chapters also offer a competing voice that is parental, so that we have dramatized within this rhetorical presentation two parents disagreeing about their daughters and what is and is not appropriate behavior for them. The Knight claims, in beginning the discussion with his wife, “Lady why shalle not the ladyes and damoyseles loue peramours For in certayne me semeth that in good loue and trewe maye be but welthe and honour and also the louer is the better therfore & more gay and Ioly and also the more encouraged to excercyse hym self more ofte in armes.”<sup>27</sup> The wife’s reply is couched within the Knight’s retelling of it, yet the mother’s voice is clear, as the opening to Chapter 123 demonstrates:

“Thenne ansuered to me your moder Syre I merrueyll me not [...]”<sup>28</sup> The remainder of the chapters maintains this same level of giving the mother place and room to speak. She argues against the objections of the Knight with her own exempla that illustrate why it is a bad idea for their daughters to engage in this type of love affair.<sup>29</sup> The mother is also quite explicit about her opinion, even using direct address with her daughters: “Therefore I charge yow my fayre doughters that in this mater ye byleue not your fader But I pray yow

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<sup>26</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 163, l. 19.

<sup>27</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 163, ll. 27-32. Mark Addison Amos remarks that “Richard Firth Green notes the importance of ‘representation and display’ to the sport so ‘conspicuously present in the rituals of courtship, and of mock-courtship, which absorbed the late medieval aristocracy, and declares conversation ‘undoubtedly the most important’ method of display.” Mark Addison Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve: Sexuality, Speech, and Self-regulation in Noble Conduct Literature,” in *Intersections of Sexuality and the Divine in Medieval Culture: The Word Made Flesh*, ed. Susannah Mary Chawning (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 19-36, 25. Such suggests that the Knight is not presenting a particularly controversial viewpoint in comparison to the one he provides to his wife.

<sup>28</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 164, l. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Charity Cannon Willard notes that Christine’s similar position on courtly love appears in *Treasury* through “her constant attack on the hypocrisy and the deceptions which are the unpleasant reality of the outworn ideal of courtly love. While admitting it might have been a noble ideal in the past, Christine multiplies warnings as the price which must almost inevitably be paid by the woman who gives in to an illicit love affair.” Charity Cannon Willard, “A Fifteenth-Century View of Women’s Role in Medieval Society: Christine de Pizan’s *Livre de Trois Vertus*,” in *The Role of Woman in the Middle Ages. Papers of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton 6-7 May 1972*, ed. Rosmarie Thee Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 90-120, 101-02.

that ye hold your self clenly and without blame and that ye be not amerous for many reasons [...]”.<sup>30</sup> This aspect of the debate emphasizes the difference of opinion between mother and father with regard to their daughters’ behavior, but these chapters nevertheless appear within a work constructed by the Knight himself. While the mother is given rhetorically superficial permission to have her voice heard, that voice is arranged and presented by the Knight at least in part, and this arrangement and design is enough, I would argue, to consider the mother not a willful woman, but rather a woman who is obedient to her husband but ultimately entirely consumed with her drive to protect her daughters.<sup>31</sup>

The Wife, as I have said, offers a number of reasons for her difference of opinion.

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<sup>30</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 164, ll. 22-25.

<sup>31</sup> As Ruys notes, Tracy Adams’s interpretation, while emphasizing different aspects of the narrator-relationships, agrees with my reading: “the Knight all along expects his wife to espouse the arguments that he himself has put forward by example throughout *The Book* up to that point.” Ruys, “Didactic ‘I’s,” 148, n. 75. See also Tracy Adams, “Medieval Mothers and their Children: The Case of Isabeau of Bavaria in Light of Medieval Conduct Books,” in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 265-89.

For a discussion on modes of reading sexual ventroliquisms of male and female authors of figures of the other sex, see Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, especially 172-226. Swift offers a compelling argument for taking a more nuanced view than is typical of much critical reception of ventroliquisms, and while I do not feel her theories are particularly appropriate to the Knight of the Tower (she is specifically writing about ventroliquisms in explicitly pro-feminine works by men), it is worth noting the general bias she finds in much of the literature: “The ventroliquisms of both sexes by both sexes are equally ‘insincere’ in the sense that each impersonated voice, regardless of gender is a fictional projection intended to be held at a critical distance from, albeit in dialogue with, the authorial voice. In the wake of recent feminist theory, however, and its sensitivity to the definition of woman’s voice, there remains a deep-seated suspicion surrounding the practice of ventroliquistic cross-dressing by male writers that is addressed in this study, and this suspicion risks restricting the critical treatment it receives to a question, once again, of sincerity.” Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*, especially 188.

Amos reads the passages including the Wife’s voice less theoretically: “in the debate the Knight advances an unquestioning view of the noble love code, while the Lady’s persona attempts to design a pragmatics that will coordinate the demands of an aristocratic love code with Christian virtues” and finds that while “the debate is not ‘officially’ concluded and tallied, [...] the text as a whole seems to support the Lady.” Additionally, though, the debate “externaliz[es] the competing codes of behavior which define and bind noblewomen,” and by doing so, “invites the debate’s readers to re-internalize its framework and categories and so engage in their own individual, situation-specific, internal debates regarding right action, all in a discursive arena.” Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve,” 27, 28, 32. This last portion of Amos’s perspective is quite significant because it makes the claim that the Knight’s rhetoric is not simply a list of prohibited behaviors that his audience must recall at various times, but because it suggests a slight degree of the type of reasoning ability that Christine de Pizan both permits to and demands from her princesses in her text.

These include that the knights who praise their paramours do not praise them out of *caritas* but rather “to enhance them self and for to drawe vnto them the grace and vayne glory of the world.”<sup>32</sup> Another reason the mother eschews paramours is that “false watches & bacbyters whiche ben neuer cessyng to talke of som euylle rather than of somme good” will “take away & dyffamen the good Renomme of the good wymmen and of many a good lady.”<sup>33</sup> After reputation the mother cites a failure of piety in women who have paramours: “a woman whiche is enamoured of a man maye not serue god of no good herte ne trewe as she dyd before.”<sup>34</sup> The last reason the mother provides echoes the Knight’s own concerns in his prologue for why he writes *The Book* for his daughters: “many gentyll men whiche ben so fals and deceyuable that they require eury gentyll woman that they may fynde And to them they swere that they shalle kepe to them their feythe and be trewe to them and shalle loue them without falshed or deceyuance and that rather they shold deye than to thynke any vylonye or dyshonoure.”<sup>35</sup> This reason and its agreement with the Knight’s own position in writing *The Book* suggests strongly that the mother here is propped up as a false opponent, and one that he wants his daughters to side with ultimately.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 164, ll. 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 164, ll. 36-37, 38; 165 l. 1.

<sup>34</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 165, ll. 4-5.

<sup>35</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 166, ll. 16-21.

<sup>36</sup> Tracy Adams offers a slightly different reading of the situation, conceiving of this portion of *The Book* less as a literary variation on style by turning to the *débat* than the Knight’s retelling of an attempt to trip up the girls’ mother. I think her reading is perhaps acceptable, but seems to rely overly much on accepting a sort of maliciousness on the part of the Knight that aligns him with bad husbands that clever and good mothers must overcome, which is essentially how she casts medieval mothers who must make their influence felt but never overtly: “The Knight puts his wife to the test in front of his daughters, pretending to try to convince her and his daughters with arguments in favor of a pleasurable and harmless pastime. But the wife is too clever to fall for his bait. She is the ideal mother, applying to her husband’s hypothetical lessons she has absorbed from him, all the while handling him without offending him.” Adams, “Medieval Mothers,” 275. For an account of a real medieval mother’s clever manipulation of her identity through the commissioning of Caxton’s edition of *The Book*, see: Theresa D. Kemp, “The Knight of the Tower and the



I suggest the mother is a false opponent not only because her voice has been subjected to the Knight's presentation of her voice, but also because her perspective is carefully delineated. She does not deny that there is love that may be elevating, but she very strictly points out the difference between "euery good woman of age" that "maye loue [...] folke of worship and honour And them also that shall counceylle her for her owne helthe & worship" and the woman who is "so ferforth enamoured in soo moche that this loue be mayster of her and maketh them to falle in somme fowle and shamefull delyte."<sup>37</sup> Similar to this clarification of what is and is not acceptable to the mother is her note that even after marriage a woman's behavior must meet certain standards. That is, married women may and ought to "make good chere to all worshipfulle men, [...] bere to them worship and honour And [...] synge and daunce before them honourably," but while these noble people ought to be "loued, doubted serued and honoured," they must be loved "without hauynge in them ony plesaunce sauf only for the bounte of them."<sup>38</sup> So, repeatedly, the mother has shown herself to be more severe in these stipulations than the Knight himself, or so the Knight repeatedly claims during these chapters, leveling the following accusations at his wife: "Ladye ye be moche hard & euyll"<sup>39</sup> and "Lady ye make me to be merueylled how that ye so sore discounceylle them to loue Wene ye too doo me to byleue that ye be so trewe in your spekyng that ye neuer were amorous [...]."<sup>40</sup> Yet while these lines from the Chevalier seem to present him as a stronger advocate of courtly love that is chaste than is his wife, all that has come before in his book suggests a closer alignment of his opinions with those espoused by his wife.

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Queen in Sanctuary: Elizabeth Woodville's Use of Meaningful Silence and Absence," *New Medieval Literatures* 4 (2001): 171-88.

<sup>37</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 164, ll. 26-27, 27-28, 31-33.

<sup>38</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 170, ll. 14, 17-18, 23-25.

<sup>39</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 167, l. 26.

<sup>40</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 173, ll. 2-4.

For example, in Capitulum 125 the Knight claims that it is beneficial for his daughters to love the man who may come and “be wyllynge to loue her and take her to his wyf.”<sup>41</sup> His wife, however, counters this very argument by repeating her concern that some suitors are displeased with receiving too many favors or too much attention from the ladies that they might marry because such displays a nature in the would-be wife that is “to moche amorous and for to be to moche open in beholdyng and in gyuyng fayre semblaunt.”<sup>42</sup> While this does not immediately alert the reader to the slippage in the Knight’s claimed position during the debate and his position in the earlier chapters of the text, the Wife herself makes the connection overtly when she recapitulates an exemplum from Capitulum 12 of *The Book*. This exemplum warns the daughters not to be too open or forward with any possible fiancés because the Knight himself rejected a possible wife because of her “ouer grete malepertnes & the lyght manere that me [the Knight] semed to see in her [...]”<sup>43</sup> Thus, while the Knight claims to advocate a certain degree of *fin’ amor*, his own actions and his earlier exempla seem to support his Wife’s position that ladies ought to “hold her self more secrete and couered and more symply [...]”<sup>44</sup> There is also one final point I would like to make in suggesting that the mother’s voice is more of a rhetorical construction to present the *débat* as a generic novelty for his daughters than it is a presentation of a seriously dissenting voice that advocates a different set of behaviors than the Knight himself does in *The Book*. Along with *fin’ amor*, the Knight questions his wife in these chapters about the proper social connections that ought to exist between man and wife. The wife staunchly supports a rigid marriage-

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<sup>41</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 167, l. 30.

<sup>42</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 168, ll. 9-10.

<sup>43</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 28, ll. 4-5. “[...] she was so pert and so light of maners [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 18, l. 25.

<sup>44</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 168, ll. 22-23.

within-class position that she articulates in a manner that is much more direct and like a command than much of the Knight's own rhetorical direct addresses to his daughters to follow principles of behavior. For example, after discussing a number of exempla against lust, the Knight says to his daughters: "wherefore moche affectually I praye yow as my right dere doughters that ye daye and nyght wyl thynke on it [the dangers of lust] [...]"<sup>45</sup> The mother does not engage in begging, asking, or telling her daughters to take an example by a story she tells when she prohibits marriage to a lesser social class; instead she simply declares "I theyr moder charge and deffende them that they take no playsaunce ne that in no wyse sette theyr loue to none of lower degree than they be come of."<sup>46</sup> Mark Addison Amos does not find this announcement against cross-class marriages odd as he reads Caxton's translation of *The Book's* treatment of "the noblewomen who are the book's inscribed audience" as "also function[ing] subtextually as body doubles for the powerful commoners against whom the text is rhetorically aimed. Through this double representation, the text figures the conflict between the nobility and the social formations of mercantile capitalism as violence against women."<sup>47</sup> Amos also reads the Knight's anxiety about remarriage as "not only in the disciplining of bodily desires, but in the circumscription of a potentially free agent with moveable capital," i.e., the Knight wants to make sure that his daughters, should they be widowed, ask all their relatives about remarriage first before they foolishly take their wealth and nobility to a union with

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<sup>45</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 92, ll. 6-7. "[...] and therfor, doughters, yef temptacion assailethe you, haue mynde day and night to make recistens ageynes hem, to kepe you clene and ferme in goodnesse." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 83, ll. 19-21.

<sup>46</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 169, ll. 10-12.

<sup>47</sup> Mark Addison Amos, "Violent Hierarchies: Disciplining Women and Merchant Capitalists in *The Book of the Knyght of the Towre*," in *Caxton's Trace: Studies in the History of English Printing*, ed. William Kuskin (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 69-100; 72.

someone of lesser degree.<sup>48</sup> Amos also notes that Norbert Elias has shown that “in Landry’s France the politically powerful burghers were ahead of their English merchant cousins in encroaching on the noble class and in adopting gentle manners, so the French aristocracy’s fortification of its symbolic boundaries was undertaken much earlier.”<sup>49</sup> Amos adds one more piece of interesting historical fact to temper our reception of the Lady’s and the Knight’s outbursts against cross-class marriages: “Knights and lesser gentry had forever been marrying their children into wealthy merchant families, and it was as likely as not the *parents* who would arrange such a marriage in order to stock their diminished coffers. Marriages were frequent between urban merchants—civic leaders in particular—and lesser gentry. [...H]istorical circumstances argue against a severe punishment for this act [...].”<sup>50</sup> Remarriage of widows generally was also maligned. G. R. Owst quotes at length a sermon rejecting the remarriage of widows, which also has some cross-class and cross-generational commentary embedded in it. The sermon claims men who marry widows “wedden the goodes more than the womman” but the real discouragement is here directed at men through a tactic that maligns the aging female body in a manner one might deem borders upon the Swiftian: “Som had lever to take an olde wedow, though sche be ful lothelyche and never schall have cheldren. And, fro the tyme that he hathe the mocke that he wedded her for, and felethe her breth foule stynkyng and her eyen blered, scabbed and febyll, as old wommen buthe, then they [the

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<sup>48</sup> Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 90. Amos’s reading is insightful, but I do not always agree with all the portions of his argument, although reading the violence against women as a sign of Caxton’s own interest in the preservation of social class rigidity certainly presents some enlightening perspectives on some of the more unusual parts of *The Book*; however, I am uncomfortable asserting too strongly the idea that the work reflects particularly Caxton’s ideals as it is his translation of the Knight’s work. Amos also places *The Book* in conversation with historical documents and analyzes the prologue and epilogue, allowing for him to make more of an argument about Caxton as translator than I am particularly interested in doing here.

<sup>49</sup> Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 74.

<sup>50</sup> Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 91.

mis-matched husbands] spend a-pon strompettes that evyll-getyn goodes.” I should note that despite the distasteful description of the remarried widow the sermon does take pity upon her because it says that while her husband is carousing, she “sytt at home wyth sorowe, hungry and thrusty.”<sup>51</sup>

I would suggest that there are two ways to read this voicing of the mother’s concerns: (1) that the Knight definitely agrees with her and (2) that in part the Knight allows for this portion of *The Book* to reflect his daughters’ mother’s voice because it was culturally appropriate and expected for the mother to have very strong opinions on the daughters’ marriages.<sup>52</sup> To a certain extent, I have discussed this already when looking at Anne de France and Colette H. Winn’s article on the all-important nature of a girl’s mother in the girl’s education and indoctrination into marriage: “Le mariage des filles est le couronnement de l’oeuvre éducatrice de la mère” (Marriage of daughters is the crowning achievement of the educative work of the mother).<sup>53</sup> That is, on a day-to-day

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<sup>51</sup> G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 381.

<sup>52</sup> See this odd occurrence at the close the Chapter 112, which otherwise provides positive examples of wives who abstain from remarriage for an example of the Knight’s obvious disapproval of cross-class marriages: “For as I trowe they whiche for pleasaunce weddeth them self ageyne to somme of lower estate withoute taking counseyll of theyr parentes and frendes do ayenst them self wherfor ofte it befalleth to them that after somewhat of tyme is passed and the most parte of the playsaunce gone And that they see that the grete ladyes sette not so moche by them as they were wonte to doo they falle in to repentaunce but it is to late But as for me me semeth that they whiche take the ladyes to theyre wyues and afterward make of theyre ladyes theyr subgettes done gret synne.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 150, ll. 26-35. “al be it so that ofte tymes high astate obeyethe for loue or flesshely pleasaunce vnto lowe degree, as there haue be diuerse ladyes that haue do so; good entent shal haue grace, but marriage that be made in other wise, there befallithe gret Inconuenient, as much as wedde hem self ayenst the wyll of kynne and frendes, and only for the flesshely delite. And whanne the tyme rennithe as from somer to winter, as whanne pleasaunce is fayled, and they see hem self lesse honoured, thanne ofte tymes they falle into Repentaille, so that loue and pleasaunce is foryete; as the nightyngales, as longe as they be amerouses, they synge plesauntly day and night; and whanne they haue reioysed thaire amerous desyre and pleasaunces, thei make abace melodye, for thei synge no more.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 156, ll. 19-32.

<sup>53</sup> Colette H. Winn, “‘De mères en filles’: Les manuels d’éducation sous l’Ancien Régime,” *Atlantis* 19, no. 1 (1993): 23-30, 26. My translation. Also, “Young girls of the upper classes usually learned to read—and sometimes even to write—either at school or at home, with the help of a private tutor. Furthermore they were educated by their mothers, who taught them the traditional social skills of a woman of their upbringing as well as how to run a household [...]” Anne Marie de Gendt, “*Aucuns Petis Enseignements*:

basis the mother of the Knight's daughters would be in charge of their education, looking after them, but as we know from the prologue of *The Book*, his daughters' mother is dead,<sup>54</sup> and so in this section toward the end of the Knight's instruction guide he develops a puissant rhetorical technique to marry his advice with the specter of the girls' mother through this first person prohibition from her. Particularly this fact of her death is important if we choose to acknowledge an emotional valence to the rhetorical presence of the mother, for, as I discuss below in the first exemplum from the book, part of the role of women's involvement with the dead is prayer for them. Thus, *The Book* presents to the daughter-audience a specter of the woman they ought to pray for daily, a fact that might establish within the textual and prayer interactions a transactional economy.<sup>55</sup> In the case of *The Book* the transactional exchange is even more complex because it is not simply the text and the reader (the daughters), but rather the readers' (daughters') reaction to a text that enfabulates a memory of their dead mother, for whom they plausibly pray daily. Thus, the rhetorical power for her portions of the text may be augmented in authority for the daughters who may perceive an economy of prayer and advice exchanging when they interact with the text and with the spiritual realm on their mother's behalf. That is, the

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'Home-made' Courtesy Books in Medieval France," in *Centres of Learning in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 279-88, 279.

<sup>54</sup> "But the deth. Whiche spareth none hath taken her." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 11, ll. 20-21. "But deth, that on all makithe were, toke her from me, [...]." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 1, ll. 17-18.

<sup>55</sup> The phrase transactional economy is clarified by turning to Louise M. Rosenblatt, who writes about modern "reading process" that "we need to free ourselves from unscrutinized assumptions implicit in the usual terminology and in the very structure of our language. The usual phrasing makes it difficult to attempt to do justice to the nature of the actual reading event. The reader, we can say, interprets the text. (The reader acts on the text.) Or we can say, the text produces a response in the reader. (The text acts on the reader.) Each of these phrasings, because it implies a single line of action by one separate element on another separate element, distorts the actual reading process. The relation between reader and text is the actual reading process. The relation between reader and text is not linear. It is a situation, an event at a particular time and place in which each element conditions the other." Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work with a New Preface and Epilogue* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 16.

perception that this advice was left unequivocally to protect the daughters' well-being by the mother increases the likelihood that the daughters will find it to be good advice, or at least advice that they are obliged to follow, and that they will perceive their debt to their mother partially returned by their daily prayers for her. One might also claim that part of their debt to be repaid to their mother would be their honoring her advice, so that the text becomes a sort of post mortem means of maternal surveillance. The passage also calls before the girls the very subjectivity of their mother, especially with the emphatic first-person pronoun aligned with her role as mother, which does not occur anywhere in *The Book* in conjunction with the Knight's role as father.<sup>56</sup> There is a well-established body of literature on the use of memorials in medieval culture, i.e. "texts, objects, and images that were used to commemorate the dead," and this scholarship also argues that "Memorial activity is the process by which kindreds and other social groups are constituted."<sup>57</sup> I would like to suggest that the Wife's appearance is partly motivated by such a memorial interest on the Knight's part, but I would also like to suggest that this rhetorical construction is also simply good rhetoric because it encourages remembrance of the text because as Mary Carruthers writes, "Successful memory schemes all acknowledge the importance of tagging material emotionally [...] making each memory as much as possible into a personal experience by imprinting emotional associations like desire and

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<sup>56</sup> My reading of the Wife as a rhetorical construction is further supported by Ruys's demonstration that "it would appear that women writers are more inclined to turn to *auctoritas* than personal experience in advising their children." Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 151. While I do not fully accept that this statement applies to all conduct literature, it is a useful generalization and in conjunction with the Wife's strong didactic I in the passage above, further suggests the rhetorically constructed nature of the Wife's sections.

<sup>57</sup> Patrick Geary, "The Historical Material of Memory," in *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17-25, 18.

fear, pleasure or discomfort [...].”<sup>58</sup> By pulling the figure of their dead mother into *The Book*, the Knight increases its memorability and stimulates his daughters’ emotions regarding their dead mother. Such emotional stimulation can help to increase recollection, which Carruthers identifies as “a re-enactment of experience, which involves cogitation and judgment, imagination and emotion.”<sup>59</sup> Patrick Geary also writes that “retention of experiences is possible only to the extent to which they can be assimilated to that which is meaningful.”<sup>60</sup> Thus these passages on *fin’ amor* and proper conduct encourage memory because they recall the girls’ mother. Thus, the section of more than ten chapters that present the daughters with the voice of their mother provides, rather than the viewpoints of a willful and disagreeing wife, a reinforced and recapitulated series of prohibitions and rules for the daughters to follow. That is, the content of these chapters accrues greater rhetorical weight for the overall gist of the earlier chapters, penned explicitly by the Chevalier. Thus, their mother presenting a more strict version of many of their father’s principles of behavior does not present an authority that undercuts the Knight’s authority, but rather one which allows it to accrue a greater amount of parental charismatic authority, especially when one considers the role of women in educating their daughters in medieval France.<sup>61</sup> And even the Knight’s Wife makes an explicit claim to her role in filial education: “For myn entencion and wyll is not

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<sup>58</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed., Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 75.

<sup>59</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 76.

<sup>60</sup> Geary, “The Historical Material,” 20.

<sup>61</sup> Winn writes: “Tout ce que la mère a appris de sa propre mère, son savoir et son savoir-faire acquis dans les exigences du quotidien, elle le transmettra à sa fille.” My translation: All that the mother learned from her own mother, her knowledge and know-how acquired in the demands of daily life, she will transmit to her daughter. Winn’s understanding of the role of the mother provides further significance to the Knight’s rhetorical choice to include the mother. Winn, “De mères en filles,” 24.



to ordeyne vpon none ladyes ne damoyseles but yf hit be vpon myn owne doughters of whome I haue the chastisement and charge.”<sup>62</sup>

While the sections that give voice to the Knight’s Wife’s voice are significant, the final parental voice that intrudes upon the Knight’s own position as narrator reinvigorates for the daughters a popular ancient text often employed in medieval education. Chapters 137 through the end of *The Book* (section 144) deal with the stories of Cato the Elder and Cato the Younger, the Elder’s son. Section 137 begins by assuming the Knight’s narrative voice and opens with a typical rhetorical phrase: “Another ensample I will telle yow of [...]”<sup>63</sup> Despite the beginning, however, mid-way through the Knight assumes Cato as the first person speaker as he tells the story of Cato the Elder’s deathbed advice to his son, Cato the Younger:

Fayre sone I haue longe lyued in this world whiche is moche harde to knowe and moche merueyllous and alwey shall wexe wors as I trowe wherefore I wold and desire moche that your gouernement and maner of lyuyng shold be good to the worship of yow and of all your frendes I haue take therfore to yow by wrytyng many enseynmentes the whiche shalle prouffyte to you hereafter yf ye therto wylle sette your herte and haue them in youre memorye Neuertheles I haue bethought in my self to telle and gyue yow other thre er I deye wherefore I praye yow that euer ye wyll haue them in your memorye.<sup>64</sup>

This first person narration from Cato the Elder continues through section 138 and continues into the initial portion of section 139 wherein Cato the Elder warns his son not to take a position under a lord because lords can be fickle and easily swayed; he also tells Cato the Younger never to spare a man from death lest by sparing him Cato take partial blame for some later evil deed he may commit, and finally he warns Cato to test his wife to make sure she keeps his secrets before he tells her anything of serious import. The

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<sup>62</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 174, ll. 10-12.

<sup>63</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 183, l. 8.

<sup>64</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 183, ll. 13-22.

remainder of the chapters, including the latter portion of section 139, illustrates how Cato the Younger responds to his father's advice. The first person fades from these chapters as the reader is given a simple third person narrative accounting for how Cato accepts a position tutoring the emperor's son and pardons a thief sentenced to death. Since he has failed to fulfill his father's first two dictates, he decides to uphold the third and tests his wife by telling her she must keep it a secret that he has murdered the emperor's son, had his heart preserved in spices, and contrived for the emperor and his wife to eat the heart. As contemporary readers may predict, and as anyone familiar with the contents of earlier chapters in *The Book*, particularly the one featuring the husband who tells his wife he has laid eggs but she must keep it a secret, may also predict, Cato's wife gossips about the supposed murder, and this gossip goes before the empress and tells her what she believes has happened. Not surprisingly the emperor orders Cato's death and when the executioner is late, the man he pardoned offers to kill him, but luckily Cato the Younger is rescued by his pupil, for whom he has sent overnight. The story ends peacefully enough—the emperor's son is alive and Cato the Younger lives to explain to the imperial couple how he was simply testing his wife only to find out something that “gyue me not to grete merueylle therof,” i.e. “a woman can not kepe secretely that whiche men sayen to her in councyllle.”<sup>65</sup>

This condemnation of women's failure of confidence ends the next to final chapter of *The Book*. The last chapter sees the return of the Chevalier's first-person persona, but not until Cato the Younger addresses the dual audience of the imperial couple as well as the Knight's daughters: “Now haue ye herd how it is happed to me by cause I dyd not byleue the councyllle of my Fader whiche was so trewe and wyse a man

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<sup>65</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 190, ll. 36, 37-38.

To me therefore is come almost a grete euylle.”<sup>66</sup> The Knight’s voice resumes after we learn that Cato resigns his office, but rather than offer a similar sort of argument for his daughters to follow all the advice he gives them in *The Book*, he instead glosses the exemplum in a somewhat typical fashion, by repeating its main lesson: “And therefore my fayre doughters this is here a good ensample how ye ought to kepe the counceyll of your lord and not telle it to no body [...]”<sup>67</sup> Thus, the Knight, who carefully arranged a prologue for his work seems to end his advice for his daughters with a simple, single piece of advice: keep your husband’s secrets. Yet, I would like to posit that the final chapter of *The Book* also operates on another level. Cato the Younger’s words to the imperial couple are his explanation of his experiences, but the Knight is also employing them to address his daughters directly. The Knight gives Cato the Younger as a sort of *de facto* example of what happens when one ignores advice given by one’s family. Additionally, Cato the Elder’s words earlier quoted from Chapter 137 also function as a stand-in for the Knight’s own values and beliefs as reflected elsewhere in *The Book*. That is, the speech from Cato the Elder sets up an elaborate metaphor—while the Knight is not on his deathbed, his re-telling of this story and positioning of Cato the Elder’s words in line with his own advice in *The Book* suggests to the reader that *The Book* is indeed something like the Knight’s deathbed and final advice for his daughters, conveying a somber authority to the work. Additionally, the similarity in Cato’s assertion that society is in decline appears repeatedly in *The Book* where the Knight laments that people no longer provide proper respect according to rank or that women no longer care to attend mass so much as they care to dress up to impress men, both of which are signs of the

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<sup>66</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 191, ll. 2-4.

<sup>67</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 191, ll. 12-14.

decaying nature of society to him.<sup>68</sup> Finally, the inclusion of Cato allows the Knight's book to participate in a second type of late medieval reading practice described by Deborah McGrady, that which was promulgated by John of Salisbury (c.1115-76) in the *Metalogicon*, which "approached reading as an activity monitored by the *magister*."<sup>69</sup> The Knight presents somewhat prurient material to his daughters, only to have the immoral elements expunged via torture or other punishment, as I show below, but his co-opting of Cato is an attempt secure greater somber authority for his own text and to announce overtly to his daughters that any other readings or subtexts that they might try to glean from his lessons ought to be ignored—only the explications he gives and the moral he points out are important.

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<sup>68</sup> Consider for example the Knight's comments on women who prefer to dress up than to hear mass: "But I trowe that ther ben many ladyes at this day that passe wel with lasse than thre masses For it suffyseth them ynowe of one masse only soo lytell loue and deuocion haue they in god & in his seruyce. [...] For he that hath not wel set his hert to hym [God] ward he passeth lyghtely as many doo in these dayes whiche haue their herte more set on the world and on the delyte of the flesshe than on god." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 54, ll. 19-22, 25-28. "And y trowe there be now mani women that passithe a dayes with feuer masses thanne .iij. and that it suffisithe hem to here one, for her deuocion is so litell in the seruice of God; [...] And he that dothe contrarie, wol passé lightly, as diuerse do now a dayes, that haue more delite to plesse the worlde and the flesshe thanne God." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 46, l. 32; 47, ll. 1-3; 5-7. Similarly the Knight discusses the general widespread nature of vices when he says "And of this manere [being bound to the devil's deeds] the moost parte of the worls is entatched and ouercome." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 61, ll. 10-11; "[...] the deuell holdithe hem bounde in his seruice till thei be vnbounde by confession; and men of these maners there be now a dayes to mani, of the whiche it is the more pitee." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 53, ll. 29-33. The Knight also laments the prevalence of flatterers: "And therfor grete merueylle is how euery flaterer is agreable and so moche pleaseth the lords and the ladyes now in these dayes." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 104, ll. 33-35. There is no corresponding passage featuring this discussion in the Harley translation. In mourning the decreasing piety of women, the Knight writes: "but now as I may perceyue and see the charyte and the holy seruyse of god is amonge wymmen sowen ferre asonder For many one there be that haue theyr herte more toward the world than to the seruyse of god." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 142, ll. 10-13. "y trowe now atte this day the charitee and holy seruice of women is right thinne ysowen; for there be mani that haue more thaire herte upon the worlde, and forto obeye vnto the worldely pleasaunce, than to the honoure and seruice of God." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 144, ll. 28-31. The Knight also mourns the failure of contemporaries to respect rank: "But as now this day the world is al tourned vpodoune For worship is not kepte in her ryght regle ne in her ryght estate as hit was wonte to be." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 152, ll. 10-13. "But the right rule fallithe as now, for honoure is not yeue vnto hem atte al tymes that best hath deserued it, as it might be shewed in diuerse causes, who so wold as forto saye of mani good women." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 158, ll. 5-8.

<sup>69</sup> Deborah McGrady, *Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and His Late Medieval Audience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 28.

This type of rhetorical, first-person eliding of narrator voices occurs in one other place that is significant in *The Book*. In section 101 the Knight showcases three main points: that it is good to care for God's servants, that every woman "ought to haue pyte as she seeth that somme body doth ony euylle to the poure people of god," and that to be charitable like the Countess of Avignon is a good thing for women to imitate.<sup>70</sup> In the illustration of the second point the Knight gives a biblical exemplum from the Passion of Christ, that of the women who weep for Christ as he carries the cross.<sup>71</sup> The Knight's version of this exemplum has Christ addressing not the Daughters of Jerusalem, but simply "My fayr doughters."<sup>72</sup> The Knight's choice to present Christ speaking to his followers in such a manner suggests that by doing so the familiar phrase that he uses with his own daughters may acquire not just parental authority and force, but a smattering of divine sanction. That is, this similarity in rhetorical direct addresses links both the Knight and Christ for the reader explicitly when both of them are already connected by their giving out of commands. Though it is certainly not as overt as Christine de Pizan's use of the rhetorical daughters of God who take over the majority of narration in her conduct book, to miss this rhetorical choice of the Chevalier is to underestimate his clear rhetorical prowess.

Examination of the paternal and maternal rhetorical features of *The Book* demonstrates the Knight's keen sense of rhetorical authority. He employs his narrator status of father "as a didactic locus, allowing [himself] to teach from [his] own personal knowledge."<sup>73</sup> At the same time he is also capable of exploiting the emotional attachment

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<sup>70</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 135, ll. 18-20.

<sup>71</sup> See Luke 23:27-31.

<sup>72</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 135, l. 10.

<sup>73</sup> Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 162.

of his announced audience to their deceased mother, which both increases the memorability of the text while simultaneously memorializing the mother. From this consideration of narrator self-definition, I turn to a consideration of the most common literary device used in *The Book*: the exemplum.

## II. Tautological Tales: Punishing Women and Other Exempla

Joseph Albert Mosher's study of the exemplum in English literature briefly discusses the original French version of *The Book*. Mosher identifies that the Chevalier produces largely a book of exempla: "above one hundred and fifty stories are used in this way and constitute by far the greater part of the book."<sup>74</sup> Thus, one can say that the major rhetorical feature of *The Book* is its reliance upon the exemplum to inculcate its values.<sup>75</sup> The Knight's prologue freely announces his intention to employ exempla: "I wold doo make a lytel booke wherin I wold doo be wreton the good maners and good dedes of good ladyes and wymmen [...] for to take of them good ensample and contenance [. . .] And also by the contrarye I shall doo wryte and set in a booke the myshappe and vices of euylle wymmen."<sup>76</sup> Often the exempla function as a further explication of a general rule announced earlier in *The Book*. Yet Mosher notes that "Although the Knight has employed more Biblical tales than we have hitherto noted in any treatise or set of

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Albert Mosher, *The Exemplum in the Early Religious and Didactic Literature of England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 135.

<sup>75</sup> Ruys would identify "the exemplary nature" of the exemplum as more significant than the actual form of the exemplum itself because she finds "female children are more likely than male children both to be taught by example and to be taught to be an example to others." Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 146, 161-62.

<sup>76</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 12, ll. 25-26, 29-31. "And therfor y purposed to make a litell boke, in the whiche y wolde write the good condicions and dedes of ladies and gentill-women [...] to that entent that my doughtres shulde take ensauple of faire continuance and good manere. And also y wol make write the manere contrarie goodnesse, the which is 'called the boke of hurting of euell women, [...].'" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 3, ll. 3-5; 7-10.

The announcement of the use of exempla in a prologue to a work was fairly common. For examples of such, including the Knight, see Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 13-15. For a list of authors who recommend the efficacy of exempla see Mosher, 14-15.

sermons, his ‘profitable examples’ include an unusually large number of indelicate exempla.”<sup>77</sup> Mosher, in the scope of his larger study of the exemplum as literary type, also argues that “the tales of the *Book of the Knight* as a body” exhibit the “tendency to extend beyond the limits of exempla to the scope and spirit of entertaining Boccaccian tales.”<sup>78</sup> While the word “entertaining” is not the one I would choose to describe many of the exempla in *The Book*, Mosher’s claim about many of the tales having features that appeal to laughter and perhaps even to theatricality that bring to life the general principles advocated by the Chevalier is not misplaced.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, employing entertaining tales that point out repeatedly the spectacular nature of the narratives (“Look at this”) and their ethical issues (“recall this example”) suggests that the Knight’s rhetoric that so often postulates an audience in its commentary on exempla is doing so to “to supply a memory” and that “the presence of an audience would appear to be crucial to the making of the ethical action.”<sup>80</sup> That is, the Knight must explain the exempla to the reader for the ethical (or unethical) action to be validated and recognized in the text, but further, shunned or incorporated into daily life by the audience. Additionally, Carruthers writes of the speaker-audience interaction that it is linked to “‘performance’” and “‘memorableness,’” or that the performance within the text of audience (daughters)–speaker (the Knight) interaction allows for the retention of ethical lessons.<sup>81</sup> Further, the

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<sup>77</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 135.

<sup>78</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 135.

<sup>79</sup> My concentration in the content below finds, like Janet M. Ferrier, that there is a “note of brutality” that pervades in many of the exempla. Ferrier, *French Prose Writers*, 7. Mark Addison Amos figures the violence within the text as part of the “sexual allegory of class, inscribing within its figuration of noblewomen the social situation and sins of the threatening merchant class” that is “most [...] developed in the text’s imagining of three issues: the correction of errant wives, excessive pride in elevation, and vanity in display and dress.” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 74-75. He discusses the correction of wives as being particularly violent.

<sup>80</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 225.

<sup>81</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 225, 226.

tendency for the Knight to interpret all his exempla by telling his daughters to take the narrative as an example to them of how one should or should not do this or that also aligns the rhetoric that the Knight employs with that of scholastic reading practices: “Glossing initiated a controlled reading experience [...]. Visually replicating the dialectic method implemented in university teaching that moved from the *questiones* to the *disputationes*, glossed school books presented reading as a practice which the *magister* always dominated.”<sup>82</sup> There is obviously no gloss on the Knight’s work, but rather we might consider his words on the exempla incorporated glosses and his claim to ultimate fatherly authority through the implementation of Cato’s voice at the end of his work as rhetorical attempts to shore up his authority and dissuade his readers from interpreting his lessons in ways he has not overtly announced or approved.

There are a number of tropes in the various exempla that populate *The Book*, and I discuss below in the greatest detail the trope that appears most frequently: that of the shaming and/or maiming of a willful woman. Other tropes I examine, though not always in separate sections, include: the Good Sister/Bad Sister structure; exempla that employ some sort of visionary, miraculous or other type of experience with the supernatural—divine or demonic; wife testing; and the wholly positive examples of women provided.

### **A. To Shame or To Maim?**

As I suggest above in the opening section of this chapter, the concept of the willful and/or disobedient woman is repugnant to the author of *The Book*, and as such, in the narratives that crop up in this instruction manual, the disobedient woman is always punished either with public ridicule, or with physical pain and suffering sometimes

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<sup>82</sup> McGrady, *Controlling Readers*, 29.



including death, or both.<sup>83</sup> The shame/maim trope is by far the most densely presented trope among the exempla, with it occurring in a staggering number of chapters: sixty-two, if we include the chapters on Eve that discuss her as the arch-willful woman, thereby shaming her. I begin with the first exemplum to appear in *The Book*, which not only illustrates the shame/maim trope but also the Good Sister/Bad Sister exemplum structure, which is not as common within *The Book* but still recurs occasionally.<sup>84</sup> The first exemplum also makes use of visionary material, making it an important opening example with which to begin. The first two chapters of *The Book* discuss “how god ought to be honoured about all thynges” and how “the fyrst werke & labour that man or woman ought to doo is for to adoure and worshipe oure lord and saye his seruyse [...] as soon as

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<sup>83</sup> This rhetorical finding is not surprising given that other analyses of misogynist rhetoric have suggested that such rhetoric, while critiquing women, can “also betray men’s fear of women and their anxiety over the possibility of female superiority.” Karen Pratt, “Analogy or Logic; Authority or Experience? Rhetorical Strategies for and against Women,” in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture: Selected Papers from the Seventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, 27 July – 1 August 1992*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 57-66, 59, n. 11. See also Lesley Johnson, “Women on Top: Antifeminism in the Fabliaux?” *Modern Language Review* 78 (1983): 298-307. I would suggest later when discussing the lecherous rope-maker’s wife below that the exemplum, with its emphasis on violent punishment for the wife’s crimes as well as her duplicitous deceit of her innocent, noble husband, reflects this very anxiety, i.e. that men are women’s fools.

Mark Addison Amos has separately and earlier made the argument that “the women in his [the Knight’s] text are rewarded or punished not only by God in the afterlife, but also in their earthly lives by divine agents with the power to dispense (or deny) success, true love, prosperity, good reputation, and most importantly, a good marriage” and that “wives who fail to exhibit behavior that he [the Knight] encourages are punished spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and most frequently, physically.” Amos, however, also differs with my reading of portions of the text and claims that the Knight’s text “Balanc[es] encouragement and threat,” which is something that I cannot agree with given the overwhelming presence of negative, threatening *exempla* in the text; such does not mean, however, that I wish to view the Knight’s text as wholly a manifestation of patriarchal authority. I discuss below and in the conclusion the other aspects of the Knight’s text that might be read more positively or that at least problematize and uncritical reception of his conduct manual as simple assertion of patriarchal authority and a manifestation of the will to dominate women. Amos does also note, however, that the text “would have a didactic interest in threatening that violations of the sexual regulatory codes, however, slight, will be met with severe social reprisals, as staging its regulations as utterly inescapable.” My difference of opinion may be that I do not differentiate the text’s wish for appearance of complete authority, that is, constructed or not, the text still does attempt to make the audience see its dictates as those which must be adhered to no matter what; I have not discussed the historical fact that adultery in the Middle Ages did not always end up in torture and beheadings as the Knight’s text seems to mandate. Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve,” 19, 23, 21, 23-24.

<sup>84</sup> I do not discuss this category in its own section below, but it appears in Chapters 3, 6, 12, 13, 103, and 119.

he awaketh”.<sup>85</sup> The third chapter discusses the necessity for women to pray for the dead, or rather, offers an exemplum about what may happen to those women who do not choose to fulfill their prayer duties.<sup>86</sup> Sometimes, however, *The Book* enjoys presenting compound images of women who misbehave, so that failures to conform to one type of behavior can lead to misbehavior in other ways. In the third chapter the failure to uphold chastity is linked with a woman’s failure to pray.

The third chapter recounts the example of “two daughters of the Emperoure [of Constantinople] that one synfull And that other deuoute”.<sup>87</sup> The devout daughter “loued god and honoured & prayd to hym alwey when she awoke”, but the other did not.<sup>88</sup>

Before continuing with a discussion of the exemplum’s content, I should say that this structure for the tale, which lays out both a positive example to be emulated and a

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<sup>85</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 13, ll. 30-31; 14, ll. 16-18. For the first chapter, there is no equivalent chapter heading with a similar quotation in the Harley version, but in Chapter 2, the opening is the same: “the furst werke or labour that a man or a woman shulde be-ginne, is to serue God; atte eueri tyme he awakithe he ought to yeue God reconisaunce, bi thought or praier [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 5, ll. 1-4.

<sup>86</sup> The Knight’s stipulation is not odd. Elisabeth van Houts has written on women’s roles in preserving family memory in Europe from 900-1200, and while she does not discuss prayer for the dead, she does discuss the bequest of property: “Women, leading private lives to a much greater extent [than men], perpetuated their private lives through oral bequests of their potential memorials to their daughters and granddaughters who simply perpetuated this tradition.” She also relates these bequests of property to oral means of passing memories and stories: “On the other hand, they maintained a private memorial tradition by handing down objects and I believe, with those objects, private stories to their daughters and granddaughters. This by its very nature was an oral and not written tradition.” Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 119. Further, Giovanni Ciappelli writes of women in Florence, and refers explicitly to their role in mourning: “women played a distinctive role in the transmission of family memory, a role that deserves to be investigated in greater detail. Owing to the part they played in the education of their children, Florentine women were able to influence their charges’ feeling of family identity, probably including aspects of family memory related to maternal kin. Moreover, society tended to grant women—probably because of what might be defined as their ‘liminal’ status—a specific role in relationships with the dead. [...] Also [...], writing skills became more common among women, and if in keeping *libri di ricordi* Florentine women of the upper class imitated the model followed by their husbands and fathers, they also found other forms of expression and prepared the ground for the flourishing of women’s writing in the centuries that followed.” Giovanni Ciappelli, “Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences,” in *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34.

<sup>87</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 15, ll. 1-2. There is no equivalent chapter heading with a similar quotation in the Harley version. Amos also discusses this exemplum; see “The Gentrification of Eve,” 21-22.

<sup>88</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 15, ll. 5-6, 9. “[...] she loued wel God, and praied hym, atte all tymes that she awaked, for the dede.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 5, ll. 27-28.

negative example to be shunned, is fairly frequent in the Knight's book, and even in chapters that purport to be about positive exemplars, there is often a subsidiary or second tale in which a negative example is presented.<sup>89</sup> There may be three reasons that the Knight decides to structure his presentation of moral lessons this way. The first is that the juxtaposition of rash opposites can be more compelling for the audience, something that Mosher associates with one of the six purposes he identifies for exempla—"to revive languid listeners, evoke interest or laughter."<sup>90</sup> A second reason is related to the first but particularly poignant for the Good Sister/Bad Sister structure because while the sharp contrast in fates for the good and bad woman may divert the audience, they are also probably better at "arous[ing] fear in the sinful" than narratives that present only praise of honorable women.<sup>91</sup> The third reason is that the stacking up of negative exemplars is more effective in aiding the memory of the daughters in the proper behavior that they should engage in—I cannot claim that negative examples can coerce the daughters more effectively than positive examples, but there is modern neurological and verbal research that shows memories are both more detailed and more numerous for verbal stimuli that

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<sup>89</sup> Of the 144 chapters, only 26 present purely positive examples of women rather than positive and negative examples in juxtaposition, though it should be noted that exempla do not occur in each chapter. Additionally chapters 82 through 101 in the Caxton translation are announced as containing positive exempla by the Knight at the end of Chapter 81. Of these specifically demarcated chapters, all of which do contain exempla, more than 26 %, or 5 of 19 chapters contain negative examples as well as positive. Additionally, these announced positive chapters make up only 13% of the whole of the 144 chapters, which drops to 9.7% of the total if we adjust down and remove the chapters that are marked as positive but actually contain negative exempla as well. Compare this to the 29% of all 144 chapters that makes up the specifically announced negative exempla (Chapters 39 through 81), which begin with an analysis and condemnation of Eve's actions. I should also note that there occurs a separate section of positive-only exempla, but they are not announced as positive by the Knight, though they clearly counter the discussion of Eve to some degree because they focus on Mary and her various positive attributes (Chapters 107-110, though in the final chapter she is merely named as an exemplar). If we include these Marian chapters in with the overall positive percentages for the whole of the work, the percentages I give above jump up to nearly 16% and 14.5% respectively.

<sup>90</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 8.

are negative.<sup>92</sup> I might also note that the Knight, when he is introducing or summarizing an exemplum or its lesson, often suggests to his daughters that they remember it, so I do find that memorability and potential for retention of the exempla he shares with his daughters are important to him.<sup>93</sup>

Like the familial loved ones who need women's post mortem attention and prayers for purgatorial aid, the Knight wants his rules for behavior attentively grasped, so he uses the Good Sister/Bad Sister structure to highlight the girls' distinct, discrete fates. Both sisters fall in love and arrange to have their lovers "come to them pryuely."<sup>94</sup> This point in the narrative marks the most expectant point for the erotic gaze; the reader is promised an intimate look at the failure of chastity, but this gaze is radically altered and diverted away from the would-be eroticism of unmarried, youthful sexual dalliance.<sup>95</sup> The seeming fabliau corrects itself with a moralizing moment. The devout sister's lover experiences a miraculous interruption to his wooing: he sees "moo than a thousand men

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<sup>92</sup> For an explanation of six verbal experiments and their methodologies that test words for memorability depending on their valence ("how positive or negative a stimulus is") and their arousal ("how calming or exciting a stimulus is"), see Elizabeth A. Kensinger and Suzanne Corkin, "Memory Enhancement for Emotional Words: Are Emotional Words More Vividly Remembered than Neutral Words?" *Memory and Cognition* 31, no. 8 (2003): 1169-80, 1170. The study shows "that individuals are better able to conjure detailed memory for a negative than for a neutral event," 1172. Note that the study did not test words with high valence values, or positive connotations, so I cannot claim that negative exempla are more effective than positive ones for retention, but the importance of the negative examples is demonstrably an aid in memory according to these tests.

<sup>93</sup> Example of the Knight's encouragement to remember certain exempla occur: at the end of Capitulum 9 ("And thenne all yonge wymmen and specially the maydens and wydowes ought to fast as I haue said here to fore by these ensamples whiche by the playsyre of god. Ye shall well retheyne and kepe." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 23, ll. 30-33; "and therfor yong women aught to faste, and specially maydenes and wedwes, as is aforesaid by diuerse exaamples, the whiche, and God before, ye shall take hede of and kepe hem well." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 4-5). Another instance occurs in the Caxton translation only, in Chapter 144: "we ought wel to haue in our memory the saynges and auctorytees of the wyse Salamon." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 191, ll. 22-24.

<sup>94</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 15, ll. 15-16, 18-19. "The knightes shulde come to lye bi them bi night priuely atte sertaine owre." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 4-5.

<sup>95</sup> Susan Udry suggests that one "read [...] conduct literature as a cross-section of competing discourses about the female body" in order to understand the contradictions within works that "advocate chastity on the one hand yet construct women as objects of desire (i.e. beauties) for the male reader on the other." Susan Udry, "Robert de Blois and Geoffroy de la Tour Landry on Feminine Beauty: Two Late Medieval French Conduct Books for Women," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 19 (2002): 90-102, 90.

in sudaryes lyke dede men whiche were aboute the damoyzell” when he pulls back the curtain to her bed.<sup>96</sup> As any self-respecting lover would do in such a situation, he immediately flees without consummating his love and suffers a fever in his own bed. In this case, the liminal status of the devout sister’s identity—I mean here that in the narrative the audience is given the option to wonder if she is going to become sexually active (like her bad sister) or if she will remain a marriageable virgin—is overcome by spiritual aid and her own good behavior. Her story becomes an imitable example to other women reading the text. Her identity as a part of the family is confirmed by the rescue perpetrated by dead relatives. Her story has been de-eroticized through her spiritual devotion. The possibility of the emperor’s family having an unchaste daughter within its bounds is circumnavigated, avoided, and the erotic elements of the would-be meeting, purified. The devout sister remains an honorable woman who does not need to be punished or excised from the text.<sup>97</sup>

The chapter, sadly enough, does not end here though. To the suitor of the daughter who is not devout “happed no thyng so”; that is, the sister who neglects her spiritual duties has no spiritual protectors to ward off her would-be lover, and the narrative informs us that as soon as “the Emperoure knewe that she was grete with child

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<sup>96</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 15, ll. 18-19. “hym thought he sawe a thousand dede bodies about her in shetis.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 6-7. The Knight apparently found this use of sudden visions amusing for he employs it again in the same manner in Chapter 4 when he describes a would-be rapist seeing “more than ten thousand prysonners buryed that kepte” the woman he wanted to rape. They scare him off because rather than flee from her rapist, she ducks into a hole and begins to pray for the dead, and happily enough they afford her the protection of her virginity. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 16, ll. 21-22. “he sawe more than x M dede folk about her.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 7, l. 7.

<sup>97</sup> On the circumnavigation of rape through torture and/or beheading in martyrdom and hagiography records, see Martha Easton, “Pain, Torture and Death in the Huntington Library *Legenda aurea*,” in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Sam Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), 49-64, and Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

he made her to be drowned” and “dyd do the knyzt to be flayn al quyck.”<sup>98</sup> The unchaste sister’s fate is to become abject, that which represents a dissolution of meaning, that which threatens. Her narrative fate is fixed—the unchaste sister *must* die, and she *must* be severed from her family identity because her identity as unmarried virgin has been breached and her identity as unmarried non-virgin daughter of the emperor is so shocking, so appalling that it cannot be sustained in the narrative. The text must excise her from the family, must kill her off, thereby labeling her as not part of the imperial family, as not desirable; she is precisely the negative model the Knight mentions will be included in his prologue to *The Book*. The moral lesson here is clear: the sister devoted to God and dutiful in her prayers does not experience the ignominy her impious sister does.<sup>99</sup> The devout sister’s prayers “for all Crysten sowles” result in her rescue “fro perisshyng and dishonoure” and her eventual marriage to “a grete kyng of grece”.<sup>100</sup> Women who do not want to be damned ought to say their prayers according to the narrator of *The Book*. But this chapter also negotiates carefully and with fear the possibility of female sexual impropriety, but as much as it entertains the subject, even takes it as a secondary lesson to the chapter’s main point that women ought to pray, it simultaneously rejects it and avoids it, and when it must acknowledge it, does so through abjection. That is, *The Book* negotiates unmarried female sexuality by containing it, and

<sup>98</sup> Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, 15, lines 21, 23-25. “But that other knight come into that other suster [the impious one] withoute letting, and be-gate her with childe.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 11-12. “And whanne her fader wost she was with childe, he made cast her in-to the Riuer, and drenche her and her childe, And made to scorch the knight quicke.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 12-15.

<sup>99</sup> At various stages in the text the Knight is fond of reminding his audience that God “gyueth for all suche wele and seruyce as is done to hym an hondred fold double.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 14, ll. 11-12. “he yeuith and yeldithe, for the good seruyce that is yeue and do to hym, the double an hundred tymes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 4, ll. 29-31.

