Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

HYBRIDITY IN GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S *THE CANTERBURY TALES*: RECONSTRUCTING ESTATE BOUNDARIES

Nazan YILDIZ

PhD Dissertation

Ankara, 2015

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KABUL VE ONAY

Nazan YILDIZ tarafından hazırlanan "Hybridity in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*: Reconstructing Estate Boundaries" başlıklı bu çalışma, 23 Haziran 2015 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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To my parents & sister . . .

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ÖZET

YILDIZ, Nazan. Geoffrey Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Hikayeleri*'nde Melezleşme ve Sınıflar Arasındaki Sınırların Yeniden Çizilmesi. Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2015.

Bu çalışma Geoffrey Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Hikayeleri'*ndeki karakterlerini toplumsal hareketlilik sonucu arada kalmış Ortaçağ melez kimlikleri olarak ele almaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma Bhabha'nın sömürgecilik sonrası dönem çerçevesinde geliştirdiği melezleşme, arada kalmışlık, üçüncü alan ve taklitçilik kavramlarından yola çıkarak, Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Hikayeleri*'nde çok farklı Ortaçağ melez kimliklerini gözler önüne serdiğini savunmaktadır. Hiyerarşik Ortaçağ toplumu feodal yapısı, ve ruhban sınıfı, soylular ve köylülerden oluşan katı sınıf ayrımıyla bilinir. Ortaçağ insanı dinle şekillenen düşünce yapısıyla toplumdaki bu hiyerarşinin Tanrı tarafından yine toplumun refahı için buyrulduğuna inanırdı. Fakat, Ortaçağ toplumunun bu katı yapısı ondördüncü yüzyılın sonlarında meydana gelen**-**Yüzyıl Savaşları, Kara Ölüm olarak adlandırılan 1348, 1361 ve 1369'daki veba salgınları ve 1381'deki Köylü Ayaklanması gibi**-** çok önemli ekonomik, toplumsal ve siyasal olaylar yüzünden büyük bir yara aldı. Adı geçen olaylar feodal yapının büyük ölçüde güç kaybetmesine ve geniş çaplı bir toplumsal hareketliliğe sebep oldu. Zaman içinde bu toplumsal hareketlilik toplumda yükselen ve alçalan bireylerden oluşan bir "orta sınıf" ortaya çıkardı. Bu "orta sınıfa" mensup Ortaçağ insanları toplumca yüzyıllardır kabul görmüş üç sınıftan hiçbirinde kendilerine yer bulamayarak, bu sınıflar arasındaki alanlarda, Bhabha'nın deyişiyle, "üçüncü alan"larda yaşadılar. Ayrıca, bu orta sınıfın toplumda yükselen bireyleri, onların sınıflarında bir yer edinebilmek için soylu sınıfını her şekilde, kıyafetlerini, gelenek ve göreneklerini ve hatta dillerini, taklit ettiler. Başka bir deyişle, "orta sınıf"a mensup Ortaçağ insanları içlerinde barındırdıkları eski ve yeni toplumsal konumlarından gelen değer ve ilkelerin karışımı sonucu melez ve taklitçi kimlikler edindiler. Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Hikayeleri*, üç sınıfa dayanan kesin hatlarla çizilmiş Ortaçağ kimliklerinin kıyısında kendi alternatif kimliklerini geliştiren işte bu "orta sınıf"ı yansıtmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Birinci Bölüm Chaucer'ın Şövalyesinin mensubu olduğu soylular sınıfındaki büyük değişim sebebiyle toplumsal konumunu kaybetmesinden dolayı eski ve yeni konumunun gerektirdiği farklı değerler arasında

melez bir kimlik geliştirdiğini ele almaktadır. İkinci Bölüm'de ise, Chaucer'ın Keşiş ve Başrahibesi, Şövalye'ninkine benzer bir şekilde fakat soylular sınıfından ruhban sınıfına geçerek, toplumda alçalmaları sebebiyle soylu melez kimlikler olarak incelenmektedirler. Son olarak, Üçüncü Bölüm'de toplumsal düzene karşı çıkıp soylu sınıfına ait olduklarını iddia ederek yeni bir toplum düzeni isteyen Toprak Sahibi ve Değirmenci, yine toplumsal hareketlilik sonucu toplumda yükselmeleri sebebiyle melez ve taklitçi kimlikler olarak ele alınmaktadırlar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Hikayeleri*, Ortaçağ'ın üç sınıf kavramı, derebeylik, toplumsal hareketlilik, Homi K. Bhabha, melezleşme, arada kalmışlık, üçüncü alan, taklitçilik.

ABSTRACT

YILDIZ, Nazan. Hybridity in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*: Reconstructing Estate Boundaries. PhD Dissertation, Ankara, 2015.

This study of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* reads his pilgrims as the hybrids of medieval borderline community, created by social mobility. Thus, drawing on Bhabha's postcolonial concepts of hybridity, in–betweenness, third space and mimicry, this dissertation argues that Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* depicts a variety of medieval hybrid identities. The hierarchical medieval society is well–known for its feudal structure and strict estate divisions; namely, the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners. The medieval frame of mind, ruled by religion, believed that this hierarchy in society was ordered by God for the welfare of the community. Yet, the radical economic, social and political changes of the late fourteenth century, namely the Hundred Years War, the Black Death of 1348, 1361 and 1369, and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, shattered this rigid construction of the medieval world. These drastic happenings resulted in the weakening of feudalism and a large-scale social mobility. The social mobility, in due time, produced a "middle–grouping", which emerged out of the upwardly and downwardly mobile medieval people. The members of the "middle–grouping" could not be fitted into any of the three estates; thus, lived in the territories, in a Bhabhanian third space, constituted by three estates. The social climbers of the "middle–grouping" also imitated the noble way of life: their attire, customs and manners and even their discourse to be accepted into the spheres of the nobility. That is to say, the medieval people of the "middle–grouping" turned into hybrids and mimics along with the mixture of values and norms deriving from their former and present status. Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* presents those people of "middle–grouping" who develop their alternative identities on the borders of the acknowledged identities of the three medieval estates. Accordingly, Chapter I discusses the Knight as a medieval hybrid owing to the changes within his own estate, the nobility, and his consequent downward mobility putting him in-between the realms and required values of his old and new status. In Chapter II, similar to the Knight, yet moving from the nobility to the clergy, the Monk and the Prioress are examined as noble hybrids due to downward

mobility. Finally, Chapter III analyses the Franklin and the Miller as the hybrids and mimics of upward mobility, who challenge the social order and ask for their own order by claiming gentility.

Key Words: Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, medieval estates, feudalism, social mobility, Homi K. Bhabha, hybridity, in–betweenness, third space, mimicry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KABUL VE ONAY…………...…………………………………….……………….. i

BİLDİRİM…...………………………………………...………….……………... ii

DEDICATION PAGE…………………………………………...…..………….. iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...………………………………………………………. iv

ÖZET……………………………………………………………………………… v

ABSTRACT…………………………………………………………………… vii

TABLE OF CONTENTS……………………………………………………...... ix

INTRODUCTION……………………………………………………………….. 1

CHAPTER I: THE CHALLENGE TO THE SOCIAL ORDER FROM THE TOP: CHAUCER'S KNIGHT AS A MEDIEVAL HYBRID…………….. 47

CHAPTER II: CHAUCER'S CLOISTERED HYBRIDS: THE MONK AND THE PRIORESS…………………………………………………………………… 110

CHAPTER III: RE-DEFINING THE ESTATES: CHAUCER'S FRANKLIN AND THE MILLER AS MEDIEVAL HYBRIDS……………………………… 167

CONCLUSION………………………………………………………………… 239

NOTES ………………………………………………………………………… 245

WORKS CITED………………………………………………………………… 251

APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORT……………………………………… 286

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM…………………………… 287

INTRODUCTION

> "Time and history are always-already colonized and never an inert, innocent Otherness waiting to be excavated" (Cohen, "Introduction: Midcolonial." 4).

The fourteenth-century medieval England was a realm of great social change and mobility due to the social, political and economic circumstances of the time. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is widely accepted as a unique representation of fourteenth-century English society. Thus, *The Canterbury Tales* presents the downwardly and upwardly mobile characters as the products of the social change and mobility of the period, which created a "middle-grouping"[1] not entirely belonging to the traditional three estates model. Indeed, there are two main arguments about Chaucer's treatment of the three estates, social mobility and the consequent emergence of the "middle-grouping" in the late fourteenth century in his *Canterbury Tales*. The first view argues that Chaucer keeps a traditional view of the social structure of his time and is true to the three estates model. For instance, Morgan asserts that Chaucer's emphasis on the military and religious figures at the beginning of *The General Prologue* indicates his notion of society which was based on the medieval traditional three estates structure ("Moral and Social Identity" 292). Hence, for Morgan, Chaucer mainly highlights the values of the rural society and old feudal nobility rather than the values of the city and the developing merchant class, which included significant members of the "middle-grouping" of the time. Therefore, Chaucer does not reflect the "middle-grouping" in his *Canterbury Tales* since he does not regard it as a unified social class with different norms and values which distinguish them from the nobility or the commoners ("Moral and Social Identity" 295). Similarly, according to Howard, one of the main aims of Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* is to arrange his pilgrims in accordance with the traditional three estates model like his contemporary John Gower does in his works (*The Idea* 152). Thereby, as Morgan affirms, Chaucer writes in line with the approved boundaries of his time "although as in all ages [those] boundaries are challenged by some and unacceptable to others" ("Moral and Social Identity" 296) as in the case of the members of the medieval middle-grouping. For Stephen, similar to Morgan, *The*

Canterbury Tales keeps a negative point of view towards the strife and search for freedom in medieval society, which caused the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, possibly because Chaucer's own social status might not let him identify himself with the revolution (69), thus with the middle-grouping.

Yet, according to the second perspective, Chaucer gives a very significant place to the weakening of the three estates by the social conflict and the "middle-grouping", and he depicts the challengers or Others of the medieval society in *The Canterbury Tales*. Although Stephen states that Chaucer might not associate himself with the rebels because of his social status, he also points out that *The Canterbury Tales* includes an in-depth analysis of social change and mobility along with a wide range of the members of the middle-grouping (74). According to Brewer, Chaucer depicts three different, yet "overlapping", classes in the medieval society, which are different from the notion of the upper, middle and lower class of the nineteenth century ("Class Distinction" 290). Similarly, Phillips notes, although the Knight with his highest rank is the first pilgrim in *The General Prologue*, there is not a standard in the arrangement of the portraits and the tales. It is the reader who will decide whether the three estates structure is reflected. Moreover, in *The Canterbury Tales,* the ends of many tales are underlined by different clashes and contradictions pointing to the change or transformation of late medieval society (21, 28-29). For King and Lindahl, the depiction of the pilgrims questions the three estates structure due to the increasing diversity of the third estate and its defying the nobility and the clergy for control and authority. Thus, the majority of the pilgrims in *The General Prologue* do not comply with any of the three estates (65, 60). Likewise, for Aers, Chaucer introduces his pilgrims in a framework where the estates model is wiped out within a changing, discordant world invaded by mercantile values (*Chaucer* 17). Dyer goes one step further and argues that Chaucer indirectly criticizes the gap between the three estates structure and complicated and corrupted reality of his time (*Everyday Life 15*). Similarly, for Wetherbee, *The Canterbury Tales* reflects the relationship between the conventional social order and the changing world (21). As it is seen, for the critics, Chaucer seems to keep an ambiguous attitude towards the social change and consequent emergence of middle-grouping in the fourteenth century which is undoubtedly the result of his implicit way of expression in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Social change and mobility seem to be important realities of the late fourteenth-century England when a middle-grouping, unsuited to any of the three estates, emerged owing to the changing social, political and economic circumstances. The medieval people of middle-grouping were in search for identity on the borders of the well accepted three estates of the time; namely, the clergy, the nobility and the commoners. Hence, as Staley suggests, the search for identity also becomes one of the main themes in Chaucer's works among which *The Canterbury Tales* is one of the best examples with its depiction of a great variety of tales together with different identity constructions (362). In other words, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* introduces characters belonging to the middle-grouping whose place in the three estates model of medieval society is not clearly defined. Most of the characters are upwardly or downwardly mobile and are caught in between their previous and present status. These upwardly or downwardly mobile characters of Chaucer embody the values and norms that can be located in different estates; that is, in their former and present estates. They, constructing new identities out of at least two different identities of the related estates, do not completely belong to either the one or the other and occupy a Bhabhanian third space; thus, they possess a hybrid identity within the in-between sites of those estates. Within this context, this dissertation argues that most of Chaucer's pilgrims experiencing upward or downward mobility such as the Knight, the Monk and the Prioress are hybrids and/or mimics such as the Franklin and the Miller as defined by Homi K. Bhabha and live on the peripheries of the acknowledged identities of the medieval three estates, without achieving a full identification with any of them. Hence, this dissertation uses Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, in-betweenness, third space and mimicry to examine Chaucer's pilgrims of the middle-grouping in *The Canterbury Tales* as representations of medieval hybrids and mimics who search for an alternative identity.

In fact, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* presents the characters of the middle-grouping, who cross the borders of estate line by imitating their social superiors such as by dressing, eating and behaving like them. These characters of middle-grouping are examined as social and moral corrupts in the medieval estates satire such as in Ruth Mohl's *Three Estates in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* and Jill Mann's *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*. In her work, Mohl keeps a wider perspective and deals

with the development of estate satire from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Mann; on the other hand, focuses on the fourteenth century and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* by examining *The General Prologue* as a form of estates satire and depiction of seven deadly sins, which offers the satiric representation of the society in the fourteenth century. Mann evaluates Chaucer's pilgrims in line with estates satire and focuses on his originality compared to his predecessors such as his ambiguous description of the pilgrims, his disregard of social ranking, his choice of characters mostly from the middle class and his emphasis on individuality (7-16).

Apart from the readings of the middle-grouping in *The Canterbury Tales* under the medieval estates satire, there are various studies on Chaucer's representation of the middle-grouping in the late fourteenth century in his *Canterbury Tales* along with the conflicts between the members of the three estates and the middle-grouping. This dissertation can be located within this group of studies. For example, the social conflict within estates in the late medieval England owing to social mobility has become the subject matter of Marxists. The Marxist critics have examined the clash between those who have the political power, the nobility and clergy, and those who have no political rights, the commoners, in medieval England as a class conflict. Within Marxist criticism, the conflicts between these two groups arose from the economic reasons due to social mobility as in the case of the conflicts between the upwardly mobile peasants and the lords in relation to rents and fines, and serfdom. These power relations between the nobility and the members of the middle-grouping also regulated the distribution of wealth and legal and political power of the period (Whittle and Rigby 65). That is to say, the social and economic changes in late medieval England led to the redistribution of prosperity and power and created the middle-grouping, disrupting the medieval social structure.

Stephen Knight and David Aers have also explored the representation of the middle-grouping in accordance with the socio-economic changes and the conflict within the medieval social classes in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Knight evaluates *The Canterbury Tales* as a work written in the time of transformation of medieval society from a feudal society to a mercantile one of capitalist characteristics. Demonstrating the

social change and its consequences, Knight deals with the traditional mindset of the medieval people, dividing the society into three groups which worked together for the mutual benefit of the community, and then the development of trade which brought about medieval people, who worked individually for their own benefits rather than the prosperity of the whole society (*Geoffrey Chaucer* xi).

With a similar point of view, Aers studies the constant rise of individualism in medieval society. Basing his argument on human identities shaped by communities, Aers reflects the interactions within groups and evaluates the place of different groups in medieval society and how these groups created various identities such as court culture, the church, the theatre and women (*Culture and History* xii). Focusing on the significance of "webs of interlocution" within medieval society, and pointing to the emergence of the middle-grouping, Aers states that "medieval identities and their communities were sustained and changed, in which they confronted new circumstances and challenges" (*Culture and History* 2). Aers also discusses different communities and various individual identities in *Piers Plowman* and in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and notes that people "did not choose [their communities] and they grow into given social identities with which they encounter in their specific circumstances" (*Community* 2). Aers also underlines the rise of individualism, due to the development of markets and rise of economic activity, in shaping one's identity in the medieval society and states that "[. . .] Chaucer knew, such a 'market-orientation' in social practice was not without consequences for values, self-identities, and structures of feeling" (*Community* 15). In fact, as this dissertation puts forward, what Chaucer presents in his *Canterbury Tales* were these self-values and identities of the middle-grouping, which did not have a place in the medieval three estates structure and which caused them to develop hybrid identities.

Many prominent medievalists such as Lee Patterson, Paul Strohm and Peggy Knapp have also analysed Chaucer's representation of the middle-grouping, their identity crisis and the conflicts between the middle-grouping and the rest of the society due to the socio-economic changes of the time. Patterson deals with the conflict between the individual identity and social identity arising from the restraints on the individual

created by society and history and states that in *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer reflects various aspects of the late medieval society by an emphasis on history and the individuals created by history (*Chaucer* 3-11). Patterson, to exemplify, treats *The Knight's Tale* as a depiction of the conflict between the individual and chivalric identity and the clash within the chivalric identity itself. In this sense, he asserts that in *The Knight's Tale*, there is a conflict between the tale and its teller and at the core of this conflict there is "the nature of chivalric identity" (168) and "the tale [. . .] defines the desire to escape from history [. . .]" (*Chaucer*169). Patterson also depicts how *The Miller's Tale* presents the rebellion of the peasants due to the social pressures, especially the Peasants' Revolt, and how the Miller refutes the aristocratic and chivalric ideals of the Knight. For him, *The Merchant's Tale* and *The Shipman's Tale* are texts which show the unstable position of the middle-grouping having no class identity. Patterson also reads *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Tale* as the victory of the subject, of the individual since the Wife subverts the power and doctrines of the authority and puts forward the power of the female in the patriarchal medieval world (*Chaucer* 244, 315-321, 322-24).

Strohm examines the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the weakening of feudalism, social hierarchy and of the three estates structure and the consequent emergence of the middle-grouping in the late fourteenth century. Strohm introduces how different orders of society, having distinct social relations among themselves, emerged as a result of the social, political and economic changes in the late Middle Ages (*Social Chaucer* 2-10). In a similar sense, Strohm further traces the historical events in late medieval England and suggests that fictional texts might reflect the truth, whereas the historical texts such as petitions and charters might not display the reality. Thus, literary texts might include historical evidence as they have their own historicity, and they should be read within a larger historical perspective than they explicitly deal with (*Hochon's Arrow* 3-9).

Knapp analyses the representations of the traditional three estates and the conflict between the members of the three estates and the middle-grouping in the fourteenth-century England as presented in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Knapp reads *The*

Knight's Tale as the depiction of the powerful nobility against the middle-grouping, and states that the Knight's discourse stands for the world of the nobility which is shaped by governing and battling. Knapp introduces *The Miller's Tale* as the voice of the commoners, and states that the Miller, one of the most significant members of the middle-grouping, evaluates the Knight's lengthy, lofty tale as a reflection of the prevailing ideology of the time, the ideology of the nobility and reacts to this ideology. Knapp also reads the Monk, the Prioress and their tales as the embodiments of the clergy, who keep a higher status in the clerical order and possess courtly and aristocratic characteristics (*Chaucer and the Social Contest* 18, 32, 45).

This study, like in the above-mentioned studies, recognises the socio-economic change and its consequences as important factors in the portrayal of the pilgrims, especially of the middle-grouping, in *The Canterbury Tales*. However, it considers Chaucer's pilgrims from a postcolonial perspective particularly drawing on Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, in-betweenness, third space and mimicry. Notably in the last twenty years, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* studies experienced a paradigm shift towards a postcolonial attitude. In his *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, Cohen encapsulates many of the central issues in relation to the reading of the medieval period with a postcolonial perspective or vice versa and how the medieval can be helpful in understanding the postcolonial regardless of a flat chronology. Cohen argues that the Middle Ages is not completely different from the Modern West as there were hybrids, too (85). Cohen further states that "[. . .] the medieval touches the postcolonial exactly at the point of hybridity" [. . .] and [s]ome medieval hybrids could feel quite at home in the high theory of scholars like Homi Bhabha, who identifies in English India phenomena that have immediate analogs in the European Middle Ages" (85). Within this context, as Cohen puts forward, the Middle Ages embraced hybrid, uncanny bodies such as giants and man-animal composites which suggests a "traumatic otherness" (5) at the heart of social and individual identity.[2] The Others of the Middle Ages were not limited to monsters and in *Medieval Identity Machines*, Cohen examines the Saracens and the Jews as the monstrous others within medieval society. In relation to the bond between the postcolonial and medieval studies, Bleeth states,

> [. . .] the Middle Ages has a special role, both as self and Other – both as the source of later attitudes toward difference and as the origin that stands prior to them, against which the "enlightened" present can be defined. (4)

Hence, for Bleeth, the Middle Ages were the beginning point of the construction of self and other in the postcolonial context. Similar to Cohen and Bleeth, Davis and Altschul in *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "the Middle Ages" Outside Europe* emphasise the overlap between the postcolonial theory and medieval studies and examine the origins and legacy of colonialism in the Middle Ages. Davis and Altschul analyse the Middle Ages in parallel with postcolonialism as they believe that the Middle Ages were a crucial period in understanding the colonial and postcolonial conflicts in relation to racial and ethnic identity. Davis and Altschul further assert that colonial medievalisms are of utmost significance in comprehending the divisions between today's medieval and modern and the East and the West, which are the key points in the colonial and postcolonial studies (1-7). In relation to the bridge between the medieval and the postcolonial, another scholar Akbari deals with the studies of the Orient and the Occident in the medieval texts whose crucial point is the Crusades as the site of bringing the East and West together. Thereby, as Akbari notes, the colonial dichotomy of "Us" and "Them" dates back to the Middle Ages and the concept of the West as we understand today seems to emerge in the fourteenth century ("From Due East" 19-34).

Accordingly, a great number of medievalists have focused on the colonial and postcolonial characteristics of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. However, they mostly concentrate on orientalism, nationalism, depiction of the Other and decolonizing nature of *The Canterbury Tales*. In most of the studies, the decolonizing character of *The Canterbury Tales* is embodied in Chaucer's creation of an English society and identity apart from France and French culture. In terms of the decolonizing quality of *The Canterbury Tales*, the scholars particularly dealt with *The Knight's Tale*.[3] On the other hand, the studies of the Other in *The Canterbury Tales* mainly depict the Jews and the Saracens as the religious or cultural Other, which is sometimes taken as a subversion to create a victorious history for Christian Europe to be able to establish a colonizing policy for Europeans. Within the context of the Other, *The Squire's Tale* and *The Man of Law's Tale* were largely analysed by the scholars.[4] More importantly, the concepts of

the Other or Otherness in the Middle Ages are largely associated with the monster studies which begin with the dichotomy of "Us" (the human beings) and "Them" (the monsters).[5] Thus, the Other is mostly examined along with monstrosity in the medieval texts. Accordingly, apart from the monsters, Jews and Saracens, the heretics, pagans, homosexuals, lepers, monsters, and witches were also depicted as the Other in the Middle Ages.[6]

It can be concluded that most of the studies have treated the members of the middle-grouping within the perspective of the social and moral corruption under the medieval estates satire, or as a part of the rise of individualism against feudalism and the conflict between those who rise and descend on the social ladder. Yet, the possible identity crisis and consequent hybrid identity of the middle-grouping is not addressed as postcolonial studies of *The Canterbury Tales* focus on nationhood, decolonization, orientalism and the Other in relation to monstrosity within the scope of religion, race and gender. In fact, the medieval society seems to abound with hybrid identities due to the traditional three estates model which created a kind of dichotomy of "Us" and "Them" in the medieval society. Hence, this dissertation examines the members of the medieval middle-grouping as Bhabhanian hybrids and mimics created by their in-betweenness within their own society owing to social mobility and so-called strict estate borders in fourteenth-century England.

Before the examination of Chaucer's pilgrims as hybrids and mimics in Bhabhanian sense, it is necessary to explain Bhabha's notion of identity in relation to hybridity. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha dwells on identities formed by the people who live on the borders of distinct communities and are caught in between those communities. Bhabha considers borders as significant thresholds encapsulating various conflicts and dilemmas as they are the merging points of separation and union (1). Bhabha defines border as "an in-between site of transition: the beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past [. . .] [which] produce[s] complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (1). Additionally, according to Bhabha, "[t]he in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood –singular or communal– that initiate new signs of

identity" [. . .] which defines "the idea of society itself" (1). Thus, grounding his argument on these merging points or in-between spaces which are the dwelling places of hybrids, Bhabha argues that there is no pure culture as there is no stable or pregiven identity and he exemplifies his point with migrants which he defines as a "borderline community" (12).

In fact, identity and its formation are central to postcolonial studies. Similar to Bhabha, Young and Hall, for instance, suggest that there is not unmixed culture or fixed identity. In this respect, Young states that English identity has been constantly identified as multifarious, "an identity which is not identical with itself" [. . .] "from which the other is [never] excluded" (3). Hall gives the long established definition of identity as such: "[identities] are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of identical, naturally-constituted unity–an "identity" in its traditional meaning (that is an all-inclusive sameness, seamless without internal differentiation)" ("Introduction: Who Needs Identity" 4). Then, in "The Spectacle of the 'Other' ", Hall points out, "the 'Other' [or difference] is fundamental to the *constitution* of the self" (237) which makes identity unstable. Hence, for Young and Hall, like Bhabha, contrary to its traditional meaning, identity is not pure and fixed since it includes the other in itself. At this point, Bhabha introduces his well known postcolonial concepts–hybridity, in-betweenness, third space and mimicry–which, as Huddard points out, "undermine the simple polarization of the world into self and other" (5). Accordingly, in *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha discusses the incomplete and unstable identity of the colonised (other) and the coloniser (self) with a psychoanalytical approach. Indeed, developing his psychoanalytic concepts in the postcolonial context, Bhabha heavily draws on the discussion of identity of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Edward Said and Frantz Fanon and develops and extends their views to the postcolonial situation. Thus, before moving into Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, in-betweenness, third space and mimicry, it seems necessary to briefly point out how Bhabha makes use of the views of the above-mentioned figures in introducing his concepts.

Drawing on Lacan's theory of identity, Bhabha explains that "[l]ike [in] [Lacan's] mirror phase "the fullness" of the stereotype –its image *as* identity– is always threatened

by lack" (*The Location of Culture* 77). Bhabha also suggests, "[f]or identification, identity is never an *a priori*, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality" ("Interrogating Identity" 100). Thus, for Bhabha, similar to Lacan, identity is ever unfinished since, lacking the other, it can never reach completeness[7], which, for Bhabha, produces hybrid identities in the postcolonial context, rather than a separate self and other. Derrida's concept of "difference" is also helpful for Bhabha to develop his own concepts. Derrida's deconstructive concept refers to infinite possibility of different meanings in language. Regarding the relationship between différancé and identity, Redman states that différancé also involves the unstability of identities:

> [T]he concept of différancé suggests that identities take their meaning from signifying practices [. . .] suggest[ing] that identities take their definition only from that which they are not, implying, for example, that the identity of the supposedly 'civilized European' is constructed in relation to a range of 'different' others: the 'barbaric' African, the 'exotic' Oriental' and so on. Disturbingly, this forces us to think of these differential identities as inherently unstable. From the perspective of difference, the identity of the 'civilized' European is constantly haunted by the liminal presence of the 'black' and 'Oriental' others against which it defines itself and into which it continually threatens to collapse. (12)

Therefore, Derrida's concept of différancé also suggests that self and other are not separable, and then identity is not stable, which Bhabha extends to the postcolonial situation to discuss his hybrid identities. Furthermore, Bhabha's postcolonial concepts are based on the complicated nature of binary oppositions which Derrida examines in his concept of deconstruction. As argued by Huddart, Derrida's views on the complexity of binary oppositions, such as presence and absence and speech and writing, are central to Bhabha's readings of postcolonial situation as Bhabha "finds that the oppositions of coloniser/colonised or metropolis/colony are also complicated and interwoven" (16). That is, for Bhabha, like intertwined binary oppositions, which also construct and fix the identity of the coloniser (self) and the colonised (other) such as civilised and uncivilised respectively, the identity of the coloniser and the colonised cannot be completely separated which again suggests hybrid postcolonial identities.

Clearly, Bhabha draws on Said and Fanon, too. In his *Orientalism* (1978), Said discusses the formation of the Orient and Oriental discourse which involves a supposedly civilized European (self) and so-called inferior East (other) (1-9). According to Young, Bhabha extends Said's Foucauldian argument in that he focuses on the psychological aspect of the relationship between the coloniser and colonised, and unlike the separation between them, he stresses the fusion of the coloniser and colonised (161). Huddart affirms that different from Said, Bhabha concentrates on the power and resistance of the colonised through mimicry and the anxiety of the coloniser since the so-called difference and superiority of the coloniser is put in danger due to the coloniser's mimicry of the colonised: "[F]or Bhabha colonial power is anxious, and never gets what it wants–a stable, final distinction between the colonisers and the colonised. This anxiety opens a gap in colonial discourse –a gap that can be exploited by the colonised, the oppressed" (6). Thus, it can be stated that Bhabha has a critical point of view toward Said. Indeed, in "The Other Question", Bhabha criticizes Said in that he underestimates the power of the colonised and overestimates the authority of the coloniser: "There is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the coloniser, which is a historical and theoretical simplification" (23). In other words, developing his concepts, along with the dilemma of the colonised and coloniser, Bhabha gives place to the agency of the colonised which mostly reveals itself in mimicking the white man.

In his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon focuses on the psychological aspect of colonialism and the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Bhabha states that in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon discloses "the doubling of identity" ("Interrogating identity" 99). Bhabha further notes that when Fanon asks 'What does a black man want?' (1), he speaks from the "shifting boundary of otherness within identity" ("Interrogating identity" 100):

> When it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of desire . . . As soon as I desire I ask to be considered. I am not merely here and now, sealed into thingness. I am for somewhere else and for something else. I demand that notice be taken of my negating activity in so far as I pursue something other than life . . . I occupied space. I

> moved towards the other. . . and the evanescent other, hostile, but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. (*Black Skin, White Masks* 112)

As Bhabha points out, Fanon, like himself, deals with the dual nature of identity, yet as Young suggests, there is a significant difference between Bhabha's and Fanon's treatment of this duality of identity, which differentiates Bhabha from most of the postcolonial critics (5). Young states that ever since Sartre, Fanon and Memmi, "postcolonial criticism has constructed two antithetical groups, the colonised and colonised, self and Other, with the second only knowable through a necessarily false representation, a Manichean division that threatens to reproduce the static, essentialist categories it seeks to undo" (5). Similarly, Bhabha himself argues that the position of the Other "must not be imaged as Fanon sometimes suggests as a fixed phenomenological point, opposed to the self, that represents a culturally alien consciousness. The Other must be seen as the necessary negation of a primordial identity [. . .]" ("Interrogating identity" 100). In "Democracy De-realized", about Fanon's approach to violence in the colonial context, Bhabha keeps a similar point of view and argues that Fanon treats "colonial violence" in Manichean terms: Manichean "[i.e. with two entirely opposed sides] dialectic of colonial space and psyche that Fanon provides as the *mise-en-scène* of colonial violence must not be read as two separate, binary spaces [. . .] because they must be read from the borderline that marks the passage between them" (202).[8] Indeed, Bhabha reads identity exactly from this same borderline which creates hybrid identities, rather than self and other, in the postcolonial context, like, as this dissertation argues, in the case of the borderline identities in the medieval society.

Thus, although Bhabha draws on different theorists in developing his concepts in relation to identity, he uniquely adjusts the views of those scholars to the postcolonial context. As Huddart states, Bhabha discovers "the hidden gaps and anxieties present in the colonial situation [where] the coloniser was less powerful than was apparent, moments when the colonised were able to resist the dominance exercised over them [which] emphasizes the active *agency* of the colonised" (2). That is, developing his concepts, as explained below, Bhabha deals with the relationship between the coloniser

and colonised which centres on the power of the colonised and the anxiety of the coloniser.

Hybridity is the first term Bhabha discusses in relation to the bond between the coloniser and colonised and consequent identity formation within the postcolonial context. The word hybrid derives from Latin *hybrida* (c. 1600) as a variant of *ibrida* meaning "mongrel" particularly the "offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar," of unknown origin but probably from Greek and somehow related to *hubris*, violation and excessive pride ("Hybrida"). *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines hybrid as: "the offspring of two animals, plants [or of human beings] of different species, or (less strictly) varieties, a half-breed, cross-breed, or mongrel" ("Hybrid," def. 1a). The earliest mention of the term hybrid in relation to the mixture of people of different races was in the nineteenth century which demonstrates that there is an increase in the assumption supporting the possibility of human hybrids. In time, hybrid became a derogatory term which was widely used in the Eurocentric descriptions of ethnic roots and divisions (Young 6; Smith 250). Thus, in the long run, hybridity turned into a bridge connecting "the racial categories of the past and contemporary cultural discourse" (Young 27). Later, as Smith notes, "the discourse of "race" became invalid, the focus shifted onto the less contentious ground of "culture" [yet] there remained the same impossible but tacitly asserted sense that there are or were distinct, *wholly separate*, (italics mine) wholly "other" or incommensurable human cultures [. . .]" (250).

As suggested so far, Bhabha's concept of hybridity opposes this entirely different "other" within identities and cultures. In *Nation and Narration*, Bhabha argues that "[t]he 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves' " (4). Accordingly, in *The Location of Culture*, Bhabba defines hybridity as a "difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality" (13) and he also describes the lives of the in-betweens and others as the "unhomely lives" and "unhomely presence" (13) who are waiting to be recognized (9) with a double self (14) and who want to join the society (16). Thereby, the hybrid in Bhabhanian terms is

"neither the One nor the Other, but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both" (28) and this territory brings about a third space which "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the people" (37).

Bhabha also defines the in-between spaces where hybrids live as the "[. . .] interstitial passage[s] between fixed identifications [pen] up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assured or imposed hierarchy" (3). These interstices, for Bhabha, emerge from "the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" (2). Bhabha further states that the articulation of this difference "is a complex, on-going negotiation" and "[. . .] hybridities emerge in moments of historical transformation" (2) which highlights a *complete change in people or in society* (italics mine). On the significance of hybridity and the great change created by hybridity in society, in his "Third Space", Bhabha notes,

> for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which *enables other positions to emerge* (italics mine) this third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (211)

Hence, according to Bhabha, hybridity is an effective means of resistance for the colonised against the coloniser as it diminishes the power and superiority of the coloniser. Similarly, in "Signs Taken for Wonders", Bhabha regards hybridity as "a problematic of colonial representation [. . .] that reserves the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other "denied" knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (156). Thus, as Young notes, the form of authority in the colonial context is turned upside down by hybridity (23) since, by hybridity, the colonial power listens to its own voice talking distinctively and reversely: "If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the product of hybridization [. . .] [it] enables a form of subversion [. . .] that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention" (Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders" 154). Bhabha furthermore states that

the third space created by the interplay between the colonised and the coloniser makes "the imposed imperialist culture" lose "not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically, often through violence, but even of its own claims to authenticity" ("Postcolonial Critic" 57-58). Then, as Young emphasizes, "[h]ybridity [. . .] becomes a third term which can never in fact be *third* because, as a monstrous inversion, a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them" (23) and "makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different" (26). That is how Bhabhanian hybridity suggests a new identity which is constructed through the mixture of differences and similarities of distinct communities whose members live on the borders of those communities, occupying a third space between them; hence, adopting the values of different communities, yet, never entirely belonging to any of them. Accordingly, Bhabha describes the colonial identity (both "the Colonialist Self and the Colonised Other") along with identity crisis embodied within colonial otherness to underline liminality of hybrid identities. That is to say, hybridity includes identity crisis in itself which also applies to the middle-grouping in medieval society.[9]

Mimicry is another concept of Bhabha through which, as Bhabha argues, the colonised fights back the coloniser (*The Location of Culture* 91). Bhabha defines mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (*The Location of Culture* 86). In a similar vein, as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin state, mimicy demonstrates the ambivalent relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. The outcome of the colonised's mimicking of the coloniser, their "cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values" is not the sole duplication of their attributes, yet a 'blurred copy' of the coloniser which might be menacing. Hence, mimicry poses a threat to the inevitability of colonial superiority over the colonised (Ashcroft et al. 139). Accordingly, for Bhabha, mimicry is "at once resemblance and menace" which makes the colonised possess a "partial" or "incomplete presence" (*The Location of Culture* 86) and mimicry "*repeats* rather than it *re-presents*" (*The Location of Culture* 88) that is why "to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English (*The Location of Culture* 87). Likewise, in Boehmer's terms, mimicry is an "imperfect

copying" (69) of the colonising culture, its manners and values to be able to withstand the colonial power which also indicates the dilemma of the colonised:

> To win self-determination they had to develop ways of dealing with the negation and self-alienation produced by colonialist rule. It was at this point, where they were confronted by their own self-contradiction, that many had recourse to the predicament that entrapped them: self- repetition or mimicry. Precisely because they could never be quite white or right enough, native colonials were able to transform the condition of mimicking the colonizer's moves into a strategy of resistance. (171)

Indeed, as Loomba suggests, it is the crisis of colonialism: "it both needs to civilise its others, and to fix them into perpetual otherness" (173). As a remedy for their "otherness" or estrangement in their own society, the colonised clings on to mimicry which, since they cannot completely be like the coloniser, puts them in a dilemma as well. Thereby, as Bhabha suggests, the menace in mimicry does not originate from an open defiance, but from the fact that it proposes an identity not completely like the coloniser (*The Location of Culture* 88). On mimicry and its being a danger to colonial power, Huddart states that the coloniser prefers the colonised to be utterly similar to him, but absolutely not to be the same. If they were the same, there would be no rationalization of the colonial policy (59). Similarly, Bhabha emphasizes that "[t]he ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from *mimicry* –a difference that is almost nothing but not quite–to *menace* –a difference that is almost total but not quite" (*The Location of Culture* 91). Hence, of mimicry Bhabha states,

> Mimicry is thus the sign of double articulation; a complex strategy or reform, regulation and discipline which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualises power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate; however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both "normalized" knowledges and disciplinary powers. (*The Location of Culture* 86)

Bhabha associates mimicry with the Other and the rebellious voice of the "inappropriate" which is similar in essence, yet, against the colonial power. In line with its resistance to the colonial rule, as Huddart suggests, mimicry is an overall reaction to dissemination of stereotypes because through stereotypes the coloniser could legitimize their inborn supremacy over the colonised (55, 58). Through mimicry, therefore, the

colonised also opposes the stereotyping which the coloniser employs to claim their authority over the colonised. Huddart also notes, stereotypes indicate "how identities are mere productions [. . .]" (70) and in the postcolonial context, stereotypes refer to the identity construction of the colonised by the coloniser. In a similar vein, for Hall, by means of stereotypes, regulation in society is obtained and stereotypes construct

> a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the 'deviant', the 'normal' and the 'pathological', the 'acceptable' and the 'unacceptable', what 'belongs' and what does not or is 'Other', between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', Us and Them. It facilitates the 'binding' or bonding together of all of Us who are 'normal' into one '*imagined community'* (italics mine); and it sends into symbolic exile all of Them –'the Others'–who are in some way different– 'beyond the pale'. ("The Spectacle of the 'Other' ", 258)

Hall further argues that creating stereotypes is, in Foucauldian terms, a kind of power and knowledge business which puts people into different categories in line with a norm and "constructs the excluded as 'other'" ("The Spectacle of the 'Other'", 259) as in the postcolonial context. Mimicry, thus, like hybridity, disrupts the colonial dichotomy of "Us" and "Them", "insider" and "outsider", "self" and "other" and the borders of the "imagined community" along with the stereotypes. Accordingly, mimicry is the embodiment of the in-between or liminal character of hybrids of "partial presence" which; on the one hand, shatters the colonial authority, yet; on the other hand, increases the dilemma of the colonised.

In the Middle Ages, the people of middle-grouping, those who could not find a proper place or possess an accepted identity in the traditional three estates, occupied the position of Bhabha's "hybrids." In other words, those belonging to the middle-grouping with, in Bhabhanian terms, their "partial" or "unhomely" presence dwelled on the borders of the medieval "imagined community" formed by the three estates. Those, in fact, were the "inappropriate" ones who shook the medieval dichotomy of "Us" and "Them". Hence, they, like Cohen's monsters, "[d]well [ed] at the gates of difference" ("Monster Culture" 7) and were "an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category" (Preface x). Additionally, they, like Young's hybrids, included in themselves "difference and sameness in apparently impossible simultaneity" (Young 26). That is to say, in Bhabhanian sense, medieval hybrids of the middle-grouping embodied a new

identity which is built up by the fusion of differences and similarities of the distinct estates. Therefore, never being a full member of any of them, they occupied a third space on the borders of those estates. They, moreover, were the Others of the medieval society with the liminality of their hybrid identities. Some of those medieval hybrids were also mimics who, like their colonial counterparts, adopted the habits, manners and values of their superior estates to be able to have a place and a voice in society. Yet, again like their colonial counterparts, mimicry was both a menace to their social superiors and a dilemma increasing their identity crisis and ambiguous status since they were "almost the same, but not quite", as defective copies of their superiors. Accordingly, like the coloniser, the medieval people of the three estates represent the self, whereas the members of the middle-grouping stand for the Other, the colonised. However, as Bhabha suggests, it is not possible to separate the self and the other completely, which creates hybridity. Hence, as Fanon's coloniseds in *The Wretched of The Earth*, the hybrid members of the middle-grouping, standing on the border of the self and the other, continually ask the question: "Who am I in reality?" (182).

This dissertation argues that the hybridity and mimicry of the medieval people can be observed in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* as it presents pilgrims mostly belonging to the middle-grouping produced by the social, economic and political changes in the late Middle Ages, it is important to give a full picture of the late medieval society and the social transformation creating medieval hybrids who disrupt the borders of "Us" and "Them". Fourteenth-century medieval England was a period of great social transformation– where the traditional boundaries, power relations and institutions were challenged–which, similar to Bhabha's explanation for the postcolonial situation, prepared the backdrop of medieval borderline identities. Medieval England was marked by two fundamental institutions: feudalism and the three estates structure constituted by the clergy, nobility and commoners. Both feudalism and the estate structure pointed to a hierarchical society that can be most clearly traced in the regulation of food and clothing for the different estates. Feudalism, the system bonding the whole society together in a hierarchical order, was one of the crucial factors which hindered social change and mobility in the Middle Ages. This system regulated the positions of the people and their relations with the others. Feudalism was also an economic and political system based on

land. In medieval feudalism, the overlord had a preeminent position on social, economic, and political grounds. He gave some of his privileges to his vassals and his friends by giving them a unit of land, a fief, to control. In return for land, the vassal vowed to provide military aid for the lord and the lord put the vassal under his protection (Bishop, *The Penguin* 109). As Coulton states, in feudalism

> [g]roups of peasants were bound to a lord in three senses alike–financial, legal and military. The lord himself, with many of his fellows, was probably similarly bound to a greater noble; the greater noble again to his count or his duke; and the count or duke still owed service and obedience, if only nominal, to the sovereign. (*Chaucer* 60)

The entire land, in fact, belonged to the king through feudal tenure. There were tenants and tenants-in-chief, mostly the magnates, who held the land, the fief: "Lesser men might hold either from the king or from another lord, and the greater magnates had large numbers of feudal tenants [. . .]" (Holmes 28). Most of the peasants did not possess their land, but "held, or rented, it from a landlord, who might be a baron, a bishop, a monastic house, a college, or a knight" (Coulton, *Chaucer* 95). At the core of feudalism, there was the manor on which the tenants worked in exchange for the protection by the lord who possessed the manor. In the abstract, the manor referred to a village; yet, indeed, it might include numerous villages and farms; sometimes a village might contain different manors. It was usually the feudal lord who was mainly responsible for administering justice on his estate. It was again the feudal lord who collected tolls together with other taxes, and he was also expected to shelter the poor, orphans and widows. The lord and his vassals comprised the nobility, a separate class apart from the mass of peasants, the clergy, and the townspeople. There were two types of land holdings as free and servile. Besides the earls, barons, lords of the manors and local freemen such as yeomen farmers and franklins, there were peasants keeping servile holdings and they were called villeins or bondmen. Both kinds of peasants, free tenants and villeins, were under obligation to give the lord of the manor some labour services, yet villeins had to pay higher rents and perform more services. If a villein ran away to a town, and lived there for a year and day, he became legally free. Yet, of course he would give up all his possessions in the manor, and his closest male relative would be fined. In the early fourteenth century, many villagers were villeins and they could not depart from their holdings, and they

belonged to their lord like the livestock of the manor. The estates of both free and unfree medieval people were certain by their birth; they depended on the land and a lord, and were mostly obliged to work (Laing 30; Bishop, *The Penguin* 110; Childress 32; Mortimer 49; Strayer and Munro 55). Feudalism was based on the notion that "nobles and villeins were born to their state by divine disposition and that they would remain forever what they were born to be. The blood of noble and commoner was believed to be different in composition" (Bishop, *The Penguin* 114). Indeed, it was this strict separation among the members of different estates which created acknowledged identities and in time, owing to the social change, hybrid identities in medieval society.

Yet, in the fourteenth century, the difference between free tenants and villeins was beginning to vanish as freemen started to control both free and servile possessions by marrying the daughters of bondmen or vice versa. Moreover, through recurrent purchase and sale of lands, some ambitious villeins gained considerable wealth and occupied significant position in their neighbourhood. In 1391, some villeins could send their sons to school in spite of the edict of Parliament which had forbidden them to do it (Childress 33). Peasants gaining significance on the social scale through holding their own land weakened feudalism and accordingly the hierarchy within the medieval society was weakened, too, through social mobility. Thereby, as Hatcher notes, "[. . .] the later fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries constituted the sole 'golden age' of the English peasantry [which caused] the loosening and eventual dissolution of the bonds of serfdom" (281).

Similarly, according to Strohm, feudalism was sometimes regarded as "a more orderly system than it ever was. But alternative, nonhierarchical or even antihierarchical, traditions of social description were available as well, existing throughout the Middle Ages but coming into special prominence in the fourteenth century" (*Social Chaucer* 3). In other words, in the fourteenth century, depending on the weakening of feudalism, a middle-grouping emerged whose members rose on the social ladder through wealth, marriage and royal favour and did not fit in with the medieval social structure defined by feudalism. Furthermore, different sources, such as some parliamentary summons and the 1363 statute, point out a fourth estate or middle-grouping including esquires,

merchants, and rich guildsmen. Distinct from the three estates, the members of this fourth or middle group were taken as belonging to a different social group besides gentils (such as knights) and non-gentils (the rest) (Childress 43; Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 11).

The second significant element of medieval society, estate, is defined in *the Middle English Dictionary* as "state or condition; social, political or religious status; rank, high rank, sovereignty and a person's position in society, one's station; rank or degree in the social, political, or ecclesiastical hierarchy; social class" ("Estāt"). Defining estate, Mann states that "the role played by a person's work in determining the estate to which he belongs" (3) is also important. The term "estate" is equivalent to status, station, stately, state, standing, and the like in the modern English (Kaminsky 684). The significance of estate in the medieval period has been underlined by various critics. Mortimer, for example, states that medieval people believed that society consisted of three sections or estates which were created by God. These three estates are those who fight, those who pray, and those who work. The aristocracy were those who fight and they defended those who pray and those who work. The clergy did the praying on behalf of those who fight and those who work. The commoners were those who worked to provide food for those who rule and pray (40). In fact, the idea of the three estates suggests that each estate eagerly accepts its duties as they were predestined by God. Estates model sustains that society operates in the best way if each class acts in accordance with its role (Bisson 143). As Whittle and Rigby note, medieval people believed that society should not consist of contradictory groups; yet, there should be different orders in society. These classes should be mutually dependent on each other to carry out a specific duty for the felicity of the entire society (67- 68). Thus, each estate promoted the prosperity of the community altogether. These three estates are also presented in literature such as in the work of John Gower, in *Vox Clamantis* (*The Voice of One Crying*): "We recognize that there are three estates. In his own way, everyone in the world lives under them and serves them [. . .] There are the cleric, the knight, and the peasant, three carrying on three different things. The one teaches, the other fights, and the third tills the fields" (116).

Undoubtedly, the three estate model of medieval society was closely related to Christianity. As a fourteenth-century homilist states "[i]n the church there be needful these three offices, [. . .] "priesthood, knighthood, and labourers", accordingly "the church, the community of Christian people, *was* society, and the performance of the tasks of his station a man's Christian duty" (qtd. in Keen, *English Society* 2). Therefore, the medieval view of the three estates had a Christian basis. Within this three estates model, women were hardly ever mentioned since their place was determined in accordance with their father's or husband's status. Fathers or husbands legally owned women. Except for widows, the status of women was determined by their male relations, but they were in a lower position as they were subject to their male kin (Keen, *English Society* 3; Childress 19). In the twelfth century, when it was possible for the clergy to marry, an Irish bishop wrote that "I do not say that the function of women is to pray or toil, let alone to fight, but they are married to those who pray, toil and fight, and they serve them [. . .]. A woman's place was a step below her man's, [. . .]" (Labarge xiii).

As mentioned above, the first estate is the clergy or those who pray. Needles to say, in the Middle Ages, Christianity formed the thought of the people and the Church kept an imperious status. Holding the biggest area of land through charity and repentance in Western Europe, the Church was a very rich and powerful institution. Apart from being a spiritual institution, the Church in the Middle Ages was also the most authoritative institution in terms of politics in Europe (Howe 84). Twenty per cent of the land wealth of the kingdom belonged to the Church. Consequently, "though [the Church] offered careers to the relatively humbly born, its interests usually lay with the landowning classes" (Lepine 59). Hence, the members of the clergy mostly came from the nobility, especially those keeping the higher ranks. Not to a great extent, yet, a religious vocation was also possible for those at the low ranks of the society. More importantly, the clergy, unlike the other two estates, the nobility and the commoners, "was not born into its class" yet went into it as a vocation, either willingly or reluctantly (Strayer and Munro 11).

According to the estimations of the scholars, about two percent of the population of fourteenth-century England belonged to the first estate. Women (except for a small number of nuns) and children could not have significant roles in the Church which meant that almost one male among fifteen was the member of the Church. In the clergy, as in the case of the other two estates, there was a strict hierarchical order and the members of the clergy were very influential figures in politics and government. After the Norman Conquest, feudal baronies were bishoprics and abbeys and tenants-in-chief were generally from bishops and abbots keeping subtenants on their lands. Till the fourteenth century, the clergymen sitting on the great council were before all else representatives of the papacy, having power above kings and their impact and prosperity extended all over Europe. They protected the freedom of the Church; yet, they were still the tenants of the King (Childress 20; Laing 81).

The second estate of the three estates is the nobility or those who fight. The members of the nobility inhabited the highest ranks of the medieval social scale. Despite consisting of only about one percent of the society, the nobility, possessing the biggest landholdings, was also the strongest political power. Thus, the nobility had a very significant role in society and a consequent great influence on the lives of medieval people. The nobles were also brought up to be military leaders in line with chivalry, a key factor in their identity. The nobility were almost always at war to protect the country from civil disturbance or outside invasion, or to extend its territories and support its allies (Ward, *Women* 1; Childress 25, 24). Three main origins of the nobility are:

> a nobility by practice and service, as, for example, service in war; a nobility by lordship, that is by possession of lands and estates as a landlord, but also by the exercise of legal authority over others as a law lord or lord of men; and a nobility by birth, that is by membership of a lineage. (Morgan, *The Franklin's Tale* 72)

In accordance with feudalism, the lords had to protect the land and they ruled over their vassals. The ties between the lord and their vassals generated the core of the administrative affairs. The highest members of the nobility were called the 'magnates'– *magnates regni*, 'great men of the kingdom' and occupied the most significant place in England. The magnates dominated the politics of the late Middle Ages through keeping

land and having noble family ties. The significance of the nobility was also traced in the historical documents of the time such as the summons inviting them to Parliament. There was also hierarchy within the nobility which included different ranks such as the earls and the greatest barons who were the wealthiest and most powerful of the nobility. On the religious part of the nobility, there were the bishops and the abbots of the greater abbeys. The lesser nobility came after the magnates in the hierarchy; they were mostly knights trained for military purposes. Knights were superior to the average sort of soldiers and they could afford fine horses, weapons, and armour. Yet, at the end of the Middle Ages, knighthood was not common among the wealthy men since the rich men having a high status, such as parish priests and country squires, could mostly gain the title *seigneur* or *dominus* –'sir' or 'lord' (Strayer and Munro 115; Holmes 19-20; Thomson 102).

The third estate, those who work, consisted mainly of the peasants "who lived in the country and produced the food, flax, and wool that fed and clothed the population" (Coulton, *Chaucer* 95). As Laing points out, medieval English society was mainly rural. Until late 1500, almost ninety-five per cent of the population dwelled in the country and largely dealt with farming (65). The third estate comprised about ninety-seven per cent of the population including a variety of people who did not belong to the nobility or clergy. Indeed, the Norman clerks gathering information for the Domesday Book found it difficult to "understand the subtle distinctions that might exist between different English villagers" (Stenton 138). In time, this diversity among the members of the third estate largely increased. As Griffiths notes, in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, society was more flexible than before; hence, there were several possibilities for people to rise in society through different means (221). These opportunities proved useful mostly for those belonging to the third estate. Accordingly, in the fourteenth century, there was not a great difference between the lives of the wealthiest members of the third estate, the bourgeoisie of peasant origin, and the lives of the nobles as the two estates combined through marriage or services to the king. Thereby, the nobility "had lost much of their independence to their kings and much of their wealth to the rising bourgeoisie. The feudal system had been weakened, and with it the old chivalric principles [. . .]. The

bourgeois, increasingly prosperous, purchased estates and gained titles and married their daughters into the nobility" (Bishop, *The Penguin* 295).

Franklins and yeomen were among those enterprising peasants. These wealthy freemen increased their land due to "[t]he decline of demesne cultivation, [. . .] [and] neither gentle nor serf [a franklin] was evidently a type of farmer who was common in the fourteenth century" (Holmes 133). The status of a franklin or a yeoman who had a land of thirty acres together with his own plow team of eight oxen occupied a higher rank than that of a villein who had to serve his lord and had just one or two acres of land to use only for himself. In case of a marriage between that franklin's daughter and a son of a gentleman, the franklin's status became higher. Furthermore, the members of his family might serve in a manor as officers such as reeves, and his status is much more improved (Mortimer 48). As Holmes similarly notes, "[t]he economics of agriculture gave greater opportunities to men of this type [. . .] and perhaps tended eventually to blur the distinctions between gentry and peasantry" (33).

In fact, besides the borders between gentry and peasantry, the borders between the members of three estates were blurred due to the upward mobility of the commoners and downward mobility of the nobility. Thus, as Childress suggests, by the fourteenth century, the hierarchical structure based on feudalism and three estates "showed a good many cracks" (3) due to some significant social and economic happenings of the period producing social mobility. The Hundred Years War between England and France, 1337-1453, and the Black Death of 1348-9 causing a great fall in population had the biggest impact on the changes in society which weakened feudalism and three estates structure (Porter 32; Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers 333-34). As Bishop notes, the Hundred Years War "was dynastic and territorial" as "[t] he rules of succession to the French throne were unclear [. . .]" (*The Penguin* 310). Indeed, by 1348 the kings of England and France declared war which lasted for a century. The reason for the war was a dynastic conflict deriving from the dispute between Edward III of England and Philip VI of France. From the reign of William the Conqueror onwards, the English Kings were paying homage to the French Kings as William the Conqueror was still the Duke of Normandy when he conquered England in 1066 and became the king of England.

Yet, in 1377 Edward III of England did not want to pay homage to the king of France, Philip VI who took away the land of Edward in Aquitaine as a response to Edward's attitude. Edward's reaction was his claim to the French throne which dated back to 1328 when Charles IV of France died having no male heir. Edward claimed the French throne by means of his mother Isabelle. Isabella was the daughter of Philip IV and when Philip IV died, his nephew, Charles of Valois, became the king rather than Isabella (Allmand 10-11).

As a consequence of Edward's claim to French throne, England had great troubles owing to the heavy taxes to fund wars. In 1377, 1379, and 1380, Parliament imposed three different poll taxes to finance the war against France. The third tax was three times as much as the first tax and people refused to pay it. When royal commissioners wanted to collect the taxes and arrest those who resisted, the villagers came together from the different parts of the kingdom; they shot arrows at the king's men, who ran away to London. Other villages joined the rebellion, making it more aggressive. The rebels let the prisoners free, tore down the official documents, and set the Savoy Palace of John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster and the king's uncle, on fire (Dillon 1; Childress 59). Hence, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was also one of the significant consequences of the Hundred Years War. To stop the revolt, King Richard granted freedom to the villeins, yet, changing his mind, as Strohm puts it, he determined the destiny of the defeated rebels through his well-known words: "Rustics you were and rustics you are still; you will remain in bondage, not as before but incomparably harder" ("Peasant's Revolt" 98).

Besides wars, a series of famines and plagues also brought great trouble and social change and mobility to English society. The results of the Great Famine of 1315-22, for example, were very destructive. As Aberth states, the reason for the Great Famine of 1315-22 was mainly the wet and cold weather which impinged on the entire Northern Europe including England, Ireland, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, France, and Germany through continuous rain rotting the plants and devastating the harvest. The bad weather conditions created famine which caused the death of 10-18 per cent of the population in England, which was accepted as a slight decline based on the fact that

although these death rates were higher than normal, it was still recoverable within a generation or two (51). The consequences of the plague, or the Black Death of 1348-49, yet, were more devastating and not easily remediable since it vitally declined the English population which was already weakened by the Great Famine.

There were two forms of the Black Death: the bubonic one which was "transmitted by a bacterium carried by the rat flea, and pneumonic, spread directly by droplet infection in a manner similar to the common cold. It is almost certain that both forms of the disease were present in late-fourteenth century England" (Thomson 9). The Black Death was thought to have come through a convoy of twelve Genoese galleys from Crimea and then the disease spread throughout Europe, first Sicily and in early 1348; it came to the Italian mainland and France (Bishop, *The Penguin* 306). Wilkonson states that the bubonic plague of 1348-49 reappeared in 1361-62 and 1369. It came to England through trade routes from the East by rats and fleas and its profound results were not "only lack of sanitation and medical knowledge, but also greater concentrations of population, the consequence of prosperity and demographic growth. [. . .] It carried off up to 40 per cent of the population, and by the end of the century may have reduced the population by half" (185). That is, possibly more than one-third of the whole population of Britain died, and less than one person in ten catching the plague could survive. Although it is not known how many people exactly died in the Black Death, it is known that many villages were entirely destroyed (McDowall 46).

As Knapp also notes, the destructive plagues of 1348, 1361 and 1369 reduced the working population to a degree that, due to the labour shortage, the workers could bargain for increased wages. Thus, the increasing cash economy required specialized careers which "blurred the traditional distinctions between those who rule and fight, those who pray, and those who work" (12). In other words, the ranks of those who work developed due to the money-based economy which brought about the acknowledgement of professions besides those related to agriculture such as artisans, bureaucrats and tradesmen. The innovations in agriculture, the consequent increase in productivity, development of cities and trade brought about urbanization and money-based economy, banking, investing, lending. The centre of the money-based economy was the towns and

guilds were the significant parts of them. Guilds were unions in which the people doing the same kind of work came together; it could be a kind of craft such as metalworking or weaving, or a trade, such as dealing in spices or textiles as merchants did. The guilds became indispensible constituent of towns and gained considerable social status and they directed industrial and commercial activity in towns, buying and selling goods, checking standards, work conditions and the admission of apprentices (Swanson 402; Mortimer 94).

The consequences of the Black Death, indeed, were disastrous for everyone, but, the lives of the peasants who survived were deeply enhanced as labour supply was inadequate; thus, it became more important than plentiful land. People could possess discarded holdings as long as they could manage them. The prosperous peasants developed into the yeoman's estate. Yet more, some of the freemen voluntarily gave up their freedom to be able to possess villein land. Noting the social change, those at the upper ranks emphasised the long-standing notion that society was composed of three estates– the nobility, clergy, and commoners and each man had a duty given by God to meet the needs of others. After the decades following the Black Death, evidently, the landowners tried to renew the old systems and laws including mandatory service (Wilkinson 186; Jones 33-34). The labour shortage due to the Black Death, however, brought about extraordinary wages which made it impossible for the landowners to till their lands. As a precaution, Parliament issued one of the well-known ordinances of labourers in 1349. The ordinance aimed to "secure an adequate supply of labourers at the rate of wages prevailing before the catastrophe" and "to prevent a labourer from refusing the legal wages offered in his own district and going to a place where he could obtain higher wages" (Olson and Crow 357). Yet, being aware of their power, the peasants could have the abolition of some feudal services and they also could go somewhere else to find a job. Thereby, in time "[g]reat numbers of serfs bought freedom, to develop into a class of yeomen-farmers, an agrarian middle class" (Bishop, *The Penguin* 308). Indeed, until the middle of the fourteenth century, lords were the sole employers of labour. Yet, later, the wealthy peasants also required labour in their farms. Hence, gradually, villeinage started to disappear and the entire economic structure of England changed. As a result, the lords struggled to keep their serfs to serve them in line

with the old feudal ties. They wanted to decrease the wages of their workers. Consequently, the labour legislations were continually proposed owing to the extreme concerns of the lords to prevent the increase in wages. The aim of the statues, in general, was to guarantee the rights of the lords and employers "against any and all attempts on the part of the rest of the population to exploit the favourable opportunities which the new shortage of labour opened for them, and so to preserve the existing– and threatened– social hierarchy" (Keen, *English Society* 39).

In the Statute of Labourers in 1351, for example, it was criticized that the current edicts were not sufficient. The workers did not respect the orders and did not want to render service to the lords if their wages were not increased. Additionally, the number of the fugitive villeins rose particularly around London. The peasants did not want to work and came together to oppose the Acts and to seek remedy for their rights in the courts. Thus, the Statues of Labourers of 1349 and 1351 forbade the labourers from going to different places to have better living conditions; and it was the first time when an English government tried to regulate the wages and prices officially. Similarly, in 1376 and 1377, Parliament issued that master craftsmen must not apprentice townsmen where there was labour shortage. These were precautions against those who were rejecting the traditions and wanted to completely get out of serfdom (Keen, *English Society* 41; Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 164; McKısack 34-35). A statute in 1388 ordered that

> [. . .] he or she which used to labour at the Plough and Cart, or other Labour or Service of Husbandry till thy be of the Age of Twelve Years, that from thenceforth they shall abide at the same Labour, without being put to any Mastery or Handicraft; and if and Covenant or Bond of Apprentice be from henceforth made to the Contrary, the same shall be holden for none. The house of common even petitioned against the sending of villeins' sons to school; but that was too odious to be accepted; the man might still give the boy education, so long as he could find or pay a teacher, and afford the fine claimed by his lord. (Coulton, *Chaucer* 98)

Lords, also, deprecated the enacts of the parliament, and they even started to take serfs by force from each other, bringing about hostility in the nobility. Serfdom, in fact, did not completely come to an end in the fourteenth century; yet, the ties between the lords and peasants radically changed and never relapsed (Jones 34; Wilkonson 186;

McKısack 341). The Black Death, therefore, was one of the significant forces which altered the structure of English society in the late Middle Ages due to the fall in population. Mortimer argues that looking from the twenty-first century point of view, "one can see [the Great Plague]'s beneficial effects–how the Great Plague cauterizes feudalism, frees up capital, and allows society to develop in a more democratic way" (203).

Similarly, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the single major upheaval in English history (Jones 15), one of the most prominent consequences of the Hundred Years War and the Black Death, was another important factor changing medieval social structure radically. There is a general consensus that the revolt "owed much of its impetus to men who were rising in the world and striving to be free from archaic restrictions" (McKısack 342). Holmes states that the notions behind the Peasants' Revolt were against the traditional hierarchical structure of the society as it supported equality (131). In fact, the Peasants' Revolt was so surprising that "those in authority thought that the lower orders had gone mad" (Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 165). Those who rebelled were not only from the helplessly poor, but including those rich peasants and artisans who gained wealth after the Black Death, yet, were troubled due to the social restrictions and the people of higher ranks who did not want them to gain power. They also did not want to be regarded as outcasts since they kept significant positions in society such as reeves, jurors, and constables. They were able to preside over their villages without the intrusion of the lords. To put it another way, the pressure on the peasants and on the social climbers of the time brought about the Peasants' Revolt of 1381–a mutiny of people who did not believe in feudal power anymore. Hence, these rebellions uncovered a radical character threatening the social order (Whittle and Rigby 71; Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 165; Bishop, *The Penguin* 300).

Evidently, the Hundred Years War, the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt are the main sources of the social mobility in the fourteenth century. Indeed, mobility was not something new in the Middle Ages, yet, by the abrogation of some limitations such as serfdom and different occupation possibilities for tenants and employees, people moved repeatedly. The immigrants moved to the abandoned villages and towns. Mostly, the

mobility within the villages and towns was not even since some of the villages were entirely abandoned. Those immigrants, by all means, were searching for a better life, for rising on the social ladder. In late medieval England, the most common way to rise on the social ladder was through the service to the superior. Besides patronage, and appropriate heritage and status, upward mobility was possible through talent which could be displayed in different fields such as in service, in arms, in administration or in estate stewardship. Thus, a sound education was as important as a good heritage. There were many possibilities for an enterprising peasant in the boroughs or in the Church. Paying a fine to his lord, a villein could educate his son, buy him an apprenticeship or a position in the clergy. One of the well-known intellectuals and clerics of medieval England was Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who was the son of a villein (Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 168; Keen, *English Society* 22; Willoughby 9). Indeed, as stated above, the most outstanding figures of upward mobility in the fourteenth century were peasants since they were those who certainly made the best use of the consequences of the Black Death. As Tuchman puts it, since the rules of land and labour were entirely changed,

> [p]easants found their rents reduced and even relinquished for one or more years by landowners desperate to keep their fields in cultivation [. . .]. Property boundaries vanished when fields reverted to wasteland [. . .]. If claimed by someone who was able to cultivate them, former owners or their heirs could not collect rent. Landowners impoverished by these factors sank out of sight or let castles and manors decay while they entered the military brigandage that was to be the curse of the following decades. (119-120)

Likewise, as Saul states "the [k]ey figures were entrepreneurs, largely of peasant origin, who produced on large scale by taking over the leases (farms) of the demesnes of lords, or by putting together a number of former peasant holdings" (*The Oxford Illustrated History* 170). In fact, the fall in population due to the Black Death "gave rise to unoccupied holdings, and this gave a chance to younger sons [of the labourers], who were welcomed both as tenants and as wage-earners" (Slack 37) to possess lands. Payling notes that since land was the most important means of gaining fortune left from the family and of the main determining factor of social position, the amount of land passed on to one family from another was thoroughly influential in the essence of social transformation in the Middle Ages. In such a society, the families continued to exist

through the male members and they enlarged their holdings by marriage connections with the members of the families lacking male heir. Therefore, the number of the families keeping estates decreased and the landed class mixed with the non-landed class having wealth (81).

The peasants, thereby, could purchase their freedom and turn into landowners. Furthermore, in time, the increase in populace grew into overpopulation and the landholdings were divided into smaller parts (Bishop, *The Penguin* 296). Illustrating the social climbers of the fourteenth century, Tuchman gives the example of a free peasant who rose on the social ladder. The peasant first enlarged his acreage and tenants, and then gave up "manual labour to servants, acquire[d] a fief from lord or Church, learn[ed] the practice of arms, marr[ied] the daughter of a needy squire, and slowly assimilate[d] upward until he appeared in the records as [. . .] squire, himself" (19). Tuchman further states that a bailiff might rise on the social ladder in a similar manner and "would begin to dress like a noble, wear a sword, keep hunting dogs and falcons, and ride a warhorse carrying shield and lance" (19). As Du Boulay similarly discusses, due to social mobility, it was not unpredictable that men and women started to dress and act in a distinct manner since "[f]iner clothes dignified people whom their social superiors in a stratified society thought of as mean and even bestial" (16).

The improving status of the entrepreneurs and their eagerness to rise on the social scale might also be traced in the life in towns. A poll tax in 1379 portrays the significant position of townsmen in the fourteenth-century medieval English society. Unlike the previous poll taxes, paid by every male usually over fourteen, the poll tax of 1379 was collected in accordance with the taxpayer's ability to pay. On the gradation, the Mayor of London paid as much as the earls (four pounds); London alderman, the mayors of smaller cities, and sergeants of law paid as much as the knights banneret (forty shillings); wealthier merchants paid as much as the knights bachelor (twenty shillings); and smaller merchants as much as the squires (six shillings, eight pence) (Childress 31).

Undoubtedly, the most significant outcome of the changes caused by the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt is the emergence of a new class formed by merchants. Most

probably, the origin of the merchants was the landless men, run away serfs, harvest labourers, beggars, and outlaws. Some of them first became chapmen or peddlers and then enlarged their business (Bishop, *The Penguin* 178). The significant status of the merchants could be also recognized in laws such as a law of 1363 in which "a merchant worth £ 1, 000 was entitled to the same dress and meals as a knight worth £ 500, and a merchant worth £ 200 the same as a knight worth £ 100" (Tuchman 19). In the strict hierarchical order of the Middle Ages, towns played a very active role leading to various improvements and employment possibilities. Gradually, towns provided people with a large range of opportunities. The bishops, the king and the nobility governed Norman towns, yet wealthy tradesmen gradually gained more significance and became leaders. In other words, the people of the towns were creating their own system and giving their assistance to barons, bishops, or kings in exchange for contract of "liberties as free communes". These contracts gave way to freedom for the growth of trade, rising the urban Third Estate (Laing 109; Tuchman 5). Bishop states that

> [t]he merchants made the towns. They needed walls and wall builders, warehouses and guards, artisans to manufacture their trade goods, caskmakers, cart builders, smiths, shipwrights and sailors, soldiers and muleteers. They needed farmers and herdsmen outside the walls to feed them; and bakers, brewers, and butchers within. They bought the privilege of self-government, substituting a money economy for one based on land, and thus they were likely to oppose the local lordling and become supporters of his distant superior, the king. Towns recruited manpower by offering freedom to any serf who would live within their walls for a year and a day. "Town air makes men free," the citizens said. Thus arose the bourgeoisie, proud, rich, energetic, and contemptuous of the feudal world that surrounded them. (*The Penguin* 178)

Clearly, commoners continuously rose on the social ladder through wealth, marriage, and royal favour. Merchants earning money through trade and investments, and peasants obtaining wide tracts of land could give their sons education and marry them to daughters of knights. Some of them, like Chaucer, could join the lower nobility by loyal service to the king or to another member of the royal family. Thus, the strict separation lines of the three estates were blurred as social mobility weakened the strict separation between commoners (workers) and nobility (rulers). The aristocracy, unexpectedly, adjusted to the new realities. They did not accept entry into the upper ranks such as

duke, yet, in the fourteenth century, several significant families of the time were recognized as peers due to the intermarriage between the gentry and the merchants, lawyers and entrepreneurs, a new type of gentlemen, hence, emerged within the gentry (Childress 45; Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 170-171).

In a similar way, many of London merchants were dubbed and became a part of the genteel families through buying land. Becoming a member of the gentility by buying land through the profits of trade was common in London. Outside London, it was mostly through marriage into genteel dynasties. As a result, medieval feudalism started to change due to the development of a new class mixed with members of peasant and noble origin. Accordingly, by 1500 there was a new pattern of society together with the new distribution of wealth and social power since there were more possibilities for mobility. Yet, the acceptance of the superiority of the noble which was customary did not change (Keen, *English Society* 15; Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 173).

Besides the upward mobility, there was inevitably downward mobility due to the social changes. The upper classes realised that they could not keep the old manor system any more due to the fall in prices and the high cost of labour. Particularly, the greater landlords started to rent out their lands to farmers, and had to obtain new abilities to manage their estates. They encountered an ongoing decline in rent income–"but avoided ruin by adjusting their style of life–by taking care over their household accounts, and [by] reducing wine consumption and the numbers of servants employed" (Saul, *The Oxford Illustrated History* 171). Bishop illustrates the downward mobility through German and Italian knights who became peasants or robbers and notes that "in thirteenth-century Siena some aristocrats were seen begging their bread" (*The Penguin* 115). Du Boulay describes those times as "a new age" when "successful men with short family histories would consolidate their gains at the expense of a crowd of newly poor" (16). In fact, due to the blurring of class lines, the status and occupations of the nobility came to a deadlock. Those descending on the social ladder came up against the danger of losing their noble heritage. As Tuchman explains, law regulated what a gentleman should and should not do not to lose his noble position. Yet, it was not certain whether he could sell wine although the kings sold their wines. Furthermore, according to a law,

a noble cannot be an inn-keeper. Yet, another law allowed nobles to join commercial activities, tradesmen, shoemakers, tailors, without losing their noble position (17).

As Tuchman further suggests, one of the most obvious reasons for downward mobility of the aristocracy in the fourteenth century was the "disappearance [of lineage] by failure to produce a male heir or by sinking over the edge into the lower classes" (18). The inheritance of land, mostly, was in line with the rule of primogeniture in which the eldest son obtained all land: "If the eldest son was dead and left children, his eldest son inherited. If, on the other hand, the eldest son was dead but left no children, his younger brother inherited. If the man who died had no children, his land went to the eldest of his brothers or the descendants of that brother" (Childress 103). Thereby, the rule of primogeniture also might be taken as one of the factors causing downward mobility in the nobility as the younger sons could not inherit land. With regard to the disappearance of lineage causing downward mobility in the second estate, Tuchman states that "[t]he disappearance rate of noble families has been estimated at fifty per cent a century, and the average duration of a dynasty at three to six generations over a period from 100 to 200 years" (18).

As observed so far, the Middle Ages were not a stable and fixed era, yet an age of transformation with regard to manners and institutions, particularly in terms of the three estates, and the gap between the upper and lower strata of the society began to decrease by the end of the fourteenth century. In line with the social changes and the consequent variety in the social structure, how medieval people perceived society also changed. In this new pattern of society, landowning and wealth gained significance since they were the means to rise on the gradation of the society. As the status of the commoners improved, their role in society also improved and they started to take an active part in politics. For instance, the stewards of the most significant lords mainly consisted of the smaller gentry who controlled the meetings of the shire court. Indeed, these were the locations where the knights of the shire and those with similar status came together for social contact and the business of the shire. The social climbers' contact with the upper classes and their growing significance on the social scale resulted in their imitation of the upper classes, specifically of their apparel as it is something usual for men to imitate

the people above them and mostly it begins with the clothing of them (Keen, *English Society* 11; Wilkonson 200; Mortimer 106).

Additionally, as Scott states, in the Middle Ages "[p]eople judged you by your clothing– the state of your soul was judged, and so was your social standing" (5). It was mainly the classes between the labourers and the nobility who evidently imitated the nobility and gained reputation and authority in their communities due to their wealth. Hence, after the Black Death, as a result of the increase in wages, the richest peasants began to imitate the fashionable clothing of the nobility. In fact, clothing, always being a significant indicator of people's position in society, was particularly of great importance in a society with different classes, medieval people; thus, were expected to dress in line with their place in the social hierarchy. Accordingly, in the fourteenth century almost ten per cent of the income of a nobleman was spent on clothing which indicates the expensive cost and the significance of clothing among the nobility as clothing demonstrated their dignity and authority. Bright colours, silks, jewels, gold and silver signified status, hence, are eligible for the nobility. Yet, taking the significance of apparel at that time into account, wearing ostentatious clothing was also something expected from those who gained wealth and status. (Wilkonson 200; Childress 94, 97; Howard, *Chaucer* 47). Most of the time, correspondingly, due to their significance in the society, the townsmen and towns women followed the changes in the dress of the aristocracy. For example, "the well-dressed merchant's wife [had] her long-sleeved tunic and sideless gown, like her noble contemporary, but the fabric [was] of an inferior quality. So [were] the furs around the cuffs and the hood" (Mortimer 114). As Mortimer further states, rich merchants and their wives imitated the nobility even in terms of taking bath which was something also luxurious and a noble custom (197). The clothing of the aristocracy was also mirrored in the dress of the lawyers, doctors and those at the higher ranks of the clergy. Therefore, religious aristocrats mostly left their silk gowns and funeral palls "to a church to be made into vestments for priests to wear during services and in religious processions. University-trained physicians distinguished themselves from common "leeches" by wearing long, full robes. The highest-ranking lawyers were entitled to wear silk" (Childress 96). Therefore, it seems possible to state that aping or mimicking their superiors, the social climbers like wealthy merchants and

peasants were claiming their status and identity in medieval society, which was unacceptable on the boundaries of the three estates. Criticizing the people who imitated their superiors in the Middle Ages, in *The Regiment of Princes*, Thomas Hoccleve writes,

> "Nay, soothly, sone, it is al mis, me thynkith,
> So poore a wight his lord to countrefete
> In his array; in my conceit it stynkith.
> Certes to blame been the lordes grete,
> If that I durste seyn, that hir men lete
> Usurpe swich a lordly apparaille;
> It is nat worth, my chyld, withouten faille.
> (435-441)

Hoccleve clearly considers it wrong for commoners to imitate the outfit of the nobles. On the other hand, Hoccleve also criticises the nobles since he thinks that it is the nobles who allow the common people to ape them. Yet, as Tuchman notes, "[n]othing was more resented by the hereditary nobles than the imitation of their clothes and manners by the upstarts" (19). The nobles tried to prevent the social climbers from imitating themselves through sumptuary laws. The sumptuary laws of 1336 and 1363 particularly aimed at prohibiting commoners from dressing like nobles and eating expensive foods. From the year 1337 onwards, only the people having an annual income of £100 per year could wear furs. Not obeying the legislation, many of the merchants' and esquires' wives kept on wearing proudly their ermine and miniver which resulted in the extension of the sumptuary laws in 1363 prohibiting the flagrant and extreme clothing of people who did not dress in accordance with their estate and status. The lower status of the townsmen was underlined by the limitations on their clothes: Gold was officially unique to the lords. Knights banneret could wear ermine and their wives could wear pearls in their headdresses. Commoners, yet, regardless of their wealth and status, were at the very most allowed to dress like squires. The statues also included items to determine the number of the dishes and minstrels and the type of the garments and linens at a wedding ceremony (Childress 31, 45; Tuchman 20). In London, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, it was ordered that

> [n]o common woman should go to market or out of her house with a hood furred with anything older than lambskin or rabbit fur, on pain of losing her hood to the sheriffs, with the exception of those ladies who wear furred capes [. . .] because shopgirls, wetnurses and other servants, and loose women bedizen themselves with hoods furred with ermine and minever, like ladies of quality. (Mortimer 103)

As the different statues and sumptuary laws suggest, medieval feudal law did not tolerate attempts at social climbing and tried to control it. To sum up, in spite of the great social change and mobility, in the three estates model of medieval society, there was not a certain place for those who rose on the social scale by imitating their social superiors. Thereby, as Mortimer states, most of the members of the society in the fourteenth century such as merchants, mariners, servants, physicians, and lawyers did not fit into the three estates model (52). Still, as Hughes similarly argues, in the Middle Ages these social climbers or "the upwardly mobile [. . .] knock[ed] [. . .] on the gates of the nobility or [bought] [. . .] their way in. It [was] a time [. . .] of imitations" (81). However, the main distinction related to class was still based on whether you were gentry or were not gentry and it was the main criterion of the time to differentiate the social climbers from the aristocracy. Gentility was regarded as the main tie bonding all of the members of the nobility together from the lesser lords to magnates (Brewer, *Chaucer* 18; Keen, *English Society* 12). Hence, gentility was the biggest obstacle on the way of the social climbers to be accepted in the sphere of the nobility, which caused them to possess hybrid identities in between the spheres of the commoners and the nobility. Likewise, the members of the nobility experiencing downward mobility were also caught in between their former luxurious and prestigious status and present meagre and humble position and consequent identities. In other words, many of the medieval upwardly and downwardly mobile people were hybrids in Bhabhanian sense as they embodied the values and norms of both their former and present estates or statutes, yet, could not be entirely a member of any of them. Indeed, those were the people of the middle-grouping who challenge the borders of the three estates with their "partial presence" and mimicry in the territory of their third space. Those were the Others, hybrids and mimics of medieval community as they were the offsprings of at least two estates, the commoners and the nobility or the clergy and the nobility.

In fact, Geoffrey Chaucer himself, with his mercantile and courtly background, might be regarded as one of the most significant representatives of those hybrids in fourteenth-century England. Chaucer's own life is an example of social fluidity (Swanson 403) and his rank *esquire* challenges "the traditional distinction between gentle and non-gentle status. [Thus], Chaucer himself was ambiguously situated" (Dillon 252). As Strohm also argues, Chaucer as an esquire was placed in an indefinite position in the social stratum of his time. He had both royal service and ties with the court; and urban, mercantile connections. Therefore, there occurs a kind of mixture of aristocratic (courtly) and bourgeois (city-based) characteristics in Chaucer which makes his social position contradictory (*Social Chaucer* 10) and which puts him in-between. Hence, making use of Eagleton's words, Strohm argues that Chaucer kept "'a dissentient conflictual position' within his own society" (*Social Chaucer* 142). As Strohm further states

> [t]hose fourteenth-century knights and esquires in royal service, whose ranks included Geoffrey Chaucer and his closet associates, enjoyed a social position of marked precariousness and promise. Available to them were greatly expanded opportunities to enter the upper ranks of the social hierarchy, not on the traditional bases of military service and land tenure, but through the skilled and specialized services they were able to provide. Operating outside formal social definitions, associated at times with the landed gentry and at times with the civil servants and lawyers, they comprised a distinctive grouping, with their own priorities, aspirations, and loyalties. (*Social Chaucer* 1)

Born as the son of a wealthy wine merchant John Chaucer, Geoffrey Chaucer had opportunity to rise on the medieval social ladder and during his lifetime, he kept various significant occupations such as "prince's page, king's esquire and ambassador, customs official, (honours in Kent), chief clerk of the king's works, forester of the royal forest of North Petherton, and finally retired pensioner in a house at Westminster" (Galway 13). Chaucer became a squire in 1368 which gave him the right to a coat of arms. Later, he occupied the positions of justice of the peace in Kent and a knight of the shire. These occupations were appropriate for the knights; yet, mostly they were filled by squires some of which were noble by birth unlike Chaucer. Chaucer also frequently went abroad, France, Spain, Italy, for military and diplomatic reasons. Between 1374-1386, in the port of London, Chaucer was also a controller of the customs of hides, skins, and

wools, and the clerk of the king from 1389 to 1391. Indeed, the whole Chaucer family illustrates medieval social mobility. His father kept possessions in London and Ipswich and his great-grandfather owned a tavern in Ipswich. Chaucer's father also fought in Scotland and Flanders for the Kingdom and kept various positions under the king's service. He worked as a deputy to Edward III's wine butler and as customs collector at the port of Southampton as well. Chaucer's family had significant possessions in the Vintry Ward in central London, which was inhabited by noblemen, merchants and vintners (Hallisy, *A Companion* 1-2; Childress 12, 43; Dillon 1).

Likewise, Chaucer's wife Philippa de Roet was a lady-in waiting to John of Gaunt's second wife and his son Thomas was an outstanding courtier and became the speaker of the Commons three times in the fifteenth century. Thomas married a noble lady and became a member of a noble family. Thomas's daughter Alice also married into the nobility and became Duchess of Suffolk. His younger daughter Agnes Chaucer was also a damsel-in-waiting at the coronation of Henry IV in 1399. Additionally, contrary to most of the writers of the fourteenth century, Chaucer was not a clergyman or a noble, yet, he derived from the rising merchant class (Childress 44, 105; Dillon 6). As Childress suggests, if Chaucer had military inclinations, "he might [even] have been knighted, as many non-nobles were for outstanding service on the battlefield" (4).

Chaucer, being a hybrid himself, represents the borderline existences of medieval English society in *The Canterbury Tales*. As Turner notes, Chaucer's *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* gives various depictions of the middle-grouping (22) of the borderline community. For Strohm, likewise, in *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer introduces the people of the middle-grouping rather than the nobility, whose influence on society was unquestionable, or the commoners who constituted 90-95 per cent of the population:

> Compared with fourteenth-century society as a whole, the Canterbury pilgrimage is deficient in representing the two ends of the social scale as comprised by those landholding aristocrats and knights [. . .] and by the multitudes of free and unfree who worked the land. The landholders, while numbering less than 1 percent of the populace, certainly loomed large in people's awareness. Yet, on the pilgrimage, they are represented by a single

> knight, and not necessarily a landholding knight at that. Also represented by as single individual are the 90-95 percent of the populace who earned a livelihood by various forms of free and bonded agricultural labour. (*Social Chaucer* 67)

In fact, realising the great change of his time, in *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer reflects "the tensions in the late fourteenth century between the Old Order–feudalism, static rural economy, and the united and unchallenged Church –and the forces of plague, urbanization, and entrepreneurship which were pushing toward fragmentation of the society and a greater degree of individualism" (Higgs 155). Thereby, in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tal*es, the social change, mobility and the conflict between feudalism and individualism along with the consequent dilemma between those rising and descending on the social ladder can be observed. Thus, it can be stated that Chaucer, in *The Canterbury Tales,* mostly portrays the characters belonging to the middle-grouping, such as the Franklin, the Miller, the Reeve, the Merchant, the Sergeant of Law, the Guildsmen and the Wife of Bath, rather than those belonging to any of the three estates. For Bowers, similarly, Chaucer's characters in *The Canterbury Tales* represent "[. . .] *true members* (italics mine) of an "imagined community," as "they do not have determined identities but are possessed of a radical contingency that emerges from anonymity and is constantly deconstructed by deviances traditionally discussed in terms of estate satire" (60). Indeed, as James notes, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* extols the new variety of English society. Most of the pilgrims are identified with towns and do not present the large rural population of the society (6-7).

Accordingly, as Mann states, *The General Prologue* does not have a proper order either literally or socially (6); and Chaucer apologizes for not putting his figures "in hir degree" (*CT*, I, 744).[10] Therefore, as Mann suggests, "[h]e shows us a world in which our view of hierarchy depends on our own position in the world, not on an absolute standpoint" (7). Indeed, the rising significance of cities and towns gradually deteriorated the suitability of the three estates model; hence, many of Chaucer's pilgrims could not have a place in any of the estates especially the professions and the rising bourgeoisie such as the five guildsmen, the Manciple and the Miller. That is, although some of Chaucer's pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* portray the third estate, many of them are

townspeople and their positions do not conform to the occupations in the three estates model of society; they are not clergymen, knights, or workers, but administrators and entrepreneurs. They are the members of a class of people who do not keep lands, yet, have enough prosperity to compete with the lower ranks of the landed nobility. The wealthiest of this class could even finance the king. Therefore, it can be stated that the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales* appreciates talent and achievement and sympathizes with social mobility (Howard, "Social Rank" 87; Knapp 12; Childress 45).

On the other hand, as Keen states, the continuing effect of the three estates view can be still observed in the pilgrims in *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* with the three idealized portraits, the knight, the parson and the ploughman. Yet, "the new diversity is also very clearly there. Leaving aside for a moment his clerical characters, into which of the three estates, one may ask, is one to fit his man of law, his franklin, his merchant, his shipman, his wife of Bath" (*English Society* 7). Thus, in *The Canterbury Tales*, along with the members of the three estates of his time, Chaucer presents those members of his society who do not have a proper place in the three estates model.

Some critics regard Chaucer's choice of most of his characters in *The Canterbury Tales* from the hybrid part of the society rather than those belonging to the three estates as defying the class structure of his time. Strohm, for example, considers the Miller's interference in the arranged sequence of the pilgrim-tellers and his claim to involvement as a clear reflection of Chaucer's challenge to the traditional three estates model (*Social Chaucer* 152). *The General Prologue* opens with a hierarchical order of the pilgrims. First, the Knight is introduced and then he is succeeded by those at the ranks of the clergy, then the middle strata and those belonging to the lower classes. Yet, this hierarchy is disrupted by the pilgrims who are presented as the social climbers of the time in search for an identity in the dynamic society of the fourteenth century. The Miller of *The General Prologue*, for instance, protests at the sequence of the tale telling (*CT*, I, 3120-27) and the Miller of *The Reeve's Tale* claims that his daughter should marry someone from the upper class as he himself keeps a higher status (*CT*, I, 3973-86). The Franklin, similarly, competes with the aristocrats through his wealth, generosity and hospitality.

Hence, it can be argued that in Chaucer's pilgrims, the "identities are pasted together, textually, socially, culturally, spiritually and materially" (Staley 363) pointing to their hybrid identity. In fact, like their historical counterparts, Chaucer's pilgrims of upward and downward mobility cannot be fitted into the traditional three estates model of the late fourteenth century. Their identities are formed between the fixed identities of the time, the nobility, the clergy, the commoners; thus, without having acknowledged identities, they occupy the borderline spaces in the territories of the medieval three estates, which put them in between. Hence, this dissertation reads Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* as the representation of medieval hybridity and mimicry in the Bhabhanian sense which is embodied in his depiction of the middle-grouping of fourteenth-century England. Consequently, this dissertation examines Chaucer's pilgrims, those excluded from the traditional three estates, as medieval hybrids, in Bhabha's words as "those who live in "in-between spaces [. . .] which initiates new signs of identity" (*The Location of Culture* 2). The identity crisis of the pilgrims leads them to develop alternative identities for themselves which are the blends of the characteristics of their former and present status apart from the fixed identities of the three estates. Within this context, this dissertation analyses Chaucer's Knight, Monk, Prioress, Franklin and Miller, who bear the very characteristics of Bhabhanian hybridity and mimicry in the medieval context.

Chapter I dwells on Chaucer's Knight in *The Canterbury Tales* as a medieval hybrid. Different from those who experience hybridity owing to social mobility from one estate to another, the Knight undergoes an identity crisis due to the radical changes within the institution of knighthood in the fourteenth century. Having no title and land, accordingly no future in the nobility; the Knight has to leave his noble status behind and join mercenary activities. Losing his noble social position because of social mobility, the Knight turns into a medieval noble hybrid since he is caught in between the two polar opposite identities of the knighthood of the time; namely, the traditional (ideal) and mercenary knighthood; thus, he lives in a Bhabhanian third space. The hybridity of the Knight is observed in his portrait in *The General Prologue*. His tale, moreover, demonstrates the transformation in the knighthood of the time from idealistic to mercenary along with the consequent hybrid identity of knighthood and knights.

Chapter II examines Chaucer's Monk and Prioress as downwardly mobile medieval noble hybrids due to their moving from a more desirable and luxurious lifestyle to a meagre life in the cloister. Monastic life was open to both men and women in the Middle Ages, yet, mostly to those of noble birth. In fact, the noblemen and women were generally sent to monasteries by their parents, without their consent. Having difficulties in leaving their noble values and norms behind and adapting themselves to the strict monastic rules, the noblemen and women, like the Monk and the Prioress, keep their lordlike or ladylike appearances and manners despite their religious positions. The Monk and the Prioress try to develop an alternative identity for themselves out of the two estates they inhabit. Thus, both the Monk and the Prioress become medieval hybrids living in a Bhabhanian third space on the borders of the nobility and clergy both of which necessitate an entirely opposite way of life. The hybridity of the Monk is observed in his portrait in *The General Prologue* and in *The Monk's Tale*, and the hybridity of the Prioress is traced in her portrait in *The General Prologue*.

Chapter III argues that in addition to hybridity, social mobility in the late fourteenth century produced mimics, and this hybridity and mimicry are observed in many of Chaucer's pilgrims, who are social climbers. The hybridity and mimicry due to upward mobility are illustrated in the portraits and tales of the Franklin and the Miller along with the Squire's and the Reeve's tales. Lacking gentle birth, yet possessing considerable wealth, the Franklin has high class aspirations and imitates his social superiors. The Franklin's social position is contradictory as he is in between a gentleman and a commoner. Indeed, the Franklin is a hybrid and a mimic since he, by birth, belongs to the peasantry; yet, he competes with the nobles through his wealth, his claim to gentility and imitation of the noble way of life. The Franklin, in other words, is caught in between his former status–a peasant–and present status–a rich landowner and lives on the peripheries of the nobility and the commoners, in Bhabha's terms, in a third space. The Miller is also examined as a hybrid and mimic. Similar to the Franklin, the Miller occupies a contradictory position in the medieval social stratum due to his non-gentle status and wealth. The Miller is indeed a peasant who rises on the social ladder through wealth, and regards himself as the member of the nobility. The Miller also imitates the nobility through his apparel and manners. Yet, the Miller is not welcomed

either by his former estate or by the estate he aspires to and occupies a hybrid identity with his partial presence on the borders of the commoners and the nobility.

CHAPTER I

THE CHALLENGE TO THE SOCIAL ORDER FROM THE TOP: CHAUCER'S KNIGHT AS A MEDIEVAL HYBRID

The life of a knight is an imitation. (Huizinga 60)

This dissertation reads Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* as a literary and social document which presents the weakening of the traditional three estates structure in the late-fourteenth century England and the consequent emergence of medieval hybrids. This chapter deals with Chaucer's Knight in *The Canterbury Tales* as a medieval hybrid who, descending on the social ladder, lives in a Bhabhanian "third space" as he comes to possess a borderline identity formed by the traditional (ideal) knighthood and the mercenary knighthood that developed as a result of socio-economic changes in the late fourteenth century. In fact, the Knight is a figure of medieval hybridity, a figure of "interstices", to use a phrase from Bhabha, formed by "the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" (*The Location of Culture* 2). To put it another way, the Knight is a medieval hybrid since he possesses the characteristics of both traditional and mercenary knighthood as part of his identity. The Knight is an ideal knight in that he is of noble blood along with refined manners, and he cherishes truth, justice, loyalty, and fights for the weak, his honour, country and religion. On the other hand, the Knight also bears the characteristics of a mercenary knight: disloyalty, fighting for his enemy for material gain irrespective of religious values without any feudal ties. Thereby, as Bhabha states of the hybrids, the Knight is "neither the One nor the Other, but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both" styles of knighthood (*The Location of Culture* 28). Hence, unlike the Monk, the Prioress, the Franklin and the Miller examined in the following chapters as hybrids since they have no certain place in the three estates of the time, the hybridity of the Knight specifically comes from the changes within his own estate which also characterise the knighthood of the time.

The Knight, indeed, is a typical representation of the changing knighthood in fourteenth-century England. Being a squire and experiencing the Hundred Years War, Chaucer was quite familiar with war and knighthood as well as the dilemmas and changes in the knighthood of his time and that knighthood was becoming hybrid. In Chaucer's life time, England and France were sporadically in war which is later named as the Hundred Years War, beginning with Edward III's claim to the French throne in 1337 and ending with the eventual peace in 1453. Chaucer himself joined some of the campaigns of the war (Rudd 18). Chaucer became a page in 1357 and joined military campaigns between 1359 and 1360. He was even taken hostage by the enemy and after the negotiations he was ransomed by the king in March 1360. Thus, "[h]e had been blooded and seen something of the splendour, horror and boredom of war" (Brewer, *A New Introduction* 52-53). *The Knight's Tale* reveals that Chaucer was entirely close to the court since it particularly, besides his other works, depicts courtly life in a realistic manner. Chaucer's familiarity with war, knighthood and courtly life is also well depicted in the Knight's portrait in *The General Prologue* (Brewer, *A New Introduction* 52-53; *The World* 109).

Chaucer was in the centre of the great royal households of the late fourteenth century in England. It is known that he was in the household of Lionel of Antwerp, and then in 1367 he moved to the household of Edward III. Chaucer was at the royal household when he was writing *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*. Therefore, with his advantaged position, Chaucer wrote about knights and the plots of the court from within. Chaucer's status at court was later strengthened by his marriage to Philippa, daughter of Sir Paon or Payne Roet of Hainault, Guienne King of Arms, who had come to England in the household of Philippa of Hainault on her marriage to Edward III, and sister of Katherine Swynford, mistress and later (in 1396) third wife of John of Gaunt. Yet, the contribution of Chaucer's familiarity with the court "to his view of the world has been too often neglected or ignored in the debate about the Knight and the values he represents" (Morgan, "The Worthiness" 120-21). Thus, it can be argued that owing to his closeness to the court and the world of the nobility, Chaucer mirrors the dilemmas and conflicts between the traditional and the mercenary knighthood of his time and

presents an accurate picture of knights and knighthood in his portrait of the Knight in *The General Prologue* and in *The Knight's Tale* in *The Canterbury Tales*.

In fact, looking at the criticism of the Knight, it can be seen that a great ambiguity prevails in his portrait. The duality in the character of the Knight has produced two polar views in the criticism of the Knight. The first view includes the traditional interpretation of the Knight, which argues that the Knight is the absolute epitome of a medieval knight, in other words, of the traditional knighthood; while the latter affirms that he is a mercenary soldier who destroys the very ideals of chivalry and the institution of knighthood, that is to say the traditional knighthood. This duality or the traditional and mercenary characteristics of the Knight in *The General Prologue* put him in a grey area, defined by Bhabha as the third space in the colonial context. An analysis of his characteristics as a traditional and a mercenary knight will show that the Knight inhabits two worlds on the threshold of two types of knighthood suggesting a hybrid identity.

The hybridity of the Knight is a direct result of the changes in the traditional knighthood and the consequent emergence of the mercenary knighthood in the Middle Ages. Hence, it is essential, in the first place, to address traditional knighthood, its significance in the Middle Ages with its specific characteristics. Knights, the warriors, in the Middle Ages occupied a very significant place on the social ladder as they were the guardians of all members of the three estates, the nobility, the commoners and the clergy. Coulton states that the chivalric class with its ideals and prerogatives was at the top of the society which was based on different social ranks. It was a "small and select class" having "a hereditary right to all the best things of this world [. . .]" (*Medieval* 188). The Middle Ages was the age of chivalry or the feudal age as well as the age of faith. War was at the heart of the political and cultural account of the Middle Ages. War, besides Christian principles, was one of the two crucial components of the medieval society and peace was not recognised as the usual condition of nations (Keen, Introduction, *Medieval Warfare* 3-4; *Laws of War* 23) which increased the significance of the warrior class, the nobility, in the Middle Ages.

That is, knighthood and chivalry, the defining concepts of the nobility remained as the central components of the Middle Ages. As Huizinga argues, the Middle Ages and chivalry were almost equivalent terms (46) and "the thought of all those who lived in the circles of court or castle was impregnated with the idea of chivalry. Their whole system of ideas was permeated by the fiction that chivalry ruled the world" (56). As Brewer defines it, chivalry was the system of knighthood, the armed forces of lords, deriving from the upper ranks of the community (*A New Introduction* 42). Similarly, Saul suggests that the aristocratic and honourable attribute of knighthood is identified as chivalry, a term which originated from the French word *chevalier*, a knight. *Cheval* and *chevalier* are equivalent words and *chevalerie* is the joint word pointing to a group of mounted knights (*Chivalry* 2-3, 14).

Chivalry, thereby, is primarily associated with knighthood and with battling on horseback and the word *chevalerie* embodies abilities required in horsemanship. Chivalry comprised beliefs and conventions, yet, it was a display[11] and style of living rather than a principle, and at the centre of chivalry, there were indispensable traits: fidelity, bounty, boldness and good manners which were cherished by the warrior class as the ideal characteristics of knights (Saul, *Chivalry* 3, 6). As Erol states, "fighting for the weak and avoiding unnecessary violence and murder, fighting for the right, for honour and not for material gain" were also the characteristics of an ideal knight ("The Changing Attitudes" 52). Additionally, pity and *franchise* (frankness, largesse, companionability, and a spontaneous, straightforward, well-adored conduct, self-reliance, and an honest and open attitude towards people) were the qualities of a perfect knight (Brewer, *A New Introduction* 43-45).

Chivalry, then, was the gist of the knightly tradition; it was a means of depiction of the fellowship between knights. Chivalry was also the order and perception of a military class accepting warfare as its heritable pursuit. Indeed, chivalry evolved from the order of personal battlers into a cultivated code with its own ideals. Chivalry, furthermore, was principally military, noble and Christian; thus, it was not something expected to emerge in the peaceful, commercial societies of medieval Europe (Saul, *Chivalry* 3; Keen, *Chivalry* 239, 253; Brewer, "Chivalry" 58; Barron 219). Chivalry in general

might be defined in line with its three main concepts which respectively refer to chivalry as a military prowess, a social class and a code:

> [T]he expert horsemanship of the military landed aristocracy and, by extension, its mode of making war; the class which developed and was at least partly defined by that expertise and its consequences, cultural as well as political and economic; or the codes of behaviour developed by the class as self-definition, especially from the twelfth century onwards. (Adams 43)

Hence, it can be argued that chivalry and knighthood are interrelated, even identical concepts. Chivalry, indeed, was the defining factor of the identity of the medieval English nobility as the medieval nobility was characterised with the chivalric ideal. That is, chivalry was the main means of self-definition of the nobility through which they fit themselves in medieval society (Saul, *Chivalry* 5; Patterson; *Chaucer* 178).

In fact, the exact date of origin of chivalry or knighthood in Europe is not known. According to some scholars, chivalry dates back to the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., referring to the emergence of communal order like the Germanic *comitatus* where a ruler was celebrated for his dignity and bravery and was sheltered by a group of warriors vowed to defend him at the cost of their lives. In exchange for their fidelity, the warriors were given shelter and weapons and a share in the wealth of the ruler. Feudalism emerged out of these kinds of systems which enabled the medieval monarchs to organise a standing army big enough to defend their territories (Rossignol 58). Chivalry and knighthood are the products of feudalism:

> In this feudal system, which first developed in western Europe, the lords themselves owed allegiance to greater lords, and all were bound by oaths of loyalty. All these lords, and some of the men who served them, were knights–warriors who fought on horseback. By the 11th century a new social order was formed by armoured knights, who served a local lord, count, or duke, and were in turn served by serfs. (Gravett, *Knight* 6)

Brewer also points to the eleventh century as the time of the emergence of chivalry when the brutal rulers and their warriors became familiar with Christian doctrines. Chivalry, moreover, maturated with courteous conduct and with a more developed civilization owing much to the higher civilization of the Arabs through the interaction of

the East and the West particularly in Spain. The advancements in demeanour brought about a particular notion of love forming the origin of the entire concept of romantic love. Courage, piety, refined conduct, and love were the components of the chivalric ideal, which was unique to the knightly class, unsuitable for the clergy and the commoners (*A New Introduction 42*-43). Thereby, through refined characteristics, chivalry as a culture on its own covered idealized knightly manners bringing knights together. The knights were warriors; yet, they acted in a courteous way even when they came up against their enemies. In the twelfth century, these courteous manners formed a knightly code of conduct underlying the courtly behaviour towards women. The courtly love poems of the troubadours of southern France depending on courtly ideal and romances gave knights instructions to follow. The clergy, additionally, assented to these lofty principles of the knights and turned the knighting ceremony into a sacred incident with a Church vigil and bath of purification. Although knights mostly had difficulty in observing the ideal, books in relation to chivalry came out as well (Keen, Introduction, *Heraldry* 8). Knights distinguished themselves from the others through these elaborated codes which became more and more important. Thus, the refined manners and how to talk and behave in an elegant gathering, particularly with women, gradually gained significance along with how to use weapons. Accordingly, an ideal knight was expected to show "a harmonious mixture of such inner, spiritual qualities as "triuwe" (loyalty), "milte" (generosity), "tapferkeit" or "manheit" (prowess, courage, Prov. proeza, Fr. proece, hardiment), and "maze" (Prov. mezura, Fr. mesure, self-restraint or measure), and of outer ones, namely "zuht" (good bearing)" (Scaglione 65). The Black Prince, Edward, Prince of Wales, the eldest son of Edward III, is accepted to personify all the traits of an ideal knight:

> indisputably of noble blood; a renowned soldier and commander; capable of acting in the most chivalrous manner, as when, having captured King John II of France at Poitiers, he insisted on acting as his squire. [. . .] The fact that Edward was also capable of coldly watching the slaughter of defeated French men, women and children, while rewarding his supporters with prodigal gifts, all fits with the chivalric concept. [. . .] like all English nobles, he was fluent in French (his mother, Queen Philippa, was French) [. . .] Finally, by dying at the relatively young age of 46 in 1376, and thus never becoming king, his popular appeal was left untarnished. (Rudd 18)

By the late twelfth century, the great lords encouraged the ideal of chivalry as a communal class bringing the men of the same class together, underlying true nobility through their patronage of tournaments, heraldry and related literature. In the thirteenth century, the time of the rise in population, towns and swift social mobility, the aristocracy entirely labelled itself as a separate class with an emphasis on the code of chivalric knighthood (Kaeuper 7). Hence,

> [n]ot all the men called milites in Latin sources were noble in the year 1200, and not all nobles would have been flattered to be called milites or even chevaliers. But by 1200, nearly everywhere in Europe, those who fought in heavy armour while mounted on horseback shared in a common ideology of chivalry which associated them in some manner with kings and princes, and distinguished them utterly from peasants, from whom some at least would on any other grounds have been entirely indistinguishable. (Stacey 13-14)

That is to say, the traditional chivalry or knighthood developed within feudalism and reached its apex in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century as a system of ideas through which the nobility characterised itself and drew its borders. As suggested so far, the knights as the warriors belonged to the nobility. In fact, the members of knighthood constituted a different class separate from the commoners, below the nobility; yet, in the end, they completely became members of the nobility. The nobility kept the feudal power and some prerogatives which later turned into inborn right underlying blood, lineage and birth. As in the case of the continent, in England too, the nobility and knights constituted a distinct gentle class characterized through their authorisation for the use of a coat of arms. The nobles and knights consolidated in a sole chivalric perception which was shaped in war and reflected in literature and in ocular demonstration. Nobles and knights also lived in the same communal structure: they married within this common structure; they were interconnected by bonds of family relationship which pointed to social privilege (Scaglione 17; Saul, *Chivalry* 72). Therefore, as Saul points out, "[c]hivalry and nobility went hand in hand. Chivalry idealised the estate of knighthood, while nobility was a way of describing its social exclusiveness" (*Chivalry* 159). The power of the nobility mainly came from land: "[l]ordship of land and men was the birthright of the noble. It was both a system of social control and a means of keeping the nation's wealth in the hands of the elite. It had

various aspects, moral and customary as well as judicial and financial. Usually, though, land was at the heart of it" (Given-Wilson 18).

Being a part of the nobility, the knights received education in accordance with aristocratic and courtly values. In fact, becoming a knight necessitated good training beginning from the early ages like different professions such as jurist, doctors and clerics:

> Just as jurists, doctors and clerics have scientific knowledge and books and they hear the lesson and lean their office through the doctrine of book-learning so honoured and lofty is the knight's Order [. . .] it would be appropriate to found a school for the Order of Chivalry and for Chivalry to be a science written down in books and for it to be a taught art, just as the other sciences are thought, and that in the beginning the young sons of knights learn the science that pertains to Chivalry and become squires after that, and subsequently travel the lands with the knights. (Llull 43)

Yet, rather than schools, the education place for knights was noble households. A boy of noble birth of nearly seven years mostly was required to go to a nobleman's house, usually to the house of his uncle or a great lord to become a page (Carpenter 275; Gravett, *Knight* 10). Shahar notes that, "[w]hen children were parted from their mothers, [t]hey w[ere] d[i]spatched to the course of other nobles to be educated: to a paternal uncle, a maternal uncle (who was usually of higher social status than the father), a friend of the father or his seigneur, who were often also the child's godparents" (*Childhood* 209). Usually, training of a page includes how to behave and how to ride. When he turns fourteen, he becomes an apprentice of a knight whom he would serve as a squire. He learns how to use weapons, how to shoot a bow, to carve meat for food and how to watch over a knight's armour and horses. As a squire, he might also join battles with his master to help him to put on his armour and to support him when he is in trouble. Prosperous squires become knights around the age of 21. They also learn the courtly code and how to attend noble ladies; how to recite poetry and to chant, possibly to play an instrument and to read or write in French or Latin (Gravett, *Knight* 10; *English* 16). Accordingly, in the late fifteenth century, a royal household was

> the supreme academy for the nobles of the realm, and a school of physical activity [strenuitas], behaviour [probitas], and manners [mores], by which the realm gains honour, flourishes, and is secured against invaders. And it

> was said of Henry of Grosmont, duke of Lancaster (d. 1361), that he took young knights into his household 'to be doctrined, learned and brought up in his noble court in school of arms and for to see noblesse, courtesy and worship. (Orme 49)

The training of the noble boys in different noble households also improved their ties with the other noble men. Mostly boys of noble birth were trained to become knights whose fathers were also knights; yet, there were also boys having mercantile background or whose fathers were lawyers or government officials. Although there were boys who did not have a noble lineage, chivalry and knighthood were still associated with the nobility involving the noble birth or lineage which the nobles shared with kings and lesser nobles (Scala 203; Gravett, *English* 16; Duggan 1; Bisson 102; Given-Wilson 2). However, as Keen argues, "[a]lthough good birth was always important, [. . .] the elitism of the nobility was a matter of worth as much as [. . .] lineage" (*Chivalry* 16-17). Thus, although a man might have noble blood, living a way of life in accordance with his social status is a requisite for maintaining his position in society. Likewise, living an aristocratic life was a social obligation for nobles as they were expected to demonstrate their aristocracy in diverse yet well accepted ways. As much as chivalry glorified the chivalric fighter as he sought for adventure, and he was a guardian of religion and in pursuit of dignity, prosperity, and love, it glorified the aristocratic man due to his social grandiosity, wealth, and largesse. Then, chivalry was social self-demonstration of the nobility (Given-Wilson 2; Kaminsky 703).

The main means of self-demonstration of the nobility or of the chivalric culture were tournaments, and heraldry.[12] Tournaments developed as a separate mode of a warlike performance at the end of the eleventh century in Northern France. In England, it was Richard I who, in 1194, for the first time consented to tournaments in spite of the Church's disapproval. Tournaments were the places of splendid and colourful display and chivalrous action of the knights which was also reflected in chivalric literature. The significance of heraldry came from the fact that the completely mailed warrior needed an indicator of identity on the field of battle and at tournaments (Barber and Barker 14, 29; Kaeuper 164; Keen, Introduction, *Heraldry* 8). As Crouch notes, in the fourteenth century, "quarterings on arms advertised that every strand in the weave of lineage was

being closely woven into the assertion of an individual's nobility. A family may have been defunct, but its heraldry continued to feature in the arms of later generations who had inherited its time-hallowed blood" (123).

In line with its courtly identity, gentility ("gentilesse") was also a very significant concept for the noble chivalric culture. Gentility referred to a multi- directional concept which merged knightly lineage with a noble way of life and manners. Gentility included different characteristics such as fidelity, devotion and keeping one's promise. Gentility was closely associated with the noble class and even it was equated with true nobility; thus, lineage and birth were the indispensable traits of it. Yet, in Chaucer's time, in the fourteenth century, the concept of gentility became very controversial since the social climbers also asserted their gentility although they lacked noble birth. The dispute in relation to gentility increased due to the gradually rising influence of the social climbers and virtue came into prominence in the explanation of gentility (Stacey 14; Farvolden 36; Ruud 53; Saul, "Chaucer and Gentility" 52). Therefore, the concept of gentility as defined by the nobility was of utmost significance for an ideal knight particularly in the fourteenth century.

As traditional knighthood was defined by Christian doctrines, in addition to their military and social characteristics, ideal knights were also defined as soldiers of Christ, which referred to their religious mission. Chivalry was parallel to a religious structure which was directed towards redemption. The pain tolerated by a knight was virtuous and his taking part in a war for a fair ground meant salvation for him. Thus, an ideal knight should be meek and religious. This spiritual perception of chivalry, favoured by the Church, was encouraged in literature as well as in the case of the knights in Arthurian romances. In one of the stories in the Arthurian Cycle which was widely known by the nobility in the late Middle Ages, the fairy Viviane tells Lancelot about the origin of knighthood which emerged because of the original sin to protect those who were weak and poor. In the end, Lancelot turns back to his warriors to restore justice and peace in line with this religious philosophy of power. Furthermore, the clergy took a greater part in military ceremonies, and a bishop became indispensible for a dubbing

ritual (Saul, *Chivalry* 201; Aurell 271). Llull, in his *Book of the Order of Chivalry* states that

> Unto the knight is given a sword which is made in the shape of a cross to signify that just as our Lord Jesus Christ vanquished on the Cross the death into which we had fallen because of the sin of our father Adam, so the knight must vanquish and destroy the enemies of the Cross with the sword and since the sword is double edged, and Chivalry exists in order to uphold justice, and justice means giving to each one his right, therefore the knight's sword signifies that he should uphold Chivalry and justice with the sword. (6)

The fair ground for war which was required for a knight to reach salvation corresponded to the war for religion, the crusade. The crusades, aimed to annihilate the foes of the cross, were very vital to the career of a knight in terms of his religious duty, as the word crusade derives from "the Latin word *crux* meaning "cross", a military campaign on behalf of the Christian faith" (David *War* 74). The First Crusade occurred when Pope Urban II delivered a sermon to take back the Holy Land at Clermont in France in 1095; yet, at that time he did not know that this aim would go beyond the Holy Land and include the assaults against the heathens in another place and even against other Christians and the heart of the Church would be affected by warriors making war through papal approval on the basis of the flag of the cross. Indeed, according to the Church, the most celebrated duty of a knight was to protect the holy places in the east (Logan, *A History* 118; Saul, *Chivalry* 219). Similarly, Guibert de Nogent, a Benedictine historian and theologian, wrote: "God has instituted a Holy War, so that the order of knights [. . .] may seek God's grace in their wonted habit and in discharge of their own office, and need no longer [. . .] seek salvation by renouncing the world in the profession of the monk" (qtd. in Riley-Smith, *The Crusades* 2). Philippe de Mézières, a crusading advocator in the late fourteenth century said: "the first and principal glory of the dignity of true chivalry is to fight for the faith" (qtd. in Keen, *Nobles* 3). Thus, crusading concentrated on the battling character of the knightly order which brought dignity to knights and which was largely acknowledged in the Middle Ages.

It was in the fourteenth century when different societies were first established to maintain traditional knighthood and chivalric values; such as the Society of St. George (1325) founded by King Charles-Robert of Hungary, an aristocratic group of fifty

knights who were required to follow specific customs and devotional knightly duties. After the Society of St. George, different societies with the same aim were established such as the Order of the Band in Castile (1330), the Garter in England (1349), the Star in France (1351), the Golden Buckle in the empire (1355), the Collar in Savoy (1364) and the Ermine in Brittany (1381). Only the members of the nobility could join these societies. Hence, chivalry was protected by the knightly class and almost became a separate culture on its own (Keen, "Chivalry and the Aristocracy" 209; Nickel 213).

Apart from societies, literature was a very significant medium of the nobility to keep traditional chivalry alive. Literature, particularly romances, had an immense impact on moulding the direction of chivalry and for the preservation of the chivalric ideal, especially in the late medieval period. Therefore, it seems inevitable to discuss the role of literature in the development of traditional knighthood. The splendid and ideal way of life of the nobility, in other words, knighthood, battles and tournaments were well-documented in literature, especially in romances and books of chivalry. Books of chivalry display the glorified chronicle of medieval aristocracy with "merveilleuse" (Saul, *Chivalry* 157; Rudd 19; Davis 213). The court life and the world of courageous, refined knights and pretty ladies are also mirrored in Chaucer's Knight and Squire in *The Canterbury Tales*, in the man in black of *the Book of the Duchess*, Troilus in *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. As Keen states, through the depiction of war and tournaments and "knights in contemporary armour, with fine war horses and heraldic blazon on their shields [. . .], [l]iterature [. . .] became a powerful influence in reinforcing and fostering for the secular aristocracy a martial value system whose bellicosity should not be underestimated" (Introduction, *Medieval Warfare* 4). Yet, literature mostly reflects this ideal world away from the harsh realities of life: "[p]oets set the ideal of chivalric virtue against this harsh reality, the dream of the gentleman who has tempered his nobility with humility, and who strives to fulfil his worldly duties and to serve God at the same time" (Bumke qtd. in Scaglione 78). That is to say, besides the ideals of chivalry, literature reflects the conflict between the reality and the ideal within chivalry. In fact, chivalry has two bases: bitter societal facts and elevated fictional models which were different yet by some means somehow concurrent. Thus, chivalry was a concept which

turned into a societal reality by means of literature (Scaglione 78). This duality, particularly in the changing circumstances of the fourteenth century, characterises the life of a knight too:

> It was the tough warrior code of the lay aristocracy. Tensions, complications and even contradictions are only to be expected and should make us cautious about asserting what ‘ideal chivalry’ inevitably had to say about warfare, women, piety, or a host of other topics. Textbook lists of ideal qualities–largess, courtliness, prowess, service to ladies and the like– are not so much wrong as inadequate. They fail to reveal the stresses within knights or the uneasiness over their role in a rapidly developing society. (Kaeuper and Bohna 274)

Similarly, Huizinga defines chivalry as a “traditional fiction”[13] and the source of an “illusion of society” which “curiously clashed with the realities of things” (67). Chivalry is also defined as “a sort of game, whose participants, in order to forget reality, turned to the illusion of a brilliant, heroic existence [. . .] divorced from the duties of everyday life” (Kilgour 8). Chroniclers are other indicators of the conflict between the reality and the ideal in chivalry. Although the chroniclers are expected to mirror an ideal picture of knights; writing history, even the chroniclers such as Froissart, Monstrelet, d’Escouchy, Chastellain, La March and Molinet dealt with the cruel and violent side of knights rather than their refined behaviours; thus, they contradict themselves. Therefore, in real life, knighthood embodies contradictions; on the one hand, there are piety, severity and loyalty which are associated with the ideal knight; on the other hand, there are brutality and greed which are commonly identified with the knights (Huizinga 56-57, 75; Saul, *Chivalry* 4-5). Hence, situated between ideal and reality or theory and practice, knighthood is full of conflicts and paradoxes which were developed further by the changing world of the fourteenth century. Accordingly, the idealized aristocratic world of chivalry portrayed in literature is different from the actual life experienced by the knights. Within these circumstances, the knights of the fourteenth century evaluated themselves and the world they lived in.

The abyss between the ideal and the real within knighthood reveals itself in battles. According to the chivalric codes, a knight should be courteous even in battles, fighting against the enemy. Yet, the code of courtesy was not always followed particularly when

a knight encountered death as in the case of the battles of Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and Agincourt (1415) when English knights murdered French knights mostly with little pity for foot soldiers, chopping them cruelly, destroying the land and goods. In the Alexandrian crusade in 1365, too, greedy European knights led by King Peter of Cyprus fought for booty rather than for religious reasons and the crusade came to an end with the butchery of hundreds of blameless, unprotected people of all ages; the ravaging of Muslim and Coptic Christian graves and holy shrines for their own gain; and the ruin of a wealthy metropolitan city (Shimomura 3; Gravett *Knight* 32; Lewis 353).

Evidently, chivalry, in Huizinga's words, a "noble game with heroic rules" (57), was a medium of escape for the aristocracy; thus, "[i]n order to forget the painful imperfection of reality, the nobles turn to the continual illusion of a high and heroic life. They wear the mask of Lancelot and of Tristram. It is an amazing self-deception" (69). In the mentality of the fourteenth century, the knights of the Round Table, the classical heroes; the figures of Alexander, Caesar, Hercules, Troilus, Arthur and Lancelot were of great significance in terms of chivalry and its ideals. Their emulation was so great that "[t]he life of a knight is an imitation; that of princes is too, sometimes. No one was so consciously inspired by models of the past, or manifested such desire to rival them, [. . .]" (Huizinga 60). The traditional knighthood, then, displayed itself in hero worship and the nobles behaved in line with the heroes of antiquity as if they did not have their individual identity. Therefore, it can be suggested that the knights grew into hybrid subjects, composites of their own identity (self) and the identity of the classical heroes (other). To put it another way, the knights had to live in the blurred space between the ideal and real and had to reinvent themselves out of what they imitated. It is important to note that, the conflict between the ideal and real affected the hybrid identity of the knights of the fourteenth century to a great extent. The idealized traditional knighthood, glorified in literature, defined by Christian ideals, the nobility and polite manners, did not match up with the realities of the world especially in the fourteenth century due to the immense social mobility caused by the significant social and economic happenings of the time. As a consequence, as Rudd states, chivalry, or traditional knighthood, declined in the fourteenth century as many men did not want to become knights because of the burden of tax and requirement of military service; indeed, it was the scarcity of

knights which enabled Chaucer and the like to be nominated as a parliamentary knight in 1386 (19).

Consequently, although the knights identified themselves as a separate class with distinct attributes within the nobility, their position in society was not clearly defined particularly in the immensely changing circumstances of the fourteenth century. Indeed, the position of the knights as a class was ambiguous since medieval knighthood included different meanings and knights had different backgrounds, social statuses, and ways of life. Thus, in a way, there were different classes within knighthood itself. Searching for a certain meaning of knight, Jones states that the meaning of "knight" was flexible and it even became more ambiguous in Chaucer's time. Jones remarks that he could not find a clear answer as to who the knight was or what knighthood meant as it changed from person to person. Knighthood might mean a perfect military ability, the manifestation of good manners and noble action or a veiled type of taxation. Furthermore, "[s]ome men refused to become knights when officially they should have done, [or] other styled themselves knights when, perhaps, they should not have. Some knights ranked with barons and earls, [and] some despised as parvenus" (*Chaucer's Knight* 4). With regard to the obscure position of the knights, Calabrese states that

> [s]ome knights were wealthy; some were poor. Some paid extra taxes to be knights; others were exempt. Some were parts of royal orders and had high aristocratic status; some worked up through the ranks to attain the knightly rank; though in other times, the low born were forbidden to become knights. Some men avoided knighthood but were compelled by kings to pay taxes and arm themselves. Some were part of fervent religious orders, created and sanctified by the Church. Some lived in the Holy Land and established kingdoms, accommodating in "hospices" visiting pilgrims and European knights who came to help them in their cause of converting or conquering the heathen. Some who called themselves knights were actually mercenaries, and some were thugs who lived by extorting peasants. [some were] members of Parliament, or representatives of local government, like Chaucer's Franklin. (2)

Furthermore, Chaucer himself was also a knight as he was Knight of the Shire (1386), a member of the House of Commons and this composite mixture of pious, political, and military characteristics created the identity of medieval knighthood (Calabrese 2). Emphasising the same point, Gravett focuses on the fact that the knights in the

fourteenth century "might be employed as household knights, as feudal troops, as volunteers, or as paid fighting men. [. . .] Some found that running their estates was their main interest. Others became county members of parliament–knights of the shire, though from the middle of the 14th century not all of them were actually knights" (*English* 6). The meaning of knight was not certain in the thirteenth century either, it might mean: those paying knight's fees, the 'belted' knights (those properly dubbed and ready for war) and the local elite keeping lesser lands who described themselves as knights (Carpenter 264). Even the costume of the knights was not a distinctive feature: "[t]he flamboyant fashions of the fourteenth century [. . .] blurred the boundaries of social distinction and status. Writers were constantly complaining that it was becoming more and more difficult to recognize a knight by the way he dressed" (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 10).