<sup>100</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 15, ll. 38-39, 36-37; 16, l. 1. “she worshipped and praied God devoutly atte all tymes that she awaked [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, ll. 24-25. “kept her from shame and distruccion [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, l. 23. “a kinge of Grece wedded her.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 6, l. 26.

failing that, relegating it to the realm of the abject—a threat which is temporarily excised but still a “perpetual danger”<sup>101</sup> that threatens all men whether they are fathers or husbands. The abject status of the willful woman in *The Book* drives the work’s trope of shaming and maiming such women.<sup>102</sup> Further, I show below in my discussion of the exemplum of the adulterous rope-maker’s wife that the abjection of the adulterous woman is amplified into the category of the diabolical.

The Knight’s text reinforces principles of conduct with experience or with concrete, material examples. Anna Dronzek points out that “the text in which the Knight outlines abstract moral precepts is invariably short in comparison to the examples” and that “of the 144 chapters in the book, only thirteen present absolute statements [...] without incorporating some kind of an example.”<sup>103</sup> The Knight links behavior, good or bad, with immediate, material consequences. Good behavior earns a happy marriage; bad behavior, disfigurement and/or death, and possibly disgrace as well. The disfigurement and death is a way for the Knight to undo the identities of willful women entirely, to dissolve them. The concept of a disobedient wife is so abhorrent that she cannot exist unless she is made monstrous, or indeed diabolical, in this text. This is not to say that

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<sup>101</sup> Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror*, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Further, we might postulate the shame/maim trope as a kind of carceral system within the Knight’s text as Michel Foucault has theorized such in *Discipline and Punish*: “The carceral network does not cast the unassimilable into a confused hell; there is no outside. It takes back with one hand what it seems to exclude with the other. [...] It is unwilling to waste even what it has decided to disqualify. In this panoptic society [...] the delinquent is not outside the law; he is, from the very outset, in the law, at the very heart of the law [...]” Michel Foucault, “From *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*: The Carceral,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2nd ed., ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York: Norton, 2010), 1490-1502, 1496. The narrative strategies employed by the Knight refuse simply to exclude bad examples, but rather his narratives construct very clearly coded examples of punishment. Amos has suggested that the Knight’s text “Foucaultian metaphor as it directs its female auditors to define themselves through the examples of women who remain steadfast [...]” Amos, does not, however, discuss Foucault further other than to say that he is reductive. Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve,” 19, 23.

<sup>103</sup> Anna Dronzek, “Gendered Theories of Education in Fifteenth-Century Conduct Books,” in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark, *Medieval Cultures* 29 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 135-59, 143.

there were no disobedient wives in the Middle Ages, but that in this rhetorical context—the education of ladies on proper behavior—the identity of the disobedient wife must be rendered abject and abhorrent if it is to appear at all. There can be no mistake that a female audience may want to identify more strongly with the impious daughter of the first exemplum than with the devout one, thus the Knight’s radical shift in gaze from semi-voyeuristic to ghastly vision to unequivocally torturous deaths for social trespassers.

The Knight is equally clear about the consequences of willfulness later in *The Book*. For example, in Chapter 63 he places the blame for marital violence squarely upon the shoulders of wives and their behavior. This quotation is a suitable opening for the discussion of the shame/maim trope that includes violence: “And therfor this ensample is very good to euery woman to see how she ought to be meke and humble and curtois in gyyng any answeere ageynst the yre and wrathe of her lord [...] so she shal euer hold the loue and pees of her lord and of all her hows neyther she shalle not make her self to be blamed ne to be bete ne slayne by her lord [...]”<sup>104</sup> This quotation is the consummate, overt statement by the Knight expressing his belief that willful women deserve to be beaten or killed by their husbands, and moreover, that they are at fault if such happens to them. The murder, torture, or other physical maiming of women occurs in 21 of the 61 total chapters I classify within the shame/maim trope. I will focus now on discussing the chapters that involve physical violence before turning to spiritualized violence and finally simple public humiliation.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 93, ll. 25-28; 33-36. “And therfor it is a good ensample to euery woman to be meke and curteis, and to ansuere mekely, curtaisly, and softly ayenst of couroux of her husbonde. [...] And so shal she kepe the pees and the loue of her husbonde, and of her housholde, and shall not make her self blamed nor slayne [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 85, ll. 1-3; 9-11.

<sup>105</sup> My second category, spiritualized violence, involves violence committed against the soul of sinning willful women in hell, usually envisioned and understood by male religious in *The Book*, and while these



Chapter 6 also incorporates physical violence directed at willful women. The sixth chapter has in common with the first exemplum not only violence but also the Good Sister/Bad Sister motif. The chapter discusses fasting and presents the fates of two married sisters; one fasts, and one does not. The wife who does not fast is marked as specifically willful and disobedient because she marries a man who tries to reason with her: “Thenne it happed that her lord knewe her manere whiche was euyll to vse suche a lyf but neuer she wold leue it for faire spekyng ne for thyng that he couthe say or doo.”<sup>106</sup> The dissolute wife is eventually blinded in one eye by a splinter late one night; the splinter breaks out of a stick that her husband is using to beat a servant who has attended the wife’s secret, late-night feast, not just to eat but also to “embra[c] one of the wymmen of the chambre.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, for the Knight, we can see an accumulation of problems that stem from the wife’s refusal to obey her husband’s call for moderation in food and drink: she is up late and away from her sleeping husband; she is fraternizing with servants; she is in the presence of unchaste behavior. These problems come to a crisis when the violence occurs at the secret feast, and while the husband does not direct the violence toward his wife, she is at fault, according to the narrative, for its occurrence.<sup>108</sup> Further,

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chapters have specific elements in common with simple physical violence, there are also extra complexities meriting their discussion separately.

<sup>106</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 18, ll. 10-15. “And thanne the knight taught her, with goodly wordes and softe, that she dede euell to lede suche lyff. But it was neuer the beter for no teching nor faire wordes, for she wolde not be chastised.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 8, ll. 27-30.

<sup>107</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 18, ll. 23-24. “And one of the men helde his honed vnder one of the womannes clothes; and that sawe the goodman [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 9, ll. 4-5.

<sup>108</sup> Amos discusses this passage in the context of his classed allegorical reading of women’s treatment in *The Book* and suggests that since this is a nobleman, the text must “obscur[e] the aristocrat’s role in causing harm, the narrative demonstrates the terrible retribution that awaits misbehaving noble wives, even as it absolves their high-born husbands of responsibility, at least, that is of *direct* responsibility.” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 78-79. Amos locates this passage as an exception to the Knight’s usual tactic of describing noble spouse abusers “in advance as ‘evil’ and ‘felon,’ or [being] otherwise dehumanized.” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 78. I would argue that while often the spouse abusers are described as bad men, there is no dwelling upon this in the text, so that I do not particularly accept fully the proposition that

because she lost her eye, “her husband had her in suche hate that he tooke his herte fro her and set it in another”, and as a result, “Thenne was she in an euyll astate & moche lassed and lesse sette by of al men that knewe her.”<sup>109</sup> The lesson is clear: disobedience will only result in one’s ultimate suffering. The sister who fasts, however, remains happily married, and her happy married life is also described in both translations as the result of her dedication to fasting.<sup>110</sup> This exemplum, just like the first, directly links obedience with prosperity and disobedience with physical violence and deserved punishment. This pattern will appear repeatedly in the other exempla that manifest violence within the shame/maim trope.

There is one other element of chapter 6 that ought to be considered, however. This aspect relates to the fact that these two women are sisters. After their just deserts, the girls’ father visits each household and finds the one-eyed daughter in a household of disarray. The significance of this does not become clear until he returns home and tells his wife about the hospitality he received at each house: “when he was comen home ageyne he recounted all to his wyf And moche cruelly repreued her by cause she had lost her doughter by cause she had kokered her and norysshed tendyrly And that she had gyuen her the reyne ouerlong in suffryng her to do all her wylle wherefore she was in an

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the Knight even perceives a real need to exculpate the noble husband from some sort of unethical deed. See my comments on this below, and note that while this passage appears in the Harley translation only, the blame for the incident is set clearly on the wife: “And this [blindness and loss of husband’s love] behapped her for the misgouernaunce abouesaid.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 9, ll. 12-13.

<sup>109</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 18, ll. 27-29, 34-35. “And for that foule mayme her husbonde kiste away his herte from his wyff, And loued an other [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 9, ll. 9-11. There is no reference to loss of reputation in the Harley translation.

<sup>110</sup> “And therefore it happed that god rewarded and gafe to her a knight ryche and puyssaunt And she lyued with hym well and honestly and in good and grete pees.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 19, ll. 1-3. “and therfor God gerdonithe her, and gaue her a riche knight and a puyssaunt, and [they] leued longe togederes worshipfully.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 9, ll. 21-23.

hard caas.”<sup>111</sup> This quotation is important because it demonstrates the points that I have made earlier about the importance of the mother’s role in the education of her daughters—here this exemplum illustrates not only that disobedience for women is dangerous, but that it is the mother’s job to teach her daughters obedience and good behavior. Of the conduct literature that I have examined in my project, *The Book* is the only work to make this point explicitly within one of its own educative narratives.

The pattern of violence within the shame/maim trope, however, is further obvious in two exempla from Chapters 16 and 17. Both share a similar narrative structure to Chapters 6 and 3: women who do not uphold a certain principle of behavior are physically injured. In Chapter 16 the bad woman is jealous of her husband, and though he “blamed and repreuyd her ofte” for her jealousy, like the gluttonous wife of chapter 6, she does not reform.<sup>112</sup> As a result, she eventually gets into a physical altercation with one of the women to whom her husband speaks often. This fight ends badly for the wife since her nose is broken, which the Knight makes a point of describing in detail as being a terribly unattractive maiming of her appearance:

wherof she had euer after a croked nose whiche is the moost syttyng membre that a man or woman may haue as it that stondeth in the myddes of the visage So was this woman al blemysshed and blamed of her husband and oftymes reproched so that it had ben moche better for her not to haue ben Ielouse and to haue kept her vysage hoole withoute blemysse And thus by the dysfyguryng of her nose and myschaunce her husband myght not loue her soo parfytely after as he dyde to fore as he was woned to doo And otherwhyle took other.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 19, ll. 9-13. “And whanne the fader come home to his hous, he chidde his wiff, saieng that she had lost his daughter for letting her haue to moche her will, and to lete her goormaunde oute of tyme.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 9, ll. 27-30.

<sup>112</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 32, l. 10. “[...] he blamed ofte her, but it was neuer the beter.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 23, ll. 5-6.

<sup>113</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 32, ll. 18-27. “[...] and that al her lyff after she had her nose al croked, the whiche was a foule mayme and blemesshing of her uisage; for it is the fairest member that man or woman hathe, and sittithe in the middill of the uisage. And so was the wiff fouled and maimed all her lyff, and her husbonde saide ofte to her, that it hadde be beter that she had not be ielous, thanne forto haue

So, again, we see the pattern of the woman who will not be instructed by her husband to change her behavior being physically injured through her continued misbehavior. The level of violence in Chapter 17 intensifies, and in doing so, it makes explicit the physical threats that Chapters 3, 6, and 16 have hinted await the misbehaving woman.

Chapter 17's principle of conduct is not to argue with one's husband, but unfortunately for the wife in the exemplum, she not only yells at her husband, but does so publicly, shaming him, and continues to do so despite that he "bad her ones or twyes that she shold be styлле and leue."<sup>114</sup> At this point, though, the narrative shifts suddenly and "her husbond whiche was wrothe smote her with his fyste to the erthe And smote her with his foote on the vysage so that he brake her nose by whiche she was euer after al disfigured And soo by her ryotte and ennoye she gate her a croked nose."<sup>115</sup> The escalation of violence here is clear; the violence is not unintentional (as in 6) or inflicted by a non-spouse (as in 16), but rather we see here the immediate result of disobeying one's husband. There is an immediate narrative correction of the abject willful woman: she is transformed into a monster, permanently physically disfigured as a reminder of how she had "answerd to her husbond so noiously and shamefully to fore the peple."<sup>116</sup>

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undone her uisage as she had. And also for the defoulyng of her uisage her husbonde might neuer finde in his herte to loue her hertly as he dede before, and he toke other women, and thus she lost his loue thorough her ielousie and foly." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 23, ll. 13-23.

<sup>114</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 35, ll. 8-9. "he [...] bade her holde her pees for shame, but the more faire he spake, the worse [s]he dede." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 25, ll. 22-23.

<sup>115</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 35, ll. 9-13. "And he, that was angri of her gouernaunce, smote her with his fiste downe to the erthe; And thanne with hys fote he stroke her in the uisage and brake her nose, and all her lyff after she had her nose croked, the whiche shent and disfigured her uisage after, that she might not for shame shewe her uisage, it was so foule blemished." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 25, ll. 23-29.

<sup>116</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 35, l. 5-6. "[...] ansuere her husbonde afore straungers like a rampe, with gret uelonis wordes, dispraising hym and setting hym atte not [...]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 25, ll. 18-21.

These exempla present a concentrated and overt pressure for the female audience to read: obey or be hurt.<sup>117</sup>

This message seems clear enough in the narratives, but in the Knight's own discussion of the correction of wives, he seems to indicate that physical violence is not acceptable among the nobility. Chapter 18, which I classify within the shame/maim trope is a wife-testing story, a genre that appears in Chapters 74 and 140-44 at the end of *The Book*, which I have discussed above with Cato and his decision to test his wife's loyalty.<sup>118</sup> Unlike the other occurrences in the Chevalier's conduct manual, however,

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<sup>117</sup> Amos rightly points out that this is not a noble couple, but a merchant-class burgher couple, and he claims that the episode "assum[es] it is natural for the middling husband to direct his wife with violence." Amos also demonstrates that this cultural practice seems to be corroborated by merchants' letters that express "routinely correct[ing] their wives by beating" without "any tone of surprise at this behavior." Amos, "Violent Hierarchies," 76. See also: Barbara Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300-1348* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 165-66; Sara M. Butler, "Spousal Abuse in Fourteenth-century Yorkshire; What Can We Learn from the Coroner's Rolls?" *Florilegium* 18, no. 2 (2002): 61-78; Trevor Dean, "Domestic Violence in Late-Medieval Bologna," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 4 (2004): 527-43; P. J. P. Goldberg, "Gender and Matrimonial Litigation in the Church Courts in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of the Court of York," *Gender and History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 43-59, see esp. 53; Leslie Dossey, "Wife Beating and Manliness in Late Antiquity," *Past and Present* 199, no. 1 (2008): 147-73; Helen Fulton, "The Performance of Social Class: Domestic Violence in the Griselda Story," *AUMLA* 106 (2006): 25-42; Louise Vasvári, "The Story of Griselda as Silenced Incest Narrative," *La Corónica* 39, no. 2 (2007): 139-56; James A. Brundage, "Domestic Violence in Classical Canon Law," in *Violence in Medieval Society*, ed. Richard W. Kaeuper (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2000), 183-95; Barbara Hanawalt, "Violence in the Domestic Milieu of Late Medieval England," in Kaeuper, *Violence in Medieval Society*, 197-214; Steven Bednarski, "Keeping it in the Family? Domestic Violence in the Later Middle Ages: Examples from a Provençal Town (1340-1403)," in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones, *International Medieval Research* 11 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 277-97; Martha A. Brożyna, "Not Just a Family Affair: Domestic Violence and the Ecclesiastical Courts in Late Medieval Poland," in Davis, Müller, and Rees Jones *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties*, 299-309.

<sup>118</sup> The Modern English translators of the *Parisian Household Book*, Gina L. Greco and Christine M. Rose, mention that "this theme of the testing of wives appears in many instance" in the *Parisian Household Book* "with men vying with each other to shame their peers by finding whose wives were either of easy virtue, haughty, or defiant, thus showing that the husband could not control his household." Gina L. Greco and Christine M. Rose, eds and trans., *The Good Wife's Guide: Le Ménagier de Paris, A Medieval Household Book* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 90, n. 4. See also on the theme of household control as a function of male worth and competence: Kate Cooper, "Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 113-27, and Kate Cooper, "Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure, and Private Power in the Roman *Domus*," *Past and Present* 197 (2007): 3-33. Anna Dronzek has also written about male concerns in looking for a bride and found from late medieval letter collections that while conduct literature addressed to men makes almost no mention of the marriage contracting process, the letter collections demonstrate a clear concern on the part of husbands-to-be that they marry women who had "the quality of being entitled to honour or respect," which "necessarily entailed the judgment of other people" and also "shows the importance that

there is not simply one wife tested, but rather this chapter captures three merchants' desire to test their wives as a contest to see who has the most obedient wife.<sup>119</sup>

The merchants test their wives by asking them to jump into a basin, though they will provide no other answer about why the wife should comply, the implication being that a wife ought to obey all her husband's commands, no matter what reason may or may not be behind them. The first two wives, not surprisingly, fail this test by refusing and questioning their husbands. As a result, the husband of the first wife "waxe moche angry and felle and gafe her a buffet" and the second wife "was beten as that other was" upon her refusal.<sup>120</sup> The third wife mishears her husband when he asks for salt to be put upon the table, and thinks he has commanded her to leap onto the table; she obeys immediately without a thought about overturning the table and all the food because she knows her husband believes his "commaundement shold be done what someuer it was."<sup>121</sup> Thus, this wife is so obedient she circumvents the actual test. This final episode lightens the appearance of back-to-back spousal violence by having everyone amused at the wife's mishearing and pleased with her obedience. Notwithstanding the cheery ending

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public opinion played in men's minds as they carried out their [marriage] negotiations." Anna Dronzek, "Gender Roles and the Marriage Market in Fifteenth-Century England: Ideals and Practices," in Davis, Müller, and Rees Jones, *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties*, 63-76, 73.

<sup>119</sup> The retelling of the rape of Lucretia in *The Parisian Household Book* frames praise for Lucretia within a wife-testing narrative that ends up stimulating her later rape and suicide. Greco and Rose, *The Good Wife's Guide*, 90-91. The motif is also in Chaucer's treatment of Lucretia in *The Legend of Good Women*.

Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 618-19, ll. 1700-56. It appears also in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, vol. 7, ll. 4764-85. *The Online Medieval and Classical Library*, ed. Douglas B. Killings and Diane M. Brendan. 1994. <<http://omacl.org/Confess/3sep.html>> Anna Dronzek's article on marriage negotiations points out that the one discussion of men's behavior that is mentioned in conduct literature for men about how to treat their wives is "not to defame [their] wi[ves] for fear of encouraging other men to do the same. To slander one's wife would be to damage her reputation and lower her position in the eyes of other men." Dronzek, "Gender Roles and the Marriage Market," 71.

<sup>120</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 36, ll. 14-15; 20. "So her husbonde up with his fust, and gaue her .ij. or .iij. gret strokes;" "And thanne he toke a staffe, and al tobete her;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 27, ll. 2-3; 8.

<sup>121</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 36, l. 34. "'y haue do youre biddinge, as ye bade me to my power [...]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 27, ll. 24-25.

to the testing, Chapter 18 normalizes marital violence through its narrative structure despite that the Knight presents a more nuanced view of the issue.

In the explication of Chapter 18's exemplum the Knight states: "For moyen peple chastysen theyr wyues by buffeetys and strokes buyt gentyl wymmen ought to be chastised by fayre semblaunt and by curtosye For other wyse ought not to be done to them. And therefore eury gentyl woman sheweth [...] by faire semblaunt and by curtosye that she obeyeth and hath euer doubte to disobeye leste ony harme come or might happen or falle to her."<sup>122</sup> This stipulation for the better treatment of women of the nobility rings a bit hollowly after we consider the chapters preceding this exemplum. Chapter 17 rehearsed the violent reaction of a female burgess's husband—notably not a noble—to her proud and angry public shaming of him, and Chapter 3 records the death of a princess who damaged her chastity.<sup>123</sup> Thus, while the Chevalier seems to want to claim that his daughters do not need to worry about being physically abused by their future husbands, his narrative impulse seems to manipulate the reader with the fear of such possible future abuse. That is, the Knight wants his daughters exposed to such violent stories so that their fear of the stories and the abuse therein will help them conform to the expected obedience and behavior of a wife. I emphasize this point particularly because this disclaimer about the nobility eschewing domestic violence appears only once in the

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<sup>122</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 37, ll. 4-11. "And thus pore men canne chaste her wyues with fere and strokes, but a gentill woman shulde chastise her self with fairenesse, for other wise thei shulde not be taught. And a gentill woman, the fairer that she is ferde with, the more ferdfull she shulde be to displease or to disobeye her husbonde; for the good doutithe and louithe her husbondes, [...]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 28, ll. 1-6.

<sup>123</sup> The emperor from Chapter 3, it is worth noting, is not maligned as cruel or unjust as Amos suggests he should be as a rule for his classed reading. The issue is different here though, as the emperor is correcting his daughter, and not his wife, so it is slightly outside the realm of Amos's spousal violence examination. Amos also admits that the Knight's promise of a noblewoman's safety rings hollowly as well: "Gentle wives are not beaten only because gentle wives do nothing to provoke beatings; the threat in the Knight's statement is unmistakable." Amos, "Violent Hierarchies," 79.

course of *The Book* while there are twenty-one chapters that present some sort of violence directed at wives, though admittedly not always noble wives and not always from their husbands.

The next grouping of chapters (55 through 57, 60, 62, 117, 121, and 123) from the shame/maim trope all emphasize the fate of women who are both disobedient and unchaste. As these exempla illustrate, the Knight is particularly concerned with infidelity among the nobility and higher classes because such can result in the dissolution of proper dynastic lines. Chapter 55 contains four exempla with only two being overtly violent. The chapter begins with a straightforward retelling of Lot's wife's story. The point of emphasis for the Chevalier is that she is willful: "but she dyd not his commandement but loked anon behynde her And therefore she bycam & was tourned in to a salt stone."<sup>124</sup> I take this punishment as part of the shame/maim trope—Lot's Wife is disobedient and not only is she physically altered (made into salt), but she is shamed through her disobedience, becoming perhaps one of the most famous examples of disobedience that there is, which is even more prominent in the Harley translation given that in that version of *The Book* we find Lot's Wife explicated as being symbolic of those sinners who are confessed but return repeatedly to the sins of which they have already been shriven, never fully reforming themselves: "the whiche is significacion of hem that God deliuerithe oute of peril and synne, the whiche turnithe ayen therto into the waye of dampnacion [...]."<sup>125</sup>

While Chapter 55 opens with a discussion of obedience, the next immediate topic to arise, specifically because of Lot's location at Sodom and Gomorrah, is lust. The

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<sup>124</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 79, ll. 14-16. "[...] Loothis wiff was not wise to kepe the comaundement of God, but she loked ageine, and sawe the towne and the pepill, and she turned to a stone," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 71, ll. 19-22.

<sup>125</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 71, ll. 22-24.



discussion that arises about lust specifically associates it with a failure of reason and an inability to control one's self—I note this here in particular because one of the elements of horror that functions in the exempla that deal with spiritual violence directed at women is the element of losing one's own willpower and self-control to demonic will. For example, the Knight writes that “for he that might do it [commit the sin of lechery] dyd it without hauyng ony shame And to it enforced them self withoute keypyng in their fowle and abhomyable doing the lawe of reason of nature.”<sup>126</sup> The failure of reason and its punishment is next discussed in the second exemplum in which the wife of “a faire knyght” runs away with a monk.<sup>127</sup> Her brothers pursue and find her “lyenge with the said monke,” and as punishment, the brothers “kyt away the Genytoryes of the monke and casted them in their susters vysage And they tooke them and bothe to geder they putted in a sake with grete foysen or quantite of stones and casted them in to a depe water.”<sup>128</sup> Note that this story does not feature a vengeful husband, but rather brothers who will not allow their sister to be unchaste without punishing her. The variation in the source of the violence for these narratives suggests to the female reader that she is always under surveillance by the men in her life.<sup>129</sup> There is no proper escape from such

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<sup>126</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 79, ll. 28-30. “And thus the .vij. Citeez were sonken and brent for because of her foule brenninge lechery done in hem ayenst nature; for they kepte therinne nother lawe ne reson nor order of nature [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 71, ll. 7-10.

<sup>127</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 80, ll. 16-17. “[...] a goodly knight [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 71, l. 30.

<sup>128</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 80, ll. 18-22. “[...] thei fonde her and the monke lying togederes. And they toke a knyff, and cutte away the monkes stones, and kest hem in dispite atte her uisage, and made her ete hem. And after they toke a gret sacke, and putte her and the monke thereinne, with mani gret stones with them, and kiste hem in-to the ryuer, and drowned hem [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 71, ll. 32-35; 72, ll. 1-2.

<sup>129</sup> Here I suggest viewing the Knight's text as similar in rhetorical structuring to Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, which Foucault discusses as the architectural manifestation of the impetus to impose “constant division between the normal and the abnormal,” and further, reflects that “All mechanisms of powr [...] are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him.” Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), 199-200. Foucault also describes the architecture in detail, but my concern is with one chief element: “the major

surveillance, and like the all-seeing God who punishes the disobedient Wife of Lot, women can anticipate meeting with violence and abuse, or even death, if they misbehave. The violence in the text is an attempt at coercive behavior modification.

The fourth exemplum in Chapter 55 also belongs to the shame/maim trope, and it tells the tale of a treacherous servant girl who leads her mistress into an extramarital affair by becoming a go-between for the wife and a lover who makes the servant a gift of a hood. This tale weaves together several threads from the lessons the Knight presents elsewhere in *The Book*, of which the most prominent is the desire for fancy dress and clothing, which the Knight argues should be eschewed.<sup>130</sup> The drive for nice things, such as a hood, motivates the servant girl's mercenary betrayal of her mistress. This social ill is juxtaposed here with the more serious fault of adultery, which, once exposed to the

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effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power [...] the surveillance is permanent in its effect, even if it is discontinuous in its action;" and the arrangement establishes power as "Visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes [...] the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so." Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201. The Knight's text is obviously not a prison and so the concepts of surveillance cannot be so acutely claimed, but I do find the suggestion of perpetual, undeclared surveillance of women by men in the text simply through the sheer magnitude of stories about women who misbehave and are punished by some male figure (father, son, uncle, holy man, brother, or king's advisor). Such surveillance can coerce compliance with standards of behavior.

<sup>130</sup> In the Harley translation there is a passage condemning in particular rich fashions for servants, but this is a passage that Caxton excised from his translation:

And there is a maner now amonge seruyng women of lowe astate, the whiche is comen, for thei furre her colers, that hangin doune into the middil of the backe, and thei furre her heles, the whiche is doubed with filth, and it is sengill about her brest; the whiche arraie y praise not in winter nor somer, for hem were beter take the furre that hanggith about her helis in the winter and sette it about her stomakes, for that had more need of hete thanne her helys, and in somer it were beter away, for flies hidethe hem therinne; and therfor y praise not the arraye nor that nouelte in a pore man.

La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 81, ll. 22-32. G. R. Owst discusses the motif of denouncing "women's finery, their love of cosmetics and other evil fashions" as common in English sermonic content, so the Knight's objections were apparently quite common. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 391. See also Thomas M. Izbicki, "Pyres of Vanities: Mendicant Preaching on the Vanity of Women and Its Lay Audience," in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), 211-34. Izbicki discusses how the fervor around this issue culminated at times in the burning of vanities, the possibly forcible "donation" of vanities for the benefit of charity, and the passage of new sumptuary laws after such sermons were delivered. Also, like the Knight who associates fashion with a variety of sins, Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) associated interest in fashion with curiosity and "pointed to prostitutes as the trend-setters," 213-14.

wronged husband, is punished. The cuckold “kylde hym and dyde his wif to be mewred and putte in pryson perpetual where as she deyde in grete sorowe and langoure.”<sup>131</sup> But this entombed death happens only after the husband discovers his wife’s assistant in the affair from her lamentations about being unchaste; the husband questions the girl and uncovers her involvement and the reward she got from it. He sentences her after her confession: “For a lytel thyng ye haue vndo yow and haue be to me traitresse. And therefore I iuge and gyue sentence that the hood and the neck be bothe cutte to geder.”<sup>132</sup> This exemplum illustrates the harshness of judgment that women might face, but also the failure to curtail punishment if the wife is not solely responsible for her infidelity; while the wife is not physically abused or scarred, she is imprisoned for life, which is its own type of psychological torture, as the text itself implies with its description of her death.<sup>133</sup>

Chapter 56 also turns to matters of chastity in both its exempla, though the women therein are both virginal rather than adulterous wives. The first exemplum is a retelling of the biblical story of the rape of Jacob’s daughter that leads to the death of Shechem and his people.<sup>134</sup> The recounting in *The Book*, however, is distinctly misogynist, casting Jacob’s daughter into the role of the over-curious woman who does not stay in her position at home: “for lyghtnes and iolyte of herte [she] lefte the hous of her fader and of her brethren for to goo and see the atoure or aray of the wymmen of

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<sup>131</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 81, ll. 11-13. “he kylde hym, and dyde his wyf to be mewred and putte in pryson perpetual, where-as she deyde in grete sorowe and langoure.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 73, ll. 3-5.

<sup>132</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 81, ll. 22-24. “For a lytel thyng ye haue vndo yow, and haue be to me traitresse; and therefore I iuge and gyue sentence that the hood and the neck be bothe cutte togeder.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 73, ll. 15-18.

<sup>133</sup> Foucault notes that one of the insidious aspects of carceral systems is that they “giv[e] to the power [here, the husband] to inflict legal punishment a context in which it appears to be free of all excess and all violence.” Foucault, “From *Discipline and Punish*,” 1497.

<sup>134</sup> See Genesis 34.

another land.”<sup>135</sup> Note the Knight again associates women’s interest in clothing with sexual license; the sexual desire, however, is not explicitly within Jacob’s daughter in this example.<sup>136</sup> Yet the Knight makes it abundantly clear that had Jacob’s daughter simply remained at home, as a woman who is not over-curious would do, she would not have been violated and she would not have caused so “grete occysion and shedyng of bloode” because her brothers’ vengeance against Shechem’s people is laid at her feet in the Knight’s retelling of the narrative, though such is clearly not the intent in the biblical passage.<sup>137</sup> There is a more tenuous connection between this biblical exemplum and the shame/maim trope, but I discuss it here because it is inextricably linked with the second exemplum in Chapter 56.

The second exemplum is comparatively brief, but again female sexuality and the death of many men is the topic of this narrative, which belongs very clearly in the shame/maim trope classification. I quote the brief story fully:

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<sup>135</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 81, ll. 37-38; 82, l. 1. “for lyghtnes and Iolyte of herte lefte the hous of her fader and of her brethren, for to goo and see the atoure or aray of the wymmen of another lande.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 73, l. 30, 74, ll. 1-2.

<sup>136</sup> Amos also notes that this “social sin is the one that seems most to disturb the Knight” and that he “devot[es] eleven entire chapters to the issue, returning to it seemingly unconsciously from topics as diverse as adultery and almsgiving, where it often serves as a part of a general moral he glosses from a completely unrelated discussion.” Amos also notices the plethora of sins that the Knight connects to “an obsession with dress”: “female narcissism, inconstancy, and lechery, with astounding consequences, including the downfall of Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah’s flood, and more generally, ‘werre/ famyne and pestylence.’” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 84. Amos also notes the historical reality of associating sexual misconduct with outrageous fashions: “In preaching against lechery and wantonness John Bromyard describes ‘city madams’ perambulating through the town, inflaming desire and ensnaring men with their incendiary clothing. These painted women are also compared to false merchants and dealers,” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 87.

Iris Grötecke also explains in her discussion of the portrayals of feminized sins that pride and lechery are sometimes conjoined: “*Luxuria* therefore appears, in the form of vanity and seduction implying an exaggerated preoccupation with the body (instead of the more valuable soul) [...]” Thus, the Knight’s tendency to unite female obsession with clothing and lasciviousness, either overt or implicit, is not out of the ordinary. Additionally, female sinners are often portrayed as damned not for single acts but “rather through the attribution of a whole complex of sins, which had female sexuality as their common frame of reference.” Iris Grötecke, “Representing the Last Judgement: Social Hierarchy, Gender and Sin,” *The Medieval History Journal* 1, no. 2 (1998): 233-60, 255, 256.

<sup>137</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 82, l. 10. “grete occysion and shedyng of bloode” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 74, ll. 11-12.

As it fortun'd and happed by a daughter of a kyng of grece whiche by her foolyssh loue acoynted her of the sone of an erle of that Countre wherefore the kyng made hym werre duryng the which more than a thousande men were slayn And yet hadde the werre lenger lasted when the kynges broder whiche was a wyse man come to the kyng and saide to hym Syre quod he I merueyle moche that only for the sport and delyte of youre daughter so many good knyghtes ben lost & also so many good men It were better that neuer she hadde be borne The kyng thenne said ye saye trouthe And anone he made his daughter to be take by whiche the meschyef was bygonne and made her to be hewen in smal pyeces And thenne before all he said that wel right it was that she sholde be so detrenchid by whome so many had ben hewen and slayn<sup>138</sup>

Just as Jacob's daughter is blamed for the deaths of the man who raped her and his people, so here there is a bloody retribution against a daughter, whose machinations are more than simple interest in foreign clothing, who is accused of causing the destruction of many good knights and men. The overarching image here is that women are crafty and manipulative, capable of rousing whole armies to fight for them. Such attitudes predict the Knight's Wife's portrayal of Venus later in *The Book*, which I discuss below, wherein she blames her entirely for the Trojan War.

The same narrative structure from Chapter 56 recurs in Chapter 57: a biblical exemplum predominates and sets up the moral that is re-emphasized with a shorter, non-biblical moral tale. Also as in Chapter 56, the Knight is a bit free with his biblical source, but in this case he does more than simply imply that vanity and curiosity of a woman are at fault for bloodshed—he attributes actual lust to the woman involved. The story is that

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<sup>138</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 82, ll. 10-24. "As it fortun'd and happed by a daughter of a kyng of Grece, whiche by her foolyssh loue acoynted her of the sone of an erle of that countre. Wherefore the kyng made hym werre duryng the which more than a thousande men were slayn. And yet hadde the werre lenger lasted, when the kynges broder, whiche was a wyse man, come to the kyng, and saide to hym, 'Syre,' quod he, 'I merueyle moche that, only for the sport and delyte of youre daughter, so many good knyghtes ben lost, & also so many good men. It were better that neuer she hadde be borne.' The kyng thenne said, 'Ye saye trouthe.' And anone he made his daughter to be take, by whiche the meschyef was bygonne, and made her to be hewen in smal pyeces. And thenne before all he said, that wel right it was that she sholde be so detrenchid by whome so many had ben hewen and slayn." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 74, ll. 12-25.

of Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law.<sup>139</sup> She tricks Judah into having intercourse with her by posing as a prostitute in the biblical narrative, in which her motives are also clearly dictated by Judah's neglect of her, which he freely admits in the biblical passage. All guilt on Judah's side is expunged from the Knight's retelling. We are told only that Tamar "bethought her that the fader of her lord shold yet engendre & gete children wel and that she was not barayn And coueyted and desyred to haue his flesshely companye whiche was ageynst the lawe."<sup>140</sup> Thus, while the Knight preserves the fact that Tamar wants a child, which has heretofore been denied to her via her father-in-law's failure to supervise a new marriage for her, the Knight also accuses her of lust. This sin is wholly absent in the Biblical account. Additionally, the Knight dismisses the biblical account's clear portrayal of Judah's own fleshly desires, for in the Bible he solicits Tamar while she is in the guise of a prostitute. The Knight, however, describes a stealthy bedroom invasion: "she cam by nyght in his Chambre and leid her with hym."<sup>141</sup> Here the pursuer is Tamar, and there is no real suggestion that Judah was indeed looking for sexual gratification—it simply turns up in his bedchamber, exculpating him from any guilt in the Knight's narrative. Finally, another addition to the Biblical tale that the Knight indulges in, is the claim that Tamar's resultant children bring about "many tribulacions and euylls" because they are children "not of trewe maryage."<sup>142</sup> This final fabrication lays the

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<sup>139</sup> See Genesis 38. Tamar's goal in the Bible seems to be that she wants a son by Judah's line, which is only incidentally sexual and more of an attempt to improve her status.

<sup>140</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 82, ll. 32-35. "bethought her that the fader of her lord shold yet engendre & gete children wel, and that she was not barayn, and coueyted and desyred to haue his flesshely companye, whiche was ageynst the lawe." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 1-4.

<sup>141</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 82, l. 36. "she cam by nyght in his Chambre, and leid her with hym," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 5-6.

<sup>142</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, l. 1, 2. "many tribulacions and euylls," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, l. 8. "not of trewe maryage," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, l. 9.

groundwork for the second, non-biblical exemplum in which bastard rulers bring about havoc and chaos in the lands over which they exert false power.

The secular exemplum tells the story of a queen from Naples who “cleyly ne truly kepte her body toward her lord” and thus gave birth to a bastard who eventually rules the kingdom, though very poorly.<sup>143</sup> The bastard himself is said to be “passynge prowde” and to treat all his people, noble and laborer alike, “full hard and felon.”<sup>144</sup> The abjection of aberrant (i.e. unmarried, unfaithful, unchaste) female sexuality is given full play in this chapter of *The Book*. Because of her sexual license the entirety of the kingdom suffers the perilous reign of the proud bastard who, in imitation of his mother, inflicts sexual aberrancy upon his populace because he also “enforced their wyues and vyoled their doughters.”<sup>145</sup> He also plunges the kingdom into war and thus poverty. So, in one woman’s sexual misdeeds we have the consequence that a myriad of sufferings afflict an entire kingdom. What could be more fearsome or loathsome than this? The power attributed to the queen’s adultery and the resulting bastard again reiterates the simultaneous fear and attraction that the female libido holds for the narrator of *The Book*; we are presented again and again with tales, sometimes salacious, that recount the effects that an unsupervised feminine libido can have on the world around it. The narrative structure of *The Book* suggests female sexuality needs to be gazed at, ought to be the object of scrutiny, but simultaneously, when that gaze is inappropriate and verges upon the destruction of family or social identity, some sort of narrative element must appear to

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<sup>143</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, l. 6. “cleyly ne truly kepte her body toward her lord,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 13-14.

<sup>144</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, l. 9, 10. “passynge prowde,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 16-17. “full hard and felon,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 17-18.

<sup>145</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, l. 12. “enforced their wyues and vyoled their doughters,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 19-20.

divert the gaze from the sexual and cleanse the licentious text of the abjection of the sexually promiscuous woman. If the diversion—such as a miraculous intervention—does not occur, then that abject woman must be eliminated, killed, excised from the text. Kristeva writes: “abjection is above all ambiguity [...] it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger.”<sup>146</sup> I suggest that the Knight’s experience of these narratives fundamentally connects himself—the male husband—to the male victims of adultery in the stories, and that further, he wants his daughters to experience the possibility of identifying with the women who meet horrible ends as a result of their infidelities. Such identification for them can aid in maintaining behavioral conformity, for it is doubtful any woman would like to meet with the end the adulteress finds at her bastard son’s hands.

The bastard’s misrule continues for a long time until the mother’s daughter-in-law reveals to her husband that her mother has been having sex with her priest. The bastard king punishes the unchaste couple by having them “both [...] be brent in a grete fornais.”<sup>147</sup> Again, a woman who willfully seeks out sexual pleasure despite the social, legal, and religious precepts against such desires is punished with a painful death.<sup>148</sup> The

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<sup>146</sup> Kristeva, *The Power of Horror*, 9.

<sup>147</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, ll. 37-38. “brenne hem bothe in a brenninge furnayse,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 76, ll. 3-4.

<sup>148</sup> Although Chapter 67 does not deal overtly with lust, I think in conjunction with this tale of the fornicating queen of Naples is the best place to mention its contents. There are two exempla about evil, unnatural queens. So the parallel I wish to suggest is that the Knight is willing to punish women of any social class, including queens should they engage in foul enough behavior, such as engendering bastards to put on the throne as above, or as in Chapter 67, murdering one’s own kin, including their own children, in order to remain in power. Queen Athaliah from 2 Kings 11 kills all her dead son’s heirs, save one, who eventually overturns her power and makes her “deye of an euyl and shameful dethe,” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 98, ll. 22-23. “made her deye and euell and a shamfull dethe” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 89, ll. 35-36. Brunhilda is the other example of a power-hungry queen who is eventually bested by a grandchild; she also dies a rather horrible death: “boun[d] with the heres of her hede atte hors taylle.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 99, ll. 4-5. “she was iuged to be distroied, and



Knight makes his narratives unequivocally clear: disobedience, particularly sexual disobedience, will end in pain and death, for women. Here, in the announced moral of the story, that pain can continue on into the afterlife: “a noble thing is to kepe hym self clenly in his maryage And for a fals heyre ofte cometh in a lond many euyls and tribulacions For by the fals heyres ben lost the grete lordships & the moders of them dampned perpetually in helle as longe as their sones shalle possesse ony ground of theyr parastre.”<sup>149</sup>

Chapter 60 returns to a biblical source, but also collapses the violence that has been found in the non-biblical exempla in Chapters 56 and 57 with the biblical exemplum. The chapter recapitulates the latter portion of Numbers 25 wherein Phineas murders a prostitute and the man soliciting her services. This act of lechery is witnessed by Phineas who “incontynent cam there as they were yet nyghe to geder and broched and put his swerde thourgh bothe the bodyes of them And soo bothe they deyde there vylaynsly by the synne of lechery.”<sup>150</sup> Again, violence is the proper coded response to sexual license. Such is clearly the case in the lengthy exemplum in Chapter 62, which returns us again not just to lust, but to the particular case of adultery.

Chapter 62 tells the story of a lusty ropemaker’s wife, who is “not wyse and the whiche kepte not her feyth & trouth toward hym [her husband] but falsed it by the mene

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drawwento peses with hors.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 90, ll. 14-15. Thus, women who exert their will, whether it is on account of their lust for physical pleasure or power, ought to be physically punished and humiliated.

<sup>149</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 84, ll. 1-5. “be ware for brekinge of youre mariage, and of getinge of false heires, the whiche may putte all a londe in tribulacion. And the moder shall be dampned perpetually, as long as thaire chyldeyn kepithe away the londe that they haue no right to from the rightfull heyres, that is to saie, her moderis husbondes londes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 76, ll. 4-9.

<sup>150</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 86, ll. 17-20. “and he drough his suerde; and whanne he fonde hem togedre, he persed hem bothe thurgh, and in that foule wise they deyde” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 78, ll. 9-11. Grötecke notes that “injuring the genitals of the unchaste” occurs frequently in visual imagery of hell. Grötecke, “Representing the Last Judgement,” 250.

of a fals bawde whiche for a lytel syluer made her to synne and playe with a pryour that was Ryche and a grete lechour.”<sup>151</sup> Again we have the union of greed, though here provided in coin rather than clothing as in the story above, with lechery again. Also, another woman who is supposed to be trusted, the woman’s gossip, as above the lady’s servant girl, helps to mislead the wife and turn her toward lechery and adultery. But the emphasis here is much more on the attempts of the women to outwit the suspicious husband. For example, the husband sees the prior lurking around the house at night, but the gossip convinces him he is simply seeing things, and later when the prior’s pants are found the wife claims that they are her pants and that it is fashionable to wear them beneath one’s skirts.<sup>152</sup> The gossip provides confirmation of this claim to the husband, and the tale ceases its playfulness at this point, the humor of the cuckold giving way to the rage of the husband to a disobedient wife. We are told that after he has seen his wife sneaking into the prior’s house alone, “Incontynently he defended her and warned her

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<sup>151</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 87, ll. 33-36. “a Ropers wiff that was not trew in kepinge of her mariage to her husbonde; and there was a false bauude that was her godsib, and toke mede of a Riche lecherous prioure to gete the ropers wyffe to do his foly with her, the whiche the bauude entreted her to.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 79, ll. 7-11.

<sup>152</sup> The Knight may be making subtle jabs at the rope-maker as Christa Grössinger discusses the popularity of the Battle for the Breeches motif in the early sixteenth century, though she also reproduces late fifteenth-century engravings featuring a woman pulling on her pants while her husband must use a distaff and a man and woman fighting over a pair of pants, significantly with a demon “inspir[ing] the woman.” Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 116-20.

Additionally, Tracy Adams’s examination of Anne de France and Christine de Pizan points us to the work of Tikva Frymer-Kensky while discussing cunning intelligence, albeit in a positive framework; Adams explains, “in the Old Testament there is ‘no expectation that [women] will be passive or submissive, no prescription that they should be so. Officially, authority and wealth resided with the men. Within the confines of this system, however, biblical women formulated their own goals and acted to achieve them.’ For biblical women, cunning intelligence was a prized trait.” Quoted in Tracy Adams, “Appearing Virtuous: Christine de Pizan’s *Le Livre de trois vertus* and Anne de France’s *Les Enseignements d’Anne de France*,” in *Virtue Ethics for Woman, 1250-1500*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews, The New Synthese Historical Library Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy 69 (London: Springer, 2011), 115-31, 120. I would suggest that the Knight may acknowledge such cunning intelligence in women—for instance, he offers Esther’s example as a wife of good speech having sway over her husband just as Christine de Pizan does in *Treasury*, but here in the case of the ropemaker’s wife and his presentation of Tamar as seducer that I discuss above, cunning intelligence is feared and in the case of the ropemaker’s wife, severely punished. The Knight stops short of reversing the Biblical fate of Tamar—he does not have her burned for her trickery—but he does claim ill will come of her children who were begotten through her cunning intelligence.

vpon payne of losynge of her eye that neuer she sholde be so hardy to goo ne conuerse in the hows of the sayd pryour.”<sup>153</sup> The shift in tone with this threat is marked; what has been a comedic and lusty tale about a husband being outwitted by two women has transformed into a narrative about the maintenance of law within a marriage. The wife’s guilt is augmented all the more by this warning and her subsequent refusal to leave off the affair. Further character assassination occurs after the wife has been murdered by her husband: “Ryght moche merueylled the neyghbours how she had tourned her herte to loue suche a pryour whiche hadde soo grete a bely and soo thycke and fatte soo blacke and so fowle of face and so vncurteys as he was And her husbond was fayre and good sage & ryche.”<sup>154</sup> Here we see the public, post mortem shaming that takes place of adulterous wives because sometimes death itself is not enough punishment.<sup>155</sup>

But to return to the physical pain the wife suffers as a result of her extramarital entanglements, we must return to the command that the rope maker gives her: avoid the priory. Perhaps not surprisingly, the wife cannot stay away and her husband catches her going there “wherfor he bete her and brake bothe her legges Thenne wente he in to the Towne and made couenaunt with a Cyrurgyen to hele and sette ageyne fast to gyder two broken legges And whanne this couenaunt was made he cam ageyne to his hows and took a stamper and brake the two legges of his wyf sayeng to her At the lest shalt thou hold a

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<sup>153</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 89, ll. 32-34. “The good man thought that his wiff went ofte to the priori, and she had not to do there, and he defended her, in payne of her lyff, she shulde no more come there, for it was not his will that she yode thedir for no thinge.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 81, ll. 14-18.

<sup>154</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 90, ll. 26-30. “And thanne thei had moche meruaile that she wolde loue and take that gret fatte black fowle prioure, and lefte to loue a goodly yonge man, wise and riche, that she had to her husbonde;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 82, ll. 6-8.

<sup>155</sup> Amos reads this passage as less of a comment on the woman’s irrational passions than as a manifestation of class othering, that is, their physical distinctions “figur[e] social distinction” and the “constant linking of the courtly class with those fair and full of grace reveals his [the Knight’s] condemnation against the ‘vncurteys’ lower classes as a fantasy of social control.” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 77.

whyle my couenaunt and shalt not go ageynste my deffence there as it pleaseth me not  
 And whan he had thus done he tooke and leyd her in a bed & there she was a grete whyle  
 without departing.”<sup>156</sup> We can see from this quotation the emphasis on a failure of  
 obedience on the wife’s part; she has broken his restriction on her visits to the priory, and  
 he is angry about it. This anger is severe enough that he makes it physically impossible  
 for her to disobey him. The seriousness of these injuries acts as a further condemnation of  
 the wife’s failure to exert self-control because having her legs broken is not enough to  
 deter her from the further pursuit of her licentious desires.

At this point, though, it ought to be noted that the wife’s willpower is  
 acknowledged by the Knight as being lessened by “the fende” who we are told  
 encourages her lechery so that “she myght not chastise her therof.”<sup>157</sup> Sadly, this  
 intervention from the devil prompts the crisis of the narrative, the murder of the wife and  
 the prior:

[...] came the Pryour secretly to her But the good man herd hym come  
 and doubted hym self and made semblaunt of slepe and routed And at the  
 laste soo moche he was herynge them that he herd how he disported hym  
 self with his wyf accomplysshynge and doynge the fowle synne of lechery  
 and he tasted aboute and found well that the dede was trewe And thenne  
 he wexed so moche angry and wrothe therof that al most he was oute of  
 his memorye and wytte And drewe oute a grete knyf with a sharp poynte  
 and caste a lytel strawe within the fyre and ranne to them lightly And he  
 kylled them bothe at ones And whanne he had done this dede he called to  
 hym his meyne and his neyghbours and shewed them the faytte or dede

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<sup>156</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 90, ll. 1-10. “And thanne he yode into the towne, and made couienaunt with a surgeon to hele two broken legges; and whanne he had done, he come home and toke a pestell and brake bothe his wyfes ys leggys, and saide to her, ‘atte the hardest, for a while, thou wilt not goo ferre, and breke myn comaundement, nother y fynde the contrarye.’” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 81, ll. 24-29. As is perhaps noticeable in the Caxton version, and as Amos has already pointed out, his edition is “somewhat confused” so that “she actually has both her legs broken twice.” Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 77.

<sup>157</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 90, ll. 10, 12-13. “the deuell tempted her,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 81, ll. 30-31. This supernatural influence over one’s will is something I will discuss more fully later, when I discuss the miraculous exempla.

And sente also for the Iustyse of whiche he was excused And hadde no harme.<sup>158</sup>

This climax, marking the end of a husband's patience for his cheating, disobedient wife, also clearly maintains the lesson that physical disobedience will be met with physical punishment. While this narrative is not of the nobility, the ease with which the husband's side is maintained by the entire public as well as the private household must have been rhetorically effective in suggesting the wholehearted social objection to female adultery, particularly since there is no landholding or kingdom at stake here but still death is the prescribed treatment for the wife's repeated adultery. This point is drawn even more overtly much later in *The Book*, in Chapter 117, wherein the Knight lists a number of punishments for adultery, both current and past. For example, adultery could be legally proven "only by two men that they [women] had had companye or carnal felauship with ony other than to theyr lord," so that with only two witnesses a woman might be "brente eyther stoned with stones And for no gold ne syluer she myghte be saued al were she neuer so noble."<sup>159</sup> The Knight also notes that "In somme places men kytte of their

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<sup>158</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 90, ll. 14-26. "whanne she was almost hole, she made the prioure come lye with her ther she laye, euene by her husbonde bi night in the bedde. And the good man douted hym that there was sum man with his wyff, and made semblaunt that he had slepte, and routed; and whanne they were doing the foule dede of synne, he hastely toke oute a long kniff and persed hem bothe thorough into the bedde. And thus he slough hem bothe in doinge this orible synne. And whanne he had done, he called his neyghboures and the officres of the lawe, and sheued hem what he had don; the whiche said, all with one uoys, that it was wel done to ponisshen hem in suche wise." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 81, ll. 31-36; 82, ll. 1-5.

<sup>159</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 155, l. 37; 156, ll. 1-3. "[...] and it might be proued upon her by tweyn witnessis that and ani other man had fleshely companie with her but her husbonde, she shulde be brent or stoned vnto the dethe, so noble and trwe was the lawe of God and of Moyses, ther was no richesse of golde ne syluer, nor for none estate, pore ne riche;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 162, ll. 4-9.

[adulteress's] throtes And in somme they be heded before the peple And in other places they be mewred or put bytwene two walles.”<sup>160</sup>

Chapter 123 confirms the pervasive punishment of adultery, even among women of the upper classes. This chapter contains a single, short exemplum voiced by the Knight's Wife, who is arguing against engaging in taking on *fin' amor*. She tells the story of “Two quenes” who are at the seaside during Lent, but these women are not devout.<sup>161</sup> Rather they “in the passion weke took theyr fowle delytes and playsaunce within the Chirche during the seruyse dyuyne” until God makes their deeds “openly knowen amonge the folke.”<sup>162</sup> The physical punishment occurs not long after the public humiliation: “they [the queens] were take and putte vnder a grete and heuy coope of lede And there they deyde of an euylle dethe And the two knyghtes theyre putyers deyde also as they that were flayne they being yet on lyue.”<sup>163</sup> This exemplum conveys that the Knight's Wife is well aware of the danger and punishment that can accompany adultery; it also illustrates that the Knight's Wife, at least as he presents her, is unafraid to share tales that are equally as gruesome as the Knight's own about disobedience and lechery.

I want to discuss one final example of how lechery can result in the physical harming and shaming of women, but this is a slightly atypical example. Chapter 121 is a lengthy exemplum that is largely about lust, but also contains a number of unnatural arrangements that invert most of the principles that are presented earlier in the Knight's book. There is no known source for this exemplum, but it purports to be about the *galois*

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<sup>160</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 156, ll. 9-11. “In sum places thaire throtes be cutte, in sum places thei be brent, in sum places bothe man and woman putte alle quik in erthe, for the shame and punission of the synne.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 162, ll. 15-18.

<sup>161</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 165, l. 37. The Harley translation is incomplete here.

<sup>162</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 165, ll. 39-40; 166, l. 4. The Harley translation is incomplete here.