The knights of the late fourteenth century, occupying a liminal space between the ideal and real, that is between the traditional and mercenary knighthood along with their gradually increasing ambiguous position, are well represented in Chaucer's Knight in *The Canterbury Tales*. Suggesting a hybrid identity, Chaucer's Knight in *The Canterbury Tales*, is one of those knights living in the overlapping spaces between the ideal and the real in that on the one hand, he is the very epitome of the ideal knighthood which does not seem to correspond with the realities of the fourteenth century; on the other hand, he stands for the real side of knighthood as he also bears the characteristics of mercenary knighthood emerging in consequence of the conditions of the period. Hence, like colonial hybrids defined by Bhabha, the Knight is caught in between since he lives in the space formed by the norms of different knighthoods. Bhabha puts emphasis on borders in his definition of hybridity since they are significant thresholds covering various conflicts and dilemmas as they are the overlapping points of separation and union (*The Location of Culture* 1). Chaucer's Knight lives in this kind of intersection of the traditional and mercenary knighthood and performs a hybrid knighthood. The hybrid identity of the Knight is formed by his double-sided knightly character; one stands for ideal knighthood and the other typifies its opposite, mercenary knighthood. The portrait of the Knight in *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* provides important information about his hybridity. To begin with his ideal side,

the Knight with his son, the Squire, both members of the nobility joining the pilgrimage, are the first two pilgrims in *The General Prologue* as the social rank of the time regulated their place. However, although the Knight, with his admirable biography, is the first and most outstanding character among the pilgrims, his identity as a knight is not so clearly defined (Rossignol 58; Vander Elst 43). Chaucer introduces his Knight as follows:

> A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
> That fro the tyme that he first bigan
> To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
> Trouthe and honour, freedom and curtesie.
> . . . .
> He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.
> (*CT*, I, 43-46; 72)

Thus, the Knight is described in *The General Prologue* as a “worthy man” (*CT*, I, 43) who glorifies “chivalrie” (*CT*, I, 45), “trouthe and honour, freedom and curteisie” (*CT*, I, 46) in line with the attributes of an ideal knight. Accordingly, criticism has considered the Knight’s ideal characteristics as a part of his representation of an ideal medieval knight. He is also described as a knight who never says a bad word to anyone: “He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde / In al his lyf unto no maner wight.” (*CT*, I, 70-71). Although it is taken to be ironic by Jones, the Knight’s elegant language also demonstrates that he is a noble knight who knows and practises courtly manners. Jones remarks that the word “vileynye” is used for behaviour proper to villeins who are not free and are not tied to a feudal lord (*Chaucer’s Knight* 111), unlike the Knight who serves his lord in war (*CT*, I, 47). Thus, it is natural that Chaucer’s gentil knight does not say a word of “vileyne” as he is a member of the nobility. Indeed, to say a “vileynye” word was also a great military crime since bad language was identified with taverns and with dice-playing. Yet, at that time, military service was the interest of the nobility and landed gentry. Later in the fourteenth century, however, due to the emergence of the armies of mercenary soldiers, it was no longer the case. Consequently, there occurred a decline in old military customs as mercenary knights frequently used bad language (Jones, *Chaucer’s Knight* 112-113), violating the courteous manners of the traditional knight. In short, the refined language of the Knight distinguishes him from the mercenary soldiers.

Moreover, in *The General Prologue*, the Knight is also “gentil” (well bred) (*CT*, I, 72), “verray” (true) (*CT*, I, 72) and “parfit” (perfect) (*CT*, I, 72). In the context of his ideal knightly characteristics, the Knight, in fact, seems to be the guard of the Church, the weak and justice and the foe of the infidel (Manly 107; Zesmer 213; Bowden, *A Commentary* 45, Robinson 652; Cooper, “Responding to the Monk”, 429, Keen, “Chaucer’s Knight”, 57). Hence, as Keen suggests, the crusading ideal was “alive in the time of Chaucer,” and the Knight is a figure whose life “[. . .] indicate[s] patterns of virtuous living that are not outmoded, but which too few in Chaucer’s opinion, made a sufficiently serious effort to follow” (*Chivalry* 60, 47). Then, the Knight embodies all of the traits which an ideal medieval knight should have, yet they mostly did not have: he is worthy, chivalrous, truthful, honourable, courteous and brave (Werthamer 16; Mertens-Fonck 110). In other words, he is “everything that a knight should be and usually was not–honourable, courteous to all classes, gallant in war and very conscientious about the religious significance of a pilgrimage” (Chute 122). Although, according to critics, Chaucer’s representation of the Knight cannot match an accurate human portrayal, all of these characteristics conform to the general characteristics of a traditional knight of the time.

In *The General Prologue*, cherishing “chivalrie”, “trouthe”, “honour”, and “curteisie”, the Knight is also presented as one of the religious knights of the time who were seen as the “soldiers of Christ” as they were continually in war against the heathen in different battles to protect Christianity (Erol, “A Pageant” 69-70; Gies 30; King 28; Mann 110). Being an ideal soldier of Christ, Chaucer’s Knight fights against the heathens with his lord: “Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,/ And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,/ As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,” (*CT*, I, 47-49). The Knight did not even waste time to put on a new outfit before going on pilgrimage owing to his religious commitment and abstention from earthly display (*CT*, I, 75-78). Thus, the Knight is the model of chivalry: Christian, warlike, and noble. Additionally, the portrayal of the Knight is filled with the ideals of crusading, protecting Christendom against the infidel in various places of the world such as Alexandria, Pruce and Algezir. Chaucer speaks of the campaigns of the Knight as follows:

> Full worthy was he in his lordes werre,
> And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
> As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,
> And evere honoured for his worthynesse;
> At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.
> Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
> Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;
> In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
> No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
> In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
> Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
> At Lyeys was he and at Satalye,
> Whan they were wonne, and in the Grete See
> At many a noble armee hadde he be.
> At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
> And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene
> In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
> (*CT*, I, 47-63)

In relation to the religious aspect of traditional knighthood, the Knight is also praised as he is very modest: "And though that he were worthy, he was wys,/And of his port as meeke as is a mayde." (*CT*, I, 68-69). Furthermore, the Knight wears simple clothes: fustian and habergeon: "His hors were goode, but he was nat gay. /Of fustian he wered a gypon/Al bismothered with his habergon," (*CT*, I, 74-76). The humble clothes of the Knight indicate his humility: "The 'habergeon' was the chain-mail tunic, [. . .] and the 'gypon' a sleeveless tunic which was worn over it. The Knight's 'gypon' is of 'fustian', that is, it is made of cotton and flax [. . .] not of high quality and it was generally not accepted suitable for the use of members of the upper classes" (Erol, "A Pageant" 64-65). Hence, the portrait of the Knight affirms "a corresponding lack of outward ostentation or materialism: the knight's eschewing of *gay* splendid clothing, his unpretentious demeanour [. . .] and his rust-stained tunic" (Phillips 29). For Erol, the Knight is not 'gay' which suggests that both the Knight and his horse dressed in a simple way, verifying his humility and attachment to his values ("A Pageant" 64-65). Thus, the Knight's simple clothes along with his meek nature are associated with his humility pointing to his commitment to religion.

Taking all these points into account, it might be argued that in *The General Prologue* Chaucer presents the Knight as the embodiment of the very characteristics of a

traditional knight: he is gentle, brave, courteous who exalts chivalry, truth, honour, courtesy and the ideal of crusading. He is also a true, humble soldier of Christ, joining pilgrimage and noble armies and fighting against the infidel for Christianity in various campaigns. Therefore, Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* embodies all of the military, courtly and religious aspects of a traditional knight. Yet, as stated, there is a different side of the knightly identity of the Knight which makes it possible to read him as a professional soldier who possesses the characteristics of a mercenary knight, betraying the very ideals of the traditional knighthood and transferring him into a medieval hybrid.

As the hybridity of knighthood and consequently of the Knight is a result of the development of mercenary knighthood, it is important to trace the changes in traditional knighthood and the emergence of mercenary knighthood again with its specific characteristics. The labour mobility, together with wage and market economy, flourished in the thirteenth century and became a threatening power in social relationships in the later fourteenth century. The change in social relationships reveals itself primarily in the marriages of *parvenus* and the members of nobility. By means of such marriages, people came close to the rank of the old nobility; however, these fresh elites were never completely accepted into the highest rank which resulted in the emergence of different grades in the nobility. More importantly than having new levels in their estate, the members of the nobility encountered a dreadful problem: the danger of losing their status in society or the extinction of their lineage. Due to the changes in the social stratification, more badly than the members of the peerage, the lesser nobles came up against the danger of walking into the grades of the nonnoble. Indeed, the knights were among these lesser nobles as it was mostly not the great landowners, but lesser nobles, such as the knights and esquires, who lost a great deal of their incomes coming from land, the main indicator of being a noble (Phillips 26; Forst de Battaglia 61; Patterson, *Chaucer* 193; Given-Wilson 63). This particular trouble of the nobility was later recognized as the crisis of the later nobility (the fourteenth century) which had its basis in the thirteenth century due to the gradually increasing importance of urban society. The trouble gave rise to the decline of feudal ties and the consequent decline in the revenues of the nobility. In the end, "many noble lineages disappeared and the

impoverished survivors of this crisis were no longer in any shape to take up the autocratic position that their forefathers had enjoyed in the High Middle Ages" (Buylaert 1118). As Rigby states,

> [w]e often think of social conflict as mounted from below, in the form of popular struggles such as workers' strikes or peasant revolts. Yet, in fact, conflict can also be engendered from above by those seeking to defend their existing privileges from the ambitions of those beneath them in the social hierarchy and thus to maintain the latter's exclusion from wealth, status or power, as can be seen in the case of the labour laws of 1349 and 1351, which attempted to keep down wages in an age of post-plague labour shortage, or the sumptuary legislation of 1363. ("English Society" 34)

Indeed, there were several reasons for the nobility's decline in the later Middle Ages. Many nobles lost their status as they could not marry in line with their estate. Dealing with trade, doing manual labour, not taking part in wars, and the abuse of noble privileges are other causes for losing one's noble status. Accordingly, a noble might "end [. . .] up as a nonnoble merely because he had neglected to use and enjoy the privileges, franchises, and liberties that nobles of his region customarily used and enjoyed" (Kaminsky 694). Yet, those nobles could regain their noble status if they corrected their behaviour (Kaminsky 69).

Primogeniture was another reason for the loss of title for the nobles. In fact, primogeniture can be counted as one of the concepts defining noble way of life as it is directly related to inheritance and maintenance of noble lineage through a male heir. As stated by Given-Wilson, rather than forfeiture and bankruptcy, the extinctions in the noble lineage happened merely because the noble families did not have a male heir (64). Primogeniture gained more and more significance from the late thirteenth century onwards. Through primogeniture, the nobility could maintain their land as it prevented the separation of estates among sons in case that there was a direct male successor. Thus, primogeniture might cause different problems for the nobility since according to primogeniture only the eldest son could inherit land and title which forced the rest of the sons to choose a different path to survive, mostly far from their noble background. Accordingly, many big noble families were wiped out in the fourteenth century. Statistics show that the extinction rate of even the peerage families in the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries was average twenty-seven per cent during each twenty-five-year period. From the thirteenth century on, the extinction rate of noble families was about fifty percent a century due to poverty, and consequent loss of nobility, or through lack of heirs (Ward, *Women* 249; Carpenter 271; Given-Wilson 65; McFarlane 59-60; Kaminsky 696). Needless to say, the decrease in the number of the noble lineages runs parallel with the decline of feudalism and consequently of traditional knighthood.

Another significant factor in the decline of traditional knighthood was its becoming more expensive in the fourteenth century. Knights were at the top of the hierarchy of nobility as they came after the aristocracy; yet, their titles were not hereditary, which meant that a knight could keep his title as long as he was alive, but he could not pass his title onto his heirs. In earlier centuries, the knights in England were men who had enough income coming from land to afford a horse and armour. However, "[b]y the fourteenth century this was no longer the case. Any man who had lands worth £40 a year could become a knight. In fact, the king would fine him if he didn't. Yet many who could be knighted declined the honour" (Forgeng 22) as they could not afford a horse and armour. In fact, it became more and more expensive to become a knight due to the development of new and expensive war equipments such as the long-bow, the cross-bow and gunpowder which the knight needed for his protection. More specifically, the inauguration of plate-armour initiated a domino effect of rising costs. Thereby, "a knight-in armour weighed far more than his predecessors and therefore required a heavier and more expensive horse" (Harvey 40). As Llull explains, wealth was indispensable to those who wanted to become a knight:

> Chivalry cannot be upheld without the harness that pertains to the knight or the honourable deeds and great expenses that befit the office of knighthood. And therefore a squire who has no armour or does not possess sufficient wealth to be able to uphold Chivalry cannot be a knight, for because of lack of wealth he lacks a harness, and because of lack of a harness and wealth the bad knight becomes a robber, a traitor, a thief, a liar, a sham and succumbs to other vices that are contrary to the Order of Chivalry. (60)

Hence, since the knights could not afford the equipment of knighthood, "[t]he criterion of knighthood chang[ed] from birth to wealth [which] was a difficult criterion to apply"

(Du Boulay 66). Accordingly, among the reasons for the decline in the number of knights, economic reasons dominated such as the rise in prices which was particularly serious around 1200s, and resultant economic transformation which was to some extent related to varying military requirements and more costly supplies, and to longings for a more lavish way of life. In the fourteenth century, there was a decline in the number of knights from almost 3,000 (in 1200) to 1,100. Furthermore, the increasing expenses of aristocratic image and the yearning to evade individual summonses to soldiery became effective in the swift decrease of knights in the countryside. From the 1240s onwards, kings systematically forced the freeholders having £15, £20 or £40 to become a knight. The novel aristocratic ambitions associated with knighthood and the common increase in depletion due to the development of the European economy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were also influential in the decline of knighthood (Ward, *Women* 3; Stacey 17-18; Carpenter 263). Therefore, in accordance with the loss of lineage discussed above "by the thirteenth century we hear of the *poor knight* (italics mine) struggling to maintain the expensive trappings of warfare, and we hear of many squires who simply opt not to attempt to raise themselves to the knightly rank" (Calabrese 6). Accordingly, in England by the mid-thirteenth century, the number of the knights was just around 3,000, and only about 1,250 of them were really dubbed. Possibly, three-quarters of traditional English armed forces of fourteenth century consisted of men under the status of knight (Kaeuper 191-92).

In parallel with the loss of noble lineage, the decline of feudalism and chivalry were landmarks in the decline of traditional knighthood and emergence of mercenary knighthood. Chivalry, once was almost equated with civilization, was in decline in the fourteenth century which was parallel to the decline of feudalism in the century. Feudalism emerged in a society in which lords together with commoners wanted to maintain the status quo. Yet, in the fourteenth century, various social and economic changes altered the previously accepted status quo such as the Peasants' Revolt, the growth of trade and industry, the increase in literacy, the emergence of a legal system emphasising written contracts and the professionalization of warfare which caused the old feudal services to be replaced by cash wages and professional soldiers. The emergence of market-oriented economy together with the Black Death of 1348 causing

a rapid decrease in population weakened the strict adjustments of feudalism; and service rents turned into payments in cash which were favourable for both landlords and tenants. Furthermore, the replacement of military services by cash payments encouraged the use of written contracts which were called indentures (Huizinga 46; Forgeng 11). Through indentures, in replacement of military service, "aristocratic landholders were typically making cash payments to their feudal superiors. When the king needed an army, he would draw up contracts with his chosen commanders, experienced captains or great lords to whom he promised a specified payment for a specific number of men" (Forgeng 11). Chaucer was also acquainted with such indentures as his son Thomas was one of these new styled knights who made a similar contract with John of Gaunt. The indenture system was later defined as "bastard feudalism" by modern historians as in the system land-holdings were replaced by money, and feudal oaths by written contracts. Unlike true feudalism, bastard feudalism was market oriented. Bastard feudalism was advantageous in that it gave the king a chance to form a powerful army independent of a standing army. Moreover, the service of paid soldiers was not limited to 40 days as in true feudalism; and they might be also preferred for their martial attributes. To exemplify, when Edward I entered into war with Scotland and France, the constraints of feudal ties gave him trouble. However, away from England, paid soldiers could serve him for a longer time if it was required (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 9; Forgeng 13; Gravett, *English* 10). Yet, bastard feudalism had also some disadvantages as it was an entirely mercenary formation which was against the main principles of traditional knighthood such as fidelity, fighting for honour, religion and one's country:

> The maintenance of retinues encouraged the corruption of legal and political institutions, as powerful lords would bend the rules in favour of their followers. Armies raised by indenture tended to find unpleasant alternate employment when they were put out of work, turning to brigandage and pillage to support themselves. Above all, bastard feudalism made it all too easy for turbulent subjects to raise troops on their own account. This aggravated the factional strife of Richard II's reign and helped tear the country apart when the houses of York and Lancaster struggled for supremacy in the Wars of the Roses during the following century. (Forgeng 13-14)

Thus, the waning of true feudalism weakened its main institution, chivalry. In the fourteenth century "most of the orders [of chivalry] and their members formed an

anticlimax, to the ideals of the early medieval chivalry" (Erol, "A Pageant" 63) which led to the emergence of two major types of knighthood. The first type included redundant display of wealth and valour in tournaments and jousting, and ardent fights like those depicted in romances. The second type encapsulated the misuse of knighthood and its power by exploiting it for their own ends and bringing out robbers and mobsters straying off the route of its religious facets. That is, knighthood was not anymore an obligatory tie for the chivalric class as there were knights who had the means for knighthood and whose forefathers were also knights in accordance with true feudalism. Yet, there were also knights who again had the means for knighthood; but, became knights due to their services in war. Hence, chivalry betrayed its own real character, committing suicide by developing into the makeup, the apparently elegant, into collage and insincerity (Erol, "A Pageant" 63-64; Given-Wilson 18; Davis 231). The polarity in knightly values signifies a hybridity, not a total decline in traditional knighthood. Consequently, knighthood in the late fourteenth century came to consist of two extreme poles of values suggesting a hybrid identity.

Therefore, differentiating a traditional knight from a mercenary one became very significant. According to medieval thought the difference between responsibility and hunger for money was very significant and this disparity identified who was a mercenary and who was not (France 1-2). Mallett explains the medieval mercenary as such: "[i]t is the concept of fighting for profit, together with the gradual emergence of a concept of 'foreignness,' which distinguish the true mercenary [. . .] from the ordinary paid soldier" (209). In fact, warriors were already paid before the indenture system, yet "the concept of man offering his services in battle merely for monetary gain was repugnant to those who had been brought up in an older tradition" (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 7). Medieval mercenaries were defined as "professionals who fought for pay, and who were not much concerned by whose money they were taking. Hardened foreign soldiers, not subjects of the English crown" (Prestwich 149). Then, paid and foreign were the main features of medieval mercenaries which were also applicable to the typical medieval mercenary, John Hawkwood (DeVries 44).

Furthermore, in mercenary knighthood, the title of knight could be given by any other person in the lesser gentry rather than king; or sometimes men could regard themselves as knights on their own as in the case of Sir John Hawkwood. Although Hawkwood was the most well-known English mercenary, who headed the White Company in Italy for over a quarter of a century, there is no official record of his knighthood as "he styled himself 'Sir John' and knighted his own followers" (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 7,10-11). Likewise, by the fifteenth century, "the majority of so-called knights had no claim to the title [. . .] And the world of the lawless brigands who went under the once proud title was nearer to reality than that of the genuine knights, with their nostalgia for imagined glories of the past" (Barber 24). There was also another difference between traditional and mercenary knights: unlike traditional knights, mercenary knights had no feudal ties and were in service only in case of war and they also could serve more than one master at the same time if they were paid. Hence, mercenary soldiers perceived war as a business rather than a holy duty and who had nothing to do with true nobility or traditional knighthood.

Additionally, contrary to traditional knights, mercenary knights were regarded as the most violent, disloyal and dishonoured soldiers who had nothing to do with the weak and needy (France 2). The issue of violence requires special emphasis in that it is also a problematic point in traditional knighthood. As Huizinga points out, there were two extreme opposites of late medieval life: "perpetual oscillation [. . .] between cruelty and pious tenderness" (10) and the "same play of opposites [. . .] characterise[s] the chivalric way of life" (Davis 228). Indeed, there was a strong clash of violence with the pious character of knighthood. Trying to find a way out of the clash between violence and religious mission of the knight, the clergymen had restless nights (Kaeuper 65). The problem of violence was a dilemma between knighthood and Christianity since whereas killing someone was strictly forbidden in Christianity; it was the main duty of a knight:

> There was obviously a bit of a contradiction between the demands of Christianity and a knight's job–which was based on professional killing. Meekness, turning the other cheek, regarding killing as a sin, weren't really subjects that were taken very seriously at knight school. This was a problem at the very heart of feudal life. (Jones and Ereira, *Medieval Lives* 146)

Yet, ironically, it was the Church itself which assigned this violent role to knights in the cause of crusades: "[. . .] quite importantly, not until the Church orders and sanctifies powerful violent military men into Christian warriors bound for Crusades do we perceive that odd mix of military and religious identity that we see [in knights in history and] in Chaucer's Knight" (Calabrese 3). Thereby, the brutality of war was in clash with the religious calling of the crusades. The brutality of holy war, yet, was hidden in the terms and imagery of serene pilgrimage. Associating the struggle in arms with the holy journey, the crusaders in the First Crusades (1095-1131) accepted themselves as pilgrims. The association of the crusade with pilgrimage did not change throughout the Middle Ages. Knights would even join pilgrimages to fulfil their main duty, to protect the weak when the Hospitallers were not enough to take care of the sick in Jerusalem. By the 1130s, it was thought that pilgrims required better guard who were the knights as armed escorts and who were recognized as the Order of the Knights Hospitallers (Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders* 66; Vander Elst 1-2; David, *War* 75).

Moreover, although crusading was regarded as a holy mission in the Middle Ages, there were also people who were against the idea of crusading and the idea of war itself. There was a great controversy over the justification of crusades. For instance, in the time when Chaucer was thinking over *The Canterbury Tales*, a paper was hammered onto the doors of St Paul's and of Westminster Abbey in London which criticised the entire notion of crusading and the Church's use of indulgences and pardons to go to war in remote territories since the crusade into foreign lands was not a pious duty any more, yet it was done for the sake of material gain (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 2, 36, 38). In *Confessio Amantis*, John Gower also criticises the crusaders who slayed the heathen for the sake of crusade which is against the doctrines of Christianity: "Let them pass the sea whom Christ commanded to preach his faith to all the world; but now they sit at ease and bid us slay those whom they should convert. If I slay a Saracen, I slay body and soul both and that was never Christ's lore" (ix). Thus, the ideal world of knighthood again clashes with the real world, especially with regard to its violent nature. Then, implicitly or explicitly, yet generally implicitly, there was always violence in knighthood. It was again the refined manners which will soften the violence in the nature of traditional knighthood:

> Showing elegant manners became increasingly important; knowing how to talk and act in refined company and especially with ladies was added to knowing how best to drive a sword-edge through a mail coif into a man's brain. These 'courtly' qualities[14] are of much obvious importance in early European history. Yet scholars have studied and emphasized these courtly qualities so enthusiastically that they threaten to claim exclusive right to the large mantle of chivalry, blocking from our vision the prickly sense of honour, the insistence on autonomy, the quick *recourse to violence* (italics mine). (Kaeuper 8)

Therefore, although there was a place for violence in traditional knighthood as it is a military, warlike institution, there was always a clear-cut distinction between the violence in ideal knighthood and that of mercenary knighthood. More specifically, the violence in traditional knighthood was specified by the polished manners and courtly, aristocratic qualities which barred the traditional knight from extreme violence and necessitated respect, pity and politeness even for the enemy. In other words, unlike the mercenary knight, the aristocratic knight was regarded "as a man of culture as well as a soldier–a man of peace as well as a man of war [. . .] such as Sir John Montagu, Sir John Clanvowe [. . .] and Sir Richad Sturry. Some of them [had] distinguished military careers, but they were also [. . .] poets and thinkers [and attended] the king's council" (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 11). That is, unlike the traditional knight, the mercenary knight had nothing to do with refined manners; yet he was in pursuit of material gain without pity.

As suggested so far, the nobility's loss of status and loosening of feudal ties due to the socio-economic changes of the time brought about the decline of traditional chivalry. In time, a hybrid knighthood consisting of two opposite forms of knighthood, traditional knighthood including aristocratic knights and mercenary knighthood embracing mercenary knights, developed. Indeed, because of the hybrid form of knighthood, the position of the knights came to be problematic. The hybrid knight was mostly the product of social mobility and there were both social climbers who gained the status of knights and traditional knights of noble blood who lost their status, forming this new hybrid knighthood. Needles to say, the well known examples of social climbers who later became knight in spite of their lack of noble blood were mercenaries. As stated above, Sir John Hawkwood was a typical example of those mercenaries rising on the

social ladder in the fourteenth century. He was the well-known English leader of a mercenary group in fourteenth-century Italy; thus, he was one of those "self-styled knight[s] who had come up from nothing and lived without the duties, loyalties or values of the old-style retainers" (Jones *Chaucer's Knight* xi). Indeed, Hawkwood's father was a tanner; yet, he later became a knight and married the daughter of the duke of Milan. According to a well-known story, Hawkwood met two friars on his way and they wished him peace; yet he regarded it as dreadful salutation as peace did not serve his purpose (Forgeng 8; Patterson, *Chaucer* 172) which demonstrates the typical notion of war of mercenary soldiers. Venette also tells about an English mercenary knight called Robert Markhaunt who was the leader of a band of mercenary new-styled knights who captured the castle of Vendôme along with the noble man and women: "Markhaunt, who was not of noble birth and came from nothing, reached undue elevation by steps of this kind. He became a nobleman and a vigorous supporter of the king of France, although he was English and had always been on the English side" (107). There were also knights who were of peasant origin and whose parents ascended due to their governmental or religious services which gained them the position of a knight. Marriage was also a worthwhile means to become rich and possess land (Gravett, *English* 7).

These mercenary soldiers were gradually preferred by the lords rather than knights, turning the medieval warrior simply into a reminiscence. Knighthood was not any more given to only the sons of knights. It became a title proper to people who according to the king deserved acknowledgement (Gravett, *Knight* 62). With regard to the changing nature of war and knighthood in the fourteenth century, as in the case of the Battle of Crecy of 1346, one of the main battles of the Hundred Years War, Bishop states that war "became [. . .] a rather dirty business [. . .] [with] contract armies, [. . .] without concern for nationality. The knights [. . .] fought no longer from feudal obligation and loyalty but for advantage. Their dream was to capture and hold some noble for an enormous ransom" (*The Horizon* 385). In fact, the brutal realities of war in the late Middle Ages, partly due to the technical developments such as the archer, pikeman and gunner, are in clash with the old aristocratic knightly values and these realities made the nobility aware of the falsehood and pointlessness of their ideal. Additionally, there is

enough proof to support that in the late fourteenth century, chivalric identity was beginning to be regarded as insufficient even by the ruling order (Huizinga 90; Patterson, *Chaucer* 178). The traditional knighthood, hence, based on true feudalism, shaped by Christian doctrines, noble birth, courtly manners and spiritual qualities such as loyalty and generosity almost came to an end in the fourteenth century, paving the way to a hybrid knighthood.

The hybrid status of the traditional knight developed further after the mercenary knight became an indispensible part of medieval armies. By the end of the thirteenth century, mercenary soldiers constituted a typical part of armies whether having a ruler or not. One of the best known bands of mercenary soldiers was the Catalan Company which was active in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The fourteenth century, specifically, was a period of immense transformation with regard to the English knight. In 1300, the military forces were comprised mainly of men who assembled in accordance with the feudal obligations. Yet, by 1400 the monarch could order a military force of professional soldiers who were chiefly organized by covenant and paid in advance. Thus, in the fourteenth century, the mercenary soldiers comprised the backbone of the army (Mallett 217; Gravett, *English* 4; Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 12) which meant that the knights of noble birth fought side by side with the mercenaries. However, there was a more vital point for the aristocratic knight: rather than joining a war along with mercenary soldiers, they themselves had to turn into mercenaries to be able to survive and this is the very point where their hybridity begins.

As France points out, although a space between the aristocratic warriors and the mercenaries was highlighted, "[somewhere in that grey and uncertain gap a man became a mercenary, but quite where the change took place is uncertain. [Thus, it was] a world where a landed knight might serve both as a vassal and as a paid man, [which] is hardly surprising" (11-12). Emphasising the turmoil in the armies in medieval Europe, France further states that even the indentured English soldiers joining the Hundred Year Wars was quite similar to the paid mercenary soldiers who destroyed Italy in the fourteenth century since they generally disregarded official regulations and fought for themselves in the same cruel manner (12). Therefore, due to the increasing power of the mercenary

armies, the mercenaries were presented in literature such as Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue*, and those were the "paid killers hid[e] behind the plate mail of romance literature and noble birth" (Frank, "The Knight Dismounted" 11). In fact, in this "grey and uncertain gap" in France's words, these knights of noble birth turned into hybrids. Knights, hence, came to occupy a position similar to Bhabha's border which is "an in-between site of transition: the beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past [. . .] [which] produce[s] complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (*The Location of Culture* 1). The aristocratic knights had to live in these merging points or in-between spaces to continue to live. Social mobility, as stated, was not always upward mobility bringing about social climbers attaining the status of a knight. There were also people who could lose their noble status if they could not keep a way of living proper to their position and the traditional knights belong to this group. There, hence, was the blurring of the boundaries between knights and the rich people in the fourteenth century since knights could be distinguished from the well-to-do and influential men of the time only by their noble descent and military service to the king. However, in time, it was no longer possible to distinguish merchants from gentils. The status and authority of merchants became equal to that of knights, some merchants of status became knights, marriage brought gentil and merchant families together; and knights engaged in a great range of mercantile activities. Consequently, knights without land directly became less significant than the men with land (Keen, *English Society* 14-23; Phillips 30; Crouch 247), the main factor that contributed to a knight's loss of his status. In relation to the changing roles between the knights and the wealthy men without noble lineage, Langland writes, "And cobblers and their sons [have become] knights on payment of silver,/ And lords' sons their labourers, pawning their lands" ("The Autobiographical Episode", *Piers Plowman* 72-73). Langland's words clearly indicate the radical social mobility and changing power relations in the late fourteenth century which did not offer a wide range of options to the noble knights.

The noble knights losing their status and wealth had two options. The first option was crusading. Although the ideal of crusading was waning in the late Middle Ages, a startling number of English nobles of fourteenth-century England took part in the battle

against the heathen in various places such as southern Spain, Prussia and Poland. The second option was to join mercenary life and mostly those who could not inherit a considerable mass of land took this option. Thus, many young English nobles joined the gangs or "Free Companies" in the fourteenth century. Yet, there were also different chances for young nobles who wanted to pursue a military career. They could join French and Scottish wars of the fourteenth century in the paid service of either the king himself or one of his noble henchmen. In fact, due to the great number of nobles who joined mercenary activities in the fourteenth century, wars of the time were termed noble trades done by mercenaries. Most nobles of the late medieval period kept humble possessions and they needed extra income. Their income was reduced by wars, plague and extremely high ransoms asked for prisoners of war; thus, the nobles had enough grounds to live in a noble way by asking for loot and payment in warfare or by gaining royal favour along with pensions and salaries. It was also certain that the petty nobles of dubious nobility had to possess a noble way of life to persuade people that they were noble. Consequently, to survive, some knights started to serve their superiors, some preferred to establish marriage ties with rich peasants, some went to towns and were engaged in trade whose compatibility with the nobility were questionable (Given-Wilson 6; David *War* 92; Kaminsky 703; Stacey 16).

That is how the knights of the fourteenth century were caught in the middle of the two extremes, traditional knighthood and mercenary knighthood, and had to develop a hybrid identity. We can observe this in-betweenness and hybridity in Chaucer's Knight as he is a knight neither totally included nor completely excluded from both spaces. In other words, the Knight in *The General Prologue*, keeps, as argued above, the characteristics of the traditional knighthood; yet, he also embodies the very traits of mercenary knighthood. It is important to note that there are some critics who completely reject the reading of the Knight as a mercenary soldier. Morgan, for instance, remarks, "[t]he claim that the Knight is a mercenary without morals or scruples is a contradiction of all the explicit assurances of the text and also of the very structure of *The General Prologue* as a whole" ("Moral and Social Identity" 300). Similarly, according to Pratt, Chaucer's account of the Knight's fighting for the infidels, against the ideals of the traditional knighthood, may not have a derogatory meaning since at that time there were

crusaders who had to join this type of battles to earn enough money to return home (125). Yet, that the knights had to go mercenary obviously demonstrates the dilemma and consequent hybrid identity of the aristocratic knights who were obliged to participate in mercenary armies in order to maintain their position as represented in Chaucer's Knight.

However, rather than as a representative of a hybrid knight, Chaucer criticism has mainly analysed Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* as an ideal knight, as discussed above, or a mercenary soldier. As suggested above, mercenaries were regarded hired assassins, as they had no ties with the countries they fought for and there was no need for them to be just or merciful. They were mostly looters and used violence as in the Massacre of Magdeburg during the Thirty Years War (David, *War* 92-93). In fact, the main figure who associates Chaucer's Knight with these kinds of mercenaries is Terry Jones. Jones identifies Chaucer's Knight with those mercenary soldiers who, as David states, "is loyal to whoever pays him [. . .] just like "Bartolomeo Colleoni, a *candottiere* (contractor) who fought in the 15th century wars between Milan and Venice–and served both sides at different times" (*War* 92). Jones argues that Chaucer modelled his Knight on Sir John Hawkwood, who degraded the very notion of knighthood (*Chaucer's Knight* xiv, 24). When Chaucer met Hawkwood in one of his journeys to Lombardy in 1378, he was with Sir Edward (de) Berkeley and they went to Lombardy to visit Bernabò Visconti, lord of Milan, and his son-in-law, the English mercenary Sir John Hawkwood. He fought at Crécy in 1346 and was knighted at Poitiers in 1356 (Morgan, "The Worthiness" 127).

In fact, two main features in the portrait of the Knight in *The General Prologue* present him as a mercenary: his clothing and the military campaigns he joined. As stated above, the Knight is depicted wearing: "Of fustian [. . .] a gypon/ Al bismotered with his habergeon" (*CT*, I, 75-76). Contrary to the aforementioned view that the Knight's simple clothing reflects his humility and lack of worldly pretension, as Jones claims, Chaucer's description of the Knight's clothing is in line with the clothing of the professional soldiers of his time as he wears the fustian jupon which "was a thick padded garment, worn for defence and not display. It would carry no armorial bearings,

and was favoured by the English free companies in Italy because it was lighter than plate armour" (*Chaucer's Knight* xii-xiii). Indeed, that the Knight's jupon is stained, "bismotered" without any heraldic sign is not suitable for an aristocratic knight who is expected to follow chivalric culture, the culture of display. As Jones suggests, "[a] dirty tunic is, of course, a rather odd attribute to give to any military hero–a smart turn-out has always been de rigueur for soldiers and still is. It is even odder to make it, as Chaucer does, the only aspect of his appearance worthy of our attention" (*Chaucer's Knight* xiii- xiv). The uniform of the medieval soldier was also socially significant; thus, the knight, having no markings on his attire such as the cross of the holy crusade or coat of arms, proves that he is a professional soldier. The Knight's coming "late [. . .] from his viage," (*CT*, I, 77), in a simple rust-stained habergeon also demonstrates that he hardly ever takes off his armour and it is another proof of his mercenary position (Echols 86). Hence, it might be argued that the clothing of the Knight is not in line with ostentatious clothes of the highest quality of the traditional knight, which was a sign of his noble status.

As Jones further explains, the Knight's dirty tunic means that the Knight did not wear anything between his chain mail and his jupon. A noble man, yet, was expected to wear a coat of plates over his habergeon and under his jupon, on which there should be his coat of arms. However, it was only the mercenaries like the professional soldiers of Hawkwood's White Company who did not prefer heavy plate armours, and wore chain mail and fustian jupon for swiftness. Furthermore, in Chaucer's day an armed soldier on horseback without a coat of arms created horror and doubt. Additionally, the Knight's military campaigns share more similarities with the campaigns of the mercenaries who terrorized Europe in the fourteenth century rather than the campaigns of a Christian knight who follows the ideals of chivalry (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* xiv, xiii, 2). The Knight is, therefore, not a "parfit gentil knight" (*CT*, I, 72) as he is in the service of a heathen like many of the mercenary knights of his time:

> This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
> Somtyme with the lord of Palatye
> Agayn another hethen in Turkye;
> And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
> (*CT*, I, 64-67)

Palatye (Palatia) was one of the many Turkish beghliks which gained independence from the extending Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth century. Accordingly, in the fourteenth century there was a continual rivalry between Palatye and the nearby beghlik of Menteshe; thus, it is possible that the Knight took part in this conflict when he joined the war with the Lord of Palatye. In fact, the Knight took part in a war on the side of one heathen against another since in 1365 the Lord of Palatye signed a treaty with Peter of Cyprus. Peter of Cyprus, furthermore, was also a mercenary leader who was rampaging and looting all along the coastline of Asia Minor (Gibbons 277; Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 87-88; Umunç 1-3; Bowden, *A Commentary* 58).[15] Moreover, there were many Christian knights in the Maghrib in Chaucer's time and they fought for different infidel rulers, for Moorish warlords for money and Chaucer's Knight might be one of those Christian knights (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* ix; Daniel 68). Hence, reading the Knight's portrait in *The General Prologue* as a mercenary soldier demonstrates that, unlike a traditional knight, his campaigns have nothing to do with the crusades. The Knights expeditions to Alexandria and Russia verify that the Knight is a mercenary soldier as well. The Siege of Alexandria in 1365 led by King Peter of Cyprus betrays the idea of crusading as the knights killed even Christians for the sake of money and plundering and it was like a massacre rather than a chivalric war:

> Alexandria had a large Christian population and a flourishing trade with all Western Europe–being, among other things, the centre of the important spice trade. [. . .] When Peter of Cyprus's armada turned up in the Old Harbour in 1365, the unsuspecting citizens of Alexandria assumed it to be an unusually large merchant fleet. By the time they realized their mistake, it was too late. (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 43-44)

Furthermore, unlike Prussia and Lithuania, there was no crusading activity in "Ruce" (Russia) in Chaucer's day as by that time Russia was a Christian country, but Chaucer's Knight fought in Russia. Then, the campaigns which the Knight joined were more in line with the massacre and pillaging as in the Siege of Alexandria which is known for the dishonour of the English knights who joined the siege and betrayed the very idea of chivalry (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 56; Frank, "The Knight Dismounted" 11; Huppe 31; Patterson, *Chaucer* 79; Vander Elst 8). It is also necessary to note that although it was essential for a knight of the fourteenth century to fight in the Hundred Years Wars, the

Knight's campaigns were not fought for his own country. Chaucer's Knight is a man who does not seem to have a connection with late fourteenth-century England since he did not take part in any of the French or Spanish expeditions of his time. Thus, the Knight's being out of the campaigns of the Hundred Years War and instead his joining only in the expeditions which were against the infidels contradicts the very ideals of a traditional fourteenth century knight as he does not help his own country. Accordingly, embodying the characteristics of mercenaries, Chaucer's Knight symbolises the eventual corruption of Christian or traditional chivalry (Gravett, *English* 45, Bell 310; Marti 155).

Besides his clothes and expeditions, Chaucer's Knight does not display many crucial characteristics of traditional nobility such as managing estates and manors and the consequent financial gain, judicial power over a specific territory and controlling villeins and serfs. Moreover, generosity was an indispensable characteristic of the nobility, which almost became a kind of tradition in the noble sphere. Generosity along with self-display was so significant for the nobility that to maintain his status and influence the noble man had to show his riches through astounding display and hospitality, watching out his every action (Dyer, *Everyday Life* xii; Robertson, "The Probable Date" 430; Embleton and Howe 18). The portrait of the Knight, yet, does not mention such characteristics. What is more, unlike a traditional knight, Chaucer's Knight has neither war equipments nor land. The Knight, indeed, might be a victim of primogeniture and needed to find different means to survive such as, as suggested above, to join free companies led by knightly bandits as in the case of the Folevilles and Coterels in the 1320s and 1330s (Given-Wilson 65; Gravett, *English* 7). Within this context, the Knight becomes a noble hybrid having mercenary values due to downward social mobility. The Knight listening to the stories of the Monk finds them too depressing and wants to hear stories of men who rise on the social ladder rather than those who descend:

> "Hoo! "quod the Knyght, "good sire, namoore of this!
> That ye han seyd is right ynough, ywis,
> And muchel moore; for litel hevynesse
> Is right ynough to muche folk, I gesse.
> I seye for me, it is a greet disese,

> Whereas men han been in greet welthe and ese,
> To heeren of hire sodeyn fal, allas!
> And the contrarie is joye and greet solas,
> As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,
> And clymbeth up and wexeth fortunat,
> And there abideth in prosperitee.
> Swich thyng is gladsom, as it thynketh me,
> And of swich thyng were goodly for to telle."
> (*CT*, VII, 2767-79)

Although the Knight is speaking of the wheel of fortune, the words of the Knight are also proper for a member of the nobility, who used to possess wealth and was for self-display; yet, deprived of them due to downward social mobility. In the light of this information, it can be argued that Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* maintains a hybrid identity with his Bhabhanian liminal presence since he is neither a completely traditional knight nor a real mercenary soldier. On the one hand, the Knight bears the traits of a traditional knight; on the other hand, he possesses the very characteristics of a mercenary soldier of the fourteenth century. Thus, in Bhabha's terms, the Knight lives in an in-between location of transition, not a totally new or old sphere, where the Knight is both insider and outsider; and develops his new identity in between (*The Location of Culture* 1). It is important to note that the hybridity of the Knight is a natural consequence of the hybridity of knighthood in the fourteenth century based on two polar opposites, which is again a direct result of the changes in knighthood due to social mobility and weakening of feudalism.

The Knight's Tale, too, portrays the Knight's hybridity by means of the hybrid identity of knighthood and of knights of the period. That is, *The Knight's Tale* presents the changes in knighthood in the fourteenth century and its consequent hybrid identity through the conflict between and within its noble characters: the Duke Theseus and two noble knights, Palamon and Arcite. The *Knight's Tale* introduces a detailed depiction of knighthood, noble way of life in the period in which it was written. Muscatine describes *The Knight's Tale* as "Chaucer's only complete, free-standing, unqualified treatment of the noble life" (*Poetry and Crisis* 125). In fact, in general terms, the *Tale* mirrors the life of those at the top of the society and it gives a portrayal of the politics of late fourteenth century which was full of political discord underlined by kingship and

despotism, fighting in unfamiliar land, interior order, marriage as a means of negotiation, and the difficulty of reaching a harmony between fairness and pity (Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 2-3) which are very significant issues in terms of the order in society as in the *Tale*.

More specifically, in the portrait and tale of the Knight, Chaucer depicts the clash between the commoners and magnates, the consequent Peasants' Revolt and the possible solution to bring peace both to the commoners and nobility. In this respect, Chaucer introduces the Miller's and Reeve's tales as opposing tales to the Knight's tale to underline England's interior disorder and to put forward possible ways of justice and order in society (Olson, The Canterbury Tales 50). The themes of order, disorder, justice, peace, war and the clash between the commoners and nobility are of utmost significance in *The Knight's Tale* in that they stand for the clash between the old, traditional noble values and new mercenary values of knighthood. In other words, it is through order and challenges to the order we observe the hybrid identity of knighthood. Thus, analysing *The Knight's Tale* in relation to its themes sheds light on the hybrid character of the knighthood of the time and consequently of the Knight.

Indeed, the conflict between order and disorder is the central theme of *The Knight's Tale* which reflects the confrontation between the representatives of the old values and order of the medieval society shaped by feudalism and the three estate structure and those who disrupt the structure of feudalism and the three estates, owing to social mobility, and become a threat to order (Muscatine, "Order and Disorder" 929; Phillips 46). That is to say, in *The Knight's Tale*, there is a conflict between the old and new order or in a sense order and disorder. As Woods points out, in *The Knight's Tale*, "hierarchy [. . .] is restated" and "a universal order manifests itself in chivalry, but much more profoundly in nature, guiding princes and lovers, settling the fate of men and cities" (*Chaucer and the Country* 303). To put it another way, contrary to the corruption in the three estates structure, the *Tale* suggests an order and hierarchy in society represented by chivalry or the nobility. This order represented by the nobility in the *Tale* is even underlined by the harmony or the structure of the *Tale*. There are two knights with similar status, trying to gain the hand of the same lady, two parallel gods Venus

(Palamon) and Mars (Arcite) together with Diana (Emelye) which are under the authority of Saturn (Theseus) (Stevens 134).

Thus, the tale is told by a knight who himself directly stands for authority and social order working for the society to rectify people. The Knight's aim is to display that although Palamon and Arcite, the personifications of disorder, could get away from prison, they cannot do away with chivalric structures and order and in the end, they yield to order, to Theseus who draws the proper ending for them. Therefore, *The Knight's Tale*, through its emphasis on order, presents an account of the main ideology of its day, the ideology of feudalism and the three estates guarded by the nobility. Yet, although the main theme of *The Knight's Tale* is order, it is based on opposites as well: Love involves conformity and distress all together; war is a source of both dignity and devastation. There are two cities, Thebes and Athens, and planets, Venus and Mars contrasted with each other (Phillips 31, 47-48; Patterson, *Chaucer* 208; Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 8). This blend of opposites, indeed, suggests the hybrid identity of the knighthood of the late fourteenth century which indicates the composite of different values and norms of the traditional and mercenary knighthood throughout the *Tale* by means of conflicts and search for an order within the world of the nobility.

The Knight's Tale, hence, displays a "mixture of manners [and] the confusion of times [. . .] in almost every page" (Warton 367). Many modern readers find *The Knight's Tale* the most displeasing since everything related to tale–the peace, the chivalric code, the agony of love, the clash of lovers and the decease of one, and the convivial rule of Theseus–are disagreeable (Brewer, *A New Introduction* 164-165). Then, order and disorder in the *Tale* are in a sense intertwined as in the case of the traditional and mercenary knighthood of the time, which might be associated with order and disorder in the *Tale*, respectively. In other words, the unpleasing world of the *Tale*, the clash between its order and disorder or its polar opposites might be related to the dilemma of the nobility due to the changes in knighthood. More specifically, the search for order in the *Tale* might be identified with the conflict within the knighthood of the time, the split between the traditional and mercenary values.

The chasm between the traditional and mercenary values of knighthood or of the nobility is highlighted right at the beginning of the *Tale* where Duke Thesus is presented as a noble leader who defeats the despot Creon and conquers Thebes. Theseus puts two Thebean knights, Palamon and Arcite, in jail. Both knights fall in love with Emelye, Theseus' sister-in-law. Throughout the *Tale*, the two lovers compete with each other to win Emelye. Yet, while trying to reach Emelye, the noble knights, mostly Arcite, do not behave in line with traditional knighthood and exhibit the characteristics of mercenary knighthood pointing to the hybrid identity of the knighthood of the time. Theseus, on the other hand, guides Palamon and Arcite all along the tale to observe the values of traditional knighthood. Therefore, the *Tale* suggests a longing for the old days of knighthood or of the three estates. Similarly, Patterson notes that *The Knight's Tale* reflects the nobility's struggle with chaos or with the mercantile values of knighthood as the powerful and arranged structure of noble life, its honour and wealth are barriers against the menacing pressures of disorder (*Chaucer* 166) shaped by mercenary values. It seems that in *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer presents a world of chaos and conflict due to the social mobility and looks for the old days of nobility when there was order in society and in estates in which all medieval people knew their place without crossing the boundaries. Hence, in *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer asks for the old days just like he did in the "Lak of Stedfastnesse", and in "The Former Age": "A blissful lyf, a paisible and a swete, / Ledden the peoples in the former age." (1-2).

Indeed, similar to Chaucer's concerns in "Lak of Stedfastnesse" and in "The Former Age", speaking of his anxieties about the disorder in society, the Knight tries to show in *The Knight's Tale* that in such a world where there is no order and the "nature of the universe" is "miscontructed", people "cannot take steps to control it or ameliorate their position within it" (Finnegan 298). As each tale of Chaucer displays the psychology of its speaker, the Knight tells about "a knight's concerns as understood by a knight [and] the contents of *The Knight's Tale* become the substance of chivalric identity" of the time (Patterson, *Chaucer* 168). In other words, the Knight tells how the world of the nobility and knighthood changed and brought disorder to the world by underlying the significance of ideal knighthood. Thus, as Muscatine suggests, the Knight is "a noble man of mature years" [. . .] whose story "suggest[s] a certain nostalgia" (*Poetry and*

Crisis 126) for the splendid old days of the nobility. The Knight, emphasising order in line with his responsibility in the three estates, even interferes with the other pilgrims for this end. For example, at the beginning of the story telling contest, the Knight decides about the order of the stories as he is asked by Harry Bailey to draw the first lot (*CT*, I, 835-38). Yet, in line with courtesy, the Knight asks the Prioress and the Clerk to come to draw their lots (*CT*, I, 839-41). In fact, the Knight, as a member of the nobility, tells "a noble storie" (*CT*, I, 3111) about wars, tournaments, knights, ladies and the conquests of noble Duke Theseus proper to order in society. The chivalric identity depicted in the *Tale*, yet, is not purely noble, but a hybrid one which is a mixture of the values and norms of traditional and mercenary knighthood. Thus, the hybrid Knight of *The General Prologue* tells a story of the hybrid identity of the knighthood of his time.

In accordance with the historical and social facts discussed above, it is significant to note that *The Knight's Tale* depicts a knightly ideal which is not applicable to the conditions of the time in that it rejects the decline of chivalry which the nobility of the fourteenth century did not want to accept, that is, *The Knight's Tale* is the figurative depiction of a common aristocratic self-understanding in the late fourteenth century. More specifically, *The Knight's Tale*, through "the narrowed consciousness" of Arcite and Palamon, of Theseus and of the Knight, depicts the late fourteenth-century chivalry which is in clash with the realities of life (Patterson, *Chaucer* 197-198). The common characteristics Arcite, Palamon, Theseus and the Knight share is

> [. . .] the gap between structures of belief and historical experience, between late fourteenth-century chivalric ideology and the facts of life in Chaucer's England. It was noble culture's inability to come to self-consciousness, to rewrite its own ideology in relation to socioeconomic change, that the *Knight's Tale* records. (Patterson, *Chaucer* 229)

Patterson's argument above clearly indicates the clash between the two extremes of knighthood and the identity crisis of the nobility in that the true nobles had difficulty in accepting the harsh realities of the time: the traditional knighthood with its ideals almost came to an end. As suggested so far, this crisis of the nobility coming along with its hybrid nobles are reflected in *The Knight's Tale*. Similar to Patterson's argument, Knapp suggests that although the Knight represents "the authorized discourses of the

Middle Ages" or "the dominant ideology" of his time, this ideology uncloaks its own paradoxes and *The Knight's Tale* depicts the "criticism of the institution of knighthood" (42). That is, the Knight and his *Tale* epitomise "how chivalry has lost touch with reality" and "[a]t every level, then, the *Knight's Tale* demonstrates Chaucer's analysis of chivalry, not so much as a misplaced ideal or as a destructive socio-political practice (although both are implied) but as a failure of self-understanding" (Vander Elst 6). Hence, in the *Tale*, Chaucer examines "chivalry's contradictions both in its contemporary practice and, more profoundly, in the idea of chivalry itself" (Patterson, *Chaucer* 167-168) and this ideal cannot be totally practised as it clashes with the realities of life. Indeed, it is this gap or clash between ideal and real, between traditional and mercenary knighthood which brings about hybrid identities, hybrid knights which Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* personifies.

Thereby, the aristocracy of the time cannot see or accept that it was not the same world anymore and there were other people gaining power apart from the nobility because for the nobility, a world not ruled by them was in chaos, it was in disorder. Since the order is threatened by chaos, a universe not in the control of the nobility, in the *Tale*, the nobility lives in dread of the possibility of losing power and status. Then, *The Knight's Tale* depicts "the collective consciousness of the second estate and showing, despite its resistance, what dark fears it harboured" (Patterson, *Chaucer* 169). In fact, the fears of the nobility caused by chaos are embodied in Chaucer's Knight who looks for the old order and traditional knighthood. Then, *The Knight's Tale* itself symbolises chivalry, a personification of order and noble life which depicts "the *doing* of knighthood" (Leicester 372). Accordingly, the Knight turns into a character who deciphers his social responsibility to provide stability in the difficult times of the fourteenth century (Knapp 31).

As discussed so far, the Knight's search for order and his dilemma between the old and new forms of knighthood is depicted in his tale in which Theseus, representing the order the Knight demands, tries to settle down the disputes in the nobility. Before dealing with Theseus' struggle for order in detail, it is proper to address the source of the *Tale* in relation to the differences between the original text and Chaucer's version and

similarities and differences between the two noble knights, Arcite and Palamon, as they represent the changes in knighthood, from the traditional to mercenary and the consequent hybrid identity of knighthood.

Boccaccio's *The Teseida* (c. 1340) is the source of Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and it is based on a first-century Latin epic: Statius' *The Thebaid*[16]. Unlike Chaucer's *Tale*, *The Teseida* is not mainly regarded as a romance but an epic. Although *The Teseida* is one of the first examples in a European vernacular written in line with the twelve-book structure of the old epics, it still has a hybrid character as it embodies both epic and romance characteristics. Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* is a multifaceted work and it also cannot be plainly categorised as a romance. *The Knight's Tale* is mostly classified as a chivalric romance since it deals with two lovers' fight for a lady and at its heart one can find love and warfare (Phillips 46; Burrow 120; Donaldson 29). On the other hand, it is important to note that "[i]f the *Knight's Tale* is a romance; however, it is not a straightforward one: [. . .] it deals with knights and ladies, love and fighting [. . .].Yet despite some surface similarities, the essence of the genre, what might be called the 'spirit of romance,' is absent" (Benson "The Knight's Tale" 107). The very elements of romances, love and war as depicted in the *Tale* obviously "differ from those found in its source, *The Teseida*, [and] differ strongly from those in more traditional romance. The love that drives the story is far from conventional *fin'amors*: it is depicted as coerced, one-sided, and ultimately destructive" (Vander Elst 88). Therefore, as its source, *The Knight's Tale* has a hybrid quality including epic and romance characteristics which are also treated in a different manner than those of *The Teseida*. Chaucer made several changes in his version. As Jones affirms, Chaucer changes Boccaccio's courteous, well-mannered epic into a tale without noble values and gentility since it is told by a newly emerged professional soldier. Furthermore, through this mercenary soldier, Chaucer created a gloomy world of terror, tyranny and fatality. This world, indeed, refers to the changes in the knighthood of the time, moving away its ideals and evolving into an institution of oppression and demolition (*Chaucer's Knight* xvi, 217).

Accordingly, Chaucer's different treatment of the main issues of his tale such as war and love is significant in that these differences also reflect the changes and chaos in

nobility, more specifically in traditional knighthood in the fourteenth century. That is to say, tracing the changes in Chaucer's version of Boccacio's *The Teseida*, his explorations of the contradictions and the dilemmas within the traditional chivalry due to the emergence of mercenary knighthood can be detected. In fact, the difference between the two works is especially visible in the depiction of Palamon and Arcite. First of all, unlike Boccaccio's *The Teseida*, in Chaucer's *Tale* it is not Arcite but Palamon who sees Emelye first. In Boccaccio's version, there is no rivalry between Palamon and Arcite, in accordance with ideal knighthood, till the fifth book; yet, in Chaucer's version there is a clash between them right at the beginning when the lovers see Emelye in the garden. In Boccaccio's *The Teseida*, when the two lovers imprisoned by Theseus see Emelye in the garden, in line with noble behaviour, they try to console each other. Yet, in *The Knight's Tale*, Palamon and Arcite "fall to snarling and fighting each other, the moment they set eyes on her–quarrelling about which one saw her first. This is simply not the stuff of courtly romance. It is the behaviour of the barrack-room. And this happens throughout the poem" (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* xvi). In fact, it is the same uncourtly and uncivilised behaviour and violence when Arcite and Palamon duel to the death in the forest for Emely and at the end of the fight which is stopped by Theseus, the two noble knights are all in blood:

> Ther nas no good day, ne no saluyng,
> But streight, withouten word or rehersyng,
> . . . .
> Thou myghtest wene that this Palamon
> In his fightyng were a wood leon,
> And as a crueel tigre was Arcite;
> As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
> That frothen whit as foom for ire wood.
> Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
> (*CT,* I, 1649-50; 1655-60)

As reflected in the forest scene above, compared to Boccaccio, Chaucer emphasises brutality and bloodshed in such a way that they become the main characteristic of the dispute between Arcite and Palamon. A knight's love for a young lady is quite acceptable; yet, the love of Palamon and Arcite is different since their love for Emelye is inconsistent, authoritarian and egotistic (Vander Elst 88; Stretter 239). Indeed, the

love of Palamon and Arcite for Emelye "does not raise them to a higher level of noble feeling, but rather lowers them to the level of squabbling like spoiled children, each determined to hurt the other in order to possess not the desired object itself, but simply the right to admire that object" (Rock 419). The behaviour of Palamon and Arcite is not in accordance with the code of chivalry as they behave like wild animals without pity and rational thinking which are proper to mercenary knights rather than ideal knights. That is, unlike traditional knights for whom love is a means of ennoblement and display of courtesy, for Palamon and Arcite, it is the reason for violence and tyranny. Then, it is possible to relate Chaucer's different treatment of Palamon and Arcite to the changes in knighthood in his time and the consequent hybridity of knighthood since Palamon and Arcite are the embodiments of disorder and they do not behave in accordance with traditional knighthood.

Another difference between Boccacio's and Chaucer's version is about high birth. In Chaucer's version, Palamon and Arcite are proper suitors for Emelye only because they are members of the nobility. Yet, in Boccaccio's version their noble origin is subsidiary reason as they demonstrate how much they love Emelye (Jones, *Chaucer's Knight* 173). Furthermore, throughout *The Knight's Tale*, during the tournament, entertainment, funeral and marriage ceremony, Theseus, representing true nobility, constantly underlines the significance of the rank and estate of Palamon and Arcite "For gentil men they were of greet astaat,/ And no thyng but for love was this debaat; (*CT*, I, 1754-55); "Of goode Arcite may best ymaked be,/And eek moost honourable in his degree." (*CT*, I, 2855-56). When Theseus's noble guests come to Athens for the great tournament, he puts them up in accordance with their rank: "This Theseus, this duc, this worthy knight,/ Whan he had broght hem into his cite,/ And inned hem, everich at his degree,/ (CT, I, 2190-92). Chaucer's emphasis on the rank and the noble origin of the knights is also noteworthy as to re-establish the order in knighthood and consequently in society, the knights of noble origin who go astray and act like mercenary knights should be disciplined. Thereby, the nobility being true to its values is essential to keep order in society. Indeed, the significance of the nobility's maintaining its high status is also highlighted right at the beginning of the tale when Theseus encounters the women who lost their noble status as they lost their husbands in war (*CT*, I, 919-23). Theseus pities

the women who lost their husbands as they were once of noble rank, yet now that they have lost their status they deserved pity. This scene also might be identified with the true nobility's loss of its status as in the case of the nobles in history who fall from prosperity to misery owing to downward mobility.