<sup>163</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 166, ll. 4-7. The Harley translation is incomplete here.

and *galoises*, which is a term “associated with sexual license.”<sup>164</sup> These sexual perverts, however, undo many precepts of behavior, not just sexual ones. And yet, just like the Rope Maker’s wife above, these *galois* and *galoises* are not wholly to blame, or rather, there is supernatural involvement: “the deuyll by his arte made many of them to deye for cold with the helpe of the flame of venus goddesse of loue and of lechery.”<sup>165</sup> The *galois* and *galoises*, because of these supernatural forces, end up relinquishing their hold on reason, and “make an ordenaunce of a moche sauage and wyld guyse and ageynst the kynde of the tyme.”<sup>166</sup> This decree is that in the winter everyone must wear very little and very light clothing and have no fires and sleep with very few blankets, but in the summer, this arrangement is reversed so that heavy clothing is worn and fires are kept burning and extra blankets are put on the beds. But these sartorial inversions are just the beginning of the unnatural arrangements here: if a wife’s lover comes to her, the husband must see to the lover’s horse and leave because while the lover is with his wife, “he had thenne no more power within his hows than had a straunger.”<sup>167</sup> Thus, this exemplum is a condemnation of more than just adultery and more than simply dressing inappropriately, both problematic behaviors that figure prominently in *The Book*, but this chapter becomes a sort of summative narrative about all that could be wrong, for it illustrates the extreme of ignoring infractions—that all that is reasonable and rational will be inverted simply so

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<sup>164</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 245, n. 161/15ff. There is no firm consensus on the source for this story for possible connotations of the word *galois*, but see: Roger Boqse, “The ‘Penitents of Love’ and the Wild Man in the Storm: A Passage by the Knight of La Tour-Landry,” *Modern Language Review* 84, no. 4 (1989): 817-33. Danielle Régner-Bohler reads the passage more along the lines of representing the moral decay of the Knight’s times. Danielle Régner-Bohler, “Galois, Galoises et la nature du temps: le monde bestourné chez le Chevalier de la Tour Landry,” in *Et c’est la fin pour quoy sommes ensemble: hommage à Jean Dufournet, littérature, histoire et langue du Moyen Âge*, vol. 3, ed. Jean-Claude Aubailly, Emmanuèle Baumgartner, and Francis Dubost (Paris: Champion, 1993), 1187-91.

<sup>165</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 161, ll. 16-18. Harley translation incomplete at this point. I discuss the role of these figures later in this chapter.

<sup>166</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 161, ll. 25-26. Harley translation incomplete at this point.

<sup>167</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 162, ll. 11-12. Harley translation incomplete at this point.

that people can “haue theyr fowle delyte and wylle.”<sup>168</sup> Again, I want to underscore the idea that the Knight objects most strongly to wives who will not subordinate their own desires, preferences, and wills to those of their husband.<sup>169</sup>

The question of personal determination is perhaps even more overt in the exempla from the shame/maim trope that punish not lechery but pride. There is a relatively smaller grouping of chapters (63, 66, 68, 80) dealing with this type of infraction that results in physical violence, but pride is nonetheless the misbehavior that is second-most frequently punished with violence. The first example of this type cautions against pride in front of one’s husband: Mariamne, a wife of Herod the Great, was haughty with her husband’s servants. To teach the wife a lesson, they report to Herod that she has a lover, and when Herod accuses her, Mariamne undoes herself (according to the Knight):

She answerd thenne to proudely and to lightly And had not her lord in honour by fayre wordes ne by curtosye neyther humbly she spake to hym as she oughte to haue do And therfor her lord that was felon and despytous and wrothe of her proud and hyghe spekyng toke a knyf and slewe her wherof he was after sory For he fonde not that tale whiche his men had told hym of her trewe.<sup>170</sup>

This chapter gives explicit and clear warning that women ought not to be prideful, neither with servants, nor with husbands, as the results can be dire. The chapter is both an invocation of women’s sweet temperament, and a warning that women without such temperaments who refuse to be submissive to others are going to be faced with

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<sup>168</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 163, l. 14. Harley translation incomplete at this point.

<sup>169</sup> Grössinger discusses in addition to the Battle of Breeches motif that another popular concept often illustrated is The World Upside-down or Topsy-turvy World that “revers[es] the accepted situation by making the man subservient to the woman.” Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 112-14.

<sup>170</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 93, ll. 18-24. “And she answered hym fersely and proudely, and demened her not in fairenesse and curtesye, nor so mekely as she shulde do; so that the sayd Herode was cruell and dispitous to her [for] her orgueilleux langage, and toke a kniff and slow her, of the whiche he was afterward full sory, for he fonde that she was untruly accused. And so bi her presumptuous port of langage she made her selff to be slayne.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 84, ll. 29-35; 85, l. 1.



unpleasant circumstances, such as being murdered in a fit of jealous rage. Further, this tale implies that Herod is not in any way really inconvenienced by the death of his wife other than emotionally; that is, women have no recourse in this narrative structure to stop or seek out recompense for violence perpetrated against them, though here such legal possibility would be moot since Mariamne is not just assaulted but murdered.

Chapter 66 returns us to biblical exempla and recounts the punishment of Jezebel from 3 Kings/1 Kings 21.<sup>171</sup> Jezebel is accused by the Knight of many evils, but the common thread holding them together is the story of Naboth's vineyard and her presumptuous means of attaining it.<sup>172</sup> She knows that her husband wants Naboth's vineyard but that Naboth will not sell it to him, so she has him falsely accused of blasphemy and stoned to death. She then tells her husband to take possession of the lands, and has people bear false witness that Naboth had left it to her husband. At this point in the biblical story a prophet foresees her death, and the Knight simply bridges the two biblical passages together, describing Jezebel's death during her attempt to humiliate a new king:

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<sup>171</sup> See 3 Kings/1 Kings 21:23 and 4 Kings/2 Kings 9:30-34.

<sup>172</sup> Her evil deeds include: "Fyrst she hated the Indygent and power she hated the holy and good heremytes and al prestes and men of holy chirche and alle them that to the laye peple taught the feythe she made to be beten and robbed." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 96, ll. 32-35. "Furst, she hate pore men, and all manere of men of the whiche she might naught haue sum manere of thinge. She hated Ermites, men of hoyle chirche, and all them that taught the christen faith," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 88, ll. 11-14. Additionally, a parallel story about Herodias, the wife of Herod Antipas, offers another tale of a wicked queen who is punished, though this chapter (81) is much less concerned with the evil deeds of Herodias (only her pursuit of St. John the Baptist's death is mentioned specifically) and moreso with Herod's slaughter of the Innocents. She is the final example of a bad woman, however, and we are told that she "ended vylaynsly." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 111, l. 31. "[...] and so she hadde an euell ende," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 105, l. 5. Though not a queen, Delilah is also presented as an evil woman who is punished in *The Book*, particularly for her greed (See Judges 16). The especially noteworthy thing about her tale is that as with some of the other women in the shame/maim trope exempla, she is blamed squarely for her death: "And thus Sampson venged hym of dalida his fals wyf whiche was there punysshed of her euylle dede and folye And well was reason and ryght that of euyl doynge euyl shold come to her." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 101, ll. 27-29. "And so was he venged of that cursed woman, the whiche was slayne in that wise. For God wolde that she were ponished for her cursidnesse, as reson was, that for her euell dede she had euel." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 93, ll. 21-24.

She wente vp vnto a hyhe portayll or yate where as Iosue shold passe and there she coynted and arayed her with clothes of gold and flouryshynge of ryche ermyns with grete plente of precious stones al desguysed and in other maner of clothyng than ony other woman of that lond was And as she sawe the kynge go by the waye she biganne of a hyghe voys to curse hym and all his lygnage also and proudly she spake to hym sayenge of hym all the vylonye that her cruel and proude herte couthe thynke The kynge thenne beganne to loke vp and sawe the couetyse and desguysynge of her and herd her proud and shamefull Wordes wherof he was meruellyed and wrothe And seyng she held not her fals and venymed tongue but cursed and euer spake euylle commanded to his men that they shold go where she was And that they shold caste her before alle the peple the head downward fro the place where she was vnto the street And so they dyde And thus by her cruell courage and pryde she shamefully and vylaynsly ended her lyf And for the grete crueltees and euyls that she in her lyf had done & made to be done commanded the kynge Iosue that she shold haue no sepulcre but that she shold be eten and deuoured of dogges”<sup>173</sup>

This passage further demonstrates the pride of Jezebel that must be punished within the Knight’s text; she offers bad counsel to her husband, mistreats people, including holy folk, and ultimately refuses to humble herself before the new king. Also noticeable is the Knight’s attention to her fashion sense: Jezebel may be bad but she dresses expensively, implying her great pride that is confirmed by her outré speech. Additionally, “the term ‘desguysed’ is an extreme one, denoting extravagant or fantastic dress, but connoting also inappropriate dress intended to misrepresent.”<sup>174</sup> As a result, we can see her violent, public death and the post mortem shame that comes of being denied a grave. Jezebel’s role is clear: she warns the Knight’s daughters of having imperious and dangerous pride,

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<sup>173</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 97, ll. 17-36. “she putte her in a garet to see the kinge Josue passé, and made her queint, and arrayed her selff in clothes of golde and ermynes and gret precious stones, all desguysed in, and in other manere thanne the other women were. And she was displeased and proude that, as sone as she sawe the kinge, she beganne to curse, and saie all the villane that she coude. And the kinge beganne to beholde the queintise and the disguising of her clothyng, and herkined the malice and pride of her langage, and comaunded sum of his men that thei shulde goo thedir and caste her downe, and the hede tofore, in the sight of all the peple. And as he comaunded, it was done, for they toke her and caste her downe. And she deyed velonously, and the kinge comaunded that, for her gret mischief that she had done, that she shulde haue no berielles; and nomore she hadde, but was eten and deuoured with dogges, and so fell her gret pride.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 88, ll. 31-33; 89, ll. 1-13.

<sup>174</sup> Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” 85.

and Amos would suggest another layered reading here that the Knight's daughters ought not to favor new and outrageous fashions.<sup>175</sup>

Even markedly much more positive women of the Bible can be accused of pride, and indeed are, by the Knight. Chapter 68 recounts the story of Moses' sister's claim to be as close to God as her brother is.<sup>176</sup> Unfortunately for Moses' sister, God is "wrothe with her" because she made this claim, and as such he "made her to become leper in soo muche she was put oute of the towne soo that she might no more come amonge the folke," except that Moses and Aaron have pity on her and pray to God that she might be healed.<sup>177</sup> While Moses' sister does receive God's forgiveness, she offers a powerful model for the Knight's daughters because of her elevated social position and her redemption; she is a potent illustration that even "the moost noble damoyssel that was in alle the land" can be punished if she misbehaves and succumbs to sin.<sup>178</sup> The miraculous reversal of the maiming of Moses's sister can also reinforce the likelihood that whatever physical violence a noble woman might experience in medieval Europe for her pride, it may very well not be undone because such a woman would have no intercessors such as Moses and Aaron.

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<sup>175</sup> "In estates satires in particular one of the most common accusations made against the merchant class, and against the wives in particular, emphasizes this improper fondness for new fashion. These accusations emphasize that the charges the Knight levels against women of his own class are those most likely to be bourgeois ones." Amos, "Violent Hierarchies," 86.

<sup>176</sup> See Numbers 12. Additionally, there are two similar stories of women claiming or questioning the power of God that follow a similar pattern. First in Chapter 80 is the exemplum of Tobit and his wife who mocks his burial of Christian soldiers despite his continued blindness (see Tobit 2). We are told that his wife is punished "by cause of her folysshe spekyng" so that she "felle in a grete sekenesse." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 110, l. 3. "and whereupon it befell that she thereafter was gretly punished with diuerse maladies." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 102, ll. 13-14. Also in chapter 80 is a similar story about Job and his wife, though as in the biblical account, no physical punishment happens to Job's wife (see Job 2:9).

<sup>177</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 99, ll. 11-33. "she had displeasance to God, and he made her become mesell, so that she was putte away, and departed from all the pepill." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 90, ll. 25-27.

<sup>178</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 99, ll. 19-20. "the most noblest that was in that tyme," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 90, ll. 32-33.

The final exemplum from the physically violent shame/maim trope I want to discuss is yet another narrative adapted from the Bible (see Judges 19-20). Caxton's translation titles this chapter (71) "How a Woman ought not to departe ne goo fro her husband for ony Wrathe or euyl Wyl that may growe or come emonge them."<sup>179</sup> This imagining and heading of the story skews the obvious focus of the biblical narrative, which is not to condemn the wrath of a wife who might leave her husband for a time because of disagreements between them, though it is indeed something that is included in the biblical tale. The remainder of the biblical narrative, however, focuses on the failure of hospitality experienced by the man and his wife when they are traveling back home together; a mob of men demands the husband be surrendered, but his host turns out both the wife and his own daughter. The wife is subsequently raped to death and her body, which her husband cuts up into 12 pieces, becomes her husband's call to war for the Israelites to fight against Gabaa/Gibeah. The Knight, however, uses this narrative to explain how "yf she had be in pees and styll with her lord al this grete euyll and sorowe had not fallen And therefore it is somtyme good to refreyne hir yre and amolysse hir herte For this is the vsage of the wyse woman whiche tendeth to lyue peasybly and louyngly with her husband and lord."<sup>180</sup> The overwhelming emphases of the exempla that

<sup>179</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 101, ll. 30-31. The Harley translation titles the chapter "Of wrath." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 93, l. 25.

<sup>180</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 102, ll. 31-35. "Therfor doughter, take hede suche a vengeance done for that leude dede of her going away; this is to saie, that she was dede, and so mani men slayne, the whiche schulde haue no harme an she had not for wrathe gone away from her husbonde; and mani were slayne for her that hadde no gilt. And therfor euery woman aught to restraine wrathe, and to plesse and suffre her husbonde, and he be wroth, with faire langage, and not togo away from hym, as dede that woman, of the whiche come moche sorugh, as the dethe of her self and of so gret nombre of pepill." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 94, ll. 21-30.

Amos also discusses this exempla, and though he does not mention its Biblical source at all, he provides the following information on medieval attitudes toward gang rape: "Kathryn Gravdal argues that both the secular and ecclesiastical courts viewed rape, even 'collective rapes,' as a crime of little import. Citing Italian, French, and English cases, Gravdal notes that similar collective rapes were common enough to be interpretable as a sexual rite of passage and that, if pursued in the courts, the rapists were customarily

I have discussed thus far as part of the shame/maim trope argue that women who are disobedient can and ought to be punished physically, either with a physical disfigurement or with a painful and/or ignominious death. And as we can see from this final biblical example, the root cause for all this violence is located, by the Knight, within the behavior—or misbehavior—of the recalcitrant and willful woman.

While physical violence is certainly the second most popular fate for willful women in *The Book* (simple shaming outstrips the violence, as we shall see), sometimes women experience violence in the afterlife, though sometimes this spiritual violence is merely a warning to the woman to reform her behavior. There are six important instances of this type of violence in *The Book* (see Chapters 9, 19, 33-34, 51-53, 102, and 121). Some of the spiritual violence in *The Book* also “provides physical, tangible symbols of the abstract concepts he [the Knight] is discussing.”<sup>181</sup> For example, in Chapter 9 there is an exemplum that illustrates that one must confess sins; a seemingly pious woman dies, but “the sepulture in whiche she was leyd bigan to fume & smoken and the erth to brenne.”<sup>182</sup> A “hooly man” makes a request of God to reveal why this disturbance should occur; the sinner reveals she died without confessing her “synne of [...] flesshe [...] with a Monk” because she feared public rebuke.<sup>183</sup> The smoke from the sepulcher becomes symbolic of the “spyrytuel vengeance” that is exacted on those who sin.<sup>184</sup> This

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assessed a lesser fine for committing their violence than the victim was for suffering it. Even obvious and undenied male guilt is held less significant than the presumed lust of the woman, [...].” Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve,” 24.

<sup>181</sup> Dronzek, “Gendered Theories of Education,” 144.

<sup>182</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 22, ll. 14-15. “for in all mennis sight her berieles began to smoke, and the erthe to brenne, and on night was gret torment herde on her pitte,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 12, ll. 22-24.

<sup>183</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 22, ll. 19, 26-27. “holy man,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 12, l. 26. “for the lust of my flesshe, y laye with a monke;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 12, l. 32.

<sup>184</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 22, l. 29. “spiritual uengeance,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 13, l. 2.

exemplum is not a warning to correct one's behavior, but rather an object lesson that the appearance of piety does not preclude the commission of serious sins; it further warns that failure to confess is truly a dangerous prospect for the soul. Moreover, the punishment of this poor woman in the afterlife is ironic because she refused to confess while alive because she feared public ridicule, but once dead, her sin is spectacularized by the fires around her tomb, and she is forced to confess publicly to the holy man that orders her to do so.<sup>185</sup> A similar type of postmortem shaming occurs in Chapter 19 wherein a woman refuses to stop feeding her lap dogs delicacies while refusing to donate to the poor. Her sinfulness is rewarded with a horrific spectacle when she is on her death bed: "a lytel afterward this lady bycam seke vnto the deth And the happed a wonder thing whiche was sene al apertely. For ther cam vpon her bed two lytel black dogges And whan she drewe on and was in a traunce they were about her mouthe and lycked her lypes And where as they lycked her on the mouthe it bycam as black as a Cole."<sup>186</sup> So again we have a postmortem shaming that indicates the sin of the dead woman, but rather than having her tomb defiled, it is her body that bears the marks of her sins.

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<sup>185</sup> Similar irony is also noticeable in Guido of Montefeltro's speech in Canto 27 of Dante's *Inferno* when Guido tells Dante the pilgrim:

[...] 'If I believed I gave  
My answer to one who'd ever go once more

Back to the world, this tongue of flame would have  
No motion. But since, if what I hear is true,  
None ever returned from this abyss alive,

Not fearing infamy I will answer you.'

Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, in *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature: The Middle Period, 100 C.E.—1450*, trans. Robert Pinsky (Boston: Bedford St Martin's, 2004), 688-848, 808. There is another description that echoes Dantean *contrapasso*. In describing the fates of the *galois* and *galoises* the Knight writes: "as they deyde of cold [because they refused to dress warmly in winter] they shalle haue to the contrarye a grete hete and warme clothyng in the pytte of helle." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 162, ll. 21-22. There is no equivalent passage in the Harley translation.

<sup>186</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 38, ll. 3-8. There is no equivalent passage in the Harley translation.

This same trope appears in greater detail in Chapter 102, which contains a single lengthy exemplum against ire. The narrative is firmly entrenched within the shame/maim trope as both physical defilement of the woman's corpse and family and public dishonor come to the woman post mortem. A charitable and good burgess is dying, but she refuses during her final confession to forgive a neighbor woman for a twenty-five year old grudge.<sup>187</sup> Her priest provides a number of varied examples to the woman, urging her to forgive, but despite being told "how Ihesu Cryst forgaaf & pardoned his dethe, [...] for none ensample ne for no thyng he [the priest] couthe saye or doo she wold neuer forgyue her euylle wylle but in that estate she deyde."<sup>188</sup> The prolonged discussion of the priest's attempts to reform the dying woman illustrate her extreme willfulness, but her stubborn addiction to her anger, much like the rope maker's wife's deadly addiction to the prior, is explicitly linked with the devil. This exemplum's link to the devil is not a simple or thoughtless link, but rather a concerted effort on the part of the Knight to render the individual will of the woman suspect and dangerous. As this exemplum unfolds, the unrelenting horror of the devil's machinations that damn the soul of this otherwise respectable and charitable burgess becomes clear. The very union of personal will with the devil makes it all the more spiritually problematic for a woman to assert her own will and desires without constantly attempting to question herself about whether the things that she uses her will to get are actually the things she wants, or if she is being

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<sup>187</sup> Amos sees this exemplum and the story of the woman who will not feed the poor but does indulge her lapdogs as part of a larger rhetorical presentation of the middle classes; i.e., *The Book* conceives of merchants "only in terms of their wealth, and envisions that wealth as being used only to purchase power that they prove themselves unwilling and unable to wield for the benefit of the community." Amos, "Violent Hierarchies," 92.

<sup>188</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 137, ll. 10-11, ll. 25-27. "oure lorde Ihesu Crist forgaued patiently his dethe," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 138, l. 16. "for no amonestement nor counsaile that her gostely fader coude do nor say, she wolde not pardone, she was so full of yre, by encomberaunce of the deuell, but she deyde in this foule dedly synne of wrathe and yre." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 138, ll. 35-36, 139, ll. 1-3.

manipulated by the devil. In essence, this type of rhetorical juxtaposition of the willful woman with the devil is an attempt to enforce behavioral conformity and submission of women through their spiritual beliefs and salvific fears.<sup>189</sup>

Upon the woman's death in Chapter 102, her priest experiences a "vysion" of "how the deuyls bare away with them the sowle of the sayd burgeys & how she had vpon her herte a grete tode."<sup>190</sup> This vision gives the priest grounds to reject her burial in the church, which her family attempts to counter, but the priest then offers them a compromise: "they [her family] shold make her bely to be opened And that vpon her herte they shold fynde a grete tode And yet more [the priest] sayd to them yf hit be not so as I say I wylle and am contente that she be buryed there as ye wylle haue her to be."<sup>191</sup> This portion of the exemplum introduces the shame aspect of the trope: a woman who has been willful by resisting renunciation of her sins is punished by public shaming. That is, the priest refuses to allow her proper Christian burial, something about which most women of her reputation—i.e. charitable and respectable—are relatively well assured. Indeed, her relatives even object to the priest's pronouncement that she cannot be buried

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<sup>189</sup> Additionally, will and the devil are seen associated with one another repeatedly, including in Chapter 121 where not only do people act against the laws of nature by dressing inappropriately for the weather but where wives and their lovers have more power and authority than their husbands. Will and the diabolical are further aligned in the chapters that discuss Eve (39-47), who is repudiated repeatedly for usurping Adam's place by speaking with the serpent about a covenant of which she is not a part, among other faults. See also my discussion of Chapter 42 below on the devil's role in taking advantage of foolish looking to lead people into lechery. Amos states that the text manifests concerns about the types of temptation that women must face: "their public sphere is fraught with sexual temptations—from the world (life at court), the flesh (themselves and their courtiers), and the devil (himself)." Amos, "The Gentrification of Eve," 20. This simple division of a tripartite temptation overlooks the careful interaction of will and devil that the Knight manufactures in his narratives.

These spiritual fears of damnation also function something like the surveillance of the panopticon by promoting fear that even sins uncovered by one's family and friends are obvious to an omniscient God.

<sup>190</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 137, ll. 29-31. "dremed that hym semed by auision how the deuell bare away the soule of this burioys, and that he sawe a gret foule tode sittynge vpon her herte;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 139, ll. 3-6.

<sup>191</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 137, ll. 39-40, 138, ll. 1-3. "he saide vnto hem that there shulde be founde within her body, vpon her herte, a foule tode." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 139, ll. 16-17.



in the church, which is the only reason for the compromise.<sup>192</sup> Because the family complies with the priest's wishes the shame extends into reality, whereas prior to the examination of the corpse only the priest knew the woman's spiritual state; after the body is opened, they "founde a grete tood vpon her herte ryghte fowle lothely and hydous."<sup>193</sup> At this point the family can no longer deny the spiritual state of their relative and must accept the ignominy of burial outside the church. But this development—the materiality of her sin presented within her body—is also a physical defilement of her corpse. The toad becomes representative of her own defilement of her soul with wrath, and the willfulness to remain angry, so that not only does she face ignominy in death and public ridicule, but also through physical maiming. Her body is not whole because it has been cut open, and further, it has been found to be impure because of its contents.<sup>194</sup>

The woman's humiliation is not complete, however, until the priest questions the toad that is found within her body:

the tood ansuered that he was the deuyl that had euer tempted her by the tyme and space of xxv yere And specially in the synne in whiche he found most auantage that was in the synne of yre and wrathe For euer syn that tyme she bare soo grete yre and so grete wrathe vpon a woman her neyghbour that neuer she thought to pardonne her the trespass that she hadde done vnto her And that other daye whanne thou [the priest] confessed her I [the devil-toad] was on my foure feet vpon her herte where as I her so streyght enclawed and so chaffed of wrathe and yre that she might haue no wyll to forgyue Notwithstandyng an houre was that I had grete fere that thou sholdest haue had her fro me and that she shold haue be conuertysed thourgh thy prechyng but nevertheless I hadde the

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<sup>192</sup> In Caxton's translation "the Frenedes and parentes of her dyd stryue with hym" over the burial. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 137, l. 38. In the Harley translation, "her frenedes were displeased with the person [the priest], and saide it was not so, it was but a fa[n]tisi;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 139, ll. 18-19.

<sup>193</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 138, ll. 7-8. "they founde a foule orible tode within her body, that grapped her herte with her pawes," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 139, ll. 21-22.

<sup>194</sup> There is an inverse story in Chapter 89 wherein spiritual purity is manifest postmortem, with a dove found within a martyr's heart.

victorye in suche wyse that she is oure for euermore.<sup>195</sup>

The devil-toad describes his hold on the woman as being such that “she might haue no wylle to forgyue” the woman with whom she was angry. This phrase, as I have suggested earlier, explicitly aligns the willful woman with the diabolical and the damned; this woman is not merely disgraced on earth by not being buried on holy ground, but she is also eternally disgraced and severed from the community of good Christians because of her willful and tenacious devotion to her anger, but what is more, that anger and her devotion to it are not wholly hers, as the devil-toad freely admits here. This exemplum, then, is an explicit warning about the power of the devil and how the devil can promote a woman’s will until it damns her. This tale is perhaps less viscerally shocking to a contemporary audience because it does not normalize spousal violence or feature overt spiritual violence aside from the carrying off of a soul—a relatively tame occurrence compared to some of the other descriptions from *The Book* that I discuss below. However, this tale would be absolutely horrifying for a medieval woman to read, and prompting the sort of self-regulation and self-examination that Christine de Pizan’s more dialogic and Boethian writing in Book One of her work prompts. After reading this tale, fear of damnation may very well prompt women to question themselves and speculate about their actions and choices: “Am I being too willful? Is this my will, or is my will somehow sinful and thus supported by the devil?” This exemplum is a radical attempt on

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<sup>195</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 138, ll. 10-22. “And this tode answered and saide, that he was a deuell of hell, that by the space of twenty winter he had tempted that woman vnto mani synnes, but in special vnto that whereinne he fonde most auauntage, and that was in the synne of yre, or of wrathe, ‘for syn that tyme she has so gret wrath vnto her neyghboure that she wolde neuer foryeue it; for y putte so grete hate, that she might neuer beholde her with her sight but she were oute of charite. And that other day whan thou hardest her confession, y was vpon her herte, and grapped it so sore with my iiij pawes, and helde it so streite and enpoysoned, that she might haue no will to yeue foryeuenesse. And yet atte one tyme y had gret fere that thow hast not take her away from me, and conuerted her with thine longe preching and good ensamples; but as now y haue the uictorie in suche wise as she is myne, and shal be dampned in hell for euermore.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 139, ll. 25-36, 140, ll. 1-4.

the Knight's part to undermine female power, decision-making, and authority by associating it and women who are resolute and determined with sinfulness and damnation.

Chapters 51 through 53 in Caxton's translation present the story of a man and his subsequent wives, all of whom die in various states of sin. The exemplum in these chapters is less horrific because of its spiritual implications than Chapter 102's narrative, but it is more viscerally shocking in terms of the violence and torture that the wives experience in the afterlife.<sup>196</sup> The wives' fates are conveyed by their husband's hermit uncle who is holy and given visions explaining each wife's fate. The first wife is damned to hell for her failure of charity, both materially and through speech. That is, she kept far too many gowns and gossiped so much that she "taken away their [other people's] good renomme."<sup>197</sup> The hermit dreams of the first wife's good deeds being weighed in the balance against her bad deeds, and he sees "the deuyll" take "her gownes rynges & Jewelles þ<sup>t</sup> she had had of the men by loue Also alle the vayne and euylle wordes that she hadde sayd of other by enuye [...] and no synne that she had done he lefte behynde but al this to geder he dyde put in the balaunce and weyed."<sup>198</sup> Not surprisingly, the bad outweighs the good and we are allowed to see what the wife faces eternally: "And thus took her the deuyll whiche dyde her to endowe her gownes that were thenn brennyng as

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<sup>196</sup> In the Middle Ages violence and hell were not anathema, as anyone who is familiar with Dante's *Divine Comedy* may be aware. Iris Grötecke writes about visual portrayals of hell that they "employ characteristic *exempla* as a mode of argument, in that a large number of non-specific punishments demonstrate the horror and brutality of Hell. Among these are beating, devouring or burning of the damned [...]." Grötecke, "Representing the Last Judgement," 250.

<sup>197</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 74, l. 37. "to bringe hem oute of her good name;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 65, ll. 31-32.

<sup>198</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 74, ll. 34-38; 75, ll. 1-2. "And whanne the deuell sawe her clothes, he ranne and toke hem, and caste hem in the balaunce with her euell dedes. And he toke all her iuellys and rynges that was geuen her by galauntys forto haue had her to do foly, [...] and she dede neuer euell dede but yt was brought thedyr and caste in the balaunce with her euell dedes;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 65, ll. 27-34.

fire and had her within in to helle And the power sowle cryed and sorrowed piteously.”<sup>199</sup>

The second wife is only condemned to a rather long period in purgatory for her commission of adultery about a dozen times, but she is saved because she “had therof many tyme be confessed.”<sup>200</sup> Her punishment, “þ<sup>t</sup> she shold be .C. yere within the fire of purgatory,” is not dilated and made into an extraordinary scene the way that the first wife’s sins are displayed in a mini-judgment scene replete with scales upon which good and bad deeds might be weighed.<sup>201</sup> There is much less dramatic concern here, despite that the sin is adultery—a misbehavior that we have seen is not well accepted or tolerated when involving wives—and this is reinforced because before the fate of the third wife is revealed, there is an obsessional return to discussing the sins of the first wife and her failure of charity in hoarding her dresses. The third wife’s gruesome damnation, however, also ties in with the first wife’s sins; rather than her dress, the third wife is obsessed with the appearance of her face. She is in hell because she painted her face and plucked her hairs “to seme more faire and plaisaunt to the world And that was one of the synnes that was moost displesynge to god For she dyde hit by pryde by whiche men falle to the synne of lechery And fynally in to all other. For aboute alle thyng it displesith to the Creatour as one wylle haue by crafte more beaute than nature hath geuen to hym.”<sup>202</sup> Her punishment is much more explicit than even the first wife’s:

<sup>199</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 75, ll. 3-6. “And there the deuell toke her, and bare her away, and putte her clothes and aray brennyng in the flawme on her with the fire of hell, and kist her doune into the pitte of hell; and the pore soule cried, and made moche sorugh and pite, but it boted not.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 66, ll. 1-5.

<sup>200</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 75, ll. 23-24. “had ofte be shriue thereof,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 66, ll. 21-22.

<sup>201</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 75, ll. 20-21. “she shulde abide in the brennyng fere an hundred yere, forto clense her,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 66, ll. 18-19.

<sup>202</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 77, ll. 4-9. “forto plese the sight of the worlde, the whiche dede is one of the synnes that displeases most God; and that is a synne of pride that drawithe after hym the synne of lechery, for the whiche Noieys flode come and stroyed all the world; for of all thinge it displesithe most the creatoure that will yeue hym-self other beauute thanne nature hathe geuen hym.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 68, ll. 10-16.

one deuylle helde her faste with his hondes or clowes by her heres and tressis as a lyon holdeth his proye in suche manere that she couthe nought meue her hede here ne there & dyde put brennyng nedels thorough her browes whiche entred in to her heede as ferre as he myghte thruste them in And the poure sowle at euery tyme cryed horribly And after he had made her to suffre suche grete martyre that ouerlonge lasted Another deuylle horryble and ouer hydous cam there with grete brondes of fyre and thrested them vnto her face And in suche maner he tormented her and brente and enflammed her ouer alle sydes.<sup>203</sup>

The level of violence here is almost shocking, and while it is removed to the realm of the afterlife, it is still quite explicit given the fairly simple expressions to be found elsewhere in the shame/maim trope of burnings or drownings that are carried out against women.<sup>204</sup>

Here, more than a single incident of maiming or death, we have recounted the torturous eternal existence for the third wife, all because she wore makeup and plucked hairs from her face. And, if we are attentive to the explanation that her deeds displeased God because they attempt to alter his creation, we can also make a connection between her sins and her will—that is, her desire to reform or reshape how she appears physically. This violent punishment, therefore, is meted out against the woman who would claim sovereignty over God’s creation and exert her will upon it; again, like the tale from

Chapter 102 that associates willfulness with sinfulness, here the narrative teaches that

<sup>203</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 76, ll. 28-38. It should be noted that in the Harley translation there are two separate descriptions of the third wife’s torture; I give the one parallel to the description in Caxton’s translation first. “a deuell helde her bi the tresses of here hede, like as a lyon holdithe his prairie, in suche wise as she might not with her hede remoue; and the same deuell putte and thruste in her browes, temples, and forhede, hote brenninge alles and nedeles, into the brayne; and the poure woman cried atte eueri tyme that he threste in alle or nedille, the whiche was brenninge,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 67, ll. 25-30. “in euery hole that her here hathe be plucked oute, euery day onis the deuell thrustith in a brennyng alle or a nedill into the brayne. And after that the deuell had made her suffre tho gret peynes, the which dured longe, another deuell come, with gret sharpe foule hideous tethe and clowes, and enflammed her face with brenning piche, oyle, terre, grece, and boyling lede,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 67, ll. 35-36, 68, ll. 1-5.

<sup>204</sup> Chapter 54, the chapter directly following the description of the third wife’s sins and fate is oddly repetitive, though it combines the first wife’s sins with the third wife’s so that we have the exemplum of a woman who “blanked and popped or peynted her self” as well as who owned “lx payre of gownes,” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 78, l. 10, ll. 16-17. “she popped and farded her.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 69, l. 15. “she had sum tyme more thanne .iiij.xx. gownes,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 69, ll. 18-19. This repetition simply acts as a reinforcement of the severity of these misbehaviors in the Knight’s eyes.

willfulness will be punished in a most gruesome manner. Indeed, the hermit who witnesses the third wife's torture is so "sore effrayed and trembl[ing] for fere" that the angel who shows him the vision must "assur[e] hym" and explains that "she had wel deseruyd it" because of her actions.<sup>205</sup>

The Knight writes extensively about matters of dress, as the shame/maim trope illustrates, but Chapter 20, which I discuss below as part of the shame portion of the shame/maim trope, features a lengthy discussion of fashion as a corruptive influence on women, particularly as resulting in women nagging their husbands for new fashions. The passage's interest intensifies, however, when the Knight inserts a codicil to say he only disagrees with women who take on new fashions if they are under his authority. I quote the passage here at length to provide a sense of the Knight's deep concern over sartorial matters:

But god haue mercy on vs at this day after that som haue herd that ony newe facion or nouelte of goune or arraye shall neuer reste till they haue therof a Copye And shullen saye to their lord or husbond dayly Suche thyng and suche shold become me wel and it is right faire I pray yow that I may haue it yf their lord or husbond saye to her my loue yf suche one haue it other that ben holden as wyse as she haue it not And she thenne wylle saye what though they can not araye them what haue I doo with all Sith that such one hath it. I may wel haue it and were it as wel as she And I say you that they shal fynd so many resons that they must nedes haue their parte but these maner of wymmen ben not founde the moost wyse ne moost connyng but they haue their hert moost sette to the plesaunce of the world I speke not vpon the ladyes ne the damoyseles that maye wel do at their lust and gyse For ageynst their estate I think not to speke ony thyng that may displese them yf I may knowe it For it apperteyneth not ne is fyttyng to me but to honoure and obeye them to my powere ne I entende not to speke ageynst them by this book but to my owne doughters wymmen and seruauntes to whome I may say that as it shal plese me and after my wylle.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>205</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 77, ll. 1-24. "[...] the Ermite tremeled and was almost oute of his witte for ferde. And the aungell comforted hym, and saide that he be not aferde, for she hadde wel deserued the payne, with more;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 68, ll. 5-8.

<sup>206</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 40, ll. 7-27.

The passage manifests specific concern for preserving his own desire and will; the disobedience of women under his control, as one may suspect given the overall rhetorical structure of tales concerning disobedient women, are not going to be tolerated; it is his will that takes precedence.

This same topic resurrects itself in Chapter 50 where there is another lengthy passage about the nagging wife who will keep “ryote and noyse” in the marital home “tylle she haue her parte be it right or wronge.”<sup>207</sup> Chapter 48 is another chapter in which the Knight obsesses over new-fangled fashions and their dangers, this time associating them with the biblical flood: “the deluge or gaderyng of waters in the dayes of Noe was bycause of the pryde and desguysyng of men and specially of wymmen that counterfeted them self of newe and dishonest rayments” that led them to lechery, which engendered God’s wrath and the flood.<sup>208</sup> Susan Udry writes about the Knight’s

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And wetithe who so takithe furst a nouelte of array on hym, thei ben moche spoken of, but now a dayes and a woman here of a newe gette, she will neuer be in pees till she haue the same. And the wiues saien to her husbndes eury day, “sir, suche a wyff and suche hathe suche goodly arraye that besemithe her well, and y prairie you y may haue of the same;” and yef her husbonde saie, “wiff, yef suche haue suche arraie, suche that are wiser thanne thei haue it not,” she wil saie, “no force it is, for thei canne not were it, and yef y haue it ye shal see how well it will become me, for y can were it.” And thus with her wordes her husbonde must nedis ordeine her that she desirithe, other he shall neuer haue pees with her, for thei wol finde so mani resonas that thei will not be werned. But the women that dothe and saithe thus, be not most wisest nor canne not best her good, but thei haue more her herte to the plesaunce of the worlde thanne to her husbondes profit. [...] but y saie it not be women that may susteine and meintayne it atte her lust; for y caste me not to speke nor to medill me of no thinge of her astate nor arraie that aught to displese hem, for it longithe not to me but to worshippe and to obeye hem to my power. Nor y understonde not to speke in this boke to none other women but to myn proper doughtres and seruauntis of myn howse, and forto shew hem how what is my luste and plesaunce that thei do. Doughtres, it is a gret perile to take stryff with folke that ben wise, or to dispraise the maners of hem. For gladly folke haue but litell worshippe that tellithe or repreithe ani suche folke of thaire condicones.

La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 31, ll. 6-22, 32-36; 32, ll. 1-7.

<sup>207</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 72, l. 36, 73, l. 1. For the equivalent passage in the Harley translation see La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 64, ll. 11-21.

<sup>208</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Offord, 70, ll. 10-13. “as Noyis flode that stroied the world for the pride and the disguysyng that was amonge women.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 62, ll. 24-26.

disavowal of makeup, advocacy of good posture and manners, and conservatism in dress, saying that it presents a programmatic view of beauty: “the Chevalier promotes the idea that beauty comes only from God and that a woman’s natural beauty is a true expression of created identity, while artificial beauty is a distortion of her person and ultimately of the order of creation.”<sup>209</sup> What the later chapter (102) tries to inculcate through the use of shame primarily, this chapter impresses upon the audience by focusing upon the anguish and torment that can come of willfulness.

The final example of spiritual violence I want to discuss spans the thirty-third and thirty-fourth chapters of *The Book*. Instead of postmortem defilement of the body, however, this narrative tells of the warning of damnation that leads to the reform of a flirtatious and spiritually inattentive wife who takes a pilgrimage with a squire who is not her husband.<sup>210</sup> The two arrive at a monastery church and during the mass the devil is said to overtake them so that they “had theyr eyen and plesaunces more to beholde eche other and to make smale signes and tokenes of loue than they had in the dyuyne seruyse or for to saie deuoutely theyr prayers.”<sup>211</sup> At this point the erotic gaze has focused in narrowly upon the two lovers—the audience wonders what sort of misbehavior is happening exactly and what detail is going to be clarified in the remainder of the chapter. But suddenly the erotic gaze turns away, just as it is turned away in the first exemplum I examined in the shame and maim trope—by a sort of visionary intervention. The lady is

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<sup>209</sup> Udry, “Robert de Blois,” 99. Izicki, “Pyres of Vanities,” 214, confirms this view as well.

<sup>210</sup> Note that this spiritual warning to the wife to reform is atypical and that more often the spiritual violence actually occurs, as in the examples discussed above.

<sup>211</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 55, lines 9-12. “And it happed they were atte the masse, and thorough the temptation of the deuell they delited hem atte the masse in loking, and in making signes, euriche to other, of loue and iapes, more thanne they delited hem in Goddes seruyce, or to saie deuoutely her matenes or praieres.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 47, ll. 20-25.



overcome by a “grete maladye” and swoons.<sup>212</sup> The people around her are unable to tell if she is alive or dead and during this time, she is transported home while she experiences both “grete payne” and sees “a merueylous aduysyon” of her dead parents. Her mother speaks first and tells her “loo here thy noretur loue and honoure thy husbond and lord as thou dydest this brest that gaf the to sowke Sythe that the Chirche hath gyuen hym to the.”<sup>213</sup> Her father then addresses her and asks her why she takes more pleasure in the squire’s company than in her husband’s, but before she is permitted to answer, she is shown “a pytte ful of fyre so nyghe to her that almoost she had fallen therin.”<sup>214</sup> Her parents then show her one hundred priests in white vestments, and then the Virgin Mary appears and shows her a woman’s dress and a shirt and says they are what keeps her “fro fallyng in this pytte” since the woman has been evil and “defowled my [Mary’s] hows and mocked it.”<sup>215</sup> From this chastisement the wife immediately wakes.

In the following chapter of *The Book* the wife and the audience of *The Book* receive a holy man’s interpretation of her vision.<sup>216</sup> The explication consists of the following: a good wife who receives everything from her husband ought to love him as a baby loves its mother’s milk, likewise the sweetness of milk is akin to the sweetness found in a true marriage; the pit signifies the punishment awaiting for the wife should she

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<sup>212</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 55, line 13. “suche a sodein sikenesse,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 47, l. 26. The pain and vision are not described in the same manner in the Harley translation, but rather it is simply said that “in thre dayes after [she was brought to town] she neuer ete mete nor drinke.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 47, ll. 29-30.

<sup>213</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 55, lines 23-24. “loue and worship youre husbonde that God and the chirche haue geuen you, and abue al erthely men, and loue hym lyke as ye haue loued these brestis, the whiche hathe norissed you.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 48, ll. 4-6.

<sup>214</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 55, lines 29-30. “a depe well full of the fire of hell, and she was almost fall therin.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 48, ll. 11-12.

<sup>215</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 55, lines 36-37. “shal kepe the from fallynge into that well of fire, notwithstandinge thou hast defowled myn hous.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 48, ll. 19-20.

<sup>216</sup> These two chapters from Caxton’s translation are run together in the Harley version and form Chapter 34.

not turn aside from the evil heat of her own desire for the squire; the hundred priests are priests for whom she has said masses and they wish to prevent her from sinning further, so they instigate her vision; the articles of clothing represent the donations she made to poor women and thus prevent her falling into the pit; and Mary's warning is an expression of her displeasure at the woman's flirtations in a church.<sup>217</sup> The early part of this narrative sets up an expectation for the reader that lust will be spectacularized, but then the narrative focus of the text shifts to emphasize the spiritual peril of the participants in this sexual misconduct. Threatening sexual contact is dissipated by a spiritual event—in this case, a vision. The erotic gaze is turned aside, and instead of the eroticism of the moment of two lovers flirting during mass, the reader is confronted with a terrifying vision of pain and suffering. A spiritual event stops the sinful act and the wife is purified through her vision. She does not die in this narrative, nor is she physically disfigured, as so many of the women in previous narratives have done and been. This visionary experience instigates a true change of heart, for we are told after the explication of her vision that the squire returns to her and attempts numerous times to “haue torned her” only to fail and carry with him the story of her steadfast faith to her husband thereafter.<sup>218</sup> Her sin, her sexual license, is not permitted to come to fruition, and so her identity that was perched at the liminal marker between faithful wife and adulteress is secured on the positive end of the spectrum. Yet, as the second chapter of this episode concludes, the narrator does not underline the point that wives ought to be chaste, but instead focuses on the idea that this exemplum shows “how me ought not to goo to hooly pylgremages for no foolysshe playsaunces but only for the dyuyne seruyse and for the

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<sup>217</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 56-57.

<sup>218</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 58, line 23. “haue turned her,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 51, l. 11.

loue of god.”<sup>219</sup> The abject nature of the uncontrolled female libido is not overtly acknowledged by the narrator, despite his very specific description of the type of foolish pleasures the wife engaged in while at mass. This omission, or even aporia, in the narrator’s glossing of the exemplum, coupled with the recurrence of unchaste women in *The Book* in various contexts, indicates both an obsession with female chastity as well as a fear of its being corrupted.

The obsession with female chastity, and even more important, the maintenance of a proper reputation are also evident within the final and most numerous category of the shame/maim trope, appearing in thirty-one chapters: those exempla that deal only with shame or dishonor rather than physical or spiritual violence. I have divided these chapters into rough categories, of which the first discusses exempla wherein a woman eligible for marriage disgraces herself somehow and loses her fiancé; the second category involves the loss of a woman’s reputation though not specifically a suitor; and the third category involves a simple public humiliation or shaming, though not necessarily a loss of reputation as regards chastity.

Chapters 12 and 119 contain exempla in which women are rejected as future wives because of their failures in behavior. Chapter 12 of *The Book* seems quite similar to Anne de France’s lengthy exemplum on the three sisters whose misbehavior loses them all potential fiancés, and thus shames their mother to death.<sup>220</sup> The Knight’s version is a

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<sup>219</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 58, lines 27-29. “no body shulde go in holy pilgrimages for to fulfill no foly, plesaunce, nor the worlde, nor flesshely delite. But thei shulde go enterly with herte to serue God; and also that it is good to prai for fader and moder, and for other frendes that ben dede, for thei impetrithe grace for hem that be alyue.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 51, ll. 16-21.

<sup>220</sup> It is worth noting that Chapter 13 of *The Book* tells almost exactly the same exemplum again only with the alteration that there are two daughters rather than three, which classifies this exemplum within the Good Sister/Bad Sister trope, but the youngest is chosen again by the suitor, who is this time the king of Spain. The daughters are from Aragon rather than Denmark this time, and the only other alteration is that the youngest daughter’s inferior beauty is made up for by her humility, which her elder sister lacks. See La

little bit happier and involves three daughters from Denmark. The king of England decides to choose a bride from among these ladies, and he sends his advisors to observe them. The eldest daughter “was the fayrest,” but she “ofte loked here and there And torted her heede on her sholders & had her sight ventillous lyke a vane.”<sup>221</sup> The middle daughter “had moche talking and spacke ofte tofore she vnderstood that whiche was said to her.”<sup>222</sup> The youngest daughter “was not the fayrest of them but she was moost agreeable & mayntened her manere more sure and sadly & spak but lital & that was wel demeurly & her regard & sight was more ferme & humble than of that other two.”<sup>223</sup> The king, after hearing of the reports of these sisters, chooses the youngest as his bride because “there is not in the world so grete ease as to haue a wife sure & stedfast ne none so grete & fair noblesse.”<sup>224</sup> The shame that is involved here is not as theatrical or spectacular as that presented in the maiming and spiritual violence sections; we are simply told that the two older daughters “had grete despite & grete desdayne” because of the king’s choice.<sup>225</sup> The other exempla that involve the loss of fiancés through poor comportment are very much alike except that in one case the bride-to-be is too friendly and forward in her discussion of love (second exemplum in Chapter 12) and in one the

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Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 28, ll. 19-37, 29, ll.1-33. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 19, ll. 5-33, 20, ll. 1-27.

<sup>221</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 26, l. 8, ll. 9-11. “the eldest was fairest, she helde not her astate and port seure, for she loked small and wynked ofte, & spake afore she understode what was saide of her, and euer loked ouer the shuldre, and euer beting her eyelyddes togedre.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 16, ll. 19-22.

<sup>222</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 26, ll. 11-13. “had meruailous moche langage, she understode what was saide to her;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 16, ll. 23-24.

<sup>223</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 26, ll. 13-16. “was not fairest, but she was most loueliche and goodly in her behauing countenance, and manere most seure and ferme, and spake demurly and lital, with meke loke, and more ferme thanne ani of that other .ij.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 16, ll. 24-28.

<sup>224</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 26, ll. 36-38. “there nis not in this world gretter riches thanne to haue a wyff ferme in her estate, behauing, and of good maners.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 17, ll. 12-14.

<sup>225</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 26, l. 40, 27, l. 1. “had gret meruaile and desdeyn,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 17, l. 17.

bride-to-be dresses too lightly for the winter in order to show off her figure to her fiancé, but he rejects her because she seems too pale and unhealthy (Chapter 119).

Exempla that discuss the loss of reputation or damage to reputation appear in Chapters 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 50, 95, and 116 in *The Book*. The majority of these chapters all have something to say about women who talk too much, whether it be by arguing with men, engaging in playful banter with men, or challenging men in some other way; women who do so risk their reputation. For example, in Chapter 14 two such exempla exist.<sup>226</sup> The first narrative describes how a woman, who is losing while “playing atte tables” with a man, accuses the man of cheating with loaded dice.<sup>227</sup> As a result, a loud, public argument ensues during which he says to her, “yf she had ben wyse and good she shold not come by nyght in to the mennes chambres and kysse them and embrace them without Candell.”<sup>228</sup> While the lady tries to claim this statement is a lie, it has been said publicly before “moche peple [...] And many of them sayd that a good stylle and not so to haue chyden had ben better for her & that she was beten with her owne staf that is to saye by her tonge.”<sup>229</sup> This particular exemplum also has another distinctive feature: the Knight describes how he tries repeatedly, but fails, to convince the

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<sup>226</sup> The first exemplum in chapter 14 seems to re-appear as the third exemplum told in an abbreviated form in chapter 95. This reappearance even includes the Knight’s solicitous attempts to get the lady to ignore her male arguing partner. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 127, ll. 35-38, 128, ll. 1-10. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 126, ll. 7-23. Grössinger reproduces a woodcut by Erhard Schön from the first half of the sixteenth century that shows an evil wife engaged in argument and physical fighting with her husband (he has some sort of staff raised up to beat her but her posture is offensive rather than defensive). Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 125.

<sup>227</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 30, l. 2. “atte the tables,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 20, ll. 28-29.

<sup>228</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 30, ll. 16-18. “yef she were wise and good, she wolde not come in mennis chaumbres bi night derkelyng withoute candell, not to coll and kisse men in her beddis alone, as she dede.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 21, ll. 8-11.

<sup>229</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 30, ll. 21-25. “afore all the peple, till he spake yet fouler and worse wordes, and more shamfull by her, that neuer might fall from her for no shaking that euer she coulede shake, and thus she shamed her selff with her gret herte, and wordes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 21, ll. 19-23.

lady to give up the argument before her humiliation, which demonstrates his attempt to generate a narrative identity that associates him with caring for and advising women properly, despite the violent ends many women in his exempla meet.<sup>230</sup>

The pattern of a woman standing up to a man, and then ultimately being shamed is repeated over and over again, though sometimes the Knight takes great pains to make the woman appear wholly irrational, as in the second exemplum from Chapter 14 wherein a woman chides a knight continuously until he leaves a piece of straw with her to stand in his place because he no longer wishes to listen to her, and his actions are “reputed for wel done [...] And she was holden for more foole than to fore.”<sup>231</sup> In Chapter 20, a lady chides a male relative, another woman’s husband, for not allowing his wife to dress in fancy clothing, and as a result, the complaining lady, who does dress in these fashions, has her chastity impugned when the man claims that these fashions were begun by “the loues [and ...] the lemmans of thenglysshe men” and are not native to their land.<sup>232</sup> As a result, just as in Chapter 14’s second exemplum: “These wordes were said to fore moche people wherof the lady held her self nyce and wyst not what to answeere And thenne many of them bigan to murmure and said among them that she had done better for to haue

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<sup>230</sup> The passage I refer to is as follows: “My fayre Cosyn Angre you with no thing that he saith For ye knowe wel he is of hautayn wordes & of folissh answers wherfor I [the Knight] praye yow for your honour that ye take no debate ageynst hym & I told her & counceiled feithfully as I wold haue said to my suster [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 30, ll. 7-11. ““anger you not in no maner wise of that that he saithe for ye know wel that he is of high wordes and full of foly ansueres, wherfor y prairie you for youre worship that ye take no debate with hym.’ And y tolde her lyk as y wolde haue saide to my suster [?or] doughter, but she wolde not do after me [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 20, l. 34, 21, ll. 1-4.

<sup>231</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 31, ll. 7-9. “it was holde well done of the knight; and thanne she was w[r]other thanne afore, whanne she fonde no body to chide with.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 22, ll. 2-3.