To be able to have a better understanding of *The Knight's Tale* and its relationship with the realities of Chaucer's time in terms of the hybrid identity of knighthood and why Chaucer made so many changes in his version, it is essential to compare and contrast the two knights of *The Knight's Tale* as well. Throughout *The Knight's Tale*, the Knight tries to persuade the audience that Palamon and Arcite are virtually equal (Rock 146). They are both found after a battle lying together among the dead bodies and bearing the same coat of arms and their physical difference is not obviously depicted; indeed, there is no specific information about their physical appearance:

> Two yonge knygthes liggynge by and by,
> Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,
> Of whiche two Arcita highte that oon,
> And That oother knyght highte Palamon
> Nat fully quyke, ne fully dede they were,
> But by hir cote-armures and by hir gere
> The heraudes knewe hem best in special
> As they that weren of the blood roial
> Of Thebes, and of sustren two yborn.
> (*CT*, I, 1011-19)

Two noble knights can be identified as "two versions of a single figure" (Edwards 35) and they are "indistinguishable at the level of worth" (Patterson, *Chaucer* 207). Furthermore, throughout the *Tale*, in spite of Arcite's a number of violations, both knights mostly behave in line with the rules of chivalry: brotherhood, "trouthe", and loyalty (Rock 416). In fact, this ambivalence in the behaviour of the knights, especially of Arcite, characterises the hybridity deriving from the two conflicting values of the knighthood of the fourteenth century. In other words, the Knight's presentation of two noble knights of traditional and mercenary forms of knighthood reflects the conflict within knighthood and the dilemma of the knights, who experience hybridity due to the two polar values of knighthood of the time. Indeed, as suggested above by Edwards, the

two knights might be taken as the two forms of one character and this character stands for the knighthood of the period including the values of traditional and mercenary values of knighthood together, a hybrid formation. Accordingly, the knighthood of the time might be read within the context of the colonial hybrid identities which keep the other (colonised) and the self (coloniser) together since the other and self are inseparable as suggested by Hall in "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" (237) and by Bhabha in "Interrogating identity" (100). That is to say, as in the hybrid identities of Bhabha, the knighthood of the fourteenth century embodies both self (traditional knighthood) and other (mercenary knighthood) in itself as reflected in Palamon and Arcite.

Rather than the similarities, the differences between Palamon and Arcite point to the hybridity of knighthood of the time. The differences between the two knights become more visible when it comes to their love for Emelye. First of all, the main difference between the two knights is that whereas Palamon represents love standing for the entire notion of romantic courtly love, Arcite embodies the knightly martial values (Stevens 131). Throughout the *Tale*, rather than Palamon, Arcite is identified with excessive violence and tyranny. Thereby, whereas Arcite goes to the temple of Mars before joining the tournament against Palamon to win Emelye (*CT*, I, 581-83); Palamon, before the tournament, goes to the temple of Venus to pray (*CT*, I, 584-86). That the two knights worship two polar deities, Mars stands for war and violence, Venus represents love and beauty, also points to the hybrid identity of the knighthood personified in Palamon and Arcite. Mars, to which Arcite prays, is closely associated with disorder and extreme violence in *The Knight's Tale* as well. On the wall of the temple of Mars, a forest was painted "with knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde," (CT, I, 1977) which stand for disorder like the forest in which Arcite and Palamon fight bestially with each other violating the rules of traditional knighthood. The temple of Mars is also defined as a place where there is

> [. . .] fiers Outrage;
> The careyne in the busk, with trote ycorve;
> A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm ystorve;
> The tiraunt, with pray by force yraft;
> The toun destroyed, ther was no thing laft.
> Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;

The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook yscalded, despite his long-handled spoon.
(*CT*, I, 2012-20)

Thus, Arcite's excessive violence and tyranny identified with Mars in the *Tale* might be associated with the mercenary soldiers and they set him apart from ideal knighthood. In fact, the main difference between Palamon and Arcite is that Arcite mainly does not behave in line with the traditional chivalric code or knightly behaviour. The most explicit and vital example of his unknightly behaviour is the fact that, unlike Palamon, Arcite breaks his oath when he sees Emelye. Seeing Emelye for the first time, Palamon keeps his brotherhood oath; yet, Arcite breaks it at once. After seeing Emelye, Palamon prays to Venus and asks for help both for himself and Arcite to escape from prison (*CT*, I, 1110). Yet, Arcite thinks only of himself and Palamon scolds him for breaking their oath of brotherhood and loving Emelye whom he sees first:

"It nere," quod he, "to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traitour
To me, that am thy cosyn nd thy brother
Ysworn ful depe, and ech of us til oother,
That nevere, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hyndre oother,
Ne in noon oother cas, my leeve brother,
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, as I shal forthren thee-
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
I woot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.
(*CT*, I, 1129-40)

Palamon also two times accuses Arcite of being "false" (*CT*, I, 1145) and states that, let alone setting his eye on Emelye, as a real knight Arcite should help him win Emelye in line with his oath:

I loved hire first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my conseil and my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have toold biforn.
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me if it lay in thy power,
Or else thou are false, I dare well say.
(*CT*, I, 1146-51)

Keeping one's oath is a significant trait of true nobility or the warrior class; hence, to a large extent, it influences a knight's honour and position in society (Corèdon and Williams 72; Keen, *Nobles* 45). Through the word truth, the significance of keeping one's word for the true knight is highlighted in the portrait of the Knight as well. He is portrayed as a knight who "[. . .] loved chivalrie,/Trouthe and honour," (CT, I, 45-46). Indeed, the concept of truth was of utmost significance for the nobility in the Middle Ages. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "trouthe" as "the quality of being true, faithfulness; one's faith or loyalty as pledged in a promise or agreement, disposition to speak or act truly or withour deceit" ("Trouthe"). Contrary to the idea of trouthe, Arcite supports himself that it was him who saw Emelye as a woman since Palamon first thought that she was a goddess and then states that love is beyond everything: "What wiltow seyen? Thou woost nat yet now / Wheither she be a woman or goddesse!" (*CT*, I, 1156-57). With his words, Arcite violates the holiness of oaths of knighthood and brotherhood. In the end, Arcite does not take his words back and concludes his defence by saying: "Ech man for hymself, ther is noon oother" (*CT*, I, 1182). Hence, as stated above, unlike traditional courtly love who ennobles the lovers, love in *The Knight's Tale* is almost an evil power, a cause for separation and betrayal between sworn brothers which is mostly observed in Arcite, who violates a significant quality of true nobility or traditional knighthood, keeping one's word or loyalty.

Arcite's breaking his oath means more than simply betraying brotherhood since there is a strong social tie between Palamon and Arcite in terms of family relationship, nationality, rank, sworn brotherhood, and knightly responsibility. Thereby, Arcite does not simply contravene an oath, he rejects this complete collection of ties (Fowler 66; Rock 42). Breaking his oath, furthermore, Arcite betrays not only Palamon, but his fellow Theban knights and Thebes. After Theseus releases him on the condition that he will never return to Athens, Arcite also breaks his oath to Theseus and turns back to Athens in disguise to win Emelye and works in the court of Theseus: "And right anon he changed his array, / And cladde hym as a povre labourer," (*CT*, I, 1408-09). It is again Palamon who rebukes Arcite for not keeping his oath to Theseus:

> Arcite, false traytour wikke,
> Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,

For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood, and to my conseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have told thee heerbiforn,
And hast byjaped heere duc Theseus,
And falsly chaunged thy name!
(CT, I, 1580-86)

Therefore, breaking his oath several times, and disregarding brotherhood, Arcite is disloyal, one of the main characteristics of mercenaries, to the values of traditional knighthood. That is to say, to win Emelye, out of courtesy, Arcite exceeds the limits, plays tricks and walks away from the doctrines of traditional knighthood. Contrary to Arcite, Palamon largely maintains the knightly principles. Thus, at the end of *The Knight's Tale*, Palamon is praised as the ideal knightly figure by Theseus and even by Arcite. On his deathbed, Palamon celebrates Palamon as the true knight of noble blood who adheres to truth and honour: "With alle circumstances trewely--/That is to seyen, trouthe, honour, knyghthede,/ Wsydom, humblesse, estaat and heigh kynrede"(*CT*, I, 2788-9). In the same manner, asking Emelye to marry Palamon, Theseus extols Palamon since he never abandons the values of a real knight when he tries to win the hand of Emelye: "That gentil Palamon, youre owene knyght, /That serveth yow with wille, herte, and myght,/ And ever hath doon syn ye firts hyn knewe." (*CT*, I, 3078-80). Examining the difference between Palamon and Arcite, another point should be noted, when Arcite comes back to Athens, he turns into a servant from a knight to work for Theseus to be able to see Emelye. It is important in this context to underline the fact that "menial labour in the service of one's greatest foe is an extreme form of [. . .] abasement, enacting, in fact, a serious transgression for a knight. [Thus], [f]irst of all, there is the problem of humbly serving one's enemy. Secondly, Arcite is contravening one of the precepts of knighthood" (Rock 422). It might be also argued that working under the command of Theseus, just like those noble knights joining mercenary activities, Arcite turns into a servant to his enemy which degrades the institution of traditional knighthood. Furthermore, Arcite does not only change his clothes and gets dressed and works like a commoner, but his name and identity:

And right anon he chaunged his array,
And cladde hym as a povre labourer,
. . . .
And to the court he wente upon a day,

> And at the gate he profreth his servyse
> To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
> Wel koude he hewen wode, and water bere,
> . . . .
> To doon that any wight kan hym devyse.
> . . . .
> And Philostrate he seyde that he highte.
> (*CT*, I, 1408-18)

At the end of the struggle between Palamon and Arcite, Arcite dies although he is the victorious side in the tournament. Thus, Arcite gains the victory as he prays to Mars, but not Emelye. The critics do not have a consensus about the reason for Arcite's death. Leicester states that the depiction of the wounding scene of Arcite displays the "fatal injury stripped of chivalric glamorising, stripped almost of any meaning beyond the process itself, the insignificant horror of a senseless accident" (340). For Cooper, there is not a moralistic or philosophical fairness in the distinct destinies of the two knights as one dies pitifully, when the other marries Emelye with joy (*The Canterbury Tales* 76). According to Brown and Butcher, Arcite dies due to his lovesickness which is conventionally regarded as an illness in relation to Saturn (221). Baum asserts that Palamon's loyalty to Venus makes him victorious (93). Brooks and Fowler believe that Palamon is morally better than Arcite; thus, he is the victorious side (51-52). In sum, in general, critics believe that the death of Arcite is not entirely justified. Yet, as Arcite is the knight who violates the knighthood ideal and Palamon is the knight who embodies the norms of traditional knighthood, Arcite's death seems significant. The death of Arcite might point to the end of mercenary knighthood. In other words, Arcite does not behave in accordance with the knightly manners, truth and loyalty, breaks his oath, so deserves to die at the end of *The Knight's Tale*. Thus, the knight who behaves in line with the norms of traditional knighthood, Palamon, marries Emelye and reaches the happy ending rather than the knight who does not observe the rules of traditional knighthood. Thereby, it might be argued that in *The Knight's Tale*, rather than the new mercenary knighthood, Chaucer depicts his preference for the old chivalric ideal which suggests order within the society led by true nobility and traditional knighthood and this ending of *The Knight's Tale* suggests the Knight's preference for traditional knighthood over mercenary knighthood.

Apart from his mainly being the embodiment of the mercenary side of fourteenth-century knighthood, the most significant aspect of Arcite is clearly his hybridity. Although Arcite appears to have the characteristics of a mercenary knight as he is violent, breaks his vows of brotherhood and loyalty, and works as a servant to his enemy, he also bears the characteristics of a traditional, noble knight. These two opposite characteristics of Arcite's identity designate his liminal existence on the borders of mercenary and traditional knighthood. That is to say, Arcite experiences hybridity since he is situated in the "merging points or in-between spaces" of mercenary and traditional knighthood, like Bhabha's migrants whom he defines as "borderline community" (*The Location of Culture* 12). First of all, Arcite's noble lineage is pointed out at the beginning of *The Knight's Tale*. Arcite is a knight of noble blood like Palamon with whom he is taken as prisoners after Theseus conquered Thebes. Furthermore, Theseus also praises Arcite as a good knight when he is badly injured and dies after the tournament: "That goode Arcite, of chivalrie flour, / Departed is with duetee and honour" (CT, I, 359-60). In fact, Arcite's taking part in the great tournament prepared by Theseus is a significant indicator of his true knightly identity. In the tournament, associated with true knighthood and order, Arcite is equal to Palamon. The tournament of Theseus is full of ideal knights and a group of these true knights is led by Arcite who joins the tournament on equal terms with Palamon:

> And westward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
> Arcite, and eek the hondred of hi parte,
> With baner reed is entred right anon;
> And in that selve moment Palamon
> Is under Venus, estward in the place,
> With baner whyt and hardy chiere and face.
> In al the world, to seken up and doun,
> So evene, withouten variacioun,
> Ther nere swiche compaignyes tweye,
> Fort ther was noon so wys that coude seye
> That any hadde of oother avauntage
> Of worthynesse ne of estaat, ne age,
> So evene were they chosen, fort o gesse.
> And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
> (*CT*, I, 2581-94)

Arcite also distinguishes himself as a man of noble behaviour when he works in the court of Theseus with his fake identity under the name of Philostrate:

> But half so wel biloved a man as he
> Ne was ther nevere in court of his degree;
> He was so gentil of condicioun
> Bothe of his dedes and his goode tonge,
> That Theseus hath taken hym so neer
> That of his chambre he made hym a squier,
> (*CT*, I, 1429-40)

Furthermore, Arcite behaves in accordance with true knighthood when he comes across Palamon in the forest. As Palamon escapes from prison, he has no bed, food to eat and the required equipment to fight Arcite. Yet, Arcite promises that he will behave knightly and for the duel, he will bring these items to Palamon. Moreover, Arcite says that he will let Palamon choose the armour he wants, and he will take the worse one:

> But for as muche thou art a worthy knyght
> And wilnest to darreyne hire by bataille,
> Have heer my trouthe; tomorwe I wol nat faille, [. . .]
> That heere I wol be founden as a knyght,
> And bryngen harneys right ynough for thee;
> And ches the beste, and leef the worste for me.
> And mete and drynke this nyght wol I bringe
> Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy beddynge.
> (*CT*, I, 1608-16)

Hence, Arcite behaves courteously in accordance with traditional knighthood and wants to fight Palamon on equal terms. The hybrid identity of Arcite reveals itself when he is alone in the forest. Turning into a servant from a noble knight, Arcite first sings and then sighs and curses his terrible destiny as he remembers his noble lineage and old days of dignity. He feels shame that he has become a servant to his enemy and about to forget that he is a prince:

> Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to sike
> And sette hym doun withouten any moore.
> "Allas," quod he, "that day that I was bore!
> How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
> Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
> Allas, ybroght is to confusioun
> The blood roial of Cadme and Amphioun--

> Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
> That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
> And of the citee first was crouned kyng.
> Of his lynage am I and his ofspryng
> By verray ligne, as of the stok roial,
> That he that is my mortal enemy,
> I serve hym as his squier povrely.
> And yet dooth June me wel moore shame;
> For I dar noght biknowe myn owene name;
> But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
> Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.
> Allas, thou felle Mars! Allas, Juno!
> Thus hath youre ire oure lynage al fordo,
> (*CT*, I, 1540-60)

Through this monologue, the identity crisis of Arcite comes to light in that he is caught in between his former (a noble knight fighting for his country) and present (a squire serving Theseus) identities. Arcite has to live in the court of Theseus and serve him as a squire; yet, he also could not forget that he is a noble knight and he should not serve his enemy. To put it another way, Arcite, with his excessive violence, breaking his oath and serving his enemy, bears the characteristics of a mercenary knight; however, with his noble origin, noble behaviour at the court of Theseus, courtesy in the forest and taking part in the tournament, he; at the same time, is like a traditional knight. Arcite, therefore, possesses the qualities of both traditional and mercenary knighthood and lives in a kind of Bhabhanian "third space" on the borders of "fixed identifications" (*The Location of Culture* 2) of the two different knighthoods of the late fourteenth century, emerging from "the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" (*The Location of Culture* 2) of these two types of knighthood.

The hybrid character of the knighthood or of the knights of the time is also evident in Theseus. Although Theseus, as suggested so far, seems to embody order and the principles of true nobility or traditional knighthood, he also bears the characteristics of a mercenary knight. To begin with his ideal side, Theseus, the Knight's ideal noble ruler, is introduced as a "duc", "lord", "governour", [and] "conquerour" (*CT*, I, 861-62). Theseus is depicted as "the founder of knighthood, the first philosopher king, the founder of parliaments [and] a fighter who overcame the Minotaur, a butcher and

wrestler in the *Polychronicron* and in similar contemporary histories" (Olson, The Canterbury Tales 62-63). Chaucer depicts Theseus in a similar manner in *The Knight's Tale* when he is on the way to defeat tyrant Creon:

> The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe
> So shyneth in his white baner large
> That alle the feeldes glyteren up and doun;
> And by his baner born is his penoun
> Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete
> The Mynotaur, which that he wan in Crete.
> Thus rit this duc, thus rit this conquerour,
> And in his hoost of chivalrie the flour,
> (*CT*, I, 975-82)

Thus, Theseus is the embodiment of the ideal lord in the chivalric world whose adventures consist of love and war —the conquests of the Amazons and of Thebes, the symbols of disorder — two components of chivalric life and who through these two vital constituents brings order to the universe which is full of disorder and tyranny. In fact, Theseus is, unlike Palamon and Arcite, the ideal knightly figure who embodies both ideal characteristics of a knight: the knight as warrior and the knight as lover (Crane, *Gender and Romance* 16; Rudd 70). Theseus brings order and justice to society right at the beginning of the *Tale* by killing Creon who tortures the dead bodies of the former noble ruler of Thebes which he conquers:

> And yet now the olde Creon-- weylaway! --
> That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
> Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee,
> He, for despit and for his tirannye,
> To do the dede bodyes vileynye
> Of alle oure lordes whiche that been yslawe,
> Hath alle the bodyes on an heep ydrawe,
> And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,
> Neither to been yburyed nor ybrent,
> But maketh, houndes ete them in despit."
> (*CT*, I, 938-47)

Theseus' killing a tyrant to bring order to Thebes is also highlighted as a proper behaviour of a true knight: "And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knyght, / He wolde doon so ferforthly his myght/ Upon the tiraunt Creon hem to wreke" (*CT*, I, 959-61); "With Creon, which that was of Thebes kyng, /He faught, and slew hym manly

as a knyght." (*CT*, I, 986-87). After killing brutal Creon, Theseus behaves in line with the custom and hands the bones of noble warriors over to their wives (*CT,* I, 991-93). Hence, as a role model of true chivalry bringing order to the universe, Theseus reconstructs Thebes which was destroyed by the tyrant Creon, becomes the leader of Thebes and brings order to the city.

Besides killing Creon and bringing order to Thebes, Theseus brings order to the two Theban cousins as well. Theseus settles the dispute between Palamon and Arcite by preparing a magnificent royal tournament in line with knightly manners rather than a crude fight in the woods, and in the end he brings Palamon and Emelye together by marriage. Theseus' vital role in bringing order to Palamon and Arcite is clearly visible in the aforementioned scene in the woods. Apart from their violence and bloodshed, Palamon and Arcite, like vagabonds, fight in the woods for Emelye without a judge or officer, yet Theseus comes and sees the lovers:

> He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
> That foughten breme as it were bores two.
> The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
> So hidously that with the leeste strook
> It semed as it wolde felle an ook.
> But what they were, no thyng he ne woot.
> This duc his courser with his spores smoot
> And at a stert he was bit wix hem two,
> And pulled out a swerd and cride, "Hoo!
> Namoore, up penye of lesynge of youre heed!
> But myghty Mars, he shal anon be deed
> That smyteth and strook that I may seen.
> But telleth me what myster men ye been,
> That been so hardy fort o fighten heere
> Withouten juge or oother officere,
> As it were in a lystes roially."
> (*CT*, I, 1698-1713)

When Theseus finds out the rivals fighting in the grove in an unknightly manner, he explains his solution which is a "short conclusioun" (*CT*, I, 1743) and plans a tournament (*CT*, I, 1845-46). Indeed, for Chaucer himself, and for later periods, tournaments symbolised the basis of chivalry and by interfering with Palamon and Arcite when he sees them fighting in the grove, Theseus civilizes savagery (Brewer,

"Chivalry" 64; Patterson, *Chaucer* 200). In other words, Theseus brings the civilised world of chivalry to Palamon and Arcite. Thereby, rather than an animal-like fight, Theseus arranges a tournament with noble participants for Palamon and Arcite in line with the chivalric code which turns the uncivilised and disordered duel of Palamon and Arcite in the woods into a civilised tournament and brings order, the traditional knightly rules to noble society. Moreover, throughout the tournament, Theseus avoids the harm of noble blood unlike in the duel of Palamon and Arcite in the woods:

> The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
> Considered that it were destruccioun
> To gentil blood to fighten in the gyse
> Of mortal bataille now in this emprise.
> Wherfore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,
> He wol his firste purpos modifye.
> (*CT*, I, 2537-42)

The depiction of the tournament is at the focal point of *The Knight's Tale*. As tournaments are means of justice, order and civilization for the nobility, Theseus even symbolises the creator who looks for justice and order in the universe and who is the mediator between Palamon and Arcite (King 25; Penninger 84; Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 246; Woods, *Chaucer and the Country* 277). In fact, as the representative of true nobility looking for order in the *Tale*, Theseus is directly presented like God himself: "[. . .] mighty Theseus" / [. . .] was at a wyndow set, / Arrayed right as he were a god in trone." (CT, I, 1673, 2528-29). The preparation of Theseus for the tournament is without equal in the world:

> Of Theseus, that gooth so bisily
> To maken up the lystes roially,
> That swich a noble theatre as it was
> I dar wel seyen in this world ther nas.
> The circuit a myle was aboute,
> Walled of stoon, and dyched al withoute.
> Round was the shap, in manere of compas,
> Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
> That whan a man was set on o degree,
> He letted nat his felawe fort o see
> . . . .
> For in the lond ther was no crafty man
> That geometrie or ars-metrike kan,

That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre fort o maken and devyse.
(*CT*, I, 1883-1901)

More importantly, to make them fight on equal terms, Theseus gives one year to Arcite and Palamon to prepare a team of a hundred knights to join the tournament. The result of the preparations of Arcite and Palamon is a perfect army of traditional knighthood which is based on noble lineage, sworn brotherhood, honour and fame to which every true knight is looking forward to join:

And sikerly ther trowed many a man
That nevere, sithen that the world bigan,
As fort o speke of knyghthod of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
Nas of so fewe so noble a compaignye.
For every wight that lovee chivalrye
And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name,
Hath preyed that he myghte been of that game;
And wel was hym that therto chosen was,
For if ther fille tomorwe swich a cas,
Ye knowen wel that every lusty knyght
That loveth paramours and hath his myght,
Were it in Engelond or elleswhere,
They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there- (*CT*, I, 2101-14)

Theseus also defines the people, dukes, earls, kings and knights, coming to the tournament as a "noble company" (CT, I, 2181-83) and as "*tame* lions" (italics mine) or leopards who are the lovers of chivalry (*CT*, I, 2184-86). Theseus' last action to bring order is to marry Palamon and Emelye, which is underlined by the First Mover speech in which Chaucer emphasises the philosophy of Boethius, highlighting a fair order and accord in society (Patterson, *Chaucer* 201; Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 246). In this speech, Theseus depicts a universe of order ruled by Jupiter, the first mover: "What maketh this but Juppiter, the kyng, /That is prince and cause of alle thyng, /Convertynge al unto his propre welle" (*CT*, I, 3035-37). The speech might be taken as the pillar of *The Knight's Tale* and it is in line with the personality of the Knight since in the speech Theseus deals with how to overcome the reversals of destiny and bad circumstances (Pratt 193, 197). The First Mover speech underlines that the marriage will bring eternal happiness to Palamon and Emelye: the marriage will "make of sorwes two/ O parfit

joye, lastynge everemo" (*CT*, I, 3071-72). Thereby, it can be argued that through the marriage of Palamon and Arcite disorder will turn into order, and Thebes' reconstruction by Theseus will be completed. Similarly, Finnegan suggests that through the marriage of Palamon and Emelye, Theseus guarantees that Thebes will be loyal to his order and at the same time the marriage refers to the reconstruction of Thebes by Theseus as "the destroyed city rises, phoenix-like, from its annihilation [. . .] [unlike in Boccaccio's version where] [. . .] [there] is no such movement [. . .] once destroyed, Thebes remains so" (288). Then, the reconstruction of Thebes is one of the noteworthy changes in Chaucer's version, compared to Boccaccio's *The Teseida* where Thebes is not reconstructed after it was destroyed by Creon. Consequently, in accordance with the changes and dilemmas of the knighthood of the time, the reconstruction of Thebes might be associated with the reconstruction of traditional knighthood by Theseus who wages war against disorder or mercenary knighthood.

Needless to say, the order highlighted in *The Knight's Tale* is a chivalric order which stands for civilization against disorder, in other words, Athenian civilization against "aboriginal Theban ferocity" which symbolises "an allegory of the progress of chivalry, a secular fraternity that imposes order first upon itself–the Order of Chivalry–and then upon an unruly world" (Patterson, *Chaucer* 201). That is, according to the Knight, the continuity of social order is based on the victory of the chivalric action. Therefore, the Knight in his tale tells his longing for a world of complete order provided by chivalry and tries to educate those who cannot appreciate it and speak up against order as reflected in the portrait of the Miller and the tale of the Reeve. Furthermore, through the conflict between Palamon and Arcite in the forest, Chaucer shows us how the commoners are incompetent to administer. No matter what the meaning of *The Knight's Tale* is, it is certain that the Knight tells it to exalt Theseus as the ideal ruler and chivalry as the source of civilization (Muscatine, "Form, Texture" 929; Wetherbee 42; Olson, The Canterbury Tales 70; Patterson, *Chaucer* 198).

Indeed, through Theseus' efforts for true nobility and knighthood, the reader discovers the hybrid identity of knighthood of the time and the aristocratic knight caught in between order and disorder, the traditional and mercenary values of knighthood. In this

context, Hanning associates the Knight with Theseus in that they are both for order and he also "relate[s] the tale's ambivalence about the possibility of order in the world" to "the problematic view of life implicit in a [chivalric] code that seeks to moralize and dignify aggression" ("The Struggle" 537). Stevens, likewise, remarks that emphasising order in society the Knight has "some fellow feelings for the Duke [Theseus]" (131). Hence, it might be argued that both the ambivalence and, in Patterson's words, the "resistance" of the nobility (*Chaucer* 169) to the chaos due to social mobility is personified in Theseus in *The Knight's Tale*. In a similar vein, Vander Elst argues that "chivalry's dilemma is anatomized in the figure of Theseus, seen by the Knight as providing an alternative to the self-destructive Theban lovers and exemplifying the civilizing process" (6).

In parallel with the ambivalence in the nobility, besides his characteristics as a perfect ruler bringing order to society, whom Palamon and Arcite should take as their model, Theseus has an unchivalric side which is generally associated with mercenary knights, tyranny and injustice. Focusing on the tyrannical rule of Chaucer's Theseus by comparing him with his counterpart in Boccaccio's *The Teseida,* Webb notes that Chaucer intentionally makes Theseus noticeably crueler than his equal in *The Teseida* as his Theseus holds some of the characteristics of a tyrant (289). In fact, right at the beginning of *The Knight's Tale*, Palamon accuses Theseus of being a tyrant since he puts him in prison and blackens his noble lineage: "And if so be my destynee be shapen/ By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,/ Of oure linage have som compassioun," (*CT*, I, 1108-10). Yet, in Boccaccio's version, Palamon and Arcite are not imprisoned, but even live in peace in Theseus's palace. Morgan, likewise, affirms that the Knight constantly extols Theseus as a worthy knight; however, it seems that he misinterprets the personality of a tyrant ("The Worthiness" 288). Many acts of Theseus might be evaluated as tyrannical throughout *The Knight's Tale*. For instance, Theseus' conquest of "the regne of Femenye" (*CT*, I, 887) of the Amazon and his marriage to their Queen, Ypolita, at the beginning of the *Tale* is regarded as a sign of his tyranny. Marriage might mean a man's rule over a woman, a kind of political authority through harmony. In this sense, Theseus marries Ypolita just for the sake of authority, which in fact brings tyranny to the Amazons rather than peace (Phillips 48-49). Thus, Chaucer's Theseus is a

tyrant in that "[r]ather than being an ideal prince, [he] seems to be the 'Renaissance machiavel' who is motivated by his own 'will to power' rather than by the pursuit of the common good" (Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 172).

The tyrannical character of Theseus' rule is clearly visible in the tournament scene where he is presented like God before his subjects: "Duc Theseus was at a window set,/ Arrayed right as he were a god in trone." (*CT*, I, 2528-29). Hence, Chaucer introduces Theseus as a tyrant who acts in line with his own will regardless of the well-being of his people. There is not such a scene in Boccaccio's version either. Another significant scene mostly associated with Theseus' tyranny and his act in line with merely his own will is his forcing Emelye to marry against her will. Emelye does not want to marry either Palamon or Arcite and she prays to the virgin Goddess not to let her marry:

> O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene, [. . .]
> Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
> Full many a yeer, and woost what I desire, [. . .]
> Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
> Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf
> Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.
> (*CT*, I, 2297; 2300-01; 2304-06)

Theseus' forcing Emelye to marry without her consent just for the sake of his political authority over Thebes overshadows his character as a just ruler and points to his tyrannical rule. Theseus wants Palamon to marry Emelye purely for the sake of the union between Athens and Thebes to claim his own ascendancy and to assure his own will which are the characteristics of tyrannical conduct (Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 6; Vander Elst 98,101). Besides its emphasis on order, Theseus' First Mover speech is another passage which is largely identified with his tyrannical character:

> Thanne is it wisdom, as it thynketh me,
> To maken vertu of necessitee,
> And take it weel that we may nat eschue,
> And namely that to us alle is due.
> And whoso gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
> And rebel is to hym that al may gye.
> (*CT*, I, 3041-46)

Theseus' statement that one needs to accept whatever comes from Jupiter is evaluated as a tyrannical declaration as Theseus is equated with God, Jupiter in the *Tale*. In other words, any protest against Theseus' rule is not accepted which signifies his violence, tyranny and dictatorship (Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry* 184). Like Arcite, Theseus' tyranny and violence are also apparent in his pursuit of Mars, the God of war and violence. That is, Theseus, carrying "rede statue of Mars"on his spear and shield (*CT*, I, 975) is identified with extreme violence since he is a follower of Mars. Accordingly, Theseus kills the Thebeans and the Amazons, imprisons Palamon and Arcite, and forces Emelye to marry irrespective of her wish. Thus, Theseus, like the Knight and Arcite, is an example of Bhabhanian hybridity which puts forward a new identity formed by the composite of differences and similarities of traditional and mercenary knighthood. Needless to say, the hybrid existence of Theseus, like the Knight and Arcite, suggests the hybrid identity of the knighthood of the fourteenth century.

To conclude, knighthood as represented in Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* and *The Knight's Tale* is clearly hybridised. The hybrid identity of knighthood was a result of social change and mobility and the consequent weakening of feudalism in the fourteenth century which gave birth to the amalgamation of traditional and mercenary knighthood. Accordingly, the hybrid knighthood of the time embodied some characteristics of an ideal knight–noble blood, trouthe, justice, courtly, refined manners, loyalty, piety, pity and fighting for the weak, his honour, country and religion–along with the characteristics of a mercenary knight, which are disloyalty, extreme violence and murder, perception of war as a mere business regardless of religious values, and fighting for his enemy and foreign countries for material gain without any feudal ties. Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* is a typical example of a hybrid knight. Chaucer's Knight has a hybrid identity as a result of downward mobility and he performs a knighthood which has both ideal and mercantile values. It seems that the well-known ambiguity of the portrait of the Knight is a product of socio-economic conditions and the consequent conflicts between traditional and mercenary knighthood of the period. The hybrid knighthood can be traced in *The Knight's Tale*, too. Theseus, and the two noble knights, Palamon and Arcite inhabit a world of two different versions of knighthood which clash with each other. Theseus, Palamon and Arcite, like the

Knight in *The General Prologue*, completely belong neither to traditional nor mercenary spheres of knighthood; yet, they occupy a space formed by both of them. Thus, the portrayal of the Knight in *The General Prologue* and his depiction of knighthood in his tale show that rather than the ideal knighthood represented by the nobility or the gradually rising mercenary knighthood, we have a hybrid knighthood and consequently hybrid knights inhabiting a Bhabhanian third space in the late fourteenth century as represented in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

CHAPTER II

CHAUCER'S CLOISTERED HYBRIDS:

THE MONK AND THE PRIORESS

We have no certain place Assign'd us: upwards
I may go or round, Far as I can, [. . .]
(Dante, "Purgatory" 7:122)

The Monk and the Prioress in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* are to some extent trespassers as they violate the medieval social order. Although the Monk and the Prioress are of noble origin and belong to the nobility as their original estate, they become the members of the clergy. Both the Monk and the Prioress have to exchange a more preferable and comfortable lifestyle enjoyed by the nobility with the cloistered life of the clergy. They, however, still maintain the characteristics of the nobility especially with regard to their lifestyle. This chapter, hence, considers their violation of the estate borders as a form of hybridity. In fact, the members of medieval monasticism were mostly of noble origin. It was not the heartfelt choice of them to enter monasteries, but it was their noble families who put them in cloister (Hermann 69; Hans-Werner 85). Consequently, noble men and women had to leave their secular and noble life behind to live in line with the monastic rules. Within this context, this chapter argues that the Monk and the Prioress are figures of hybridity, who, in Bhabha's terms, want "to be recognised" with their "unhomely presence" (*The Location of Culture* 9, 13) as they inhabit borders of two estates. Chaucer's Monk and Prioress, like the Knight, become medieval hybrids as they move from the noble status to a clerical status without finding a suitable place and fixed identity either in the clergy or in the nobility. Thus, they develop an identity out of the values and norms of their noble way of life and the monastic life that they have to adopt. In this sense, the Monk in *The General Prologue* is depicted as a lordlike monk and the Prioress as a ladylike nun in all respects including

their apparel and manners since they establish their respective identities in the interface between the noble and monastic culture, that is to say, in a Bhabhanian third space.

As it is a result of their adoption of the monastic life that the Monk and the Prioress develop hybrid identities, the monastic life and its norms should be explained. The Monk and the Prioress belong to the first estate according to the medieval estate theory. Within the traditional three estates division of medieval societies, clergy, nobles, commons, it was natural that the clergy was the first estate as it embodied a religious calling which indicated the favoured status of faith in medieval society. The Church was so powerful that it was deeply integrated with the frames of community and politics. Being one of the most significant, prosperous and authoritative foundations of medieval England, the Church pervaded medieval society, its life and culture. The power of the Church came from its role of saving souls via teaching and sacraments and from its representation of Christ in the world. The Church was also a very significant institution due to its economic position in society. Twenty-five per cent of the land of England belonged to the Church. Thus, it mainly provided opportunities to those of gentle birth and the landowners. The Church, hence, was a leading landowner on whose land peasants worked as they worked on the land of a lord. There were also builders, carpenters and other tradesmen who worked for the wealthier abbeys and monasteries and lay brothers who, not completely ordained, yet were affiliated with the monastery (Forgeng 27; Lepine 359). In fact, as Rudd suggests, the Church was a great corporation, "forming almost a mini-state within a state [. . .] [with] its own courts [. . .] parishes and churches [. . .] parsons, priests, bishops, and archbishops [. . .] the monasteries and convents, inhabited by monks, nuns, friars or canons, each again, with its individual hierarchy" (22). Within this hierarchy, there were two types of clergy: the secular and regular clergy. The secular clergy, such as parish clergy, priests and cathedral canons, was close to the world affairs as their main duty was to meet the devotional demands of the laymen. On the other hand, the regular clergy was composed of monks, nuns and friars and they lived away from worldly matters and in line with some rules asking for frugality and restraint. The entire clergy almost formed one percent of the populace. The members of this small population, yet, had a distinctive position in medieval society which was also noticeable in their appearance. They had

tonsure and those belonging to the regular clergy wore exclusive attire in accordance with their order (Forgeng 27; Lepine 368).

One of the most significant differences between the clergy and laity was ordination, a process of seven stages to become a priest. The minor orders consisted of four stages which did not necessitate an attachment to a religious career. The major orders included subdeacons, deacons, and priests which required a complete affiliation of the clergy and from the mid-twelfth century entailed celibacy. The members of the clergy were also separated from the rest of the society as they had legal prerogatives and representatives in the parliament. Perhaps, the most apparent distinction between the clergy and the other two estates was that nobody was born into the clergy. Therefore, the members of the clergy joined the order with their distinctive qualities deriving from their original estate, the nobility or the commoners, signalling their in-between position. Compared to the common members of the clergy, the aristocratic members of the clergy had more opportunities to keep a higher status in the church. It was also possible for the commoners to attain high positions; yet, it was so strenuous that a minority of them could accomplish it (Lepine 368; Forgeng 27).

The Church and clergy as the cornerstones of medieval society performed their duties through monasticism which referred to exercise, or *exercitium* in Latin, in the war against wrongdoings. Monasticism pledged itself to a completely pious and poor life which was similar to that of Christ; thus, the monks were referred to as *pauperes Christi*. The roots of monasticism sprang from the eremities, the monks living in isolation. The word "monk" derives from the Anglo-Saxon *munuc* which comes from Greek *monos* meaning lonely or single (Partridge 2033). Hence, in monasticism the concept of extreme spiritual union with other monks was essential and compared to friars who could go outside the monastery, preaching and teaching, the monks needed to concentrate solely on their relation with God and they had to fight against earthly aspirations. The significance or dominance of the monastic life in the Middle Ages is not something to be underestimated. Monks, especially, on their own formed a kind of third estate between the clergy and the laity. Apart from their main aim, to stimulate otherworldliness by dedicating themselves to worship in monasteries away from the

world, the monks also undertook various roles such as working as scribes, instructors, and healers (Hans-Werner 56-57; Hermann 69-70; Rudd 23; Forgeng 29).

It was the sixth century when monasticism was introduced to England by Augustine who was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to convert the Saxon kings of southern England. In time, the monastery founded by Augustine in Canterbury turned into the most prominent centre of Christianity in Britain. Monasticism reached its zenith in the thirteenth century, each year nine new monasteries were established in the mid-twelfth century and by about 1320, the number of the monasteries was more than a thousand in England which could not have been surpassed by any other period. The dedication of the monks to a life of Christ was strongly supported by the public including the members of the nobility, who supplied the required funds to establish monasteries. Although the supporters did not always actively join monastic life, in return for their help, besides a good place to be buried, they were promised an easy course to paradise through masses and prayers (Lepine 363).

By the fourteenth century, there were two dominant monastic orders in England: the Benedictines and the Augustinians. The Benedictine Rule was founded by Saint Benedict in A.D. 529 at Monte Cassino in Italy and set the first rules to direct monastic life.[17] These rules aimed to guide monks to become an ideal Christian by practising modesty, submission, worship, tranquillity, and withdrawal from the matters of the world. In a short time, many men and women joined the Benedictine Rule, which necessitated the foundation of new monasteries and nunneries and the appointment of abbots and abbesses to give religious training to those seeking spiritual guidance. Indeed, the Benedictine Rule reflects the feudal structure as it orders monastic communities in accordance with certain rules bringing the members of the communities together. Nominated by the entire community, the abbot or abbess performed as a feudal lord and the members of the community served as serfs. In smaller communities, there were priories or prioress who substituted the abbot and abbess. In a century, the Benedictine monastic life became so accepted that it stretched out across Europe. It is estimated that in 1569, there were 37,000 Benedictine monasteries including eleven emperors, twenty kings, fifteen sovereign dukes and electors, thirteen sovereign earls,

nine empresses, and ten queens. The Rule of St. Benedict has been accepted as the most significant record about Western monastic life. In the long run, to be a monk meant living a life in line with the rules of St. Benedict (Spear 2; Hourigan 40; Rossignol 62; Hilpsich 14; Cranage 114; Hermann 71).

Giving religious instruction in the Middle Ages, the monasteries were at the heart of education as well. The monastic libraries kept the entire knowledge of the period, the books related to grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music along with the Bible, liturgical books, homilies, lives of saints, monastic regulations and the works of the Church Fathers, whose dominion prevailed the Middle Ages. These libraries also included books on history, literature, and law; in short, they incorporated almost everything put in letters. Furthermore, the formal education, in church schools or at universities, worked within at least one of the spheres of the church. Thereby, the majority of the people who were in charge of education were automatically associates of the church (Hans-Werner 69, Rudd 22).

Even though monasticism was at the centre of medieval life, the withdrawal from the world, the main requisite for monasticism, required a genuine answer to the divine calling which, as Hermann points out, was mostly not the case in the Middle Ages: "[T]he modern notion of religious vocation as a 'divine calling' does not apply to medieval monasticism, which was usually determined by societal and familial, rather than individual, choice" (69). In Chaucer's time, owing to the reluctant participation in monasticism, people began to join monasteries as a matter of career rather than vocation. There were people who did not fit into monastic life, and ruined its principles as it was difficult and unpleasant to them (Power, *Medieval People* 82; Hermann 69). Thus, it can be suggested that the medieval people for the most part did not join monasteries as they sincerely wanted to follow the path of Christ; yet, they had to choose it in accordance with the wishes of their families or of the society. Indeed, monasticism necessitated a severe life style, which was not easy to withstand. First and foremost, it was the cloister which reflected this rigid life in which the monks had to live. As Cranage states, "[i]n a very special sense the cloister was the home of the monk. It was the secluded centre of his daily life, communicating directly with the

church and the other chief buildings, and forming, in at least one of its walks, the place of literary study" (1).

The strict life conditions of the monks are also plainly visible in their daily routine. There were three basic duties of the monks following the Benedictine Rule: taking part in the divine service (primarily prayers and praise), performing manual labour (agriculture, crafts, and housekeeping), and studying (copying of manuscripts which was indispensable for preserving and transmitting knowledge throughout the Middle Ages). There were seven prayer services which started at 2 or 3 a.m. and lasted routinely throughout the day and evening. The purpose of the frequently performed prayer was to make monks come together and get closer to God away from the disturbances of the world. To produce manuscripts was also vital for the educational objectives of the monasteries which contributed much to the continuity of classical culture. Besides copying manuscripts, some well-educated monks, generally the instructors of the monasteries, wrote new works, mostly by imitating well-known works by the order of someone of a higher status (Rossignol 62; Hans-Werner 71). The Benedictine Rules in 1277 state that, "in place of manual labour the Abbots shall appoint other occupations for their monks according to their capabilities (namely) studying, writing, correcting, illuminating, and binding books" (Cranage 7). Outside the time of praying, monks were working, reading, eating, or sleeping in a stringently specified manner. Even talking was rigorously under control (Hermann 72).

Providing accommodation and food for the pilgrims and travellers, as part of social welfare, were also among the responsibilities of monasteries. Hence, huge monasteries had an attached guesthouse. Monks were also in charge of nursing the sick. There were also strict rules with regard to meals and dress. The Benedictines let only one main meal to be taken in the summer (except on the days of fasting) during noon, and in the winter during nones (3.p.m.). The dietary rules were so strict that the monks sometimes pretended to be ill to eat better food and to have a comfortable bed. Indeed, the strict diet was the most rigid facet of monastic life. There were noblemen who joined monasteries and found the diet intolerable, and wanted to leave the cloister. The Rule of St Benedict is also well known for its rigid dress codes emphasising austerity and

humility. The old clothes of monks were given to the poor (Hans-Werner 72-73, 100; Kerr 46, 50; Koslin 63; Cranage 20). Chapter 55 in the Rule of St. Benedict addresses the dress of monks:

> Suitable clothing shall be given to the monks, depending on the climate. In cold regions more will be required than in warm [. . .]. However in temperate regions, we believe that each monk will make do with a cowl and a tunic heavy for winter, light (or worn) for summer. [. . .] Monks should not complain of the color or texture of their clothing. It shall be whatever is available in the surrounding countryside or whatever is cheapest. (85)

Another significant requirement of the monastic world was related to property. Since monasticism required a life dead to the world, those joining the monasteries had to give up all their properties. In Chapter 33, the Rule of St. Benedict forbids private property: "It is most important that one particular vice be cut away from the Monastery by the very roots–namely–that no one presume, without the Abbot's permission, to give, or receive, or hold as his own anything whatsoever–not even a book, or tablet, or pen, or anything else" (58-59). Therefore, in accordance with the rule of poverty, the monks had to abandon personal possessions since from now on all they needed, including their clothes, belonged to the monastery (Kerr 45). Although so far discussed strict life style of monasticism did not seem suitable for the nobility, there was a strong relationship between the members of the nobility and the church. This close relationship between the nobility and the clergy requires a closer examination in that it is the very reason for the emergence of medieval noble hybrids living in monasteries. As Hans-Werner remarks there might be different motives behind the interest of the nobility in monasteries such as the conventional role of the nobility as guardians of religion and their religious faith. In this sense, the benefactors and their families "laid claim to the monastic life in the service of the Lord by engaging monks to pray not only for themselves, but also for others. The monks remembered the deceased and the living members of the founding family in their masses [and] pray[ed] for their salvation" (67).

Apart from the religious concerns, the nobility were also interested in monasteries as they were politically very powerful. Then, there was a mutual interest in the relationship between the nobility and the clergy. Although the origins of the regular clergy are

ambiguous especially before 1300, in the twelfth and the early thirteenth century, those joining the clergy were mostly of baronial and knightly dynasties and of upper levels of the society. In later periods, the number of those noble birth joining monasteries gradually decreased due to the decline in the number of sons born into nobility. In England, the decrease of the number of the noble birth in the clergy stirred up trouble in the sixteenth century since the members of the clergy of noble birth to protect the ecclesiastics from royal assaults remained in minority (Hans-Werner 67; Lepine 359).

Besides being the founders and supporters of the monasteries, the members of the nobility took active part in monasteries, becoming abbots, abbesses, monks or prioresses. Yet, their secular upbringing as the members of the nobility seems to clash with the monastic way of life. Compared to the life of solitude and poverty of monasticism, the life of the nobility is active and is closely associated with worldly concerns such as wealth, generosity, splendid clothes, and arranged marriages. The difference between the members of the two estates began with their childhood and education. Different from the common educational means in fourteenth-century England such as grammar schools, universities, or the Inns of Court (for lawyers), education was not taken as a separate component in the upbringing of the noble children, and it did not include the trained tutors and formal institutions. That is, excluding the sons of the nobility who were brought up by their parents to enter the church, and who were mostly sent to the university, the young nobles were educated at home, in the noble households which were by all means much more than scholarly formations (Myers 59; Forst de Battaglia 61; Given-Wilson 2-3). The noble household became the hub of the education of the noble boys who were instructed in the manners of the nobility, which included totally different values and norms compared to those of the clergy.

First of all, until the age of five or six, the highborn children spent time mostly with females at home. Later, usually they were sent to other noble households or they were instructed by male educators at home. In spite of the increasing number of the licensed tutors working at noble households in the late Middle Ages, the instructors at noble households were generally not qualified teachers, but knights or clerks. In fact, the duty of the knights and clerks was not academic teaching but the cultivation of aristocratic

traits and achievements. Typically, physical training was also widely emphasised, including training in horsemanship, the wielding of arms, hunting and archery together with athletics and ball-games. Through hunting, the boldness of the boys of noble birth was tested; they learnt horsemanship and how to use weapons as well. The noble boys were also educated in conventional noble pastimes alongside military practice. To give an example, music was a courtly enterprise and to have ability in singing and playing of musical instruments were the attributes of the nobility. The boys of noble birth were also taught how to dance. Chess was also among the noble pastimes besides dicing and backgammon. Among the outdoor activities of the nobles, the most common was falconry which required less physical activity and had more connection with hunting rather than warfare (Given-Wilson 3-4).

As for monasticism, when the children became teenagers, they might be accepted into a monastery. Accordingly, although it was prohibited by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1216, in the Middle Ages, it was common for the nobility to send their children to the church when they were young. However, it was still probable for a boy of seven years old to be appointed as a doorkeeper, reader, or exorcist, and when he turned thirteen or fourteen, he could become an acolyte. Taking part in these minor orders required a partial tonsure without a strong pledge to a clerical career; thus, those at the minor orders could have a secular life, marry and work outside the walls of the church. It was possible to become a subdeacon at the age of seventeen which entailed a mandatory vow binding him to a clerical and celibate life. At the age of nineteen, one could become a deacon or monk and at the age of 24, it was possible to become a priest. There were similar rules for girls although there was only one option for them in regular orders, to become a nun (Forgeng 60).

Apart from their education, there was a great gap between the life of the nobility and the life in the monasteries. As stated above, the monks were supposed to have a simple life dead to the world: living in the cloister without any property, praying, working, reading, dressing in cheap and humble clothes, and even eating and sleeping in a strictly specified manner. On the other hand, the life of the nobility was shaped by a worldly, ostentatious, extreme display with regard to wealth, hospitality, spending, fashionable

and expensive clothing, which Saul defines as “culture of display” (*Chivalry* 52) and Kaminsky as social grandiosity (703). Entirely different from the world of the monks, the members of the nobility might even lose their noble status, if they did not live in line with this “culture of display” (Keen, *English Society* 169-170; Dyer, *Standards of Living* 89).

Although the monks’ life of humility away from worldly concerns contradicted with the nobility’s splendid way of life in every respect, the wealth and power of the nobility turned its members into the most possible candidates for the cloisters. In fact, the monastic society was autonomous to which it was not easy to attach if you were not a member of the nobility. As Hans-Werner explains, there were requisites for admission into a medieval monastery. For example, a volunteer endowment was necessary which later turned into compulsory. As giving up the wealth for those who wanted to join the monastic life was crucial in the Benedictine Rule, entering a monastery, at least a section of their properties was donated to the monastery (85). Gradually, these alms developed into considerable land donations. There were several charters in relation to these donations which were believed to be means of entering a monastery for the benefactor or one of his children. Thus, “before one could become a monk one had to be a landowner, so that many monasteries eventually became monasteries for the nobility alone” (Hans-Werner 85). In other words, unlike in its early years when it was possible for everybody to enter monasteries, in time there appeared “social exclusiveness” (Hans-Werner 87) which mostly welcomed the members of the nobility.

As it has been suggested so far, to become a member of the clergy entirely required noble ties. The approval of the family of the children had to be taken to be able to accept the children into the Church; and for those who were married, the spousal consent was required. The acceptance into the church meant favourable circumstances for progress and reputation both for the children and their families. Furthermore, significant positions were handed over within the same family, most probably from uncle to nephew or aunt to niece; thus, clerical sovereignties were outstanding characteristics of the Middle Ages. Family relations designated which church the child might be sent to. For example, after deciding to put her bastard grandson in the church,

Hildegard Franca found a monastery for him in the abbey of Saint-Père of Chartres where his grandfather and other kindred joined before. Those of noble birth joined monasteries in different periods of their lives, when they were children, adults or old. Unfortunately, their reasons for entering the church were mostly obscure (Livingstone 94-95). As Livingstone illustrates,

> In 1060, Hubert of Saint-George's entrance into the church is simply described "when he became a monk." [. . .] Other elites' motivations are more completely revealed in the documents. Norman of Montoire, for instance, joined the church in the prime of his life after a war wound prevented him from taking up arms once again. Patrick the knight was "touched by divine inspiration" and abandoned the secular life and became a monk at La Trinité of Vendôme. (95)

There were also some wealthy lords who became monks after living a life of bloodshed with the hope that their sins would be forgiven. In fact, there were also knights joining the monasteries in their old age after a hard life of war due to health problems. The monasteries and nunneries were perfect places for those knights as they had hospitals and qualified and experienced healers. In return for entrance into a monastery, the retired knights donated money to the Church. For example, Joscelin, a knight of Vendôme, stated that he could not have a fruitful life anymore and wanted to leave the worldly issues behind and from now on desired to live the life of a monk.[18] Thus, the nobles of the same family who wanted to live away from the world joined the same monasteries which created protracted bonds with the monks. Joining of family members in the same monasteries spurred their kin to make endowments to the establishment where their kindred were monks, nuns or canons as well. The reputation and religious well-being of the family were intensified by these kinds of donations (Gravett, *Knight* 52; Livingstone 96).

Bishops also used to be members of highly placed noble families. The ecclesiastical dynasties tended to pass their offices from maternal uncle to nephew. Although there were struggles of the reformers, family ties were vital to securing an episcopal office or, less frequently, an abbacy. Therefore, bishops, particularly, were mostly chosen in line with their heritage, rather than their piety or possible episcopal acuity. Thus, the family prestige and noble heritage were of utmost significance in entering the church. Indeed,

as stated, there was a mutual dependency between cloister and castle which made this close relationship possible. The nobility required the church for forgiveness and religious instruction, and the monks needed the shelter of noble benefactors (Livingstone 110).

As underlined by Cranage, those who wanted to become monks went through a careful inquiry including information about their homeland, lineage, well-being, education, attitude, potential for singing and writing, and whether he was under an obligation, amicable, good natured and reliable (2). Hence, the members of the nobility, apparently, were quite properly fit for the position of monk. Yet, the secular world of the nobles, largely attached to worldly life in line with their "culture of display", included characteristics which could not be welcomed by the clergy.

Furthermore, private monasteries for the sons and daughters of the nobility were established which indicates the secular part of the monasteries of the time. Private monasteries were established on the land of the founder and his family; therefore, the founder and the relations of the founder contributed to ecclesiastical life. The members of the family of the founder were accepted into the monastery to become monks and nuns. Thus, private monasteries became "homes for sons born after the eldest [. . .] and especially for daughters (whom one either could not or did not want to marry off) [. . .]. The upshot was that the nobility preferred establishing nunneries, whose abbesses were frequently their own daughters" (Hans-Werner 73). Hence, the wishes of the noble boys and girls were not taken into consideration, which meant a mandatory way of life for them.[19] This obligatory life embodied, as in the case of colonial hybrids, in Bhabhanian words, "the interstices–the overlap and displacement of domains of difference–" (*The Location of Culture* 2), in the distinct domains of the nobility and monasticism. Accordingly, the reluctant change of status or estate along with values and norms led to hybridity in the medieval context.

Another significant point should be noted in relation to the relationship between the noble members of the monasteries and their families they left behind after they joined a monastery. It seems that after joining a monastery, there was no total separation for the

noble man and woman from his or her noble background and family. Although it was assumed that monks left all bonds of their noble lineage after they joined a monastery, the evidence shows that it was not the case. In fact, the motive for the nobles in sending their sons and daughters to a monastery or trying to marry them to the sons or daughters of distinguished families was the same: to maintain or increase the authority and dignity of their family. Thus, the presumption that the monks severed all family ties after they entered the cloister contradicts with the motive behind the nobles' sending their sons and daughters to monasteries. Then, the commitment of noble children to monasteries was a consciously taken step of the family to establish significant ties with the Church which also developed a bond between the clerical and secular world. Charters related to properties also indicate that the relationship between the monks and their family were not loosened after they entered the cloister as they still kept their place in the family, their interest in family affairs and in the rights to family property as well (Livingstone 93-94). Therefore, these tight bonds between the clerical and secular realms of the noble monks also contributed much to their hybrid identities since they could not totally leave their noble background behind and become a real member of the clergy.

The necrologies of the monasteries also indicate that although the members of the nobility joined the spiritual life after they became monks, they were still regarded as the members of the family. For example, when a monk of noble birth, Gaufred, died, his father donated his property to the church to pay tribute to his death. There were similar bonds between uncles and nephews as well. The noble members of the monasteries were frequently visited by their relatives in the monasteries. Even in some cases, "[. . .] monks consciously used their insights and experiences as members of both the secular and monastic elite to aid their houses and kin" (Livingstone 107). Yet, their ongoing relationships with their noble families put them in between their former and new estates.

To sum up, among the reasons for joining the Church in the Middle Ages, the reluctant choices constituted the greater part as many boys of noble birth "were presented to a monastery by their parents while still young, there they were raised and disciplined as *pueri oblati* under the supervision of a custodian in accordance with the Benedictine Rule [. . .]" (Hans-Werner 84). There were also noble sons and daughters who were put

in monasteries as their physical appearance did not fit the general characteristics of the nobility. As the members of the nobility ate better, they were fat and tall. Thus, those handicapped sons and daughters of noble birth were also put in monasteries not to harm the prestige of their family (Reuter 89; Fuhrmann 9-10). It seems that trying to fix a stable identity for themselves, as Bhabha suggests for the colonisers, the nobility discarded its members who were physically impaired, and forced them to have a "borderline existence" (*The Location of Culture* 13). Indeed, it was the typical argument of the time of the monastic life that monasteries turned into places of waste "for old and physically and mentally disabled members of aristocratic families [. . .]. [S]ome are lame, others are one-eyed, blind even, others are one-armed, but on the other hand, all are noble" (Reuter 90). As Reuter further notes,

> By literally shutting 'imperfect' members of their families away from view, aristocrats collectively preserved a social image of themselves as different from others. In a world where mental and physical disabilities were common and visible, aristocrats appeared collectively exempt from such scourges. (89)

In fact, putting those defective members of their family in cloisters, the nobility tried to keep their identity safe which is, as noted by Hall, the outcome of "difference and exclusion", [. . .] rather than [. . .] all-inclusive sameness [. . .]" ("Introduction: Who Needs Identity" 4).

Taking all these points into account, it can be claimed that the world of monasticism was already a world of in-betweenness. As Hans-Werner points out, medieval monasticism was not merely a part of the church; yet, it was the world of all of the ruling classes. Although the primary aim of monasticism was to be away from worldly affairs, medieval monasteries typically could not avoid merging the religious and worldly matters. Therefore, "medieval monasticism was a lordly life in grand style, albeit in religious form. Therein lay a significant portion of its success, as well as its historical significance. Nevertheless, this secular aspect contradicted the originally religious goals and led to perennial conflicts" (57). Indeed, there also lies the source of dilemma or the hybridity of the highborn members of monasteries who belonged to a totally different, secular world before joining the monastic world of the Church. Yet,

they were also the most proper candidates for a monastic life due to their wealth and power. Hence, the noble-born monks were hybrids inhabiting, in Bhabha's terms, "an in-between site of transition: the beyond [was] neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past", which brought about composite identities, neither totally included nor excluded from different communities (*The Location of Culture* 1). Therefore, like Bhabha suggests for migrants in a postcolonial context, the medieval noble monks, living in the merging points or in-between spaces, became the members of a kind of medieval "borderline community" (*The Location of Culture* 12).

Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*, which Swatos describes as a "sociological classic" as well as a literary one (36), presents the members of this borderline community, the noble monks and nuns in the portraits of his Monk and Prioress. In fact, similar to their counterparts in history, Chaucer's Monk and Prioress are noble hybrids in that their lifestyles are formed out of the values of the nobility and the clergy; thus, they come to perform the values and norms of their noble and clerical estates. Within this respect, the hybridity of the noble monks and nuns can be traced in *The Canterbury Tales*.

The Monk, Daun Piers, is the first religious figure introduced in *The Canterbury Tales*. To be able to argue that the Monk is a hybrid, his noble origin should be discerned. The possible noble origin of the Monk and his consequent hybridity can be traced both in his portrait in *The General Prologue* and in his tale. To begin with his portrait in *The General Prologue*, the Monk is presented as a carefree man who detests working very hard which was one of the required characteristics of monasticism. The noble origin of the Monk can be detected, before anything else, in Chaucer's address to him as a "lord" (*CT*, I, 172). In fact, the Monk really lives like a lord. Different from the necessities of monastic life, yet in line with the values and norms of the nobility, the Monk is a "manly man," (*CT*, I, 167), and a hunter who likes "venerie," (*CT*, I, 166) very much. Lindeboom describes the Monk as a man who strongly situated himself "in the here-and-now" (339). Just like a noble, in Lindeboom's terms, he is a figure of *carpe diem* and is in pursuit of a pleasant life as reflected in his fondness for hunting, horses, hounds, fine clothes and good eating (339). In this context, the Monk's love of food (*CT*, I, 26), his splendid apparel (*CT*, I, 193- 97; 203), his hunting, horses (*CT*, I, 166-

68; 190-92) and his dislike of monastic rules (*CT*, I, 173-87) are the indicators of his noble origin and consequently of his hybrid identity. To put it another way, these mentioned characteristics of the Monk indicate that he is a medieval hybrid as he is a monk of noble birth. In fact, the Monk possesses the very elements of the "culture of display" of the nobility. These traits, indeed, point to the values and norms of the nobility, which the Monk has to abandon to become a real member of the monastery.