<sup>232</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 39, l. 18. “the unthrifiti women that bene euell women of her body and chamberers to Englissh men and other men of were that duellen with hem as her lemmannys,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 30, ll. 19-21.

holden her styлле and said nought.”<sup>233</sup> The remaining chapters that reprove women for talking with men (21 through 23) all result in the same sort of shaming. Chapter 50 continues the Knight’s interest in clothing that we saw in Chapter 20, except instead of having a woman lose favor because she argues with a man about appropriate fashions, she simply loses her reputation because she is seen dressed in “her straunge and newe arraye,” so that everyone gawks at her as if she were “a wylde beest.”<sup>234</sup> After marveling over her fashion, however, the lady is “euer mocked & scorned & nought set by.”<sup>235</sup>

Chapter 24 contains two exempla, both of which oppose the attendance of too many feasts and balls. In the first narrative we have the fate of a woman who is not openly willful because she never overtly disobeys her husband, but we are told she has “her herte set to the world for to daunce and synge well,” which makes her popular at feasts, which she asks for permission to go to, and which her husband grudgingly allows “for fere to stande oute of the grace of other lordes” who enjoy his wife’s company.<sup>236</sup> This arrangement ends badly when she is seen by her husband’s brother at a feast, pulled aside with one knight when the lights are suddenly extinguished and then relighted. The Knight explains that “there was done thenne none harme ne vylonye” but her husband “mystruste her all his lyf after ne neuer had syth that tyme to her soo grete loue ne

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<sup>233</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 39, ll. 32-36. “And so these wordes weren saide between the baronesse and the knight tofore all the peple, and the baronesse helde her pees for shame, for she wost not what to saie nor to ansuere; and so ther was mani that saide it hadde be beter for her to haue holde her pees.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 30, ll. 30-35.

<sup>234</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 73, ll. 15-16, 17. “a gentill woman that come to a fest so straungely atyred and quaintly arrayed, to haue the lokes of the pepill, that all that sawe her come ranne towards her to wonder lik as on a wilde beste, for she was atyred with high long pynnes lyke a iebet, and so she was scorned of all the company, and saide she bore a gallous on her hede.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 64, ll. 24-29.

<sup>235</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 73, ll. 33-34. See previous footnote for Harley version.

<sup>236</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 43, ll. 31-32, 35-36. “[...] and daunced and sange with knyghtes and squieres, & all her herte was sette on the worldes plesaunce [...] Her husbonde warned her not, for ferde lasse thei that praied hym wolde be wrothe, and leste men wolde deme that he were ielous of his wiff;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 35, ll. 4-6, 9-12.

playsaunce as he was woned to haue.”<sup>237</sup> Caxton’s translation also adds of their marital accord afterward that “he was a foole and so was she also And euer after eche arred at other lyke houndes And they lost all their goodes and household And all for a lytell occasion.”<sup>238</sup> This description is odd because it includes a condemnation of the man’s irrational response to his brother’s condemnation of his wife, which is something we have not seen anywhere else in *The Book*, including the earlier chapters where the wife is maimed through some behavioral fault of her own despite her husband’s attempts to reform her and because of the physical fault in her appearance, there is a subsequent withdrawal of her husband’s affections. Here we find not a particularly sympathetic view of the woman’s plight, but at least an acknowledgement that the husband, perhaps in allowing his wife the freedom to attend these parties, acted just as foolishly as his wife did, indeed, the man’s reasoning is impugned along with hers as they are both dehumanized and described as dogs. The second exemplum in Chapter 24 is more deadly because the woman who is accused of misconduct “blamed and sklaundered” and so she “bycam seke a long tyme of soo grete a sekene that she was all deffeted And had no thyng on her but skyn & bone.”<sup>239</sup> The woman dies, but she confesses to everyone that she was innocent and had not committed mortal sin; this story elevates the level of pity expressed in the earlier story as well, and despite that these exempla are a part of the shame/maim trope I have identified within *The Book*, they also operate in a functionally

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<sup>237</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 44, l. 11, ll. 14-15. “all his lyff after mistrusted that his wiff had done amys, and loued his wiff neuer after so well as he dede before.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 35, ll. 22-24.

<sup>238</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 44, ll. 14-17. The Harley translation omits the dog imagery: “And so there was neuer pees betwene hem, but euer glomyng, loring, and chiding, and all her housholde yede to not for this cause.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 35, ll. 24-26.

<sup>239</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 44, ll. 19-20, 21-22. “she caute an euell name bi a lorde, that she was so full of sorugh that she was nigh dede, and in so moche thought that she dwyned away that there laft nothinge on her saue the bones.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 35, ll. 28-31.



different manner. That is, the women are not clearly to blame for their actions here, and as such these are the only exempla in the Knight's work that point out, much as Anne de France and Christine de Pizan point out, that it is dangerous to be a woman rather than to be a willful, disobedient woman. The Knight's two stories illustrate how much care women must have for their reputations, which is emphasized in the closing of Chapter 24. Here the Knight directly addresses his daughters and tells them they should "haue alwey by you somme of youre frendes or of youre seruauntes," so that if the lights are put out or anything else happens, his daughters will not be at the "peryllle of euyll eyen and of euylle tonges that alweye espye and seye more harme than ther is And also for more surely to kepe youre honoure youre name and youre good fame ageynst lyers that wylle alwey saye the euylle and leue the good."<sup>240</sup> This direct address solidifies the Knight's appeal to his daughters' emotions: he cares for them and knows that even the appearance of wrongdoing can have drastic effects, such as shaming one to death because of public ridicule as in the second exemplum.<sup>241</sup>

The exempla that deal with public shame, but not necessarily the questioning of a woman's chastity, comprise the majority of chapters in the shame category of the shame/maim trope (15, 49, 63, 64, 69, 72, 74, 77, 78, 83, 103, and 106). The first of these chapters contains an exemplum rather like the testing of the three merchants' wives discussed above, not because it involves spousal violence, but rather because it aims at

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<sup>240</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 45, ll. 9-10, ll. 12-15.

<sup>241</sup> Here is perhaps an appropriate place to mention that the Knight recounts his memories of a fellow knight's assessment of women's reputations. In chapter 116 Geffroy de Lyege's actions are described as he rides through the countryside, inquiring after women's reputations: "yf he understode by ony maner that the lady of the manoyr or place were blamed of her honour and worship he shold haue gone out of his ryght way Rather than he had not gone to the yate of the same place and make there a faytte and put and sette his signes ageynste the yate And thenne rode ageyn in to his ryght way And contrary to this dede yf hit happed to hym to passe before the place of a good and Renommed lady or damoyselle al had he neuer so grete haste he wente to see her." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 155, ll. 14-21. There is no parallel passage in the Harley translation.

being entertaining and humorous for the audience. The lesson promulgated by this exemplum is that women ought not to eat delicacies without their husband's permission, which is a topic we have seen treated with much less humor in the story of the wife blinded in one eye by a splinter. Here, however, things are much more comedic as the wife plots with one of her servants to kill and eat her lord's favorite eel. Unfortunately for the wife and servant, the lord also possesses a "pye in a cage whiche spak and said all that she sawe."<sup>242</sup> Perhaps predictably, the magpie tells the husband after the eel has been eaten, but it is not the wife who is punished by the husband, who leaves after expressing his displeasure. Rather, it is the poor magpie: "the lady and the chamberere cam to the pye and plucked of alle the fethers of his hede saying Thou hast discovered vs of the ele and thus was the poure pye plumed and lost the fethers of his hede."<sup>243</sup> But the story does not end there, or it would not be included in the public humiliation category. After the magpie has been plucked, whenever a bald or tonsured guest, or one with a high forehead, came to the house, the magpie would always say, "ye haue told my lord of the ele," because of which the wife was "after moche scorned & mocked."<sup>244</sup> Though this exemplum contains much that is humorous, the majority of the remaining chapters are

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<sup>242</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 31, ll. 18-19. "a pie in a cage, that spake and wolde tell talys that she sawe do." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 22, ll. 10-11.

<sup>243</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 31, ll. 32-35. "the maistresse and the maide come to the pie, and plucked of all the fedres on the pyes hede, saieng, 'thou hast discovered us of the ele;' and thus was the pore pye plucked." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 22, ll. 24-26.

<sup>244</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 31, l. 37, 32, l. 3. "'ye spake of the ele,'" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 22, l. 28. "for this woman was afterward mocked for the pye and the ele." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 22, ll. 32-33, l. 19. In the Harley translation imprisonment is not mentioned, but Vashti is to be "putte [...] from hym, and [...] she shulde not come in his presence of all a yere, to geue other ensauple to obeye beter to her husbonde;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 85, ll. 24-26. The law in the Harley translation does mention imprisonment, however, along with other specifications Caxton's translation omits: "she shulde be mued all a yere, with litell mete and drinke, and kept from the comunicacion of all peple, for to show her defaute." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 85, ll. 30-32.

less interested in conveying the humor of misdeeds than in condemning the willfulness associated with them.

For example, Chapter 49 discusses the trip that a group of women are making on foot to a wedding. There arises a dispute between the older women and the younger women, who “ful were of their wyllle” and “wold not folowe” the older women who remain on the high road.<sup>245</sup> These young ladies are humiliated because they end up being greatly delayed and quite filthy when their shortcut lands them in muddy land, and they are repudiated by one of the older women for trying to advance themselves.<sup>246</sup>

The remainder of the chapters largely has to deal with a wife’s attitude toward her husband, and if that attitude involves pride, she is shamed. Chapter 63 tells the story of Apame, though the account given by the Knight does not entirely mesh with the apocryphal account in the Bible; the Knight’s version has her act pridefully toward her husband, the king, and his family so that she is eventually exiled.<sup>247</sup> Chapter 64 tells the story of Queen Vashti who refuses to attend her husband’s banquet; the Knight has her sentenced to being “shette bitwene two wallys that euery other [wife] shold take therby ensample to be better obedient to theyr lord than she was,” and a law is then made: women who disobey or disagree with their husbands can be imprisoned for a year and given “litol mete and drynke for her defaute.”<sup>248</sup> The refusal to eat with a husband crops

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<sup>245</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 71, ll. 23-24. A very compressed version of this appears in the Harley translation but in that version, rather than willfulness alone, the younger women are in a hurry to have their “new array and disguysing [...] be furst sayne atte the fest;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 63, ll. 34-35.

<sup>246</sup> Chapter 106 in *The Book* recounts a similar type of story, though age plays no role. It is a simple retelling of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins from Matthew 25:1-13. The lesson here is that preparedness is important, and clearly the younger girls in chapter 49 are not equipped with the same prepared reasoning as the older women. See Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 9, for a brief discussion of the iconography of the wise and foolish virgins in church decoration.

<sup>247</sup> See Apocrypha: 1 Ezdras 4:29-31.

<sup>248</sup> See Esther 1 for the Biblical account, which mentions nothing of imprisonment but does mention a law decreeing wifely obedience. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 94, ll. 13-14.

up again in Chapter 72, wherein a wife is punished for her refusal to eat with her husband by being forced to eat next to his dirty swineherd and served upon a tablecloth made from the dirty dishrags. Again this exemplum returns to the physical defilement that might be associated with the postmortem desecration of the willful women's bodies, though here her will is punished by being forced to dine next to the "foule and ouermuche hydous" swineherd.<sup>249</sup> We are also reminded by the Knight that obedience and humility are necessary in a wife "yf she wylle haue and kepe his [her husband's] loue and pees."<sup>250</sup> The second exemplum in Chapter 74 is part of the wife-testing trope that we have seen in the Cato chapters at the end of *The Book* and in Chapter 18. Here a man confesses to his wife that he has laid eggs; she reveals this to her gossip, and the rumor spreads until finally the husband confronts her before her family that not only has she not kept his secret, but she has magnified the number of eggs to five. As a result, "she was ashamed and helde her self for a foole and wyst not what she shold answer."<sup>251</sup> This is another humorous exemplum—there is no spousal abuse or imprisoning of disobedient wives, but again, she is publically shamed for her actions.

Chapter 103 modifies the pattern we have seen thus far because the relationship that is damaged is between an uncle and his neice. This story is part of the Good Sister/Bad Sister trope, which again highlights the contrast between the ends of those who are capable of good behavior and those of women who are incapable of approved

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<sup>249</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 103, l. 8. The Harley translation preserves this story but makes no mention of the swineherd's filthy appearance. This episode also fits nicely within the rubric of Amos's classed reading, though he does not discuss it; it seems to suggest that the class loathing is also part of the wife's punishment.

<sup>250</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 103, ll. 20-21. "all women aught to be humble, and to fulfill her husbondes comaundement, and to ete with hym in his presence rather thanne with ani other." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 95, ll. 12-15.

<sup>251</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 106, ll. 5-6. "the wiff was so sore ashamed, that she wost not what she might do nor sey, for there was none excusacion in her folye." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 97, ll. 22-24.

behavior. The exemplum explains the proper way to greet family that has been long absent. The uncle travels out of the country for an indeterminate amount of time and when he returns he comes to one niece's house while it is still dark, but rather than come to him directly, she "shette her self within for to bursshe and make clene her gowne to make her gay and fresshe," but she remains at this so long, he grows cross and rides off to the other sister's house.<sup>252</sup> The good sister comes to her uncle immediately even though she was "makyng [ . . . ] her breed" and "with her hands yet full of paste came and embraced hym and" asks him to pardon her dress.<sup>253</sup> She then makes him comfortable while she goes to dress herself properly, after greeting him personally. She is rewarded with both dresses, which her uncle had intended to split between the two sisters. The shame here is not necessarily public, but it is clear that the removal of gifts from one sister to the other is meant to mark out a hierarchy of filial affection as well as good and bad behavior.

The remaining chapters that deal with public humiliation are all biblical in source. Chapter 69 describes the story of Elkanah's wives, Anna and Peninnah.<sup>254</sup> Anna's patience alleviates her barrenness when God takes pity on her and Peninnah, who had been proud and fertile, loses favor because Elkanah "loued her [Anna] more than he dyd Fennenna [Peninnah] to whome her children were al dede."<sup>255</sup> Chapters 77 and 78 tell exempla featuring King Solomon. In Chapter 77 is the retelling of 3 Kings/1 Kings 2:21

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<sup>252</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 139, ll. 6-8. "And she went streite to her chaumbre, forto array her in the most fresshe wise [ . . . ]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 140, ll. 26-27.

<sup>253</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 139, ll. 17-18. "toke upon her to make leuein for brede of whete, and with her hondes as thei were, pasted with the leuein that she handeled, al floury [ . . . ]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 141, ll. 6-8.

<sup>254</sup> See 1 Samuel 1 and 2.

<sup>255</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 99, l. 36, 100, l. 1. "for the whiche her husbonde toke her in gret loue, and helde her more dere thanne that other wiff, whos children were dede." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 91, ll. 17-19.

wherein Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, asks permission to marry a pagan who was his father's, King David's, enemy.<sup>256</sup> Solomon refuses and she "held her thenne for nyce and ashamed."<sup>257</sup> Chapter 78 recounts his judgment over the infant from 3 Kings/1 Kings 3:16, with the result that "the treason of the fals woman" was "approued and knowen" publicly.<sup>258</sup> The last group deals with Eve as an archetypal badly behaved woman, and the chapters span 39 through 47, with each chapter focusing on a different fault. Chapter 39 identifies Eve as having "lytell kepte the commaundement of god" and as having committed "the synne of inobedyence."<sup>259</sup> At the feet of this sin are laid all her losses: death, pain during childbirth, and struggling to take food from the earth. There is not an explicit shaming statement in Chapter 39, or the other sections dealing with Eve, per se, but the Knight's structuring of these chapters to discuss her wrongdoing thoroughly and systematically is an attempt to shame Eve and to discourage women from repeating her follies. Each of the chapters shifts from Eve's story to a contemporary issue that a

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<sup>256</sup> The tale of David and Bathsheba itself appears in Chapter 76, with the Knight recasting the biblical narrative in the manner Jerome (c. 340-420) does in his *Adversus Jovinianum* (392-93), blaming the episode on Bathsheba since she "kembed & wessed her heer at a wyndowe where as kyng dauid myght well see her She had ouer fayr heres [.]" The Knight concludes the chapter saying that all the mischief and murder that results "cam by the pryde that bersabee had of her herte." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 107, ll. 6-7, 18-19. "she kembed her hede atte a wyndow, the kinge perceued her. And she was right faire merueylously in euery beaute that longith to woman, [...] by the pryde that Bersabee had of her herte." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 99, ll. 3-5, 16.

<sup>257</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 107, l. 27. "She held her thenne for nyce and ashamed of that she had be warned of her demaunde and requeste." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 99, ll. 25-26. There is also a second exemplum on the same theme in this chapter, which features the Duke of Athens' wife asking for him to marry his sister to her bastard son. He does not outright refuse her, but when she continues to demand when it will happen, he has her "conueyed in a castel." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 108, l. 7. "conueyed in a castel" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 100, l. 13. It is also noteworthy that this chapter ends with another admonition that wives must "require not her lord of nothing vnresonable or dishonest & hou þ<sup>1</sup> she must obeye hym." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 108, ll. 8-10. "she require not her lord of nothing vnresonable or dishonest, & hou þat she must obeye hym" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 100, ll. 14-16.

<sup>258</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 108, ll. 32-33. "and soo was the treason of the fals woman approued and knowen," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 101, ll. 7-8.

<sup>259</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 62, l. 17, ll. 20-21. "lytell kepte the comaundement of God," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 54, l. 33, 55 l. 1. "the synne to breke the comaundement of God," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 55, ll. 5-6.

medieval woman might have to encounter, and thus the shame is not necessarily textualized and part of the narrative as it has been in the other shame narratives that are part of the shame/maim trope, but instead the chapters work directly to shame the reader who may have engaged in behavior that can be likened to Eve's behavior, she "wherby the deth is come and entred in to this world."<sup>260</sup>

The Knight's discussion of Eve may explain the cosmic horror with which a willful or disobedient woman is met within the rest of *The Book*—i.e. she must be hurt, shamed, killed, or tortured to death. The disobedient woman signifies for the medieval Christian male the loss of prelapsarian wealth, freedom, and eternal life, and thus she must be punished through shame or violence or some other type of suffering.<sup>261</sup> There is no woman more abject than Eve, and the worst thing for the Knight is that she lurks everywhere, in all women, and thus his narrative compulsion with tracking down the inner-Eves of the women in his narratives and punishing them, much as God punishes Eve herself, along with the remainder of humanity, in Genesis 3:16-19. In this chapter the Knight likens Eve's disobedience to women who now disobey rules because someone has flattered them. The Knight also warns that being alone with the serpent was like being alone with someone who is not Eve's kin, so women ought to avoid such as well. Amos has an insightful reading of the Knight's discussion of Eve's first three follies:

They [the follies] are read as failures to regulate properly the self in relation to courtly males: respectively, as failing to report to her noble lord, engaging with courtly seducers, and falling victim to false flattery. These follies constellate around the importance of women being skillful

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<sup>260</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 62, ll.15-16. "wherethrough the dethe ys entered in to this worlde," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 54, ll. 31-32.

<sup>261</sup> This point is magnified by Chapter 45, which cites Eve's folly as not believing that she would die by God's commandment. This allows the chapter to dilate outward to consider the fate of everyone: death. The chapter also includes the biblical images of separating the wheat from the chaff (see Matthew 3:12 and Jeremiah 23:28) and of the thief in the night image of death (see 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and 2 Peter 3:10). On Eve's association with death see Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 5-6.

readers, for the specific deficiencies recall the stereotypically female inability to discern properly the speaking situation and fulfill their role in it: women are condemned for not speaking in private when they ought and for speaking in public when they ought not.<sup>262</sup>

Much of the remainder of the follies that Eve is accused of by the Knight associate her behavior with a failure of chastity, particularly when they are related to contemporary lessons for the female audience, as indeed Chapter 39's suggestion that it is best only to be alone with one's kin does. Chapter 40 convicts Eve of not speaking with her husband before speaking of her own will to the serpent; the chapter also contains an exemplum about a woman who avoids an extramarital affair by telling her suitor that she "sholde therof speke to her lord" for permission before she answered him, which caused him to leave off the pursuit.<sup>263</sup> Chapter 41 likens Eve's equivocal description of God's commandment<sup>264</sup> to women who answer calls for illicit love without firmness, are easily convinced via talking that illicit love is acceptable, and then are left disgraced afterward.<sup>265</sup> Eve's next folly in Chapter 42 is that she looks at the tree, and so vision is

<sup>262</sup> Amos, "The Gentrification of Eve," 29.

<sup>263</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 63, ll. 37-38. "wolde wete her husbandes will, and geue hym an ansuere." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 56, ll. 20-21.

<sup>264</sup> The Knight, following biblical text, says the commandment is "yf they ete of that fruyte they sholde deye of it," but that Eve replies to the serpent that the commandment is more conditional: "yf we ete of it it might fortune soo that by aduventure we shold dye." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 64, l. 9, ll. 11-12. "yef they ete of the fruit, that they shuld deye;" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 56, ll. 29-30. "'yef we ete of this fruit perauventure we shull deye,'" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 56, ll. 31-32.

<sup>265</sup> I want to mention here just briefly an image that Grössinger discusses and which is almost an inverse image of Eve, though it is not of Mary. Perhaps rather than an inverse, it might better be said to illustrate what women need in order not to succumb to the same faults Eve did. The image is a c. 1525 woodcut called *The Wise Woman* and it displays a diagramed housewife—that is, the image is a picture of a woman with all her parts labeled with small text boxes: "Her stiff body is laden with the symbols that indicate her qualities, explained in the accompanying text-boxes: eyes like those of a falcon in order to keep clear of shameful behavior; a key in her ear, referring to her willingness to listen to the word of God; the lock in her mouth, preventing her from using bad language and talking unnecessarily; the mirror to ward off pride; the turtle-dove on her breast illustrating that she will let no other man but her husband near her; the serpent around her waist, demonstrating that she will speak to no one except her husband; the jug she carries representing charity towards the poor; and the horses' hooves symbolising her unshakeable chastity, because with them she stands steadfast and will not be moved." Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 43-44. This image reflects a sort of pictorial presentation of the rhetorical surveillance that the Knight's book cultivates



aligned with inciting lust: “when thenemye fyndeth them in suche foole lokyng & delyte he pryketh and enflammeth them by suche temptacion wherein he holdeth them fast bounden in soo moche that he maketh them to fall in the fylthe or ordure of that they desire to doo wherefore they lose both body & sowle thenne all this euylle cometh only by fowle beholding.”<sup>266</sup> Chapter 43 escalates the looking to touching, faulting Eve for touching the fruit because “foolisshe touchyng chaufeth and enflammeth the herte.”<sup>267</sup> Chapter 44 is the last of the Eve chapters that presents the sexualization of Eve’s misdeeds, though this time through the pathway of gluttony for her folly of consuming the fruit is likened to people who “delyteth them in delicious metes and in strong and swete wyne wherof they norysse their body and fylle theyr bely by whiche delyte they be chaufed and meued to the fowle delyte of lechery.”<sup>268</sup> These are the most important chapters from Eve’s condemnation to consider in the context of shame. The majority of Eve’s follies are associated with lust, which suggests that lust or a failure in chastity, or perhaps even the appearance of such, is the most dangerous way for a young woman to misbehave for it could damage not only her name and reputation, but that of her family as well. The Knight’s rhetoric of concern about female chastity does not appear solely within the shame/maim trope, however. Chastity remains a concern even in exempla dealing primarily with the supernatural, as we will see.

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and simultaneously presents a number of carceral motifs that indicate boundaries against which the wife will not cross, again resurrecting the image of the panopticon.

<sup>266</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 65, ll. 23-27. “For whanne the deuell of hell findithe folke togederes with suche folisshe fals looks, he temptithe and enflamithe, and makithe hem to fall in the foule orible synne of lechery, thourgh whiche they lese bothe body and soule.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 57, ll. 28-32.

<sup>267</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 66, l. 12. “for leude touching and handelyng sterith and chafithe the flesshe and the body, and blindithe reson that shulde gouerne all, and makithe thanne folke fall into orible synne of luxurie.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 58, ll. 14-17.

<sup>268</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 66, ll. 32-35. The connection to lechery is not present in the Harley translation, but the folly of delighting in the taste of the fruit is. Amos notes this predilection of the Knight’s “compounding of oral-appetitive associations” in conjunction with Eve as well by “conflating the transgressive sites of a woman: her mouth and her sex.” Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve,” 28, 29.

## B. Visions and the Supernatural: Good and Bad

There are a number of exempla in *The Book* that deal with some aspect of religious vision or another supernatural element, whether it be the involvement of the devil or Venus, or some other supernatural entity.<sup>269</sup> I examine here only the exempla that I have not discussed above in the context of the shame/maim trope. The first group that I discuss is the positive, divine reward exempla, and the first of these appears in Chapter 7, which praises fasting. Within this chapter is an exemplum that tells of a crusader who is prevented from going to hell because he died in battle without being confessed because of his fasting devotions on Wednesdays and Fridays, and as a consequence, when the knight is beheaded in battle, he “spack after tyll that the preest cam and confessed hym.”<sup>270</sup> This exemplum is somewhat atypical as it involves the man primarily as the recipient of the reward, whereas typically the men who are involved in this type of exemplum appear in an advisory capacity, either interpreting the dreams and visions of women, or communicating their own. In the next chapter, 8, a Roman prostitute who fasts on Fridays for Christ and Saturdays for Mary is saved when she falls into a pit at night and calls out for Mary’s help. A “voys” tells her that she is going to be saved but that she must become chaste, and in the morning she is drawn out of the hole.<sup>271</sup> Chapters 31 and 32 tell similar stories of women who want to hear the mass but have some obstruction to doing so.<sup>272</sup> In

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<sup>269</sup> These occur in the following chapters from Caxton: 3, 4, 8, 9, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31-34, 51-53, 57, 62, 84, 89, 102, 121, 123, 129, and 135.

<sup>270</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 19, ll. 33-34. “and [he] deied not till a preest come to shrive hym,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 10, ll. 9-10.

<sup>271</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 20, l. 36. “a uoys,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 11, l. 3. A similar exemplum appears in chapter 86 wherein St. Elizabeth and God preserve the only son of a woman who cares for orphans once he has fallen into a pit in a river. The woman is able to recover her son once, after he has been missing for eight days: she has a dream of his location along with being told why he has been saved. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 117, ll. 14-29. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 112, ll. 5-23.

<sup>272</sup> Chapter 110 also offers an exemplum involving spiritual reward when a Roman lady is at mass and moved to pity for a cold, poor woman “which was sakyng for cold.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord,

the first case the miracle is that one of the “pyeces of sacrament” that the traveling friars who sing mass for the woman have prepared “spryng[s] in to the mouthe of the good lady in maner of a lytel bright clerenes.”<sup>273</sup> In the second example, the lady is traveling on pilgrimage when her chaplain falls off his horse and cannot sing the mass, and when she complains to God, “anone god sente to her an Angel in stede of a preest” to sing the mass.<sup>274</sup>

The final example that I have classified in this positive category is not as simply positive as most of the other examples have been, but is closest to the first example of the martyred crusader. In this case we have an exemplum in support of education of children on religious matters. A nine-year-old child is taught religion, and he is able to maintain his arguments against “paynims.”<sup>275</sup> From here the tale both darkens and takes on an odd resemblance to Chaucer’s *Prioress’s Tale* because the young child is martyred without forsaking God, but rather affirms that God is in both heaven and his heart. After his death his murderers cut him open, remove his heart, cut it open, and “they sawe a whyte douue that yssued oute of hit wherfor some of them by this ensample were conuertyd to the

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147, l. 35. “trembled for colde in a gret froste and colde winter,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 152, l. 29. The lady takes the poor woman home, clothes, feeds, and warms her, and miraculously “whyles she was aboute this charytable dede the preest that sayd the masse couthe speke neuer a word vnto the tyme that she was come to the Chirche ageyne And as soon as she was come ageyne he spake as he dyd to fore.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 148, ll. 1-4. “the preest that was atte messe might neuer speke worde vnto the tyme that the ladi was come ayen,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 153, ll. 1-2.

<sup>273</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 53, l. 32, ll. 33-34. “he brake the oste in the .iiij. parties.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 46, l. 9. “And he sawe one of the parties lepe into the good ladies mouthe in manere of a gret clerenesse or a light,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 46, ll. 9-11.

<sup>274</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 54, l. 13. “he [god] sent her a seint in stede of a preest to saie her a masse,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 46, l. 27.

<sup>275</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord 121, ll. 35-36. “payens,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 118, l. 4.

feythe of god.”<sup>276</sup> This conversion miracle, which the Knight has put to use chiefly to exonerate himself from the misdeed of educating his daughters, again features a male child, and seems oddly out of place within the context of the larger work. Perhaps the best way to understand both this narrative and that of the beheaded crusader is through Amos’s classed lens. These figures might both be understood as noble, obviously in the crusader’s case since he has weapons and arms with which to fight. The child’s nobility is less clear, but he is said to have been “four yere at the schole” by the age of nine, which does not suggest the childhood of the laboring or merchant classes who might have had their children employed or apprenticed by this time. However, if we do accept the child’s nobility, we can view these exempla as a reaffirmation of the moral qualities of the nobility; viewed thusly, the passages are less variant and seem to attain a rhetorical goal—reifying social class boundaries through moral othering—while providing entertaining accounts that are simultaneously miraculous and edifying.<sup>277</sup>

The next group of exempla that deal with the supernatural revolves around holy men having visions of their flocks or of the realms in which they reside. Chapters 27 and 28 are largely the same: holy men see demons alighting on their inattentive congregations. The chief difference in the chapters is that Chapter 28 features both Martin of Tours and Saint Bryce as the holy men who witness these demons.<sup>278</sup> The inattentiveness of the parishioners in Chapters 27 and 28 is augmented in the exemplum in Chapter 29 with both pride and sloth, particularly as they exist in the nobility of the

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<sup>276</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 122, ll. 8-10. “whanne they had opened his hert, they sawe that there flawe oute of it a white doue. And bi that miracle, mani of hem were conuerted vnto the faith, and beleued in God.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 118, ll. 15-18.

<sup>277</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 121, l.34. “the whiche had be iiij yere atte the scole” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 118, ll. 2-3.

<sup>278</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 48, ll.16-38; 49, ll. 1-30; 49, ll. 33-37; 50, ll. 1-18. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 40, ll. 15-33; 41, ll. 1-29; 41, ll. 32-33; 42, ll. 1-21. For depictions of gossiping women at mass see both woodcuts reproduced in Lehner and Lehner, *Devils*, 6.

parish. The noble husband and wife lie in rather than waking before noon in time to hear mass, and as a result the entire parish cannot hear the service; the married couple and their priest have a dream vision in which a flock of sheep and their shepherd are terrorized by two large black hogs, who are then in turn pursued to death by hunters with black dogs. The priest explains the dream vision to the couple; their sinfulness prevents the other parishioners from enjoying mass, and will ultimately be their spiritual doom since they are represented in the dream by the pigs. Thus, while the visions prior to this were partly amusement and reproof for the audience, this exemplum is less interested in entertainment and provides a more serious punishment for the wife and husband than simply being made to appear ridiculous to the mass-providing holy persons as in the two previous chapters: “the hooly man said that he shold thre sundayes knele to fore his parissshens and crye them mercy and praye them to pardone hym And that they wold praye to god for hym and hys wyf also And from thenne forthon they wold be the firdt to fore other at the Chirche.”<sup>279</sup> This punishment seems designed to punish both sloth and pride, which the nobleman manifested in his thinking he had the right to rob the parish of their service by sleeping in since he is the most important person in the parish in his own eyes. It is also a realistic punishment, rather than drawn for amusement, and as such the visionary aspect of this exemplum is much less about spectacle and more about revealing spiritual endangerment, just as in the first set of positive examples the miraculous occurrences were about confirming the piety of the recipient of the divine rewards,

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<sup>279</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 52, ll. 15-18. “And the holy man counsailed that on thre Sondagis he shulde knele on his knees afore all the parissshenes, and crie hem mercy, and that they wolde forgeue hym his misdede that he had kepte hem so longe a dayes from her masse, And that thei wold prairie to God foryeue hym and his wyff, and he wolde euer after be one of the furst atte the chirche.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 44, ll. 18-24.

whether those are a miraculous communion, an angel-sung mass, or the preservation of their life or that of a loved one.<sup>280</sup>

The final discussion that I have of a holy man having visions is similar in tone to the example we have just considered and occurs in Chapter 57, which I have discussed above in terms of the punishment of the Queen of Naples who gives birth to a bastard son who assumes the throne and proceeds to wreak havoc on the kingdom, but there is also another element to the story in which a baron seeks out information about the realm from “an hooly heremyte moche religious” who predicts that “as long as this kynge [the bastard] and one his sone shalle be on lyue the tribulacion shalle not cesse” because “this kyng that now regneth is not trewe heyr to the Crowne but is borne in aduoultre And therefore he may not be peasyble to the reame ne haue the Ioysaunce of it wherefore he and his reame must haue sorowe and tribulacion as long as a fals heyr shall possesse it But his sone shal haue none heyr And so shalle fynysse the fals lygnee [...]”<sup>281</sup> The hermit who predicts this also predicts the punishment and death of the adulterous queen at her son’s hands, and we are told that “all this befelle afterward as he [the hermit] said.”<sup>282</sup> Thus, we have seen three essential types of miraculous activity in *The Book*: some sort of spiritual reward given to those of great piety, the use of visionary material to mock sinners in an amusing way, the use of visionary material to warn sinners of their impending doom, and finally here as a sort of moral prophetic reading of the future that

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<sup>280</sup> The exemplum here also problematizes Amos’s reading of the classed othering in *The Book*, i.e., the passage presents an understanding of the nobleman here as not morally perfected.

<sup>281</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, ll. 22-29. “it shulde dure as longe as this man were kinge, for he is not rightfull heire, but misgoten, and therfor the Reme that he hathe no right [to] may neuer acorde with hym, nor may not haue the loue of the peple; and whanne he ys dede, ye shull haue rest and habundaunce of all good. And as the Ermite saide, in al thinge it was;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 75, ll. 29-34.

<sup>282</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 83, l. 38. See previous footnote for the parallel passage from the Harley translation.

explains the woes of a culture according to the sins of its rulers. So the Knight has a wide range of uses for the spiritual in his text, and now I would like to turn to its more overtly negative appearances.

As we have seen spiritual rewards, there are also two accounts of supernatural punishments, aside from the ones we examined in the spiritual violence section above in the shame/maim trope. Both exempla have again to do with one of the Knight's favorite topics: fashion and personal appearance. In the first case in Chapter 25, a noblewoman refuses to dress up for Sunday services because "I [the noblewoman] se no men of estate here."<sup>283</sup> The noblewoman contends with her servant that her actions are not wrong and even dares God to smite her, though it is noteworthy that there is no male religious authority that intercedes and interprets what happens to the noblewoman, but rather we are given her understanding of it:

late come al that may come therof [of her not dressing up for mass] Anone with that worde there cam a wynde all hoote and smote her in such wyse that she might not styre ne remeue more than a stone And thenne she confessid her and repentyd and auowed to many pylgremages And was caryed in a lytyer And she told to al men of worship that she fonde the cause of this maladye that had so taken her And that it was the vengeance of god And she said that she had more grete ioye and gretter playsyre for to make her queynt and gaye for peple of estate that cam from without forth in to suche a place where as she was for to playse them and to haue parte of their beholdynges than she dyde for ony deuocion at hyhe festes of oure lord ne of his sayntes And sithe she sayd to gentyll wymmen where as she arrayed her My loues loo see here the vengeance of god And tolde to them alle the fayt And saide to them I was woned to haue a faire body and gente And so sayd euery man of me And for the preysyng the bobaunce and the glorye that I took I clad me with ryche clothes and fyn wel pourfyld and furryd And shewed them att festes and Iustes For somtyme the fruyte that was in me was nouzt & folye & alle that I dyde was for the glorye and loos of the world And whan I herde saye of the companye that sayde for to please me look there is a wel bodyed woman which is wel worthy to be bilouyd of somme knyght Thenne al my herte

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<sup>283</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 45, ll. 27-28. "we shull see no folke of astate to-daye." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 118, ll. 15-18.

reioysed in me Now maye ye see what I am For I am now gretter than a pype. And am not like as I was ne the gownes ne robes that I loued & had so dere that I wold not were them on sondayes ne on the feestes for thonoure of god shall now neuer serue me And therfor my fair loues & frendes god hath shewed to me my folye that spared myn araye on holy dayes for to shewe me fresshe & Ioly to fore men of astate for to haue preysyng & beholding of them wherefore I pray yow my frendes that ye take ensample here at me.<sup>284</sup>

This quotation displays at length the spectacularization of this woman's life: her sin has become a physical punishment that she must cope with on a daily basis, humiliating her where she once felt the most pride. Notwithstanding, I have located this exemplum outside the shame/maim trope because while one may argue that the lady has indeed been shamed (and perhaps even maimed if we consider the changes in her physical body to make manifest the fact that she was puffed up with pride), after seven years of doing what the speech above does, i.e. testifying to her sinfulness and repenting publicly and discouraging others from sinning in the same manner, God eventually "sente to her

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<sup>284</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 45, l. 37-38, 46, ll. 1-29. "'Fall what woll fall, y wol do more euell.' And assone as she had saide that worde, there come a sodeine wynde that smote the ladi that she might not sterve nor remeue more thanne a stone, and fro that tyme forwarde she most be bore two and fro, and swall, and become grete. And thanne she knowleged her misdede, and vowed pilgrimages, and was caried to hem in a litter And to all folke of worshipe she tolde what was the cause of her sekenesse, and that it was the uengeaunce of God that fell on her, the whiche she had well deserued, for she saide that all her lyff she had sette her to worshipe the worlde more thanne God, And hade more ioye to make her plesaunt to the worlde, to folke of astate, and straungers, that she might haue the lokes of hem, than for loue or ani deuocion that she had to God, other to ani of his seintes. And after she saide to yonge gentill women, 'Takithe hede of the vengeaunce of God that is fall on me; for sum tyme y had a faire body, and small, as euery body saide, to plesse me. And y, for bobounce and for to be preised of the worlde, y clothed me in riche clothinge and in good furies, and y made it to be shape in the best wise, streite and well sittinge and iuste, that sum tyme the fruite that was in me suffered payne and was in perell; and all that y dede to haue veyne glorie of this worlde. And whanne y herde the pepill that preised me, the whiche thei dede to plesse me, saieng, 'Here is a faire body of a woman the whiche is lykly to be loued of a worthi knight,' thanne my herte reioysed of gladnesse. Now may ye see what y am, for y am gretter thanne a pipe. And y am not lyk her that was sumtyme so queint and gay in my good arraye, streite and iuste, that y helde so cherey that y wolde not were it in the halydayes and Sondayes in the worshipe of God. And therfor, ladyes and frendes, God hath shewed me my foly for sparing my clothis on the holy day, and to were hem afore men of astate and straungers, to be preised and haue the losse and loking of hem. Wherfor y prairie you all that ye take here atte me a faire ensauple.'" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 37, ll. 21-34, 38, ll. 1-22. Note also that in the Harley translation the woman suffers this physical state for only a year before being healed.



helthe” so that she could live normally but with greater humility directed at God.<sup>285</sup>

While this exemplum certainly features elements of the spectacular, it is also fairly serious and not obviously meant to entertain; the second example of a supernatural punishment, however, is very much supposed to be entertaining and verges upon the bawdy.

In Chapter 30 a lady who has the opposite problem of the swollen noblewoman above, that is, she spends too much time dressing for church and is frequently very tardy, is punished for her pride. This punishment is not nearly as painful or mortifying as the noblewoman’s above, and is clearly meant to be received partly as an indication of God’s sense of humor. As the people who are anticipating her at church wait, they begin to murmur:

God sende to her an euyl sight in her myrroure that causeth vs this day and so oftymes to muse & to abyde for her & thenne as it plesyd god for an ensample, as she loked in the Myrroure she sawe therin the fende whiche showed to her his hinder parte so fowle and horryble that the lady wente oute of her wytte and was al demonyak a long tyme and after god sente her helthe.<sup>286</sup>

The lady certainly suffers a frightful experience and is said to go mad, but she neither must testify about her sin, nor must she endure it for a period of seven years, as the noblewoman who refused to dress herself properly for church did. The scatological nature of the punishment additionally makes it laughable and entertaining, as does the sense of

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<sup>285</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 46, ll. 31-32. “he sent her helthe, and heled her hole of all her sekenesse.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 38, ll. 24-25.

<sup>286</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 53, ll. 6-12. “sum of hem cursed her, and saide, ‘The deuell araye her onis, and be her merour, for because she makithe us euery day in use and to abide after her.’ And as God wolde shew for ensauple, atte the same tyme and houre as she loked in a mirror, in stede of the mirror, the deuell turned to her his ars, the whiche was so foule and orible that for ferde she was wode and oute of her mynde, and was so sike longe; and atte the laste God sent her her witte;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 45, ll. 8-16. For a reproduction of the German woodcut showing this scene see Lehner and Lehner, *Devils*, 7. Grötecke discusses a similar visual motif for vanity in hell scenes: “devils hold a mirror in front of her and comb her hair.” Grötecke, “Representing the Last Judgement,” 253.

the punishment stemming from the people she inconvenienced, as it is their curse that generates God's punishment of her.<sup>287</sup>

God's reaction to sinful behavior is not the only supernatural reaction described in *The Book*. For example, both Venus and the devil appear a number of times in the Knight's work, acting as agents that foster sins that are already at work within individuals, as I have discussed above with both the *galois* and *galoises* as well as the burgess who could not set aside her anger prior to her death. I would like to extend the discussions begun there in this final portion of my chapter dealing with the miraculous and supernatural exempla in *The Book*. I begin here by discussing the appearance of Venus as she is described either wholly negatively (by the Knight's Wife) or as largely negative by the Knight himself.<sup>288</sup> The purely negative Venus appears in the chapters narrated by the Knight's Wife, 123 and 129. Venus comes up in the Wife's opposition to young women having paramours because this can lead to distraction during mass, i.e. one's thoughts are upon love or sexuality when they ought to be directed at God. We have seen that such inattention can be mocked or can be taken quite seriously. The Wife claims that such distractions are "the arte or crafte of the goddesse that men calle Venus the whiche had the name of a planete as I herd saye of a good and trewe man whiche preched and sayd how ones the deuylle entred in to the body of a dampned woman whiche was Ioly and gaye and moche amerous The deuylle that was within her body

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<sup>287</sup> Again, this incident troubles the binary reading of class and morality that Amos proposes for morality in Caxton's edition and suggests that a full understanding of the text will not privilege examination of class over examination of gender and spiritual matters.

<sup>288</sup> The maligning of Venus's image is not merely textual or unusual. Grössinger reproduces and describes a 1494 woodcut from *The Ship of Fools* by Sebastian Brant: "woman is personified as Lady Venus, instigating foolish love by men, for she is seen with all her fools, i.e. men, at her beck and call [...]. [...] She holds a donkey, an ape, and men in fools' costumes on leashes, while behind her lurks the figure of Death, thus pointing to the deceptive nature of love and the transience of all worldly pleasures." Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 96-97.

made her to doo many fals myracles wherfor the paynims helde her for a goddesse and worshipped her as a god.”<sup>289</sup> Here we have an etiology of the goddess Venus that euhemerizes her compounded with the more contemporary medieval theory of possession. Furthermore, the demonization of Venus is augmented by the Wife’s continued narration of her mythical life, which includes, according to the Wife, inciting the deaths of many innocent men: “And this Venus was she that gaf counceyll to the Troians that they shold sende Parys [...] to grece and that she shold make hym rauysshe and haue with hym the fairest lady of al grece wherof she sayde trouthe [...] for the whiche faytte or dede were slayne afterward more than xl kynges and xij CM other persones and mo wherof this Venus was of al thys grete meschyef pryncipall cause.”<sup>290</sup> If possession by a demon were not enough to condemn Venus in the Wife’s eyes, this fault of the Trojan War ought to be. It is particularly significant when we consider the previously discussed shame/maim exempla from Chapter 56 that deal with women who start wars for their own amusement: the Knight’s narratives have these women punished with death and dismemberment and locate the fault for such an end clearly within the women themselves and their sinful behavior. The Wife has clearly explained that Venus is a negative figure, but I can also show that Venus, for the Wife, is a sort of stand-in for the devil himself.

After blaming the Trojan War on Venus, the Wife goes on to describe her as “an euylle goddesse fulle of euylle temptacion She is the goddesse of loue whiche kyndelet and chauffeth the amerous hertes and maketh them to thynke bothe day and nyght to the

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<sup>289</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 165, ll. 13-19. The Harley translation breaks off before this chapter.

<sup>290</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 165, ll. 20-27. The Harley translation breaks off before this chapter.

loye and foule delytes of lechery And specially whan they be at the masse or heryng the dyuyn seruyse the deuyl causeth this for to trouble their feythe and theyr deuocion whiche they haue toward oure lord.”<sup>291</sup> Here we see a clear alliance between both Venus and the devil in the Wife’s description of her; Venus, like the devil in the spiritual violence exempla discussed above, encourages sin that is within the heart of the individual, provoking sin and preventing repentance, as we saw specifically in the case of the wrathful burgess who is prevented by the devil-toad’s paws from repenting her grudge. The Wife again mentions Venus as “the goddesse of lechery” in Chapter 129, solidifying her wholly negative read of the mythological figure and her alignment with the devil’s role in tempting and testing humanity. I wish to examine one more instance of Venus’s appearance in *The Book*, and this in the chapter on *galois* and *galoises*, which is part of the Knight’s narration. Herein the Knight describes Venus more ambivalently as “the goddesse [...] whiche hath grete power vpon yongthe [...] For somme she maketh to be amerous of loue reasonable And other of folysshe loue and unreasonable.”<sup>292</sup> While this initially seems to be a slightly more positive reading of Venus—she can infect young people with reasonable love rather than unchaste and irrational sexual desire—the Knight also unites her deeds with the devil. The Knight claims that the *galois* and *galoises* are affected by “the deuylle” who “by his arte” made them die “with the helpe of the flame of venus goddesse of loue and lechery.”<sup>293</sup> Thus the role of Venus in *The Book* is parallel to that of the devil’s when he appears in the guise of the tempter or the promoter of various sins, though obviously Venus’s special realm is the promotion of sexual gratification.

<sup>291</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 165, ll. 27-33. The Harley translation breaks off before this chapter.

<sup>292</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 161, l. 16, 11. 17-18. The Harley translation breaks off before this chapter.

<sup>293</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 161, ll. 13-19. The Harley translation breaks off before this chapter.

Having begun the discussion of supernatural figures by addressing the role of one of the devil's assistants, we might now turn to his role within *The Book*. The discussions above, including of Chapter 62 wherein the devil encourages the ropemaker's wife to repeat her adultery, have shown us the devil as tempter.<sup>294</sup> This concept first appears in *The Book* when the Knight catalogs the Seven Deadly Sins and claims that their practitioners are forced to continue in sin because "therin the deuyll holdeth them faste bounden vnto the tyme of shewynges of very and pure confession."<sup>295</sup> This occurs additionally in *The Book* in an exemplum from Chapter 135 that condemns the failure to leave a proper will that provides for one's estate and burial and division of property; in the tale a woman leaves unexpected treasure after her death, and her daughter fails to provide a proper tomb or pay for prayers for her dead mother. The Knight comments at the end of the chapter, claiming that the devil has been at work in the daughter's mother who hoarded the gold secretly: "the deuyll is subtyll to tempte the folke of the synne where he seeth them most entatched & soo fast he holdeth them in it that they maye not leue it withoute to be therof Confessyd and maketh them his seruauntes as he dyd the forsayd lady For he dyd soo moche that she was subgette and seruaunt to her gold in suche wyse that she durst not take of hit to doo her ony good."<sup>296</sup> This generalization about the devil's role in life is a good way to consider how he functions in the majority of

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<sup>294</sup> "[...] al this is but temptacion of the deuyll whiche holdeth and kepeth the synnars With brennyng and enflamed hertes to thende he may doo them to falle within his grynnes or nettes." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 91, ll. 13-17. "the more the synne is abhominable the egerkyer thei be tempted bi the deuell," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 82, ll. 12-13.

<sup>295</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 61, ll. 9-10. "and the deuell holdithe hem bounde in his seruice till thei be vnbounde by confession," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 53, ll. 30-31.

<sup>296</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 181, ll. 1-6. The Harley translation breaks off before this chapter. Such arrangements were not unusual: "A surprisingly common type of bequest in wills specified that money should be left to endow chantry chapels in order that they might continue 'forever' or 'as long as the world shall stand.' [...] In the meantime, a priest was daily to pray for the donor's soul, the souls of his kin, and the souls of all Christians." Clifford Davidson, "The Signs of Doomsday in Drama and Art," *Historical Reflections* 26, no. 2 (2000): 223-45, 225.

his appearances in *The Book*, as a tempter and as a figure who urges sinners into stubborn, willful devotion to their sin.

The final appearance of the devil I would like to discuss occurs in Chapter 84, where he takes on a role similar to that he plays in Chapter 30, where he appears and punishes the lady who lingers over her appearance by showing her his backside. The exemplum in Chapter 84 is set up as a negative parallel to the biblical Leah and Jacob who are good parents because they never “cursyd them [their children] but blamed and repreued them by other maner and dede.”<sup>297</sup> In the negative exemplum two angry and violent parents who frequently argue, curse their son with something that might have the Modern English equivalent of “the devil take you.”<sup>298</sup> As a result, “the fende cam that seased and toke hym by the one hand and lyfte hym vp fro the ground And where as he touched hym the fyre sprang oute and loste his hand For whiche cause he was al his lyf in daunger and parylle.”<sup>299</sup> Unfortunately the punishment that is meted out in this case of the devil’s appearance does not seem to be fairly merited by the child upon whom it is inflicted. The exemplum does convey, however, a sense of the reality of the supernatural and supra-rational world; there are things that exist within the Knight’s reality that are not commonly acceptable today, and part of the place of the miraculous and the diabolical within the rhetoric of his conduct book is to coerce proper behavior from his daughters.

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<sup>297</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 114, ll. 17-18. “they cursed hem not atte no tyme, but blamed hem with correccion as belongithe vnto fader and moder to do vnto thaire childe;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 108, ll. 14-16.

<sup>298</sup> The text does not give their precise words but states: “the fader and the moder [...] wente and gaf hym to the deuyl.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 114, ll. 26-28. “thai betoke hym and gaue hym vnto the deuell of hell.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 108, ll. 26-27.

<sup>299</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 114, ll. 28-31. “all soddenly the foule anemy cesed the childe by the armes and lefte hym up from the erthe. And ouer all where as the deuell had touched the childe, the fere fastened upon hym in suche wise that the childe loste his membres, and was evermore afterward disfigured.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 108, ll. 27-31. See Lehner and Lehner, *Devils*, 7 for a reproduction of the German woodcut depicting this scene.

The place of the supernatural in *The Book* can be to reward good behavior, punish bad behavior, and demonstrate the dangers of tempting the devil, either through cursing others or through being lax with one's own moral vigilance.

### C. Shining Pearls: Exemplars to Follow

The final category of exempla I would like to examine from *The Book* contains positive role models without negative counterparts within the same chapter. As with the announced negative examples of women beginning with Eve, there are announced positive examples as well. Chapters 82 through 101 are supposed to present positive portrayals of women; compared to the 29% of the total number of chapters that the negative examples make up, these announced positive chapters make up only 13% of the total number of chapters, and slightly less than 10% if we adjust down the total to reflect the number of chapters (5) that are presented in the positive section but also include a negative portrayal of women. I will discuss below only the positive exempla that I have not discussed above in the supernatural trope section.

Chapter 10 of *The Book* focuses on courtesy and two exempla that support being courteous. The first is simply a recounting of a historical person, Pierre de Craon, who “hathe gotten and conquerd moo knyghtes squyers and other peple to serue hym and to doo his playsyrs by his grete curtosye in the tyme that he bare armes than other dyd for money eyther for other thynges.”<sup>300</sup> The second exemplum is more properly a narrative and features a noblewoman who removes her hood when she sees a tailor, and when she is asked why, she replies that she would rather “take it of to hym [the tailor] than to haue

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<sup>300</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 24, ll. 13-16. “that conquered the knyghtes and squyers by his curtesie and humilite to do hem [more] plesaunce in the tyme of his were, than other lords couthe gete with her gold and siluer or ani other yeftes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 14, ll. 20-23.

lefte it vnto a gentyll man And that was reputed for ryght wel done.”<sup>301</sup> This presentation of the virtue of courtesy suggests, as do both Christine de Pizan and Anne de France, that courtesy can be used as a mode of flattering, manipulating, and winning over others in the public audience. That is, if one shows oneself to be courteous and humble toward all people, it will improve one’s reputation and prevent rumor from easily being circulated and accepted, whereas one who is haughty in demeanor to servants or others may find that it negatively affects one’s public persona. The Knight even explicitly states that courtesy can be used as a form of social control: “But that [courtesy] whiche is done vnto small gentyllmen and gentyll wymmen and to other of lasse degre that honoure and curtosye comen of a fre and courtoys hert And the lytell or poure man or woman to whome it is done thynketh that he is happy to receyue it and hath therin a grete playsyre And gyueth ageyne grete honoure to hym or her that hath done to hym suche curtoys and honoure And by this maner of the small peple to whome is done suche curtoyse or honoure cometh the grete loos and renomme whiche growth fro day to day.”<sup>302</sup> These positive exempla act almost inversely to the negative exempla; as the willful women receive their just punishments, those who are humble receive their just rewards—a good reputation.

The majority of the chapters that are purely positive in their presentation of women occur within the announced positive range of Chapters 82 through 101. I will turn

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<sup>301</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 24, l. 39, 25, l.1. “gladder that se had do it of to hym thanne to a lorde. And thei alle sawe her mekenesse and wisdom, and helde her wyse.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 15, ll. 9-11.

<sup>302</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 24, ll. 26-34. “the curtesie that is made to poure gentylmen, or to other of lasse degre, it comithe of fre and gentill curteys and humble hert. And the small peple that the curtesye is done to, holdith hem worshipped therby, And thanne, ouer all there thei comithe, thei praisithe and spekithe good of hym that dothe hem reuerence and curtesie. And of the pore that curtesie is done to, comithe gret loos and good name fro tyme to tyme, and getithe loue of the peple;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 14, ll. 31-34, 15, ll. 1-4.



to these chapters now as a group as they are largely comprised of biblical sources. Chapter 82, for example, cites Sarah as a positive example for women to follow and gives a highly compressed narrative of her life, citing being saved from Pharaoh (see Genesis 12:15-20 and 13:1-2) as well as her eventual fertility (Genesis 11:30 and 21:1-3). Yet, this chapter does not focus on any specific virtues of Sarah that make her particularly noteworthy; the Knight simply says that she is saved from rape because of “her holynes and good lyf,” which carries the implication that had she not been spared, she would not have deserved to be. Sarah is preserved because her good behavior, which is not explicitly described beyond her faith and humility, earns her rescue from rape and barrenness.<sup>303</sup> The Knight interestingly compares Sarah’s life to hagiographical accounts of saints who similarly suffer “fro many other grete torments,” and he, perhaps oddly, omits the context of Sarah’s seizure by Pharaoh.<sup>304</sup> His emphases and omissions in the retelling convey primarily a desire to praise patient suffering and the endurance of faith.

Chapter 86 also recapitulates a biblical story (Exodus 2:5-10), of Moses’ adoptive mother, the Pharaoh’s daughter, who protects and raises Moses out of charity. While this particular exemplum does not focus on the reward for good behavior, the next exemplum, recapitulated from Joshua 2:1-6, does. Rahab of Jericho offers shelter to “certayne good men whiche were come there for to preche to the peple of that tounne,” helping them to escape murder, and so she and the lives of her household are spared by the forces that sack Jericho.<sup>305</sup> The Knight’s retelling, here, as above with Sarah, omits and alters details

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<sup>303</sup> Another biblical exemplum in Chapter 97 retells the story of Susannah from Daniel 13 where her faith that God will save her is met by the prophet Daniel, who as a mere child, is able to uncover the attempted forced sexual encounter that Susannah refuses from two Jewish holy men.

<sup>304</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 112, l. 15. “from many other turmentys,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 105, l. 30.

<sup>305</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 118, ll. 6-7. “certayne holy men were come into the towne for to teche and preche the pepill,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 113, ll. 2-3.

of the biblical text such as Rahab's sexual status and that the so-called preachers were actually spies. This free manipulation of Scripture indicates a comfortable authority and perhaps a knowledge that his daughters may not have access to the texts that would allow them to recognize the faults in his readings, or they may indeed represent failures of the Knight's own knowledge, but this is perhaps less likely given the collaboration of clerics he cites in his prologue. Chapter 94 repeats this same praise of offering hospitality to holy men, for it retells 4 Kings/2 Kings 4:8-37 wherein a barren wife gains the birth of her son and his resurrection from Elisha, to whom she has given hospitality. Charity is also praised in Chapter 110, where it is specifically associated with the Virgin Mary and other female exemplars.<sup>306</sup>

Holy figures are not the only people who ought to receive charity and hospitality according to the positive exempla. Many of the positive stories about women revolve around the proper treatment of their husbands. For example, in Chapter 89 Deborah is praised for her wisdom because that very wisdom can be used to "reule" her cruel husband.<sup>307</sup> Likewise, Esther is praised in a similar fashion for "whanne she had hym alone" she would correct her husband "curtoysly."<sup>308</sup> Finally, Elizabeth, in Chapter 98 is prized as the ideal woman who loves and fears her husband, and who also is incidentally

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<sup>306</sup> Chapter 136 tells an exemplum about a good widow related to the Knight himself—his grandmother, Olive de Belleville, and one of the chief attributes she is praised for is her charity to relatives at feasts, to the poor through her distribution of food, and her aid to women at both funerals and childbed. On the characterization of Olive as reflective of the Knight's indecisive portrayal of his narrative identity (poet or moralist), see Elizabeth Allen, "Anticipating Audience in *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*," in *False Fables and Exemplary Truth in Later Middle English Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 27-52.

<sup>307</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 121, l. 18. "[...] she coude byhaue her selff so well vnto hym that euer more she plesed hym, and brought hym oute of hys frensy, and made hym paisible vnto her and vnto all other peple." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 117, ll. 20-23. See Judges 4:5 for how people sought her out for advice.

<sup>308</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 129, l. 10, 12. "whanne she sawe hym by hym selff, and that he was oute of his yre, with her faire and humble speche she coude so wel behaue her selff vnto hym in goodly wise, that she shewed hym all his faute." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 127, ll. 28-31.

adept at speaking to him “by soo fayre and attemperate langage that in no wyse he might neuer be wroth.”<sup>309</sup> As these women of the Bible are championed for treating their husbands properly, Ruth in Chapter 90 is praised for the wisdom of treating her husband’s relatives courteously for they protect her in her widowhood.<sup>310</sup>

Similar to the courtesy projected toward one’s husband is the active protection of one’s husband that is praised in two exempla, one biblical and one not, in Chapter 91. The biblical example is of Abigail from 1 Samuel 25:23ff, wherein she humbles herself before King David and begs for her husband’s life. The other exemplum praises the wife of a cruel Roman senator who falsely accuses another man of treason; the accused demands to have the charge answered through single combat. The senator is a coward and claims illness, but no secondary replacement can be found, and so out of desperation the wife, who is often mistreated, “armed her self & cam to the felde And by cause god sawe her bounte and that she dyd her deuoyr he gaf her force and strengthe in soo moche

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<sup>309</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 131, ll. 24-25. The Harley translation does not mention Elizabeth’s skilled speech specifically but notes that “she was so good, so well auised, and of so noble attemperance, that she kepte her husbonde in Ioye and pees,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 131, ll. 9-10.

<sup>310</sup> See Ruth 1:12 and 2:2 for the appropriate biblical passages. Chapter 112 of *The Book* also includes two accounts of contemporary widows who are models of being good wives and widows because they cared for their ugly, invalid, incontinent husbands while they lived and remained chaste and cared for their children after their husbands’ deaths. Their verbal acumen, however, is not praised as is Deborah’s, Esther’s, and Elizabeth’s. Chapter 136 praises a good widow in an exemplum that tells of her life, which includes the verbal acuity to prevent gossipers from gossiping and make them “abashed” that they “spake euylle of other folke” rather than praying for them. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 182, l. 29, 28. The Harley translation stops before this chapter. Chapter 92 praises another biblical woman, the wife of King David, for making peace between Absalom and his father, her husband. Doing so protects her inheritance during her widowhood because Absalom looks after her property rights. See 2 Samuel 14 for the appropriate biblical passage. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 124, ll. 19-33; 125, ll. 1-2. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 121, ll. 27-33; 122, ll. 1-22. Note also the particularly medieval relevance that these Biblical exempla have: one must be polite and courteous to one’s relatives because one’s survival during widowhood may be wholly dependent upon their intercession on one’s behalf. Amos reads the importance of verbal prowess as one of the main dictates of the Knight’s text: The Knight “seems most comfortable with women exerting their influence on the public sphere through their husbands and lords, yet he is insistent that noblewomen ought to be educated, able to speak, and willing to negotiate a space in which to exert their influence.” see “The Gentrification of Eve,” 31, see especially 25-31. This reading of the Knight’s text is a bit more positive than I support, or rather, it makes the claim more boldly in the case of a woman speaking and negotiating more strongly than I think can be attributed to the Knight’s text.

that she obteyned the vycory.”<sup>311</sup> This rather outré protection of a husband’s reputation by his wife justifies that which everywhere else in *The Book* might be found unacceptable. We have the wife taking pity and then acting unequivocally to prevent damage to her husband’s reputation, and furthermore, we are told that the wife’s bravery earns her “gretter honour” than she was wont to receive from the citizens and the emperor.<sup>312</sup> Another common theme that we can see in these praised wives is that they are often burdened with irascible or otherwise bad husbands, and so their living with their husbands manifests a type of suffering while their treatment of them often requires humility. These qualities are typified by the Virgin Mary in Chapters 108 and 109.

Women are also offered unequivocal praise for seeking good counsel and eschewing flatterers in Chapter 93, which recounts 3 Kings/1 Kings 10:1-10 where the Queen of Sheba seeks out King Solomon’s wisdom.<sup>313</sup> Religious devotion is also praised in Chapters 99 and 136. Chapter 99 ascribes the status of proper religious devotion through shame, contrition, and confession to Mary Magdalene as she appears in Luke 7:38.<sup>314</sup> Chapter 136 offers a non-biblical exemplum about a good widow who devotes

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<sup>311</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 124, ll. 2-5. “she went her into a chambre, and made her to be armed, and mounted vpon a good cursere, and rode into the felde, and hadde her uisage deffait in suche wise that she was vnknowe vnto eueri creatoure. And for as moch as God sawe the bounte and trouthe of her, and that she dede it in the saluacion and the worship of her lord and husbonde, and for the loue that she had vnto hym, God sent the victorie and the honoure be vnto her husbonde bi her hands, for she conquered his enemy.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 121, ll. 2-10.

<sup>312</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 124, l. 9. “worshipped and helde in Reuerence moch more thanne euer thei hadde ydo before.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 121, ll.15-16. Chapter 100 praises wives who engage in more conventional preservation of their husbands, namely through fasting and piety. There are two exempla; one biblical from Luke 8:3 that describes the wife of Herod’s pagan seneschal serving Christ, and the other is not biblical but describes how a wife preserves the life of her evil husband through prayer until she dies and he is finally put to death.

<sup>313</sup> See also 2 Chronicles 9:1-12. Chapter 93 also praises a male servant for being the only person in the household of a dying Roman Emperor who will avoid flattery and therby helps the emperor to save his soul by advising him to give of his wealth before he dies. I mention this exemplum only in the footnotes as it does not offer a positive female exemplar.

<sup>314</sup> The chapter also conflates Mary Magdalene with St. Mary of Egypt, which is common in the Western tradition of St. Mary of Egypt, and so the latter’s penance in the desert and fasting are also considered models of religious devotion.

herself to nightly prayers in addition to her charitable works. These good women pave the way to a specific discussion of the Virgin Mary, who has four chapters devoted to her, though she only appears nominally in the fourth. The most important of these chapters is Chapter 107, which recapitulates Mary's story from the New Testament but also discusses her body as "Temple of God where as the weddyng of the deyte and of the humanyte was made."<sup>315</sup> The chapter also discusses Mary as the inverse of Eve as some of Eve's follies are inverted in Mary's actions. For example, Eve's implicit trust of the serpent's words is undone by Mary's questioning of the angel at the Annunciation about how she would give birth. This presentation of Mary sets the stage for using her as an exemplar of charity and suffering later in *The Book*, which connects her to the practice of affective piety.

The final examples of women who are positive role models that I wish to discuss are all women who are charitable and who also exhibit what modern scholars would call affective piety. These women are all moved by pity to be kind to others. Chapter 101 has a number of examples of such women. First Martha and Mary are praised for their kindness to Christ and his servants.<sup>316</sup> Second are praised the women who weep for Christ while he bears the cross even after he reveals that they will suffer in the future.<sup>317</sup> And finally there is an exemplum not from the Bible but drawn from the life of the Countess of Avignon who founds the abbey of Bourgueil, and who, among other deeds, marries off poor maidens with good reputations and displays pity for women who are

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<sup>315</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 143, ll. 33-34. "the chaumbre and the temple of God, where as was made the espoisall, and the alyaunce and knyttyng of the godhead vnto the manhode, disunite vnto humanite." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 147, ll. 8-10.

<sup>316</sup> See Luke 10: 38-42.

<sup>317</sup> See Luke 23:27-31.

pregnant.<sup>318</sup> Chapter 105 offers further examples of such kindness. For example, the women who arrive at Christ's tomb early in the morning are said to have had great pity and charity for staying up to prepare expensive oils with which to anoint him.<sup>319</sup> Finally, early Christian women during Nero's reign in Rome are praised for attending mass frequently and burying the bodies of Christian martyrs.<sup>320</sup> Thus, the positive exempla we have seen function through their exemplarity, as well as their focus on inspiring women's affective devotion and acceptance of specified rules of behavior because positive exempla illustrate that good women receive rewards for their behavior.

### III. Images and Imagery

Having looked at all the various tropes that occur within the large body of exempla in the Knight's book, we can finally turn to other rhetorical features: imagery and images that appear within *The Book*. I would like to begin first with positive imagery, and then move on to the negative images that are associated with sin and other negative qualities. Finally, after I have examined these, I will discuss the appearance of animals within the text and draw some conclusions about how and why the Knight makes reference to them.

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<sup>318</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 135, l. 37, 136, ll.2-3. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 136, ll. 31-32, 33-34. Chapter 104 offers an exemplum that features a male hero, Patrides, who is moved by pity for a woman accused of infanticide but really framed by an evil and martially skilled knight who wishes to seduce her. Patrides preserves her honor by triumphing over her detractor, but he also dies, as a sort of medievalized type of Christ from a mortal wound he receives in the battle. The lady accepts his armor after his death and prays for him daily, much as medieval Christians might have prayed at the crucifix daily. This passage obviously offers a secularized sort of imitation of the type of devotion a young lady ought to have toward Christ, so that it maps parallels between religious practice and the more secular *fin' amor*; this is perhaps the only example of a narrative in *The Book* that approximates a positive illustration of *fin' amor*, but it is perhaps foolish to call such *fin' amor* at all as the male lover is completely out of reach as he is dead.

<sup>319</sup> See Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1, Luke 24:10, and John 20:1.

<sup>320</sup> See La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 142, ll. 1-7 and La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 144, ll. 19-24.

The first physical symbol, and the most used positive one from *The Book*, occurs in Chapter 118: the pearl. The Knight writes, “a woman whiche is pure and clene ou3t to be compared to the preciouse Margaryte [...] For a Margaryte is a grete perle and round bryght and whyte and clene without ony spotte or tatche.”<sup>321</sup> The Knight explains that the pearl represents:

the valour and worth of the woman For she that is clene and withoute tatche that is to saye she that is not wedded that kepeth her vyrgynyte & chastyte And also she that is wedded whiche kepeth and holdeth her self clenely in the holy sacramente of maryage [...] Also she that kepeth wel and clenely her wydowhede . . . [are] lykened and compared as sayd our lord to the precious margaryte whiche is euer bryght and clene withoute ony macule or tatche<sup>322</sup>

Here there is less of the quotidian in the symbol as pearls would be objects to which not everyone would have equal access. Yet the nobility would be able to afford some jewelry and be familiar with what the pearl looks like as “pearls circulated in huge quantities” during the period.<sup>323</sup> If the Knight’s daughters, members of the nobility, were familiar

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<sup>321</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 156, ll. 32-35. “vpon the mater of women that liueden in clenness, he [Christ] likened suche a woman vnto a precious margarite,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 163, ll. 4-5. Note that no such comparison is biblical; see La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 243-44, n. 156/31-33.

<sup>322</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 156, ll. 36-37; 157, ll. 1-9. “a bryght thinge, rounde, white, and clene, a stone so clere and faire that there is no tache therin, nor spotte of vnclenne[s]; and this is saide to be a woman that is not wedded, and she lyuith in virginite, clenness, and chastite; or ellys bi a woman that is wedded, and she kepith the truly and honestly the sacrament of mariage, & also by them that worshipfully and perfittly kepe thaire wedwhode, that lyuen in chastite and in sobriete.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 163, ll. 5-12.

<sup>323</sup> Elena Lemeneva and Kiss Farkas Gabor, “Economic and Social Value of Jewelry,” *Dress, Jewels, Arms and Coat of Arms: Material Culture and Self-Representation in the Late Middle Ages*, Department of Medieval Studies at Central European University, <http://www.ceu.hu/medstud/manual/SRM/value.htm>. For a discussion of jewels and jewellery in Flemish devotional manuscripts see Kate Challis, “Marginalized Jewels: the Depiction of Jewellery in the Borders of Flemish Devotional Manuscripts,” in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 253-89. Challis makes the point that pearls appear in various arrangements in the marginalia of these manuscripts, all of which “occur in books designed for worship.” This observation suggests the pearl is a jewel with somewhat obvious religious association, but Challis also suggests that we recall the materiality of gems that were “privately owned and worn as body adornments” and “were objects of desire [...] a form of conspicuous consumption.” She further explains that devotional texts such as the ones she examined are also a part of the “*haute couture* of the Middle Ages,” so that pearls and other jewels with their “elitist connotations” are appropriately incorporated into the illuminations of such books. Challis, “Marginalized Jewels,” 267, 269. Elizabeth Harper writes about pearls in the context of *Pearl*, drawing

with such a stone, or had jewelry or clothing adorned with pearls, the presence of the physical pearls could remind them of the symbolic pearl. The pearl imagery manifests the same sort of concern over a woman's sexual reputation that the rest of *The Book* does through its exempla that punish adultery and licentious sexuality. This discussion of the pearl in Chapter 118 is actually an expansion on the briefer mention in Chapter 114 wherein good women are compared to "the precious Margarite It is a perle whiche is whyte and round bright and wythoute macule or spotte."<sup>324</sup> The pearl then becomes a central metaphor for the pure woman, she who is devoid of the flaws of disobedience, unchastity, and the stains of other sins.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Knight's other unequivocally positive images describe Christ. Chapter 104 describes Christ as a warrior. The warrior aspect of Christ is employed as a model of charity because he "faught for the pyte of vs and of al humayn lygnage For grete pyte he hadde to see them goo and falle in the tenebras of helle wherefore he suffred and susteyned alone the bataylle moche hard and cruell on the tree of the holy Crosse," and he is also said to have suffered the Five Wounds "of his debonair

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attention to both the role of gift-giving economies in understanding the pearl's social signification in the Middle Ages as well as its spiritual symbolism. Elizabeth Harper, "Pearl in the Context of Fourteenth-Century Gift Economies," *Chaucer Review* 44, no. 4 (2010): 421-39. See especially the image of Crown Princess Blanche as a model of the type of uses that pearls could have in the possessions of the nobility; while the Knight's daughters might not have been well placed enough to possess such items first-hand, they may well have seen them at court. Harper writes of the crown: "Objects like the coronal of Princess Blanche embodied prestige and honor; they circulated among aristocratic courts to transport that prestige." Harper, "Pearl," 422 (image), 436. If the pearl as a sign of chastity might also be associated with prestige and thereby reputation, then it may indeed be the perfect metaphor to present a chaste woman, for the conflation of chastity with the pearl represents the conflation of honor (read actual virginity as well as reputation for chastity) with the wearer of the pearls. If the Knight's daughters had access to them, they might be a potent reminder that they ought to police their actions carefully.

<sup>324</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 152, ll. 5-7. "For the sowle is the precious marguerite vnto God." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 158, ll. 1-2. Note the difference in tone here; whereas in Caxton's translation the comparison to the good woman is more direct, here the good woman is the woman who cares for her soul and wins salvation, the last of which is compared to the pearl.



and free wylle.”<sup>325</sup> Thus, Christ’s Passion transforms him into a physical soldier engaged in battle, much like the portrayal in the Anglo-Saxon poem “The Dream of the Rood.” His Passion becomes symbolic of the ultimate selflessness that anyone, including a woman, might adopt.<sup>326</sup> The second image of Christ, which appears in Chapter 38, is less typological and imitable as it is an image of his salvific inspirational power. That is, his life is imagined as an example upon which one might look to refresh one’s eyes and spiritual devotion. Christ is said to be “thexemplaire of life and of ioye perdurable And is the swete welle or fountain wherynne men may fynde alle goodnesse and sauement.”<sup>327</sup> These positive images all have in common an attempt to inspire one to righteous behavior or action, or to provide hope, as this image of Christ as a fount provides hope of purification, renewal, and guidance to all who take him as their guide.

From the hope of Christ-the-fountain, I would like to turn to one more positive image, though it is more marginally positive, but ultimately readable as an image that

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<sup>325</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 141, ll. 7-11, 13. “oure lorde Ihesu Crist faught for us, for the gret compassion and pitee that he hadde upon all humaigne linage, whanne he deliuered us from the derkenesse of hell and dampnacion perpetual, where as [he] faught for us by the vertu of his glorious passion,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 143, ll. 20-24. The Harley translation elaborates the description of receiving the Five Wounds, which it presents as a series of salvific acts: Christ “bought us with his precious blode, and receiued dethe for oure redempcion and deliuerance, and fraunchised us of all thraldome, and restored us ayen vnto his ioye and blisse euermore lastinge; and thorough hys mercy, debonair[e], and vertu, and for loue and pitee that he hadde vnto all his creatoures.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 143, ll. 25-30.

<sup>326</sup> It should be noted that in Chapter 104 women are also recommended to think of themselves as soldiers or knights, for the Knight uses a simile to compare the struggle for a knight to build up his prowess and reputation to a lady’s struggle to preserve her reputation: “good name and Renomme ye shold peyne your self to get and kepe it As the good knyght whiche tendeth to come to worship & flee vylonye payneth hym self and suffreth many grete trauaylles as cold hete and hongre and putteth his body in grete leopardy and aduerture to deye or lyue for to gete worship and good Renomme and maketh his body feble and wery by many vyages also in many bataylles and assautes and by many other grete peryls,” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 151, ll. 17-25. “to bere a good name, and to be well soken of, [...] ye wolde putte youre herte in payne to entende therto; right as a knight that desirith worshippe and vaillaunce, the whiche he wynnith by gret payne and laboure in hete and colde, and puttith his body in so mani aduertes of dethe, and all for to wynne worshippe and good name, as by straunge viages, by harde assautes, by diuerse gret batailes, and by mani other gret perilles in armes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 157, ll. 12-21.

<sup>327</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 61, ll. 36-37, 62, l. 1. The Harley translation identifies Christ as the source of a good life, everlasting joy, and salvation, but omits the image of the fountain.

inspires the sinner to cleanse the self and the soul. This image is of a silver platter and appears in the eighth chapter and recurs in the ninth.<sup>328</sup> In the eighth chapter a prostitute dreams three times that she “drew and took out of a donghyll a vessel lyke to a plater of syluer And when she beheld it she saw therin many black spottes and a voys cam sayeng scoure and make clene this plater.”<sup>329</sup> This dream is later explained to the prostitute by a holy man as a vision of

[...] the sowle that is in the body And yf the body consented not to doo synne she shold be alwey whyte as the vessel of syluer that cometh fro the goldsmythe Ryght so is the sowle when it cometh fro the fonte of bapteme And lyke as the Vessel that ye sawe was in the donge in lyke wise is the sowle in the body whiche is no thyng but donge and fylthe.<sup>330</sup>

Anna Dronzek points out that such a symbol “is not a random object, but a common household good,” so that choosing such a symbol unites the example of a good soul with an object that a woman would encounter on a daily basis.<sup>331</sup> Additionally, if the ladies were to clean their silver, the activity could remind them of their spiritual silver, or soul, which would also need polishing. Thus this very material image is a means by which to convey to a prostitute that she must reform herself and live chastely. Her soul, which is soiled by the sin of her physical sex acts, needs purification. So, while it might be easy to

<sup>328</sup> For the reminder of this image in Chapter 9 see La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 23, ll. 1-6. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 13, ll. 11-16.

<sup>329</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 21, ll. 6-9. “drowe oute of a donghill a plater of siluer, and, as she loked theron, ther was diuerse blacke spottys therin, and there come a voys to her and saide, ‘score so long on this plate till ye haue hadde away all the blacke spottis, and make it white and clene, as whanne it come oute of the maistres honed that made hit.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 11, ll. 14-19.

<sup>330</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 21, ll. 21-26. “y wille shewe you what youre auision signifieth; the plater drawn oute of the donge likenithe the soule in the bodi, and yef the bodi consented not to synne, the soule shulde be as white and as clene as the siluer whanne it come furst from the goldsmith, for so clene is the soule whan he comithe from bapteme; and the soule is the plater that was founde in the dongge, so is the bodi dongge, wormes, and felthe. And whanne the bodi hath synned for his fals delitis, thanne comithe on the soule a blacke spotte for eueri synne. And there the spottis is, to the body that hathe done the synne be confessed, and repente hym of his synne in as foule manere as he dede the synne, and make satisfaccion;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 11, ll. 25-36, 12, l. 1.

<sup>331</sup> Dronzek, “Gendered Theories of Education,” 144.

emphasize the negative aspects of this image—its filthiness, its association with waste—it is more spiritually productive and thus in line with the moralizing of *The Book* to understand it as a positive image that indicates the salvific potential inherent in Christ's and the Christian God's immeasurable potential for mercy.

Chapter 96 also contains a somewhat ambivalent image, but the ambivalence is because it does not present hope of salvation. The exemplum recounts a young wife's explanation for why she does not engage in mirth since her husband is "euylle and felon": "she sayd that the fere that she had of the prysons kepte her fro myrthe and gladnesse The one pryson was loue the other was dred and the third shame These thre vertues mastyred her for the loue that she had to her lord kepte her fro doynge of ony thyng that myght come to the dysplaysyre of her lord drede made her ferynge the losse of her good renomme and honour and to falle in synne And shame kepte her fro euylle and dishoneste reпреef [...]."<sup>332</sup> I should note here that there are some obvious discrepancies between the Caxton and Harley translations, chief of which is that the Harley does not present the image of the prison, but simply describes these three virtues as constraining the woman's will. The French text, which Caxton generally follows more closely, does include the image according to Offord.<sup>333</sup> I find this image strikingly similar to the nets and cages that Christine de Pizan's *Three Virtues* mention when they describe how they will

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<sup>332</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 129, l. 20, ll. 25-32. "she saide vnto her woman, that thre thinges distrained her for to eschewe diuerse plesaunce, disportes, and other loyouseie, and tho were, loue, drede, and shame; and these iij thinges maistred her: the loue that she had vnto her lorde her husbonde kepte her, that neuer she wolde do thinge that was his displesaunce; drede, that kepte her from synne and disworshipe; shame, to be auised and saued from velanie reproche." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 128, ll. 27-34.

<sup>333</sup> See La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 235, n. 129/26. I should also note that the Harley translation relates this not as a separate exemplum about a wife from the *Book of Kings*, which is how it is presented in the Caxton translation, though Offord notes that it is actually an exemplum from *Miroir des bonnes femmes*, but as a continuation of Esther's story, which is that of the exemplary woman with which this chapter begins. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 235, n. 129/19-20.

disseminate *The Treasury*. The desire to capture and then enclose women within golden cages contains obvious associations with the hunt and falconry, but I think that the underlying message of the two images is similar: women can be set apart and above others if their behavior conforms to certain standards. The Knight's prison imagery offers a bleak alternative to the will-manipulating devil, i.e. one must guard oneself as if jailed or open oneself up to diabolical temptation. Certainly Christine de Pizan does a better job of glossing over the implications of caging women, but the idea of control, surveillance, and conformity are tantamount in both images, for the wife who allows these prisons to guide her actions knows her reward is to "kepe the loue of hym [her husband] and pees in her hows."<sup>334</sup> So, fear is a very strong motivational element of the Knight's rhetoric; women are repeatedly presented as earning the disfavor of their husbands through their disobedience and willfulness, so much so that the positive role models confess that their actions are shaped by fear of prisons—of the loss of the little social and cultural standing that they have. This image paints a bleak understanding of the medieval woman, and while I do not want to claim medieval women faced such a simple and desolate existence, it is necessary to note the striking similarity between this image and Foucault's panopticon discussed above that functions so that "the perfection of power [...] tend[s] to render its actual exercise unnecessary."<sup>335</sup> That is, the wife who behaves because she is scared of these "prisons" preempts her husband's need to correct her because she corrects herself.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 129, l. 25. "she dede hym euermore plesaunce, and lyued with hym in ioye and pees." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 128, ll. 25-26.

<sup>335</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

<sup>336</sup> Amos also discusses this prison imagery, but argues that through it "the *Book* hopes to provide these Freudian 'drive controls' that Hester, and indeed all women, require to keep their weak natures in check, exhibiting a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between shame and guilt, threatening severe

From this somewhat grim image of prisons that instill virtue, I would like to move to more explicitly negative images. The first image in this category is one that describes all sinners, for in Chapter 37 the Knight provides a laundry list of the types of sinners, identifying all of the Seven Deadly Sins in his list, and then explaining that such people are “sones and disciples of the deuylle For well they ensyewe and folowe the doctryne and faites of hym their mayster by whoos counceylle and temptacion they be ioyned with synne and lying in the way of dampnacion.”<sup>337</sup> This image is perhaps not overly visual or concrete in the way that a pearl, silver platter, or fountain is a specific, visual referent. However, when we consider this description of the sinner as the kin and subject of the devil, in juxtaposition with an odd comment that the Knight throws into the first chapter on Eve’s follies (Chapter 39, just a single chapter, intervenes between this image and the devil’s kin image), the comparison begins to become a bit more physical. The Knight (only in the Caxton, not the Harley translation) claims that “the Hystorye sayth [the serpent] hadde a face ryght fayre lyke the face of a woman.”<sup>338</sup> I would like to suggest that while the feminine serpent head may be a traditional way to present the serpent, it also offers a direct embodiment of the concept of kinship with the devil, and the Knight’s presentation of Eve’s follies, suggests that just like the sinners who are led into sin by false doctrine, Eve is led into her sin by the serpent.<sup>339</sup> Further, I propose that the Knight

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punishment while at the same time offering rewards for self-regulation.” Amos, “The Gentrification of Eve,” 22.

<sup>337</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 61, ll. 5-8. “these manere of men sheuith that they be the children of a fals maisteris doctrine, the whiche is the deuell of hell, that counsailethe, temptithe, and gouernithe hem,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 53, ll. 27-30.

<sup>338</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 62, l. 37, 63, l. 1. This reference is in the standard French edition of *Le Livre*, though admittedly this edition does not account for all the manuscript variations. See M. Anatole de Montaiglon, ed., *Le livre de Chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l’enseignement de ses filles publié d’après les manuscrits de Paris et de Londres* (Paris, 1854; Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 86.

<sup>339</sup> Grössinger discusses several images of Eve and notes that in a fresco of her temptation in the Saint Nicholas church in Klerant, “the serpent’s head is that of a woman, often thus represented in art because the

employs this image here not just to make tangible the somewhat unclear referent of the devil's kin, but also to force the female audience to self-visualize as sinful. By forcing the female audience to assume a monstrous self-image, that of the woman-faced serpent, the Knight can horrify his female audience into self-regulation and examination that might help to promote appropriate behavior and discourage inappropriate or sinful behavior because committing such would bring up the monstrous association of the woman with serpent. Amos makes a similar claim, though with respect to how Eve's follies are presented in conjunction with the medieval court equivalents of her follies: "here she [Eve] functions didactically as a site for identification, an image of a woman who fails to resist temptation and falls victim to the seductive wiles of the noble court."<sup>340</sup>

The union of serpent and woman is not the only negative portrayal of sinful women in *The Book*. There is a much more quotidian and less theologically inclined image in Chapter 118, which is also the chapter in which the pearl is discussed as a metaphor for the chaste woman. I would suggest the juxtaposition of these images implies that the image for unchaste women in this chapter is meant to be the inverse of the pearl. The Knight explains:

it is a foul thyng to spylle droppes of ynke in to a dysse ful of mylke  
 Ryght so is of her that ought to be a good mayd whanne she spylleth and  
 gyueth her maydenhede to another than to her spouse And also is of her  
 whiche is wedded that of her falshede & fowle lechery breketh and  
 spylleth her holy sacrament of maryage and forswereth her feythe and her  
 lawe toward God and the chirche and toward her lord also Also she  
 whiche oughte to bere her self clenely in her wydowhede and that doth the  
 contrarye This maner of wymmen be lyke the black thatches that ben vpon

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tempter (devil-serpent) in that manner identifies with Eve; they are mirror-images of each other." Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 7. See also the reproduction of a c. 1500 woodcut showing the serpent with Eve's face, Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 95.

<sup>340</sup> Amos, "The Gentrification of Eve," 30.

the whyte mylke and vpon the whyte couerchyef they be lyke in no thyng  
to the precious Margaryte<sup>341</sup>

This particular negative image then is slightly different from the feminized serpent, for it does not inspire self-reflection so much as it is a presentation of corruption, but unlike the more ambivalent image of the silver platter that can be scoured to purity and cleanliness, one cannot siphon the ink from milk, so the stains upon the soul figured in this image are more damaging and everlasting. Perhaps it is significant in particular that this image is associated with a failure of chastity, the behavioral issue the Knight seems most obsessed with. We should note that the silver platter image is provided of a woman who is a prostitute as well, but the difference seems to be that here the image is applied to all women. That is, while the Knight wishes to leave rhetorical room to allow a prostitute to repent and amend her life through fasting and penance, much like St Mary of Egypt who is conflated with Mary Magdalene in *The Book*, here the Knight is addressing women who have not yet sinned, and so the severity of the image is more intense, suggesting such a trespass is unable to be overcome or undone.

Another image has a similar implication to the inked milk image, i.e., once something is done, it cannot be undone. The image occurs in Chapter 144 in the context of lamenting a wife's failure to keep her husband's secrets, which then become public gossip. Talking is compared to archery: "in lyke wyse as the shafte is departed fro the bowe must take her flyght and cours and neuer cometh ageyne to the bowe tyll it haue

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<sup>341</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 157, ll. 19-30. The Harley translation employs a different image, though still nearly as commonplace and certainly stripped of the theological context of the woman-faced serpent. "it were a foule thinge to take a faire suete rose and putte hem in a stynking vessell; right so the clenness of a mayde or of a good woman that she misuse it not with vnclene men, that desyren false flesshely plesaunce; [...] these .iij. manere of woman misuse the vertues, these vertues beforesaide, the maide her maydenhode, the wyff her mariage, the wedwe her weduhode, thanne be they liche vnto the Roses in a stynking vessell, for thei haue lost thaire fayrenesse, thaire suetnesse, and thaire vertu, for the vnclennesse that they be inne; and thanne they be right not apparent nor like vnto the precious margarite." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 163, ll. 26-27, 164, ll. 2-8.

smyte somme thynges Soo is the word whiche yssued oute of the mouthe lyke it For after that he is put out of the mouth it may neuer be put in to the mouthe ageyne but that it shal be herd be it good or euylle.”<sup>342</sup> As with the stain of unchaste behavior, gossip cannot be recalled or undone, and so, according to the Knight, should be entirely avoided.<sup>343</sup>

The remainder of the negative images focuses not upon the sinner but upon his instigator. They are figurative representations of the quality of the devil that we have seen again and again in *The Book*: his ability to constrain one’s free will to turn away from sin. We are told the devil has nothing to do with marriage because

in puterye and in synne mortalle or deadly he hathe grete power and is there in his persone to chauffe and meue the synnar to the fals delyte as the smyth whiche putteth the cole in the fornays and thenne he bloweth and kyndelet hit And soo moche wayteth the deuylle to serue them wel in that fowle delyte and to kepe them styll therin that at the last her caryeth and bereth wyth hym theyr soules in to the depe pytte of helle wherof he taketh as grete Ioye and holdeth hym therof as wel apayed as doth he that al the day hath chaced atte euen he taketh the best and hath it with hym.<sup>344</sup>

This description further augments our understanding of the devil’s role in the Knight’s worldview presented in *The Book*. He is like a blacksmith who stokes the libidos of his victims, overtaking their own will, and driving them toward sin. His hold and power over sinners is absolute, and the second image of the devil as the hunter demonstrates his delight, not just in ensnaring souls, but also in his final acquisition of them. This image is

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<sup>342</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 191, ll. 17-22. The Harley translation breaks off prior to this chapter.

<sup>343</sup> A third image of this nature occurs in Chapter 133 (no equivalent in the Harley translation) wherein the Knight’s Wife describes the danger of giving in to just one kiss: “And thus as one kyssynge draweth to hym another And as the fyre kyndelet another & thus atte laste the bedde is a fyre & the hows also.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 175, ll. 16-19.

<sup>344</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 158, ll. 9-18. “the fende of hell hathe no pouer in that holy sacrament [marriage], but he peynithe hym euermore to eschauufe and to draw the man or woman by sum falce delite vnto synne; and, as a smithe that is euer blowing in the fire, and right so seruithe the enemy of hell that besiethe hym euer forto kendill and light the fere flame of dedly synne witheinne the hertis of man and woman bi fals delite, whereby he bringithe the sowles vnto hell. For that is all his craft and ioye, as a chosen hunter that chasithe all the day, and atte the night he takithe the beest, and ledithe it forthe with hym;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 164, ll. 30-35, 165, ll. 1-4.



reflected in the earlier discussion of the angry woman whose devil-toad confesses that he thought she might repent during her dying confession; there is no image of the hunter in that exemplum, but it still expresses the delight that the devil-toad has in his successful acquisition of her soul.

I would like to end my discussion of images in *The Book* by turning from evil images to images that represent judgment or evaluation, and essentially this equates to one image, that of the scales. We have seen this image first in our discussion above of Chapter 51, wherein the wife who has too many dresses and too sharp a tongue is damned when the weight of the clothing and her own sins outweighs her good deeds during her judgment. Her fate is to be dragged off to hell in her burning raiment, but here I want to discuss more in depth the image of the scales themselves. In the case of Chapter 51, they equate to a figural presentation of justice. Norbert Schnitzler has written about the theories of reception of images of the Last Judgment in courtroom settings rather than in religious contexts. He claims that such images present a “connotative level of iconographic codes that informs the historian if not of how justice was to be done, then at least ‘of a notion of how justice could *seem to be done*.’”<sup>345</sup> The scale image in Chapter 129, narrated by the Knight’s Wife, presents the inverse of justice, or it intends to. The image comes as a rejection of a married woman’s engaging in *fin’ amor*: “I doo compare to the mercer whiche weyeth his sylke whiche is fyn and light but yet he maye put so moche of it in to the balaunce that it shalle ouerbere the weight whiche is at the other syde of the balaunce That is to saye that the woman may be soo moche enamoured that lasse she shalle loue her lord therfore and that the loue worship and cheuauce whiche he

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<sup>345</sup> Norbert Schnitzler, “Picturing the Law: Introductory Remarks on the Medieval Iconography of Judgement and Punishment,” *The Medieval History Journal* 3, no. 1 (2000): 1-15, 5.

shold haue she shalle take fro hym and gyue it to other.”<sup>346</sup> Here the scale image is still about judgments, and to use a pun, weighing out choices. Yet the actual image itself is not about justice, but rather about the risk of injustice—of the scales the balance her emotional devotion to her husband and her paramour tipping to favor the paramour over the husband. Schnitzler also notes that, “Contemporary medieval debates on the religious functions of images inform us that besides a didactic statement, images could move their beholder to mercy, sorrow, pain or fear.”<sup>347</sup> One additional corollary reaction this image might generate, in addition to an intellectual reaction that identifies the tipping scales as a sign of injustice, is an emotional one that sees the injustice and immediately attaches it to the husband; depending on his personality, it might generate fear or guilt within the female viewer.

Besides emotional reactions the image might generate, the Wife’s implementation of the imagery is much more geared toward perceiving the scale as quotidian and material. The use of a concrete, tangible person manipulating a physical scale, rather than the more intangible judgment of a woman’s soul carried out by a devil that appears in the earlier image, ties the scale to concrete reality. The significance of such is that a woman’s daily activities might have a greater chance of triggering a memory of this use of the image since it is more connected to her daily life, and thus the educational aspect of the later appearance of the image is likely to recur more frequently than with the earlier image. This greater educational value is because the experiential ties this image has with the woman’s own life make it more probable that she will return to thinking about her loyalties and duties toward her husband because she is more likely to see an actual

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<sup>346</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 171, ll. 4-10. The Harley manuscript ends before this chapter.

<sup>347</sup> Schnitzler, “Picturing the Law,” 10.

balance in use by a cloth merchant than she is to ever see a devil piling up someone's sins, though I should note that this more ethereal image is certainly something that medieval women might have encountered in medieval art should they live close enough to a cathedral.<sup>348</sup> Yet, the scale associated with the devil seems to be an image that is complete, set off as the woman's deeds are being judged post mortem when there is no more time for her to reform herself or repent of her sins. The image that occurs later in the context of the merchant is still an open image, that is, no one has died, and thus the image is more likely to prompt self-evaluation and examination within the female audience, whereas the devil's balance may just prompt fear and avoidance of sin.

#### **A. The Imagery of Beasts: Naturalizing Behaviors**

In addition to these non-animal images, there are a number of occurrences of images or proverbs that make reference to animals. Some of these I will avoid discussing, particularly the magpie from Chapter 15 and the toad from Chapter 102, as I have discussed these in the context of the shame-maim trope above. I would, however, like to consider some of the positive, negative, and neutral usages of animals in *The Book*. The positive examples are the least numerous figures, but share the general theme that humanity need only look to the "book" of God's creation in order to find models of appropriate behavior. This attitude is not foreign for a medieval text, especially given the popular medieval bestiaries that moralized the created world. The first animal mentioned in *The Book* is the sparrowhawk in Chapter 10, and the animal is taken as a model for why people ought to be courteous: "curtoysye ouercometh all them that ben felouns

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<sup>348</sup> Scenes of the Last Judgment were popular in medieval church art, including the carvings on tympana, such as that found on the western tympanum of the Sainte-Foy abbey church at Conques, which dates to the first half of the twelfth century. There is also a Judgment tympanum at the church of Saint-Lazare at Autun.

prowde by thensample of the sperhauk Take a sperhauke ramage And calle hym  
 curtoysly and ye shal make hym come frely to yow ye from the tree he shalle come  
 vpon youre fyste And yf ye be not curtoyse but rude and cruel he shal neuer come  
 Thenne syth the curtosye vaynquyssheth a wyld byrde whiche hath in hym no reson  
 Thenne ought she wel refrayne a man and woman moche more.<sup>349</sup> Being courteous is  
 again coded here by the Knight as that which can make others malleable and more  
 favorable to one; he takes the example of the sparrowhawk from the natural world and  
 employs it to discuss a normalized use of courtesy as a social control. Thus, the Knight  
 employs animal imagery to further the central argument of Chapter 10: being courteous  
 to everyone has benefits.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 24, ll. 1-8. “for humilite and curtesie ouercomithe all proude hertys that be fell, as a sperhauke, be he neuer so ramageus, ye may ouercome hym with goodly and curteys demening, ye may make hym come from the tre to your honed. And yef ye fare rudely and be cruell with hym, he will fle his way, and neuer come atte you. And sethe that curtesye and softenesse may ouercome a wilde bride, that hath no reson, nedes it aught to refrayne felons proude herte of man and woman.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 14, ll. 10-17.

<sup>350</sup> The Knight uses the animal behavior of wild beasts generally in the same way in Chapter 86 wherein he describes how caring for orphans through charity is desirable because it pleases God and “is shewed to vs example of many other bestes also that whan men haue slayn the moder and that the faons ben loste withoute noretur another beest cometh and nouryssheth them [...]” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 117, ll. 32-35. The Harley translation makes this quality specific to the hind: “it is sheued us in ensaumple by the hynde, that, whanne the moder of other bestis be slaine, yet woll she gladly, of her gentill nature, norissh the yonge ther as she comithe, and kindithe hem till they may susteine hem selff” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 112, ll. 27-30.

This justification of behavior appears in explications of punishments for negative behavior too, as the Knight also claims that disobedient wives ought to look on how the lion treats the lioness and be scared to mistreat their own husbands: if “the female of the lyon hath done the lyon ony faute or despite he shalle not go with her but fro her shalle kepe hym self one daye and a nyght And soo sheweth he his lordship and seynorye that he hath ouer the lyonesse This ensaumple is fair & prouffitable to all wymmen consyderynge how a sauage and wyld beest and withoute reason and that dothe as nature enclyneth her maketh herself to be dradde and doubted of her felawe.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 94, ll. 32-37, 95, ll. 1-2. “whanne the lyonesse hathe done hym ani displese or despite, he will not turne no more to her of all that day, ne that night, for no thinge that may be fall; he shewes in suche wise his lordshippe. And it is a good ensaumple to eueri woman, whanne a wilde beste, that canne no reson but auent that meues hym, makes hemself dradde and doubted of his felaw.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 86, ll. 10-15. A similar usage occurs only in the Harley translation in a passage I have quoted above on p. 235, n. 52 where the natural behavior of the bird is used as a justification for why women should not remarry for love without taking the advice of friends and family. The Knight’s opposition to women taking husbands without consulting their friends and family might reflect “the fact that, according to canon law, medieval women and men of age could bind themselves simply by swearing vows to each other, without any supervision or control.” Dronzek, “Gender Roles and the Marriage Market,” 69.

A slightly different use of the animal occurs with the rabbit reference that appears in Chapter 11, which educates women not to move their heads around too much lest they be “mocqued” for “lyghtely cast[ing] their sight and hede and torne their vysage here and there.”<sup>351</sup> Here the “hare” is suggested as a model of behavior rather than as a proof for why the female audience should behave in a specific way.<sup>352</sup> There is no naturalization of conduct, just the offering of a model to the audience that is of “a beest that seeth alwey to fore hym euen right forth withoute tornyng of his heede here ne there.”<sup>353</sup> The Knight also offers negative examples of animal behavior in the same chapter. As opposites to the steady gaze of the forward-looking hare, the Knight tells his audience to avoid being “semblable the tortuse ne to the Crane” because these creatures “torne their visage and the heede aboute their sholders and wynde their hede here and there as a vane.”<sup>354</sup> The use of wild animals to discuss negative traits is also done in a more symbolic, narrative way

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<sup>351</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 25, ll. 14-15. “thei that lokithe bak, and ar ofte stering with the hede, ar ofte scorned & mocked.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 15, ll. 22-23.

<sup>352</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 25, l. 9. “lymer,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 53, ll. 27-30. The Harley translation does not refer to the hare, but rather to the blood-hound or leash-hound, but nonetheless the same attributes are ascribed to it as to the rabbit.

<sup>353</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 25, ll. 9-10. “the whiche lokithe euer afore hym, withoute turning her hede hedir or thedir, but lokithe euer forth right.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 15, ll. 17-19.

<sup>354</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 25, ll. 5-7. “be not like the crane or the tortu; for thei are like the crane and the tortu that turnithe her hede and fases backward, and lokithe ouer the shuldre.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 15, ll. 13-15.

Chapter 95 includes another example of this type of usage of the animal: “Loke and behold these grete dogges that men calle mastyns they shalle barke and shewe theyr tethe but a gentylle dogge shalle not do so And also lyke wyse shold be of the gentylle men and wymmen.” This use of the animal appears in the context of arguing and chiding in public, and thus the person who engages in a public display of anger is like a barking dog. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 128, ll. 15-18. “as ye may see bi these curre doggis; of thaire nature thei growne and berke euermore, but gentill greyhounds do not so. And so aught it to be of gentill men and gentill women.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 126, ll. 28-31. G. R. Owst identifies this dual image of two types of dogs as deriving from the *Speculum laicorum* where they are explicitly compared with women: ““for, some [dogs] are well-bred, others low-bred. The well-bred, indeed, are silent and free from guile; the low-bred are ill-tempered and fond of barking. So it is with women: the daughters of nobles are artless, silent, and lovers of solitude; the ignoble to be sure are loud and roamers in the streets.”” Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 386-87. The naturalization of classism is quite obvious in this depiction, but is simultaneously deployed to present women with one of two choices: be silent and obedient or be labeled as a member of the lower classes. This technique is also used in Christine de Pizan’s text when she describes ladies at court who speak discourteously and gossip as fishwives.

than in the reading of the animal's behavior as good or bad in and of itself. I have already mentioned Chapter 29 above in my discussion of supernatural exempla, but I did not discuss the vision in detail. In the dream vision the prelate sees himself as a shepherd, and he is with his sheep, which rather unsurprisingly stand in for his congregation. The congregation is blocked and terrorized by "a black swyn and a sowe [...] And these hogges were horned" that block the way into the grazing field for the rest of the sheep.<sup>355</sup> These pigs are representative of the lord and lady whose sloth prevents the remainder of the parishioners from hearing mass, or being spiritually nourished. The final animals to appear are even more ominous than the menacing pigs: "a grete chace of black hunters syttyng vpon grete black horses which had with them grete quantyte of grehoundes and black dogges" appear and hunt the two pigs until "they were taken & slayn."<sup>356</sup> This usage of animals to indicate innocent victims (sheep), sinners (pigs), and the demons that will prosecute the sinners in the afterlife lest they reform (hunters and hounds) represents a marked shift in the Knight's implementation of animal imagery. It is more narrative-driven than simply pointing to an animal and marking it as an example of good or bad behavior, and it aligns this exemplum with the fable by including a dream vision that is also, by genre, a fable. The appearance of animals in fables was also a sermonic commonplace according to G. R. Owst, who notes particularly that animals can provide naturalistic detail to a sermon, moralized content, or humor.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 50, l. 37, 51, l. 1. "a gret blacke swyne and a sowe, horned," La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 43, ll. 8-9. G. R. Owst provides this excerpt of a sermonic account including boars: "the boar of the wode [...] is more wylde than the boor of the feld . . . ffirst a boor smyteth sore with his tusckis [...] he wole gladli reeste him in foule slowis or mury places; [...] he hath a foule stynkyng savur where he goth." Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 196-197.

<sup>356</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 51, ll. 11-13, 17. "come mani blacke hunters, and blake hors, with many blake greyhoundes, and raches; [...] chaced and bote hem spitously bi the eeres and this; [...] they [the pigs] were take and slayn." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 43, ll. 16-21.

<sup>357</sup> Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 196-205.

The Knight also employs animal imagery, not just to add narrative flair or difference in style, but also to humiliate people he identifies as morally corrupt or misbehaving. For example, in Chapter 35 where fornication within a church is reproved, he describes the couple engaged in it as “ioyned to geder as a dogge is to a bytche.”<sup>358</sup> This description comes as a way to describe the punishment that God metes out to these fornicators, who are stuck joined together like two mating dogs for an entire day such that the entire parish can witness their sin. Clearly this presentation is meant to dehumanize the sinners as well as humiliate them.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 59, ll. 6-7. “were fast like a dogge and a byche togedre,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 51, ll. 33-34.

<sup>359</sup> The Knight accuses people of being mistaken for or compares them with wild animals often in an attempt to classify their poor behavior as inhuman and shocking. In Chapter 50 a woman dressed in foreign costume attracts attention at a feast of Saint Margaret as if she were “a wylde beest.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 73, l. 17. “a wilde beste,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 64, l. 27. In Chapter 37, which provides a catalog of sinners, the Knight claims that lechers are so overcome with their desires that they are “wors than wylde beestes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 61, l. 1. “enflamed unmesurably like wolues, or other wyld beestis” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 53, ll. 21-22. Chapter 88 also features a proverbial expression that amounts to a comparison of humanity to beasts when humanity gives in to physical desires: “For ones takynge his refection in the day is angels lyf twys takynge his mete is mans lyf and many tyme takynge mete is beestes lyf.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 120, ll. 31-33. “for onis vpon the day to ete and drinke, it is angelic; and .ij. tymes it is the lyff of man and woman; and for to ete ofte tymes after the flesshely appetite, it is the holy lyff of a beste.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 116, ll. 19-22. In Chapter 62 the Knight describes the lecherous wife of the rope-maker as “lyke and of the nature of the she wulf that is the female of the wulf whiche taketh and cheseth to her loue the most fowle and lothly wolff.” La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 90, ll. 31-33. “as the femall of the wolff, that chesithe to her make the foulest wolff of all that ben in the wode.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 82, ll. 9-10. All of these instances mark those who misbehave as irrational and driven by passions, whether for fashion or sex. It is also noteworthy that the desire to imitate new fashions is associated with unchastity by the Knight, who identifies English prostitutes as the source of new fashions in France.

There are two other examples of using animals in this manner, but they do not appear in Caxton’s translation, only in the Harley translation. In the Harley sections 67 through 69 women are discouraged from wearing extravagant fashions. Those who come to church are at first merely described as “so horned lychee to be horned snails and hertis and vnicornes.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 63, ll. 2-3. This description is a simple attempt at humiliation, but it is soon elaborated further. Women who wear extravagant head dresses to church are “like the hertys, that bare downe her hedes in the small wode; For whanne thei come to the chirche, and holy water be caste on hem, thei bowe downe the hede.” This motion of the women’s heads, however, is soon associated with the diabolical: “‘Y doute, [...] the deuell sitte not between her hornes, and that he make hem bowe down the hede for ferde of the holy water.’” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 63, ll. 6-11. The explication makes explicit the attempt to strip rational thought from sinning women and to associate them with evil forces.

There are two final uses that the Knight has for animal imagery. One is associated with expressing temptation and how it ensnares sinners. This implementation appears twice, in Chapters 44 and 48 wherein a spider's web and the net that lurks beneath a fish while it enjoys bait describe how sin and desire are not always obviously and overtly causing the spiritual death of the sinner.<sup>360</sup> That is, the fish that nibbles the bait, like the sinner that gives in to temptation, will die by the net just beneath him as the sinner will die spiritually from his or her misdeeds. The second use of animal imagery is much less sinister in tone, and simply occurs when the Knight uses a proverbial expression that features an animal. This occurs twice in *The Book*, once in Chapter 63 and once in Chapter 129, and in both instances, the proverbs express a simple fact, acting as a statement that implies "this is just the way things are, and one cannot do anything to change the facts of nature." Chapter 63's proverbial expression, for example, is "For al hertes be not euer in one estate A stone slyteth And a hors falleth."<sup>361</sup> This expression occurs after the exemplum in which Apame is exiled because of her haughtiness, and the warning is that even though one's husband may seem to be always "simple and debonayr" to her, a woman ought not take that as a sign that she can and ought to become haughty with him because then his attitude toward her may change, just as a horse may

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<sup>360</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 67, ll. 7-8; 70, ll. 36-37. La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 63, ll. 18-19; 59, ll.4-5.