Generally, the Monk's love of pleasant meal, splendid clothes, horses, hunting and disdain for monkish authorisation and study were examined in accordance with the monastic stereotype or estates satire on monks. Indeed, the attributes listed in the Monk's portrait were commonly identified with the real monks who consistently complained of the strict rules of monastic life (Mann 7, 28) as Chaucer's Monk does:

> The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Beneit—
> By cause that it was old and somdel streit
> This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace,
> And heeld after the newe world the space.
> (*CT*, I, 173-76)

That is to say, Chaucer's description of the Monk reflects the sarcastic perspective toward the clergy of his time as the Monk indulges in horses, hounds, and hunting. In fact, in medieval estates satire, gluttony, violations of the vow to poverty and of vegetarianism or ascetic diet are criticised as common characteristics of the clergy (Forgeng 30; Hermann75). Similar to his literary and historical counterparts, unsuitable for a monk, yet accepted for a noble who is fond of nice eating, Chaucer's Monk loves to eat "fat swan" (*CT*, I, 206) more than any other "roost" (*CT*, I, 206) and he was "ful fat" (*CT*, I, 200). As Lindeboom points out, the Monk is beefy, in fact, he is so overweight that "there is a greasy sheen all over him. It is easy to see that he exemplifies the sin of Gula or Gluttony, though with a substantial bit of Pride thrown in, to be recognized in his love of ostentation" (339). Hence, not giving up his noble traits after joining the monastery, Chaucer's Monk eats like a noble violating the rigid dietary rules. Accordingly, the Monk's hybridity can be observed in his physical description which accentuates that the Monk looks like a lord with his healthy and fat body rather than a monk vowed to poverty: "He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;" (*CT*, I, 200).

The splendid attire of the Monk is another mark of his hybridity. Fur, jewellery, good horses, and fashionable shoes are all described as the particularities of the extravagant costumes of the monks and commonly associated with the clergy in medieval estates satire (Mann 21). Similar to his counterparts in history, the apparel of the Monk is embellished with costly squirrel fur, or "grys" (*CT*, I, 194) which was, as Hermann states, rigidly prohibited for the monks in the monastic rules (76). As Erol notes, "Grys was the back of the grey northern squirrel and it was very valuable and was used by the aristocracy" ("A Pageant" 91-92). The Monk also wears a "gold ywrought a ful curious pyn" (*CT*, I, 196) and leather boots that are notably "souple" (*CT*, I, 203) or, as Hermann points out, malleable, the best leathers of the time (76). Concerning the luxurious clothing of the Monk, Erol states that the nice clothes of the Monk are proper to aristocracy and apart from his attire made of the best material of the time, he wears footgear which is also proper for aristocracy ("A Pageant" 93-94). The Monk "is an outrider ("a fair for the maistrie, / an outridere" (*CT*, I, 165-66)) since he was in charge of the business matters of the monastery, especially looking after the manors belonging to it. Hence, in spite of his violation of the monastic rules with respect to his diet and apparel, as Beichner states, "in being outside his monastery, the Monk is obeying, not defying, his obligations" (612). J. O. Brown points out that the Monk's role as an outrider provides him with an opportunity to "operate [. . .] on the borderline between the secular and the clerical worlds, and the secular world has come to claim the greater part of his interest [. . .]" (44). Thus, besides eating and dressing like a noble, the Monk's position as an outrider enables him to live on the territories of the nobility and the clergy, contributing to his hybrid identity. The Monk also wears a gold pin: "And for to festne his hood under his chyn, / He hadde of gold ywroght a ful curious pyn; / A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was." (*CT*, I, 195-97). As Brooks states, the gold pin of the Monk shows that he violates the territories of the nobility. Furthermore, it is in the shape of a love-knot which stands for the Monk's disrespect for his vow of chastity (19). Therefore, wearing a pin is again more suitable for a member of the nobility rather than the clergy. Similarly, for Howard, the Monk's fur and gold pin with a love-knot display that he is an aristocrat ("Social Rank" 88).

The Monk's fondness of hunting is also a mark of his noble origin. Hunting was the sport of the nobility and forbidden to monks; yet, the Monk is known for his love for "venerie" (hunting) (*CT*, I, 166) and for his "deyntee horse [. . .] in stable" (*CT*, I, 168) which are "in greet estaat" (*CT*, I, 203). The Monk's fondness of hunting also stands for a common characteristic of the monks in estates satire, lust: "Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight; / Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare/ Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare." (*CT*, I, 190-2). Furthermore, "venerie" (*CT*, I, 166) is a word associated with Venus; thus, it again has sexual connotations referring to hunting women (Werthamer 21) which is against the monastic rule of celibacy. The horse of the Monk is also described as "palfrey [. . .] as broun as [. . .] a berye" (*CT*, I, 207). Erol states that the palfrey was a sumptuous horse which was largely "used for display [and] [i]t was suitable mount for a knight; hence, it is contrary to the rules of the monastery which requested poverty" ("A Pageant" 94-95). Yet, loving "venerie" (*CT*, I, 166), the Monk refutes the accusation that "[. . .] hunters ben nat hooly men," (*CT*, I, 178). Indeed, hunting was not unusual for the monks in the Middle Ages. As Cranage notes, it was not easy to prevent the monks being interested in hunting and other noble sports, noble way of dressing and eating which made them look like secular nobles rather than clerics:

> The monks of Canterbury, like all those in England, were hardly different from seculars [. . .] They amused themselves with hunting, with falconry, with horse racing; they loved to rattle the dice; they indulged in drink; they wore fine clothes, studied personal appearance, disdained a frugal and quiet life, and had such a retinue of servants that they were more like secular nobles than monks. (52)

Similarly, Forgeng points out that the members of the clergy keeping the higher ranks "might have incomes and lifestyles that ranged from gentle to lordly, and they often had more in common with the aristocracy than with the lesser clergy [such as] the priest William of North Berwick [. . .]" (28). In the late Middle Ages, these sorts of monks shared much more characteristics with the secular landowner rather than a cleric which might be a reason for Chaucer's adjacency of an outrider monk and the aristocratic the Madame Eglentyne with the landed family. In fact, the hunting Monk is not as common a character as the hunting parson in other satiric works; yet, the specific stereotype of the monk as hunter comes from the general stereotype of the clergy, prelate, rector,

parson, or clerk (Phillips 28; Mann 24). For Mann, Chaucer emphasises the "monastic lordliness" and the aristocratic indifference to consumption by portraying the Monk's interest in hunting and his lordlike appearance in *The General Prologue*. Moreover, the lordly aspect of the hunting cleric is widely depicted in various works such as in Matheolus' *Lamentations* in which a hunting parson apes squires and he is harshly criticised as hunting is not proper for clerics and it is suitable only for the aristocracy (34). Then, we need to recognise the Monk as an imitator of the aristocracy. As Kaske points out, "[. . .] the hunting monk is himself a cheap imitation of knighthood, able to ape its manner but debarred by his very way of life from its positive achievements" (258).

In fact, the main criticism of the Monk does stem from neither his being an "outridere," (*CT*, I, 166) as it was not forbidden in the monastic life, nor his love of hunting which was forbidden to monks, but from his disregard of the holy devotional customs of monasticism and his commitment to the world (Hermann 75) since he finds the monastic rules too strict and prefers to keep pace with the new world (*CT*, I, 173-76).[20] Furthermore, Chaucer's Monk completely objects to the statements of Saint Augustine (*CT*, I, 187) and does not agree with him in that "a monk, whan he is reccheless, /Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees-" (*CT*, I, 179-80). More importantly, the Monk's disregard of the strict rules of monasticism and his attachment to the world invoke his noble origin and former lifestyle. The Monk's dislike for church services is also implicated in his bridle which is likened to the sound of the church bell which the Monk hears when he is riding his horse outside the cloister:

> And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel Heere
> Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere
> And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle
> Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.
> (*CT*, I, 169 -72)

The clash between the church services and the bridle might be also taken as a symbol of the clash between the present status of the Monk as a member of the clergy and his noble background or identity reflecting itself in his love of pleasant meals, horses, hunting, and splendid clothes. Although there was widespread criticism of the monks' hunting, the great interest of the real monks in history and of Chaucer's Monk in

hunting seems inevitable when their noble origin is taken into account. It was not easy for the noble monks to renounce their noble ties which also included their habits as in the case of hunting. Referring to the Monk's concern with hunting, the Host also prefers the Monk to tell a story about hunting rather than his boring stories of the fallen men as he seems more familiar with hunting (*CT*, VII, 2796-2805). Phillips also asserts that the words of the Host sheds light on the unmonkish identity of the Monk who is described as a macho "governour" (*CT*, VII, 3130) as there is no misery, celibacy, and meekness in his conceptualising of a monk (185). As Phillips further suggests, "[the Host]'s words not only capture what many contemporaries felt about worldly clerics: they also depict the Monk as very like one of his own worldly rulers [the members of the nobility]" (185).

However, in spite of the Monk's hatred for monastic life, his trespassing on the borders of another estate and the desire for worldly pleasures, the narrator states that the Monk's opinion is good (*CT*, I, 183) as if he approves his argument. Chaucer tells the Monk's opinion as follows:

> What, sholde he studie and make hymselven wood,
> Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
> Or swynken with his handes, and laboure,
> As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?
> Lat Austyn have his swynk to hym reserved!
> (*CT*, I, 184-88)

Concerning Chaucer's stand on the Monk, Mann states that Chaucer gives his depiction of the Monk for our confirmation, not for disapproval (24). On the other hand, Phillips suggests that Chaucer leaves the answer of the question of whether the opinion of the Monk is acceptable or not to the reader:

> The question that follows continues that feeling that the Monk's attitude, and the conflict between the needs of secular society and traditional religious values, does call for some kind of examination [. . .]. Whether the reader's answer is traditional values or [. . .] some acknowledgement of society's new needs, is–like the interpretation of the Prioress' brooch–left entirely up to the reader. (42-43)

The narrator concurs with the Monk or feigns to do so in that there is no logic behind ruminating on books or manual labour as St. Augustine ordered. Thus, unlike the

Prioress, the Monk directly objects to the monastic rules (Werthamer 21). The Host also highlights this point in *The Monk's Prologue* and annoys the Monk by saying that he does not look like a monk: "I vowe to God, thou hast a ful fair skyn;/ It is a gentil pasture ther thow goost./ Thou art nat lyk a penant or a goost:" (*CT*, VII, 3122-24). Furthermore, the Host curses the one who is responsible for the Monk's becoming a member of the clergy: "I pray to God, yeve hym confusion/ That first thee brought unto religioun!" (*CT*, VII, 3133-34). In fact, as again the Host calls attention to, the "manly" Monk fits for a lover and husband rather than a cleric: "Nat oonly thou, but every mighty man, / Though he were shorn ful hye upon his pan, / Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is lorn!" (*CT*, VII, 1951-53). Hence, as Mann suggests, in the Monk, Chaucer writes in line with the medieval estates satire; yet, with a different stance since he introduces merely the Monk's perspective which sheds light on the "unattractiveness" of the rigid religious life (32). Likewise, according to Benson, unlike the Knight "we go inside the mind of the Monk to share his private, rebellious thoughts" ("The Canterbury Tales" 95) about monastic rules. Regardless of Chaucer's stance on his monk, it is certain that he presents a monk who does not hesitate to live like a noble under the roof of a monastery.

In fact, reading the prologue, indicating the hybrid identity of the Monk, one encounters two types of monk: A monk who goes out of his monastery to fulfil his duty as an outrider, and a noble monk who cannot totally leave his previous life behind and goes hunting and never gives up his ostentatious clothes and nice food. Accordingly, the hybrid Monk, for Farrell, has a "thoroughly hybrid discourse" ("Hybrid Discourse" 55) in which his voice is clearly recognized. Farrell underlines that in the prologue of the Monk, there are two types of descriptions, one describes the Monk, the narrator, and the other includes "the Monk's own analysis of his vocation" and his own opinion. The voice of the Monk questions the applicability of the old principles to the monastic life in the fourteenth century and clearly expresses his reluctance to follow monastic rules ("Hybrid Discourse" 54-55):

> He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen
> That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men
> Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees

> Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees-
> This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
> But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;
> (*CT*, I, 177-82)

Thus, it can be argued that in the hybrid discourse of the Monk, there are two main voices merging together representing his clerical and noble identity: the voice of the society which illustrates the monastic rules and the voice of the Monk himself which depicts the cry of a monk of noble birth imprisoned in a cloister and tells about his life in-between.

Taking all the points discussed so far into account, it might be argued that on the one hand, the Monk's love of food, his ostentatious apparel, his hunting, horses and his dislike of monastic rules cannot be accepted in the medieval world as he is a member of the clergy. On the other hand, it can be also claimed that since these characteristics occupied a very significant part of his previous noble lifestyle, it was almost impossible for him to abandon them. Indeed, this impasse of the Monk signifies his hybridity. Hence, the Monk becomes involved in a kind of "*cross-category*" between the nobility and the clergy which, as Pieterse notes, refers to hybridity covering "the mixture of phenomena that are held to be different, separate [. . .]" (72). Accordingly, as it has been argued so far, examining the Monk in relation to his possible noble origin as in the case of most of his fellow brothers in history, his hybrid identity comes to light since he, like Bhabha's hybrids in a postcolonial context, lives in the "interstitial passage between fixed identifications [which] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference" (*The Location of Culture* 4). In the Monk's case, the fixed identifications are his previous estate, the nobility, and his present estate, the clergy; to both of which he cannot completely belong. Hence, the Monk becomes a medieval hybrid who belongs to "[. . .] neither the One [the nobility] [. . .] nor the Other [the clergy] [. . .]" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 28) but something else besides which inhabits the domains of both estates.

Besides the Monk in *The General Prologue*, the Monk of *The Shipman's Tale* is a hybrid, too. Daun John in *The Shipman's Tale* is a monk who is also a noble and an outrider:

> This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
> Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
> By cause he was a man of heigh prudence
> And eek an officer, out for to ryde,
> To seen hir graunges and hir bernes wyde;
> (*CT*, VII, 1252-56)

Daun John is a wealthy monk who goes hunting and has relationships with women, violating the vow of poverty and celibacy. Daun John also has mercantile connections which suggest that he is one of those monks of noble birth just like the Monk in *The General Prologue*. In fact, there were close contacts between the monks and the merchants and the nobility. In *The Shipman's Tale*, likewise, the monk and the merchant are old companions and the monk brings money, foodstuff, and beverage to the household of the merchant. The merchants' relationship with the monks was an indicator of their social prestige as the monastic world was a private sphere and its donors and members were mostly from the nobility. The contacts between the monks and merchants were typical in late medieval London. Their contact involved various business matters such as money dealings and exchange of gifts and their relationship was taken as companionship (Hume 143, Thrupp 150-51,176). Thus, like the Monk in *The General Prologue*, the Monk in *The Shipman's Tale* violates the monastic rules with his interest in hunting and other worldly issues such as love and money. More significantly, Daun John in *The Shipman's Tale* also reveals the hybrid position of the noble monks in that, like in the case of the real monks of the fourteenth century, most probably through his noble origin, Daun John keeps his old connections with the world outside even after joining the monastery. That is to say, like his historical counterparts, Daun John inhabits two worlds.

The Monk's hybridity can be observed in *The Monk's Tale* too. Critics widely accept that there is a contradiction between the Monk in *The General Prologue* and the Monk the storyteller in that the one is worldly, whereas the other is otherworldly respectively.

For example, J. O. Brown points out that the tedious series of tragedies of the Monk are in the form of a sermon against the dependence on worldly fortune. Thus, before the Knight and the Host, the reader might also complain about the stories and is confused about the difference between the worldly and cheerful Monk in *The General Prologue* and the Monk the storyteller (44) who is otherworldly and depressed. Similarly, Brewer remarks that the Host wants the Monk to tell a tale of hunting "reverting to the character of the Monk as portrayed in *The General Prologue*, which Chaucer has so casually abandoned" (*A New Introduction* 371). Yet, it might be argued that Chaucer does not totally desert the character of the Monk in *The General Prologue* as the stories of the fallen men are in line with his present status and personal experience in that he also in a way falls from prosperity to misery, from a luxurious life to the cloister. Hence, taking into account the Monk's noble origin, it is also appropriate for him to tell stories of tragedy, which is also a noble genre. It might be also argued that the Monk's tale indicates his hybrid identity in that besides marking him as a noble of downward mobility, telling the stories of the fallen men, the Monk focuses on the worldly pride and wheel of fortune which might be taken as a part of his clerical identity. That is to say, this conflict between the prologue and the tale of the Monk might be read as the mark of his hybrid identity since it reveals his double identity as a noble belonging to the nobility and as a monk, a member of the clergy.

Indeed, as Hermann suggests, contrary to the common expectation, the Monk in his tale does not give any Christian messages or tell about the hardships of monastic life, but narrates the stories of famous fallen men (77). In his tale, the Monk depicts the great men such as Adam (*CT*, VII, 2007-14), Sampson (*CT*, VII, 2015-94), Hercules (*CT*, VII, 2095-2142), Pedro of Spain (*CT*, VII, 2375-90), Peter of Cyprus (*CT*, VII, 2391-98), Nero (*CT*, VII, 2463-2550), Alexander (*CT*, VII, 2631-70) and Caesar (*CT*, VII, 2671-2726) who fall from high degree or prosperity to misery due to the wheel of fortune. *The Monk's Tale* is a short form of *The Canterbury Tales* itself, a compilation of tales; yet, all of its stories deal with one topic, the fall of great men. The *Tale* also includes didactic messages such as wealth is impermanent and one should not rely on his affluence. Similarly, according to the medieval writers the message that one should not depend on prosperity characterised tragedy as well (Phillips 180). Accordingly, the

Monk defines his tales as *tragedie* which display the situation of those descending from "heigh degree" into "miserie" which indicates inescapable influence of fortune:

> Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
> As olde bokes maken us memorie,
> Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
> And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
> Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
> (*CT*, VII, 3163-67)

In line with the medieval notion of tragedy, there are numerous works in the period highlighting the working of the wheel of fortune and the decline of great men such as Boccacio's *Decasibus virorum illustrium* (*The Fall of Famous Men*) which narrates the stories of men of status who were subdued by fortune. *The Monk's Tale* is also accepted as a Lancastrian poem in that it depicts the consequences of Richard II's notion of kingship, his alleged tyranny and downfall (Phillips 181, 185). Indeed, as Frank states, the wheel of fortune was a medieval cliché which the medieval writers commonly illustrate in their works:

> Fortune and her wheel, on which kings and heroes rose and fell, were a medieval cliché, but a powerful image nonetheless. Life was terribly uncertain in the fourteenth century. More to the point, Fortune had support in philosophy and had a role in the divine plan, spelled out for all to see in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. This was one of the most influential books of the Middle Ages and one Chaucer had translated and knew well. ("The Canterbury Tales" 149)

According to Phillips, the stories of the Monk have a religious side since the medieval notion of tragedy was basically related to a religious perspective as the hardships in the world might make people pay more attention to the other world by understanding the temporariness of worldly pleasures. Yet, in general the concern of the Monk is the earthly world and mostly his stories are concluded with a caution about the strength of fortune and the unavoidable fluctuation of "heigh degree" and "prosperitee" in society, excluding any mention of the otherworld or religious principles (180): "But that Fortune alwey wole assaille/ [. . .] For whan men trusteth hire, thane wol she faille, / And covere hire brighte face with a clowde." (*CT*, VII, 2763; 2765-66). When the Monk is asked to tell his tale for the tale-telling contest, he boastfully says that he has two or three tales to

tell including one about the life of Saint Edward; yet, he will begin with a tale depicting a list of tragedies:

> I wol yow seyn the lyf of seint Edward;
> Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle
> Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
> (*CT*, VII, 3160-62)

As pointed out by Rossignol, it seems that tragedy is the popular genre of the Monk as he says he has numerous tragedies to tell (62). Yet, although it was common to write about the wheel of fortune in relation to tragedy in the medieval period, as stated above, according to many critics it is not appropriate for the Monk of *The General Prologue* to tell the stories of the wheel of fortune. Lindeboom, for example, argues that "the Monk's Tale is badly suited to its narrator", since the Monk in *The General Prologue* wears nice clothes, lives for the day, and spends his time with hunting, horses and good eating (339). Lindeboom further suggests that there is also a great disparity between the description of the Monk in *The General Prologue* and that of *The Prologue of The Monk's Tale* since the former portrays a bald and overweight man, the latter displays a good-looking libertine (348). With regard to the incoherence between the Monk and his tale, Olsson states that the Monk tells his tale "which seems to have little relationship to Chaucer's portrait [. . .]" (1). After finishing his story, the Monk says he has no "lust to pleye" (*CT*, VII, 3996) the stories "Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare" (*CT*, I, 191) which he loves best. Thus, Olsson states that "[. . .] the choice of "tragedie" as the genre, [. . .] seems inappropriate to this pleasure-loving "outridere." (1). These inconsistencies turn the Monk into one of the longstanding mysteries of *The Canterbury Tales*. Critics, recently, not being able to solve the oddity of the Monk, have proposed to analyze the tale as an autonomous text free from the pilgrim who tells it, or to acknowledge the paradox between the Monk and his tale (Olsson 1). Underlying in his words the "discomfiture" of the Monk, Lindeboom asks

> Monk's case histories are self-incriminatory in a general sense only, in their common insistence that worldly pride comes before a fall. This makes him rather difficult to live with, for what can we do with such a contradictory character who is entirely a man of the world in one place and thus a suitable case for a degree of chastening and in another shows himself to be a spiritual person not in need of any such measure? (341)

Evidently, the Monk displays the common characteristics of hybrid identities, which Bhabha defines in his *Location of Culture* as "unhomely presence" (13) and "interstitial existence" (16), since hybrids "live in the unhomely world" (16). Furthermore, the Monk's in-between situation points to, as suggested by Bhabha, the "shifting boundary of otherness within identity" ("Interrogating identity" 100) which emerges after the self comes across the other within itself. This otherness within the identity of the Monk is also in line with Bhabha's argument that hybridity opposes the completely different other within identities since "[t]he 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves' " (*Nation and Narration* 4). Similarly, as Lindeboom states, in his Monk, "Chaucer was ultimately striving for a self-reflecting or self-condemnatory situation, in which the Monk is implicitly or explicitly made to repudiate his fixation on this earthly life through the medium of his own Tale" (340). Thus, whether rejecting to be given a certain identity or trying to find a suitable identity, both of which seem entirely impossible in his position, the Monk turns into an "other" and experiences hybridity which embodies, as stated by Pieterse, "a condition tantamount to alienation, state of homelessness" (73). Chaucer's Monk, thus, becomes a figure of "homelessness, loss of class, abandonment by [. . .] family; and [by] being or becoming different" (Patel 410). Moreover, when Chaucer's Monk is read in line with the perspective that the Monk is a noble hybrid due to his descending from the luxurious noble way of life to the destitute monastic way of life, his tale, which is stopped by the Knight, another medieval hybrid, and which is widely accepted as "at odds with his individual character" (Kaske 259), becomes meaningful.

The Monk's notion of tragedy in his tale might be also useful to discuss him as a hybrid figure. As Hermann argues, according to the Monk, being deprived of the favours of destiny is a tragedy which shows itself in his attachment to the earth and his lamenting "the loss of worldly pleasures, when he should have been learning the discipline of transcending them" (77). In other words, the Monk bemoans the fact that in his new estate, unlike in his former one, he is expected to abandon his worldly concerns, which seems impossible and the greatest tragedy for him, like any member of the nobility who is used to "culture of display" in every sense. Thus, in spite of his criticism of monastic

life in *The General Prologue,* which he in a way defines as tragedy at the beginning of his story in accordance with his noble identity, the Monk in his tale, in accordance with his clerical identity, tells that it is always possible to fall from high status or from prosperity to misery due to the worldly pride and wheel of fortune and there is no remedy for that:

> His [Balthasar's] hye estaat assured hym in pryde;
> But Fortune caste hym doun, and ther he lay,
> And sodeynly his regne gan divide.
> (*CT*, VII, 2188-90)
>
> Now fil it so that Fortune liste no lenger
> The hye pryde of Nero to cherice,
> (*CT*, VII, 2519-20)
>
> I wol biwayle in maner of Tragedie
> The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,
> And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
> To bringe hem out of hir adversitee;
> For certein, whan that fortune list to flee,
> Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde;
> Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee;
> Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.
> (*CT*, VII, 3181-88)

Consequently, the wordly concerns of the Monk correspond with his concept of tragedy; yet, they contradict his emphasis on worldly pride and the wheel of fortune, which all together suggest his hybrid existence.

Reading the Monk as a medieval noble hybrid, the interaction between the Monk and the Knight might be also evaluated through a new point of view. Apart from the interplay between the Monk and the Host, the interaction between the Monk and the Knight in *The Canterbury Tales* has been widely analysed in the criticism of both the Monk and the Knight. First of all, the Knight and the Monk represent the two highest estates in *The Canterbury Tales*, the nobility and clergy respectively. In other words, as Kaske states, the Knight and the Monk stand for the two main medieval foundations: the secular feudalism and the church (254). The Knight and the Monk are accepted as the cornerstones of medieval society who are responsible for the order in the society as they occupied the noblest offices ordained by God which give them equal status:

> Many are the offices that God has bestowed upon this world in order to be served by men, but the most noble of them all, the most honourable, the two closest offices that there are in this world are the office of the cleric and the office of the knight, and therefore the greatest friendship that there can be in this world should be between cleric and knight. thus, just as the cleric is not following the Order of the Clergy if he contravenes the Order of Chivalry, so the knight is not upholding the Order of Chivalry if he contravenes and disobeys the clerics who are obliged to love and uphold the Order of Chivalry. (Llull 45)

As Llull suggests, the monks and the knights are expected to have a good relationship with each other in line with their responsibility for their society. As also stated, they should respect the rules of the orders of each other. Yet, in *The Canterbury Tales*, they both seem to be in a quarrel and do not follow the rules of their order and the Monk even follows a lifestyle which is more proper for a knight rather than a monk. Indeed, the Monk and the Knight are both men of noble birth who had to choose different paths since they could not inherit the hereditary rights of their father. In other words, the Monk and the Knight are both medieval noble hybrids who, most likely in line with primogeniture, were sent to the monasteries or had to join professional armies. More importantly, one's path, becoming a monk, whether willingly or not, was entirely accepted by the medieval society, whereas the path of the other, becoming a professional soldier, was severely criticised. Although their routes were different, the Knight and the Monk share another significant characteristic: they had to abandon their noble lifestyle and had to live in the required manner of their new way of life which make them hybrid as well. Accordingly, the in-between status of the Knight and the Monk exemplifies the third space which, as Bhabha remarks, emerges from the junction of "two original moments [. . .] enabl[ing] other positions to emerge [and] [. . .] set[ting] up new structures"[. . .]" ("Third Space" 211). Yet, needless to say, this new structure was not welcomed by the medieval society shaped by the three estates.

To conclude, it can be argued that the Monk is a medieval hybrid living in a third space on the borders of the nobility and clergy both of which necessitate an entirely opposite way of life. The Monk is a product of social mobility and most likely of primogeniture. In fact, the hybridity of Chaucer's Monk is a consequence of his downward mobility as the life he leaves behind is much more luxurious and preferable than his present

monastic life in which he has to be cloistered. Thus, the common criticism of the Monk, his being a trespasser and a corrupt cleric by dressing, eating and behaving like nobles, might be associated with his in-betweenness as he has to relinquish his lavish lifestyle coming from his secular, noble origin and has to get accustomed to the monastic life which is very different from the life he used to live. Yet, as it was reflected in the case of the real monks who felt themselves as the members of nobility even after they joined a monastery, it does not seem entirely possible for the Monk to break off his noble ties. Accordingly, the Monk's hybridity also arises from his dual role as a monk and a member of nobility. As it is seen, the Monk is a member of the aristocracy who joins the cloister in spite of his reluctant answer to the divine calling and tries to develop an alternative identity for himself out of the two estates he now inhabits.

Like his Monk, Chaucer's ladylike Prioress is a medieval hybrid who is most probably again a victim of familial concerns. Yet, since the Prioress is a woman; she has more limited alternatives compared to the Monk: if she could not marry in line with her noble status, her sole option is to enter a nunnery and to become a nun. Being accustomed to a very different way of life, like the Monk, the Prioress experiences a kind of identity crisis and lives in a "third space" between the terrains of her previous and present estates, the nobility and clergy. In fact, as Bhabha points out in relation to the third space, the Prioress lives in an alternative position emerging from "two original moments" ("Third Space" 211) deriving from her two estates. Thereby, keeping the characteristics of both her original and current estate, the Prioress, similar to the Monk, could neither be a real member of the nobility nor of the clergy, but a hybrid trying to find a suitable place for herself on the borders of two estates. Power's words, in relation to the ties of the Prioress with her family, thus with her previous estate, which she keeps after entering the convent, openly demonstrate the in-between position of the Prioress:

> She probably became more worldly as time went on, because she had so many opportunities for social intercourse. Not only had she to entertain visitors in the convent, but [. . .] [s]ometimes she went to the funeral of a great man, whom her father knew and who left her twenty shillings and a silver cup in his will. Sometimes she went to the wedding of one of her sisters, or to be godmother to their babies; though the bishops did not like these worldly ties, or the dances and merry-makings which accompanied weddings and christenings. (*Medieval People* 91-92)

Thereby, the Prioress' natural contact with her family members after she is cloistered is also the source of her in-betweeness or hybridity. Due to the more restricted and dependent role of the women in the Middle Ages, entering into the details of the hybridity of the Prioress, it is necessary to deal with the position of medieval women paying special attention to the medieval nun and noblewoman. In fact, the women scarcely possessed a free zone for themselves in the Middle Ages as their space was specified by a prevalent belief deriving from the church and the aristocracy (Power, *Medieval Women* 9) which assigned them an inferior place. As stated by Hanawalt, a medieval woman's "reputation might hinge on her ability to remain in [this] particular, acceptable space" ("Medieval English Women" 19). Crossing this admissible territory, the medieval women were exposed to punishments. According to this firmly grounded misogynistic idea, women were inferior to men since they were believed to be defiant, lecherous, irrational and deceptive; and their physical attractiveness was perceived as a carnal trap for the mental and spiritual development of men. That is, in the Middle Ages women occupied a secondary place and their merit was in parallel with their acceptance of their inadequacy. The ideal characteristics of medieval women were meekness and submissiveness; thus, it was the best way for a medieval woman to behave in line with her secondary status. Accordingly, the medieval community was undeniably under male dominance and after marriage the identity of woman was mostly classified in accordance with that of her husband. In relation to the disparity between the sexes, woman was also referred to as daughter, servant or wife of the head of the household. Therefore, both in theoretical and practical terms, man was superior to woman in the Middle Ages (Mağıltaş 3; Ward, *Women* 5; Murray 2; Müller, "Conflict, Strife" 314; Bennett 99).

Indeed, there were two main routes for medieval women: marriage and taking a monastic vow since marriage was taken as the second preferable option after a life of chastity. With the exception of those taking monastic vows, marriage was common and women married men who were mostly two times older than themselves. The youngest or unmarried daughters of the nobility mostly became nuns to be able to avoid paying a dowry. The cloistered life remained as the mere option for a lady of high birth who did not or could not marry. Hence, marriage was of utmost significance especially for the

noblewomen. Although there were some different practices of inheritance for the noblewomen in different parts of Europe in the Middle Ages, the noblewomen shared the same consequences of primogeniture which required male succession, underlying the growing significance of lineage in Europe. The customs of the nobility for those of noble birth were similar in different places of Europe and they were defined by arranged marriages and the woman's dowry. Among the noble families, especially those having estates to preserve, early arranged marriages of partners of different ages were common. As the social status of the partners rose, the number of such marriages increased which were actually political engagements as in the marriage of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia who married when they were 15 and 16 respectively. Upon the death of Anne of Bohemia, Richard married Isabella of France, who was only seven years old at that time and Richard was 30, which was again a political marriage (Ward, *Women* 5; "Noblewomen" 262; Power, *Medieval People* 78; Bennett 90; Rudd 20).

Therefore, the marriages of the noble children were organized by their families with the attendance of their lords and of the king; and it was almost exceptional for the noble children to have a say in their marriage. Furthermore, marriage was arranged in accordance with the principles and customs of feudal lordship, and was inseparably based on goods and prosperity; thereby, the individual concerns were hardly in question. The desire to guard an heiress and to make favourable agreements firmly affected the choice of families for marriage partners; thus, the marriage agreements were shaped by the matters of money and land. In other words, marriage was perceived as a means of material benefit for noble families (Ward, *Women* 15). Land and property were crucial for the members of the nobility to sustain their splendid lifestyle which was also the case for the noblewomen whose "landholding [was] well documented, [and] the amount of land in their hands varying according to the accidents of birth and fortune" (Ward, *Women* 122). Accordingly, the marriage agreements determined the settlement of the possessions. The agreement was usually prepared by the fathers or male kin of the bride and bridegroom. The father of the bride gave a dowry for his daughter which was basically a present of land, and later (from c. 1300) turned into money. As it is seen, it was always preferable to marry an heiress and an heiress almost always married at least

once; hence, most probably an heiress would not become a nun (Ward, *Women* 16-17, 87).

As in the case of the noblemen, the religious life was open to the daughters of noble families as they thought that "having a member in an order of consecrated virgins would bring blessings to both the family and the cities" (Ebaugh 13). Above all, if a woman of noble birth was not an heiress and could not marry in line with her status, her mere option was to become a nun. Power describes this unfortunate and compulsory position of medieval noblewomen as "the disadvantage of rank" due to the "narrowness of the sphere to which women of gentle birth were confined'' as there were restricted opportunities proper to their status. Accordingly, Power notes that the nunneries turned into the refuges of the gentle born (*Medieval English Nunneries* 4, 5). Thus, as indicated in her physical traits and manners, Chaucer's Prioress in *The General Prologue* is also a lady of high birth, who probably became a nun as she had no marriage dowry (Werthamer 18-19).

Furthermore, it is more likely that the nuns who wanted to run away from monastic seclusion were in majority since they were not old enough to prefer the monastic career willingly. Girls could legally become nun at twelve years old; yet, there are numerous documents stating that they entered the nunneries younger than twelve.[21] Therefore, the noblewomen's entrance into monasteries, again like the noblemen, was not largely upon their request but upon familial concerns as opposed to a sincere craving for spiritual perfection required by monasticism. This craving necessitated an otherworldly territory away from the earthly interruptions; hence, monks and nuns were expected to leave the world and their kin behind willingly in search of spiritual superiority. Consequently, the monks and the nuns stayed under the roof of the monastery in a strict enclosure (Logan, *Runaway* 12; Daichman 13; Lee 160). However, owing to their possible reluctant answer to divine calling, it was mostly not the case for the boys and girls of noble birth to leave their noble and worldly background behind the monastic walls. Bardsley lists the main reasons for the entry of those born as nobles into a monastic career in the Middle Ages as such: an aging widow might be put in a nunnery by her heirs' sons to possess her inheritance. A disabled child might be put in a nunnery or monastery to keep him or her out of the sight of the community. Parents who could not manage the

marriage of their daughters might place some of them in nunneries out of their consent. Parents having too many sons might place some of their sons in monasteries not to endanger the inheritance of their older brothers (35-36). Power depicts the situation of the noble monks and the nuns who had to enter monasteries unwillingly as follows:

> [M]any monks and nuns entered religion as a career while still children, with no particular vocation for the religious life. To such, even though they may experience no longing for the forbidden pleasures of the world, the monotony of the cloister would often be hard to bear. Their young limb would kick against its restrictions and the changing moods of adolescence would turn and twist in vain within the iron bars of its unadoptable routine. (*Medieval English Nunneries* 290)

As Daichman argues, in line with the situation of noblewomen, according to many of the medieval legacies, "fathers left dowries to either an earthly or heavenly lord, with many fathers indicating exactly which convent the daughter was to "attend" at her age of legal puberty". Thus, there emerged a famous proverb of the time: *aut virium aut murum oportet mulierum habere*– "a woman ought to have either a husband or a wall– the convent cell's wall" (13). Accordingly, one of the most frequently dealt issues in the writings of the inhabitants of nunneries was the search for the answer of why they were there. Then, the nuns sometimes described their joining a nunnery as a trauma in their writings (Winston-Allen 23; Shahar, *The Fourth Estate* 42).

In fact, about the place of women in monasteries, there are different points of view. According to Johnson, women kept a basic place in monastic life in the medieval period, and the convent was a community populated by women along with men (3). Furthermore, as stated by Leclercg, the life of monasticism gave women an advantage as it was in a way freedom from the constraints set by men (68). On the other hand, it can be also argued that the women in monasteries had again an inferior position as they were subjected to stricter rules compared to the monks. Even though the enclosure was asked for both monks and nuns, the nuns were expected to observe the rules of enclosure more strictly than the monks which was partly because of the male perception of women as sensuous and lecherous. Furthermore, although the nuns were the members of the clergy, they did not have the prerogatives of the monks as they did not have an option of priesthood, their abbesses did not have a room in the House of Lords, and

generally they lived under male clerical order (Lee 160-61; Forgeng 30)[22]. Referring to the inferior position of medieval women in the Church, Shahar points out that "[a] Christian woman could not officiate in church. She could not take the sacrament of the priestly order (ordinatio) and she was denied the right to preach" (*The Third Estate* 22).

Yet still, whether inferior or not, there was a place for women, especially for the noblewomen, in medieval monasteries. Indeed, it was in the sixth century when the first female monastery, St. Jean at Arles, was founded as a reply to a great requirement for monastic dwellings for women. It was the bishop of Arles, St. Caesarius (470-542), who established the first nunnery for his sister, Caesaria, and two or three friends of her in 508. Upon the rapid development of the nunneries, St. Caesarius wrote *The Rule for Nuns*, the earliest example of the rules particularly written for female members of monasticism. Caesarius remarked that since most of the habits of the nunneries are different from those of the monks, they have made a few changes in accordance with their sex. The strict rules of the cloister or the nuns were also specified by the medieval instruction manuals such as *Ancrene Wisse* and by the Benedictine Rule which mainly included the orders related to prayers and key directions in relation to clothing, food and possessions (Lee 94, 103-104; Savage and Watson 51-52).

Female monasticism came to England in the early seventh century and rapidly developed in the second half of the seventh century in the entire continent. A royal princess, Hilda, played a significant role in the development of female monasteries in Britain as she preferred to establish a nunnery in her own homeland rather than entering the nunnery of Chelles near Paris where her sister already joined. As in the case of the monasteries discussed above, the Anglo-Saxon nunneries did not detach themselves from secular life. On the contrary, the nunneries mostly had tight bonds with the nobles through whom they extended their authority outside the convent (Lee 150, 227). Bede, in *Ecclesiastical History of England,* highlights the same point about the nunnery of Whitby which was mostly visited by the members of the nobility to consult Hilda of Whitby: "Her prudence was so great, that not only meaner men in their need, but sometimes even kings and princes, sought and received her counsel [. . .]" (272).

Accordingly, similar to the connections of the noble boys with monasteries, the women of noble birth also had close contacts with nunneries in line with family ties. As the noblewomen possessed land and property**,** they were expected to support the Church, which was also a way to salvation. There was a long-standing relationship between noble families and churches which went on after a new family took over an estate through the marriage to an heiress. The noblewomen kept their connections with monasteries associated with both their families and their husbands. For example, Anne, the countess of Stafford, preferred to be buried at Lanthony Secunda priory and went on supporting her father's college at Pleshey. Apart from the noblewomen who financially supported the monasteries, there were noblewomen who personally entered monasteries as abbesses and nuns. In the earlier Middle Ages, the nunneries abounded with the daughters of the upper nobility. For instance, the first Cistercian nunneries preferred their members from the upper and lower nobility. Later some nunneries accepted merely noble nuns. Indeed, the first abbesses, the chief of the nunneries, of Anglo-Saxon nunneries were mostly of royal birth. Furthermore, due to their noble blood, the Anglo-Saxon abbesses had the control over both men and women in the clerical order. By the fourteenth century, the Benedictine nunneries accepted almost only the daughters of the nobility and bourgeoisie (Ward, *Women* 192-193; Boris 178; Leyser 20, 27; Shahar, *The Fourth Estate* 38-39).

Indeed, apart from becoming abbesses, many medieval women spent the last years of their life as nuns and some of them became nuns after they were widowed. It is not possible to know whether they took the veil as they willingly wanted enclosure or they had to do it for familial or monetary concerns. The acceptance into nunneries, as in the case of the monks, necessitated financial support, yet this amount of money might have been less than the amount of money to be paid for a dowry (Ward, *Women* 195; Power, "Chaucer's Prioress" 140-41), which was, as stated, one of the main reasons for sending noblewomen to monasteries. In such cases, these noble nuns could go on their education in French, sewing, and etiquette (Grode 27).

On the other hand, as Southern argues, the nunneries were sometimes substitutes for marriage since they were appropriate places for the widows and daughters of noble birth

where they had the opportunity to continue their distinguished lifestyle they had outside the walls of the monastery (309). In fact, in the Middle Ages, it was common for the nobility to found and send their daughters to nunneries which was sometimes against their wishes to provide single or widowed noblewomen with pleasant lives appropriate to their social status (Lee 310). Frank, likewise, states that becoming a nun rather than becoming a wife might not mean a minor position as the nunneries might provide the females of noble birth with authority ("Seeing the Prioress" 229). Power suggests that "[a]s a rule the nuns possessed the right of free election, subject to the *conge d'el ire* of their patron and to the confirmation of the bishop, and they secured without very much difficulty the leader of their choice" (*Medieval English Nunneries* 45). As Power further notes, the nuns kept an authoritative position as they could nominate people of higher rank and they also had the chance of promotion for themselves. Although most of the nuns did not have a status of power, the qualifications to become the head of a nunnery were that the nominee should be older than the age of twenty-one, born in matrimony and have good social status (*Medieval English Nunneries* 45).

Apart from the authoritative position of the prioresses in monasteries, which complied with their noble status, the abilities of the noble nuns coming from their noble training also made them the most preferred candidates for the head of the nunneries. Frank points out that after the election, a Prioress was in charge of various duties which marked her as an estate administrator; "a mother superior charged with both the spiritual and physical well-being of the inhabitants of her convent" ("Seeing the Prioress" 230). This power of prioresses in nunneries is seen proper to their higher noble status coming from their family. Chaucer's Prioress has such authority observed in her management of the worldly business and otherworldly needs of the nunnery. In fact, to control the convent ideally in the late fourteenth century, a time of great social change together with rapid urbanization, a prioress should be active just like Chaucer's Prioress (Topping 71; Hourigan 43). Similarly, Olson pictures an ideal prioress of the fourteenth century as follows:

> She had to have the administrative skill of a baron and the spiritual authority of a parson. She had the authority to see the liturgical services properly said, to oversee all management of the convent property, to supervise the

> education of convent novices, children, and youths, to supervise convent arts, crafts, and to provide for the disciplining of sisters violating humility, continence, voluntary poverty, or worship-and-work disciplines. (The Canterbury Tales 134)

Accordingly, although the Benedictine order limited the interplay with the world outside, a prioress had an extraordinary degree of independence to be able to keep the connection between the convent and the outside world. In the fourteenth century, for example, it was natural for a prioress to go to London for legal, estate and church matters, for instance (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* 69; Frank, "Seeing the Prioress" 232). Thus, typically, the noble heritage was the most required trait to be able to be elected as a prioress. Servey likens the prioress appointments of the late Middle Ages to today's popularity contests as the nuns worked hard to become the prioress and asked for the support of the other nuns. Some nuns even offered bribes to get the votes of the nuns (24). The prioresses kept their status till they died, unless they became ill, willingly resigned, or were dismissed by church authorities for violating the rules or ineptitude. Apart from being the head of the nunnery, the prioress was also a significant businesswoman in town. If the money of her nunnery was enough, the prioress also became a patron to local artists and poets. The prioress also turned into a kind of feudal lord, a landlady if her nunnery kept estates by feudal tenure. All these responsibilities of the prioresses required them to be experienced to deal with business matters of the nunnery (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* 42-46, 57-71; Servey 24; Thompson, "Why English Nunneries Have No History" 131) as well as to be spiritual, efficient, and reliable leaders.

The noble lineage was so significant that, commonly, in the late Middle Ages, the prioress was not the most pious one, but the nun who had the most noble ancestors. As stated in the church laws, it was not possible for a corrupt nun to be a prioress; however, a nun having noble connections yet with immoral behaviour could win this position more easily than the other simple nuns. The traditional medieval prioress, hence, was a noble and strong woman (Servey 26; Deichman 16). Power puts forward that "[a]ll nuns were Christ's brides, but an earthly father in the neighbourhood, with broad acres and loose purse strings was not to be despised. If great lady retired to a nunnery, she was

very likely to end as its head" (*Medieval English Nunneries* 42). Moreover, a prioress with noble family ties usually could ease financial matters of the convent in terms of food, and income (*Medieval English Nunneries* 42-43). Servey underlines another possible reason for the nuns to elect a nun of noble birth for the head of their nunnery:

> Since many religious women [. . .] longed for a life more like that of court ladies–a life spent outside the jail/convent and its strict monotonous schedule of silence–it is reasonable for us to consider the election of a more worldly nun a happy occasion to many nuns. Perhaps such a prioress would allow them to wander about town and have meals at their secular friends' and/or relatives' homes. (28)

Therefore, like in the case of the noble monks, owing to their noble lineage, wealth and administrative skills, the women of noble birth were the most possible candidates for the cloister. On the other hand, besides the seeming harmony between the nobles and monastic life, due to the clash between the values and norms of the nobility and those of the clergy, the noble nuns, as Lee affirms, mostly had difficulty in adapting themselves to monastic life, to its strict rules: "[T]hey did not seem to live as comfortable a life in the convent as they had lived in the world" (145-46). Indeed, Winston-Allen clearly depicts the dilemma of a fourteen years old real nun of noble birth, who was placed in a nunnery when her father died and her mother wanted to marry again, and who had very difficult times trying to adjust herself to her new life in the cloister:

> When she came to live here she was a nice, likeable girl of about fourteen years of age who in better days had been tenderly raised by her mother. And therefore it was exceedingly difficult for her when she had to leave her mother. But, because she saw that her mother desired it and it was her wish, she acquiesced, although it was trying and difficult for her. For she had been high spirited and merry and now had to behave in a *restrained, subdued manner* [my emphasis]. Oh, this life seemed so unsettling to her that her heart failed her when she thought that she must spend her life here. [. . .]When she was young, this good sister often had to master herself with great effort, for she was very merry and lively by nature and loved talking with people. Thus her nature and this life were like *light* and *darkness* [my emphasis]. And therefore she had a hard, difficult life and had to overcome her nature and break it. I believe that many a saint in heaven did not have as hard a time of it as this life was for her. (24-25)

The entrance of the third and fourth daughters of the nobility into nunneries without a genuine religious calling played a significant role in the increasing number of the young people joining the monastic houses as a profession in the late Middle Ages (Grode 31). Yet, there was a great difference between the former noble lifestyle of the convent girls, and the present cloistered way of life. Thus, it was easy for those monks and nuns who unwillingly joined monasteries and nunneries to be distracted by the worldly pleasures outside the monasteries. Evidently, Chaucer's Prioress is most probably one of those prioresses of noble birth who was sent to a monastery due to the familial or monetary reasons. As Power states, the details in relation to her fine manners at table and her courtliness display that the Prioress belongs to the nobility by birth and growth. Accordingly, the depiction of the Prioress might have even been drawn from one of the feudal books of conduct for noble girls ("Chaucer's Prioress" 144). Similarly, Shahar states that Chaucer's Prioress was one of those ladies of high birth as she had been taught French and instructed in table manners from her childhood onwards. Moreover, due to her noble lineage, it was most probable that she would be the relevant nominee for prioress which was a usual practice in Benedictine nunneries (*Childhood* 38-39). It is possible, as Power suggests, the Prioress was a little noble girl who was sent to a nunnery of her ancestors by her father to be able to avoid paying a dowry. Power notes that Egylentine [the Prioress] would get into a new *habit* [my emphasis] along with a bed (*Medieval People* 78) when admitted to the nunnery.

Yet, as Kerr points out, being cloistered required even more than changing one's habits, but one's nature as well: Those who wanted to join the cloister needed to know that along with the habits and customs of one's previous life, "both by practice and by force", one's nature must also change to keep up with the values and norms of the Rule of St. Benedict (2). In fact, the knowledge about the life of the nuns mostly came from visitation records which indicate the contacts of the nuns with the outside world as in the case of the noble monks discussed above. The prioresses of rich nunneries, for example, generally hosted aristocrats on travel and they ate with the lord and ladies from nearby places. Nuns were also hosted by noblewomen in their households. There was even a strong relationship between the firmer orders, like the Minoresses, and the

nobility (Ward, *Women* 195-196; Hourigan 43). In some cases, these nuns of noble birth were also shown favouritism as in St. Jean monastery:

> St. Jean was full of women from noble families at least among its leading members [. . .] despite the insistence on poverty, there are interesting clauses in the *Rule* allowing special treatment for those from noble families. It required the abbess to provide for good wine so that she might be able to give it "to those of more delicate upbringing" [. . .]. This indicated that despite its ideals, St. Jean was dominated by women from noble families. (Lee 109)

The hybrid identity developed consequently by the nuns and the Prioresses can be observed in Chaucer's Prioress. Needless to say, the strict rules of the nunneries were the main reasons for the noble nuns' dilemma in cloister. In terms of rules, the Rule of St. Benedict kept the most significant place in nunneries like in monasteries as it was the main order in the management and development of monasticism in the West. Despite the fact that the Rule addressed the male members of the convents, in time the nunneries followed the Rule of St. Benedict as well. Following the Rule of St. Benedict, the female members of the convents modified the rules in line with their requirements in nunneries which brought about the Benedictine nuns. These modifications were later written with a specific language and scope particularly appealing to the nuns (Grode 7, 9). Chaucer's Prioress, for instance, is from "Stratford atte Bowe," (*CT*, I, 125). It is likely that she is a fourteenth-century Benedictine nun, the prioress of St. Leonard's since St. Leonard's was the only abbey belonging to Stratford at Bow. Moreover, St. Leonard's was a Benedictine abbey which Chaucer visited and the Benedictine order was definitely the most prevailing order in England in the fourteenth century (Hourigan 39). Similarly, Harrigan and Benson state that Madame Eglentyne is a prioress of a Benedictine monastery at Barking, one of the oldest and richest in England, two miles away from Chaucer's house (Hourigan 39; Benson, "The Canterbury Tales" 340). Yet, Chaucer's nun violates the monastic orders right at the beginning as she goes on a pilgrimage although it was forbidden by the Benedictine Order. As Topping notes, "[t]aken as a piece with her authority and power within her convent, her [the Prioress'] pilgrimage to Canterbury demonstrates the assertion of her own will over that of her Bishop, and of the very Benedictine Rule by which she lives" (73).

Another significant rule Chaucer's Prioress violates is silence. The nuns were not permitted to speak needlessly. If the nuns needed to talk to each other, they were required to use sign language to keep the silence. Even while the nuns were eating, they passed the items to their sisters without speaking (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* 287; Grode 24). Yet, Chaucer's Prioress violates the rule of silence by her "countrefete cheere/ of court" (*CT*, I, 139-40). Owing to the rules which the nuns had to observe, the lives of the nuns were afflicted by quietness and boredom; thus, the nuns wishing a life away from monastic imprisonment were in majority (Servey 10-11).

These strict rules and the prisonlike lifestyle together with increasing wealth and power of monasticism contributed much to the corruption in the nunneries and monasteries. The people of the monasteries, abbots and abbesses, priors and prioresses, were socially and politically the leading figures of society. They had the same reputation as the members of nobility along with additional respect due to religion. Yet, this dominance and prosperity along with the deficiency of a religious calling of some monks and nuns brought about the deterioration in the Benedictine Rule. For example, the prioresses and abbesses left the monastery on the pretext of monastic business. Some prioresses joined weddings, danced, put on ornamental clothes and gems; and many of them went on pilgrimages. Hence, the vocational negligence on the part of the prioresses and nuns fascinated a great number of people who wanted to join monasteries. Yet, this deterioration in the monastic life led some people to question the essence of monastic life (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* 69; Hourigan 40). Concerning the corruption in nunneries and monasteries, a monk called Adamnan tells that when he was reciting the Psalter, a stranger came into sight unexpectedly and told him that

> [n]owhere [in the monastery] have I found anyone except yourself concerned with the health of his own soul. All of them, men and women alike, are either sunk in unprofitable sleep, or else awake in order to commit sin. Even the cells, which were built for prayer and study, are now converted into places for eating, drinking, gossip, or other amusements. [. . .] The nuns [. . .] spend their times weaving fine clothes [. . .] adorn themselves like brides or to attract attention from strange men. *(Ecclesiastical History of England* 284*)*

Chaucer's Prioress is among those corrupt nuns as she wants to run away from the monastery whenever possible, goes on pilgrimage, keeps dogs, and eats like the people of court. Thereby, the Prioress wastes the supplies of the church extravagantly on items of decorating, on travel expenses, eating good food, sleeping at an inn and on feeding her dogs. This kind of extravagancy resulted in bankruptcy in many of the convents in the late Middle Ages (Servey 72). As Power explains, these prioresses violating the monastic rules were regarded as earthly and people hated them since they did not behave in the way they should behave "living too luxuriously, ruling like an autocrat, and/or showing favouritism to some nuns" (*Medieval English Nunneries* 59). Generally, due to her innumerable violations of the monastic rules, the portrait of the Prioress is taken as a biting satire on the corruption of the church (Power, "Chaucer's Prioress" *136*).

Indeed, in his Prioress, on a pilgrimage with a nun and three priests to Canterbury Cathedral, Chaucer might have been inspired by a real prioress, Mary Suharde or Syward, who was the head of the Benedictine nunnery of St Leonard's at that time (Power, "Chaucer's Prioress" 136; Andrew 231). In accordance with her possible noble origin, according to Fridell, in the portrait of his prioress, Chaucer made use of a real courtly model, who was depicted in a portrait by Jean de Liege in 1367. This portrait most likely belonged to Philippa of Hainault, the queen of Edward III since there are a great number of similarities between the portrait of Philippa of Hainault and the depiction of Chaucer's Prioress: "The oval face and the conventional nose and brow are strongly modified by the concavities across the expanse of the forehead; the full, rounded volumes of the cheeks and chin; deep concavities between the chin and mouth; the small, tight petulant lips" (Fridell 182-83).

Undeniably, as it has been suggested so far, it is the strict rules or the prisonlike lifestyle of the convent which push the noble Prioress into violation of the rules of her position and these rules are the deciding factors in her hybridity as well. In early eleventh century, a Latin song describes a nun who bemoans the dullness of singing divine office, and tells about the luxuries she yearns for:

> *Fibula non perfruor, flammeum non capio, strophum assumerem, diadema cuperem, heumisella!–monile arriperem si valerem, pelles et herminie libetferre.* (I have no *brooch* (my italics) to enjoy, can wear no bridal-veil; how I'd long to put on a ribbon or a coronet - woe is me!–I'd get a necklace if I could, and wearing ermine furs would be lovely). (qtd. in Mann 130)

Accordingly, Chaucer's Prioress is not necessarily a corrupt, negligent prioress but rather a noble woman trying to adapt to a strict religious lifestyle. In the Middle Ages, it was common for bishops to visit nunneries and monasteries in England to check whether they observed those strict rules. The bishop, for example, wanted to learn whether the prioress behaved suitably and asked the nuns whether they had any complaints. One of those complaints, which were told the Bishop of Lincoln by the nuns about their prioress, is as follows

> The Prioress [. . .] wears golden rings exceeding costly, with divers precious stones and also girdles silvered and gilded over and silken veils and she carries her veil too high above her forehead, so that her forehead, being entirely uncovered, can be seen of all, and she wears furs of veil. Also she wears shifts of clothes of Rennes, which costs sixteen pence the ell. Also she wears kirtles laced with silk and tiring pins of silver and silver gilt and has made all the nuns wear the like. Also she wears above her veil a cap of estate, furred with budge. Item, she has on her neck a long silken band, in English a lace, which hangs down below her breast and there on a golden ring with one diamond. (qtd. in Power, *Medieval People* 90)

Clearly, Chaucer's Prioress, with her fair-forehead, well-pinched wimple, and little dogs, is almost the same as this prioress depicted in the visitation records of the monasteries (Power "Chaucer's Prioress" 138). Thus, Chaucer's Prioress is a lifelike character who embodies the very characteristics of a fourteenth-century prioress including her violation of the monastic rules. The Prioress clearly disregards the monastic rules with her noble traits and habits: her apparel–her forehead or headdress along with her gold brooch–and her courtly identity embodying her name, her French, her dogs and her table manners, all of which point to her hybrid existence on the realms between the nobility and the clergy.

The forehead or headdress of the Prioress is a mark of her noble identity. The forehead of the Prioress is described in *The General Prologue* as such: "But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;/ It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe; /For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe." (*CT*, I, 154-56). As Farrell states, the Prioress shows her skin which is a sign of vanity, and her forehead is huge as she is mostly interested in her physical well-being, eating and drinking, rather than in the spiritual world ("The Prioress" 211). As Cooper states,

> A wide forehead was an attribute of beauty, but eight inches is too much—and the third line insists that it is not just poetic license. 'Nat undergrowe' cannot, in this context, mean 'well- proportioned': it is a litotes, like Rome being no mean city or death no small thing. The Prioress is a large woman. (*Oxford Guides to Chaucer* 3)

Yet, to some scholars, "nat undergrowe" (*CT*, I, 156) means that the Prioress is extraordinarily tall, or she has excessively big bosoms. Evidently, Madame Eglentyne is tall and overweight which might be taken as a sign of her former estate since, as stated, the members of the nobility were fat and tall since they ate better. Apart from her physical size, the problem seems to be that the Prioress does not cover her forehead as required (Bowden, *A Commentary* 94; Morgan, "Obscenity and Fastidiousness" 489). As Hodges points out, the Prioress' headdress is inadmissible as "her veil is worn too high on her forehead and her wimple is inappropriately "pynched" (*CT*, I, 151), which display her vanity, a characteristic improper to her occupation (*Chaucer and Costume* 46). Coulton even claims that "[t]his nun had no business to possess any forehead at all, so far as Chaucer was concerned" (*Medieval* 276). For some scholars, the Prioress wears her veil high to follow worldly fashion as large and unlined foreheads signified medieval beauty. Although the nuns were expected to wear their veils attached firmly down to their eyebrows to cover their foreheads entirely, high foreheads were popular among secular ladies and they even shaved their foreheads to keep them higher. It seems that the Prioress and her nuns could not resist the trend of the day and they mimicked it (Knight 179, Curry 42; Bowden, *A Commentary* 94-95; Ridley 17; Power, *Medieval People* 89-90).

On the other hand, according to Long and Hardy, Chaucer does not even clearly mention that the Prioress does not cover her forehead ("The Prioress and the Puys" 16, 36). For Hodges, at that time the church authorities did not declare any regulations in relation to the height of veils or that the nuns should cover their forehead. Upon analysing the relevant illuminated manuscripts, Hodges concludes that there are "no illustrations of a veil worn down to the eyebrows before late fifteenth century […] manuscripts. Commonly, nuns' veils in earlier medieval illuminations are worn at a height of one to two inches above the eyebrows–high enough for an observer to be able to judge the breadth of the forehead below" (*Chaucer and Clothing* 56). Furthermore, as again Hodges states, generally the nuns in the manuscripts do not have a veil, wimple, or headgear and their foreheads and hair are completely revealed (*Chaucer and Clothing* 56). In a similar sense, Grode points out that there were no rules related to wimple style, veil height or covering of the forehead in the Benedictine Order or in *Ancrene Wisse* (61). Yet, still, as remarked by Hodges, Chaucer's mention of "fair foreheed" (*CT*, I, 154) displays that the Prioress wears her headdress in the secular style of her time (*Chaucer and Clothing* 51).

Being once a member of the nobility, the Prioress seems to be interested in the trends of her day, a continuation of her former usual habit. Hence, she experiences an in-betweenness as a result of her religious responsibilities. In fact, clothing was one of the significant issues the nuns had to observe; yet, some of the rules about clothing were also the most violated ones. The rules in relation to clothing were especially violated by, like the Prioress, the nuns of noble birth, who were used to wearing expensive clothes of fur, silk and velvet as a sign of their noble status before joining a nunnery (Grode 14; Elliott 6). Chapter 55 of the Rule of St. Benedict included clothing underlying the vow of poverty:

> Let clothing be given to the brethren according to the nature of the place in which they dwell and its climate; […] The sisters should not complain about the color or the coarseness of any of these things, but be content with what can be found in the district where they live and can be purchased cheaply; and that each nun should have–two tunics and two cowls, to allow for night wear and for the washing of these garments. (85-86)

Chapter 55 also stated that the apparel of the nuns "should be the sort that can be found in the country where they live or bought at the cheapest rate" (85). Furthermore, in 1237, it was accepted that, together with monks and canons, the nuns could officially wear only black contrary to the colourful clothes of the nobility (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 134; Clark 241; Elliott 8). Indeed, there were many prohibitions about clothing which the nuns had to observe. For example, they could not wear "gowns with wide bottoms, sleeves turned back showing fur at the wrist, wide girdles or plaited belts which men might see, [. . .] laced shoes, red dresses and the long supertunics of the "secular" type, silken clothing, [. . .] [and] rings other than their consecration ring [. . .]" (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* 585). As mentioned above, it was mostly the nuns of noble lineage, who did not observe the rules about clothing since they wanted to follow the fashion in line with their former noble habits. Accordingly, in 1314, the Archbishop Melton at Hampole asked the prioresses to warn their nuns who wore clothes in style improper to the regulations of the order, no matter what their status is (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 138).

Undoubtedly, the inheritance, due to their noble heritage, was the origin of the expensive dresses of the noble nuns. Those noble nuns in nunneries were mostly given presents of attire of costly material, embellished with gemstones, furs, silk, gold, and silver, inherited from their friends and kin. For example, a prioress, Joan Samborne at the Austin nunnery of Lacock, a royal foundation, owned an expensive closet. Another example, Joan, Prioress of Swine, in 1394, owned "one cloak of black cloth furred with gray, one round silver basin and ten marks of silver" through inheritance (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 136-137, 140). The noble nuns' interest in expensive clothes was also improper to the rule of the Benedictine order forbidding private property, which was mostly broken in the late fourteenth century. The formal visitation archives include various examples indicating the ban of private property, which was repeatedly ignored by the prioresses, whose wardrobes were full of forbidden dresses coming from inheritance (Thompson 3-5). As Hodges suggests, for a nun of noble birth, to dress in accordance with the order meant to abandon the entire notion of high class position deriving from birth (*Chaucer and Clothing* 145). In fact, this necessity of leaving aside the privileges of the nobility upon becoming a member of the clergy formed the basis of

the hybridity of the nuns. On the borders of the nobility and the clergy, the noble nuns live, in Bhabha's terms, "in the "place[s] of emergence [. . .] from which something begins its presencing" (*The Location of Culture* 5). In the medieval context, this new presence emerging out of the borders of the nobility and the clergy refers to the identity of the medieval hybrid nuns, like the Prioress, trying to find alternative existence for herself on the margins of her former and new estate.

Additionally, the dilemma of the noble nuns in relation to clothing is apparent even in the sumptuary laws. Although the nuns of noble birth had to wear simple clothes in line with their order, those nuns keeping private property, though it was forbidden, seemed to have the right to dress luxuriously. According to the second sumptuary law in 1362, regardless of occupation, the "personal income continued to be the final determinant of what an individual might lawfully wear without penalty of confiscation" (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 143) which applies to Chaucer's Prioress as well:

> Chaucer provides no information in his description of Madame Eglentyne concerning her possible expenditure by the year, or her income, except that he tells us she travels accompanied by a retinue, one suitable to the prioress of prosperous priory. If we follow this indication we might expect the Prioress to dress as some of her historical counterparts did, in luxurious clothing. (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 147)

As in the case of her forehead or headdress, the luxurious clothing of the Prioress has been generally regarded as the sign of her worldliness. Erol, for example, notes that the apparel of the Prioress indicates her incapability "to become the person of her station and profession. Each detail concerning her costume is a trespass in itself of the rules of the convent" ("A Pageant" 83). The most notable item of the costume of the Prioress is her golden brooch, which has also been regarded as a sign of her vanity. Chaucer describes the golden brooch of the Prioress as such

> Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
> A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
> And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
> On which ther was first write a crowned A,
> And after, *Amor* vincit *omnia*
> (*CT*, I, 158-62)

Among the other striking items of the Prioress, the inscription on her brooch has provoked the most prevailing criticism among scholars. In fact, like in the case of her forehead, there are two main perspectives on the beads and brooch of the Prioress. According to the first view, the beads with a brooch on which is written *Amor vincit omnia* (love conquers all) stands for her spiritual devotion. On the contrary, the second perspective considers it as a token of her vanity as it symbolises earthly love (Grode 73). The ambiguity of the Prioress' brooch reflects on her religious and noble hybrid identity. As Lowes argues, the Prioress is "hovering [. . .] between two worlds" as reflected in the ambiguous motto on her brooch (375). Similarly, Phillips states

> The worldly element in the portrait, the sense that the woman vowed to God, and administrating a convent, cultivates the airs and graces the airs and graces of an upper-class, sexually attractive lady, is encapsulated in the ambiguity as to whether he all-conquering *Amor* of her brooch's motto is heavenly or earthly love. (39)

The Prioress' brooch underlines the ambiguity of her portrait with its secular and religious elements and embodies the characteristics of her two spheres. The Prioress' brooch, therefore, marks her as a hybrid figure. Moreover, the brooch of the Prioress is gold, "brooch of gold ful scheene," (*CT*, I, 160). The sumptuary laws of 1363 banned medieval people from wearing gold brooches apart from those who kept the highest-rank in state and clergy. It is not clear if the Prioress' rank is high enough to wear a gold brooch, especially a gold brooch with a problematic divine message. As mentioned above, there are two nunneries which the Prioress is associated with: Barking Abbey and St. Leonard's. Barking Abbey was prosperous, and its prioress with a gold brooch absolutely would not shock people. Yet, St. Leonard's was to some extent more impoverished; thus, a gold brooch of the prioress of St. Leonard's would have been more incoherent. As gold was an expensive and usually a noble material, the Prioress' brooch appears to be a very expensive religious item for it is attached to a rosary (Rex 65; Grode, 71, 73). Moreover, the way the Prioress wears her rosary is suggestive of her hybridity:

> She wears her rosary beads about her wrist, too, like a court lady's beaded bracelet. Readers must also consider the coral and green color of her rosary beads. Gaily colored rosary beads were often worn/used by court women,

> but nuns were expected to employ less colorful, less noticable rosaries, either black or dark brown. (30-31)

Accordingly, the Prioress' rosary is a "coral bracelet with its gold brooch" and it is a worldly, womanly item. As Taitt argues, "its motto serves as a gentle reminder of the opposition of the ideal and real in its wearer" (61). As Hodges states, the Prioress' bracelet is ornamental which is not for devotional love and the inscription of the brooch of the Prioress displays that "her pursuit of worthiness has become an end in itself, for her attention to dress and courtly manners [. . .] [has] pushed her aside from the path of a true love of God" (*Chaucer and Costume* 187). Underlying the vagueness of the rosary and the inscription, Gaylord claims the Prioress has not verified that she sincerely realises the meaning of celestial love ("The Unconquered" 623). Jacobs also associates the gold brooch of the Prioress with worldliness. (151-152). According to Wood, the high-priced gold brooch of the Prioress conveys a secular message as the Prioress imitates courtly and aristocratic behaviour ("Chaucer's Use of Signs" 97-98).

In fact, the phrase, *amor vincit omnia*, was initially used in Virgil's *Tenth Eclogue* in a monologue with regard to earthly love. Yet, long before Chaucer's times, the clergy and later the public started to use the expression as a compact and catchy word referring to faith (McGowan 199; Madeleva 43). The gold brooch with its controversial inscription is clearly a sign of the hybridity of Chaucer's Prioress. The Prioress has the right to wear a gold brooch as her previous original estate is the nobility and she still keeps her personal property; yet, her present estate, the clergy, does not let her wear it. It is noteworthy that the Prioress' wearing a gold brooch is less shocking if she is of aristocratic origin. This renders her position as a prioress problematic, though, and points to her in-between position.

The hybrid identity of the Prioress can be clearly observed in her name as well: "she was cleped madame Eglentyne." (*CT*, I, 121). The name of the Prioress, Madame Eglentyne, does not have something to do with a saint or with the Bible. On the contrary, Eglantine is a lovely and romantic name. What is more, the name "Eglentyne" invokes a connection with the characteristical romance heroine (Grode 43, Madeleva 8; Hanning, "From Eva and Ave" 586; Andrew 231). In fact, according to *Middle English*

Dictionary, the word "Eglentin" is of French origin, meaning briar rose or sweetbrier deriving from an old French word *eglantine* ("Eglentin"). According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, besides its French origin, the word eglantin derives from *aculentus* meaning prickly in Latin; it also means the rose tree and sweet-briar "much like the common brere but leues are swete and pleasant to smell to" and as "a stone of hardness and grain of marble" ("Eglantine," def. 1). Kelly indicates that an eglantine refers to a wild rose, which "grows to a height of eight feet: armed with stout, hooked prickles [. . .] the bush is tall, wide, and hardy" (365) signifying power and independence rather than a mild, common feminine type. Holloway notes that Eglentyne with its relation to roses brings medieval romance heroines to mind and points out that Eglentyne exactly derives from the romances in fourteenth century such as Raynar's *Recueil de Motets* and *Bele Aiglentine et le quens Henris* (201). Accordingly, it seems that the Prioress adopts Eglentyne as a name because of its courtly overtones.

Another characteristic of the Prioress which indicates her noble origin and consequent hybridity is her speaking French: "And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,/ After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,/ For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe." (*CT*, I, 124-26). As Erol notes, "[. . .] the knowledge of French may be acceptable as the Prioress would need French for her profession. Still in the fourteenth century some knowledge of French was thought to be a sign of nobility" ("A Pageant" 89). Indeed, a prioress in the Middle Ages needed to speak French with some eloquence as bishops declared their instructions in French. Thus, the Prioress' French is proper to a lady of nobility and to a prioress both. The Prioress speaks a type of secondary Stratford French which points to the nunnery of Madame Eglentine: the Benedictine cloister of St. Leonard's at Stratford at Bowe. Some scholars argue that Chaucer intentionally made the French of the Prioress second rate, which is a means of satire (Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer* 244; Bowden, *A Commentary* 246; Grode 47; Hourigan 39). On the other hand, for some scholars, the accent of the Prioress is meant to entertain Chaucer's noble readers (Kuhl 306-309; Ridley 18; Livingstone 217). It is not so significant whether Chaucer used the accent of the Prioress to satirise her or to humour his noble readers. Yet, it is important to note that her name and speaking French are possibly the characteristics she has because of her noble origin. In other words, the important point is that the Prioress'

knowledge of French along with her French originated name Eglentine point to her noble background and her consequent hybrid existence in the nunnery.

The in-between position of Chaucer's Prioress is apparent in her eating habits, too. The nuns were to eat the food accepted by the order at the accepted time, unlike the way they used to do before joining a nunnery. In the nunneries, the same food was served in each meal as imposed by the Benedictine Rule in Chapter 39:

> We think it sufficient for the daily dinner, whether at the sixth or the ninth hour, that every table have two cooked dishes [...]Therefore let two cooked dishes suffice for all the brethren; and if any fruit or fresh vegetables are available, let a third dish be added. [...] Let a good pound weight of bread suffice for the day, whether there be only one meal or both dinner and supper. (65)

The nuns were to be slim and their diet was mostly under strict control; thus, they had almost no option with respect to the time and kind of meal they ate. The nuns who tried hard to adapt to the dietary rules and rigid fasting were apparently in the majority. Consequently, the nuns of noble birth had a severe life in the convent as in the case of a noble nun who had to steal food as she was very hungry (Servey 49-50; Lee 145-146). A nun wrote: "I am very hungry. Thus far I have fasted and eaten nothing at all [today]. Our entire midday meal was over salted. We pushed it away [and] I did not eat a bite. Yesterday I had [only] warm beer. Now I must eat bread dipped in sauce" (qtd. in Winston-Allen 48). Likewise, Bell points out that particularly the nuns used to eating well were considerably affected by the strict dietary rules. Those nuns had to change their old eating patterns and more importantly, they had to obey the toughest dietary rules after they joined nunneries (20-21). The difficulty of the Prioress in *The General Prologue* in leaving her former eating habits behind is visible in her table manners. Indeed, the table manners of the Prioress indicate her noble origin. Chaucer gives the details of the Prioress' table manners as follows:

> At mete wel ytaught was she with alle;
> She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
> Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;
> Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe
> That no drope ne fille upon hire brest.

> In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest.
> Hir over-lippe wyped she so clene
> That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
> Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
> Ful semely after hir mete she raughte." (*CT*, I, 127-36)

The Prioress' table manners and diet are proper for a noble lady. Obviously, the Prioress is more experienced in eating than fasting as she is a very neat, noble and well-practiced eater. Her experience in eating well displays that she has attended the places where there are other courteous eaters. Rather than a head of a nunnery, the courteous table manners of the Prioress demonstrate that she is of noble origin (Rossignol 113). Besides her familarity with eating together with other nobles, as the line "nat undergrowe" (*CT*, I, 156) suggests, the Prioress is a fat nun which is problematic because nuns were supposed to observe rigid dietary rules and avoid overeating. Nuns were assumed to devote themselves to spiritual perfection rather than physical fulfilment. The Prioress eats much even on the way to pilgrimage. It seems that the table manners of the Prioress are appropriate advice given to the courtly women on eating to help them to impress men through neat eating (Servey 59). In fact, the table manners of the Prioress are similar to the manners noblewomen are advised to win the love of men in *The Romance of the Rose* (Mann 129; Dane 219; Williams, *The French Fetish* 32). In *The Romance of the Rose*, the noblewomen are told how to eat properly as follows:

> [. . .] Let her guard against getting her fingers wet
> up to the joint in the sauce, against smearing her lips with soup,
> garlic, or fat meat, against piling up too large morsels and stuffing
> her mouth. When she has to moisten a piece in any sauce, either
> *sauce verte*, *cameline*, or *jauce*, she should hold the bit with her
> fingertips and bring it carefully up to her mouth, so that no drop
> of soup, sauce, or pepper falls on her breast. She must drink so
> neatly that she doesn't spill anything on herself, for anyone who
> happened to see her spill would think her either very clumsy or
> very greedy. (231)

It is not only the table manners and her diet that make the Prioress ladylike. Chaucer identifies her with the ladies in romances also through her physical traits (75): a "nose tretys," (*CT*, I, 152), eyes "greye as glas," (*CT*, I, 152), a mouth "ful smal, and therto softe and reed," (*CT*, I, 153), and a "fair forheed," (*CT*, I, 154).

Another courtly quality of the Prioress is her pet dogs. The Prioress owns dogs and feeds them with the best food (*CT*, I, 146-47) which is quite acceptable in her former estate. Chaucer describes the Prioress with her dogs as follows:

> But for to speken of hire conscience,
> She was so charitable and so pitous
> She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a maus
> Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
> Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
> With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel-breed.
> But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
> Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte;
> And al was conscience and tendre herte.
> (*CT*, I, 142-50)

Chaucer associates the Prioress' misdirected Christian charity and piety with the dogs she keeps, thus combines the characteristics of her dual estates. As a nun, she is charitable and pious, as a noble lady she keeps dogs and feeds them with the best food. The sympathy of the Prioress for mice and little dogs might be taken as a sign of her gentleness; on the other hand, her interest in mice and dogs also displays her estrangement from religious values (Hourigan 44). In fact, keeping animals was forbidden in nunneries and keeping dogs, the favourite of the nuns, was included in the three ills/evils, as Power calls it, three D's: dances, dresses and dogs (*Medieval People* 88). Rules about dances, dresses and dogs were the most violated ones in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The ban on animals in nunneries was well documented in the edicts of the time: the abbesses or nuns could not keep dogs or birds. Another edict from Whitby states, no dogs could be kept within the walls of the cloister (Bennett 96; Steadman 1). In *Ancrene Wisse*, keeping animals was seen as a distraction and it was forbidden to keep animals except cats:

> My dear sisters, unless need drives you and your director advises it, you must not have any animal except a cat. An anchoress who has animals seems more like a housewife […] for then she has to think of the cow's food, of the herdsman's hire; to flatter the bailiff, curse him when he impounds it, and pay the damages anyway. (Savage and Watson 201)

The nuns usually violated the ban on the keeping of pets which the bishops constantly had to struggle against although they came to nothing[23]. The women of nobility enjoyed

themselves by keeping pets and the nuns imitated them. Besides dogs, monkeys, squirrels, rabbits, birds and cats were the favourite animals of the nuns. The ban of the bishops on keeping dogs was a futile attempt for the Prioress as she could not even leave her dogs behind on a pilgrimage (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* 305-307; *Medieval People* 90). Indeed, for a woman of noble birth, like the Prioress, keeping pets was a usual habit which was not easy to abandon. Power notes that

> [i]n addition to money for their lodging and meals, boarders also brought their worldly trappings–fashionable clothes and small dogs–with them, tempting those gently born prioresses who shared the spirit, manners, and tastes of their race. (*Medieval English Nunneries* 9)

Having seen her noble sisters in stylish clothes with small dogs, it seems natural that a lady of aristocratic birth recalls and wants to maintain her previous habits, fashionable clothes, gold brooches and small dogs, which is generally regarded as mimicking.[24] Thus, as Power further suggests, the Prioress, mimics the nobility and keeps dogs. As mentioned above, the fashion-conscious, noble prioresses used to living in luxury, mostly spent the supply of the convent to imitate their previous life styles. They mostly spent money on costly foods and luxurious clothes (*Medieval English Nunneries* 161-75).

Thereby, in her apparel, headdress, brooch, speaking French, table manners and her keeping dogs, the Prioress is an imitation of courtly ladies and their manners. As Brewer suggests, imitating the courtly manners, the Prioress becomes an "inferior outsider" (Brewer, *The World* 119). Indeed, being an outsider in the cloister marks the Prioress' hybrid existence like the monster "dwelling at the gates of difference" which according to Cohen is "an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond—of all those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within" ("Monster Culture" 7). Hence, the Prioress as a hybrid includes in herself "an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category", as Cohen states of the monster (Preface x). The Prioress, in fact, is an outsider who is displaced due to her hybrid existence. As Hopper suggests, the Prioress is a woman disappointed with her religious occupation. She probably laments the chance of secular love or having children which slipped through her fingers, which shows in her maternal care over her dogs (63). Then, as a disobedient and joyless nun,

the Prioress "seems to have an uneasy foot in both camps" in both her religious and earthly divisions (Frank "Chaucer's Prioress" 346; Hopper 77), as in Bhabha's hybrid identities who possess "unhomely presence[s]" (13) and "interstitial existence[s]" (*The Location of Culture* 16).

As so far argued, the hybridity of the Prioress arises from the clash between her noble traits deriving from her noble lineage, which she does not relinquish, and the rules of the cloister, which she is expected to follow in line with her current status. In other words, the Prioress embodies the characteristics or values and norms of both her estates; thus, she could not be either a real nun or a noble lady, yet lives in-between. In fact, the Prioress' embodiment of two polar characteristics makes her a hybrid figure. As Hanning points out, Chaucer develops a woman in the Prioress who "assumes the behaviour of another role, that of a refined courtesan, even though it is inappropriate" ("From Eva and Ave" 585). This complex and in-between identity of the Prioress "is so carefully two-sided[25] that although she can afford to feed wastel bread and milk to her dogs, she also sings the Divine Office and carries a rosary" (Grode 4). However, Chaucer's Prioress could be neither a romance heroine nor a religious nun as she is "[. . .] caught between the two roles of nun and courtly lady" (Topping 76).[26] Yet, the Prioress seems to be produced by an estate structure that stimulated the cloister for women irrespective of a religious calling. Indeed, the ladylike Prioress of Chaucer, like his lordlike Monk, shows that the conventional division of the religious world and secular world in the Middle Ages did not work any more (Farrell, "Hybrid Discourse" 90; Phillips 28).

To conclude, the hybrid identity of the Prioress is also the corollary of the circumstances of the period. Hence, the ambiguous portrait of the Prioress, a nun with courtly manners, suggests a hybrid character. In this sense, the Prioress possesses a liminal existence in a third space between her original estate in which she used to have a luxurious, worldly lifestyle, and her present estate in which she is supposed to lead a simple life dedicated to religion. As a Bhabhanian hybrid, the Prioress, like the Monk, adopts a new, hybrid identity formed by a mixture of the characteristics of the nobility and clergy; yet, she never entirely belongs to any of them. That is to say, maintaining

the traits of both her noble and religious status, the Prioress turns into a medieval hybrid. In fact, this in-betweenness of the Prioress properly fits Young's definition of hybrid. Young, similar to Bhabha, asserts that hybridity cannot be completely a third term "because, as a monstrous inversion, a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them" (23) and "makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different" (26). Thus, the Prioress can neither totally belong to the nobility nor to the clergy, yet lives in the territories of both, maintaining the habits or values and norms of both in her. Accordingly, the Prioress is both similar to and different from the members of her two estates. Werthamer asks: "Isn't it understandable that a well-bred young woman should want to keep some of the innocent pleasures of worldly life in a convent?" (20). The answer for this question was definitely not positive in medieval society in which the three estates structure shaped the mind and way of living of the people and brought about borderline identities as observed in Chaucer's Monk and Prioress.

CHAPTER III

RE-DEFINING THE ESTATES: CHAUCER'S FRANKLIN AND THE MILLER AS MEDIEVAL HYBRIDS

Of louts and fools I also sing
Boast of many a lofty thing
And want to be what they are not,
The whole world's vision they would blot
Because it never honors them.
From noblemen they claim to stem
The while their father banged and pounded
And in the cooper's trade was grounded,
. . . .
Now he would claim his blood is blue
As if no man his father knew
His name was Master Jack of Mayence,
The while his son is Squire Vincenz.
(Brant 252)

In his *Ship of Fools* (1494), Sebastian Brant criticises medieval social climbers who broke the boundaries of feudalism and the three estates, and claimed nobility without taking their low origin, thus, lack of gentility into account. Brant's poem clearly displays the uneasy position of the social climbers on the medieval social stratum in that they were not accepted into the ranks of the nobility and they were accused of trying to be what they were not in reality. Indeed, the social climbers were the corollaries of the late fourteenth century which was a time of decline for feudalism and the three estates. On the other hand, the rise of capitalism and the consequent social change and mobility marked the same period as a time of prosperity and developments along with the emergence of a strong middle-grouping of social climbers. Yet, as Strohm notes, the traditionalist medieval society did not accept "middle" or other intervening categories that could blur the firm division of social levels: the commoners on the one side and lay and religious members of the nobility on the other, in other words, the inferiors and the superiors (*Social Chaucer* 2-3). Hence, in the late fourteenth-century England, there were people who did not belong to any of the traditional three estates, of clergy, nobles or of the commoners, owing to upward social mobility created by the weakening of

feudalism and rise of capitalism. The members of this middle-grouping which could not fit in the accepted boundaries of the three estates grew into medieval hybrids living in a third space formed by their former social status as commoners and the present higher social status they claimed on the borders of the three estates. Living on Bhabhanian thresholds of "the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" (*The Location of Culture* 2), the hybrids of upward mobility challenged the notion of three estates of the time and they occupied medieval borderlines. Medieval hybrids of common origin were also mimics, imitating their social superiors, the nobility and clergy, which was obviously noticeable in their apparels, manners and customs and even their discourse. Most of the commoners in the fourteenth century were social climbers and their position can be explained in terms of Bhabha's theory of mimicry which is defined as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite (86)" as the commoners eventually become *almost the same but not gentle* (italics mine).

As argued in the previous chapters, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* represents medieval society as moulded by social mobility making the three estate model inadequate in defining medieval identity, and many of his characters are hybrids who experience a state of in-betwenness as a result of social mobility. Socially upward mobile people of the medieval society in *The Canterbury Tales* are also mimics. Within this context, this chapter specifically examines Chaucer's Franklin and Miller as medieval hybrids and mimics for the reason that they are the very characters bearing various characteristics of medieval hybridity and mimicry owing to upward mobility as illustrated both in their portraits and tales. Searching for a stable identity apart from the accepted identities of the time shaped by the medieval three estates, these pilgrims experience hybridity in the medieval context and live, in Bhabhanian terms, in "interstitial passage[s] between fixed identifications", namely between the commoners and nobility, and in "'in-between' reality" with their "unhomely presence" (*The Location of Culture* 3, 13).

Chaucer's Franklin and the Miller are hybrids produced by the tensions and developments of the late fourteenth century. Unlike the Knight, the Monk and the

Prioress, the hybridity of the Franklin and the Miller arises from upward social mobility. Both the Franklin and Miller are of peasant origin; yet, they are the wealthiest peasants of the community. Rising on the social scale through their considerable wealth, the Franklin and the Miller pound at the door of the nobility, claiming gentility and asking for acceptance into their sphere. Yet, lacking noble origin, they are not accepted into the nobility. Not entirely belonging to the commoners any more, the Franklin and the Miller are not acknowledged by the commoners either. Thus, the Franklin and the Miller live in a Bhabhanian third space formed by the territories of the nobility and the commoners and develop their hybrid identities in between these two estates. Different from the Knight, the Monk and the Prioress, the Franklin and the Miller are mimics since they imitate the nobility in all respects including their apparel and lifestyle. Through mimicking the nobility, the Franklin and the Miller, to use Bhabha's definition of mimicry, show their "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (*The Location of Culture* 86). Yet, mimicking the habits and values of the nobility, they could not go beyond becoming, as Ashcroft et al. suggested above for the colonised, a 'blurred copy' (139) of them.

Before examining Chaucer's Franklin and the Miller as medieval hybrids and mimics, the social context enabling their upward mobility and consequent hybridity and mimicry must be covered. As discussed in detail in the introduction, the medieval society was marked by the traditional three estates which divided the society into three orders. As Howard states, "[t]he division became so traditional that most men thought it ordained by God; and most peasants, like most nobles, assumed that a man should patiently continue in the class which he had been born" ("Social Rank" 86). Thus, the three estates model was accepted "venerable and lasting" which made the medieval notion of society fixed rather than dynamic (Huizinga 48). In this hierarchical system, as Huizinga suggests, "[e]very notion [. . .] is linked with ideas of a higher and more general order, on which it depends like a vassal on his lord" (216). Accordingly, the franklins and millers were of those commoners with their peasant origins who were supposed to stay in the territories of the commoners in the medieval three estates. In fact, since they occupied the lower levels, it was mainly the peasants who challenged

the medieval social hierarchy, social injustices and asked for their rights from their superiors.

The three estate structure did not expose every facet of medieval society since the main aim of the division was to put forward a morally acceptable reason for social injustices and, particularly, to persuade the commoners to acknowledge the authority of the nobility and the clergy. The commoners were kept out from, in changing extents, the opportunity to reach property, social position and authority; and yielding to the superiors because of respect was one of the choices of the commoners (Rigby, "Social Structure" 1; "English Society" 26-27). Therefore, England in the Middle Ages was a "deference society" with different hierarchies "which regulated the respect and the kind of service which one man or woman may expect of another, or may expect to pay another" (Keen, "England" 1). The concept of deference to the superiors in the Middle Ages included widespread animosity to individual social mobility and an emphasis on the acceptance of one's position on the social stratum (Rigby "English Society" 27). Using the words of St Paul, Thomas of Wimbledon, a well-known preacher of the fourteenth century, states that one should observe what estate "God hath clepid him and dwell he there in", acknowledging the necessity to behave "accordyng to his degree" (qtd. in J. K. Knight 99-100). The people outside the borders produced by the hierarchical medieval society were put on the *margins* (italics mine) regardless of their ranks in society (Hanawalt*, Of Good and Ill Repute* 18). As Hanawalt further states, "[r]ituals of inclusion and exclusion encouraged the maintenance of the desired social order and helped to form a concept of the "we" who acted against the undesirable "them". The rituals of marginalization, therefore, are part of the process of forming group boundaries" (*Of Good and Ill Repute* 31). Hence, medieval society was a society of "Us"s and "Them"s where there was no accepted place for the in-betweens.

Yet, this strict and hierarchical structure of medieval society was turned upside down by the social mobility which was at its zenith in Chaucer's time, when roughly half of the population of England died because of the Black Death in about 1342. Thus, the rigid rules in relation to address, apparel and rank were valid only in theory. As a result, a rich member of the commoners belonging to the middle-grouping developed a better

life style compared to a poor member of the nobility. Indeed, in the middle-grouping, places of small groups were not clearly defined. The places of the franklins, yeomen and squires were not clear on the medieval social scale and there was also not a clear-cut difference between a local miller and a local smith. The ambiguity of the social positions of the medieval people was even traced in the disagreement over the right to enter the Church first on Sunday (Forgeng 7-8) as depicted in the portrait of the Wife of Bath in *The General Prologue*: "In all the parish, wife was there none,/That to the offering before her should go" (*CT,* I, 449-50). As stated, upward social mobility benefited mainly the peasants who used their chance to rise in the hierarchy. The medieval peasantry[27] included villeins, cotters, and free tenants, and almost all of the villagers who worked in the fields all day, ploughing, sickling, and freighting the cart. In each village, there were generally two bakers at the entrance and end of the village along with the smith, the carpenter, and the millers and fullers. A typical medieval village included twenty to fifty houses, situated around a church, manor house, mill and water supply. Like the society of the period, it is hard to define who a late medieval peasant was as it did not have a fixed meaning. Yet, there were still some fundamental characteristics of late medieval peasantry: Peasants were mainly rural workers and they supervised the manufacturing. Their production was mostly dependent on the household, its family and servants. The production of the peasants were included in the market economy, yet, not entirely based on markets. The peasants had some responsibilities and as well as some rights. Artisans and building workers were also included in the peasantry (Gies and Gies 102-103; Dyer, Introduction 3; Larson 9).

Generally peasantry was divided into three. Those at the lowest rank did not possess any land or owned little land to feed their families. In the middle rank, there were peasants who held a land of 12 to 16 acres or of 24 to 32 acres. A land of 12 to 16 acres was enough to maintain a family in a good season, and through a land of 24 to 32 acres a peasant family could gain more than they needed to survive which could free them from the villein status and even enabled them to buy more land. At the highest ranks of the peasant community, there were peasants in minority who possessed lands of 40, 50, or even 100 acres, which might, after a few generations, move them to a higher level, to the gentry regardless of their current villein status. The Hundred Rolls survey of 1279 of

seven Midland counties shows that thirty-two percent of all the arable land was covered in the lord's demesne, his private land; villeins held forty percent and freeholders held twenty-eight percent of the entire arable land. Almost a fifth of the peasantry held nearly a land of 24 to 32 acres. More prosperous families were in minority and they held 100 acres or more. Generally, the amount of holdings was decreasing as the population increased. The rich peasants were frequently called principal villagers or even autocrats. They had abundant land and chattels, the village offices were under their control, and they had good meals and big families. The villagers of the second rank held a smaller amount of land and fewer chattels. In good times they could do well, yet to make a living, they depended on other villagers to help them. The village community looked up to them; yet, they seldom kept the enviable positions in the village. The villagers at the third rank were the cottars, or tertiary villagers. They held just a cottage and a few acres, and thereupon, to survive, they had to rely substantially on wage labour or some extra work, such as thatching. Their life quality was not high and a small number of their children remained alive (Kosminsky 230-237; Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound* 6).

This difference between the poor and the rich peasants increased after the Black Death which had a direct impact on the number of offsprings who could see their adulthood. As a result of the changes in the village community after the Black Death, the rich peasants keeping high positions in the village began to experience difficulties. The wealthiest, consequently the most important members of the villages, such as haywards, reeves, and constables, held the highest positions which were supposed to run in families. Yet, these village authorities were generally in an odd situation in that they had to be the mediators between their neighbours, the lords and the state. In fact, the separation and injustice between the poor and rich peasants meant that the peasants of lower ranks worked for the peasants of higher ranks. The division within the peasant community was so varied and great that it was sometimes more significant than the separation between the peasants and the lords (Müller, "A Divided Class" 117; Dyer "Power and Conflict" 7; Britton 168). No matter what their ranks were, as Wickham notes, "[p]easants were the primary producers of the rural society of the feudal mode of production, and lords (including churches and kings) could only exist because they took

rents, dues, and services from peasants ” (498). Thus, feudalism cannot operate without the production of peasants.

Additionally, the medieval peasant cannot be imagined without the lord who controlled his/her entire life under the manorial system, a type of arrangement and administration in relation to land and the ties between and the peasant and lord. The lord did not harvest the estate himself, but his reliant peasants cultivated his land in return for rent and services (Goetz 108, 110). As discussed in depth in the introduction, the authority of the lord over the serfs or villeins was in the extreme in that serfdom[28] included no type of individual freedom or action. The land of the serf, servile or villein was the property of their lords which could be taken away from them on any occasion. The lords gave the land to peasants along with animals, farming supplies, and even household equipment. Thus, the peasants were the tenants of the lords, and they did not possess any goods and chattels as everything belonged to the lord. If a peasant committed a crime and was sentenced to a monetary penalty, his lord could penalise him for using his money carelessly. If he wished, a lord might ask for money from his serfs as tax. The fees such as of tallage, entry, marriage, and of leaving the manor might be collected in varying amounts. Servile widows could marry and single servile men could marry widows at the request of the lord to take over the holding of the widow. In the case of the disagreement between the lords and serfs, the serfs were told the fact that they possessed “nothing but their bellies” (Dyer, *An Age of Transition* 33). Thereby, there was a strict system of rules for the peasants which were imposed by their lords.

This medieval “deference society” based on stable rules and structures, however, transferred into a society of change through the changes in the relationships between the lords and peasants due to social mobility. According to du Boulay and M. J. Bennett, the reason for the social mobility was mainly individuals’ desire to be successful and rich within and among the distinct ranks of society (79; 247). Larson also argues that individuals were the main factors in the change of the medieval society triggered by some social factors such as the Black Death which facilitated the change and gave people favourable circumstances (xix). Thus, it was the personal ambition which enabled the transformation of medieval peasant community in the Middle Ages. Yet,

needless to say, along with the Black Death and the personal ambition, the Hundred Years War and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 were also the main factors in the transformation of the peasantry from commoners to significant members of medieval society. The Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 turned the "social description and social practice [of the time] [. . .] from the static and the hierarchical to a more fluid and less hierarchical state" (Strohm, "The Social" 15). The high taxes also contributed much to the rising of 1381. Another outbreak of war against France in 1369 brought about extraordinary high taxation which did serious harm to the life of the commoners more badly than before as they hardly had anything to give their landlords, whose requests were increasing. To fund the Hundred Years War, even in its earlier stages, the income of the commoners was taxed; Edward III also put a tax on wool production and export for two years from 1340 onwards. In the late fourteenth century, on the eve of the Black Death, there were new taxes such as the parish tax in 1371 and the poll-taxes of the late 1370s and 1380. With the introduction of the lay subsidy in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the load of taxation weighed upon the peasantry. Those in authority were aware of the possible dangerous outcomes of these high taxations of the commoners. From the thirteenth century onwards, they were constantly warned by the counsellors to the king. Even the poems of the early fourteenth century depicted the maltreatment which the poor experienced due to the poor harvests and extreme taxation (Given-Wilson 119; Schofield 172, 184). For example, "The Song against the King's Taxes" (1338-9?) tells about the possibility of a revolt:

> Such tribute cannot be paid forever;
> Lacking, who can give or touch with hands?
> People suffer such ill that they can give no more;
> I don't doubt that, if they had a leader, they would rise.
> (Coss, *Thomas Wright* 85)

Before the Peasants' Revolt, it was the Black Death which, as Larson asserts, "set the stage" for the conflicts between lords and peasants and the consequent social change (225). Especially, the Black Death of 1348 caused the death of half of the population in England and slackened the ties between labourers and landowners . The effect of the Black Death was long-term and for a long time after the Middle Ages, the population could not come to the pre-plague level which affected the economic and social structure

of the society deeply (Rudd 21; Keen, *England* 134). The decline in population resulted in labour shortage, high wages and labour-mobility which caused the landowners to ask for the old services from the villeins. About the severity of labour shortage, in 1349, Henry Knighton, an Augustinian canon at the abbey of St Mary of the Meadows in Leicester, wrote: “By the winter there was such a dearth of servants and labourers that men were quite bewildered as to what they should do about it [. . .] beasts and cattle strayed everywhere, for none were left to tend them” (Keen, *England* 143). The Black Death was the key factor that affected social mobility due to the consequent high fatality. The great decline in the population of England meant that there were empty positions on the higher ranks of the society and along with the renting manorial demesnes out in village community; land became accessible and was fairly inexpensive. Thus, the new dispersion of land gave way to an active land market. Consequently, the numbers of cottagers and smallholders could decrease as in the case of Halesowen where the cottagers and smallholders decreased from forty-three percent to thirty-five per cent after the Black Death while the per cent of rich peasants in the village increased from eighteen to twenty-six per cent. Hence, the medieval peasants’ access to land solved the deadlock in relation to the land in the fourteenth century. In fact, this broken deadlock totally changed the lifeline of medieval society since in the Middle Ages land was at the centre of survival both for its cultivators, peasants, and owners, lords (Rigby, “English Society” 29; Schofield 62; Harriss 238; Razi 144-46; Campbell 64; Goetz 107).

The great rise in the wages owing to the labour shortage was a very significant reason for the increase in the number of the prosperous peasants. The reaction of the government to the labour shortage and the resultant rise in the wages was the well-known Ordinance of Labourers of 1349 which was modified, and turned into a statute in 1351. The most significant articles of the statute fixed wages at the level of 1346, asking labourers to acknowledge the price and to approve their lords. To be able to limit rivalry for labour, employers were prohibited from accepting workers before their regular requirements or current treaties expired. The rates of manufactured goods were also pinned at their pre-plague level. The statute was put into effect, from 1352 to 1359, by exceptional offices of justices in each county, coming together four times a year. Later

on, the statute was implemented by the justices of the peace. However, the struggle of the government, through the Statutes of Labourers of 1351 and 1388, to support landowners was not successful in keeping the wages at the level before the plague and prohibiting the villeins from leaving their estates. The reason for the failure was that the labour shortage was not a short-lived occurrence as the decrease in the population in 1348-9 was never compensated. As a result, the lack of labour developed into an invariable fact of the economic circumstances of the post-plague period. Accordingly, in the post-plague period, the stipulations of villeinage noticeably lessened (Keen, *England* 143; Phillips 7; Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free* 231-32). A petition given to the parliament by the knights of the shire in 1377 brings the conflict between the lords and peasants to light:

> in several parts of the realm of England the bondmen and landtenants in villeinage [. . .] have withdrawn [. . .] their customs and services due to their lords, intending that they should be completely discharged from all manner of service [. . .] And they menace the officials of their said lords to kill them if they distrain them for the customs and services abovesaid, so that the lords and their officials do not distrain them [. . .] for fear of death, which might easily happen by their rebellion and resistance. And so the said lords lose and have lost great profit from their lordships, to the very great disinheritance and destruction of their estate [. . .]. (Given-Wilson 119-120)

Indeed, according to Hilton, it was the tension between the landlords and peasants which formed the development of medieval society, especially in the post-plague period (*Class Conflict* ix). In England, the peasants insisted on higher prices and in refusal of traditional services which led to further vacant tenancies. Expectedly, these vacant tenancies were populated by the rich peasants becoming a threat to the noble landowners. John Symth, the historian of the Berkeley family, pointed out the enormous transformation in the times of Lord Thomas IV, in the mid 1380s and how the Lord had to change in line with changing society:

> Then began the times to alter, and he with them [. . .] instead of manureing his demesnes in each manor with his own servants, oxen, kine, sheep [. . .] under the oversight of the reeves of the manor [. . .] this lord began to joyst and tack in other men's cattle into his pasture grounds by the week, month, and quarter: and to sell his meadow grounds by the acre. (Keen, *England* 149)

Keen notes that the change in the Berkeley family was a common case for the lords in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries since at those times, gradually more lords rented out their demesnes to the peasants and made their living through rents unlike the feudal lords. Hence, the main function of the landlord in agriculture changed and he developed into a rentier rather than a farmer (*England* 149). Thompson J. notes that this change in the role of the lords "is one of the most marked steps in the transition from the traditional medieval economy to the modern economy" (19). Furthermore, the jurisdictional power of lords over peasants also abated as serfdom died away. The peasants, gaining land both from the lords and the other peasants, became aggressive not only with regard to their relationship to the lords, but to the other members of the villages. Indeed, the change in the landlord referred to the entire change in rural England as serfs and feudal lords were displaced by tenants and landlords giving way to the emergence of a new status quo. In this new life in rural England, the lords lost most of their vassals and had to replace them by hired servants even in the household, who did not have any feudal obligations; hence, they could quit whenever they were not paid or they could decide to work for another lord. Furthermore, in the teeth of fierce objections of the lords, the number of villeins gradually declined and by the end of the Middle Ages, they were only a small minority (Dyer, *An Age of Transition* 32; Larson xviii; Abram 3-4).

Eventually, rents and prices decreased and lords asked for more villein fees even from their free tenants. This mounting harsh attitude of the lords and the continuing expectations of the labourers led to the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. The violence between the lords and tenants also signalled the coming of the revolt. One single event in relation to the estate might arouse a conflict between the lords and tenants or a public turmoil. For example, in Halesowen, as a reaction to the extreme claims and cruel stratagems of their lords, the tenants used violence against their lords which turned into a wide ranging revolt in 1381. In fact, in the post-plague period, the prosperous tenants became the main foe of the lords, although they could be also good collaborators since they had a great authority in their village disrupting the balance between the lower and upper classes (Larson 171, 173; Schofield 164).

For Abram, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was the refusal of the lower classes of the long-accepted superiority of the upper classes (2), which was declared by John Ball, the leader of the revolt, with these words: "Whan Adam dalf [delved] and Eve span; Wo [who] was thanne a gentleman?" (Dobson 374). Similarly, according to the early twentieth century historians of the 1381, the revolt displayed "in strict terms [. . .] the economic, political, and legal oppression of the upper class over the lower class" (Eberhard 8). Among the rising people, there were not only peasants, but artisans and tradespeople as well who protested against the taxes, and violation of their rights. The people of London opened the city gates to the rioters, and they went into Aldgate, above which Chaucer lived at the time. The rebels burnt down John of Gaunt's palace (the Savoy), insulting the queen mother in her own bedroom, killing important officials and slaughtering Flemish immigrants. Jack Straw and Wat Tyler were the other leaders of the Revolt. When the rebels entered London on Wednesday, 12 June, the king and his advisors made themselves safe in the Tower. The rebellious tenants assaulted the lords and their possessions and different badges of lordship were also devastated such as the manor houses and other riches of lords along with the feudal records (Turner 19; Justice 2; Schofield 165).

The main demand of the rebels was the abolition of serfdom. The rebels of Somerset formulated an agreement setting all men of their county free from manorial burden. The rebels of Essex were ready to turn back home from London when Richard II had guaranteed them charters of freedom. Wat Tyler declared that "no man should be a serf, nor do homage or any manner of service to any lord, but should give fourpence rent for an acre of land, and that no one should work for any man but at his own will, and on terms of a regular covenant" (Keen, *England* 149). The Peasants' Revolt was so shocking for those who ruled as many of them believed that it was a penalty of God. The bewilderment and horror of the rulers were depicted in the chronicles besides the literature of the time (Turner 18). Yet, although he himself experienced the Revolt, Chaucer hardly referred to it in his works. In *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer refers to the "cherles rebellyng" (*CT*, I, 2459) or in *Troilus and Criseyde*, he writes the "blase of strawe" (IV, 184). Yet, one cannot be sure whether Chaucer really speaks of the revolt

or not. There is only one possible reference of Chaucer to the revolt in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, when he describes a noisy barnyard pursuit:

> So hydous was the noyse-- a, benedicitee!--
> Certes, he Jakke Straw and his meynee
> Ne made nevere shoutes half so shrille
> Whan that they wolden any Flemyng kille,
> As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
> (*CT*, VII, 3393-7)

It is again hard to make out clearly what Chaucer means with these words. Yet, without doubt the peasants are likened to screaming animals, and these animals had a lawful goal, the fox, the vice killer of the tale. The fox is indeed a common symbol of lawyers, and the lawyers were one of the main figures whom the rebels hated much. These ambiguous references to the revolt also indicate Chaucer's unwillingness to make open political declarations (Turner 19, 23). For Strohm, Chaucer's avoidance of making explicit personal and social criticism in his works is also a sign of political pressure on the writers at that time ("Politics and Poetics" 84). Indeed, like in the previous revolts of the lower ranks in the Middle Ages, the animal images were used for the rebels taking part in the revolt of 1381. When the London artisans and workers assaulted the queen, mayor, and aldermen in the thirteenth century, their action was described as "roaring abuse" and with different repulsive attributes in the chroniclers (Hanawalt, *Of Good and Ill Repute* 12). The chronicles also depicted the commons as the "fools of the vulgar herd" and the autocracy of London believed that the revolt was a wild menace coming from the peasants who were set free and violated the borders dictated by social hierarchy and law. In line with the animal imagery, in the chronicles, the commons "roar" rather than talk; they were believed to assail literacy by devastating court records. Thus, the commons were farmyard animals demolishing the customs of the cultured. Illustrating the scenery where Richard II disclaimed the charters he has promised the peasants to make them go away at Mile End, one of the chroniclers wrote the exact words of the king:

> Rustics you were and rustics you remain [. . .] For as long as we live [. . .] we will strive to trample on you so that your slavery may be an example to posterity, and so that those like you may now and in future have always

> before their eyes as if in a book your misery and reasons for cursing you. (qtd. in Hanawalt, *Of Good and Ill Repute* 13)

Indeed, in medieval society, chaos and brutality of those who were not knights or members of nobility created a scandal. Whereas the public accept the slaughter under certain conditions, the violence of those *outsiders* (italics mine) required penalty. Accordingly, the revolt was not successful and in the end, traditional responsibilities of the peasants were restored. However, many landlords recognised that their efforts to keep old traditions were in vain and in time they involuntarily gave up their objections to the demands of the peasants. Hence, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 became the main factor in the changing relationships between the lords and peasants in the late fourteenth century (Hanawalt, *Of Good and Ill Repute* 14; Keen, *England* 149; Larson 171). Similarly, Dyer states that the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 induced a transformation within the relationship between the lords and peasants, as "the revolt of 1381 indicated a landmark in peasant self-confidence and independence" and it "encouraged tenants and put lords on the defensive for the next half-century" (*An Age of Transition* 244, 96). Thus, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 let the voice of medieval "Them"s heard by "Us"s of society.

In fact, this change in the relationship between the lords and peasants indicates the decline of feudalism and the beginnings of capitalism which destroyed the structure of the society "in which labour and rent obligations were exacted by lords from their dependent tenantry in return for promises of protection evolved into one in which, increasingly, relations were dictated by the market and settled for money or money's worth" (Schofield 7). Thus, feudalism did not correspond with the realities of the society anymore which brought about the end of the traditional lord-vassal relationship and the disappearance of old classes and emergence of new classes. Gradually, before and after the Revolt, serfdom died out and due to the increase in wages, in England the lords largely left the land to the peasants (Abram 2-3; Larson 225), a very significant indicator of the rising position of the peasants.

Another noteworthy gauge of the rising status of the peasants is in relation to the rents. The initial movement towards contractual money rents accelerated in the fourteenth

century. In the pre-plague period, this rent system was mostly for the advantage of the landlord and, for example, when there was change in the prices of rents, they generally increased before 1350. Yet, by the mid- to late-fourteenth century, the contractual rents were mainly favourable to the tenants rather than the landlords. The increase of contractual rents was followed by a change of labour services into money rent which started a system of the substitute for all services by monetary counterparts. Yet, even by the end of the fourteenth century, some landlords still hoped that their manors would be run through a servile tenantry paying a part of the rent in the type of labour (Schofield 31, 65). Dyer states that:

> Serfs realized that they were better able to bargain with their lords for reduced rents and for the removal of servile duties. Serf and non-serf saw in the era release from poverty. Some wage earners were able to acquire land, and tenants generally found that they could expand the size of their holdings. Wages increased [. . .]. The upper classes felt threatened. Workers had become expensive and ill-disciplined, and tenants were restless for better conditions. ("The Economy and Society" 163)

Those restless tenants, essentially, were the rich peasants who became wealthier by making use of the conditions after the Black Death and Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in the best way. It was the more prosperous peasants who rented the land of the lords or old peasants' holdings whereas the poorer peasants could not race for larger and better lands. Indeed, it was again the wealthier peasants who rose against the lords in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 as they were aware of the possible opportunities for them to rise on the social ladder. It was also the richest members of the village communities who brought a suit against their lords to claim their rights since they were the ones who shared the same interests with their lords. More than poor and middling peasants, the wealthiest peasants had the opportunity to improve their social status; hence, they mostly benefited from the vacant holdings in the post-plague and post-revolt period since they had the money to pay entry fines, to possess goods and livestock for a bigger holding. However, those ambitious rich peasants had some difficulties since although they could climb the social ladder within the village community; they generally needed more than land to be able to rise to the gentry. Yet, still this new distribution of land disrupted the relationship between the lords and peasants in favour of the rich peasants.

For example, passing over the barricades of the strict order of the society, Clement Paston, having a humble farm of five or six score acres in the late fourteenth century, earned a good position in East Anglia and even could send his son to Eton (Larson 178; Schofield 165; Rigby "English Society" 29; Tuchman 119; Wilkonson 201). As Postan aptly states, the period from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century was "the golden age of the English peasantry" (*The Medieval Economy* 142).

The peasants who took the best advantages of this "golden age" were franklins, the freemen holding the largest lands, of 50 acres or more, sufficient to have a sound way of living and the possibility of economic progression. The Franklins had a luxurious life style and those franklins were in majority who earned more than some squires. The franklins were sometimes called yeoman which kept the rank below a squire, and in Chaucer's time, the term "yeoman" also started to be used for this group of people serving the squires. Yet, in reality, there was a great difference between the franklins and yeomen in terms of wealth and status. The franklins were at the top rank of the village community and other villagers might work for them. The franklins had many servants as well. Some franklins, as though they were lords, could rent, court and farm the whole manor of a lord which was quite common after the Black Death. These franklins running an entire manor also blurred the line between the gentry and peasantry by wedding the daughters of esquires. Yet, such a peasant, appointing his own bailiff, keeping servants, having cousins who were the members of the gentry and of the nobility, does not conform to the usual image of a peasant. Villeins of sizeable lands might also have a lifestyle similar to a franklin; yet, they did not have the same reputation. Below the franklins, there were the husbandmen in the village community; they were freemen or villeins who mostly kept a land of 15 to 40 acres, which was enough to feed a peasant family. In the early fourteenth century, a third of the peasants was composed of husbandmen and most of the lands held by villeins was in this category (Forgeng 19; Mortimer 50).

However, as noted by Saul, the people at the high ranks were irritated by this world in which everything "turn[ed] upside down, and they repeated the ancient idea that society consisted of three orders: fighters, prayers, and workers" (*The Oxford Illustrated History* 164). Yet, in Dyer's words, it was the "new middle ages" where people were

not in the order as those authoritative figures wanted them to be. The "new middle ages" can be summarised as an age of "flexibility and variety" which was "capitalist" and the product of the changes and dilemmas of the fourteenth century–a dying away aristocracy, a mobile and freer peasantry, and an active industrial and metropolitan sector (*An Age of Transition* 39). Undoubtedly, this new age, as suggested so far, was populated largely by a new group of people, an upwardly mobile middle-grouping not entirely staying out of the traditional three estates, yet not totally belonging to any of them either, thus, living in the merging points of the estates or in-between spaces, they formed, in Bhabhanian terms, a kind of medieval "borderline community" (*The Location of Culture* 12). This brand new group, as noted by Keen, emerged "out of the debris of the old manorial community" (*England* 152). The peasants or tenant farmers, such as franklins, yeomen, husbandmen, millers and reeves, were in majority in this middle-grouping, which did not conform well to any of the three estates (Keen, *England* 150; Dyer, *An Age of Transition* 37-38; Abram 5; Knapp 12) and experienced hybrid identities.

Hence, the members of the middle-grouping grew into hybrids as they did not either completely belong to the nobility or to the commoners and possessed the qualities of both their new and former status-wealth, land and lifestyle of aristocracy along with a peasant origin lacking of noble blood. More importantly, in spite of the radical changes in medieval society, the main factor keeping these new rich medieval people on the borderline between the aristocracy and commoners was gentility which was the main link among the different ranks of the nobility which was related by birth and noble blood, more than manner or life style. Thus, in spite of great social mobility, England was still an aristocratic country (Brewer, *Chaucer* 18; Keen, *English Society* 12; Aurell 264; Du Boulay 133). The medieval mind could not easily accept the profound transformation of the society from the authority of the nobility to the golden age of peasantry and the consequent middle-grouping inhabited a medieval third space. As Huizinga observed, the decline of feudalism and the consequent loss of status of the nobility was not easily accepted even in the fifteenth century. According to Huizinga, the reason for this disavowal was that nobility and feudalism were not real fundamental elements of society anymore; however, they still influenced the mentality of people as if they had the upper hand. Thereby, the people of the fifteenth century could not see the

actual forces behind the political and social transformation as they searched for it in the warlike and courtly nobility. They insisted on accepting the nobility as the most significant factor in society, overestimated its significance, underestimating the social power of the lower classes (46-47). Accordingly, even though the diminishing importance of the nobility as a social force was realized, there would be no change in the perception of the nobility in people's mind. Thus, lacking gentility, it was not possible for the social climbers of the middle-grouping to be accepted into the upper classes in spite of their wealth and constantly rising social position.

Although they were not welcomed into the circle of the nobility, the hybrid social climbers never gave up and tried to survive on the threshold of the commoners and the nobility through mimicry. The social climbers tended to mimic the nobility or their social superiors in numerous ways. A peasant, upon becoming a squire by buying lands and having his own tenants, would imitate the apparel and manners of the nobility, keeping war equipments and going hunting (Tuchman 19). The counterpart of the peasant in the town, the merchant did the same: wealthy merchant "show[ed] off as best he c[ould] with the whole houpeland and high-collar ensemble, long cuffs and all, although using a less expensive material and not having cuffs as long as a lord's. If anyone in town [. . .] [was] wearing a rakishly folded hood, it [. . .] [would] be him" (Mortimer 106). Yet, no matter whether they were in the country, or town, the nobility did not recognise the social climbers as their equals:

> [n]othing was more resented by the hereditary nobles than the imitation of their clothes and manners by the upstarts, thus obscuring the lines between the eternal orders of society. Magnificence in clothes was considered a prerogative of the nobles, who should be identifiable by modes of dress forbidden to others. (Tuchman 19)

In a vain attempt to prohibit upwardly mobile people from wearing improper clothes not in line with their estate, sumptuary laws and statutes were declared one after another, trying to fix the types of clothes people might wear and the amount of money they might pay out. According to a statute of 1390, labourers or servants going to hunt, a game of nobility, was to be sentenced to a year in prison (Tuchman 19; Maddern 117). Indeed, behind those parliamentary acts announced from 1363 onwards, besides

economic and moral purposes, there was "the social fear felt by men of estate for their ebullient inferiors" (Du Boulay 67). The Augustinian canon and chronicler Henry Knighton wrote in 1388 that:

> The elation of the inferior people in dress and accoutrements in these days, so that one person cannot be discerned from another in splendour of dress or belongings, neither poor from rich, nor servant from master, nor priest from layman, but everybody tried to imitate the other, till the magnates had to decide a remedy. (Lumby 299)

Similarly, the words of Adam of Usk, a late medieval Welsh priest, canonist and chronicler, clearly expresses how those men of upper class looked down on the social climbers: "by nature bestial, not drawn from the gentlemen of the countryside but from rustics or tailors or artisans [. . .] Men who at home were hardly worthy to take off the shoes of their masters have behaved like the equals and fellows of lords" (qtd. in Thompson, E. M 203). Yet, as suggested so far, the imitation of the upwardly mobile medieval people of the aristocracy was a natural consequence of the social change in the medieval society since they had more riches to spend besides food: "Not surprisingly, men and women began to appear and behave differently. Finer clothes dignified people whom their social superiors in a stratified society thought of as mean and even bestial [. . .] It was indeed a situation paralleled time and again in a world where catastrophe or invention redistributes wealth" (Du Boulay 14). Du Boulay describes those times as the "age of ambition" (66), the ambition of the upwardly mobile, and notes that through their ambition, the social climbers, yet, achieved a very distinct type of gentility including gentle conduct in the real sense, which was very different from the concept of gentility of the warrior nobility "whose manners matched their fingers nails" (65). That is to say, their acquired gentility was not enough for the social climbers to become actual members of the nobility which was also the main reason for their liminal existence, or hybridity and mimicry.

Hence, the hybrid members of the medieval middle-grouping of upward mobility were also mimics in the Bhabhanian sense as they imitated the attire and the lifestyle of the nobility: dressing, eating, behaving, and even talking like them but they failed to become actual nobles, or in Bhabha's words for the colonised, a "recognizable Other"

(*The Location of Culture* 86). Thus, like in the case of colonised mimics, to survive and to be accepted by medieval society, these medieval hybrids tried to be like their social superiors. As stated above, for Bhabha, mimicry is also a kind of menace or weapon for the colonised who use the same weapon against the coloniser to war against them. As Young argues, recognising mimicry as a weapon for the colonised against the coloniser; Bhabha concentrates on the psychological facet of the relationship between the coloniser and colonised (161). The fear of the coloniser is that the colonised "want to take [their] place" ("Remembering Fanon" 117), to become like them, which is not acceptable. In the medieval context, the use of mimicry as a weapon might work even better in that let alone being the same, the nobility could not put up with any sign of resemblance between themselves and the new wealthy class of social climbers. The fear of the colonised, too, could be applied to the nobility especially during and after the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 when they thought that the peasants had gone mad and they wanted to become like them as they imitated their appearance and manners which was inadmissible since they were just, as Du Boulay remarks, beasts in the eyes of the nobility (16). Thus, as in the case of colonial mimicry as suggested above by Ashcroft et al. (139), mimicry becomes a threat to the superiority of the nobility over the commoners. Yet, still, as Bhabha argues in relation to the colonial situation, mimicry is both "resemblance and menace" which makes the social climbers occupy a "partial" or "incomplete presence" (*The Location of Culture* 86) on the threshold of the nobility and the commoners. Accordingly, another point in respect to colonial mimicry is also applicable to medieval mimicry of the social climbers. As noted by Loomba in relation to the colonised, as a solution to their "otherness" or estrangement in their own society (173), the social climbers hold on to mimicry too; yet, it also brings them to an impasse since they could not completely be like the nobility, which designates their hybridity.

As suggested so far, the hybridity and mimicry of the social climbers are visible in the tension and relationship between the lords and the peasants becoming rich in the post-plague and post-revolt period. Franklins and millers were the main representatives of these wealthy social climbers in the changing medieval world. In parallel with their counterparts in history, the Franklin and the Miller in *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* are medieval hybrids in their mimicry of the nobility as they are

created by the transformation of peasants from the commoners to a strong and unacceptable threat to the nobility. Keeping the highest position in the village community, franklins are the best examples of medieval hybridity and mimicry. Chaucer's Franklin, likewise, is a figure of in-betweenness. First of all, the Franklin is a social climber without a noble birth. He imitates the apparel, manners and customs and even the discourse of the nobility which is observed both in his portrait in *The General Prologue* and his tale. Unable to find a stable place for himself in medieval society, parvenu Franklin is in a dilemma about his social position which turns him into a hybrid. Not entirely belonging to the nobility or to the commoners, and dreaming of becoming a real gentleman, the Franklin inhabits a space neither of his previous estate nor his aspired social position.

Chaucer's Franklin, indeed, precisely reflects the social conflict and turmoil of status of the franklins in the later-fourteenth century England. The franklins were trying to be accepted into the gentility long before the late fourteenth century. Yet, after the Black Death, there were more possibilities for them to be accepted into the higher ranks of the society. Hence, a franklin living in the late fourteenth-century England was a contradictory character (Coss, "An Age" 64-65). As Homans notes, "there is good evidence that in rural England [. . .] a small class of freeholders existed, less wealthy than the gentry, more wealthy than the husbonds and cotters, and that these men were called franklins" (250). A fourteenth-century franklin was a peasant who kept a wider area of land, possibly 30 to 60 acres, compared to other peasants of the village. He also kept free tenure and socage for life, both in his name and his heirs which meant that he, unlike a villein, was not subjected to his lord's direct will in terms of labour or rent. As a freedman, the franklin had position before the king's courts, and the Justices of the Peace where he might also attend as Justice. A franklin might keep numerous servants or villeins. Yet, franklins were still mostly under the management of the lords and their stewards, and they were under the obligation of fealty, rents, and special responsibilities such as overseeing the crop services. Additionally, the franklins kept the highest of three classes of villagers: franklins, cotters and husbonds. The franklins paid rent for their lands but did not have any military responsibilities and labour services to his lord. He might speak for the interest of the manor at different juridical meetings. Thus,

franklins were the political and social leaders of village society (Olson, The Canterbury Tales 264-65; Homans, 250; Childress 33).

The word *franc*, derived from Latin which means free, also reflects the rank of Franklin (Knapp 107; Olson, The Canterbury Tales 264). Although franklins were free from the obligations of villeins and probably "self-defined as gentle", the status of a squire or belted knight was higher than that of a franklin since they kept more land, owed both fealty and homage along with military services, and occupied the lowest ranks of the strata of temporal lords. Hence, a typical franklin was just half-free, neither a villein nor a complete gentle, which pointed to his in-between position. That is to say, the social status of the franklins is not clearly defined as to whether they are noveau riche landowners or established category of country squires. The ambiguous position of the franklins arises from the fact that it is not certain whether they were the members of the landed gentry, or they were ranked under the landed gentry, hence not counted as gentils (Olson, The Canterbury Tales 266; Phillips 136; Sembler 135). *The Middle English Dictionary* defines Franklin as: "[a] freeholder and *libertinus*" ("Frankelein"). According to *the Oxford English Dictionary,* franklin (*francoleyn*, *fran (c)kelain* or *layne*) means "[a] freeman, a freeholder; in 14-15th c., the designation of a class of landowners, of free but not noble birth, and ranking next below the gentry" ("Franklin," def. 1,2). Thus, the dictionary meaning of Franklin does not solve the problem either.