<sup>361</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 93, ll. 6-7. This proverb does not appear in the Harley translation, nor does the second one, though this one is absent because it occurs after the cut-off point for the Harley translation. The second proverb is "for certayne a woman may not haue two hertes no more than a greyhound may renne after two bestes." La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 171, ll. 10-12. Here the proverb occurs in a passage advocating for a wife not to split her love between her husband and a paramour. There is also one of these proverbs in the Harley translation, but its equivalent does not appear in the Caxton translation. This proverb is in Chapter 6 and occurs as a way of explaining why a woman should cultivate fasting and abstinence from early in her life: "sette a colte in aumblyng ringes, he will use it whiles thei aren on." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 9, ll. 17-18. The implication here is that training in youth will carry forward into adulthood. Thus the proverb's use is slightly different and there is a parallel drawn between moral habits and the natural learning of animals.



indeed fall, despite that this is a rather rare occurrence.<sup>362</sup> The Knight employs animal imagery in six chief ways in *The Book*: as proof that a principle of behavior is “natural,” i.e. he uses animals to naturalize good traits; as exemplars of good or bad behavior; as fable-like entertainment; as dehumanizing imagery of sinners that implies they lack will power and reason; as representations of temptation; and finally as proverbial expressions of truth.

#### **IV. Authorial *Auctoritas*, or Making Your Sources Your Own**

The final topic of discussion I would like to consider with regard to the Knight’s rhetorical choices is the occurrence and use of authorities within *The Book*. I will identify here biblical paraphrases, references to Scripture, references to named saints and holy figures as well as named historical figures, vague references to unnamed figures such as the “sage,” and proverbs, among the numerous types of authorities within *The Book*. Since we have just begun discussing proverbs as they include animals above, I begin with proverbs in this section as well. I do not provide a full catalog of the proverbial expressions or trace them through to the French sources.<sup>363</sup> I simply wish to suggest the rhetorical function of the Knight’s use of proverbs. First, some proverbs are employed to make a comparison between a situation that is related to behavior or ethics and the real, material world. For example, in Chapter 62 the Knight writes that “so ofte is the pot borne to fetche water that atte laste it breketh in pyeces.”<sup>364</sup> This proverb occurs in the discussion of the rope-maker’s wife’s repeated indulgences in adultery, and it conveys

<sup>362</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 93, l. 1.

<sup>363</sup> Both Offord’s edition of Caxton and Wright’s edition of the Harley translation note proverbs in their annotations, and Wright’s edition has a part of the apparatus dedicated to the listing of and connecting of English proverbs to their French equivalents.

<sup>364</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 91, ll. 5-6. “the potte may goo so longe to water, that atte the laste it is broken;” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 82, ll. 18-19.

that repeated use of sin, like repeated use of the water pot, will eventually have consequences. This comparison prompts the audience to consider quotidian activities and objects, such as fetching water and the pitchers in which water is held, with a symbolic eye. That is, by associating these two things—repeated sin and the water pot—the audience may come closer to associating them, and thus to considering their actions when engaged in an activity such as fetching water. The other primary function of the proverb within *The Book* is to express simple truths that the Knight wants to be accepted. For example, in Chapter 5 the Knight advocates that the mind be focused upon only prayer when one engages in it. He justifies this behavior with a proverb, suggesting that its simple factual truth proves the necessity of accepting his behavioral code: “For ye may not goo two weyes at ones For ye must goo that one or that other.”<sup>365</sup> The Knight’s use of proverbs either relates his lessons to the everyday, material world, or they try to naturalize his lessons by conveying that they guide one to what might be called truthful behavior.<sup>366</sup>

Other authorities that the Knight employs include biblical paraphrase;<sup>367</sup> reference to the gospels, Old Testament, Scriptures, or Bible made generically;<sup>368</sup> unclear or vague references including phrases such as “the sage saith”, “the book of wisdom says” (which is general enough that it might not be any of the Wisdom books of the Bible but rather

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<sup>365</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 17, ll. 1-2. “ye may not goo two waies atte onis,” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 7, l. 19.

<sup>366</sup> Sarah Salih notes that “Ann Rosalind Jones defines the fundamental paradox of the conduct book: its investment in the conscious production of what it also claims to be natural behaviour.” Sarah Salih, “At Home; Out of the House,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women’s Writing*, ed. Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 124-40, 135.

<sup>367</sup> Chapters 49, 102, and 108 contain biblical paraphrases. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 72, ll. 5-6; 136, ll. 21-24; 145, ll. 16-18; 146, ll. 7-9.

<sup>368</sup> In Offord’s edition, Chapters 13, 38, 80, 83-85, 87, 90, 96, 101, 102, 108, 109, 114, 118, and 144 contain such references.

just a reference to a collection of proverbs);<sup>369</sup> named figures from the Bible such as Christ, Solomon, Peter, and Paul;<sup>370</sup> named religious figures not from the Bible such as saints;<sup>371</sup> and finally named historical figures that the Knight cites as examples of good comportment.<sup>372</sup> I do not include in this brief survey of authorities all biblical references that include exempla taken from the Bible; I have discussed many of these in the shame/maim trope or the positive exempla tropes above, though it is noteworthy that occasionally there is reference made to the Bible without a full exemplum that references a person.<sup>373</sup> The majority of these types of authority references that the Knight makes routinely throughout *The Book* function in one of two ways: either to lend credence to some mode of behavior the Knight advocates, or to provide a named exemplar who practices some mode of behavior that the Knight either praises or blames. These functions are not particularly surprising, but I would like to note one oddity that is noticeable within the announced positive chapters (82-101) that employ biblical exempla about women of the Bible. A number of these chapters have generic biblical claims that seem to justify the praise of the biblical woman in question by claiming explicitly that the Bible or Scriptures praise her. This explicit reference is odd because frequently when there are Biblical references, especially if they are to bad or morally reprehensible women from the Bible, the overt biblical connection is missing, leaving the reader to recall that Delilah is biblical. Thus, I suggest that the Knight's overt references to the

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<sup>369</sup> In Offord's edition Chapters 39, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 58, 62, 75, 82, 100, 101, 117, 118, 129, and 134 contain such references. La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 62, l. 37; 63, l. 1; 65, l. 12; 66, l. 9; 67, l. 6; 68, l. 35; 71, ll. 3-4; 72, l. 8, 15; 73, l. 6; 85, ll. 1-2; 87, l. 38; 106, l. 30; 112, l. 16; 134, l. 1; 135, l. 23; 156, l. 18; 157, l. 19; 171, ll. 14-15; 176, ll. 6-7.

<sup>370</sup> In Offord's edition Chapters 47, 63, 87, 88, 91, 129, and 144 contain references to Solomon (four times), God or Christ (four times), Peter (once), and Paul (once).

<sup>371</sup> In Offord's edition Chapters 26, 28, 52, 62, 86, 87, 89, 110, and 133 contain such references.

<sup>372</sup> In Offord's edition Chapters 19, 101, 111, 114, 115, 116, 120, 130, and 133 contain such references.

<sup>373</sup> For example, in Chapters 44 and 62 the Knight references the Flood as having been caused by the vanity of women, which in turn inspired lechery.

Bible that occur in Chapters 83, 84, 85, 87, 90, 96 (twice), and 101 (twice again) are markers of his anxiety about offering praise of these women. The only other explanation may be that he wants his female audience to be certain that they can find information on these women for further contemplation in the Bible, but this rationale hardly seems plausible when one considers that these women who are being explicitly linked to the Bible include well-known figures such as Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Ruth, and Esther.

This portion of my analysis of the Knight's work may seem brief in comparison with the relatively longer discussions I provide on the exempla, imagery, and parental narrator. There are two explanations for my brevity. First, Ruys's work demonstrates and discusses the curtailment of *auctoritas* in *The Book*:

While scholarship can show that most of the Knight's stories are drawn from written sources, he himself only rarely draws attention to these *auctoritates*. [...] John L. Grigsby shows that the Knight quite often adds a tale based on personal experience to those drawn from other texts in order to emphasize his lesson, or recasts a written text as an example he has recently heard. Written *auctoritas* and personal experience thus not only merge, but they seem also to be equally valid sites of didactic authority [...].<sup>374</sup>

Second, much work, as the quotation from Ruys above also indicates, has already been done on the Knight's sources.<sup>375</sup> Thus, I am left to draw conclusions about the rhetorical function of the Knight's authorities, which as I have shown, are unremarkable save for the oblique reference to Scripture when he praises biblical women.

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<sup>374</sup> Ruys, "Didactic 'I's,'" 147.

<sup>375</sup> See for example Mosher, *The Exemplum*, 135-36; John L. Grigsby, "Miroir de bonnes femmes," *Romania* 82 (1961): 458-81; John L. Grigsby, "Miroir de bonnes femmes (Suite)," *Romania* 83 (1962): 30-51; John L. Grigsby, "A New Source of the *Livre du Chevalier de La Tour Landry*," *Romania* 84 (1963): 171-208.

## V. Conclusion

To end my discussion of the Knight, I move in a rhetorical circle, returning once again to a quotation from a piece of medieval literature: “O moul, pou marrez a myry juele, / My priuy perle withouten spotte.”<sup>376</sup> These words are from the jeweler/dreamer of *Pearl* and contain his accusation that the earth mars his daughter, whom he describes as a pearl and whom he has lost. There are parallels between both the jeweler/dreamer of *Pearl* and the Knight-narrator of *The Book*. It is also not outside the realm of plausibility that the Knight might have conceived of his own daughters as pearls, for he uses the image of a pearl himself to describe the ideally chaste woman. This parallel occurs to me because Elizabeth Harper’s article reads the jeweler/dreamer both sympathetically and within the socio-cultural context of his time. Harper explains that “All children, but particularly daughters, were subordinate to fathers (or, in the absence of a father, to the head of household) by virtue of their age, sex, and dependency.”<sup>377</sup> I point this historical situation out as a means of moving toward some final statements about the Knight’s rhetoric, but I do not mean to excuse, undercut, or minimize the misogyny or violence directed at women in *The Book*. But “the male head of the household exercised a degree of control over his wife and children that we find abhorrent; in particular, the law allowed him to use violence to correct them and compel their obedience.”<sup>378</sup> The Knight’s work is a manifestation of his culturally permitted woman-correction, and thus it can be read as a tool of social and parental coercion, but reducing it to simply an instrument of social

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<sup>376</sup> Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, eds, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, rev. ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 55, ll. 23-24.

<sup>377</sup> Harper, “*Pearl*,” 428.

<sup>378</sup> Harper, “*Pearl*,” 428-29.

coercion reduces the complexity of the father-daughter relationship. The “layer of emotional attachment and dependence which complicates the father’s power” needs to be considered when we evaluate the Knight’s rhetoric, just as Harper is correct to consider it in her reading of the jeweler/dreamer.<sup>379</sup> Acknowledging these factors of medieval life allows us to see both that this text is a site of contested power and control, but also that despite the violent misogyny present in the rhetoric of the text, it was written by a father for his daughters, which is sometimes quite easy to forget given the violence that abounds in so many of the Knight’s narratives. Harper writes:

Feminist scholarship [...] cannot—or will not—tell us what it feels like to be a patriarch. Our myth of the autonomous individual prepares us to sympathize with the controlled or resisting daughter, not so much with the controlling father. Yet in the character of the dreamer, *Pearl* depicts with sympathy the internal emotional logic that underlay late medieval law.

Few fathers would have understood their possessiveness as power wielded for the sake of domination. They would have justified it instead as longing, need, even dependence [...].<sup>380</sup>

Keeping in mind the difference in emotional response medieval readers might have to a text as violent and misogynist as the Knight’s allows for the conclusion that despite the fact that the rhetoric reflects patriarchal concerns about female sexuality, behavior, and dress, as well as anxiety over social class mobility, the rhetoric of the Knight also encompasses a medieval paternal care that exists despite its alienness and distastefulness to modern readers. The Knight employs the rhetorical freight of *The Book* to prevent his daughters from acting in socially unsanctioned ways; his exempla, imagery, and *auctoritas* all work toward this end, and often without mercy.<sup>381</sup> The Knight sometimes

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<sup>379</sup> Harper, “*Pearl*,” 437.

<sup>380</sup> Harper, “*Pearl*,” 429.

<sup>381</sup> Amos presents a complex reading but one which emphasizes class identity rather than nuancing gender and family complexity for the Knight: “part of the movement of the text is the systemic appropriation of religious elements and their deployment to validate a moral-aristocracy, one dependent not on material

suggests that a woman is better off policing herself with her own fears (the prison imagery) than facing punishment—including imprisonment, disfigurement, abandonment, and/or death—from her husband or another man in her life. Yet the Knight's obsession with punishing and excising the willful women in his text can also be read as a motivation to help his daughters preserve their reputation and real safety, for while I discuss the Knight's list of punishments for adultery as a rhetorical scare tactic, women in the Middle Ages were sometimes punished or killed for such acts, or the rumors of them. The Knight's rhetorical strategies are profoundly different and encompass more violence than either Anne de France's or Christine de Pizan's, but in my concluding chapter I hope to discuss some of the similarities *The Book* shares with these women-authored texts and further extend a nuanced reading of the Knight's rhetoric such that he is not simply reduced to a misogynist father.

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status, but on an ennobling honor code that includes an element of the sacred." Amos, "The Gentrification of Eve," 33.

## Chapter 5

## Good “Wives” Giving Good Advice: Verse Didacticism in England

“I have observed that most women in this world take joy in their children. But, my son William, I see myself, Dhuoda, living separated and far away from you. For this reason I am somewhat ill at ease, and eager to be useful to you. I am happy, therefore, to address this little book to you, which is transcribed in my own name. It is for you to read as a kind of model. Even though I am absent in body, this little book will be present. As you read it, it will lead your spirit back to those things you ought to do for my sake.”<sup>1</sup>

Dhuoda  
*Liber Manualis*

I begin this chapter with a quotation from Dhuoda, a Carolingian mother who wrote a manual, not for her daughters, but for her son, William, who was separated from her. This quotation encapsulates two primary features of the texts I examine in this chapter. First, Dhuoda presents her relationship with her son, establishing her work is written by a parent for a child, and second, Dhuoda’s words reference her separation from her son as well as her hope that the handbook on behavior she has written for him will act as a reminder not just of proper behavior, but of proper behavior “for my [Dhuoda’s] sake.”<sup>2</sup> In writing thus, Dhuoda encodes herself as William’s parent in her text, and she implores William to read the text in a way that will recall to him her memory and her

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1 “Cernens plurimas cum suis in saeculo gaudere proles, et me Dhuodanam, o fili Wilhelme, a te elongatam conspiciens procul, ob id quasi anxia et utilitatis desiderio plena, hoc opusculum ex nomine meo scriptum in tuam specie tenus formam legendi dirigo, gaudens. Quod si absens sum corpore, iste praesens libellus tibi ad mentem reducat quid erga me, cum legeris, debeas agere.” Dhuoda, *Dhuoda, Handbook for her Warrior Son: Liber Manualis*, trans. and ed. Marcelle Thiébaux, Cambridge Medieval Classics 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 42, 43. A better known translation of this section of Dhuoda’s text is perhaps Carol Neel’s: “I am well aware, that most women rejoice that they are with their children in this world, but I, Dhuoda, am far away from you, my son William. For this reason I am anxious and filled with longing to do something for you. So I send you this little work written down in my name, that you may read it for your education, as a kind of mirror. And I rejoice that, even if I am apart from you in body, the little book before you may remind you, when you read it, of what you should do on my behalf.” Dhuoda, *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman’s Counsel for Her Son*, trans. Carol Neel, Regents Studies in Medieval Culture (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Dhuoda, *Handbook for her Warrior Son*, 43.



desire for him to behave in a specific manner. This second feature implies a *quid pro quo*, or what I call transactional feature, of the text. That is, here Dhuoda provides William with something (advice) in the hope of getting something else in return (appropriate behavior that will reflect well upon Dhuoda and her family), though the transaction is slightly more complex than this explication initially suggests because Dhuoda does not merely hope for compliance, she structures her text and employs rhetoric to foster it in her audience.<sup>3</sup> I connect these rhetorical tendencies in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis* with the impetus behind three short poems that survive in manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that address women's behavior and are written in Middle English or Middle Scots: "The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter," "The Thewis of Gud Women," and "The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage."<sup>4</sup>

These poems do not have identifiable authors, as the *Liber manualis* does, but the three poems share a similar mood with Dhuoda's prologue, from which the above epigraph comes: privileging of the parent/child relationship in the work's rhetorical structure and the implication of parent-child separation are key in "The Good Wife" and "Wold a Pylgremage." I examine "The Good Wife," "Thewis," and "Wold a Pylgremage" together because of the similarity of rhetorical style in their advice provided for young women: each is a simple, practical guide grounded in directions based on the daily experiences of the girls and young women who either heard or read these works.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on Dhuoda and her *Liber manualis* see: Marie Anne Mayeski, *Dhuoda: Ninth-Century Mother and Theologian* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); M. A. Claussen, "God and Man in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*," in *Women in the Church: Papers Read at 1989 Summer Meeting and 1990 Winter Meeting of Ecclesiastical History Society*, eds. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 43-52. Dhuoda's *Liber manualis* also is a point of departure for Juanita Feros Ruys's discussion of experience in Ruys, "Didactic 'I's and the Voice of Experience in Advice from Medieval and Early-Modern Parents to their Children," in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, *Disputatio* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 129-62, 131-36.

<sup>4</sup> Hereafter these poems will be, respectively: "The Good Wife," "Thewis," and "Wold a Pylgremage."

Two of the three poems, “The Good Wife” and “Wold a Pylgremage,” employ a parental narrator, and they also share a similar organizational structure that has rhetorical implications for the poems: both have short stanzas that are followed by pithy proverbial statements that recapitulate the stanza’s lesson or that elaborate or illustrate it in some way. The compulsion to provide specific, vivid imagery is shared between two of these poems, “Thewis” and “Wold a Pylgremage,” as both include specifically visual imagery that illuminates the principles of behavior that are either advocated or eschewed by the works. Because “The Good Wife” employs the parental narrator, “Thewis” concrete visual imagery, and “Wold a Pylgremage” both of these rhetorical features, in this chapter I arrange the presentation of the three poems in this manner, so that our discussion culminates with “Wold a Pylgremage,” the more rhetorically sophisticated of the three poems.

I discuss one other poem in this chapter as well, and while it is from an English context, it is Anglo-Norman in language, and I discuss it primarily as a way to contextualize and deepen the reading of the mother as rhetorically persuasive figure in this poetry. The poem is “*Débat entre mère et fille*,” (Debate between Mother and Daughter), or as the editors and translators of the text rather misleadingly translate the poem’s rubric, “Choosing a Husband.” The verse is preserved in British Library Additional MS 46919 and reproduced with an English translation in an anthology of Anglo-Norman lyric poetry.<sup>5</sup> It does not present the rhetorical construction of the mother-daughter relationship as simply as the three poems that make up the majority of this

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<sup>5</sup> See David L. Jeffrey and Brian J. Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric: An Anthology Edited from the Manuscripts with Translations and Commentary*, Studies and Texts 93 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990). I am indebted to Felicity Riddy for my knowledge of this lyric. See her mention of it in Riddy, “Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text,” *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 66-86.

chapter, and so I include it here as a way to problematize the attempt to control readers with which didactic literature engages, and I consider it only at the conclusion of this chapter, once my main argument concerning the other three poems has been made.

I rely upon Tauno F. Mustanoja's 1948 edition for the text of the three mother-as-didactic-speaker poems but differ markedly in my approach and reading of the texts.<sup>6</sup> For example, of "Wold a Pylgremage," Mustanoja claims: "the contents of his [the anonymous author of "Wold a Pylgremage"] work differ a great deal from those of the earlier poem ["The Good Wife"]; besides, its general tone is remarkably coarser. The rather rude allusions to butchers and horse-dealers have no counterpart in *The Good Wife Taught her Daughter*, and much of the warm, intimate atmosphere of the latter work is missing in the former."<sup>7</sup> While I do not disagree the contents of the poems differ, my examination of these poems demonstrates the incorrectness of Mustanoja's assessment of difference, which seems to be prematurely asserted on the flimsy basis of so-called literary merit and not rhetorical qualities. "Wold a Pylgremage" is not what I would consider "rude" but rather a much more specifically and concretely drawn portrait of the experiences that a middle class young woman might have undergone in the Middle Ages. In my overall examination of conduct literature, I situate these texts clearly on my rhetorical spectra associated with familiar rhetorical authority (in the case of two of the poems this authority is parental) and concrete rhetorical tropes, which include in the case of these poems, the use of proverbial reinforcement of lessons, the use of experiential context in the presentation of conduct principles, and the employment of specifically visually drawn images to enliven the lessons presented.

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<sup>6</sup> Tauno F. Mustanoja, ed., "*The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter*," "*The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage*," "*The Thewis of Gud Women*" (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran, 1948).

<sup>7</sup> Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*," 130.

## I. Proverbs and Experience as Context

Before we examine the rhetoric of “The Good Wife,” it is essential to discuss the various extant versions of the poem, all of which are provided in Mustanoja’s edition.<sup>8</sup> There are six extant versions of “The Good Wife,” five derived from manuscripts and one from a 1597 printed book derived from a lost Norfolk manuscript.<sup>9</sup> Mustanoja privileges the E- and H-texts, the earliest versions, but claims that E is the most authoritative, meaning closest to the original version of the poem, save that the H-text has more stanzas than the E-text and that these stanzas appear to be lost from the E-text, not later additions to the H-text.<sup>10</sup> Based on these estimations from Mustanoja, I quote primarily the H-text, though I provide the equivalent E-text (if extant) in the notes. Additionally in the notes, I provide the N- and A-text versions of the lines if extant in order to provide a glimpse of the poem as it was known closer to the date of some of the other conduct literature that I examine, particularly Caxton’s translation of Geoffroy de La Tour Landry’s conduct manual. The persistence of the poem’s existence, despite the textual mutations it undergoes, speaks to the popularity of the genre as well as to the interest of various readers in the topic.

“The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” has three structuring devices that must be explored: narrative context for behavioral principles, which can be best understood in terms of rhetorical significance as a manifestation of the *enargeia* I describe in the

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<sup>8</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”. Mustanoja has a detailed and clear explication for the relationship between the various versions of the text, and the explications I provide rely on his. See particularly, 92-128. For a discussion of not only the various texts of *The Good Wife* but also a detailed consideration of how the other contents suggest how the poem may have been used, see Riddy, “Mother Knows Best.”

<sup>9</sup> The E-text is from MS. Emmanuel College, Cambridge I. 4. 31 (c. 1350); the H-text from MS. Henry E. Huntington Library HM 128 (1400-1450); the L-text from MS. Lambeth Palace 853 (c. 1425-30); the T-text from MS. Trinity College, Cambridge, R. 3. 19 (1463-90); the A-text from MS. Ashmole 61 (1450-1500); and the N-text from a 1597 printed edition derived from a no longer extant manuscript.

<sup>10</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 124-25, and see especially 197-221 for the supplementary versions in the appendix.

introduction; the employment of the proverb as a reinforcing agent of the advice; and the use of the parental narrator. “The Good Wife” presents its principles in a context that both articulates a situation that young women might experience, which while not generating the specific concrete imagery that “Thewis” and “Wold a Pylgremage” do, nonetheless serves to remove the principles of behavior from the realm of abstractions, placing them into quotidian contexts and tying them to the experiences of its audience. The H-text version of the poem consists of thirty-five stanzas of four verse lines followed by a pithy restatement of the lesson that describes appropriate behavior. This structure embeds each proverbial lesson in a context or a pseudo-experience. For example, stanza IV reads:

Ȝif any man bidde þe worschipe, and will wedde the,  
 Auysely answeere hym; scorne hym noȝt, what he be.  
 Schewe it to þin frendis, and forhele it noȝt.  
 Sitte by hym, ne stande þer synne may be wrought.  
*A slaundre þat is reised is euell to fell,*  
*My leue child.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 159, ll. 20-25. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: “If any man praises you, and desires to wed you, / Answer him prudently; do not scorn him, whatever he is. / Tell your friends and do not conceal it. / Neither sit nor stand by him where sin may be done. / Slander that is circulated is difficult to silence / My dear child.” E-text:

“Ȝef eni man bidde þe wrsipe þat wile wedden þe,  
 Sueteli him answeere; scorn him noȝt, whatso he beo.  
 Scheu hit to þine frendes, no forhele hit noȝt.  
 Sit noȝt bi him, no stond, þar sunne mai be wrought.

*A sclandre þat is reised is evil to stille.*” Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 158, ll. 18-22.

N-text:

“Gif any man with worship desire to wed thee,  
 Wisely him answeere, scorne him not what he be,  
 And tell it to thy friends and hide thou it nought,  
 Sit not by him nor stad not that sin mow be wrought:

For gif a slaunde be once raysed,  
 It is not so sone stilled,

My leeue dere child.” Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 210, ll. 22-28.

A-text:

“If any man profer þe to wede,  
 A curtas ansuer to hym be seyde;  
 And schew hym to thy frendes alle,  
 For anything þat may befawle,  
 Syt not by hym, ne stand þou nouȝt  
 In sych place þer synne may be wrought.” Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 217, ll. 27-32.

A fairly abstract proverb, which might apply to many situations, is here specifically grounded and contextualized within the precise moment of a suitor presenting himself and within the cultural concern over women's reputations. This concrete application of the proverb aids audience retention and provides the very simple narrative within which that proverb can be accessed and recalled by the audience.

I might pause here to discuss briefly what Felicity Riddy has called the “bourgeois ethos’ in the later Middle Ages”:

the household was the locus of production and trade, and its members consisted not only of the kin group but of apprentices and live-in servants as well. [... A] fifth to a third of urban households contained servants, many of whom were adolescent girls. [...] “[T]he working household [...] was value laden and ideological” and “seems to have represented a distinctive complex of values—stability, piety, hierarchy, diligence, ambition, and respectability—all of which were crucial to the success of those craft and trade groups who were in place in the towns [...].”<sup>12</sup>

Riddy’s understanding of this aspect of medieval urban culture allows for a reading of these poems in terms of their didacticism that considers the culturally normative role in education that these poems may have played. Further, her article traces the location of these ideological motives to control young women beyond the rhetorical figure of the mother and into the urban power structure, largely populated by men. Riddy writes that “The household ideology of ‘What the Goodwife Taught Her Daughter’ locates the woman as wife and mother within the home; her domesticity is represented as a prime virtue and she herself as the repository and maintainer of bourgeois values. ‘Goodwife’ is a term of respect; it is the counterpart of ‘goodman,’ which means not only the male head

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<sup>12</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 67. Such concerns are manifest in other conduct literature. See Mark Addison Amos, “Violent Hierarchies: Disciplining Women and Merchant Capitalists in *The Book of the Knyght of the Towre*,” in *Caxton’s Trace: Studies in the History of English Printing*, ed. William Kuskin (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 69-100, and 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 (1993): 61-72.

of a household but a burgess or freeman. The ‘goodwife’ is both a virtuous woman and a citizen’s wife; the bourgeois ethos seeks to conflate those two meanings.”<sup>13</sup> These poems reveal not only anxiety about female reputation, but as Riddy’s discussion of the term “goodwife” also suggests, there is additionally unease about how women’s reputations can impinge upon men’s and also, in a society wherein household and business place were aligned, one’s guild or business reputation. Riddy even suggests that this poem documents the urban household’s “aim [...] to consolidate, to achieve long-term prosperity, and, if possible, to move upward. A poem like ‘What the Goodwife Taught Her Daughter’ was part of their process of self-definition, one of the means whereby this group articulated a set of values that endorsed worldly and material success.”<sup>14</sup> This ethos for economic well-being is perhaps even more overtly present in the Anglo-Norman poem I discuss below.

To return to the text, each of the stanzas of “The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” are arranged in this proverb-ended structure, and each of the stanzas deals with the quotidian experiences of a middle-class young woman, including: how to act in church, how to walk in public, the proper reasons for going into town and the suitable pursuits while there, proper behavior regarding dress, and the proper way to treat and oversee one’s servants and other workers. This dual structure reinforces itself: the stanza provides the context, and the closing lines provide the proverb that generalizes the principle being illustrated. For example, the corresponding proverbs in the H-text for the list of activities above is as follows: “*In þi gode beryng begynnyth þi worschipe, / My der child*”; “*Euell lak, euell name, / My leue child*”; “*þat tauerne haunteth / His thrifte*

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<sup>13</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 68.

<sup>14</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 69.

*forsakith, / My der child*"; "*þat mesure loueth and skill / Ofte hath his wille, / My leue child*"; "*Mery is owne þing to kepe, / My dere child*"; "*At ese he is þat seldam thankith, / My leue child*"; "*Ouerdone pride / Makyth nakid side, / My leue childe*"; "*Redy is at nede / Afor don dede, / My leue childe*"; "*Many handys make light werke, / My leue childe*"; "*Mykell note hym behoueth to don þat house schal holden.*"<sup>15</sup> As is evident, some of these proverbs (the second especially) do not have a clearly drawn context on their own, thus by placing them within the stanzaic context of a young woman's lived experience, the proverbs take on a concretized meaning and can be more readily remembered and

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<sup>15</sup> Note that Mustanoja catalogues alphabetically the proverbs from the various texts. See 298-41. These citations are organized with the H-text citation, my translation, then the equivalent passages in the E-, N-, and A-texts are given. All page references and line numbers refer to Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*". Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*", 159, ll. 18-19. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "In your good bearing begins your worship / my dear child." E-text: "*In þi god beringe biginnet þi wrschipe.*" 158, l. 17. Italics in Mustanoja. N-text: "For after thy bering, / So shall thy name spring, / My leue dere child." 210, ll. 19-21. A-text: "In thi god beryng begynnes þi worschype, / My dere douzter, of þis take kepe." 217, ll. 25-26; 161, ll. 48-49. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Difficult blemish, difficult name, / My dear child." E-text: "*Euil lat, euil name, / Mi leue child.*" 160, ll. 44-45. Italics in Mustanoja. N-text: "For gif thou haue euill name, / It will turne the to grame, / My leue dere child." 211, ll. 54-56. A-text has no summative proverb in this instance; 161, ll. 54-56. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Who haunts taverns / His thrift forsakes, / My dear child." E-text: "*þat tauerne hantet / Is þrift forsaket*" 160, ll. 50-51. Italics in Mustanoja. N-text: "For who the tauern vsis / His thrift he refusis, / My leue dere child." 211, ll. 61-63. A-text: "Forsake þou hym þat tauerne hanteht, / And all þe vices þat þerinne bethe." 218, ll. 67-68; 163, ll. 61-63. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Who loves measure and skill / Often has his will, / My dear child." E-text: "*þat mesure louez and skil / Ofte hatz his wil, / Mi leue child.*" 162, ll. 56-58. N-text: "Who so loues measure and skill, / He shall ofte haue his will, / My leue dere child." 212, ll. 68-70. A-text has no equivalent proverbial passage; 163, ll. 68-69. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Merry is it to keep one's own things, / My dear child." E-text: "*Mirie is oune þing to loke, / Mi leue child.*" 162, ll. 63-64. N-text: "Mery is owne thing to see, / My dere daughter I tell it thee, / My leue dere child." 212, ll. 75-77. A-text has no equivalent proverbial passage; 165, ll. 98-99. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "At ease is he that seldom thanks, / My dear child." E-text: "*At ese he is þat selde þonket.*" 164, l. 94. The N-text and A-text have no equivalent passages; 165, ll. 110-12. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Overdone pride / makes a naked side, / My dear child." E-text: "*Ouerdon pride / Wirchet nakede side, / Mi leue child.*" 164, ll. 104-06. Italics in Mustanoja. The N-text and A-text have no equivalent passages; 167, ll. 124-26. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Readiness is needed / Before the deed is done, / My dear child." E-text: "*Redi is ate nede / Bifor don dede, / Mi leue child.*" 166, ll. 117-19. N-text: "Before done deede / Another may speede, / My leue &c." 213, ll. 131-33. The A-text contains no parallel proverb; 167, ll. 137-38. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "Many hands make light work, / My dear child." E-text: "*Many honden maken lizt werk, / Mi leue child.*" 166, ll. 131-32. The N-text contains no equivalent passage, but the A-text contains "To helpe them sone þou sterte, / For many handes make lyzht werke." 220, ll. 153-54; 169, l. 143. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: "It behooves him to do much work who will manage a household." E-text: "*Michel note him bihouetz þat hus schal holden, / Mi leue child.*" 168, l. 137-38. N-text: "For they will do better if thou by them stond, / The worke is soner done there as is many hond, / My leue &c." 214, ll. 140-42. A-text: "Mych thing behouen them / þat gode housold schall kepyn." 220, ll. 143-44.



adhered to. Riddy suggests also that casting the mother-narrator's lessons in terms of proverbs shows "her wisdom [...] as traditional," which is "a way of authorizing the goodwife's utterance."<sup>16</sup> I ought also to note that the conventional proverbs contained in these poems have much in common with the contents of sermonic literature, as G. R. Owst shows in *Literature and Pulpit* where he describes some of the sermonic dictates leveled at women: they should have "stillesse in berynge, [...] abstinence in mete and drynke, schame in semelaunt and chiere" and be "honeste in clothyng."<sup>17</sup>

The presence of a mother-figure throughout the poem also feeds into the context of a pseudo-experience. For example, the first line begins with "Doughter" and nearly all the proverbs at the close of each stanza include either "*My dere childe*" or "*My leue child*."<sup>18</sup> This repetition maintains a narrative experience of the mother addressing her daughter.<sup>19</sup> Constant reference to the audience as child, encourages the audience members to adopt the persona and may well remind them of former experiences when their mothers instructed them. Such rhetoric conforms to the practice of *enargeia*, as it can trigger a memory of specific experience—that is, the language used has the "ability

<sup>16</sup> Riddy, "Mother Knows Best," 78.

<sup>17</sup> G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 384.

<sup>18</sup> Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*," 159, l. 1, 7, 13. Italics in Mustanoja. E-text: "Doutter" 158, l. 1, but in this version the child references occur only in the form "Mi leue child" 158, l. 7. N-text and A-text both incorporate a short prefatory stanza that brings up the mother-daughter relationship, but the word daughter does not occur in the first line of these versions of the poem. The N-text includes in the proverbial section references either to "My leue dere child" or to "My leue &c." 210, l. 7; 212, l. 98. The A-text almost entirely removes the refrain mentioning the parent-child relationship but where it occurs it appears as "My dere douzter," occasionally without the adjectival modifier or with it placed after the noun. 217, l. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Riddy suggests that "The poem is not, presumably, a literal address from a mother to a daughter, since a daughter living at home with her mother learns informally, by example and word of mouth; she does not need a text. It is when their relationship has been disrupted—when the daughter does not in fact live at home any longer—that a written text is required to mediate between them. Riddy, "Mother Knows Best," 71.

to ‘make visible’ its subject matter.”<sup>20</sup> The rhetorical significance of such visualization is the “ability to move the audience and to make them feel the emotions appropriate to the events described.”<sup>21</sup> The appropriate emotions triggered here are those of obedience and fondness for the mother; in structuring the poem within the mother-narrator frame and repeatedly referencing the “dear child” audience, the rhetoric brings to life memories of the audience’s own lived experience. These memories, by the very nature of the reading/listening act as a transactional act, cannot help but engender these emotional connections. The author employs the rhetoric here in a manner that is meant to manipulate the audience emotionally and make it more open to submitting to the behavioral dictates in the poem.<sup>22</sup> The mother-narrator rhetoric may trigger nostalgic memories for audience members who are separated from the physical presence of their mothers, such as young female servants; ostensibly the mother-narrator allows the actual mother to haunt the audience through recollection of past lived lessons.

The variances in the textual versions of “The Good Wife” represent this fictionalized mother-narrator context to greater and lesser extents. For example, the H-text has only two of its thirty-five stanzas end without the “my dear child” refrain, but the E-text has eight of its twenty-eight stanzas end without the refrain. The N-text, however, has all thirty-two of its stanzas make use of the refrain, but the A-text, which both

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<sup>20</sup> Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Abingdon, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009), 88.

<sup>21</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 90.

<sup>22</sup> On the transactional nature of reading, see Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader The Text The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978). She does not apply the term to listening in an audience, but she is not concerned with medieval or ancient audiences. I extend the descriptor of transactional to medieval listening to the reading of texts because I see no reason for claiming that exposure to material aurally rather than visually should somehow blunt the effect of emotional or personal experience in one’s reaction to the material. Riddy discusses the importance of the mother as “play[ing] a crucial—and possibly nostalgic—symbolic role in the representation of domesticity.” She does not, however, mention the rhetorical practice of *enargeia*. Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 76.

Mustanoja and the more recent edition for TEAMS by Eve Salisbury print without stanzas, almost entirely eliminates references to the mother-daughter relationship in the poem, without maintaining the refrain at all.<sup>23</sup> There are eleven references to daughter or child from the narrator directed toward the audience in the entirety of the A-text. My assessment, based on Mustanoja's sense of the authenticity of the E- and H-texts leads me to believe that the A-text has removed these refrains to reduce repetition that may have seemed excessive to the scribe, but I would maintain that the original text of "The Goode Wife" made consistent and extended use of the parental narrator in order both to provide a context for the advice and instructions as well as to confer on that advice the charismatic power that someone's parent might have over them by giving a personal discussion on principles of behavior. Like Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*, "The Good Wife" claims authority over the audience's behavior, and by casting its principles of behavior into the realm of parental advice, it instills itself with parental charisma and power. My insistence on the rhetorical significance of the parental narrator is somewhat of a revision of Mustanoja's perspective on the issue: "While some works are to be taken as genuine parental admonitions—addressed by a known personage to his own child or children—this framework no doubt became a more or less conventional element in most of them [i.e., conduct works]."<sup>24</sup> While not incorrect, Mustanoja's reading of the parental narrator seems to imply that the conventional is without purpose, whereas I argue that it is a distinct authority-building rhetorical choice. Unlike Mustanoja, I cannot conclude after examining the texts of "The Good Wife" that "either the part played by the parent's

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<sup>23</sup> Eve Salisbury, ed., *The Trials and Joys of Marriage*, TEAMS Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), 219-31.

<sup>24</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .", 30. Mustanoja provides a thorough listing of various parental advice appearing before 1500 in French and English; he includes some Latin sources too that were translated into French and/or English.

address in these works is often a mere question of form, or [...] the authors of these instructions lacked a real insight into the peculiar structure of a child's mind."<sup>25</sup> While the parental narrator is indeed a part of the poem's form, it fulfills a vital pedagogical approach: it instills authority in the precepts presented in the poem and it provides a narrative context within which these principles can be recalled. As for the accusation that the author of "The Good Wife" knew nothing of how to write in order to appeal to a child, I must suggest that perhaps these poems were addressed not to very young girls, but to girls approaching or at marriageable age. I derive this idea not because there is any internal evidence that supports this claim within the text of "The Good Wife," though one can hardly imagine a very young child being permitted to roam around town or into taverns as the audience of "The Good Wife" is cautioned against, but because a similar poem addressed to a young man by his father makes overt reference to age: "A wyse man had a feyre chylde, / Was wele of fifteen wyntur age," whom he "Taught [...] bothe wele and feyre."<sup>26</sup> There is no way to say whether or not the author of "How the Goode Man Taght Hys Sone" knew "The Good Wife" poem in any of its versions, but the A-text of "The Good Wife" appears after a version of "How the Goode Man Taght Hys Sone," and I would posit, though with the codicil that this is far from certain, that the age range for the audience of "The Good Wife" approximates the announced age in the poem for boys. That is, rather than extremely young girls, as Mustanoja seems to suggest make up the audience, I would say that young girls in their teens, though perhaps as young as twelve, would be the primary audience for this poem, and that given this audience, the rhetorical effect of the parental narrator would have an immediate impact as the audience is not

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<sup>25</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .", 78.

<sup>26</sup> Eve Salisbury, ed., "How the Goode Man Taght Hys Sone," in Salisbury, *The Trials and Joys of Marriage*, 233-45.

completely adult yet and that obedience to one's parents was compulsory at such an age.<sup>27</sup>

Riddy further points out that the choice to name the mother—*not* the father—in these advice poems “represent[s] the female domestic zone as so separate as to be all but autonomous, and yet this autonomy is an illusion: the text is paternalistic, not maternalistic.”<sup>28</sup> She also clarifies that the poem “is the expression of an ethos that sought to represent prudent marriage and domesticity as ‘natural’ for women in a period in which young girls migrating to towns as unskilled labor and contracting marriages away from parental oversight, or not marrying at all, were seen to pose threats of various kinds to bourgeois interests,” a view that reflects her stance that the poem “is the product of a meeting of interests between male clerics and city fathers.”<sup>29</sup> I would also suggest that in some ways the poem reflects the social interests of the good wife who would have employed the servant girls and other women separated from their families in an urban environment; such women would have had their own concerns for their reputation—clearly I cannot claim that the good wife's concerns for her reputation is not without complicity with patriarchal systems of power—but keeping in mind a woman's desire for her own reputation does cast a slightly less hidden paternity over the poem.<sup>30</sup> I offer this

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<sup>27</sup> I do not want to suggest that no children disregarded or disobeyed parental instruction in the Middle Ages, nor that conduct guides explicitly and efficiently prevented such disobedience. Rather, my thoughts above suggest that the standard cultural expectation was for obedience, and as such, the parental narrator is especially rhetorically potent in these conduct texts, though is obviously still in a transactional relationship, one with which it cannot assure complete child-audience compliance.

<sup>28</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 72.

<sup>29</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 72-73.

<sup>30</sup> Riddy does acknowledge this viewpoint in her article. See Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 83. This female concern for reputation is also manifest in the longer conduct manuals that I discuss in the chapters below. Christine de Pizan warns women at court to be sure of the reputations of the women in her circle, Anne de France tells her daughter to provide relief to relatives of good reputation (but not to those of bad as that will cast suspicion over her own honor), and the Knight warns his daughters, somewhat more obliquely, about going to balls and making sure to always have a good woman nearby them to help safeguard their reputations.

additional—not contrary—reading to Riddy’s while fully acknowledging my agreement with her supposition that the manuscript contents with which the poem circulated “suggest that for around eighty or ninety years, at least, ‘What the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter’ was part of the pastoral repertoire of clergy serving the populations of the central and west Midlands” and that in conjunction with the precepts in the poem, this suggests a union of clerical and urban interests because “women migrants were a considerable source of disruption.”<sup>31</sup> Together these two traits—clerical sponsorship and dissemination coupled with urban interests of feminine control—suggest the poem seeks “containment of female energy and enterprise.”<sup>32</sup> Riddy’s pinpointing of the issue of containment coincides with G. R. Owst’s contention that one of the major faults of women he finds cited in the sermonic literature is “‘*instabilitas loci*’, an equally fatal attraction to the outside world, its freedom, its publicity and its scope for yet more pleasant gossip.”<sup>33</sup> I find this cultural root for didacticism addressed to women within sermon literature to be an interesting origin for what I argue becomes, in Christine de Pizan’s and Anne de France’s manuals, advice on how to negotiate and navigate court life for women. That is, the didactic genre is an ambivalent one; there is a push to control, but I suggest in the chapters below that Anne and Christine employ it to teach women

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<sup>31</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 74. That verse was incorporated into sermonic performances is attested to in England, see Alan John Fletcher, *Late Medieval Popular Preaching*, where he examines the use of Middle English verse, especially as a means of achieving “the pleasurable conquest and colonization of the congregation’s imagination,” 276. Jeffrey and Levy also both discuss at length the occurrence of Anglo-Norman lyrics in “preaching handbooks and occasional collections, the diffusion of which is largely a thirteenth-century phenomenon” that is reflective of “the spirit of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the *Statutes of Salisbury* promulgated at the Council of Oxford (1222), with their emphasis on increased instruction of the laity.” Thus the manuscripts contained “subject matter which both friars and secular priests could be expected to expound upon and illustrate.” *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 3. For a discussion of the pastoral care of laywomen in late medieval England that focuses particularly on literature directed to priests, see Beth Allison Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England*, Gender in the Middle Ages 3, (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 74.

<sup>33</sup> Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 388.

how to control themselves in order that they might achieve their own power and/or authority.

But to return to the controlling narrator-as-mother, her importance is reaffirmed in the final two stanzas of the H-text where the mother narrator reappears in more than just the refrain of “my dear child.” Stanza XXXIV of the H-text opens with: “Now haue I taught þe, doughter, so dide my modir me.”<sup>34</sup> The final stanza of the H-text includes these lines:

Now thrifte and thedam mote þou haue, my leue swete barn.  
Of all oure forme-fadres þat euer were or arn,  
Of patriarkes, of prophetis, þat euer were o lyue,  
Her blessing mote þou haue, and wele mote þou thryue.<sup>35</sup>

These lines, like the ones that reiterate the audience’s role as child, assert the narrator’s identity as mother, and again reinforce the sense of an experience. The author concludes with a maternal blessing that confers upon the audience-child the inheritance of the

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<sup>34</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 172, l. 204. My translation: “Now have I taught you, daughter, just as my mother [taught] me.” E-text: “Nou haui tauht þe, douter, so dede mi moder me.” 170, l. 157. N-text: “Now haue I taught the doughter, so did my moder mee” 215, l. 171. A-text: “Now I haue tauzht þe, my dere douzter, / The same techynge I hade of my modor”; 221, ll. 199-200.

<sup>35</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 172 ll. 210-213. My translation: “Now thriftiness and prosperity might you have, my dear sweet child. / From all our forefathers who ever were or are, / From patriarchs, from prophets, who ever were alive, / Their blessing might you have, and may you prosper.” E-text:

“Nou þrift and þedom mote þou haue, mi leue swete barn.

Of alle oure forme-faderes þat were or arn,

Of patriarches and prophetes þat euere weren on lieu,

Here blissinge mote þou haue, and wel mote þou þriue.” 170, ll. 164-67.

The N-text and A-text have no parallel passages that are exactly matching, but the N-text has a passage wherein the gift for following the principles of behavior is the mother’s blessing:

“Now looke thou do doughter as I haue taught thee

And thou shalt haue my blessing the better may thou the,

And euery maiden that good wife wold bee

Do as I haue taught you for saint charity:

And all that so will do God giue hem his blessing

And send hem all heauen at her last ending.” 216, ll. 220-25.

Likewise the A-text has a short passage but instead of removing the long list of supplementary religious figures from the blessing, the mother’s direct blessing is omitted:

“Therfor, allmyzhty God inne trone,

Spede vs all, bothe euen and morn,

And bring vs to thy hyzhe blysse,

That neuermor fro vs schall mysse.” 221, ll. 205-08.

family, a rhetorical choice that links the behavior advocated in the poem with the possibility of a more material inheritance that a properly obedient middle-class heir might expect. In this manner the poem both casts back into the audience's own previous experiences and interactions with parents as well as casting forward, into future interactions that the audience may have. These future interactions, which will come at the dispersal of their deceased relatives' wills, it is implied, will relate to how well the audience has embodied the principles of behavior advocated not only in the poem that has been heard or read, but also in the advice that the grandmother gave the mother, who now gives it to the daughter in this poem. Thus in some ways these closing remarks in "The Good Wife" further underline the bourgeois ethos, for one way to ensure economic success is to work oneself into the good graces of those from whom one might inherit. Riddy further notes that casting the advice into the realm of that which is handed down generationally, from woman to woman, is a falsity because the bourgeois ethos evident in the poem is something that only could have arisen in conjunction with "the rapid increase in urban populations," so the advice in them "only purports to be deeply traditional and old-fashioned" in the interests of promoting regulation of women in the home and in the city.<sup>36</sup> Such observations underscore the careful rhetorical choices the poet makes in generating a text that is persuasive for his audience.

Felicity Riddy's ideas about the use of "The Goode Wife" lend credence to my rhetorical analysis of the parental narrator as absent-but-present. "The Good Wife" may have been read by merchant-class or middle-class townspeople to their female laborers who would have been separated from their own parents, and thus in need of hearing, even if in a fictionalized form, advice on conduct from mother figures. For example, Felicity

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<sup>36</sup> Riddy, "Mother Knows Best," 78.



Riddy writes, “women in a quasi-maternal relation to their servants or female apprentices” might have had a use for these poems because “‘What the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter’ can be read as a text from which women as household managers might learn how to train young girls.”<sup>37</sup> At the very least it provides a cultural standard against which merchant- and middle-class women could measure either themselves or their servants. This exploration of “The Good Wife” has established the importance of the parental narrator, narrative context, and proverbs to the rhetoric of mothers’ addresses from England.

## II. Visual Pedagogies and Proverbs

“The Thewis of Gud Women” is a short verse work in Middle Scots similar in content to but different in narrative style from “The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter” and Mustanoja notes that the general consensus for the original is that it could not have been written before 1450.<sup>38</sup> “The Thewis of Gud Women” is found in a manuscript with other conduct literature, and the only information suggested about the author by Mustanoja is that he “probably” was the same person who wrote “The Foly of Fulys and the Thewis of Wys Men” and “The Consail and Teiching at the Vys Man Gaif his Sone,” which are the poems that precede “Thewis” in the C-text, and which are both paternal instructions for sons. The idea that the same author may have written “Thewis” is somewhat peculiar as “Thewis,” in contrast to the other poems this chapter examines,

<sup>37</sup> Riddy, “Mother Knows Best,” 83.

<sup>38</sup> “The Thewis of Gud Women” survives in two versions, both included in Mustanoja’s edition. I use the C-text, which survives in a “late fifteenth century” manuscript: MS Cambridge University Library Kk. 1. 5, Part VI. The other version, the J-text, comes from a manuscript with a colophon dating of 1487 and is titled *Documenta matris ad filiam* despite the lack of a maternal narrator: MS. St John’s College, Cambridge, G. 23<sup>2</sup>. I follow Mustanoja’s preference for the C-text because “the deviations may be less numerous and conspicuous in C,” though he freely acknowledges that “neither of the texts is a faithful copy of the original.” Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*,” 155.

does not adopt the parental narrator as a rhetorical trope, but Mustanoja suggests, and I find no basis to disagree, that the advice within “Thewis” was “derived principally from everyday observations and from current ideas about female education,” especially if these derived from sermons and their ideas about women.<sup>39</sup>

Yet before we dismiss the concept of the parental narrator entirely, I would like to point out a scribal feature of the C-text of “Thewis,” which I believe is relevant and provides some connections with understanding how such advice might have been received and the impetus for providing it. Following “Thewis” there is a short epilogue that refers to all the poems within the same part of the manuscript and reads like the summative comments at the end of “The Good Wife.” The epilogue begins: “Now have I tald 3ow myne awyß” and ends

And here I pray þe readaris all,  
And als þe heraris, gret and small,  
That ay quhen at thai one it luke,  
Thai pray for hyme that maid the buk.<sup>40</sup>

Thus “The Thewis of Gud Women” does not establish a parental narrator, but clearly the compiler, if not the author, desires the book to act as memento for his presence. This desire echoes Dhuoda’s desire for her book to remind her son of her, and while Dhuoda’s memento seeks to establish a certain sort of behavior that would reflect appropriately on the parent, here the advice is given and in return, only a prayer is required. This bid for prayer from the scribe does not, therefore, fully align with the aims of a parental narrator but is nonetheless significant and indicates both that the scribe felt that his work would be read, perhaps often, and that through the advice he has recorded, even though not

<sup>39</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 139.

<sup>40</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 194, l. 295; 196, lines 311-14. My translation: “Now have I told you my advice . . . And here I beg all the readers, / and all the listeners, great and small, / that when they on look on it [the book], / they pray for him that made the book.”

originally composed by him, this textual trace of his identity might be enough to prompt others to pray for his soul. Thus, “Thewis” avoids the parental narrator, but the transactional mood adopted in Dhuoda’s *Liber manualis* and “The Good Wife” is present, at least in this scribal addendum.

While the parental narrator is absent from “Thewis,” we do find evidence of two other types of rhetorical tropes: the occasional incorporation of proverbs as in “The Good Wife” (though with much less frequency) and the use of explicitly visual imagery that provides a specific context for the principles of behavior presented in the text. Because the incorporation of proverbs is so rare in the poem—twice in nearly three hundred lines—there is a different rhetorical purpose at work in “Thewis.” Whereas in “The Good Wife” the proverbs are presented as a sort of summary for a given context, a setting by which they are placed into a framework and made specific, in “Thewis,” the principles of behavior within the poem are justified by common wisdom—i.e. the proverb.

For example, the first proverb occurs roughly fifty lines into the poem in the following context:

Bot euir with dreid and schamfulnes  
Scho suld draw to the lawest place,  
And erare lawar place to tak  
Na fra hir place be put abak.  
God dois honore to lawlynes,  
Quhen prid is punyst in al place,  
Quhilk in women is maist to blame,  
For eftyr prid oft folowis schame.<sup>41</sup>

These lines establish first a principle of behavior (ll. 45-48): women should seek places

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<sup>41</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 139, ll. 45-52. My translation: “But ever with dread and modesty / She should draw to the lowest place, / And take a lower place before / Than from her place be put back. / God does honor to lowliness, / When pride is punished in all places, / Which in women is most to blame, / For after pride often shame follows.” The proverb occurs in the last line here as the poem moves onto issues of honesty after this proverb is given.

of low estate and be content therewith. Then comes an explication associating proper behavior with a reward from God (ll. 49-50), or rather the suggestion that properly modest women will not be punished while those who are prideful will be, which is in turn followed by a statement about female nature (l. 51) and finally the proverb (l. 52). Thus, the poem first presents how one should behave, and then seems to justify this particular point of conduct by providing a proverb that confirms that pride is a negative trait to possess, at least for women. Rather than providing a sort of pithy summary, this proverb justifies the recommended behavior. The second proverb, which appears about another 50 lines further into the poem, functions similarly, again rationalizing or justifying the strictures placed on female behavior.