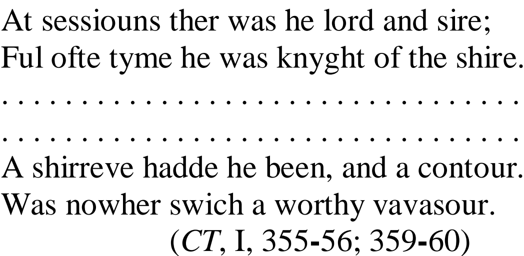
The poll tax of 1379 indicates that a franklin should be evaluated at 6s 8d or 3s 4d, in line with his estate which suggests that the franklins roughly possessed the same status that of resident knights and esquires. Therefore, being very important persons in their villages–particularly if there was no inhabitant member of the gentry–the franklins might be aspiring and pompous. Although there is not certain proof; a franklin is believed to be a member of the bourgeois parvenus who refers to a person suddenly rising from a low social class or economic position to one of wealth or power (Coss, "An Age" 63-64; Pearsall, The Canterbury Tales 149). For Gerould, the franklins were the members of nobility ("The Social Status" 262). For Schaefer, the franklins were "of the highest order of the bourgeoisie or of the lowest order of the nobility, at any rate" (194). Similarly, Cooper states that "[. . .] the Franklin is not inherently a social climber, or a *nouveau riche.* The evidence is strongly that franklins were landed members of the

minor gentry, with a long-standing stake in land ownership" (*Oxford Guides to Chaucer* 45). Touching upon Chaucer's Franklin, Denholm-Young suggests that franklins were ranked below the gentry; yet, Chaucer's Franklin seems to have a higher position with his significant occupations: Franklins were the members of a class right under the gentry and in the poll-tax for the West Riding of Yorkshire of 1379, they were assessed at 3s. 4d. and the knights at 20s, which means that a franklin is "one sixth of a knight". Furthermore, on condition that they had noble blood, they might be acceptable by society (24). Hence, there is no consensus among the critics about franklins' social status as it is not certain whether they were gentlemen of noble blood belonging to the gentry or social climbers who once belonged to the commoners. However, possessing considerable size of land, franklins were men of status; yet, it was not enough to be regarded as a member of the gentry in the medieval mind. In fact, the 1379 poll tax also shows that, whatever the position of the franklins were, they had not yet gained gentility when *The Canterbury Tales* was composed (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 107). The social position of the franklins, that is to say, whether they are gentle or not, is not clear-cut which put them in between the nobility and the commoners designating their hybrid existence.

Similar to his historical counterparts, Chaucer's Franklin is the only pilgrim in *The Canterbury Tales* whose "position in the pecking order is open to question" (Saul "Chaucer and Gentility" 46). Indeed, the Franklin's status perfectly fits in the concept of hybridity defined by Bhabha as he lives in the "[. . .] interstitial passage" (3) formed by the different domains of the nobility and the commoners. The overlapping domains of difference of the Franklin grow out of the different characteristics of his previous and present social status, as a commoner and a social climber. The hybridity of the franklins and their struggle to change the medieval mind to gain a gentle status are exposed both in the portrait of the Franklin in *The General Prologue* and in his tale. One of the main indicators of the hybridity of real franklins in the fourteenth century was their ambiguous social status and their keeping the position of knights and squires. As the Black Death shifted financial circumstances in favour of the smaller landowners; the ranks below the knights on the social order were filled not only by 'esquires', 'valets', 'scutifers', but by 'sergeants', 'firmarii', 'yeomen' and 'franklins' as well. Franklins

were free; yet, they were not gentil; thus, in spite of their keeping the positions of knights and squires, they were still the social inferiors of knights and esquires having noble blood (Brown and Butcher 62-63; Coleman 58-9). Consequently, franklins came out as new men "with an interest in levelling up and blurring traditional hierarchy [. . .] [as reflected in Franklin's] tale end[ing] with an implication that "gentillesse" is innate and can be found in any class" (Senapati 66-67).

Accordingly, as in the case of his equals in history, in spite of his inferior social position, Chaucer's Franklin, a new man blurring the boundaries, in *The General Prologue* keeps the position of knights. The Franklin, unlike the Squire or the Knight, does not possess any chivalric aspect or an hereditary position; yet, he undertakes several managerial duties which were once merely identified with squires and knights (Brown and Butcher 60; Robertson, "Chaucer's Franklin" 277). Indeed, Chaucer's Franklin in *The General Prologue* is a man of status:


At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
. . . .
. . . .
A shirreve hadde he been, and a contour.
Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.
(*CT*, I, 355-56; 359-60)

Thus, Chaucer's Franklin, is a distinguished member of medieval society: a justice of the peace ("lord and sire"), knight of the shire, sheriff, cantour and a vavasour. In fact, Chaucer's Franklin reflects the powerful, yet, hybrid franklins of the late fourteenth century, keeping mostly the positions of those of the nobility without having a noble lineage himself. In 1368, the social status of the Justices of the peace ("lord and shire") was protected by statute. The duty of the Justices of the peace was to keep the peace and discover and investigate murders and trespasses. They were also responsible for investigating labour laws, weights and measures, and forestalling and regrating. By the late fourteenth century, each county possessed eight justices, and they were the inevitable members of the justice in England. Unlike the Justices of the peace, the knights of the shire were selected from the commoners. Sheriffs of all counties were

asked to arrange the selection of two knights from every shire, two citizens from every city, and two burgesses from every borough, from amongst the most capable, for Parliament (McKisack 137, 202, 187).

Chaucer's Franklin is also a sheriff, an occupation of franklins in medieval society. It was the position which brought the members of commoners and the nobility together. Being a sheriff was a great honour in medieval England and William the Conquer used the Saxon organisation of sheriffs to balance neighbouring nobles. In fact, it was first Edward I who established an organisation to collect the money he required, the House of Commons. Contrary to the House of Lords, the House of Commons included a combination of gentry: knights and other rich freemen from the shires (sheriffs) and merchants from the town (McDowall 23, 30) similar to Chaucer's Franklin.[29]

Hence, the sheriff, like the Justice of the peace, is an occupation which demonstrates the significant social status of Chaucer's Franklin and his closeness to the nobility, paving way to his ambiguous and hybrid and mimic existence. Another office of Chaucer's Franklin is "cantour". There is not agreement among the scholars in relation to the meaning of "cantour". As Robertson states, "cantour" means accountant or auditor ("Chaucer's Franklin" 275); on the other hand, Saul defines it as an advocate in court, or lawyer ("The Social Status" 19). The Franklin's relation to the sphere of law might also associate him with the Sergeant of the Lawe, his fellow traveller on pilgrimage (Sembler 138). Similarly Knapp states that probably both the Sergeant of the Lawe and the Franklin were presented as lawyers (105). Among the offices of Chaucer's Franklin, "vavasour" is the most problematic one. The word "vavasour" evolved from a French literary tradition where the vavasour has an unclear status on the borders of aristocracy (Carruthers 283-84). Pearcy defines the Arthurian-romance vavasour in relation to Chaucer's Franklin:

> They are provincials in comparison with knights, who have much closer contact with the royal court. Since vavassors are frequently family men with grown sons and daughters, they are usually old, on occasions explicitly grey-haired patriarchs, and their life style is characterized by settled domesticity, in comparison with knights who are conventionally young and unattached. They are also hospitable, since by providing lodging for knights

> they are brought into contact with the world of knight-errantry. ("Chaucer's Franklin" 36)

According to Robertson, the word "vavasour" does not include any legal office and shows that the Franklin is a landowner ("Chaucer's Franklin" 277). Eckhart associates the word "vavasour" with an old family from West Riding Yorkshire, the Vavasours; and asserts that Chaucer might have been inspired by this family, Yet, she adds, "at this distance it is difficult to know exactly what the reference implies" (245). Additionally, Gerould states that all franklins were vavassour at that time (*Chaucerian Essays* 53). To Frankis, the word "vavasour" was not commonly used in England and it meant a vassal of vassals (46). In Latin, similarly, *vassal* refers to a young man and when it is used at the beginning of another Latin word *puer* having the same meaning; it means home slave [my translation] (Bloch 274). About the ambiguity of the word vavasour, Stenton points out:

> There is a difference between the Norman and the English use of the word *vavassor*. The origin of the word is obscure, but in the eleventh century it was current in every part of Feudal Europe in the general sense of vassal. In the greater part of France the word seems to have carried a certain sense of distraction. The vavassor of early feudal documents is inferior to the baron, but normally he is a knight, and he is raised above the landless men of the military class by possession of a fief which may well be of considerable extent. (17)

Thus, vavasour[30] is another ambiguous occupation of the Franklin pointing to his vague social position. Making his social position more unclear, in the fourteenth century there were no vavasours who occupied all of the offices of Chaucer's Franklin. For instance, there was no vavasour who was a sheriff, which was a higher position, at the same time. Chaucer seems to create a mixture of several professions in his portrayal of the Franklin. That is, in the portrait of the Franklin, Chaucer brings different offices together which did not exist in the fourteenth century. Most essentially, the main offices kept by Chaucer's Franklin were usually occupied by knights or esquires, members of gentry, in reality (Eckhardt 244; Mann 152; Coss, "An Age" 64). According to Saul, giving occupations to his Franklin more significant than real franklins of his time, Chaucer might be satirising the aspirations of franklins rather than their actual positions ("The Social Status" 23). Unlike Saul, Coss affirms that rather than satirising the social

pretensions of franklins, Chaucer criticises the arrogance and extreme concern of those keeping higher ranks of the medieval society, who felt uneasy about the *burel* (unlearned) and wealthy men of the time such as franklins ("An Age" 64). Hence, the offices of Chaucer's Franklin, rather than their real attainments, reflect the aspirations of the franklins of the time. Yet, after one or two generations, following the Black Death, the situation would change since the franklins could enlarge their holdings and increase their influence on the local peasantry; thereby, they were appointed to these occupations and entered in the gentle society (Saul, "Chaucer and Gentility" 52). In sum, it is important to note that Chaucer's Franklin in *The General Prologue* seems to have positions occupied mostly by knights in the late fourteenth century contributing much to his hybrid position.

In accordance with his counterparts in history, therefore, in spite of lacking noble blood, or gentility, Chaucer's Franklin is introduced as a man of status occupying the positions of knights and squires, and spending time with the members of the nobility. In *The General Prologue*, the Franklin dresses and behaves like the nobility which was not acceptable in a hierarchical society where even what to wear and eat for each estate were fixed by law. Accordingly, the Franklin grows into a hybrid and a mimic. The first noticeable indicator of his hybridity in *The General Prologue* is his attire. The attire of the Franklin is described in only two lines in *The General Prologue*; Chaucer does not describe his clothes, but his accessories; yet, it is enough to display his aspirations to become like a noble: "An anlaas and a gipser al of silk/ Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk." (*CT*, I, 357-358). Erol states that the attire of the Franklin reflects his social status as a wealthy and respectable landowner ("A Pageant" 103). Erol further remarks that

> the 'anlaas' was a broad, two sided dagger used for hunting and the 'gipser' was a pouch worn attached to the girdle. [. . .]The dagger is a specific one used for hunting, as the Franklin is a land owner of great standing he has the privilege of hunting, since, only the nobility and the gentry of certain wealth and income could hunt. As for the 'gipser', it is of supreme quality, made of silk, the most valued material of the Middle Ages. ("A Pageant" 104)

Yet, as discussed so far, the status of franklins was ambiguous; it is certain that he is a social climber; however, it is not certain whether they are accepted into the nobility or

not. Hence, his going hunting, an activity suitable for the nobility and wearing silk, a sign of nobility (Given-Wilson 3; Saul, *Chivalry* 52-54) become questionable. In addition to hunting and dressing like a noble, Chaucer's Franklin behaves like a noble, signifying his hybridity and mimicry again. In *The General Prologue*, the Franklin's imitation of a noble way of life is indicated in his lavish lifestyle, generosity, and hospitality, which were parts of aristocratic self-display. First of all, Franklin's rich table which he keeps ready all day shows his aspirations to the nobility besides his economic power and social status. As Hussey argues, "the Knight [is] his social superior," and "[t]hough his social position is less significant we sense that he knows how to live like a lord" (*Chaucer's World:* 90). The Franklin's lordly lifestyle is depicted in *The General Prologue* as follows:

> An housholdere, and that a greet was he;
> Seint Julian was he in his contree.
> His breed, his ale, was alweys after oon,
> A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.
> With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
> Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
> It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
> Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
> . . . .
> His table dormant in his halle always
> Stood redy covered al the longe day.
> (*CT*, I, 339-46; 353-54)

Thus, the Franklin has a good lifestyle and extravagant hospitality. Robertson describes the Franklin as "a pleasure-loving, self-seeking upstart" (*A Preface to Chaucer* 470). Living for the enjoyments of life, the Franklin is described as the son of Epicurus in *The General Prologue*:

> Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn;
> To lyven in delit was evere his wone,
> For he was epicurus owene sone,
> That heeld opnioun that pleyn delit
> Was verray felicitee parfit.
> (CT, I, 334-38)

Indeed, due to the growth of trade in the fourteenth century, there was a great rise in the

standards of living in the noble households which increased the social emulation showing itself through splendid hospitality, expensive buildings and clothes (Myers 59). Likewise, as Keen points out “[h]ospitality was something expected of every aristocrat, from gentleman to earl or duke [. . .] [Furthermore] [. . .] just as the patience was a required characteristic of the poor, spending was taken as a social obligation for the medieval nobles and gentlemen” (*English Society* 169-170). The hospitality, generosity and high living standards of the medieval aristocracy were sometimes associated with their greed, selfishness, and gluttony; yet, this display was very significant for keeping their social distinction and it was a kind of competition among the members of the high ranks (Dyer, *Standards of Living* 89). It seems that Chaucer’s Franklin is practising hospitality of the nobility; in other words, he imitates the noble way of life pointing to his mimicry. Speecht points out that:

> [. . .] fairly lavish standard of living generally attributed to a franklin’s wealth and taste for good living had by the mid-fifteenth century become almost a commonplace. [. . .] the franklins contemporary with Chaucer were materially on an equal footing certainly with the vast majority of esquires, and probably with many knights of the medieval countryside. (76)

However, the Franklin seems to be overdoing this traditional hospitality of the nobility which Olson associates with his aspirations for knighthood as he spreads a lavish table, and grinds his sauce rather than his spear (The Canterbury Tales 267). Thus, Franklin’s aristocratic display presents a hybrid character. Just like a noble who lives in line with the “culture of display” of aristocratic life (Saul, *Chivalry* 52), Franklin, lacking noble lineage, yet, possessing a considerable wealth, lives in accordance with the rules of self-display to prove his status and claim gentility. As suggested by Bryant, Franklin wants “to display his wealth before less fortunate neighbours; [. . .] [since] his standard of living was certainly well above that of most of the other farmers in his county” (319), which was an accepted behaviour if you were a noble. Accordingly, the hybrid Franklin of *The General Prologue*, like his colonial counterparts, tries to gain a place for himself in the medieval noble society through mimicry. Yet, as Eckhardt argues, the Franklin “belongs to many worlds. He is linked to the image of the daisy, to both Christ and Epicurus, to the saint of hospitality, to food and generosity, to English rural government, and (somehow) to the family of Vavasour” (248). Belonging to many

worlds, or estates, thus, not entirely belonging to a certain estate, the Franklin becomes a medieval hybrid and mimic. With his "partial presence", the Franklin, imitating their manners and values, as Boehmer suggests for the colonised, becomes an "imperfect copy" (69) of the nobility. Additionally, similar to the colonial situation, mimicry for the Franklin is a means of resisting the superiority of the nobility along with a way to be accepted into their sphere; yet, it also increases his dilemma as, mimicking his superiors; he is welcomed neither by the nobility nor by the commoners.

As suggested so far, the main reason for the hybridity of the Franklin is his lack of noble blood, or gentility. Indeed, the concept of gentility, the key factor in the emergence of the medieval hybrids due to the upward social mobility, is the main issue of *The Franklin's Tale*. Before examining gentility as reflected in *The Franklin's Tale* in relation to his hybridity, it is necessary to discuss the concept of gentility of the time. First and foremost, the concept of gentility– "gentilesse"– includes "loyalty, faithfulness, and fidelity to one's word and to others"; and it is synonymous with the word "trouthe" (Farvolden 36). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, France became the model of knightly ideal of the nobility and put on a new feature to the noble lifestyle. The word gentility gradually became synonymous with nobility and gained a new meaning: noble birth, and polished manners. The literature addressing the nobility also involved the instruction of the members of the nobility in the concept of gentility (Gaylord, "A Study" 2). Thus, in Chaucer's time, lineage was the most accepted attribute of gentility as Oliver de la Marche argues "[t]he gentleman is he who of old springs from gentlemen and gentlewomen, and such men and their posterity by marriage are gentle [and nobility] is the beginning of gentility" (qtd. in Saul, "Chaucer and Gentility" 42). Yet, while the social climbers were shaking the medieval social structure in the late fourteenth century, the change in the concept of gentility was inevitable. As Jones suggests, it was the times when "[t]he debate on 'gentilesse'–far from being a mere philosophical or literary conceit–was a desperately important political issue which was shaking Europe to its very foundations" (*Chaucer's Knight* 119). In this debate, contrary to the supremacy of lineage and gentility of birth, the nobility of character came into prominence (Mulligan 69). Mann states that *gentilesse* was synonymous with *courtoisie* in that both words covered the search of spiritual perfection and the evasion

of vice (11). As Gaylord suggests, due to his hybrid background of bourgeois and courtly values, Chaucer is the very poet to evaluate the old and the new, along with the contradictions of the late fourteenth-century England ("A Study" 399), including gentility.

In fact, Chaucer deals with the essence of gentility in his *Gentilesse* and in *The Canterbury Tales*. For Coghill, Chaucer's concept of gentility can be obviously observed in his ballad, *Gentilesse* (15). In his *Gentilesse*, Chaucer discusses the nature of gentility and shows that true nobility depends on honourable manners rather than noble descent:

> The firste stok, fader of gentilesse-
> What man that desireth gentil for to be
> Must folowe his trace, and alle his wittes dresse
> Vertu to love and vyces for to flee.
> For unto vertu longeth dignitee
> And noght the revers, saufly dar I deme,
> Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe. (1-7)

In the ballad, Chaucer suggests that "gentilesse" is not something to be inherited; hence, those of noble birth cannot claim that they were gentil on the basis of their noble lineage. Futhermore, to be gentil, a true noble; one should follow virtue and avoid vice. Minnis points out that *Gentilesse* does not explicitly address a specific audience. Yet, "since it is largely concerned with those who have the lineaments of ancestral nobility and wealth, it seems likely that [Chaucer] is addressing the aristocracy. [. . .] reminding them what their obligations are: [. . .] they should cherish their nobility with virtuous action and not let it degenerate through vice" (*Oxford Guides* 485-86). Thus, the problem basically arises from the contradiction between the requirements of birth and virtue. Virtue is a quality belonging to an individual, thus a person might or might not possess it; however, birth is a hereditary characteristic and a person without virtue might have it. In other words, in Chaucer, gentility is not hereditary but a personal quality. Therefore, gentility has nothing to do with birth, but it is mostly related to individual virtue and doing gentle deeds. That is to say, Chaucer, like Boethius and Dante, believes that true gentility is related to the quality of character, virtue and it is not an attribute of wealth or family inheritance (Saul "Chaucer and Gentility" 45; Mulligan 69). A similar view is presented in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and to some extent

in *The Prologue of The Nun's Priest's Tale*. In the tale of the Wife of Bath, a knight of high class has to marry a hag of low class and in the end, he grows very angry with the old woman and says that they are not of equal status as she is not gentle and lacks noble blood. The old woman says to the knight:

> "But, for ye speken of swich gentilesse
> As is descended out of old richesse,
> That therefore sholden ye be gentil men,
> Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
> Looke who that is moost virtuous always,
> Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
> To do the gentil deeds that he kan;
> Taak hym for the grettest gentil man."
> (*CT*, III, 1109-16)

Thereby, the old woman asserts that someone can be "gentil" only if he does "gentil" deeds and behaves virtuously. The old woman also states that noble birth and ancestors do not make someone "gentil" as there are people of noble lineage who still do not act in line with gentility:

> "Eek every wight woot this as wel as I,
> If gentillesse were planted natureelly
> Unto a certeyn lynage doun the lyne,
> Pryvee and apert thanne wolde they nevere fine
> To doon of gentillesse the faire office;
> They myghte do no vileynye or vice.
> . . . .
> "Heere may ye se wel how that genterye
> Is nat annexed to possessioun,
> Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
> Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo, in his kynde.
> For, God it woot, men may wel often fynde
> A lordes sone do shame and vileynye;
> And he that wole han pris of his gentrye,
> For he was boren of a gentil hous
> And hadde his eldres noble and vertuous,
> And nel hymselven do no gentil dedis
> Ne folwen his gentil auncestre that deed is,
> He nys nat gentil, be he duc or erl,
> For vileyns synful dedes make a cherl.
> (*CT*, III, 1133-38; 1146-58)

As Minnis suggests, writing on gentility, Chaucer must have been aware of the latent egalitarian suggestions about gentility since he experienced the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and was familiar with John Ball and the well-known couplet: "Whan Adam dalf and Eve span/Who was thane a gentilman?" (*Oxford Guides* 485). Hence, for Chaucer regardless of status, lineage, and wealth, one could be a gentle, noble person just by doing noble deeds. Yet, this notion of gentility of Chaucer contradicted the nobility's concept of gentility. In other words, the members of the nobility of Chaucer's time did not seem to agree with Chaucer since for them to be gentle, noble blood was a *sine quo non*. Therefore, lacking noble blood, those members of the middle group, the social climbers, could not completely be a part of the nobility and turned into medieval hybrids and mimics as they could not fit into the commoners as well and lived, in Bhabha's terms, in a kind of third space between the territories or borders of the nobility and the commoners.

Apart from his ballad *Gentilesse* and *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, quite interestingly, his main representative of the nobility in *The Canterbury Tales*, the Knight, seems to be for social climbers as well. As discussed in the first chapter, in *The Prologue of The Nun's Priest's Tale*, the Knight stops the Monk who keeps telling the stories of downwardly mobile people and insists on listening to the stories of upward mobility (*CT*, VII, 2767-2779). Similarly, Brewer states that the Knight talks much about his preference of the stories of those rising on the social ladder, "[and] [t]his generous attitude to upward social mobility seems typical of the Knight, and presumably of Chaucer, but not of the culture generally, which required men to remain in that station of life to which God was presumed to have called them" (*A New Introduction* 371). As Brewer suggests, just like his Knight, Chaucer seems to be for social mobility. In relation to Chaucer's stance on social mobility and gentility, Mulligan notes

> [c]onsidering Chaucer's social position as attached to the ruling class but not born to it, the idea that men of lower birth could attain higher positions than those they inherited would have been comforting; Chaucer in fact lived this reality in his series of appointments and consistent maintenance (through various royal administrations) of royal favour. It cannot be surprising, therefore, that the concept of *gentilesse* appears periodically in his work. (68-69)

Taking all these points into account, it may be argued that, in his Franklin, Chaucer depicts the in-between position of the social climbers showing itself in the imitation of noble way of life in *The General Prologue*, and discussion of gentility in his tale. As Cooper argues, the focal point of the idea of gentility in Chaucer is "the independence of noble action from noble birth" which is quite natural to be mentioned by a franklin, a social climber and representative of the lower ranks of the gentry (*Oxford Guides to Chaucer* 240). Similar to Cooper, Crane suggests, the discussion of gentility "is particularly appropriate to members of the lowest and most vulnerable category of gentry" since the nobility's "more fundamental and political" assertions of the right to superiority were wearing away" ("The Franklin" 242-43). On the other hand, pointing to his in-between status, for some critics, *gentilesse* is not a suitable topic for Franklin to talk about. Brown and Butcher state that "[i]t is not the *Franklin's Tale*, but a tale that the Franklin happens to be telling" (150). Thus, the tale does not seem to be suitable for its teller. The innkeeper Harry Bailey also does not prefer the Franklin to talk about *gentilesse*. He says: "Strawe for your gentilesse" (*CT*, V, 695); yet, *gentilesse* was still the subject matter of the Franklin's tale since he seems to be obsessed with gentility. The social climbers' obsession with gentility was indeed the horror of the nobility. As Coss points out, besides a period of upward mobility, the late fourteenth century was probably a period of "the fear of upward mobility" ("An Age" 63). In fact, *The Franklin's Tale* develops an idea of gentility appropriate for the social climbers and depicts characters of different ranks performing gentility.

Indeed, it is widely believed that *The Franklin's Tale* is based on Boccaccio's *The Filocolo* (*Il Filocolo*). *Decameron* also includes a similar and shorter version of the same story (Finlayson 385). Yet, as Pearcy puts it, Chaucer entirely altered "the balanced claims necessary for a successful *questione d'amore*" and unlike Boccaccio who "designate[d] both the husband and the lover as knights, and thereby ma [de] them social equals" (*Épreuves d'amour* 167); the main characters of *The Franklin's Tale* are a knight and a squire who are not equals. It is significant that there is a gap between the gentle (knight) and the non-gentle (squire) in this sense. The *Tale* deals with the story of a knight, Arveragus, his wife, Dorigen, and a squire, Aurelius, who is in love with the wife of the knight. As Pearcy further states, "Chaucer adds information about the courtship of Arveragus and Dorigen [as well] which indicates that Dorigen, rather than

assuming a rank conferred on her by marriage, is by birth superior not only to the squire Aurelius but also to her husband Arveragus" (*Épreuves d'amour* 174). Thus, not only the knight and the squire, but the knight and his wife are not social equals in Chaucer's version either. Hence, we have the marriage of a lower-born knight and a higher-born lady. Chaucer tells how the knight Arveragus tried hard to win the hand of the lady who is of noble heritage:

> In Armorik, that called is Britayne,
> Ther was a knyght that loved and dide his payne
> To serve a lady in his beste wise;
> And many a labour, many a greet emprise,
> He for his lady wroghte er she were wonne.
> For she was oon the fairest under sonne,
> And eek therto comen of so heigh kynrede
> That wel unnethes dorste this knyght, for drede,
> Telle hire his wo, his peyne, and his distresse.
> (*CT*, V, 729-37)

Thus, besides *gentilesse*, the Franklin's tale is also about courtly love, another concept associated with the nobility. Eventually, in the *Tale*, Dorigen, the lady of noble birth, accepts the love of the knight, Arveragus, and they marry. Dorigen swears that she will be faithful to her husband: "Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf--/ Have heer my trouthe--til that myn herte breste." (*CT*, V, 758-59). Later, Arveragus goes to a war to England as he is a knight in pursuit of honour and reputation: "In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne,/ To seke in armes worshipe and honour/For al his lust he sette in swich labour --" (*CT*, V, 810-12), leaving Dorigen behind with her deep sorrow, which begins the story of gentility. Thinking that the rocks on the Breton coasts will prevent her husband from returning home, Dorigen even reproaches God for creating the rocks since they give her pain:

> But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,
> That semen rather a foul confusion
> Of werk than any fair creacion
> Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable,
> Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable?
> For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne eest,
> Ther nys yfostred man, ne byd, ne beest;
> It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
> . . . .

> But wolde God that alle thise rokkes blake
> Were sonken into helle for his sake!
> Thise rokkes sleen myn herte for the feere."
> Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous teere.
> (*CT*,V,868-75;891-94)

There is also a young, rich and handsome squire Aurelius, a man of reputation, who "[h]adde loved hire best of any creature/ Two yeer and moore, as was his aventure,/ But nevere dorste he tellen hire his grevaunce" (*CT*, V, 939-41). When Aurelius confesses his love to Dorigen, Dorigen gets angry and remembering her promise to her husband, answers: "Ne shal I nevere been untrewe wyf/ In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit; / I wol been his to whom that I am knyt" (*CT*, V, 984-86). Yet, in desperation, and not believing that her odd wish could come true, Dorigen makes a promise to Aurelius that she will be his mistress if he can remove the rocks:

> Looke what day that endelong Britayne
> Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
> That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon--
> I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene
> Of rokkes that ther nys no stoon ysene,
> Thanne wol I love yow best of any man;
> Have heer my trouthe, in al that evere I kan."
> (*CT*, V, 992-98)

Realising the unattainability of the the request of Dorigen, Aurelius sinks into despair: "Madame," quod he, "this were an inpossible!/ Thanne moot I dye of sodeyn deth horrible." (*CT*, V, 1009-1010). After two years, Arveragus, "chivalrie the flour" (*CT*, V, 1088), comes back home, making Dorigen's wishes come true. Throughout two years, Aurelius was "in suffering and in hellish torment" (*CT*, V, 1101), trying to find a way to remove the rocks of Brittany as Dorigen wishes. Eventually, by the help of a magician clerk at Orleans, a friend of his brother, Aurelius, through magic, made it "[. . .] for a wyke or tweye,/ [. . .] semed that alle rokkes were aweye." (*CT*, V, 1295-96). The clerk makes a spell in return for a thousand pounds and Aurelius swears that he will pay his debt: "Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!" (*CT*, V, 1231). Upon fulfifiling her wish, Aurelius reminds Dorigen of her promise: "Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;/ And in myn hand youre trouthe plighten ye/ To love me best-- God woot, ye seyde so," (*CT*, V, 1327-29). Thus, Aurelius puts Dorigen in a deadlock: "For wende I nevere

by possibilitee/ That swich a monster or merveille myghte be!/ It is agayns the process of nature." (*CT*, V, 1343-45).

Dorigen should be faithful to her husband, in line with her pledge to him; yet, she should also keep her promise as a noble lady. Desperately, she even wants to kill herself since, as suggested by Ganze, she wants to be like "a true Penelope" rather than "a false Criseyde" ("My Trouthe" 323). Dorigen laments as follows:

> Save oonly deeth or ells dishonour;
> Oon of thise two bihoveth me to chese.
> But nathelees, yet, have I levere to lese
> My lif than of my body to have a shame,
> Or knowe myselven fals, or lese my name;
> And with my deth I may be quyt, ywis.
> (*CT*, V, 1359-63)

According to Mathewson, the only interest of Dorigen is to maintain her chastity (30). Later, in sorrow and tears, Dorigen tells her husband about her situation: "Allas," quod she, "that evere was I born!/ Thus have I seyd," quod she, "thus have I sworn"--/And toold hym al as ye han herd before; (*CT*, V, 1463-65). Arveragus, leaving his honour behind, tells his wife to keep her promise to the squire since keeping one's word, *trouthe*, is of utmost significance to his knightly identity:

> Ye shul youre trouthe holden, by may fay!
> For God so wisly have mercy upon me,
> I hadde wel levere ystiked for to be
> For verray love which that I to yow have,
> But if ye sholde youre trouthe kepe and save"
> Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may kepe
> (*CT*, V, 1474-79)

Yet, Arveragus is in tears when he tells his wife to keep her promise: "But with that word he brast anon to wepe,/ And seyde, "I yow forbade, up peyne of deeth,"(*CT*, V, 1480-81) and he also asks her to keep this event secret: "That nevere, whil thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,/ To no wight telle thou of this aventure--"(*CT*, V, 1482-83). Hence, just like his wife Dorigen, Arveragus is in a dilemma as both keeping his honour and his promise are essential to his feudal and knightly identity (Phillips 140). For Brown and

Butcher, Arveragus' cry is significant in that it reflects the social tension and crisis of the aristocracy in the fourteenth century since after winning honour and social position as a knight, Arveragus loses his dignity. Furthermore, to avoid public shame within the aristocratic community, Arveragus has to accept private shame (112). Hence, as suggested by Brown and Butcher, in relation to the crisis within the aristocracy, "Arveragus' emotional outburst is symptomatic of the tensions of social change" (112). In other words, Arveragus has to submit to someone of lower rank, just like the members of the nobility who had to accept the social power of the social climbers. Later on, upon learning that the knight Arveragus behaves gently: "[. . .] Arveragus, of gentillesse,/Hadde levere dye in sorwe and in distresse/Than that his wyf were of hir touthe fals." (*CT*, V, 1595-97); and asks his wife to keep her promise, Aurelius, the squire, also behaves gently and releases Dorigen from her promise:

> "Madame, seyth to youre lord Arveragus
> That sith I se his grete gemtillesse
> To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse,
> That him were levere han shame (and that were routhe)
> Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre trouthe
> I have wel levere evere to suffer two
> Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.
> I yow relesse, madame, into youre hond
> Quyt every serement and every bond
> That ye han maad to me as heerbiforn,
> Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.
> My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
> Of no biheste, and here I take my leve,
> As of the treweste and the beste wyf
> That evere yet I knew in al my lyf.
> But every wyf be war of hire biheeste!
> On Dorigen remembreth, atte leeste.
> Thus kan a squire doon a gentil dede
> As wel as kan a knyght, withouten drede."
> (*CT*, V, 1526-44)

Thereby, Aurelius proves that a squire can also do gentle deeds just like a knight which underlines Chaucer's concept of gentility based not on birth but on virtue and manners. As Brown and Butcher note, it is Aurelius, not a knight whose gentle status is certain, yet a squire, who solves the problem within the aristocracy and it refers to the necessity of acceptance of a new type of order in medieval society due to social mobility. Hence,

The Franklin's Tale "argues for the resolution of the crisis within aristocratic society by means of the acceptance of a new social order" (113). Behaving gently, yet, Aurelius finds himself in a dilemma since he does not have enough money to pay his debt to the clerk: "Allas!" quod he. "Allas, that I bihighte/ Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte/ Unto this philosopher! How shal I do?" (*CT*, V, 1559-61). Now, it is time for the clerk to display gentility; thus, he states that someone does not need to be a knight or a squire to do a gentle deed:

> This philosopher answered, "Leeve brother,
> Everich of yow dilde gentilly til oother.
> Thou art a squire, and he is a knight;
> But God forbade, for his blissful myght;
> But if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede
> As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!
> (*CT*, V, 1607-12)

As Nachtwey notes, in his answer the Clerk focuses on social hierarchy (118). Hence, in accordance with Chaucer's idea of gentility, other than the knight and squire, the clerk behaves with gentility as well and releases the squire from his promise and does not ask for money in return for his services:

> Sire, I releesse thee thy thousand pound
> As though right now were cropen out of the
> ground,
> Ne nevere er now ne haddest knowen me.
> For, sire, I wol nat taken a peny of thee!
> (*CT*, V, 1613-17)

As Phillips notes, "[t]he clerk's rejection of a fabulous fee challenges social order, showing there is nothing innate about *gentil* behaviour" (142). In line with the concept of gentility based on gentil deeds rather than on noble blood, before ending his story, the Franklin asks "Lordynges, this question, thanne, wol I aske now,/ Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?/ Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende." (*CT*, V, 1621-23). Phillips affirms that the question of the Franklin underlines the theme of the tale, "fredom" which includes three meanings: "generous", "noble", and "without restraint" within the story (137). As noted by Mulligan, the question also suggests that the entire characters act with gentility (66) which highlights a new type of freedom based on

wealth (70). Similar to the argument of Brown and Butcher, Brown points out that the end of the story reflects a "harmonious social order [as] [t]he fabric of Arveragus' society was on the brink of disintegration, but it has been brought back from abyss" (*Chaucer at Work* 150) by those who are not gentle by birth. Hence, the end of *The Franklin's Tale* suggests that Chaucer supports a new social order of upward mobility. In other words, the Franklin tells his story in a way that the end of the story will reveal that the one on the lowest level of the social ladder is the most noble. Thus, from the Franklin's story, a new reality or order is constructed in which the nobility is achieved through virtue rather than noble birth. In this new reality, additionally, the Franklin's aspirations to be noble come true (Sweeney 167; Williams, "The Canterbury Tales" 47).

Accordingly, the concept of gentility emphasized in *The Franklin's Tale* is related to the position of the franklins. Importantly, as Strohm suggest, this problem of gentility, giving the title gentle to a certain group of the society, was not only a problem for the franklins, but for all members of the middle strata of fourteenth-century society, who were not gentle by birth, including Chaucer himself and most of his audience (*Social Chaucer* 108). More important than the conflict between the social climbers and the aristocracy, the gentility discussion of the Franklin reveals the hybridity of social climbers in that they, living on the borders of nobility, try to have a place in the nobility through their claim to gentility. Hence, the Franklin, due to his extreme social aspirations, "conduct[s] himself as he thinks befits the nobility" (Lumiansky 186). Root, likewise, points out that the Franklin is a "self-made man [. . .] uncomfortably conscious of a certain lack of "gentility," [and is] conscious that, with all that he has acquired and attained, he can never be quite the complete gentleman" (271-272). That is to say, it is clear that since his origin is low, rising on the social ladder as a result of wealth, the Franklin "attempts to deny and camouflage his roots and convince himself and others of his inherent nobility by acquiring and displaying the accoutrements and accomplishments of his new class" (Williams, "The Canterbury Tales" 43). As Strohm suggests, *The Franklin's Tale* displays Franklin's endeavour to come up with "a flexible and humane alternative to the feudal oath and the outworn social structure" which was a serious problem for the people of middle-grouping in the fourteenth century (*Social Chaucer* 108). Yet, as Strohm further suggests, Franklin's alternative to the feudal oath

"remains no less urgently attractive for a fourteenth-century audience caught between an unworkable feudal ideal and a congeries of eminently workable but manifestly cynical postfeudal arrangements" (*Social Chaucer* 109). Therefore, the medieval mind did not yet seem ready for the Franklin's new concept of gentility which developed as a natural consequence of the social change of the time.

Likewise, it must be noted that in a sense even his story suggests that the Franklin's claim to gentility cannot be realised. In the first place, Aurelius could not really remove the rocks; yet, through magic, Dorigen believed that he removed the rocks. Thus, Aurelius cannot entirely "participate in *gentilesse*, according to this theory, because he has not earned Dorigen's indebtedness" (Mulligan 70). The Franklin tells a Breton lay revolving around the concept of gentility just to be counted as gentil; yet, at the centre of the *Tale*, there is the discord between appearance and reality, through which Chaucer presents "the dangers inherent in choosing appearance over reality, illusion over truth" (Farvolden v). That is, the magical scene displays that the Franklin, in reality, could never reach the territories of the nobility (Brown and Butcher 99). Accordingly, *The* Franklin's tale marks him as a social climber claiming gentility without noble lineage, pointing to his hybrid identity in a Bhabhanian third space.

Along with his hybridity, the mimicry of the Franklin can be observed in his tale too. First of all, in addition to his attire, hospitality and generosity displayed in his portrait, the gentility discussion of the Franklin in his tale is a sign of his imitation of nobility since gentility is a concept unique to nobility. In other words, behaving as a person of gentility, the Franklin directly imitates a trait of the nobility. The Franklin, in fact, regards gentility as the essence of nobility and takes it as "an imitable quality" (Ganze "Seeking *Trouthe*" 163). In *The Franklin's Tale*, hence, gentility turns into a trait to be imitated and it spreads like an infection. First, Aurelius imitates the gentility of Arveragus, and then the Clerk imitates the gentility of Aurelius. The Franklin cannot acknowledge the true gentility from an aristocratic point of view and he takes it as something quantifiable (Brown and Butcher 89; Coss, "An Age" 64-65). Hence, the Franklin asks: "Which was the moostefre [i.e. noble], as thynketh yow? (*CT*, V, 1622). The Franklin's imitation of the very concept of the nobility, gentility, and his aspirations

to the nobility are well displayed in his relationship with his son in his tale. At the beginning of his tale following the Squire's tale, the Franklin shows his admiration for the Squire, the son of the Knight, and praises him for his gentle qualities and knowledge of rhetoric:

> "In feith, Squier, thow hast thee wel yquit
> And gentilly. I preise wel thy wit,"
> Quod the Frankeleyn, "considerynge thy yowthe,
> So feelingly thou spekest, sire, I allow the!
> As to my dook, ther is noon that is heere
> Of eloquence that shal be thy peere,
> If that thou lyve, God yeve thee good chaunce,
> And in vertu sende thee continuaunce,
> For of thy speche I have greet deynee.
> (*CT*, V, 673-81)

As Kittredge notes, the Squire impresses the Franklin with his gentility. For Kittredge, the real reason for the Franklin's keen interest in the Squire is that: The Franklin does not completely belong to the gentry; yet, as a rich landholder, "he is the kind of man that may hope to found a family, the kind of man from whose ranks the English nobility has been constantly recruited" ("Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage" 24). Accordingly, the Franklin, later on, begins to tell about his son and states that he is even ready to give up all of his land and property if his son could have the skills of the Squire. Yet, the Franklin's son is not interested in gentility: he gambles, he has no concern with any serious talk and does not take his father's advice. Aspiring to noble society, the Franklin even despises pages and gets angry with his son who prefers to talk to a page rather than a man of nobility. In short, the Franklin's son has nothing to do with the Squire, or with the world of the nobility:

> I have a sone, and by the Trinitee,
> I hadde levere than twenty pound worth lond,
> Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,
> He were a man of swich discrecioun
> As that ye been! Fy on possessioun,
> But if a man be vertuous withal!
> I have my sone synbbed, and yet shal,
> For he to vertu listeth nat entende;
> But fort o pleye at dees, and to despende
> And lese al that he hath, is his usage.
> And he hath levere talken with a page
> Than to comune with any gentil wight

Where he myghte lerne gentilesse aright.
(*CT*, V, 682-94)

As Phillips argues, evaluating gentility in relation to money and possessions, and regarding it as something to "lerne", the Franklin fuses "gentil" and "burel" responses (136), which again highlights his hybrid identity caught in between the realms of the nobility and the commoners. In addition to gentility, the Franklin aspires to the concept of lineage of the nobility, and for the Franklin it seems, again like gentility, something to be imitated. As stated by Burlin, franklins do not have a title, yet, so-called gentility due to their wealth and consequent social and political power. In other words, the Franklin is a man of importance, however, he is not a part of the gentility of noble birth or lineage; thus, his social and political power are not hereditary (56). Yet, talking about his concerns for his son, and his lack of gentility, the Franklin pretends to have an heir in the sense of aristocratic lineage. As Burlin further suggests, since the Franklin could not have an hereditary title to pass on to his son, gentility becomes a kind of title for him; a title and "a nobility of manner which can be learned and imitated, so that, in all but title, the son of a franklin might become indistinguishable from the son of a knight" (56-57). Similarly, as Cartlidge notes too, right at the beginning of his tale, the Franklin deals with the issue of inheritance by referring to land which is also unique to the nobility. The Franklin might be a significant landowner and have some paternal responsibilities; yet, "he is not quite an aristocrat, and is therefore deprived of the justifications for possession that aristocracy brings" [such as land] [. . .] [and] prosperity, it appears, has exaggerated the Franklin's sense of his heir's duties and responsibilities to the point at which anything like a father's love vanishes from view" (238). Gaylord notes that

> The Franklin, already established on the land, is not satisfied with his public duties and his major position in the shire. He covets a higher nobility. His conversation reveals his worldly aims: to forge his family into noble stock and perhaps to buy more and more land (a rich and well-nurtured son might marry as well as Arveragus). His tale reveals his own conception of the gentillesse he hopes to settle down to and establish as the theoretical basis for his own life and morality. ("A Study" 541)

However, the Franklin does not even have a chance to have a noble succession since his son is a wastrel and gambler who does not have any interest in learning the squire's

gentility or manners. Hence, undoubtedly, the Franklin's hope for aristocratic heritage is doomed to failure and in his tale, only through imagination; the Franklin can get out of such restrictions (Olson, The Canterbury Tales 267).

Comparing his tale to the tales of the Squire and the Knight, the Franklin's imitation of nobility can be also observed. In many aspects, *The Franklin's Tale* mirrors the Squire's and Knight's tales. The tales are all romances displaying noble way of life and courtly love. For instance, both in the Franklin's and the Squire's tales, there are noble lovers leaving their ladies behind to keep their honour, Franklin's Averagus and the Squire's tercelet. Furthermore, as Ganze suggests, throughout his tale, the Franklin focuses on the concepts highlighted in the portrait of the Knight ("Seeking Trouthe" 164) such as "[t]routhe and honor, fredom and curteisie" (*CT*, I, 46). Additionally, the descriptions of the Knight and the Franklin in *The General Prologue* are also similar to each other. The Knight is decribed as a "verray, parfit, gentil knight" (*CT*, I, 72). Similarly, the Franklin is likened to Epicurus, whose opinion is "pleyn delit" and "verray felicitee parfit" (*CT*, I, 337-38). This similarity also indicates "the Franklin's superficial and materialistic understanding of the qualities he wishes to imitate" ("Seeking Trouthe" 164). Furthermore, as Grudin points out, telling his tale, the Franklin seems to compete against the Squire, he interrupts the Squire and tries to outperform him in telling a romance (115). Both the Squire and Franklin talk about themselves as storytellers and about rhetoric, the art of discourse or public speaking to inform and persuade the audience (*CT*, V, 35-41; *CT*, V, 716-728), which is a significant mark of social division at that time (Brown and Butcher 66).

Moreover, the Franklin imitates the discourse or the use of rhetoric of the Squire, which he praises at the beginning of his tale, since the Franklin identifies rhetoric with *gentil* birth. That is to say, "the Franklin recognizes that a particular kind of utterance, and especially that which expresses a 'lorldly" conception of experience, is the prerogative of the aristocracy" (Brown and Butcher 75). As Pearsall remarks, the eloquence of the Squire displays the complete confidence, social status, and authority of the nobility ("The Squire" 90-1). Thus, by copying the style of the Squire, the Franklin imitates nobility to which he aspires. Since the manner of speaking indicates one's status; the

choice of words is pivotal to a man of low origin who covets the status, prerogatives, and authority of the nobility. Hence, his concern for the social arrangement is the reason for the Franklin's emphasis on rhetoric. In fact, there is ambivalence in the Franklin's use of rhetoric in that although the Franklin states that he does not know rhetoric, his tale suggests that he is familiar with rhetoric (Middleton 76; Burlin 60). After listening to the tale of the Squire and praising his use of rhetoric, the Franklin states that he does not know anything about rhetoric:

> But, sires, by cause I am a burel man,
> At my bigynnyng first I yow biseche,
> Have me excused of my rude speche.
> I lerned nevere rethorik, certeyn;
> Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare nd pleyn. (*CT*, V, 716-20)

Defining himself as a "burel" man, the Franklin acknowledges that he is unlearned and of low origin; thus, unlike the Squire, he has no idea about rhetoric. Yet, although the Franklin states that he does not know rhetoric, he is acquainted with the name of Cicero, one of the experts of the art (Brown and Butcher 76): "I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,/ Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero." (*CT,* V, 721-22). In a similar vein, Andersen describes the Franklin as a "self-conscious" rhetorician just like the Knight and the Squire (146). In fact, Andersen and Brewer focus on the style of the Franklin which is similar to that of the Squire. For instance, it is important to note that the Franklin keeps his gentle behaviour, imitating the Squire, when the Host behaves to him rudely. The Host tells him to stop talking about gentility and tell his tale and just like the Squire, the Franklin answers the Host in a quite courteous manner (Andersen 146, Brewer, *A New Introduction* 332). The Host politely asks the Squire to tell a tale: "Squier, com neef, if it youre wille be, / And sey somwhat of love; for certes ye / Konnen theron as muche as any man." (*CT*, V, 1-3), and the Squire courteously agrees:

> Nay, sire," quod he, "but I wol seye as I kan
> With hertly wyl; for I wol nat rebelle
> Agayn youre lust; a tale wol I telle.
> Have me excused if I speke amys;
> My wyl is good, and lo, my tale is this. (*CT*, V, 4-8)

The Host reprimands the Franklin and asks him to tell his tale: "Straw for youre gentillesse!" quod oure Hoost./"What, Frankeleyn! pardee, sire, wel thou woost/That

ech of yow moot tellen [a tale or two] atte leste" (*CT*, V, 695-97). Yet, the Franklin answers politely in the manner of the Squire: "That knowe I wel, sire," quod the Frankeleyn./ "I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn,/ Though to this man I speke a word or two." (*CT*, V, 699-701). The host, however, orders him to tell a tale: "Telle on thy tale withouten wordes mo" (*CT*, V, 702). The Franklin, yet, does not give up his politeness:

> Gladly, sire Hoost," quod he, "I wole obeye
> Unto your wyl; now herkneth what I seye.
> I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse
> As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse.
> I prey to God that it may plesen yow;
> Thanne woot I wel that it is good ynow.
> (*CT*, V, 703-8)

Hence, as Andersen notes, the Franklin equates his gentility with that of the Squire and imitates the language of the Squire (148, 150). With regard to the Franklin's imitation of the content and style of the nobility, Brown and Butcher state that the Franklin "is actually quite well informed about [. . .] subjects [in relation to nobility] and has acquired those 'languages' of the aristocrat and intellectual which he both disdains and admires" (81). Above all, according to Burlin "[t]he imitation of noble ways is nowhere more apparent than in the Franklin's use of rhetoric. It is precisely the high manner of the telling that he admires in the performance of the young Squire and considers to be the true manifestation of his gentillesse" (60). As again Burlin affirms, the Franklin imitates the gentility and language of the Squire and the Knight, he could not appreciate gentility, and he even does not behave in line with his own concept of gentility as he despises pages. If a page cannot be virtuous most probably because he is not a noble, the Franklin's pretentions for himself and his son are also hopeless (59). More importantly, the Franklin's in-between status is also apparent in his treatment of the Squire and his tale. As Brown and Butcher argue above, the Franklin both hates and appreciates the world of aristocracy represented by the Squire. The Franklin admires the Squire and the world of the nobility by praising him at the beginning of his tale and wishing his son to be like the Squire. The Franklin, on the other hand, in his tale, criticises the Squire, or the aristocracy by trying to refute the noble concept of the gentility based on noble birth.

Indeed, the concept of gentility in relation to the tales of the Franklin and the Squire, the subject matter of the two tales, requires a closer examination in that along with the ambivalent attitude of the Franklin towards the nobility– imitating, envying the nobility, yet, still challenging their concept of gentility–it reveals the in-betweenness of the Franklin living in a third space. This problematic attitude of the Franklin towards the nobility originates from aforementioned social tension between the two groups, the nobility and social climbers. In fact, as Brown and Butcher note, *The Squire's Tale* and *The Franklin's Tale* deal with the clash between social orders and social pretension of the fourteenth century. Hence, although both tales are about the same subject matter, gentility, their treatment of their subject is quite different and contradictory (59). In other words, gentility is the focal point of both tales since it is the very concept at the centre of the social tension between the nobility, and the members of the upwardly mobile middle-grouping. Thus, the question at the end of *The Franklin's Tale* "Lordynges, this question, thanne, wol I aske now,/ Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?/ Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende." (*CT*, V, 1621-23), underlines the problem which is the essence of the social conflict between the nobility and the middle-grouping. Indeed, it is this social conflict which makes the Franklin tell a romance. As in the case of the Miller's tale and the Knight's tale, the tale of the Franklin is a reply to the Squire's tale. Thus, *The Franklin's Tale* suggests a different social reality to emphasise the emptiness of the gentility of the aristocracy presented in *The Squire's Tale*. Accordingly, we have two different perspectives on the social and political reality of the late fourteenth century which are put against each other in the Franklin's and Squire's tales (Brown and Butcher 64, 91, 109).

As stated above, the Franklin presents his own concept of gentility as an alternative to the traditional gentility supported by the Squire in his tale. For Mandel, as the Franklin extols the gentility of the squire and wants his son to be like the Squire, it is a bit unexpected to find out that the concept of gentility works entirely in diverse ways in the two tales (99). On the other hand, as Phillips notes, the Franklin is the "appropriate voice, a social boundary-crossing voice, to take us over from the *Squire's Tale*'s definitions of *gentilesse* to the *Franklin's Tale*'s encounter between inherited and meritocratic *gentilesse*" (*An Introduction* 135). Indeed, *The Squire's Tale* begins with an

implicit reference to King Arthur by defining king Cambyuskan and his court in a similar manner to that of Arthur and his court:

> At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,
> Ther dwelte a kyng that werreyed Russye,
> Thurgh which ther dyde many a doughty man.
> This noble kyng was cleped Cambyuskan,
> Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
> That ther was nowher in no regioun
> So excellent a lord in alle thyng:
> Hym lakked noght that longeth to a kyng.
> As of the secte of which that he was born
> He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn;
> And therto he was hardy, wys, and riche,
> And pitous and just, alwey yliche;
> Sooth of his word, benign, and honourable;
> Of his corage as any centre stable;
> Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous
> As any bachelor of al his hous.
> A fair persone he was and fortunat,
> And kept alwey so wel roial estat
> That ther was nowher swich another man.
> (*CT*, V, 9-27)

Thus, the narrator focuses on the ancient, ideal nobility personified in Cambyuskan and his court. Furthermore, king Cambyuskan gives a feast to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of his crowning (*CT*, V, 42-43) as in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. When Cambyuskan sits on his dais along with his noble guests, listening to his minstrels, all of a sudden, a knight upon a steed of brass appears at the hall door, terrifying the noble attendants:

> In at the halle dore al sodeynly
> Ther cam a knyght upon a steede of bras,
> And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.
> Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ryng,
> And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng;
> And up he rideth to the heighe bord.
> In al the halle ne was ther spoken a word
> For merveille of this knyght; hym to biholde
> Ful bisily they wayten, yonge and olde.
> (*CT*, V, 80-88)

Later on, the narrator even likens the knight to Gawain due to his gentility, great respect for king Cambyuskan and his skill in the art of speech, rhetoric: the knight salutes king, queen and the lords

> [w]ith so heigh reverence and obeisaunce,
> As wel in speche as in contenaunce,
> That Gawayn, with his olde curteisye,
> Though he were comen ayeyn out of Fairye,
> Ne koude hymn at amende with a word.
> . . . .
> Accordant to his words was his cheere,
> As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.
> (*CT*, V, 93-97; 103-104)

The beginning of *The Squire's Tale,* hence, presents an ideal picture of the noble way of life with noble and gentil characters similar to King Arthur and his knights. Yet, the tale entirely changes its direction with a new story about a noble falcon and tercelet (male falcon) in which the tercelet, noble and apparently gentil, does not keep his promise to the falcon, and fails to behave in line with gentility. In this part of the tale, princess Canacee, daughter of Cambyuskan, encounters a falcon in pain while she is wandering in the grove:

> Ther sat a faucon over hire heed ful hye,
> That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
> Ybeten hadde she hirself so pitously
> With bothe hir wynges til the rede blood
> Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood.
> (*CT*, V, 411-15)

The noble falcon tells her tearful story to Canacee and displays how a noble tercelet does not keep his vow and betrays her love although he seems to be the most gentil and courteous in the world both by his behaviour and fine words:

> I nyste nat what was adversitee
> Til I koude flee ful hye under the sky.
> Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,
> That semed welle of alle gentillesse;
> Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,
> It was so wrapped under humble cheere,
> And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,
> Under pleasance, and under bisy peyne,

That no wight koude han wend he koude feyne,
So depe in greyn he dyed his colours.
(CT, V, 502-11)

However, this seemingly gentil tercelet breaks “his othes and his seuretee, (*CT*, V, 528), and not for “his honour” or “vertu of necessitee,” (*CT*, V, 592-593), but, wantonly leaves the falcon. Yet, still, the falcon “[. . .] thought he was so trewe, / And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn” (*CT*, V, 588-89). Some time later, the falcon learns that the tercelet loves someone else. The falcon tells that although the tercelet is of noble birth (“gentil born” *CT*, V, 622), he does not keeps his promise and loves another bird and left me alone; thus, he has turned “his trouthe falsed in this wyse” (*CT*, V, 627).

Therefore, in *The Squire’s Tale*, in spite of his noble birth, high discourse, and seemingly gentil appearance and behaviour, the tercelet deviates from gentilesse and trouthe. Yet, in *The Franklin’s Tale*, all of the characters, regardless of their rank, are true to gentilesse and trouthe. Furthermore, the honour of Arveragus and Dorigen, the characters whose nobility is unquestionable, is saved by those who are their social inferiors. In this context, the Franklin seems to give the members of nobility, from which he is excluded due to not having gentil blood, a good lesson on gentility. Furthermore, in his tale, the Franklin displays the emptiness of the traditional gentility, which is based on noble birth and appearance, and foregrounds his own concept of gentility based on virtue and noble deeds. In a similar sense, Stark notes, it is the Squire and his class which is criticised by the Franklin in that they “confused the idealized virtues of the romance world with superficial good manners and social style [. . .] [and] display” (184).

In relation to the gentility link between the Franklin’s and Squire’s tales, an interesting point should be taken into account as well. Upon ending the story of the falcon and tercelet, the narrator says that he will return to his first story, the story of Cambyuskan and the strange knight: “And ther I lefte I wol ayeyn bigynne.” (*CT*, V, 670). Yet, the story does not continue and the tale of the Franklin begins which is again on gentility, but from a different point of view. Indeed, the gentility in the Franklin’s tale is discussed in accordance with a social climber, who has a hybrid identity because of the

concept of traditional gentility. That is, *The Franklin's Tale,* unlike *The Squire's Tale*, is a tale which treats gentility in accordance with the changes of the time by lending an ear to the voice of the social climbers. Indeed, it is the way how Chaucer ensured a powerful sense of reality in his Franklin. In his tale, the Franklin reveals the insincerities of the aristocratic world. More importantly, his tale reveals the real world of the Franklin which is a complicated one as it is the mixture of emulation and displacement of the noble world, which he wants to be a member (Ferster 154; Brown and Butcher 85). In fact, the complicated world of the Franklin displays his hybrid identity since he both aspires to the world of nobility, as he lives on its border, and criticises the same world as well, as he is not accepted into it.

In conclusion, it is clear that in Chaucer's time, gentility was the main reason bringing about the medieval hybrid identities who were social climbers lacking noble blood as in the case of Chaucer's Franklin. As presented in his portrayal in *The General Prologue* and in his tale, the Franklin occupies a Bhabhanian third space in between the "fixed identifications" (*The Location of Culture* 3) of the time as a commoner with aspirations to the nobility. The Franklin clearly imitates his social superiors, the members of the nobility, their attire, their manners and customs and even their use of language to claim a space among them. Hence, the Franklin is also a mimic, like all the other medieval social climbers. The Franklin, indeed, is a character who employs mimicry to be *exactly the same* (italics mine) as the nobility through his aristocratic self-display: his attire, land, wealth, pleasure-loving, hospitality, generosity, and claim to gentility. Through his hybrid identity, the Franklin keeps an ambivalent relationship with the nobility as he both admires them and wants to be one of them; and he also criticises them and redefines their concept of gentility. Hence, in Bhabha's words, the Franklin, becomes "a complex figure of difference and identity" (*The Location of Culture* 1) as he, neither totally included, nor excluded from their spheres, lives on the borders of the nobility and the commoners.

The Miller is another medieval hybrid and mimic as a result of upward social mobility. Like the Franklin, as Knapp suggests, the Miller is one of the "non-fit"s in the medieval society (12). Indeed, the Miller, like the Franklin, is one of the preeminent freemen of the village community (Forgeng 19). Being one of the members of the wealthy and

influential medieval middle-grouping, yet lacking noble blood, the Miller lives on the threshold between the nobility and commoners, in other words, in a Bhabhanian third space. The Miller, thus, is a part of the medieval "borderline community" (*The Location of Culture* 12). The Miller is a mimic imitating the attire and customs and manners of the nobility as well. The mimicry of the Miller, is also an indicator of the power of the social climbers. As Huddart suggests in relation to the relationship between the coloniser and colonised, the nobility becomes "less powerful than [is] apparent, [. . .] [since the members of the middle-grouping are] [. . .] able to resist the dominance [of the nobility] [through mimicry which] emphasizes the active *agency* of the [. . .] [social climbers]" (2). We can observe that the Miller is portrayed as a hybrid and mimic in *The General Prologue*. *The Miller's Tale*, a representation of the world of social climbers, and *The Reeve's Tale*, a depiction of a prosperous miller aspiring to nobility, also provide information about the hybrid and mimic identity of the Miller along with the medieval millers.