This second proverb applies specifically to a woman who is a good wife:

Be ferme of hed, fut, and hand,  
 Nocht oft in stret to be wauerand,  
 For wauerynge betaknis wylsumnes,  
 Wanwyt, welth, ore wantonneß;  
 Ore ellis to sek sum company  
 At war nocht lyk to be gudly;  
 But ay hald rownd and plan maner,  
 Haldand ay falowschip with hir feir.  
 Fle fra defamyt company:  
 Lyk drawys to lyk ay commonly.<sup>42</sup>

Here we have a long list of traits, which are again, like the first proverb, concerned with reputation. The woman who is too prideful will face God's wrath; the woman who keeps bad company, or is suspected to, will attract more bad company, with the possibility of the implication that she will herself become bad. Just as the earlier proverb justifies

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<sup>42</sup> Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*", 182, ll. 109-18. My translation: "Be firm of head, foot, and hand, / Not often wandering in the street, / For wandering about betokens wilfulness, / Want of knowledge, welfare, or wantonness; / Or else to seek some company / that is not likely to be goodly; / But always maintain an honest and plain manner, / Holding always fellowship befits her. / Flee from defamed company: / Like draws to like always commonly."

women's humility, the second proverb justifies women's concern about their company. There is not a specific context elaborated as in "The Good Wife," but rather very specific principles of behavior that are justified—indeed naturalized and presented as traditional wisdom—and left for the audience to absorb without the mother narrator.

Having explored the proverbs of "Thewis," we can now turn to the visual imagery that appears three times. The poet warns early on, "That womenis honore is tendyr and slyddyr, / And raithar brekis be mekil thinge, / As farest roß takis sonest faidinge."<sup>43</sup> This concept is touched upon in the fourth stanza of "The Good Wife," but in "Thewis" there is a difference of expression. A concrete, physical object is used to make an abstract quality appear concrete, and this image presents a central concept for the poem, which as we have seen with the proverbs, gets elaborated in a number of ways, such as in the warning for a woman to look after what type of company she keeps. Like a rose, a woman's honor is delicate and must be protected carefully if it is not to be ruined. A similar type of metaphor is used later in the poem when the author warns against wearing makeup: "Flam nocht the flouris at wyll faid, / To mend his mak at God has maid / With payntyng-wattrys, to gar hir schene."<sup>44</sup> The instructive principle of conduct is couched in another concrete metaphor; ephemeral and impermanent makeup, which has not been fixed to the wearer's face by God's hand, is like a quickly dying flower.<sup>45</sup> This image, unlike the earlier flower imagery, does not control and dictate the underlying principles of the poem, but instead it serves to devalue the physical attractiveness of women,

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<sup>43</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .", 176, ll. 8-10. My translation: "That women's honor is tender and frail, / And breaks by rather a great deal, / Just as the fairest rose fades soonest."

<sup>44</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .", 182, ll. 87-89. My translation: "Do not display the flowers that will fade, / To mend the shape that God has made / with makeup [water colors], to make her shine."

<sup>45</sup> Owst marks the common quality of such claims, quoting several sermons that consider wearing makeup "tamper[ing] with the handiwork of God." Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 392. Below in the chapter on the Knight I show his similar opinion.

especially false attractiveness (i.e. created with makeup). In and of itself, this initially appears like an unimportant passage, but while the first concrete comparison using figurative language and flower imagery establishes the mood, this second image, and also a third, which I discuss shortly, counters the idea that a beautiful woman, or one who can make herself beautiful with makeup, need not behave.

The third image, unlike the second that is separated from the first by nearly eighty lines, occurs four lines later, again underscoring the failure and impermanence of the physical world:

Schame is today be quhit and red,  
And one the morne waloyt as a wed;  
Bot kep þe hew of hir nature,  
For syk fairnes sal langest dure.<sup>46</sup>

This secondary physical imagery states that the duration of one's innate or natural beauty cannot be extended, i.e. cosmetics do not help and beauty, being a physical thing is ultimately of little value. Again the emphasis is on innate qualities, unaugmented beauty; while this type of imagery disappears from the poem at this point, the remainder of the poem returns to more precepts that ensure a woman leads a comfortable and accepted life, detailing the behaviors that will not be problematic for a woman to engage in. This physical imagery serves as a rhetorically concrete and visual argument that the physical and the man-made (e.g. makeup) cannot last the way that nature can. Rhetorically speaking, such passages are much more effective than simply declaring that honest women do not wear makeup. Thus, in this reading of "Thewis" I have demonstrated the rhetorical significance of both the proverb and the concretely drawn image. "Wold a

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<sup>46</sup> Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*", 182, ll. 93-96. My translation: "Shame is today of white and red, / And in the morning withered as a weed; / But keep the hue of her nature, / For such fairness shall longest endure."

Pylgremage” draws on these rhetorical features, merging image and proverb as well as drawing on the parental narrator examined in my discussion of “The Good Wife.”

### III. Combining the Parental Narrator with Proverbs and Images

“The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage,” another example of verse conduct literature, repeats the narrative structure of “The Good Wife” and contains lessons regarding female behavior similar to those in the other two poems. Unlike the other verse works examined in this chapter, however, there is only one extant copy of this poem, found in MS Porkington 10 (now MS Brogyntyn MS ii.1), that dates to the latter half of the fifteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Mustanoja considers this poem later than “The Good Wife” but does not view “The Good Wife” as a source, though he notes that “its subject matter agrees largely with the standard exhortations of contemporary sermon literature.”<sup>48</sup> In this poem we find a blend of the rhetorical features of the two poems already examined: proverbs, the parental narrator, and concrete visual imagery all help to create a rhetorical and narrative context for this advice. Further, sensitivity to lived experience manifests in “Wold a Pylgremage,” both in the narrative contexts drawn by the parental narrator and in the physical comparisons presented alongside the lessons that demonstrate knowledge of medieval town life. The opening stanza of “Wold a Pylgremage” establishes the narrator-mother instructing her daughter before leaving on a pilgrimage. The first line simply announces that “the good wyf wold a pylgremage,”<sup>49</sup> but then in the second and following lines, the narrating presence takes on the persona of the good wife: “Sche [the

<sup>47</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 131-32.

<sup>48</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 130-31.

<sup>49</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 173, l. 1. My translation: “The good wife wanted to go on a pilgrimage.”

good wife] sayd, my der doztor, þou most vnderstonde / For to gowerne well this hous  
and saue thyselfe frow schond. / For to do as I þe teche I charge the þou fonde.”<sup>50</sup> Thus,  
remembered experience of an actual mother’s advice grounds the poem’s precepts. Also  
as in “The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter,” there are frequent references to the  
audience as child.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, this position is reiterated at the close of the poem,  
where the author writes, “*Witt a O and a I, doztor, pray for me.*”<sup>52</sup> Note also of this  
closure that it, like the other poems, requests the work be read in a transactional manner:  
advice in exchange for prayer.

The rhetorical impact of these repeated references to the mother-daughter  
relationship in “Wold a Pylgremage” is qualitatively different from that in the various  
versions of “The Good Wife.” “The Good Wife” employs these references in an almost  
entirely rote refrain and the gendered quality of the relationship is largely stripped from  
the interaction, with most references being to the child, not the daughter. While “Wold a  
Pylgremage” is a much shorter poem and thus has fewer references in overall number to  
the parent-narrator and the daughter-audience positions, these references are more  
colloquial and conversational in manner, not part of the proverbial summary that comes  
at the end of each stanza, but rather, interjections within the wife’s advice. Because the  
references occur largely as apostrophe, or direct address, this poem, more so than “The  
Good Wife,” stimulates immersion into the narrative world of the poem, encouraging the  
audience to adopt the position of daughter or child more effectively than the refrain in

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<sup>50</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 173, ll. 2-4. My translation: “She said, ‘My dear daughter, you must understand / how to look after the house and to keep yourself from shame. / Therefore I charge you to try to do as I teach you.’”

<sup>51</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”. References to the audience as “doztor,” aside from those in the first stanza (l. 2), occur in lines 19, 25, 43, 55, 73, 78, and 83.

<sup>52</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 175, l. 83. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: “With a Ho and a Hi, daughter, pray for me.” I follow Mustanoja regarding the initial part of the line: 135.



“The Good Wife” does. This poem is more in tune with the needs of an oral audience as it takes greater advantage of the concept of dialogue by avoiding a simple, formulaic refrain that sharply decreases the verisimilitude of the dialogue. Finally, the context for the address from mother to daughter is much more concretely drawn in “Wold a Pylgremage” than in “The Good Wife” because of the specific nature of what the wife intends to do in “Wold a Pylgremage”—go on a pilgrimage. No such contextualizing move is made in the advice contained in “The Good Wife”; readers are just to accept that she teaches her daughter these things as part of her parental role. The greater narrative context and narrativist bent of “Wold a Pylgremage” likewise make it a more rhetorically powerful attempt at behavioral management for an audience with limited time to read or listen to its advice. To clarify: the concrete and specific context establishes what I have discussed above as *enargeia*, the quality of writing that enacts emotion and memory, and helps listeners and readers enter the reality of the poem more fully, thus encouraging them to take on the audience-as-child role more fully and perhaps be less questioning of the authority and the rightness of the advocated behavior. That is, rhetorical context plays into increased rhetorical authority through encouraging greater audience “buy-in.”

Aside from the constructions of mother-narrator and daughter-audience, “The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage” also uses tangible experiences to underscore its lessons. I would suggest that these tangible experiences, tied in the poem to direct visual, sensory observations of the world, act to add authority to the advice given in the stanzas, instead of the repetitive refrain as is found in “The Good Wife.” That is, the proverbial expressions in “The Good Wife” have some cultural weight, but the weight of the proverbs themselves is frequently undercut by the poem’s own refrain that almost always

inserts the proverb into the mother-narrator's mouth by tagging the halfline "My leue child" to each proverb. This tagging accentuates the narrative and authoritative power of the parental narrator, augmenting the power of the proverb to command right behavior. In "Wold a Pylgremage" this sort of double reliance on the narrator and the proverb does not occur—instead the proverbs themselves are refitted to include specific, culturally relevant images that would be deeply resounding for the audience, and capable of producing a certain amount of guilt or shame surrounding bad behavior. For example, in stanza II, the good wife cautions her daughter: "rene þou not fro hous to house lyke an Antyny gryce."<sup>53</sup> The narrator, in the stanza portion, uses the image of St. Anthony's pigs with bells attached to them, wandering the city streets in order to get fed; anchoring the lesson to an unflattering image, the mother-narrator reinforces that the behavior she forbids is unattractive. This somewhat shameful image (for who wants to be associated with a roving, hungry pig?) is conjoined by the familiar proverb "*Syldon mossyth the ston þat oftyn ys tornnyd and wende*."<sup>54</sup> Here the imagery remains more concrete and more jarring in the stanza, but the proverb again makes a further comparison, asserting the wandering young woman will be not only like a foraging pig, but also like a rock without ties or connections to its surroundings. Neither of these are flattering images, which augments the seriousness of the advice in the stanza. I would also point out that the quality of the Anthony's pig image in particular is of a much more concrete nature than that found in "Thewis," which presents concrete images, though in a somewhat less culturally specific manner—i.e. flowers that wither and fade are something that can be

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<sup>53</sup> Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*", 173, l. 8. My translation: "Do not go from house to house like a St. Anthony's pig."

<sup>54</sup> Mustanoja, "*The Good Wife . . .*", 173, l. 12. Italics in Mustanoja. "Seldom mosses the stone that often is turned and turns."

found across most cultures, as perhaps is the mossless stone—but the Anthony’s pig, and some other images I have yet to discuss, tailor this poem’s imagery to coincide with the cultural needs and knowledge of its audience: young women living in towns who might have seen Anthony’s pigs.<sup>55</sup> Mary Carruthers examines how a certain set of images or what she might call *picturae* or imagined figures, are employed by Cistercian monks, cautioning medievalists to be aware of the problematic dichotomy of sharply distinguishing between visual and rhetorical arts in the medieval period.<sup>56</sup> Carruthers suggests a more general use of images among those composing rhetorical works. The *pictura* is the creating of an image within the mind’s eye and was an exercise encouraged particularly by preachers.<sup>57</sup> In particular this *pictura* would “suppl[y] to a listening audience the essential visual schematic within which to organize and thus retain what they were about to hear.”<sup>58</sup>

The union of images in stanza II that occurs across the stanza’s lines and the

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<sup>55</sup> I should point out here that literal images—works of art—were long accepted in the Western Church following Gregory the Great’s letter to Serenus in which he declares, “For what writing presents to readers, this a picture presents to the unlearned who behold, since in it even the ignorant see that they ought to follow; in it the illiterate read. Hence, and chiefly to the nations [gentiles], a picture is instead of reading.” “Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus, quia in ipsa etiam ignorantes vident quid sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt. Unde et praecipue gentibus pro lectione pictura est.” Gregory the Great, “Epistle XIII To Serenus, Bishop of Massilia (Marseilles),” in *Selected Epistles of Gregory the Great Bishop of Rome*, trans. and ed. James Barmby (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, rpt. 1979), 53. My purpose in quoting this passage is not to suggest that “Wold a Pylgremage” is associated with any particular art objects depicting medieval life, but I would like to suggest that the images and very specific cultural references that are found in “Wold a Pylgremage” as well as “Thewis” are the literary equivalent of a picture, but rather than with ink and line, the pictures here are drawn with words. See Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditations, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) on the importance of visual images, real or imagined, for meditation and memory within the monastery. I suggest that the clerical authors of the poems deploying such images here are aware of their rhetorical power to aid in the formation of vivid memories of the advice as well as to make concrete an abstract principle.

<sup>56</sup> Mary Carruthers, “Moving Images in the Mind’s Eye,” in *The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, and Princeton University Press, 2006), 287-305, 287-88.

<sup>57</sup> Carruthers, “Moving Images,” 288.

<sup>58</sup> Carruthers, “Moving Images,” 288.

proverbial lines is reduced in stanza IV to the concrete image being located within the proverb itself. The stanza warns the audience-daughter to wear appropriate clothing, and to “Honge thy gordoll nott to lowe.”<sup>59</sup> The appropriate image is in this case, made more painfully shameful and poignant as the proverb is couched by the mother-narrator as the words of others: “*thus men wyll tell, / ‘The corsser hathe his palfrey dyzt all reydy for to sell.’*”<sup>60</sup> The implication here is clear: dress inappropriately or overly lavishly and men will talk, and that talk may either be that this woman is looking for a husband, or more likely, that she is looking to sell her body; the image suggests improperly dressed women call their chastity into question and are little better than the animals with which they are compared in this proverb.<sup>61</sup> The rhetorical impact of this type of image, structured as popular response to ill behavior, radically empowers the rhetorical authority of the given advice through excitation of shame and fear in the audience. Another similar example of concrete imagery occurs in stanza V, where the wife warns her daughter not to “schew [...] thy stret hossyn” or “legys whyte.”<sup>62</sup> The experience regarding this behavior is summed up in the proverbial saying: “*The bocher schewyth feyr his flesche, for he wold sell hit full blythe.*”<sup>63</sup> So again, the lesson is associated with a concrete, culturally relevant context and an experience that helps to illustrate the meaning. Further, the comparison between an ill-dressed woman and a merchant recurs, expressing again the cultural idea that women who want to sell themselves—whores—present themselves in

<sup>59</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 173, l. 21. My translation: “Hang your girdle not too low.”

<sup>60</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 173, ll. 23-24. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: “thus men will tell, ‘The horse dealer has his palfrey dressed all ready to sell.’”

<sup>61</sup> Owst notes that women who dress scantily were characterized in sermons as “the Devils’ decoys, snaring the heedless bird [men] into the gins of the fowler; while their very cauls may be compared to the decoy-nets.” Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 396.

<sup>62</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 173, ll. 26, 25. My translation: “show . . . your tight-fitting hose” or “white legs.”

<sup>63</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*”, 174, l. 30. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: “The butcher shows his fine meats, for he would sell them very happily.”

inappropriate or revealing dress. But additionally, the same point about appropriate dress, chastity, and gossip directed at women suspected of being unchaste due to dress recurs.<sup>64</sup> This level of preoccupation with chastity is not absent in the other poems, but I would suggest that “Wold a Pylgremage” presents the concern for chastity in the most poignant, culturally resonant and explicit manner of the three poems, which again increases the rhetorical weight of its advice for young women.

The parental narrator, the summative proverb, and the concrete imagery of “Wold a Pylgremage” make it the most rhetorically complex and nuanced of the three short advice poems here examined. There are, however, two other items of note in “Wold a Pylgremage” that, while slightly outside the range of rhetorical analysis, are nonetheless significant to this investigation. First, of all three poems, “Wold a Pylgremage” is the only one to address the possibility of a position in life for a woman outside of marriage.<sup>65</sup> Even more interesting is the level of choice that the parental narrator provides the daughter-audience in describing this scenario:

Yfe þou wylt no hosbounde have, but wher thy maydon croun,  
 Ren not about in eueri pley, nor to tawern in toвне.  
 Syt sadly in þin arey; let mournynge be þi gown;  
 Byd þi prayers spessyally witt good devossyon.  
*Wit a O and a I, al day men mey see,  
 The tre crokothe son þat good cambrel wyll be.*<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Women and merchants are found in confluence in the sermonic context in other ways as well: Thomas M. Izbicki writes about Italian attitudes toward female vanity of dress in the Middle Ages, and in particular he notes the attempt by some clerics to punish the tailors and other businessmen who allowed women access to such vanities, though these attempts did not go uncontested by Church leadership or the businessmen. Izbicki, “Pyres of Vanities: Mendicant Preaching on the Vanity of Women and Its Lay Audience,” in *De ore domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), 211-34, especially 219-20.

<sup>65</sup> “The Thewis of Gud Women” suggests that some women who do not marry because of a failure in chastity or some other character flaw will end up beggars and dependent on the kindness of others.

<sup>66</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*,” 175, ll. 67-72. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: “If you will have no husband, but wear your maiden crown, / Run not about every place, nor to tavern in town. / Sit sadly in your array; let mourning be your gown; Bid your prayers especially with good devotion. / With a Ho and a Hi, all day men may say, / The tree soon becomes crooked that will be good gambrel.” Note Mustanoja’s

Here, as in the lines discussed above, we have an acute image appearing in the proverbial lines: the obedient religious woman bends quickly to her new status, adjusting herself to be prayerful and humble, just as a tree that bends easily will make a good hanger for meat for a butcher. Further, there is an implied comparison with the crucifixion which saw Christ's body obediently hanging upon the cross; thusly should a religious woman bend her will to her occupation. This image may perhaps be jarring, especially the association of Christ's body with butchered meat, but it may well have provided a keen sense of the specific duties of a religious woman: obedience, bending one's will might be no more clearly or concisely expressed with such visceral energy. The acute sense of pain conveyed by the fleshiness of Christ's body, if it is indeed being invoked, is also an appeal to affective piety and the interest in empathizing with Christ's passion.

Finally, I would like to point to the blessing that occurs in the final stanza of "Wold a Pylgremage," which aligns it structurally with "The Good Wife" in its various versions that all give some sort of variety of blessing and to the scribal message that appears directly after the C-text of "Thewis," which asks for prayers rather than gives a blessing. As "Wold a Pylgremage" unites the rhetorical approaches of the other two poems, its blessing unites the features of the blessing and the request for prayer. The final stanza both blesses and seeks blessing:

Farwell, douzttor, farwell nowe! I go vnto my pylgremage.  
Kepe þe wel on my blessynge tyl þou be more of age.  
Let no merth ner jollyte þis lesson frowe þe swage;  
Then þou schalt have þe blys of heyvyn to thy errytage.  
*Witt a O and a I, dozttor, pray for me;*

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glossary definition of cambrel: "a bent piece of wood used by butchers to hang carcasses on." Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .", 244.

*A schort prayer wynnythe heyvyn, the Patter Noster and an Ave.*<sup>67</sup>

There are several significant features of this passage. First, note again the reintroduction of the narrative context for the advice: the pilgrimage as the prompting for the advice returns in this final stanza, marking the progress of narrative fiction, i.e. the preparation that the Wife undertook for her pilgrimage is complete and she is now leaving; the result of this reintroduction of narrative context again lends immediacy and poignancy to the roles of mother as narrator and daughter as audience. Second, the mother asks for a transactional relationship of mutual spiritual and worldly benefit with the daughter audience: the mother narrator has erected a text of advice and offers her blessing to the daughter, while in exchange, the daughter is expected to heed the advice and is also asked for her own spiritual aid in the form of prayer for her mother. This transactional relationship at the close of the poem can only help to solidify the indebtedness of the audience to the mother-narrator and encourage participation in the behavioral contract erected within the text of “Wold a Pylgremage.” Third, I would like to point out the clarity and specificity of the final line of the poem: much conduct literature directed at women encourages spiritual devotion, often in the form of prayers for one’s relatives, as is requested here in the final stanza of “Wold a Pylgremage,” but less often does one find specific enumerations of appropriate and suitable prayers. While the suggestion that a girl ought to say the Our Father and the Hail Mary is not revolutionary or unexpected, I believe the actual mentioning of the names of these prayers again further concretizes the narrative world of the poem. That is, young women in “Wold a Pylgremage” live in a

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<sup>67</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*” 175, ll. 79-84. Italics in Mustanoja. My translation: “Farewell, daughter, farewell now! I go to my pilgrimage. / Keep yourself well with my blessing until you are older. / Let no mirth or jollity sway you from this lesson; / Then you shall have the bliss of heaven to your heritage. / With a Ho and a Hi, daughter, pray for me; / A short prayer wins heaven, the Our Father and Hail [Mary].”

world inhabited by butchers, horse sellers, and roaming St. Anthony's pigs, and while they are asked to pray, they are asked to pray specific prayers. And so all three of these poems belong to the class of conduct literature that is associated with the familiar, indeed familial in the case of "The Good Wife" and "Wold a Pylgremage", narrator and the concrete, specific world. Yet, "Wold a Pylgremage" achieves a certain level of rhetorical poise and power: its engagement with cultural norms and expectations for women is grounded in a concrete narrative context, presented by a parental narrator, and coded with concrete images—sometimes combined with proverbs—whose rhetorical power is impossible to deny for its contemporary audience.

And yet at the same time, "Wold a Pylgremage" seems to offer the most open view for a woman's life. For example, "The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter" suggests that a housewife with much work can be more effective when she works alongside her servants, providing them with a model.<sup>68</sup> Likewise "The Thewis of Gud Women" begins by acknowledging that "The gud wyf schawis, for best scho can, / Quhilkis ar thewis of a gud woman."<sup>69</sup> "The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage" does not exhort the audience to become a model, nor does it even mandate becoming a wife, but it does suggest the daughter consider "what woman þou wolt be, and theron set thy thowzt."<sup>70</sup> Thus while "Wold a Pylgremage" is a particularly culturally grounded and rhetorically savvy literary production, I would argue it also leaves open the window of possibility, even for middle-class and merchant-class young women to choose their own life path, even if that is limited between the choice of wife and religious maiden.

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<sup>68</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . ." 167, ll. 133-38.

<sup>69</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .," "The Thewis of Gud Women," 176, ll. 1-2. My translation: "The good wife illustrates, as best she can, / what the qualities of a good woman are."

<sup>70</sup> Mustanoja, "The Good Wife . . .", 175, l. 61. My translation: "what kind of a woman you want to be, and meditate on that."



#### IV. The Daughter Speaks: Mother-Daughter Debate in Anglo-Norman Lyric

The last poem I wish to discuss in this chapter is most noticeably different from the previous three poems in that it is not monophonic or single-voiced. Rather the poem presents a dialogue between mother and daughter over the type of husband that a woman should marry: handsome or rich, with a slight modification of these positions coming in the closing lines. The poem is part of the *jeu parti* classification of *débat* poetry, which “consisted of a *débat* on a choice from alternatives, or on the decision between two potential and often conflicting courses of action.”<sup>71</sup> Given my emphasis on the rhetorical power of the mother to persuade, one might expect that this poem allows for a bit of disagreement on the part of the daughter only to have the mother ultimately triumph in the debate, but such is not the case. The poem consists of five stanzas of ten lines each, with alternating speakers at each stanza. Proportionally, the daughter’s voice is privileged because she speaks in three of the five stanzas and because she speaks in the final stanza, leaving her voice as the resounding speech act for the audience.

The poem centers on the subject of wooing and marriage, and it opens not with the mother giving advice, but with the daughter seeking it out: “Bele mere, ke frai?” (“Mother mine, what shall I do?”)<sup>72</sup> Amusingly, just as this poem allows for speech acts by the daughter that are silenced in the poems discussed above, this poem also permits for the discussion of gift exchanges and kissing, the first of which is explicitly prohibited in two of the other poems and the last of which was a commonly maligned practice in

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<sup>71</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 246.

<sup>72</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 243, l. 1; 244, l. 1.

English sermons.<sup>73</sup> For example, Owst recounts the sermonic comparison of the devil's encouragement of lechery to a tavern owner who gives away a bit of alcohol so that the drinker will eventually come in and become intoxicated; so it is with ““unclene kyssynges, clippynges and other unhoneſt handelynges”” that they will eventually bring ““thiſe unclene pepull to ſom plase that pleaſes hem, wher that thei may make here cownauntes of ſenſuall love.””<sup>74</sup> Compare this to the daughter's claim of gift-exchange with not one, but two, ſuitors:

“Mes les dounz me funt retrere  
 Dunt jeo largement en ay,  
 Kaunt li uns va, l'autre repeire,  
 Si unt mis mun quer en esmay!”  
 (“They force me to hide away  
 all the gifts I get from them,  
 because no ſooner does one leave than the other arrives,  
 ſo putting my heart to diſmay!”)<sup>75</sup>

More ſhocking than the daughter's admission is the mother's advice to her confused daughter: ““Volunters a douns me pris— / Jeu ſanz pru n'est ben aſis!”” (“I accepted gifts with delight— / a game without prizes isn't much fun!”)<sup>76</sup> Theſe paſſages communicate that while women's reputations might be conſtructed as hinging upon reputation in many texts, there were clearly diſſenting voices, if not actors, who may have exchanged love-gifts, as the mother admits doing when ““jeovenette”” (““young””).<sup>77</sup> The importance of acknowledging this poem's rhetorical choice of two

<sup>73</sup> “The Good Wife” reads thusly in the H-text: “For none wronge couetise zifte þou ne take; / But þou wete wele whi; ſone þou it forſake. / Goode wiſe men with ziftis men may ouergone, / Thow þei were alſo trewe as euer was þe ſtone. / Bounden he is þat zifte takith, / My dere childe.” Mustanoja, “The Good Wife . . .” 163, ll. 76-81. “Na giftis gyf, na drowreis cnaif, / Na billis of amouris to reſaif.” Mustanoja, “The Good Wife . . .” 180, ll. 75-76.

<sup>74</sup> Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 383. The longer manuals I diſcuſs below alſo ban kiſſing as a ſort of ſexual gateway.

<sup>75</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 243, ll. 7-10, 244, ll. 7-10.

<sup>76</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 243, ll. 13-14, 244, ll. 13-14.

<sup>77</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 243, l. 12, 244, l. 12.

voices and the inclusion of authority-sanctioned behavior that appears perhaps questionable given other documents that prohibit it, is that it allows us to remember that while conduct texts were ideological in nature, the discussion above demonstrates that this ideology was not monolithic nor did it determine completely all facets of medieval women's lives or their behavior.

Particularly of interest in this poem is the announcement of female erotic enjoyment, which the other conduct texts I examine eschew or punish. The daughter exclaims:

“Mere, kaunt li bels me prent  
 Il mei beise a moun talent—  
 Douce e suef e ceo sovent:  
 Avis me est ke beif piement!”  
 (“Mother, when my handsome lad takes me in his arms  
 he kisses me to my heart's content—  
 sweetly, softly and often:  
 to me it's like drinking spiced wine!”)<sup>78</sup>

Such utterances are not to be found in the other texts that I examine in this study, and one might particularly claim that a poem such as this does not fall within the parameters of conduct literature, but like much medieval literature, this poem is an example of the didacticism that creeps into many genres of medieval literature. The poem also shares elements of generic similarity with the debate that occurs toward the end of Geoffroy de La Tour Landry's conduct manual, wherein he engages his wife in a discussion on courtly love. Such is not quite the issue here in this poem as the daughter presents her problem as being a choice between a handsome suitor and a rich. If we consider the class-conscious ethos of the poems we have discussed above, we might expect that a choice of

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<sup>78</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 243, ll. 21-24, 245, ll. 21-24.

the rich man would triumph, and it is indeed the choice of the mother to push her daughter toward the wealthier suitor:

“Le secle est ore de tel manere:  
 Les riches avaunt, les povres arere.  
 Poi engard hom en la chere  
 Si le riche atorn n’i seit:  
 Marchaunt a voide almonere  
 Fet a feire poi de espleit.”  
 (“This is the way it is in the world:  
 the rich get richer, the poor get poorer.  
 No one bothers to look at a face  
 if the clothes aren’t fine:  
 a merchant with an empty purse  
 is not going to be able to purchase much.”)<sup>79</sup>

These lines reflect a number of important issues. First, there is a true mercantile sensibility about them that indicates awareness that dress reflects status and dressing better earns greater respect. Such dramatizes late medieval concerns over the preservation of class distinctions through the regulation of dress via sumptuary law; Christine’s and the Knight’s texts show acute awareness of this same issue, but both of them come down on the opposing side. That is, the mother here wants her daughter to make a wise choice from her two suitors, and in her opinion the wise choice is the man who is rich and who will thereby afford the daughter better clothes and social status. Such a choice coincides with the ethos of attaining and maintaining fortune that Riddy has identified in “The Good Wife.” I would also suggest that the concept of marrying well, or into prosperity, is also reflected in “Thewis,” though with a different angle, for the speaker of the poem there warns that women who misbehave will marry poorly and be left starving by dissolute husbands (the only kind of which they are worthy by virtue of their previous poor behavior), without sympathy in the community which will say: “Had sche done

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<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 244, ll. 35-40, 245, ll. 35-40.

weill, / Sche had ben maryt richly; / Now lat her chewys hir fore-thi.”<sup>80</sup> So, the mother’s voice in this poem may also reflect an anxiety to have a daughter who has married because doing so might have been understood as a confirmation or demonstration of her virtue. Simultaneously, there is a distinct preference for money here that might not have been wholly acceptable to a clerical audience, and certainly, while the Knight seems to have had a special loathing for cross-class marriages, they did indeed happen in late medieval England.<sup>81</sup> Thus, these lines present a complex of desires on the mother’s part: the social mobility of her daughter, the honor of her daughter, and the concomitant accretion of her own status through her daughter’s increased status.

Yet mother is not always right, or at least the poem seems to imply such, for the closure and response from the daughter is a rather Boethian rejection of worldly goods that seems to trump the mercantile, worldly concerns of the mother:

“Tel quide mounter en haut  
 Ke al descendre fet fol saut!  
 Si nostre aver nous faut,  
 Ke frum nous de nostre ernald?  
 Aver est en aventure:  
 Mu test fous ke trop l’aseure.  
 Mes honur e bunté dure  
 Coment ke de l’aver chalt:  
 Ke seit entendre mesure,  
 Cil est riche ke mout valt!”  
 (“The higher they climb,  
 the harder they fall!  
 What is the use of having a lot  
 if it all can be lost?  
 Wealth is always at risk,  
 and anyone who depends on it overly is very foolish.  
 Honour and goodness endure,

<sup>80</sup> Mustanoja, “*The Good Wife . . .*” 192, ll. 274-76. “Had she done [behaved] well, / She would have married richly; / Now therefore let her help herself.”

<sup>81</sup> See Amos, “Violent Hierarchies,” and Anna Dronzek, “Gender Roles and the Marriage Market in Fifteenth-Century England: Ideals and Practices,” in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones, *International Medieval Research* 11 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 63-76.

whatever the fate of wealth:  
 the one who understands moderaton  
 is the one who is really wealthy.”<sup>82</sup>

Here the daughter’s voice opposes directly the worldly concerns of the mother’s position; her choice turns from handsomeness toward inner virtue at the end, undoing her seemingly more unstable position in the debate because she appeared to be concerned with superficial appearances. One might suggest reading this poem, therefore, as more permissive in terms of sexual and courting behaviors because the real target of the satire in this debate is not romantic love but materialistic over-reaching and pursuit of those vain and fickle fruits of fortune. Such a position would be commensurate with those who oppose social climbing, and thus the poem ultimately sympathizes with a conservative social class understanding.

However, this class conservatism seems nearly outstripped by the topsy-turvy inversion of the mother’s advice by the moral character present in the daughter’s final speech act. This poem demonstrates that power, despite the somewhat hegemonic appearance of much conduct literature, was very much contested. It further illustrates that there is not one axis of power at stake in conduct literature, but multiple axes such as age (parent-child), sex (male-female), and class (noble-merchant-peasant). All of these factors can and should be addressed when scholars analyze the rhetoric of conduct literature, as my previous chapters have remained very much engaged with these various issues that help to delineate claims of authority and power within courtesy literature.

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<sup>82</sup> Jeffrey and Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, 244, ll. 41-50, 245, ll. 41-50.

## Chapter 6

## Conclusion

## Mapping Out Gynosocial Spaces in Conduct Literature: Reputation is Everything

“Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.”

Matthew 10:16<sup>1</sup>

Douay-Rheims

“Some women perhaps may say, ‘I do not need the approval of men, for I do not ask for the witness of men; it is God who sees my heart.’ We all know that; nevertheless, let us remember what the Lord said through the Apostle: ‘Let your virtue appear before men.’ [...] It is not enough for Christian chastity to be so but it must seem so. Your chastity should be so great that it may shine from your soul to your clothes and emanate from that conscience to your outer appearance, so that the special characteristics of chastity, which unite to maintain the faith forever, may be visible for all to see.”

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertulian (c. 160-c. 225)

*The Appearance of Women* II.13<sup>2</sup>

“May they pray to God for their servant Christine, desiring that they may see her life in this world last as long as their own. May it please them all to remember her kindly with friendly greetings as long as she lives, praying to God that by His pity she may be judged with increasing favour and that He may give her such light of knowledge and true wisdom that she may be able to use it here below in the noble labour of study and the exaltation of virtue in good examples to every human being. And after her soul is parted from the body in merit and reward for its service, let them offer paternosters, oblations and devotions to God for her [...] so that she may be presented before God [...]”

Christine de Pizan

*The Treasury of the Book of the City of Ladies*, Epilogue<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Tracy Adams for this quotation as she concludes her article with it: Adams, “Appearing Virtuous: Christine de Pizan’s *Le Livre de trois vertus* and Anne de France’s *Les Enseignements d’Anne de France*,” in *Virtue Ethics for Woman, 1250-1500*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews, *The New Synthese Historical Library Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy* 69 (London: Springer, 2011), 115-31. “Ecce ego mitto vos sicut oves in medio luporum estote ergo prudentes sicut serpentes et simplices sicut columbae.” Vulgate.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Alcuin Blamires, Karen Pratt, and C. W. Marx, eds., *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 57.

<sup>3</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of Three Virtues*, trans. and ed. Sarah Lawson, rev. ed. (Penguin: London, 2003), 168.

The words from Matthew cited above can easily be read as a gloss on the dangers of court, and the concomitant devotion to reputation that a woman at court must maintain; one could even choose to describe Anne de France's message to Suzanne as a recapitulation of this sentiment.<sup>4</sup> To clarify the seriousness of court as a dangerous place for women, we merely need to consider that C. Stephen Jaeger has written, in the context of male courtiers, that "It is a truism of court life that all public acts and words are a mask; to reveal one's true sentiments and intentions is the act of a naïve fool. Life is divided into two levels, and the man who cannot maintain this double life has no place in court."<sup>5</sup> The three full-length conduct manuals that I have examined in this study, Christine de Pizan's *Treasury*, Anne de France's *Enseignements*, and Caxton's translation of Geoffroy de La Tour Landry's *Book*, all prize women's reputations above all else. The short poems I discuss in my first chapter also have a vested concern over a woman's

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<sup>4</sup> Charity Cannon Willard writes about Christine's special concern for women and notes that "The same sense of insecurity pervades the *Enseignements d'Anne de France*, written by Louis XI's daughter for her daughter Suzanne de Bourbon in 1504" and Anne "speaks [...] of the dangers of life in this world." Willard, "A Fifteenth-Century View of Women's Role in Medieval Society: Christine de Pizan's *Livre de Trois Vertus*," in *The Role of Woman in the Middle Ages. Papers of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 6-7 May 1972*, ed. Rosmarie Thee Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 90-120, 106.

I might note also that the importance of what Christine and Anne do in their conduct manuals, to a certain degree, is to take advice that was already being addressed to men, and convert it to women. For example, see the Anglo-Norman poem addressed to a sexless, but probably largely male, audience: "Cil qui voldra oïr mun chant" or "Let him who wants to hear my song," which is titled "True Friendship" in its English translation. David L. Jeffrey and Brian J. Levy, eds., *The Anglo-Norman Lyric: An Anthology Edited from the Manuscripts with Translations and Commentary*, Studies and Texts 93 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990). This poem discusses how friends should behave toward one another, including kind correction of one another's faults, refusal to gossip about one another, and it counsels against being friends with those who mock charity or whose virtues have been untested. This poem is evidence that while the advice in Christine's and Anne's manuals may not have normally been explicitly addressed to women, the advice was not all that controversial, especially when given to men. The radical performances that they engage in therefore reside in their overt choice to address women. Note that I do not intend to say women did not have access to manuals directed at men; in all probability they did; however, I do not feel that such access reduces the radical act of women writing explicitly for women. On cross-gender reading of conduct texts see Kathleen Ashley, "The *Miroir des bonnes femmes*: Not for Women Only?" in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 86-105.

<sup>5</sup> C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 62.



reputation, though not in the context of the court. I have shown that this concern for reputation, at least in Anne's and Christine's manuals, reflects the authors' knowledge that "women do succeed, by adapting themselves cleverly to their situation and taking advantage of their target's weaknesses. The secret to success is a carefully managed persona. A virtuous appearance is a tool, self-consciously deployed to provide the crucial moral authority she requires to exercise influence, with both men and women."<sup>6</sup>

Rosemarie Deist discusses gender and power in medieval romance, and she agrees that the primary means for a woman to exercise power is through her "*engin*, which is composed of resourceful and productive mental talents. *Engin* is a form of subcutaneous female power that operates deeply within social strata and away from the open scrutiny in which male power pronounces and manifests itself."<sup>7</sup> Deist's concept of *engin* might be said to be deployed in the careful maintenance of one's reputation, and she describes the importance of such when she discusses the performance of power: "Political and social influence requires visual representation that can be deciphered and 'read'. Status is public presentation, which is actualized through words, gestures, voice, even pitch of voice, in sum, status is linked to corporeal, physical signs."<sup>8</sup> Christine's rhetorical approach that encourages the careful cultivation of good reputation is dialogic, interrogative, and encourages contemplation and reasoning.<sup>9</sup> She writes of the importance of reputation by

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<sup>6</sup> Tracy Adams, "Appearing Virtuous," 124.

<sup>7</sup> Rosemarie Deist, *Gender and Power: Counsellors and Their Masters in Antiquity and Medieval Courtly Romance*, Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003), 171.

<sup>8</sup> Deist, *Gender and Power*, 172.

<sup>9</sup> With much less overt rhetorical appeals that activate the use of reason and contemplation, Anne de France also encourages the use of reason as she tells Suzanne: "I believe you must act with measure and reason" ("ne doive avoir mesure, [...] selon les termes de raison") and "If you are acting with reason, you must never do this [...]" ("ce que, de raison, ne se doit faire"); Sharon L. Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France: Lessons for My Daughter*, Medieval Women (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 46, 47. A[lphonse]-M[artial] Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France, Duchesse de Bourbonnois et d'Auvergne à Sa Fille, Susanne de Bourbon ...* (Moulins: C. Desrosiers, Imprimeur-Éditeur, 1878), 54-55, 55. Even less frequent are the Knight's appeals to reason, but he does include statements adjuring his daughters to

introducing the topic within the frame of an allegorical lesson: “First of all Prudence teaches the princess or great lady how above all things in this base world she ought to love honour and a good reputation” (“Prudence tout premierement enseignera a la princepce ou haulte dame comment sur toutes les choses de ce bas monde doit aimer honneur et bonne renomée”).<sup>10</sup> Further, she allows the princess to explore the matter by engaging in introspection: “For this reason the wise princess will say to herself, ‘Above all earthly things, there is nothing that is so becoming to noble people as honour’” (“Pour ce dira la sage princepce a soy meismes: sur toutes choses terrestres n’est nulle qui autant affiere a haulte gent que fait honneur.”)<sup>11</sup> Anne of France’s approach to this topic is simply to insist upon a woman behaving with honor: “Devote yourself completely to acquiring virtue. Behave so that your reputation may be worthy of perpetual memory: whatever you do, above all, be truly honest, humble, courteous, and loyal. Believe firmly that if even a small fault or lie were to be found in you, it would be a great reproach” (“emploiez vostre entendement du tout à acquérir vertus, et faictes tant que vostre renommée soit digne de perpétuelle mémoire, et quoy que vous fassiez, sur toutes riens, soiez veritable franche humble courtoise et léalle, et croiez fermement que si petite faulte ne mensonge ne pourroit estre trouvée en vous, que ce ne vous fust un grant

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remember the examples he provides. Sometimes, as here, he does not precisely encourage rational thinking but self-examination: “And this is a thyng that moche peple ought to remember and texpress oft in theyr mynde And therefore this is a good ensample how the courage & thought ought to be measured.” Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, ed. M. Y. Offord, trans. William Caxton, Early English Text Society, supplementary ser. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 34, ll. 32-35. This text does not appear in the Harley translation.

<sup>10</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de Trois Vertus: édition critique*, ed. Charity Cannon Willard with Eric Hicks (Paris: Champion, 1989), I.11.41, ll. 11-14.

<sup>11</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.11.28. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.11.41, ll.22-23.

reproche”).<sup>12</sup> But Anne also provides negative examples and a single exemplum narrating the consequences for women who have not behaved in a manner commensurate with preserving honor. Yet while the means to presenting the principles for behavior and the ideas in the chapters presented by Prudence to the audience in *Treasury* may encourage a more open participation in evaluating and choosing right action from the audience, the principles advocated by Prudence are quite similar to many of the practical pieces of advice that one finds in Anne de France’s manual for her daughter. The same may be said of the Knight’s instructions to his daughters: they are to obey God, speak kindly to their husbands, and be submissive. The key difference in *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* is that he inundates his readers with exempla of misbehaving women whom he then narratively destroys, either in reputation or in body, and sometimes both. His exempla are also more violent and seek to place the entirety of the blame for any punishment bad women receive on their own actions—male guilt is never posited.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>12</sup> Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France*, 31. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d’Anne de France*, 11. Quotation from section 5.

<sup>13</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant has described the difference between Christine’s rhetoric and the Knight’s as being a rejection of “the anti-feminist view that women are inferior to men in terms of rationality by presenting her readers with reasoned arguments as to why they should seek salvation rather than opting simply to frighten them into virtue with threatening cautionary tales.” *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 183. Also, while the Knight, as we have seen, repeatedly blames the wife, Christine explicitly does not accept female guilt in cases of domestic violence: “How many women are there actually, dear friend—and you yourself know—who because of their husband’s harshness spend their weary lives in the bond of marriage in greater suffering than if they were slaves among the Saracens? My God! How many harsh beatings—**without cause and without reason**—how many injuries, how many cruelties, insults, humiliations, and outrages have so many upright women suffered, none of whom cried out for help? And consider all the women who die of hunger and grief with a home full of children, while their husbands carouse dissolutely or go on binges in every tavern all over town, and still the poor women are beaten by their husbands when they return, and *that* is their supper!” “Ha! chiere amie, quantes femmes est il, et tu meismes le sces, qui usent leur lasse de vie ou liain de mariage par durté de leurs maris en plus grant penitence que se elles fussent esclaves entre les Sarasins? Dieux! quantes dures bateures **sans cause et sans raison**, quantes ledenges, quantes villenies, injures, servitudes et oultraiges y sueffrent maintes bonnes preudesfemmes qui toutes n’en crient pas harou. Et de telles qui meurent de faim et de mesaise a tout plain foyer d’effens, et leur maris sont en lieux dissolus ou mainent les galles par la ville ou es tavernes, et encores les povres femmes seront batues au retourner et ce sera leur soupper [...]” (boldface is my emphasis, italics is original) Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, rev. ed., trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea), 1999, II.13.118-19. Maureen

violence of the Knight's narrative is not present in the shorter works of conduct literature, but those texts—in their imagery and their content—imply that women who do not behave according to the simple principles laid out in the poetry will be unsympathetically viewed by the public.

And what of actual virtue? The quotation from Tertullian draws our attention to the appearance of virtue but to its reality as well. All three conduct manuals' advice for women to be pious, pray for the dead, and otherwise engage in religious devotion can be connected to the desire to cultivate virtue in reality, not simply its appearance. The Knight's text, as we have examined, illustrates the pains of hell for those who appear virtuous but refuse to confess and relent their anger or their lust. We might keep in mind also that there was a "medieval Christian tradition of modifying the spirit through gesture. The tradition is a broad one, comprising the ideas that through good works one gains salvation (as opposed to the later Protestant notion that one is saved through faith alone) and that one can approach holiness through certain postures."<sup>14</sup> Christine acknowledges freely that open charity of the princess to inspire charity in others might be problematic:

It may seem that she [the princess] has a small streak of hypocrisy [...] yet it may be called a 'just hypocrisy', so to speak for it strives towards good and the avoidance of evil. [...] We [Three Virtues] repeat that this kind of 'just hypocrisy' is almost necessary, especially to princes and princesses who must rule over others and to whom more reverence is due than to other people. As for that, it is written in the book of Valerius that formerly princes claimed that they were descended from the gods so that their subjects would hold them in greater reverence and fear them more. (par eulx semble qu'elle touche aucun raim d'ypocrisie [...] toutevoies se puet

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Cheney Curnow, "The *Livre de la cité des dames* of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1975), II.13.818.

<sup>14</sup> Adams, "Appearing Virtuous," 130. See also C. Stephen Jaeger's discussion of *cultus virtutum* in *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), especially 76-117.

elle appeller par maniere de parler juste ypocrisie, car elle tent affin de bien et eschivement de mal [...] Si disons de rechief que ceste maniere de juste ypocrisie est comme neccessaire a princes et princepses qui ont dominer aultruy, a qui plus reverence affiert que aultre gent, et certainement ne messiet elle point a toute personne qui desire honneur, le faisant a cause de bien. Et ad ce propos est il escript ou livre de Valere qu'anciennement les princes faignoient qu'ilz fussent parens aux dieux afin que leurs subgiéz les eussent en plus grant reverence et plus les craingnissent.)<sup>15</sup>

What this passage reveals is that even in the case of self-deification, if the end results are for the greater good and stability of the society, the appearance of virtue is permissible. Christine's image of the lady's court similar to the well-run abbey and Anne's discussion of the necessity to treat one's female relatives well also illustrate that they "are interested in virtue [...] for reasons beyond the practical advantages it lends to those who attempt to persuade."<sup>16</sup> Christine steeps her text in theological underpinnings, associating her work with the Virgin Mary and authorizing it through a divine visionary experience; Anne writes in the tradition of St Louis whose piety was exemplary for her. Rosalind Brown-Grant also notes the performativity of virtue as an essential end for Christine's project: by teaching her readers that "every member of the female sex" can "construct for herself: her reputation" Christine is teaching them "to live a morally blameless existence," but also to "act as a living refutation of misogynist discourse."<sup>17</sup>

The final quotation from above, from the end of *Treasury* itself, points both to the virtue that Christine hopes to inculcate in her audience as well as a sort of intellectual or spiritual kinship that exists between the reader of her manual and herself; we saw this same transactional relationship in some of the shorter poems where the narrator or scribe

<sup>15</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasury*, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.17.48. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, I.17.67, ll.51-53; I.17.68, ll. 54, 58-65.

<sup>16</sup> Adams, "Appearing Virtuous," 129.

<sup>17</sup> Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 195.

ask for the audience's prayers. Christine asks for their well-wishing and their prayers after her death; her text has been written charitably, and so she sees the benevolence of her audience as her reward—she could not rely on such had she advised the mere cultivation of virtue's appearance.<sup>18</sup> Christine and Anne advocate virtue and its appearance in order to achieve one's ambitions; the Knight is simply concerned with maintaining virtue's appearance, most acutely because it also affects his reputation should his daughters appear disorderly: "for men, their reputation was crucially dependent on those of the women with whom they were connected—their mothers, wives, and daughters—such that adultery and cuckoldry would constitute a defamation of both his and their good names."<sup>19</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant writes of Christine's advice that it is

Distinguishe[d] from that of her male counterparts in their courtesy books [by] her emphasis on what might be termed a 'politics of visibility,' a politics designed to protect women but which, paradoxically, would seem to be drawing on a tradition going back to one of the most fervently misogynist Church Fathers. [...] *Trois Vertus* eschews exemplification in favor of a set of codes of virtuous conduct which must not only be followed, but followed for all to see. The originality of Christine's text therefore resides in its stress on women's skillful manipulation of those codes within which their reputations will be defined. [...] Rather than simply demanding women's obedience to their husbands, as her male contemporaries do, Christine's advocacy of the 'politics of visibility' as a method for constructing one's reputation appeals to women's rational self-interest by encouraging them to obtain credit for conforming to a praiseworthy standard of behavior.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, this type of closing is not atypical in medieval works, but I wish to point out that in her explicit claim for prayers that Christine makes, she is finalizing a writer-reader relationship that she explicitly begins in the opening of her work where she lays out her intent.

<sup>19</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 193. Brown-Grant similarly notes, and I would agree, that "Christine's text is unequivocal: it is the woman's own reputation, not that of her male kin, which is at stake" (195). The same might be said of Anne de France who notes repeatedly that Suzanne must guard her reputation. On the role of reputation and the desire of men to control it see also Philippa Maddern, "Honour among the Pastons: Gender and Integrity in Fifteenth-Century English Provincial Society," *Journal of Medieval History* 14, no. 4 (1988): 357-71, and Felicity Riddy, "Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text," *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 66-86. Riddy discusses this topic in the context of the urban merchant and guild classes.

<sup>20</sup> Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence*, 200.

Like Brown-Grant, I agree that Christine's *Treasury* authorizes a performance, but further, Christine's *Treasury* in itself is such a performance. It is her testament to the proof of the intellectual, rational capacity for a woman, and what is more, for such a woman to teach other women. Christine's rhetorical transvestism is then a powerful claim for female authority and voice, though one that is meticulously performed, like that of the virtuous performance she requires from her pupils. Further, Anne's *Les enseignements* might be understood as a performance as well, but a less rhetorically radical one. Anne's text shows no overwhelming connections with theology, allegorical tradition, or visionary rhetoric. This is not to say that Anne was incapable of understanding or deploying these rhetorics, but rather to note that her performance is less describable as a performative transvestism, as I have described Christine's rhetorical work in *Treasury*; Anne's is more of a performance of expected, or prescribed, femininity. Her specific context and specific address to her daughter and the absence of a particularly overt anti-misogynist program for her work make it less likely that it would be well-received should she have taken on Christine's overt rhetoric and polemic. Where Christine's rhetoric transcends boundaries of socially constructed medieval gender concepts, Anne's confirms, in large part, the performance that someone such as the Knight of the Tower would look for in his audience, i.e. Anne's rhetorical performance conforms much more overtly to expected concepts of femininity than does Christine's, with the exception that by writing *Les enseignements* she inserts her text into a tradition of writing for children that unambiguously aligns her with a masculine royal activity engaged in by both Louis IX, and more immediately, by her father, Louis XI. Such self-insertion, however, need not be read as outré for a woman provided that she avoid overtly advocating socially

revolutionary behavior for women.

There is yet one more common concept all three authors deal with, though thus far I have only explored it in the writings of Anne and Christine: that a positive, gynosomal environment should be upheld by court women and within kinship lines.<sup>21</sup> Briefly, I should discuss the term gynosomal before continuing to elaborate upon its role in the conduct manuals I examine. Judith L. Kellogg, in writing about the building project in *City of Ladies*, has demonstrated that “as Christine and her three divine mentors excavate and then build, they create new configurations of space. Christine is then able to analyze and transform the meanings of these configurations with a view to exposing the inequitable gendering of space, and subsequently, to identify the spaces in which women can shift the balance of patriarchal power.”<sup>22</sup> Kellogg does not discuss *Treasury* in this article at all, but I believe many of the points that she makes about the re-evaluation of space that takes place in *City of Ladies* can be similarly claimed for *Treasury*, and further, that the re-gendering of space that she describes as taking place in *City of Ladies* is brought to its fulfillment through *Treasury*, a text which advocates female-female relationships. Such female-female relationships are gynosomal, and while I may not wish to claim that they issue a direct challenge to patriarchal power, I believe that such social relationships allow for a different and additional source of power to circulate within a largely patriarchal society.<sup>23</sup> Kellogg discusses Christine’s city as “an idea meant to be

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<sup>21</sup> What I define as gynosomal is not particularly present in the short conduct poems I examine in Chapter 1.

<sup>22</sup> Judith L. Kellogg, “*Le Livre de la cité des dames*: Reconfiguring Knowledge and Reimagining Gendered Space,” in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady, Routledge Medieval Casebooks (New York: Routledge, 2003), 129-46, 129.

<sup>23</sup> Kellogg, at the end of her article, acknowledges a similar limitation to Christine’s building project: “Christine’s final advice places women squarely back into the spaces configured by men—not only occupied by abusive husbands, but also laced with what she has described as the seductive ‘traps’ in which women can be enclosed if they do not enclose themselves self-reflexively within the city. [...] Given the real social constraints of women’s lived lives, the body politic must reside within Christine as within every



‘mapped’ into individual female bodies—to be internalized to function as protection and fortification within the social spaces they actually inhabit.”<sup>24</sup> This idea becomes specific and particular advice in *Treasury* where the advice for each of the types of women is presented to them; this advice allows for the maintenance of reputation even in a volatile and difficult place such as court. Briefly I will discuss such advice here, particularly as it applies to the princess.

Many chapters in Christine’s *Treasury* cover prudent advice for behavior in quotidian situations, the practical portion of her conduct guide, portions that she means to be followed rather exactly. In Book One most of the practical advice is located in either one chapter for princesses generally (Chapter 12), one of two chapters dealing with widowed princesses (Chapters 22 and 23), or in the final chapters of Book One that are directed to the chaperone and guardian of the princess, and most of these incidents include concern with reputation. Chapter 12 describes the daily life and tasks of the ideal princess and functions as a simplified version of most of Book One wherein the principles are left out and only good behavior is described, but structurally the chapter acts as an introduction for the next seven chapters in which Prudence’s lessons are extrapolated and elaborated upon, though they are implied in the actions undertaken in Chapter 12.<sup>25</sup>

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other citizen of her city. Thus at the same time that she directs women back to their marginalized social position, she can also reassure them that her city can remain both a refuge and a defense.” Kellogg, “*Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge*,” 141. This re-direction that Kellogg posits is exactly what the advice in *Treasury* does, but I would postulate that *Treasury* allows the City of Ladies to be more than just a conceptual succor for women; *Treasury* strongly advocates for women to act on behalf of other women, and in as much as it was ever successful in attaining that goal—which we can obviously never ascertain—it becomes a text that allows for and encourages the circulation of power not just between men, but among women.

<sup>24</sup> Kellogg, “*Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge*,” 130.

<sup>25</sup> Among the princess’s daily activities are: prayer upon waking (Christine even supplies a sample prayer), attendance at Mass according to her availability given her governing responsibilities, giving of alms, attendance at council meetings with good demeanor, receipt of counsel from her virtuous councilors,

Chapters 22 and 23 of Book One address princesses who have been widowed, young and old. The advice is practical and contains socially expected behavior such as “she will lament her bereavement, and she will keep herself secluded for a time after the funeral and obsequies, with only a little daylight and in sad and mournful weeds” (“qu’elle plaindra et pleurera sa partie si que bonne foy le donne; se tendra closement meismement un temps après le service et obseques, a petite clarté de jour, a piteux et adoulé habit et attour”).<sup>26</sup> Chapter 22, which deals with mature princesses, also includes information on how she should proceed after her husband’s death: ascertaining what the content of his will is, making sure lands are properly divided among nobles, encouraging peace within her kingdom but being unafraid to wage war if necessary.<sup>27</sup> All this advice seems conventional enough, but both Chapters 22 and 23 contain pointed language that suggests that the widow must be very careful about how she is perceived. For example, in Chapter 22, the widow is advised to “summon good assistance and [...] use it to protect and defend her rights boldly by law and reason,” but “she will refrain from using hot and hasty words to anyone, but she will protect her rights; she will state her case or have it stated courteously to everyone” (“appellera bon conseil et en usera en gardant et deffendant son droit hardiement par droit et raison, sans se eschaufer en hautaineté de parole vers nullui, ains dira sa raison ou fera dire courtoisement a tous et par bel, mais

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midday meal including courteous receipt of all those in attendance, rest or private work or amusements within her chambers, vespers attendance, a walk in the garden, and a bedtime prayer. Prudence teaches how one ought to treat one’s husband, how one ought to treat his relatives and friends, how one ought to oversee one’s children’s education and upbringing, how one ought to treat the envious, how the princess ought to seek the favor of all her subjects, how one can keep women in one’s court in order, and how one ought to know one’s finances and revenues.

<sup>26</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.22.58. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.22.83, ll. 9-12.

<sup>27</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.22.59-60. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.22.83, ll. 31-34; I.22.84, ll. 35-58.

elle gardera son droit.”)<sup>28</sup> Even the established adult princess, then, must be wary of how she appears; however, this concern is considerably amplified in Chapter 23. First Christine provides practical information: live on her lands, see to the distribution of offices to wise men, etc., but then in the final paragraphs of the chapter Christine makes some stipulations regarding the young widowed princess’s behavior and supervision that mark her position as particularly socially vulnerable. First, the princess should “be under the guidance of her parents, obey their wishes, and be governed entirely by them and by their regulations,” (“sera en cel estat soit soubz la Baillie de ses parens; obeisse a leur volenté et se gouverne toute par eulx et par leur ordonnance”) while she remains a widow.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the young widowed princess must be under surveillance. Christine also bars her from “Games that are too merry, all dances, tight gowns, and all frivolity” (“jeux trop renvoisiéz, toutes dances, estroites robes, et toutes jolivetéz”) because engaging in such things will endanger “her honour” (“honneur”), and if she should indulge in these things, it should never be “in front of men” (“privé et non devant hommes”).<sup>30</sup> From this point on the emphasis on the widowed princess’s behavior shifts subtly from concern over appearing wise and sedate to maintaining her chaste reputation.<sup>31</sup> That is, “It is not

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<sup>28</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.22.59. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.22.84, ll. 46-50.

<sup>29</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.23.62. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.23.89, ll. 69-71.

<sup>30</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.23.62. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.23.89, ll. 74-75, 78, 79.

<sup>31</sup> Christine does not simply express concern over the reputations of widowed princesses, but for all princesses. For example, she warns that the princess must guard against having women servants who appear unchaste and that the best course of action is “to enforce her regulations [so] that there will be no visitor to her court so foolhardy as to dare to whisper privately with any of her women or give the appearance of seduction. [...] The lady who is chaste will want all her women to be so too, on pain of being banished from her company” (“qu’il n’y aura nul repairant a sa court si hardy qui a nulle de ses femmes ose conseilher a part ne faire semblant d’attrait [...] La dame qui toute honneste sera vouldra que ses femmes le soyent, sur peine d’estre mises hors de sa compaignie”). Later in the chapter Christine explains the reason for this strictness is “so that bad reports about it may not circulate in the town, in distant regions or anywhere else” (“que mauvais raport en estranges contrees ne avau la ville ne autre part n’en puist estre fait”). Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.18.51, 52. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.18.72, ll. 14-16, 20-21; I.18.74, ll. 55-56. Christine also warns women who are respectable and chaste in their current

at all seemly for her to speak or confer privately with men, whoever they may be, nor for knights, squires, nor other men to be in her company too much without a reasonable excuse, and they should never be in her chamber. For such things can soon cause a few words to slip out, even with little foundation, and her character can be besmirched and fall into disrepute” (“Il ne lui apertient point a tenir a part regne ne conseil a hommes, qui qu’ilz soient, ne que chevaliers, escuiers, ne aultres frequentent trop ne sans raisonnable achoison environ elle ne en sa chambre, car par telz choses son bien en pourroit estre desavancié et cheoir en aucunes paroles, qui moult tost et a pou d’achoisson sont levees [...]”).<sup>32</sup> Here Christine’s emphasis is for the sexual reputation of the princess, which must not be at all suspect, but Christine’s warnings continue and include an injunction against marrying without considering advice from her friends and family, nor should she ever speak of marriage in private with anyone.<sup>33</sup> Christine’s practical, specifically contextualized advice here reflects some of the same concern for reputation that one can find in Anne of France’s *Les Enseignements* for her daughter. Anne provides a veritable

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lives not to become complacent because “no one ought to presume that he is stronger than St Peter was or than David and Solomon were, and others of great knowledge who have fallen into sin” (“nul ne doit presume de soy que il soit plus fort que fut saint Pierre, ne que David, Salemon et autres de grant savoir qui trebucherent en pechié”) and because “When the sheep is old the wolf can still sometimes carry it off” (“Quant la berbis est vieille, si l’emporte aucuns foiz de loup”) which Christine means to convey that chaste women “do not know what is to happen to [them] nor how tempted [they] will be” (“vous ne savez qu’il vous est a avenir ne comment tempees serez [...]”). Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.11.161, 162. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, III.7.215, ll. 14-16; III.7.217, ll. 63-64, ll. 61-62. Additionally, in a sample letter that a princess’s guardian could provide to her princess regarding reputation, Christine supplies this warning against thinking that taking on an extramarital lover is like having a servant: “Consider, Madam, that as it seems to these ‘servants’ great honour to boast that they are loved or have been loved by a great lady or a woman of good name, how could they keep quiet about it [the affair or love] if it was *true*? For God knows how they lie! And may it please God that you ladies may be well aware of this, for you will need to protect yourselves against it” (“Comment cuidiez vous, ma Dame, qu’il semble a ses servans grant honneur de dire et eulx vanter qu’ilz soient améz, ou ayent esté, d’une bien grant maistresse ou femme de renom, et comment en tairont ilz la verité? Car Dieux scet comment ilz en mentent, et pleust a Dieu qu’entre vous, mes Dames, le sceussiez bien, car cause auriez de vous en garder”). Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.27.84. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.27.119, ll. 239-40; I.27.120, ll. 241-44.

<sup>32</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.23.63. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.23.89, ll. 85-89; I.23.90, l. 90.

<sup>33</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.23.63. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.23.90, ll. 95-105.

litany of encouragement for Suzanne to protect her honor. Such passages as this appear frequently:

And because of their weak female nature, it is especially important for all women of rank who want to have a good reputation to be so shamefast and fearful of bad judgment that they move not a single limb of their body without need and that they be rightly ordered with a kindness always compassed by reason. On this subject, one philosopher says that the most displeasing thing in the world, especially for men of rank, is to see a young woman from a good background who is unpredictable and unrestrained. And on the other hand, as another philosopher says, the most noble and pleasing treasure in this world is a woman of noble rank who is young, chaste, and well-mannered. (et, par espécial, à toutes femmes de façon qui désirent avoir bon bruit, à cause de leurs féminines et douces condicions, lesquelles doivent estre tant honteuses et craintives de mesprendre, quelles ne doivent mouvoir corps ne membre sans besoing, et par droit ordre de douceur compassée en toute raison. Et dit ung philosophe parlant à ce propoz que la plus deshonneste chose qui puisse estre au monde, en espécial aux hommes de façon, est de veoir une jeune femme yssue de bon lieu volage et effrenée. Et, au fait contraire, dit ung autre philosophe que le plus noble et plaisant trésor qui puisse estre en ce monde, est de veoir une femme de grande façon belle, jeune, chaste, et bien moriginée.)<sup>34</sup>

This quotation reveals the perpetual concern for reputation that Anne's text evinces, and she employs not only her own presentation of the fact that reputation is paramount for a young noble woman, but she also enlists the aid of authorities to reinforce the point.

Anne also deploys imagery when she beseeches her daughter to maintain her reputation.

In the penultimate chapter of *Les enseignements* she declares that a woman of untested virtue is not praiseworthy and she describes the resistance of the young noblewoman to the inducements of courtiers for love affairs in martial terms:

And above all, you must fly the acquaintance of such men [“who make unreasonable requests of you” (“qui vous feroient requestes desraisonnables”)<sup>35</sup>] because it is the best way to protect yourself. [...]

<sup>34</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 38. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France*, 29-30.

<sup>35</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 67. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France*, 129. Anne also specifies that these unreasonable requests are requests for illicit sex acts, which becomes clear only in her advice to Suzanne to tell the men that “you cannot believe that their hearts are so debased that they could put them to

But, suppose a castle is beautiful and so well-guarded that it is never assailed—then it is not to be praised, nor is a knight who has never proven himself to be commended for his prowess. To the contrary, the thing most highly commended is that which has been in the fire yet cannot be scorched (or worse) or that which has been in the terrible depths of the sea yet cannot be drowned or that which has been in the mire of this world yet cannot be soiled in any way. Worthy of being praised, therefore, are women who in this miserable world know to live in purity of conscience and chastity; they are worthy of eternal glory because by their steadfast chastity and good virtue they redirect fools, disordered in their carnality, to the good road. (Et, sur toutes choses, on doit fuyr l'accointance de telz gens, car c'est souverain remède pour bien soy garder. [...] Car, suppo [sé] que ung chasteau soit de belle et bonne garde, qui jamais ne fut assailly, si n'est-il pas à louer, ne le chevallier de sa prouesse à recommander, qui oncques ne fuerent esprouvez. Aussi, au fait contraire, la chose est de grant recommandacion, qui est au feu et ne peult ardoir ne empirer, et que est ès terribles ondes de la mer, et ne se peult noyer, et qui est ès fanges de ce monde, et ne se soulle, en manière qui soit. Si sont doncques dignes de estre louées les femmes qui, en ce misérable monde, sçavent vivre en purité de conscience et chasteté, et sont dignes d'avoir gloire éternelle. Car par leur ferme chasteté et bonne vertu, sont cause de réduire les folz, désordonnez en leur charnalité, à bonne voye.)<sup>36</sup>

Here Anne's imagery combines the dangers of court life with overtly direct imagery that exemplifies the perilous position in which romance can place women; all the more, she associates extramarital sexuality with a failure of reason—with unreasonable requests—thus like Christine, Anne associates maintenance of the female reputation as the only reasonable means by which a woman can hope to survive court life. Anne is also insistent that to avoid the dangers of the court is impossible, hence the image of the besieged castle. The imagery in her final exhortation to Suzanne provided above makes it starkly apparent that reputation can be unironically conceived as a matter of life and death.

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such vile things, and then show them the eternal joys and honorable praise that is to be acquired by the excellent virtue of chastity.” “povez dire que ne croiriez jamais qu'ils eussent le couraige si bas ravallé, que le mettre en si villes choses, en leur remonstrant les éternelles joys et honorables louenges, que on acquiert par l'excellente vertu de chasteté [...]” Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France*, 67-68. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France*, 129.

<sup>36</sup> Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France*, 68. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France*, 129-31.

Christine also provides a great deal of practical advice for the guardians and chaperones of princesses in the final chapters of Book One.<sup>37</sup> For example, Chapter 25 discusses how the chaperone ought to be aware of any men who may be in pursuit of her married mistress and presents a simple approach for dealing with the problem: the chaperone ought to offer an easy and welcome friendship so that the would-be lover shares his desires with her, and then she is to very politely affirm the good character and high morals of her mistress before ending with the following declaration: ““I have but one death to die, and I would prefer it rather than that I should consent to or see the dishonour of my mistress [with an affair or rumor of one]. It is best that this business never be mentioned again and that we leave it at that”” (“je n’ay que d’une mort a mourir, laquelle chose aimeroie mieulx qu’il m’avenist que ce que je consentisse ne veisse le mal et la deshonneur de ma maistresse. Si vault mieulx qu’il n’en soit plus et que la chose demeure tant”).<sup>38</sup> Cumulatively, these practical lessons and inducements to preserve virtue and reputation demonstrate Christine’s and Anne’s overwhelming concern with reputation and its necessity for a woman to be able to function in society. What is more, the valiant defense of the princess by her female chaperone above epitomizes my concept of the gynosocial. It is easy to accept a bribe and introduce an unsavory, immoral relationship into the princess’s life, but Christine’s ideal chaperone resists the typical romance narrative and keeps allegiance with her princess, helping her to maintain a spotless

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<sup>37</sup> In Book Two Christine also provides practical advice to women who live on estates, but this has been thoroughly discussed, particularly in comparison with the Pastons. See Diane Bornstein, “The Ideal of the Lady of the Manor as Reflected in Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des trois vertus*,” in *Ideals for Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan*, Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series 1, ed. Diane Bornstein (Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1981), 117-28.

<sup>38</sup> Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Lawson, I.25.71. Christine de Pizan, ed. Willard, I.25.100, ll. 118-19; I.25.101, ll. 120-21.

reputation.<sup>39</sup> There is not so clear an overt female-female show of solidarity in Anne's text, but significantly Anne does tell Suzanne to "commend yourself with a good heart to the Virgin Mary, and she will succor you in all your necessities and affairs" ("et vous recommandez de bon cuer à la vierge Marie, et elle vous secourira en toutes voz neccessitez et affaires").<sup>40</sup> At the very least we can read this turning to Mary as a spiritual female-female relationship, and one which Christine champions in *City of Ladies*, where Mary is made queen. Such a conception of the relationship with Mary is not too different from Kellogg's assessment of the constructed City of Ladies: "this is not simply a spatial structure, but a temporal edifice as well that provides women a collective history."<sup>41</sup> That is, we do not need to conceive of the relationships advocated in these works as strictly real life and temporal, but they can extend further than that, as in the case of Mary, where a woman's individual connection might be achieved through spiritual devotion and faith, not simply good treatment of other women in her life. Kellogg also quotes Margarete Zimmermann's work on memory and Christine, which offers another insightful way to elucidate my concept of the gynosocial:

Ainsi, l'espace imaginaire de la *Cité des dames* permet aux femmes de dialoguer avec l'ensemble des femmes de toutes les époques de l'histoire et constitue une sorte d'archive, un vaste lieu de mémoire où sont enregistrés et conservés les faits des 'grandes dames exemplaires.'

(Thus the imaginary space of the *City of Ladies* allows women to enter into dialogue with all women of all periods of history and constitutes a sort of archive, a vast site of memory, in which are inscribed and preserved the deeds of exemplary great ladies.)<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Compare this image with the servant from *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, which I discuss in the chapter on the Knight, who helps seduce her mistress in exchange for a hood.

<sup>40</sup> Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France*, 67. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d'Anne de France*, 128-29.

<sup>41</sup> Kellogg, "Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge," 131.

<sup>42</sup> Kellogg, "Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge," 132.



The interactions between women that constitute these dialogues, and the places wherein we see women interacting on one another's behalf, to help each other, are examples of gynosomal interactions, interactions wherein women are the principle actors and their actions work charitably to help other women, either in the maintenance of reputation or in the providing of spiritual, emotional, or material succor. Kellogg further recognizes that individual virtue is not enough for Christine, who describes a community of women in a city: "the strength of her newfound feminine subjectivity comes not in isolation, but from creating an orderly and well-governed community available to all women."<sup>43</sup> *Treasury* is the rhetorical performance that makes the performance of virtue available to all women of a variety of social classes; it is the activation of the city-planning and construction that Christine undergoes in *City of Ladies*.<sup>44</sup> The relationships that women have in *Treasury* are "inclusive, reciprocal, and interdependent."<sup>45</sup> I would also like to suggest that on a more personal level Anne's *Les enseignements* act similarly for Suzanne, and this is particularly noteworthy in Section XII, which warns Suzanne to "avoid all private meetings, no matter how pleasant they are, because as you have seen, many an honest beginning comes to dishonest and harmful end. [...] Consider, then, that many women have suffered a great deal and some have lost their honor and advantages, even in marriage" ("je vous conseille que vous vous gardez de toutes privées et gracieuses acoinctances telles qu'elles soient, car on a veu, en ce cas, plusiers honnestes

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<sup>43</sup> Kellogg, "Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge," 134.

<sup>44</sup> I should note that Kellogg presents a different reading that presents *City of Ladies* as the site of this performance: "As Christine reconstructs her subject position in the course of building her textual city, so her female reader also reconstructs herself in the act of reading the text." Kellogg, "Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge," 140. Kellogg's article is insightful, but I must maintain that *Treasury* appears much more to be the locus of such reconstructing on the part of the reader who is repeatedly engaged with rhetoric that encourages inner dialogue and self-examination. This is not to say that there is not such dialogue in *City of Ladies*, but that it is taking place between Christine-the-narrator and the Three Virtues, not the audience and the Three Virtues and other allegorical figures as it does in *Treasury*.

<sup>45</sup> Kellogg, "Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge," 134.

commencemens, dont la fin a esté depuis deshonneste et préjudiciable. [...] Pensez donc que plusieurs dames et damoiselles ont eu beaucoup à souffrir, et aucunes en ont perdu honneurs et aventaiges, tant en mariage [...].”<sup>46</sup> This first-person didacticism that warns Suzanne away from meetings with men is more than just a moral prescription; it is a gynosomal warning from one woman to another that clearly marks out the dangers of court life for women—earlier in the chapter Anne even discusses men in just the same way that the Knight describes them in his prologue—out to trick women: “there is no man of worth, however noble he may be, who does not use treachery, nor to whom it does not seem good sport to deceive or trick women of rank from one good family or another” (“il n’y a si homme de bien, tant noble soit, qui n’y use de traison, ne à qui ce ne semble bon bruit, d’y abuser ou tromper femmes de façon, soient de bonne maison ou autres [...].”)<sup>47</sup> This passage makes explicit the need for female alliances in what appears to be games of manipulation and power, but games which can have devastating effects for women of nobility.

The juxtaposition of reputation-obsessed rhetoric with a rhetoric that supports a positive, female-oriented environment in conduct literature reveals a keen tension in the conduct manuals. On the one hand, the anxiety to control and monitor female behavior is evident; on the other, the promotion of gynosomal relationships among women reveals a concern for female space and safety at court. Scrutinizing these rhetorical impulses demonstrates that as homosocial relationships in medieval Europe were important to men, there is at least the possibility that some women found gynosomal relationships

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<sup>46</sup> Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France*, 40. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d’Anne de France*, 35-36, 37. Anne has demonstrated this earlier in the section by recounting an exemplum of a knight who swore a false oath to secure the favors of a noble woman.

<sup>47</sup> Jansen, ed. and trans., *Anne of France*, 39. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d’Anne de France*, 32.

indispensable as well. My chapters on Christine and Anne have firmly established these authors' concerns with female-female relationships.<sup>48</sup> I will recapitulate some highlights of these texts after exploring the gynosocial moments in the Knight's *Book*. I would also argue that Anne's and Christine's texts fulfill some of the qualities of what Sara Evans stipulates as necessary for "insurgent collective identity [...] 1) social spaces within which members of an oppressed group can develop an independent sense of worth [...]; 2) role models [...] 5) a communication or friendship network through which a new interpretation can spread, activating the insurgent consciousness into a social movement."<sup>49</sup> That is, these books would require a quiet place, such as a study or library, or other chamber where a woman could read or have the work read to her. Christine's illumination project for *Treasury* even suggests such a space populated by all the ladies of the world, listening to the instruction of the Three Virtues. Both Anne and Christine cite exemplars of good and bad behavior. And finally, though we have no physical, tangible or written proof of such, I would suggest that these texts that circulated among women offer a point for the generation of female-female relationships, even if only textual as Christine's epilogue implies that she has a special connection with her readers, that they are indebted to her for her literary kindness to them. I do not claim any sort of radical feminism either for Anne or Christine. The Knight's encouragement of these female-female relationships will need to be considered more carefully, perhaps, as if we

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<sup>48</sup> I should note that in a woman's network of alliances, some of these would be with men—as we have seen in Anne's relationship with her husband Pierre—but I still maintain, as I have shown in both chapters on Anne and Christine, that both authors point out specifically being in good accord with female relatives. Kate Langdon Forhan also notes the unisex quality of alliances: "a prudent woman of high social class also builds a network of allies among knights, prelates, lawyers, bailiffs and even merchants and artisans, so that if difficulties strike, her reputation as a woman of 'noble bearing and wisdom' will maintain her credibility, [...]." Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, *Women and Gender in the Early Modern World* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2002), 63.

<sup>49</sup> Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 232-33.

are concerned about attributing feminism anachronistically to Anne and Christine, we must be truly apprehensive about doing so for Geoffroy de La Tour Landry.

It is quite true that there are relatively few places in *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* wherein female-female relationships are offered as positive and exemplary. More common are examples of women trying to outdo one another in fashion or of women turning to the protection of men when their chastity is assaulted.<sup>50</sup> The first example of what I call the gynosocial motif in *The Book* occurs in Chapter 87, which is one of many chapters that enjoins women to practice charity. It contains three exempla, one biblical (of Rahab) and two hagiographical (Saints Anastasia and Radegunda). I want to focus on Radegunda's story as the Knight tells it first because it overturns his usual, as we have seen in the examination of the shame/maim trope, insistence upon the punishment of women exercising their will, and because it also offers a powerful description of the flourishing of a female community, albeit not in a manner explicit as in Christine's *City of Ladies*. Radegunda

Whiche was queen of Fraunce and whiche comforted and vysyted the  
poure enchartered and emprysoned and nourysshed the orphanes and  
vysyted them that were seke And by cause she myghte not entende to hit

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<sup>50</sup> For example, the Knight is able to advocate female reliance upon male assistance and simultaneously enjoin women to accept their position in patriarchal culture when he says "I wolde that ye wel withheld within youre hert thexample of a good lady of Acquyllee whiche the prynce of that Countre praid of foule loue And whan he had ynough prayd and spoken to her she answerd that she sholde therof speke to her lord And when the prynce sawe this he lefte her in pees and neuer syth spack to her therof and said to many one that she was one of the moost parfyte & best lady that was in his land & in this manere the good lady receyued grete preysyng and louyng of many one. And soo ought euery goode woman doo and **not answer after her own wylle.**" (my emphasis) La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 63, ll.34-38, 64, ll. 1-5. "And y wolde that ye knew the ensaumple of a lady that the prince of Acquile required of foly loue, the whiche, whanne he hadde all praid, ansuered that she wolde wete her husbondes will, and geue hym an ansuere. And he saw that, and lete her be, and neuer spake more to her of that matere. And the prince tolde all the peple that she was one of the perfit good women of all hys londe; and thus the lady gate her moche worshippe that she ansuere so the prince. And so aught eueri good woman to lete her husbonde ansuere and not they." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 56, ll. 18-26. Note the stark difference between the episode described here and Christine's chaperone's defense of a lady's honor in *Treasury*. Here there is no network of women assisting one another, but men who are challenging women's reputations and then almost perversely confirming those reputations when their offers of infidelity are eschewed through a woman's disavowal of power that is complicit with patriarchy.

as ofte as **she wold** for doubte to disobeye her lord she lefte her lord & alle the worship and vayne glory of the world and the worldly Ioye and ranne to hyde her secretely fro parys vnto Poytyers And there she rendryd her self in to thabbeye and bycame a Nonne and lefte the world to thende she myght the better serue god **withoute drede of any man** wherefore afterward god shewed for her sake a miracle For a tree whiche stode in the myddes of theyr cloystre the whiche was al drye god made hym to bycome and wexe fayr and grene And sprange oute of hit newe braunches and leues ageynste the cours of nature But no thyng is Impossible to god<sup>51</sup>

First I want to point out the boldface passages here that point to Radegunda's exercise of her own will and her rejection of male authority, save obviously for the male authority of God, in whose service she chooses to be rather than her husband's. This shift in perspective in *The Book* is radical as the narrative presents her choice as clearly conflicting with her husband's, and yet she is not punished for acting on her will; I concede, however, that the Knight's acceptance of this situation is due entirely to the sacred nature of Radegunda's identity and her self-subjection to the ultimate patriarch, God. The second aspect of this abbreviated *vita* is the miracle story, which appears initially as a simple miracle story. But we must note that the tree is renewed "ageynste the cours of nature" just as Radegunda's choice to violate the Knight's naturalized gender hierarchy would be, in his opinion, a violation of nature. Further, this tree is renewed within the grounds of the abbey, and thus I take it to be symbolically representative of a renewal of female community and safety within Radegunda's presence. Thus, this first

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<sup>51</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 118, ll.36-38, 119, ll. 1-12. (my emphasis) "that was queen of Fraunce, that uisited the poure prisoners, and norisshed orpheliens, and releued the sike folkes. And whanne she might not entende hereto, for doute of disobeisaunce vnto the kinge her lorde, priuely she forsoke her lorde, and refused all worldely ioye, and come into Peytiers, into an abbey of ladyes, and putte her selff in habite amonges hem to serue God atte her leyser and pleasaunce. And sen hedirto God hathe shewed gret miracles for her; and how there was a tree in the middes of her cloystre, that gaue vmbre and shadow of long tyme, and was woxe olde and drye; but God, atte the praier of this holy lady, renewed the tree in suche wyse as it hadde a nwe barke all fresshe and grene, and nwe braunches full of grene leues, semyng vnto all creatoures that it was a thing ayenst the course of nature, but only by the might of God, to whom no thing is impossible." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 114, ll. 1-16. For an English translation of Venantius Fortunatus's *Life of St Radegund*, see Mary-Ann Stouck, ed., *Medieval Saints: A Reader*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 4 (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1999), 205-17.

example does not contain overt gynosocial relationships; Radegunda's charity is not marked as being given specifically to other women, but if we read the Harley translation, we might make a stronger case for reading the tree imagery as more toward our point. The Harley translation marks the miracle as a result of Radegunda's own prayers; this translation also points out the function of the tree in the abbey—to give shade, which one might also understand as shelter or protection. If we conceive of the miracle as initiating in Radegunda's will and as a miracle that benefits her female world of the abbey, the questionable nature of the gynosociality exemplified in the passage is greatly reduced.

I wish to turn now to more compelling examples of the gynosocial within *The Book*.<sup>52</sup> Chapter 101 of *The Book* is also a chapter advocating charity, but particularly in its context that calls up the distinctly female (according to the Knight) emotion of pity. At the end of the chapter, which presents biblical examples first, comes the story of the Countess of Avignon who

founded the Abbeye of Bourgueyl where as she lyeth buried [...] This good lady where as she sawe her poure parentes that myght not honestly kepe theyr estate she gaf to them largely of her goodes The poure Maydens gentylle wymmen that were of good renommee she enhaunced and maryed them She made to seche and enquire the poure housholders and somme of her good she gaf to them She had grete pyte of wymmen whiche were at theyre childbedde and vysyted and foustred them She had of her owne phisiciens and Cyrurgyens to helpe and hele for goddess loue al maner of folke And in especialle the poure whiche had nought to paye.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Chapter 90 of *The Book* praises Ruth for her charity to her husband's relatives, but I would like to suggest an undercurrent of the gynosocial within the biblical text, even if the Knight elides it. See Ruth 1:14 and 2:2, both of which present Ruth and her mother-in-law working together.

<sup>53</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 135, ll. 33-39, 136, ll. 1-5. "and founded the abbey of Burgeyl, and she is there yberied; [...] This good lady, she halpe and gaue her goodes vnto her pore kyn, unto pore gentill women and maydenes, to susteine and meintaine her estate, to kepe from synne and mysleuinge. And she enquired thorough euery parisshe for pore men and women that were wedded and had children, and had not wherewith to susteyne hem, and for such and for diuerse sikenesses or other aduersitees might not labouore ne trauaile, and upon poure women in gesyne: all suche pepill, and mani other, she releued and comforted with almesse of her charitable deuocion. And also she hadde her medicines and surgens forto hele and medicine all suche as were nedefull [...]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 136, ll. 24-33, 137, ll. 1-3.

Again, as with Radegunda, there is a discussion of general charity. But more specifically the Knight notes that the Countess looks after noble women and maidens as well as pregnant women. The Countess is merely an exemplar, her life offering a model to the Knight's daughters, and the Knight never explicitly says in this instance, as Anne de France does, that his daughters ought to care for women in their childbeds, but this narrative presents another example of hints of the gynosomal. These activities perhaps are not central to the Knight's text because his greatest concern is not with formulating a positive female-centered network of relationships as is the case for Anne and Christine. The truly unusual discussion of female-female relationships, however, comes in Chapter 108 of *The Book* where indeed the Knight does prescribe that women care for one another in their childbeds.

Chapter 108 is part of the series of chapters that discusses Mary as an exemplar of virtue, which here happens to be humility. We are given a number of instances of Mary's humility, but the last she is praised for is

her good kynde and nature of her curtosye whanne she wente and vysyted her cosyn saynte Elysabeth whiche wold serue her And the child of Elysabeth that was saynte Iohan Baptist maade thenne Ioye within his moders bely In so moche þ<sup>t</sup> by the grace of the holy ghost saynte Elysabeth cryed & sayd that blessed shold be the fruyt of her wombe & that she was blessyd aboue al wymmen & that hit was not reson that the moder of god shold come to see and vysyte so poure a woman as she was And than bothe Cosyns humbled them self one toward the other wherefore good exemplary is here how that parentes and Frenedes ought to see and vysyte eche other in theyr childbedde and in theyr disease and sekenesse And humble them self the one ageynst the other as dyd these two holy and blessyd ladyes.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 145, ll.26-36, 146, ll. 1-2. "her curtesye & good nature, whanne she went forto uisite her cosyn seint Elizabeth, and the cilde that was withinne her, whiche was seint Iohn the Baptist, reioyed by the grace of the holy gost. And seint Elizabeth, saieng vnto oure lady that she was blessed abue all women, for the fruit that was within her, and that it was not reson the moder of the Sone of God shulde come to uisite so pore as she was. And in this wyse full godly thei reuerenced and obeyed eche to other, as louyng cosynges and parentys. As by ensaumple herof ye may see how ye aught to loue, uisite,

This passage more overtly states the obligation of female relatives to be humble with one another, as Anne de France's text does (section XIX). But more, this passage seems to present to us the Incarnation and the experience of childbirth from a wholly female perspective. I am not blind to the fact that the Knight consigns Elizabeth's words to the Holy Ghost, but still we have miniature narrative about two women exchanging kindnesses during their pregnancy. This is the model of gynosocial behavior, and it presents a positive, friendly exchange between women. Such is indeed a rarity within the Knight's work where we find Good Sisters rewarded while their Bad Sisters suffer various degrees of humiliation, torture, or death, and where we also find women competing with one another in dress. I must note, however, that this retelling of the exchange of female humilities occurs only after the Knight presents us with a list of people to whom women owe their humility: "toward god toward her lord and toward the world."<sup>55</sup> Thus, gynosocial friendships such as the one the Knight references are completely subordinated to patriarchal hierarchy structures and advocated only inasmuch as they confirm typical virtues assigned to women to exemplify, such as humility. Nonetheless, the Knight does posit this relationship as the ideal female-female relationship for he immediately tells his audience to strive to be like Mary and Elizabeth "and not say as doo some whiche of theyr prowde and folysshe herte say thus I am the more noble the more gentyll eytter the more hyghe maystresse And therfor I ought to go

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and reuerence youre kyn, and eche vnto other [...]" La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 149, ll. 30-33, 150, ll. 1-8. See Luke 1:41-46 for the Biblical account.

<sup>55</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 145, l.16 "vnto God and vnto the worlde, and for a wedded woman to be obedient and humble vnto her husbonde." La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 149, ll. 18-20.



before that other.”<sup>56</sup> Clearly, the Knight cannot allow a positive image of women to predominate; as is typical of *The Book*, he returns again to examples of behavior that need containment, punishment, and rejection.

However, I do not wish to say that Anne and Christine present us only with images of positive female relationships. I have shown in my chapter on Christine how envy between ladies-in-waiting is addressed by Christine and how the chaperone must prepare herself emotionally for the cruelties of the princess over whom she is given charge. Further, Christine also notes the engagement of women in competitive expenditures, though often as a means of class critique rather than as a critique of women’s negative competition with one another. She also mocks women who submit to extravagance with the following exemplum: a tailor reported that “He has used five ells [...] of wide Brussels cloth” (“v· aulnes de drap a l’aune de Paris de drap de Bruisselles de la grant moison”) on a “*cotte hardie* for an ordinary lady” (“une cote hardie” “pour une simple dame”) so that “Three quarters of the train touched the ground, and the full sleeves reached to her feet, and God only knows how correspondingly large the head-dress is and how high the points are!” (“traine bien par terre trois quartiers, at aux manches a bombardes qui vont jusques aux piéz [...] Mais Dieux scet se selon cest abit convient large attour et haultes cornes [...]).<sup>57</sup> This passage conveys Christine’s eye for detail; the Knight notes women are competitive and will nag their husbands for the

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<sup>56</sup> La Tour Landry, *The Book*, ed. Offord, 146, ll.3-5. “not forto saie that,—as there be sum amonges women that of that gret pride they sayn,—‘Y am the gretter gentill woman, and of the more nobl linage, and gretter maistresse, wher she shal come rather vnto me;’ or ellys thei be envyeusis whiche shall goo furst up on the offerande, forto haue most of the vayne glorie of the worlde. So that there be mani women that haue thayre hertys suoll full of pride and enuye, as atte diuerse assemblees and festis thei auyse to be the furst yset and serued, and haue the honoure, or ellis for despite they will not ete nor drinke, for the gret enuie that is within hem.” La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight*, ed. Wright, 150, ll. 9-19. Note the considerably longer discussion of petty jealousies between women in the Harley translation.

<sup>57</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, II.11.116-17. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, II.11.159, ll. 61-62, 60, 59-60, 62-64.

newest fashions, but Christine lingers over the details of the fashions more often than the Knight, and she shares his same outrage over women dressing beyond their station, which I addressed in my chapter on *The Book*. For comparison, consider Christine's condemnation of excess practiced by the "wife of a grocer" ("femme de marchand"), a condemnation which almost erotically unfolds the details of excess luxury while simultaneously deploring the lavish display:

[...] his wife is rich and dresses like a great lady. Not long ago she had a lying-in after the birth of her child. Now, before one entered her chamber, one passed through two other very fine chambers, in each of which there was a large dresser covered like an altar and laden with silver vessels. And then from that chamber one entered the chamber of the woman in childbed, a large and well-appointed room hung from floor to ceiling with tapestries made with her device worked very richly in fine Cyprus gold.

In the chamber it was a large, highly ornamented dresser covered with golden dishes. The bed was large and handsome and hung with exquisite curtains. On the floor around the bed the carpets on which one walked were all worked with gold, and the large ornamented hangings, which extended more than a hand span below the bedspread, were of such fine linen of Rheims that they were worth three hundred francs. On top of this bedspread of tissue of gold was another large covering of linen as fine as silk, all of one piece and without a seam [...] and very expensive; it was said to be worth two hundred francs and more. It was so wide and long that it covered all sides of this large, elaborate bed and extended beyond the edge of the bedspread, which trailed on the floor on all sides. In this bed lay the woman who had given birth, dressed in crimson silk cloth and propped up on big pillows of the same silk with big pearl buttons, adorned like a young lady. (elle soit riche; et pour tant grant estat—et assez de telles y a—que elle fist en la gesine d'un enfant que elle eut, n'a pas longtemps. Car ains que on entrast en sa chambre, on passoit par 'ii' autres chambres moult belles ou il avoit en chascune un grant lit de parement bien et richement encourtiné; et en la seconde avoit un grant dreçoir couvert comme un autel, tout chargé de vaiselle d'argent blanche. Et puis de celle on entroit en la chambre de la gisant, laquelle estoit grant et belle, toute encourtinee de tapisserie faicte a la devise d'elle ouvree tres richement de fin or de Chipre, le lit grant et bel encourtiné tout d'un parement et les tapis d'entour le lit mis par terre sur quoy on marchoit, tous pereilz a or ouvréz, les grans draps de parement qui passioient plus d'un espan par soubz la couverture de si fine toile de Raims que ilz estoient prisiéz a 'ccc' francs; et tout par dessus le dit couvertoir a or tyssu avoit un autre grant drap de lin aussi delié que soye, tout d'une piece et

sans cousture—[...] et de moult grant coust—que on prisoit deux cens frans et plus, qui estoit si grant et si large que il couvroit de tous lez le tres grant lit de parement et passoit le bourt du dit couvertoir qui trainsnoit de tous lez; et en celle chambre avoit un grant dreçoir pare, tout couvert de vaisselle doree. En ce lit estoit la gisant, vestue de drap de soye taint en cramesy, appuiee de grans oreilliers de pareille soye a gros boutons de perles, atournee comme une demoiselle [...].<sup>58</sup>

These examples from Christine’s text serve to balance my argument that her text is a radical performance that opens up possibilities for action for women. Clearly Christine envisions and desires one sort of female-female relationship, one in which reputation and loyalty to one another supersedes class-based, social one-upmanship and the temptations of illicit love.

My chapter on Anne notes similar attitudes within Anne’s work: she encourages Suzanne to be kind to her relatives but notes, especially in Section 17, that some women do not respect the ranks of others and will jostle and compete with one another for place and in terms of their fashion. One particular place that Anne speaks forcefully about avoiding envy and the negative female-female relationships it engenders is in section XXIII: “envious women must be considered like those who, out of envy, betrayed and crucified Jesus. Because of their damned envy, these women with treacherous hearts betray and murder those whom, in God’s eyes, they should love, and they destroy the honor and profit of the virtuous as well. There is no greater treason in this world than to defame and dishonor someone secretly, out of envy” (“telles femmes doivent estre mises au nombre de ceulx qui par envye trahirent et crucifièrent Jhésus. Car, par leur dampnée envye, elles trahissent et mectent à mort, en leur couraige félon, ceulx que, selon Dieu; elles sont tenues d’aymer, aussi leur honneur et prouffit. Car on ne peult faire en ce

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<sup>58</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Treasure*, trans. and ed. Lawson, III.3.137-38. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre*, ed. Willard, III.3.184, l. 45; III.3.185, ll. 46-69.

monde plus grant trayson, que, secrètement, par envye, diffamer autruy, et le deshonnorer.”)<sup>59</sup> This passage again points out Anne’s tendency to translate betrayal into religious terms, for as we have seen she compares women who betray their relatives to heretics. Here, those who enviously malign others are like Christ’s murderers; the imagery is stark and the amount of shame that is provoked by such a comparison must have been rhetorically forceful. There is also a passage that strips religion from the argument that women ought to work with one another rather than in competition with one another. It is a passage that suggests that we ought to understand *Les enseignements* as a gynosocial production that fosters mother-daughter interactions, for in section XXV [27], Anne advises Suzanne in the matter of her own dress, should she have children. Anne explains “when they [the children] reach an age to be fully arrayed, little by little reduce your own adornment, always conducting yourself honorably so that no one has any reason to speak ill of you; never behave as those arrogant mothers who display themselves with their daughters, next to whom they look like grandmothers! Such women are mocked [...]” (“Et quant elles seront en eage de porter atours, peu à peu vous devez laisser les vostres, en vous conduisant tous jours honnorablement, affin qu’on n’aye occasion d’en mal parler, sans faire ainsi que ce outrecuidées meres, à qui il semble beau d’estre veues devant leur filles, auprès des quelles elles souvent ressemblent estre grant meres, dont elles sont mocquées.”)<sup>60</sup> Thus all three conduct guides present the reader with less than ideal female-female relationships, but for both Anne and Christine these failed or problematic relationships become the antithesis for their own rhetorical impulse.

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<sup>59</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 55. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d’Anne de France*, 86.

<sup>60</sup> Jansen, *Anne of France*, 62. Chazaud, *Les enseignements d’Anne de France*, 106-07.

While it is perhaps difficult to resist viewing these texts in a manner that is not black-and-white, that does not declare the Knight of the Tower wholly villainous in his portrayal of women or Anne and Christine as wholly valorous in theirs, the reading of these texts with more nuance points out the sharp medieval contradictions in attitudes toward gender, and as Juanita Feros Ruys has said, “Scholars dealing with medieval and early-modern didactic literature need to be aware [...] that contradiction can be found at the heart of any didactic text and that the didactic genre is by no means a monolithic one, either in intent or effect.”<sup>61</sup> Anne and Christine write in order to encourage more positive female-female relationships and in the act of writing are engaged in a positive action for other women. The Knight, on the other hand, subordinates the very few gynosomal moments in his text to more commonplace moralizations as well as to patriarchal and hierarchical schemata of control to which women must submit in his text. Additionally, his portrayal of dysfunctional female-female relationships far outweighs the positive relationships he describes. All three of these conduct manuals present a variety of rhetorical approaches to their audience, and all of them to a certain extent present idealized female-female relationships, but by and large those relationships in the Knight’s text exist on the periphery. Anne’s and Christine’s texts are gynosomal rhetorical performances, even if Christine engages in an intellectual and visionary rhetorical transvestism, and even if Anne co-opts authorities and prescribes tight limitation on her daughter’s activities within the texts. Finally, while the Knight’s text participates in, and even demands, the legitimation of patriarchal hierarchies, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* is, as I describe in the conclusion to that chapter, a text motivated by paternal

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<sup>61</sup> Juanita Feros Ruys, “Introduction: Approaches to Didactic Literature—Meaning, Intent, Audience, Social Effect,” in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, Disputatio 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 1-38, 7.

concern. Such concern cannot be expected to be as radical or performative as Anne's and Christine's texts, but it is simultaneously a mistake to ignore the repeated warnings of the Knight that the world is dangerous for women, all the more so if they dare to defy conventional gender roles. Anne's and Christine's texts perhaps acquire their greatest revolutionary momentum when examined in parallel with the Knight's insistent lesson: it is the very circumspect and careful means through which women are advised to form relationships and control their own behavior in Anne's and Christine's texts that make them important. That is, we cannot look to these advice manuals and be disappointed that Christine and Anne did not champion women's equal entering into the medieval world with men because such overt confrontation to the system of patriarchy in place at that time, so obviously embodied in the Knight's text, would have meant the advice would have been practically useless for medieval women unless, like the many disobedient women in *The Book*, the women sought death, torture, entombment, or some other form of social humiliation. Briefly I would like to reiterate that this same complexity of rhetoric and didactic concerns is found, in a much abbreviated form, in the short verse that I examine in chapter one above. The tensions over female behavior, its effects on the household unit, and the authoritative symbolism of the parent compete with issues of class and devotion to material or to spiritual concerns in conduct poetry. There are no neatly structured and easily mapped patterns of influence for these texts; their rhetorics are complex, multiple, and heterogeneous, reflecting the complexities of subjectivity in late medieval Europe.

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. “Chier[s] filz” occurrences in Ashley’s edition of *Enseignemenz a Phelippe*

Occurrence #	Section	Page	Quote
1	1	7	“A son chier filz ainzné Phelippe”
2	2	7	“Chiers filz, pour ce que . . .”
3	3	7	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
4	7	8	“Chier filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
5	8	8	“Chier filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
6	9	9	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
7	11	9	“Chiers filz, aies volentiers . . .”
8	15	10	“Chiers filz, pren te garde que . . .”
9	16	10	“Chiers filz, se il avient que . . .”
10	21	12	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
11	23	12	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
12	24	13	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
13	25	13	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
14	26	14	“Chier filz, pren te garde diligemment que . . .”
15	27	14	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
16	28	14	“Chier filz, donne volentiers pouoir a . . .”
17	30	15	“Chiers filz, je t’enseigne que . . .”
18	31	15	“Chier filz, je te pri,”
19	32	15	“Chier fils, je to doing toute la benoïçon que . . .”



Appendix 2. “Chiere fille” occurrences in Ashley’s edition of *Enseignement a Ysabel*

Occurrence #	Section	Page	Quote
1	1	17	“A sa chiere et amee fille Ysabel”
2	2	17	“Chiere fille, pour ce que . . .”
3	3	17	“Chiere fille, je vous enseigne que . . .”
4	4	18	“Chiere fille, se vous l’amés, . . .”
5	5	18	“Chiere fille, la mesure dont nous le devons amer,”
6	6	18	“Chiere fille, aiiés grant desirier . . .”
7	7	18	“Chiere fille, acoustumés vous a souvent confesser . . .”
8	8	19	“Chiere fille, oiiés volentiers le service . . .”
9	9	19	“Chiere fille, oiiés volentiers parler de Nostre Signour. . .”
10	10	19	“Chiere fille, se vous avés aucune persecution . . .”
11	13	20	“Chiere fille, aiiés le cuer piteus . . .”
12	14	20	“Chiere fille, amés toutes bones gens,”
13	15	20	“Chiere fille, prenez vous garde a vostre pouoir que . . .”
14	16	20	“Chiere fille, obeïssiés humeement a . . .”
15	17	21	“Chiere fille, metés grant paine que . . .”
16	19	21	“Chiere fille, aiiés un desirier en vous . . .”
17	20	21	“Chiere fille, pourcachiés volentiers orisons de bones gens”
18	22	22	“Chi finent li commandement ke li rois sains Loÿs fist a ma dame Ysabel, sa fille” <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note this is the only occurrence where “fille” is not also modified by “chiere.”

Appendix 3. “Ma fille” occurrences in Chazaud’s edition of *Les enseignements*

Occurrence #	Section	Page	Quote
1	I	1	“La parfaite amour naturelle que j’ay à vous, ma fille”
2	II	4	“Las! Or pensez donc, ma fille”
3	III	4	“Après, ma fille”
4	III	5	“Hélas! ma fille”
5	IV / IIII	7	“ Et pour tant, ma fille”
6	V	11	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
7	V	12	“Or donc, ma fille”
8	V	14	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
9	VI	14	“En outre, ma fille”
10	VI	16	“Et pourtant, ma fille”
11	VIII	19	“Pour tant, ma fille”
12	VIII	20	“Aussi, ma fille”
13	X	24	“Aussi, ma fille”
14	X	26	“Pour tant, ma fille”
15	XI	27	“Ma fille...”
16	XII	30	“Et pour tant donc, ma fille”
17	XII	33	“Por quoy, ma fille”
18	XII	35	“Mais nonobstant, ma fille”
19	XIII	37	“Doncques, ma fille”
20	XIII	38	“Pour tant, ma fille”
21	XIII / XIV	42	“Doncques, ma fille”
22	XIII / XIV	43	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
23	XIII / XIV	45	“Pour conclusion, ma fille”
24	XV	46	“... s’il adveniot, ma fille”
25	XVI	47	“Or pensez donc, ma fille”
26	XVI	50	“Advisiez donc, ma fille”
27	XVII	53	“... et pour tant, ma fille”
28	XVII	56	“Mais nonobstant, ma fille”
29	XVIII	57	“Par quoy, donc, ma fille”
30	XVIII	59	“Et s’il adveniot, ma fille”
31	XVIII / XIX	61	“En outre aussi, ma fille”
32	XVIII / XIX	63	“Par quoy, ma fille”
33	XVIII / XIX	63	“...et pour tant, ma fille”
34	XVIII / XIX	64	“Après, ma fille”
35	XVIII / XIX	65	“Pour lesquelles causes, et plusieurs autres évidentes raisons, qui seroient trop prolixes, ma fille”
36	XVIII / XIX	68	“Et, pour ce, [ma] fille”
37	XVIII / XIX	69	“Aussi, ma fille”

38	XVIII / XIX	71	“Doncques, ma fille”
39	XVIII / XIX	72	“Pour tant, ma fille”
40	XVIII / XIX	73	“Donc, ma fille”
41	XVIII / XIX	74	“Et affin, ma fille”
42	XX	76	“Donques, ma fille”
43	XX	79	“Pour ce, ma fille”
44	XXI	80	“Au surplus, ma fille”
45	XXII	82	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
46	XXIII	84	“En après, ma fille”
47	XXIII	87	“Pour tant ma fille”
48	XXIII / XXIV	88	“Au surplus, ma fille”
49	XXIII / XXIV	89	“Et saichez, ma fille”
50	XXIII / XXIV	90	“Ainsi, ma fille”
51	XXIII / XXIV / [25]	90	“Pour tant ma fille”
52	XXIII / XXIV / [25]	95	“Pour ce, ma fille”
53	XXIII / XXIV / [25]	96	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
54	XXIII / XXIV / [25]	96	“Mais aussi, ma fille”
55	XXIII / XXIV / [25]	98	“Pour tant, ma fille”
56	XXV(1) / [26]	99	“Au surplus, ma fille”
57	XXV(1) / [26]	100	“Pour ce, ma fille”
58	XXV(1) / [26]	101	“Aussi, ma fille”
59	XXV(1) / [26]	102	“Pour ce, ma fille”
60	XXV(1) / [26]	103	“Pour ce, ma fille” <sup>1</sup>
61	XXV (2) / [27]	106	“Oultre, ma fille”
62	XXVI / [28]	110	“Pour tant, ma fille”
63	XXVI / [28]	112	“Aussi. Ma fille”
64	XXVI / [28]	113	“Pour ce, ma fille”
65	XXVI / [28]	114	“; pour ce, ma fille”
66	XXVII / [29]	114	“Aussi, ma fille”
67	XXVII / [29]	115	“Pour ce, ma fille”
68	XXVII / [29]	117	“Pour tant, ma fille”
69	XXVIII / [30]	119	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
70	XXVIII / [30]	121	“Aussi, ma fille”
71	XXVIII / [30]	121	“Et pour ce, ma fille”

<sup>1</sup> This is the only occurrence of “ma fille” that does not also appear in Jansen’s translation.

72	XXVIII / [30]	122	“Pour ce, ma fille”
73	XXVIII / [30]	123	“Pour tant, ma fille”
74	XXVIII / [30]	125	“Par quoy, ma fille”
75	XXIX / [31]	126	“Finablement, ma fille”
76	XXIX / [31]	127	“Par quoy, ma fille”
77	XXX [32]	128	“Et pour tant, ma fille”
78	XXXI [33]	132	“Et pour tant, ma fille”

Total occurrences of “ma fille” in Chazaud’s edition: 78

Total occurrences of “my daughter” in Jansen’s translation: 77

Only sections VII and IX have no references to “ma fille.”

Section XIX has the most references to “ma fille,” totaling to 11 occurrences.

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