Chaucer's prosperous and pretentious miller in *The General Prologue* is the quintessence of the millers of the fourteenth century. Traditionally, the millers belong to the commoners since they are mostly unfree peasants. The millers generally rented the mill and paid a certain amount of money to the lord, getting an advantage of the distinction between that and the multure, the portion of flour saved as fee. In Chaucer's time, the old hand mills were displaced by big, stream-powered mills and water mills, and due to the developments in plowing techniques, many serfs did not have to plow by hand. Basically, the mill was a method by which the wealthy and the authoritative kept the other members of society under control. Thus, milling was a kind of monopoly since only the nobility could possess mills and all of their social inferiors in the environs had to use them. Yet, in time, the monopoly was passed on to the wealthy millers who could own mills, which also made the peasants hate millers just like once they detested the gentry for bringing about monopolies. Hence, along with their thievery, the millers became the unwanted members of medieval society (Homans 362; Lambdin and Lambdin 272, 274; Fossier 100). The thievery of the millers is even displayed in a well-known proverb of the fifteenth century: "If any sack would not dance to his [bag]pipe, it had to let itself be tolled twice in punishment" (Jones, "Chaucer and the Medieval

Miller" 12). As a medieval poem suggests, the millers were notorious for their power and theft: "As the wheel wen round he made his pelf/One hand in the hopper, the other in the bag,/ As the wheel went round he made his grab [. . .]" ("Jolly Miller", qtd. in J. A. W. Bennett 114). Among the victims of the millers, the most unfortunate were the clerks as they did not have the right to use the mills and colleges did not possess mills, the clerks were left at the mercy of the millers. The clerks, moreover, were mostly the targets of criticism in fabliaux (Lambdin and Lambdin 274; Heffernan, "Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" " 312) as in *The Reeve's Tale*. Theft appears to be a characteristic of Chaucer's Miller, Robyn, in *The General Prologue*: "Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;/ And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee." (*CT*, I, 562-563). As Patterson states, the millers stole; yet, it was not certain whether their main victims were the peasants or the lords. However, it is clear that the millers gained wealth in the post-plague period when they could bargain with mill owners for better prices ("No Man His Reson Herde"126-127).

Indeed, in milling, the English followed the Roman tradition and millers were chosen from serfs; it was the reason why millers were generally described with the physical characteristics associated with serfs even after they became free. Chaucer's millers in *The General Prologue* and in *The Reeve's Tale* are also described with the characteristics of serfs. Robyn has "blake [. . .] and wyde [. . .] nosethirles" (*CT*, I, 557), and Symkyn, the miller in *The Reeve's Tale*, has a "camus" (flat and broad) nose (*CT*, I, 3934), which had been identified with the lower classes for ages. The miller's rising social status seems to attract much criticism: since most peasants "never threatened to compete with the propertied classes, it was not necessary to ridicule their ambition. The miller, on the other hand, had money to spend and was better able to overstep the barriers which had gradually developed between the classes" (G. Jones 6). In fact, the aspirations of the millers overlap his hybrid qualities, the qualities of the nobility and the peasantry. As Lambdin and Lambdin argue, "[i]f any of the pilgrims illustrates a link between the gentry and the peasants, it would be the miller, a member of a group that had no *identifiable* (italics mine) stature, being neither upper nor lower class" (272). Hence, the millers occupied "an atypical social position" within the medieval society. They mainly belonged to the labouring class; yet, through their wealth, they also had a

place in the gentry. Thus, both the labourers and the gentry detested the millers. More importantly, the millers "had lots of money to spend and were able to step above the boundaries that had evolved between the classes, but nobody wanted them [as] they were still seen as serfs in the eyes of the gentry" (Lambdin and Lambdin 275).

Evidently, the millers, in general terms, were hybrids as, neither totally included nor excluded from the estates of the commoners and of the gentry, they occupied a Bhabhanian third space formed by the intersection of "two original moments" and "which enables other positions to emerge [. . .] [and] sets up new structures of authority [. . .]" (Bhabha, "Third Space" 211). Similar to his historical counterparts, Chaucer's Miller in *The General Prologue* has hybrid characteristics. Indeed, examining the portrait of the Miller, the most notable feature is his animal-like appearance:

> His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
> And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
> Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
> A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys,
> Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
> His nosethirles blake were and wyde.
> . . . .
> His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
> (*CT*, I, 552-57; 559)

The Miller's red head is mostly associated with deceit and treachery. The ugliness is also conventionally described with "red hair, bristly hair, hair on the face, a huge mouth and a prominent beard, and they also make full use of the animal imagery which is so striking in the Miller's portrait" (Mann 162). Indeed, the animal-like qualities are also associated with peasants which were well documented in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. The Miller as an ill-mannered man, never bowing to anyone overturns the social hierarchy. It is certain that millers participated in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. For example, John Fillol, a miller from Hanningfield, Essex, was hanged for he took part in the revolt. There were other millers having a major role in the revolt. Furthermore, when the mutineers of Bury St. Edmonds decapitated John Cavendish, a King's Justice who had implemented the Statute of Labourers with extreme harshness, the slayer was named Matthew Miller; referring to the physical strength of millers and their fame for

rampage (Phillips 61; Patterson, "No Man His Reson Herde" 128). In addition to his physical ugliness, the Miller, accordingly, is described as physically strong:

> The millere was a stout carl for the nones;
> Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.
> That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,
> At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.
> He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;
> Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
> Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
> (*CT*, I, 545-51)

While, as Pearsall states, aggressive and disruptive, the Miller embraces the knightly activity of fighting with his wrestling, knives, shield, and capacity to bring down doors with his head (The Canterbury Tales 75). Hence, there seems to be the implication that the Miller forces and breaks the social boundaries. Furthermore, a knightly imitation is also suggested in the manners of the Miller. The doors possibly stand for the social boundaries which oblige social climbers not to exceed their limits. Wetherbee notes that breaking the doors with his head refers to the capability for unplanned and possibly devastating self-assertion in a society in which conventional restraints are questioned and repudiated. Indeed, in medieval society, the Miller's "skill in stealing grain [. . .] seems less a social evil in itself than a symptom of his general lack of restraint" (31) since he is theoretically situated at the lowest scale of the social hierarchy. Accordingly, disrupting the boundaries with his head literally and his wealth in reality, the Miller does not intend to accept the restrictions imposed on him by medieval hierarchy. Thus, the Miller, as Bhabha affirms in relation to the colonised, becomes the defiant voice of the "inappropriate" (*The Location of Culture* 86) which is in essence similar to the nobility, yet still, against its superiority; thus, his mimicry turns him into an Other.

One of the main ways for the Miller to violate the regulations is through his clothes. The Miller wears "[a] whit cote and a blew hood [. . .]" (*CT*, I, 564). The Miller's blue hood suggests that he is an overreacher and he aspires to a higher social position since "blue hats and brightly coloured hose were theoretically illegal for the lower classes" (G. Jones 6). The Miller's weapons are also significant: "A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde." (*CT*, I, 558). As Erol points out, the Miller's ambitions for a higher position and

his belligerent character are also presented in his weapons, his sword and small shield ("A Pageant" 120). Erol adds that "[t]he utmost a person of the lower class could carry was a knife and that only for very pragmatic purposes. However, the aggressive Miller not only has a sword but also a "bokeler". The sword was only worn by knights and the aristocracy as a symbol of their standing and duties" ("A Pageant" 120). In the portrait, hence, the knightly aspirations of the Miller are foregrounded. Since the millers regarded themselves as a member of the upper class, Robyn the Miller wears a blue hood. Indeed, as stated above, as the millers were serfs, they were banned from carrying arms, a special right to freemen. Even after they became free, they were consistently banned from wearing weapons (G. Jones 7). Thereupon, the Miller trespasses on the territories of the nobility and imitates them as he *thinks* that he is also one of them.

Another indicator of the Miller's hybrid identity in *The General Prologue* is his bagpipe which points to his peasant origin: "A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,/ And therwithal he broghte us out of towne" (*CT*, I, 565-66). Playing his bagpipe, the Miller leads the pilgrims out of London and towards Canterbury. The bagpipes, as Block notes, had a significant part in medieval England, as they were used as military instruments and in church services and ceremonies. Yet, the bagpipes were mainly folk instruments to be played at marriage rites, dances, and even burials. Hence, the bagpipes were identified with the lower class until at least the middle of the seventeenth century. Robyn is absolutely of peasant origin as he is a discourteous, rough man and a master in wrestling, a conventional rustic sport. Thus, his playing the bagpipe not only refers to his talent in playing the bagpipe, but it also strenghthens his social background as rural (239-240). Therefore, as Lambdin and Lambdin argue, "[d]espite his wealth and wearing of the blue hood, our miller is still rooted in the peasantry" (276).

Although the Miller has low-class origins, he is determined to gain a place in the realm of the nobility. We can observe his aspirations in his comment on the Knight's story. After the noble Knight completes his story, each pilgrim in the company appreciates it as a noble story: "In al the route nas ther yong ne oold/ That he ne seyde it was a noble storie/ And worthy for to drawen to memorie," (*CT*, I, 3110-12). For the Host, it is the Monk who should tell a tale after the Knight: "Lat se now who shal telle another tale;/

[…] Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye konne,/Somwhat to quite with the Knightes tale."" (*CT*, I, 3116-18-19). Yet, the drunken and irreverent Miller does not agree with the Host and insists that his story is also a noble one and he should tell a tale after the Knight's tale:

> The Millere, that for drunken was al pale,
> So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,
> He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
> Ne abyde no man for his curteisie,
> But in Pilates voys he ganto crie,
> And swoor, "By armes, and by blood and bones,
> I kan a noble tale for the nones,
> With which I wol now quite the Knyghtes tale.
> (*CT*, I, 3120-27)

Thereupon, the Miller in a way demands equality with the Knight. The Host, however, reminds the Miller of his place in society: "And seyde, "Abyd, Robyn, my leeve brother;/ Som bettre man shal telle us first another./ Abyd, and lat us werken thriftly." (*CT*, I, 3129-31). It is important that the Miller does not give up his claim and tells the next tale after the Knight: " "For I wol speke or elles go my wey."/ Oure Hoost answered, "Tel on, a devel wey!/ Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome." (*CT*, I, 3133-35). Thereby, a "cherles tale" (*CT*, I, 3169) comes after the noble story of the Knight; and, the Miller, a churl, disrupts the social order and tells his story after the Knight, a member of the nobility, and before the Monk, a member of the clergy. As several critics have noted, the interruption of the Miller of the story telling contest works as an intentional disruption of the social order which is observed by the Host (Smilie 87; Morgan "Obscenity and Fastidiousness" 493; Lambdin and Lambdin 276; Burt 18, Selby 53). By so doing, clearly the Miller equates himself with the Knight, a member of the nobility who is particularly responsible for keeping the order in society and who belongs to the estate which he aspires, yet is not accepted into. As stated above, David suggests the intervention of the Miller as a kind of "literary Peasants' Rebellion" (*The Strumpet Muse* 72).

This rebellion continues in his tale, too, in which the Miller challenges the aristocratic order of *The Knight's Tale*. As Turner points out, *The Miller's Tale* fiercely parodies the

tale of the Knight by revealing the "pretensions of the high-flown discourse of courtly love", and by asserting that "the middle classes have just as much right to voice their opinions as their social superiors" (29-30). In other words, the Miller revolts against the societal and political pressures of the time, and claims a place for the lower classes. It seems that the Knight is aware of the implications of *The Knight's Tale* for the dominant ideology and hegemony and he responds with his own tale aggressively. As Grudin suggests, there is no way for the Miller to welcome the tale of the Knight without acknowledging its beliefs (88). Hence, the Miller, like the Franklin, is unable to adopt entirely the aristocratic order and reality and attempts to create a space in it for the hybrids like himself.

Claiming his own order and reality in contrast to the Knight, thus his place in the nobility, the Miller both challenges and imitates the Knight's tale. Therefore, the tale of the Knight, dominated by the concept of noble order, which is found artificial by the Miller, is challenged by the tale of the Miller who suggests a natural order in society. In the order of the Miller, everything in the tale of the Knight turns upside down and romance is replaced by fabliau, tragedy by comedy, philosophy by corporal desire, and princes by clerks and carpenters. Indeed, *The Miller's Tale* can be considered to reflect the threats to aristocratic authority caused by the upward mobility of the peasants in the Middle Ages (Zieman 73; Phillips 60; Patterson, *Chaucer* 244-79).

The challenge of the Miller to the Knight's authority is actualised by the imitation of his tale, his plot, characters and discourse albeit in a fabliau. *The Miller's Tale* is a fabliau in *The Canterbury Tales* along with *The Reeve's Tale*, *The Cook's Tale*, *The Merchant's Tale*, *The Shipman's Tale*, *The Summoner's Tale*, and *The Friar's Tale*. The fabliau is a French originated genre which most likely emerged out of the long-established oral comic stories under the impression of the fable. The first examples of fabliaux were given by Marie de France's in her *Isopet* (or "Little Aesop"), written in the twelfth century (possibly before 1189). The fabliaux are narratives which tell about the old husbands cuckolded by their young wives; thus, their main subject matters are treachery and debauchery. The style of the fabliaux is simple and the characters are ordinary people like tradesmen, villagers and students (Lewis 241; Reis 123; Benson, *The*

Riverside Chaucer 7). At the centre of *The Miller's Tale*, there is the world of the social climbers; it takes place in Oxford and tells about an old "riche gnof" John (*CT*, I, 3188), his yong wyf (*CT*, I, 3233), Alison, their tenant, a "poure scoler" (*CT*, I, 3190), Nicholas who knows "of deerne love" (*CT*, I, 3200) and Absolon a "parissh clerk" (*CT*, I, 3312). Both Nicholas and Absolon are in love with Alison who is very beautiful: "Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal/ As any wezele hir body gent and small." (*CT*, I, 3233-34). Thus, besides the husband, it is a story of one woman and two men who want to gain the love of the woman as in the story of Emelye, and Arcite and Palamon in *The Knight's Tale*. In his tale, the Miller specifically attacks the courtly values and aristocratic, refined manners of the nobility which are accepted as the values distinguishing the nobility from the rest of the society, particularly from the social climbers. Accordingly, in *The Miller's Tale*, instead of the refined manners of Emelye, and Arcite and Palamon, there is the discourteous conduct of Alison, Nicholas, and Absolon.

Thus, as Rutledge states, unlike the love triangle of Emelye, and Arcite and Palamon, there are neither chivalric men or unattainable women, nor polite conduct but obscenity and lust within the love triangle of Alison, Nicholas and Absolon (6). Parodying the courtly love tradition in *The Knight's Tale*, the Miller's Nicholas plays a man of lovesickness and Alison an aloof mistress. When John is away from home for business, Nicholas and Alison flirt with each other which directly contradicts with courtly behaviour of the noble characters of *The Knight's Tale*. Trying to win the love of Alison, Nicholas imitates the noble discourse, yet, with an improper language and behaviour: "And seyde, "Ywis, but if ich have my wille,/ For deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille." (*CT*, I, 3277-78). Similar to Nicholas, Alison, pretending to be a noble lady, replies: "And seyde, "I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey! [. . .]/ Or I wol crie `out, harrow' and `allas'!/ Do wey youre hands, for youre curteisye!" (*CT*, I, 3284; 3286-87).Yet, in the end, Alison, unlike a romance heroine, accepts the love of Nicholas: "That she hir love hym graunted ate laste,/ And swoor hir ooth, by Seint Thomas of Kent,/ That she wol been at his comandement," (*CT*, I, 3290-92). After Nicholas reaches his aim without too much difficulty, as Pearsall points out, he plays his guitar like a true courtly lover (The Canterbury Tales 176): "He kiste hire sweete and taketh

his sawtrie,/ And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie." (*CT*, I, 3305-6). The parody or imitation of aristocratic characters and their noble way of conduct in *The Knight's Tale* are more clearly visible in the relationship between Alison and Absolon. Absolon, a parish clerk, a solicitor and barber as well, "hath in his herte swich a love-longynge" (*CT*, I, 3349) for Alison. A parody of the courtly lover, Absolon dresses and behaves like a noble man, he also plays the guitar and the fiddle:

> Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,
> And strouted as a fanne large and brode;
> Ful streight and evene lay his joly shode.
> His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos.
> With Poules wyndow corven on his shoos,
> In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
> Yclad he was ful small and properly
> Al in a kirtel of a light waget;
> Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes
> And thereupon he hadde a gay surplys
> As whit as is the blosme upon the rys.
> As white as is the blossom upon the branch.
> . . . .
> In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce
> After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
> And with his legges casten to and fro,
> And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
> Therto he song som tyme a loud quynyble;
> And as wel koude he pleye on a giterne.
> (*CT*, I, 3314-24; 3328-33)

As Erol states, in his attire and talents, Absolon, disregarding the fact that he is a clerk in minor orders, imitates the courtly manners since he pays his clothing and hair a lot of attention, wears colourful clothes and has great talent for playing musical instruments and dancing ("A Pageant" 143-144). Besides music and singing, Absolon's regarding himself as a courtly lover is also observable in his serenade to Alison to win her love (Hallissy, "The Churlish" 151). Deeply in love with Alison, Absolon goes to Alison's window, plays his guitar, serenades her and asks her to pity him: "He syngeth in his voys gentil and small,/ Now, deere lady, if thy wille be,/ I praye yow that wole rewe on me," (*CT*, I, 3360-62). Alison rejects him since she loves Nicholas; and the exhausted

Absolon can not sleep but never gives up wooing her lady. He dresses elegantly, combs his locks, sings like a nightingale, and swears that he will be her servant for ever:

> He waketh al the nyght and al the day;
> He kembeth his lokkes brode, and made hym gay;
> He woweth hire by meenes and brocage,
> And swoor he wolde been hir owene page;
> He syngeth, brokkynge as a nyghtyngale;
> . . . .
> But what availleth hym as in this cas?
> She loveth so this hende Nicholas
> (*CT*, I, 3373-77; 3385-86)

Upon learning that John goes on a trip to Osney, in reality John is in a tub as he is deceived by Alisoun and Nicholas that there will be a flood, Absolon goes to Alisoun's window, serenades and gently asks for her mercy again. Yet his lady is in bed with Nicholas:

> What do ye, hony-comb, sweete Alisoun,
> My faire bryd, my sweete cynamome?
> Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me!
> Wel litel thynken ye upon mu wo,
> That for youre love I swete ther I go.
> . . . .
> Ywis, lemman, I have swich love-longynge
> That lik a turtle trewe is my moornynge.
> I may nat ete na moore than a mayde.
> (*CT*, I, 3698-3702; 3705-07)

Alisoun, thus, plays the unattainable noble lady and Absolon is the lover in pain. As Brown states, imitating the courtly manners and discourse, Absolon plays a "pseudo-knightly role". Alisoun, as an unattainable lady, is a reflection of Absolon's aristocratic pretensions as a lover. Absolon's pretensions indicate the hybrid character of his social status: parish clerk, part-time lawyer and barber. The pseudo-knightly role of Absolon is given through aristocratic vocabulary: 'love-longynge' (*CT*, I, 3349), 'curteisie' (*CT*, I, 3351), 'paramours' (*CT*, I, 3354), 'gentil' (*CT*, I, 3360), 'rewe' [pity] (*CT*, I, 3362) (*Chaucer at Work* 89-90). In fact, serenading Alisoun, Absolon uses a high-style language in line with courtly love tradition; yet, the pilgrims, having just listened to the Knight's tale, recognise his foolishness since he treats Alisoun as if she were Emelye.

Thereby, fidelity, aristocratic competition and mutual deference of Palamon and Arcite in *The Knight's Tale* are displaced by debauchery and rude rivalry of Nicholas and Absolon (Hallissy, "The Churlish" 151, 154).

Indeed, like Absolon, Alisoun has hybrid characteristics which are clearly observed in her ladylike presentation. Along with her relationship with Absolon in a courtly manner, at the beginning of the *Tale*, Alisoun is presented like a noble lady which is in accordance with the *descriptio feminae*, commonly used to introduce the heroine of a romance (Pearsall, The Canterbury Tales 176) like in the description of Emelye in *The Knight's Tale*:

> Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal
> As any wezele hir body gent and small.
> A ceynt she werede, barred al of silk
> A barmclooth as whit as morne milk
> Upon hir lendes, ful of many a goore.
> Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore
> And eek bihynde, on hir coler aboute,
> Of col-blak silk, withinne and eek without.
> The tapes of hir white voluper
> Were of the same suite of hir coler;
> Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye.
> And sikerly she hadde a likerous ye;
> Ful smale ypulled were hire browes two,
> And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.
> She was ful moore blissful on to see
> . . . .
> And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,
> Tasseled with silk and perled with latoun.
> . . . .
> A brooch she baar upon hir lowe coler,
> As brood as is the boos of a bokeler.
> Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.
> (*CT*, I, 3233-47; 3250-51; 3265-67)

A similar description of the lady is provided in the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer describes lady Blanche, the wife of his patron, John of Gaunt as the most beautiful and courteous:

> That was so fair, so fresh, so fre,
> So good that men may wel se
> Of al goodnesse she had no mete!"

For al the world so hadde she
Surmounted hem alle of beaute,
Of maner, and of comlynesse,
Of stature, and of wel set gladnesse,
(484-86; 780-83)

This kind of description was used to describe a beautiful woman of high social class, thus, it is significant that Alisoun is described in a similar manner (Brewer, *A New Introduction* 285). Besides his physical characteristics, Alisoun's clothing also mirrors the attire of a noble lady, she wears silk and follows the fashion: "a "ceynt" "barred al of silk", (*CT*, I, 3235); "[. . .] on hir coler aboute,/ Of col-blak silk, [. . .]" (*CT*, I, 3239-40). Phillips states that, Alisoun, the wife of a new rich guildsman of the post-plague period, dresses in accordance with the fashion of the time (*An Introduction* 56): As Erol suggests, the fashionable, embroidered clothing of Alisoun and her use of silk, such as her girdle embellished with silk and pearls, (*CT*, I, 325-51), reflect her pretentions as well as her prosperity since she is of low class ("A Pageant" 141). Yet, as Erol further states, "the pearls are imitation and they are made of latoun, parallel to her fake gentility. She wears a brooch but lacking the gentle refinement of taste, she has exceeded the point in size and grace" ("A Pageant" 148) as her "brooch she baar upon hir lowe coler, /As brood as is the boos of a bokeler" (*CT*, I, 3265-66).

Hence, Alisoun imitates the fashion of aristocratic women. Indeed, as the wife of a rich social climber, Alisoun is also one of those who were the most significant members of middle-grouping, the guildsmen, who were well known for their high class aspirations and imitation of the high classes. As reflected in the portrait of the Five Guildsmen in *The General Prologue*, the guildsmen were the very indicators of the hierarchical but unsteady social and economic formation of late medieval England. Like Alisoun's husband, one of the guildsmen is a carpenter and he wears an expensive silvermounted knife (*CT* I, 367) and has enough property and income to find himself eligible to be selected an alderman (a representative on the London City Council) (Wasserman and Guidry 155, 163). Moreover, besides the guildsmen, Chaucer presents "their class conscious wives, to be a bustling member of the upstart middle class who at the close of the fourteenth century challenged the lower ranks of the nobility for political and economic influence in London" (Wasserman and Guidry 155). The pretentious wives of

the guildsmen want to be called "madame" and, like the Wife of Bath, they want to be the first to enter the church: "It is ful fair to been ycleped madame,/ And goon to vigilies al bifore,/ And have a mantel roialliche ybore." (*CT*, I, 376-78). Evidently, the guildsmen are well aware of the fact that their wealth provides them with respectability along with an abnormal status (Martin 13, Lisa 321). Pointing to her hybrid character, however, in Alisoun's portrait, there is special emphasis on her rural origins. She is, for instance, described in terms of barnyard animals and fruits:

> Ful smale ypulled were hire browes two,
> And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.
> . . . .
> Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,
> And softer than the wolle is of a wether.
> . . . .
> But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
> As any swalwe sittynge on a berne.
> Therto she koude skippe and make game,
> As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame.
> Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
> Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
> Wynsynge she was, as is a joly colt,
> She was a prymerole, a piggesnye,
> For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
> Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.
> (*CT*, I, 3245-46;3248-49; 3257-63; 3268-70)

Brown argues that Alisoun's portrait intertwined with nature works against the fixed, exaggerated, and artificial features in the portraits of aristocratic women. Along with her eyebrows, as black as sloe berries, soft skin like a sheep's wool, and playfulness like a calf, Alisoun is definitely "a child of Nature, but not Nature the sculptor–instead a Nature who is visible in the countryside in what grows, has vitality, is beautiful, bears fruit" (*Chaucer at Work* 96). As Brown further notes, the portrait of Alisoun also includes artificial qualities both in its form and content; yet, it is still different from those of the noble women since it is underlined by a polarity: the cloth continually mentioned, silk, is "rich, luxurious, 'aristocratic', but it is annexed to clothes that are themselves unpretentious, homely. Barred silk adorns Alisoun's belt, around a flounced apron ([*CT*, I,] 3235-7), her white smock and collar are embroidered with black silk, a detail matched in the ribbons of her cap ([*CT*, I,] 3238-42) [. . .]" (*Chaucer at Work* 86).

In fact, Alisoun's portrait presents her hybrid qualities. She, being a wife of a wealthy carpenter, imitates the attire and behaviour of the noble women, wears fashionable clothes and keeps relationships with Alisoun and Absolon in a courtly manner; yet, she is still a woman of low class. Her social aspirations create her hybridity. Thus, the Miller, portraying the world of social climbers as a hybrid and mimic member of the changing society of the Middle Ages, creates hybrid and mimic characters in his tale.

Similarly, *The Reeve's Tale*, as a fabliau, presents hybrid formations and characters. Its central character is a miller who claims gentility due to his wealth and his wife's so called noble origin. In fact, *The Reeve's Tale* is closely related to *The Miller's Tale*. The Miller teases the Reeve, Oswald, by telling a story about a cuckolded and pretentious carpenter which is also the former profession of the Reeve: "In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster;/ He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter." (*CT*, I, 613-14). The Miller begins his tale: "For I wol telle a legend and a lyf/ Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,/ How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe." (*CT*, I, 3141-43). Realising the implication of the Miller, the Reeve in anger says: "It is a synne and eek a greet folye/ To apeyren any man, or hym defame,/ And eek to bryngen wyves in swich fame." (*CT*, I, 3146-48). Yet, the drunken Miller has no intention of stopping:

> And seyde, "Leve brother Osewold,
> Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
> But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;
> Ther been ful goode wyves many oon,
> And evere a thousand goode ayeyns oon badde.
> That knowestow wel thyself, but if thou madde.
> Why artow angry with my tale now?
> I have a wyf, pardee, as wel as thow;
> Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,
> Take upon me moore than ynogh,
> As demen of myself that I were oon;
> I wol bileve wel that I am noon.
> (*CT*, I, 3151-62)

This quarrel between the Miller and the Reeve reveals a real conflict among social climbers in the Middle Ages since they all competed with each other, besides the members of the nobility, to rise on the social ladder. It is possible that there was a personal conflict between the Miller and the Reeve. More importantly, rather than a

personal level, there is a clash on social level between the Miller and the Reeve. The conflict between the Miller and the Reeve is quite expected due to their social positions. The major duties of reeves were to guard their lords' personal interest and to control whether the grain was suitably garnered. The reeves also checked the estate repeatedly, purchased the required supplies, and taxed the workers who used them. Indeed, the reeves possessed a quasi-judicial status as they were the main officers of the lord (Mann 282; Carella 528; Tupper 265; Bowden, *A Reader's Guide* 125; Olson, "The "Reeve's Tale"" 2; Mcdonald 289). The responsibilities of reeves are presented in Chaucer's Reeve as well, who is very skilful in his job:

> Wel koude he kepe a garner and a bynne;
> Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.
> Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn
> The yeldynge of his seed and of his greyn.
> His lords sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
> His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye
> Was hoolly in this reves governynge,
> (*CT*, I, 593-99)

Thus, the village community depended on both the miller and the reeves since they controlled money and goods which were mostly in short supply. To put it another way, the more a miller got, the less a reeve could steal (Lindahl 111-113). Like the millers, the reeves made unfair profit as in the case of Chaucer's Reeve who is very rich yet is "astored pryvely:/ His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,/ To yeve and lene hym of his owene good" (*CT*, I, 609-11).

The reeves and millers, hence, were among the minority who were freeholders on an estate; and they were the richest peasants with their ambiguous socio-economic positions, which disrupted the traditional hierarchy (Lindahl 111; Morris 63; Craik 30). Lambdin and Lambdin point out that although reeves kept power over millers in terms of "overseeing and regulating them, they were not always better off financially than their correlatives. Millers often made more money than reeves and were therefore more powerful financially, if not socially. This made reeves, who were poorer, seem lesser in terms of titular balance" (279). Accordingly, the village community hated reeves as they abused peasants (278). In fact, Allman, in relation to the Reeve, designates the late

fourteenth English society as a community in which people were in a search for identity by trespassing on the territories of different estates. Certainly, Allman's observation provides an outstanding summary of medieval hybridity which seems at the centre of the medieval community due to the social transformation:

> Indeed, an ambivalent identification with the second estate haunts Oswald's narrative presence from the time of his introduction in the *General Prologue* with a tonsurelike haircut and a friar-like girdle. The Reeve becomes almost a test case through which Chaucer dramatizes late-medieval possibilities for manipulating estate-bound identity. What Chaucer represents in the Reeve is not, however, a vision for moving beyond the grammar of estate or even a desire to do so; rather, the Reeve embodies the attempt to express publicly a chosen affiliation with an estate that is not his own, to elude the bonds of a particular estate identity while assuming markers of another. (386)

Ironically, the Miller and the Reeve, mocking each other's social ambitions in their tales, reveal the in-betweenness of social climbers in their tales. The Reeve in his tale, which he tells in revenge for the tale of the Miller, discloses the hybridity and mimicry of the Miller. Like *The Miller's Tale*, *The Reeve's Tale* is a fabliau which is about an arrogant, thieving and violent miller who is proud of his wealth and of his high-born wife. His wife, in fact, is the daughter of a parson, thus illegitimate. Yet, the Miller has great expectations for his daughter since her mother is of noble lineage. In the tale, Chaucer presents two Cambridge clerks, John and Alayn, trying to take revenge for their college's damages by deceiving the Miller who steals flour from them, which as Phillips notes, underlines the themes of revenge and rivalry between the intellectuals and tradesmen in the late fourteenth century (65).

In fact, right at the beginning of his tale, the Reeve declares that his story aims to teach the Miller a lesson: "Thogh I answere, and somdeel sette his howve;/ For leveful is with force force of-showve/ [. . .] And, by youre leve, I shall hym quite anoon;" (*CT*, I, 3911-12; 3916). Accordingly, the miller of the Reeve, Symkyn, looks like the Miller of *The General Prologue*: They are both wealthy, bully, thief, belligerent, animal-like, they play the bagpipe, wrestle, wear arms, violate the rules, and have flat noses:

At Trumpyngtoun, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
. . . .
A millere was ther dwellynge many a day.
As any pecok he was proud and gay.
Pipen he koude and fisshe, and nettes beete,
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and sheete;
Ay by his belt he baar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade.
A joly poppere baar he in his pouche;
Ther was no man, for peril, dorste hym touche.
A Sheffeld thwitel baar he in his hose.
Round was his face, and camus was his nose;
As piled as an ape was his skulle.
He was a market-betere atte fulle.
Ther dorste no wight hand upon hym legge,
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
A theef he was for sothe of corn and mele,
And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele.
His name was hoote deynous Symkyn.
(*CT*, I, 3921-24; 3925- 41)

G. Jones states that the Reeve "obviously makes the miller of his tale a twin brother of the Miller of the pilgrim group" (4). Besides the other similarities between them, Chaucer might have used the bagpipe specifically–apart from his emphasis on lechery–to establish a link between the Miller of *The General Prologue* and the miller in *The Reeve's Tale* and to introduce him realistically, focusing on his rural background and social position (Block 243). Depending on the fact that the miller of *The Reeve's Tale* is also a wealthy and proud social climber with aspirations for the nobility, the emphasis on his rural background also provides an insight into the hybridity of the miller. In *The Reeve's Tale*, the arrogant and pretentious miller's pride mainly comes from the fact that his wife is of noble origin, which he believes makes him a member of the nobility which he deserves due to his rich yeomanry:

A wife he had, come of oble kin;
The parson of the town was her father
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras,
For that Symkyn sholde in his blood allye.
She was yfostred in a nonnerye;
For Synkyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
But she were wel ynorissed and a mayde,
To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
And she was proud, and peert as is a pye. (*CT*, I, 3942-50)

Hence, the miller's wife, receiving education in a nunnery, is also as proud as the miller, although she is the illegitimate daughter of a parson. Since the couple regard themselves as the members of the nobility, they dress and behave like the nobility and want people to treat them in the same manner:

> A ful fair sighte was it upon hem two;
> On halydayes biforn hire wolde he go
> With his typet wounde aboute his heed,
> And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
> And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same.
> Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but "dame";
> . . . .
> Algate they wolde hire wyves wenden so.
> And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
> She was as digne as water in a dich,
> And ful of hoker and of bisemare.
> Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hire spare,
> What for hire kynrede and hir nortelrie
> That she hadde lerned in the nonnerie.
> (*CT*, I, 3951-56; 3962-68)

Symkyn's claim for noble status is so powerful that his every step aims to assert this status (Wetherbee 55). The arrogant couple go out on holidays and walk about showing off their pretentious, colourful clothing, the wife with her red gown and the husband with his hose of the same colour (*CT*, I, 3951-55). The wife expects everybody to call her anything but "dame" due to her alleged noble lineage (*CT*, I, 3956; 3963-68). Chaucer ironically describes the wife as bismared since she is the daughter of the parson of the town who is supposed to be celibate; yet, she still believes that she should be haughty like a noble in line with her education at nunnery. Of course, the husband is always there with his dagger to protect his wife. Hence, the miller and his wife clearly are placed in the interface between the commoners and the nobility. It is their alleged connections with the nobility that they place their great expectations for their beautiful, twenty-year old daughter, Malyne:

> A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two
> Of twenty yeer, withouten any mo,
> . . . .
> This person of the toun, for she was feir,
> In purpos was to maken hire his heir,
> Bothe of his catel and his mesuage,

> And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
> His purpos was for to bistowe hire hye
> Into som worthy blood of auncetrye;
> For hooly chirches good moot been despended
> On hooly chirches blood, that is descended.
> Therfore he wolde his hooly blood honoure,
> Though that he hooly chirche sholde devoure.
> (*CT*, I, 3969-70; 3977-86)

Therefore, it is especially the parson, the grandfather of Malyne, who is planning to make her his heir and to marry her to a man of noble blood. There is also an implication that the parson abuses the goods of the Church. As Phillips points out, the parson helps the family to raise them on the social ladder by marrying the daughter to a noble man through a considerable dowry, deriving from the goods of the Church. Chaucer's satire of the couple and the parson is also apparent in his diction, his ironic repetition of the word holy ("hooly blood" and "hooly chirches good") suggests that "this "deynous" family has no lineage, no "worthy blood of auncetrye"- as yet- to support its ambitions [. . .] because of [the wife's] origins "digne as water in a dich" " due to her being illegitimate (*An Introduction* 66). In fact, Malyne might be accepted as the best figure of hybridity and mimicry in the family since her father is of peasant origin, and, no matter whether she is accepted or ridiculed, of noble blood of her mother. As Allman notes, the hybridity of Malyne is also reflected in her physical appearance: the Reeve describes Malyne "as a hybrid of peasant and romance-heroine types: she shares with her father a peasant's "kamus nose" (*CT*, I, 3974) (only in *The Reeve's Tale* does Chaucer use this description), but possesses the grey eyes of her narrative betters. Similarly, her "buttokes brode" are (*CT*, I, 3975) paired with the round, high breasts of a noblewoman" (392). Thus, similar to the Prioress, Malyne is constructed by a mixture of the characteristics of the noble heroine and a peasant girl.

Indeed, the end of *The Reeve's Tale* frustrates the Miller's claims to nobility through his daughter. The Miller is a thief who horrifies his environs including a college in Cambridge (*CT*, I, 3987-96). Yet, two "yonge povre scolers" (*CT*, I, 4002) of the college decide to bring the miller into line. Realising their plan, the Miller is annoyed and disdains the clerks: "The moore queynte crekes that they make,/ The moore wol I

stele whan I take./ In stide of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren." (*CT*, I, 4051-53). Hence, the Miller again steals the grain of the clerks, to make matters worse, the trick of the miller costs them a horse (*CT*, I, 4071-72). However, in the end, the clerks triumph over the Miller. As it gets dark, the two clerks ask the Miller whether he could give them a room to stay in return for money; the Miller accepts, yet, they all, the miller, his wife, his daughter and baby boy along with the clerks, stay in the same place since the miller has just one room. About midnight, they all go to bed; yet, Alayn is determined to teach the miller a lesson. He goes to the bed of Malyne and the wife mistakenly goes to bed with John. When the miller realises what happened, he catches Alan by the throat and they fight like animals on the floor:

> "Ye, false harlot," quod the millere, "hast?
> A, false traitour! False clerk! quod he,
> "Thow shalt be deed, by Goddes dignitee!
> Who dorste be so boold to disparage
> My doghter, that is come of swich lynage?"
> And by the throte-bolle he caughte Alayn,
> And he hente hym despitously agayn,
> And on the nose he smoot hym with his fest.
> Doun ran the blody streem upon his brest;
> And in the floor, with nose and mouth to broke,
> They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke;
> (*CT*, I, 4268-78)

Thus, the miller is beaten by Alayn and John who joins the fight as well. The expectations of the miller for his daughter come to an end as Alayn disparages, socially debases (Blamires 99) the "swich lynage" of her. Wetherbee suggests that the social ambition of the miller is even evident in his use of the French rhyme, "dispar´age" and "lyn´age" (18) as French is a language associated with nobility which indicates the mimicry of the miller in terms of language as well. Wetherbee also notes that at the end of the tale, "the social structure defined by the Parson's legacy and Symkyn's ambition has collapsed" (56). The tale ends with the commentary of the Reeve, you reap what you saw: "Thus is the proude millere wel ybete,/ [. . .] And therefore this proverb is seyd ful sooth,/"Hym thar nat wene wel that yvele dooth." (CT, *I,* 4313; 4319-20). Therefore, the Miller's aspirations and his so-called noble lineage come to nothing. As Phillips notes, "[t]he text dramatises the notion that the social ambitions of a man in his

position, and any challenge they might pose within the system, are not based on sound grounds, and deserve to be trounced, [. . .]" (67). In fact, as in *The Miller's Tale*, in *the Reeve's Tale* too, the Miller's hybridity seems to pose a threat to the social order. Yet, these tales also demonstrate that there was a class of social climbers in the Middle Ages and who were in majority. They, indeed, constituted the hybrid identity of the medieval society which neither entirely included, nor totally excluded from the three estates.

In conclusion, the Miller in *The General Prologue* and *The Reeve's Tale* is one of the epitomes of medieval hybridity and mimicry as he is engaged in upward mobility. With his steadily increasing wealth, despite his common origins, the Miller occupies an atypical position on the borders of the estates. As it is seen, his identity and the description in *The Canterbury Tales* foreground his peasant origins and show him struggling for a better position. As argued above, in spite of his low class origins, the Miller's determination to have the privileges of the nobility is observable in his tale too. Not only he claims to have equality with the Knight, but also in his tale, the Miller presents the social climbers, hybrids and mimics like himself, who challenge the hierarchies in the medieval society and form new identities. Similarly, in *The Reeve's Tale*, the miller and his family lay claims to a higher social status through dress and manners accordingly. Hence, Chaucer clearly represents, through his social climbers, hybrid formations taking shape in the Middle Ages. The Franklin and the Miller are medieval hybrids and mimics who challenge the hierarchical order maintained by the estates system. Yet, the hybrid voices do not seem to be heard at least in Chaucer's lifetime, which is indeed the very reason for the emergence of medieval hybrid and mimic identities.

CONCLUSION

"[T]his question, thanne, wol I aske now,/ Which was the mooste [hybrid], as thynketh yow?" (*CT*, V, 1621-22)

The fourteenth-century English society was a predominantly hybrid society as a result of a large-scale transformation which Bhabha puts forward as the deciding factor in the emergence of hybrid identities. The socio-economic change of the time brought about an unprecedented social mobility which produced a middle-grouping of downwardly and upwardly mobile people, that is, people of no certain estate, which gradually became a threat to the traditional three estates structure of the Middle Ages. The members of the "middle-grouping" occupied the postcolonial in-between territories of the medieval three estates, which turned into Bhabha's in-between spaces where hybrids lived. A Bhabhanian reading of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* suggests that the three estate structure became inadequate to define the changing medieval society and consequently gave way to hybrid identities of the middle-grouping. Accordingly, this dissertation has argued that in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, examined from a Bhabhanian perspective of hybridity, third space and mimicry, the pilgrims of the middle-grouping are figures of hybridity and/or mimicry as they live in the passages between "fixed identifications" of the period, that is, in a Bhabhanian "third space". Chaucer's pilgrims, the Knight, the Monk, the Prioress, the Franklin and the Miller, hence, emerge as hybrid and/or mimic existences produced by social mobility.

Chaucer's Knight in *The General Prologue* undergoes a change of status and ends up a composite identity. Occupying an in-between territory between the traditional and the mercenary knighthood, the Knight produces a hybrid identity. Different from the rest of the characters studied, the Knight becomes a hybrid figure as a result of downward mobility depending on the great changes in his own estate. Thus, although the Knight does not move from one estate to another, he still develops a dual identity or "a double self", a self of a traditional knight and a self of a mercenary knight, representing two distinct identities of knighthood in himself. It is significant to note that the "double self" of the Knight both contradicts and corresponds with the traditional criticism of him. That is to say, inhabiting a Bhabhanian borderline, the Knight appears as a hybrid

figure, neither a quintessence of a medieval knight nor a mercenary soldier, yet an amalgamation of both which characterised the hybrid identity of the knighthood of the time and inevitably of the knights. The Knight, hence, represents an accurate medieval knight who is hybridised by the changes in knighthood in the fourteenth century.

Expectedly, the Knight in his tale reveals the identity of knighthood and consequent hybrid identity of the knights of the late fourteenth century. The two-sided knightly characteristic of the time, ideal and mercantile, is presented through the conflict between the noble characters of the tale: Theseus, Palamon and Arcite, which conforms to the crisis of the nobility as accounted in history. Apart from Arcite, interestingly, Thesus, the symbol of order and traditional knighthood, is presented as a hybrid figure in accordance with the circumstances of the period. It is also significant that *The Knight's Tale* depicts the conflict between the commoners and the nobility and in this sense, the noble knights, Palamon and, especially, Arcite, the personifications of the hybrid knighthood, are put in the commoners' shoes as they challenge the knightly order. Another striking point that should be noted in relation to *The Knight's Tale* is that, to a great extent, Chaucer's changes of Boccaccio's *The Teseida* correspond with the changes in knighthood of the time, therefore, with its hybrid identity. Evidently, *The Knight's Tale* represents the ideal and real world of knighthood and of hybrid knights which developed liminal existences between the ideal and the real, that is, in-between the two polar spheres of the fourteenth-century knighthood.

Similar to the hybridity of the Knight, Chaucer's Monk and Prioress are medieval noble hybrids due to downward mobility; yet, this time the mobility is from one estate to another, from the nobility to the clergy. Although the nobility and the clergy adopted by the Monk and the Prioress consecutively are the two privileged estates of medieval society, the mobility of the Monk and the Prioress from the nobility to the clergy is downward mobility as they move from the comfortable and lavish life of the nobility to the simple and restricted life of the clergy. Accordingly, as argued above, the Monk and the Prioress has to live in a Bhabhanian "interstitial passage" (*The Location of Culture* 4) between the nobility and the clergy; to either of which they cannot be entirely attached.

The Monk's hybrid identity, like that of the Knight, is observed in his portrait in *The General Prologue*: He is a worldly man of the nobility and an otherworldly man of the clergy. Unlike the Knight, however, the hybridisation of the Monk brings him a new title as the lord of the nobility turns into a monk. It is significant to note that the dual identity of the Monk discloses itself in the contradiction between his portrayal in *The General Prologue* and in his tale, which can be accepted as a kind of tale/teller relationship since even though the Monk of *The General Prologue* is largely a worldly man, the Monk as the storyteller is an otherworldly man telling about destiny, worldly pride and the wheel of fortune. Another important point about the Monk is that, unlike the Prioress, he speaks out against the monastic rules and he insists on living a life more appropriate for the nobility. This open rebellion marks him as a rebellious figure and his rebellious voice becomes the voice of the "inappropriate", which Bhabha associates with the Other. In this sense, the Monk becomes even more rebellious, thus more Other than the Miller, since he is the "inappropriate" voice of the very top.

The Prioress, similar to the Monk, is a hybrid, too since she combines in herself the characteristics of the nobility and life of a nun. The Prioress' hybrid identity is traced in her noble values and norms in her portrait in *The General Prologue*. Thus, in the nunnery, she lives a life of a noble lady with her apparel, table manners and dogs rather than a nun. Furthermore, as a result of her change of estate, her title also changes from the lady to a nun. Yet, unlike the rest of the characters, the Prioress is more complex in that joining the nunnery she, in a way, experiences downward and upward mobility together. She is downwardly mobile as she moves from the clergy to the nobility and she is not a lady any more. She is, at the same time, upwardly mobile since she gains authority as a woman in male- dominated medieval society because she is the leader of a nunnery due to her characteristics deriving from the nobility. Furthermore, that the Prioress gains an authoritative position in the cloister owing to her traits arising from her aristocratic upbringing and education also contributes to her hybridity since it shows that even in the nunnery, she is expected to perform some characteristics of her noble identity. In fact, it is this paradox which designates her identity in-between the spheres of the nobility and the clergy.

Another point to consider is that although the former estate of the Monk and the Prioress, the nobility, required an opposite way of life compared to the clergy, the members of the nobility were the most likely candidates for the cloister. This discrepancy, in addition to preparing the hybrid existence of the Monk and the Prioress, displays the fluidity of the three estates. The in-between position of the Monk and the Prioress is developed further since there are several ambiguities in relation to their status after they are cloistered. For instance, according to the sumptuary laws, the Prioress has the right to wear a gold brooch since she is a significant member of the clergy and she is of aristocratic origin, and most probably, she still keeps her personal property; yet, the clergy does not let her wear it due to the vow of poverty. Thus, the ambiguities in respect to the rights and responsibilities of the nuns and monks of noble origin contributed to their hybridity to a large extent.

More than those downwardly mobile figures of knighthood and clergy, fourteenth-century England was a world of social climbers, who belonged to none of the three estates, hence, had to develop alternative identities by mimicking of their superiors. Accordingly, unlike the Knight, the Monk and the Prioress, the Franklin and the Miller are represented in *The Canterbury Tales* as examples of those hybrid identities produced as a result of upward social mobility. Apart from their hybridity, the Franklin and the Miller are also mimics who imitate the nobility in terms of their apparels, manners and customs and even in their discourse. Therefore, the Franklin and the Miller ask for “a reformed, recognizable Other,”, yet become almost the same but not quite gentle as a result of their attempts to move upwards.

The hybridity and mimicry of the Franklin are observed both in his portrait in *The General Prologue* and in his tale. In general, in his portrait, the Franklin’s hybridity and imitation of noble way of life are reflected in his splendid lifestyle, generosity, and hospitality, which are the characteristics of the aristocratic self-display, peculiar to the nobility. The Franklin’s mimicry of gentility is particularly apparent in his relationship with his son in his tale. The hybrid and mimic Franklin tries to make his way into the nobility through his own concept of gentility in his tale, which is a reply to the Squire’s tale and reveals the social conflict between the nobility and the social climbers in terms

of the nature of gentility. Another significant point in relation to the Franklin is that the Franklin in his portrayal in *The General Prologue* mimics the nobility in every sense and there is no sign of the clash between the nobility and him as a social climber. Yet, in his tale, the discord between the nobility and social climbers comes to light as the Franklin tells a tale which exalts the concept of gentility of the social climbers and disparages the concept of gentility of the nobility. That is to say, the ambivalent relationship of the Franklin with the nobility, like his historical counterparts, is documented in his tale, along with his admiration and mimicry, through his criticism of the nobility. Thus, the borderline identity of the Franklin exposes itself in his inner conflicts, too.

Similar to the Franklin, the Miller, with his wealth and peasant origin, lives on the fringes of the nobility and commoners, that is to say, in a Bhabhanian third space. As a mimic, the Miller imitates the attire, and customs and manners of the nobility and aspires to be noble through his wealth. The dual identity of the Miller is traced in his portrait in *The General Prologue* by his physical traits, rough manners and playing bagpipe, indicating his peasant origin, and by his aspirations to the nobility displayed in his attire and arms. In his tale, the Miller, like the Franklin who challenges and imitates the Squire's tale, imitates the Knight's tale and suggests his own social order and reality. Similarly, in *The Reeve's Tale*, the Miller regards himself as a member of the nobility, and he and his wife dress like the nobility and adopt the manners of the nobility. It might be argued that there is double mimicry in the Miller in that he both imitates the upstarts with land, the gentry, like the Franklin, and the nobility, like the Knight. That is, like the Franklin, the Miller is the representative of the medieval hybrids and mimics, who blurs the line between the commoners and the nobility and lives in between these two estates.

Indeed, the Franklin and the Miller are the most apparent representatives of the social change, reversal of power relations and consequent liminal identities in the late fourteenth century. As Bhabha states, "[. . .] mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (*The Location of Culture* 86). Mimicking their superiors, unlike the Knight, the Monk and the Prioress, the Franklin and the Miller reject their past and disown their previous identities. Furthermore, like

the colonised who mimicked the coloniser, the upwardly mobile medieval people became a threat to the authority of the nobility, and there emerged the fear of upward mobility since the nobility did not accept the social climbers to become like them as the coloniser who did not want the colonised to become like them. Then, with a Bhabhanian perspective, those upwardly mobile medieval people mimicking the nobility represent the power of the colonised and the anxiety of the coloniser, the nobility in the medieval context. Hence, more than the Knight, the Monk and the Prioress, the Franklin and the Miller dissolve the medieval dichotomy of "Us" and "Them", "Self" and "Other" or "Noble" and "Non-noble".

In conclusion, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* presents the medieval world of the late fourteenth century as the world inhabited by several kinds of hybrids and mimics. Occupying a third space, in which they share the characteristics of at least two estates, Chaucer's hybrid pilgrims do not entirely belong to the nobility, clergy or the commoners. These hybrid and mimic identities, like their historical counterparts, challenge and redefine the fixed identifications or "Us"s and "Them"s of medieval society shaped by the three estates model. That is to say, Chaucer's pilgrims with their unfixed identities defy the medieval concept of "imagined community," of certain identities. It is important to note that the well-known ambiguity of Chaucer's pilgrims and their hybridity overlap. What is traditionally recognised as ambiguity, in a sense, is hybridity. In other words, recognising Chaucer's pilgrims as hybrids explains to a great extent the ambiguity that dominates their portrayal in *The Canterbury Tales*. Accordingly, it seems that Chaucer's pilgrims are the members of the borderline community of a hybrid society, or a "third space" since they are Bhabha's cultural Others and hybrids. Thus, medieval society, an "unhomely" place for figures of interstices, embraces hybrid English identities which rupture the boundaries of the traditional medieval estate structure and subvert the dichotomy of "Us" and "Them".

NOTES

[1] The medieval people who did not fit into any of the three estates are mostly described as the members of "the middle-grouping" "strata" or "class". For the use of the term, among several other critics, see Morris Bishop, *The Penguin Book of the Middle Ages* (Norwich: Fletcher and Son, 1971) 308; Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1989) 4-5; and Marion Turner, "Politics and London Life." *A Concise Companion to Chaucer.* Ed. Corinne Saunders (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) 29-30. Yet, in this dissertation, apart from the acknowledged members of the middle-grouping such as the franklins, millers, merchants or yeomen, the Knight, a member of the nobility, and the Monk and the Prioress, members of the clergy, are also evaluated within the medieval middle-grouping as they do not completely fit into their estate.

[2] For the details, see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Introduction: Midcolonial." *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*. Ed. J. Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) 1-17.

[3] For the various examples of orientalism, decolonization and nationalism as reflected in *The Canterbury Tales*, see Noel Harold Kaylor, "The Orientation of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales." *Medieval Perspectives* 10 (1995-96): 133-47; John M. Bowers, "Chaucer After Smithfield: From Postcolonial Writer to Imperialist Author." *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*. Ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) 53-66; Brenda Deen Schildgen, *Pagans, Tartars, Moslems, and Jews in Chaucer's* Canterbury Tales (Gainesville: Florida UP, 2001); Kathryn L. Lynch, "East Meets West in Chaucer's Squire's and Franklin's Tales." *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch (New York: Routledge, 2002) 76 -101; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Orientation and Nation in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales." *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch (New York: Routledge, 2002) 102- 34; Susan Schibanoff, "Worlds Apart: Orientalism, Antifeminism, and Heresy in Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale." *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch (New York: Routledge, 2002) 248-80; Carol Falvo Heffernan, *The Orient in Chaucer and Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003); Susan Marie Nakley, "'From every shires ende': Chaucer and Forms of Nationhood". Diss. U of New Jersey, 2008; and R. M. E. Oldman, "The Postcolonial "Knight's Tale": A Social Commentary on Post-Norman Invasion." MA Thesis, Marshall University, 2010.

[4] On the depiction of the Other in *The Canterbury Tales*, see Albrecht Classen, *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle* Ages (New York: Routledge, 2002); Kenneth Bleeth, "Orientalism and the Critical History of the Squire's Tale." *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch (New York: Routledge, 2002) 21-31; and Khalid Mosleh Alrasheed, "The Postcolonial Middle Ages: A Present Past." MA Thesis, University of Wyoming, 2009.

[5] For detailed information on the relationship between the dichotomy of "Us" (the human beings) and "Them" (the monsters) and the concept of Otherness in the Middle Ages, see particularly Chapter 3 and 7 in Asa Mittman's *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[6] On the Otherness and the monstrosity in the Middle Ages, see, among others, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)." *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1996) 3-25; David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Montreal: McGill Queen's UP, 1996); Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis:

Minnesota UP, 1999); John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (New York: Syracuse UP, 2000); Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003); Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Ananya Jahanara Kabir, and Deanne Williams, *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005) especially chapter 5 and 6; Jenna Louise Stook "Troubled Identities: Saracen Alterity and Cultural Hybridity in Middle English Romance." (Diss. U of Calgary, 2010); Dana Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2010) especially Chapter 2 and 4; and see particularly Chapter 1 and 4 in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*. Eds. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Bodwin, Corwall: MPG Books, 2003).

[7] For Lacan's mirror stage which demonstrates that identity cannot be formed without the Other since it is formed from the outside, see Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage." *Identity: a reader*. 7th. Eds. Paul du Guy, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman (London: Sage, 2000) 44-50. For detailed information about Bhabba's discussion of identity in relation to Lacan's mirror stage, see "The Other Question" in *The Location of Culture*, particulary pages 76-78 and pages 42-45 in Huddart's *Homi K. Bhabha*.

[8] For Bhabha's views on Fanon, see Homi Bhabha, "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1994) 112-123.

[9] For details in relation to the hybrid identity, liminality and identity crisis, see Bhabha's "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative" 40-65 in *The Location of Culture* and Bhabha's "Remembering Fanon", particularly pages between 116-118.

[10] All Chaucer quotations are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry Dean Benson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.

[11] Saul describes chivalric aristocratic culture as "a culture of display" in line with the necessity of visual display to claim one's status in the Middle Ages when the level of literacy was very low. The nobility showed their strength through their luxurious clothes in public. For instance, in the Bayeux Tapestry Duke William of Normandy is depicted wearing an apparel of high rank "–a three- quarter-length mantle thrown back over the shoulders and fastened by a clasp at the throat; knights would typically be attired in rich silk robes when they were dubbed at royal knighting ceremonies[which] was normal for the well born". The ancient belief supporting that the outer appearance reflected the inner world was also another factor in the splendid self-display of the chivalric world. Saul Nigel, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2011) 52-54.

[12] Although tournaments were indispensable for the nobility and chivalric display, the Church was strictly against tournaments, which displays the clash between the courtly and religious identity of knighthood. As Barber and Barker and Carlson state, tournaments were prohibited in ecclesiastical laws even in the twelfth and thirteen centuries, at their zenith, and knights joining the tournaments were severely penalized. Yet, tournament was a fundamental part of knightly identity as it underlined the significance of noble birth, skill, bravery, courtliness and generosity. As a penalty, the Church might not accept to bury the body of the knights killed in a tournament in line with the ecclesiastical rituals. Thus, the Church regarded tournaments "as a

threat to men's salvation" and to "public order". Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageant in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000) 139, 142, 146. David Carlson, "Religious Writers and Church Councils on Chivalry." *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, eds. Howell Chickering and Thomas H. Seiler (Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988) 151.

[13] The impact of literature on the knights of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was so great that they even imitated the scenes in literature in their real lives, which displays the overlapping of reality and imagination. For instance, in 1360 two French knights jousted with two English knights who were in vermilion, they were almost performing a scene in Chrétien's Le Conte du Graal, which involves an episode with a 'Vermilion Knight'. Saul Nigel, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 157.

[14] Yet, just like in the case of the tournaments, the courtly values of chivalry also seem to clash with the religious identity of the knight as they create a dilemma between the institution of knighthood and the Church. As Brewer states, the courtly values of chivalry were continually criticized by the Church which "in the name of other worldliness, constantly attacked courtly values as worldly. [For the Church] [l]ove of self and of others was idolatry when it came before the love of God. Carnal delights, from sex to fighting, the whole gamut of deadly sins from pride to sloth, destroyed the spirit". Derek Brewer, *The World of Chaucer* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000) 81.

[15] For detailed information on the role of the mercenary soldiers in relation to the conflict within the different Turkish beghliks of the fourteenth century, see Himmet Umunç's article "Balat'ta Bir İngiliz Şövalyesi: Beylikler Döneminde Türkiye'nin Batı ile İlişkileri." *XIII. Tük Tarih Kongresine Sunulan Bildiriler, 4-8 Ekim, 2000* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002) 1-10.

[16] *The Thebaid* deals with Thebes, a Greek city, which, like in the stories of Troy and Rome, was also the inspiration for medieval romances from the twelfth century on and present heroes, as fighters and beloveds, and the nobility as the epitome of bravery, dignity, courtliness, and authority. Helen Phillips, *An Introduction to* The Canterbury Tales*: Reading, Fiction, Context* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) 46.

[17] The main monastic orders were the Benedictines and their branches such as the Cluniacs and Cistercians; other essential rules were the Carthusians, Premonstratensians, and Augustinian canons. J.P. Hermann, "A Monk Ther Was, A Fair for the Maistrie." *Historical Guide to the Pilgrims in The Canterbury Tales,* eds. Laura C. and Robert T. Lambdin (Westport: Praeger, 1996) 72.

[18] Livingstone illustrates how a knight decided to take a clerical career and became a monk as such:

> Let all posterity know, namely those monks of the monastery of Marmoutier, that a certain knight named Bernard, cognomen Flagellus, desiring to become one of us, gave to us half of the land that is called Ostrulvilla, with the exception of the tithes, with the consent of his lord from whom he held these things, namely Hugh of Le Puiset, viscount of Chartres, and also Evrard of Levasville, and also with the consent of his paternal uncle Stephen and his two brothers, Hugh and Robert.

Thus, the noble Bernard Flagellus became a monk and left his sword behind by the consent and support of his family. Bernard, "knight-turned-monk", was a member of a significant noble family of the Chartrain. His mother was Pagana, daughter of the previous lord of Fréteval, his father was Pagan of Frouville, and his uncle, Nivelon II, was the lord of Fréteval. Bernard had connections with many other leading noble families of the period as well. A. Livingstone, "Brother Monk: Monks and Their Family in the Chartrain, 1000-1200AD1." *Medieval Monks and Their World: Ideas and Realities: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan*. Eds. David Blanks, Michael Frassetto and Amy Livingstone (Leiden and Boston; Brill, 2006) 103.

[19] In fact, Chaucer himself was one of those medieval people who needed to live in line with his family's wishes. As Brewer suggests, Chaucer's father most probably had different occupation opportunities for his son as he was a wealthy merchant; yet, the church was not among them:

> The Church was not for him for he was too disdainful of ritual and, though not exactly disobedient, too evasive of discipline, too much interested in the world, the flesh and the devil to take to a monastic career. Also, he came from rather too well-off a family to become an ordinary parish priest, and his origins were not sufficiently aristocratic for him to be placed immediately high up on the ladder of advancement in the Church.

As Brewer notes, as a social climber lacking noble lineage, it was not possible for Chaucer to occupy a high position in the clergy; thus, his father preferred a career for him in the court. Derek Brewer, *The World of Chaucer*, 53.

[20] Due to the Monk's reference to St. Benedict, many critics argue that he is a member of a Benedictine monastery or one of the divisions of the Augustinian canons. Christopher Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister: The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001) 164. R. Rossignol, *Critical Companion to Chaucer: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File, 2006) 62.

[21] Daichman points out that the reluctant girls of the nobility, both above and below the legitimate age of twelve, were well accepted into convents due to the noticeable dowry they brought with them. Moreover, the unrevealed, illegal daughters of nobles mostly became nuns as the convents were proper places to hide their fathers' immoral misdeeds. Graciela S. Daichman, *Wayward Nuns in Medieval Literature* (Syracuse, Syracuce UP, 1986) 14, 16.

[22] The secondary position of the religious women is also reflected in the words of Henry of Ghent, one of the leading Augustinian scholastic philosophers of the early fourteenth century, as such: "Therefore how very stupidly do men act who instruct women about this science beyond what is fitting and expedient for women to know; and especially men who both explain to women and translate for them into the vernacular sacred books for reading". A.J. Minnis, "The 'Accessus' Extended: Henry of Ghent on the Transmission and Reception of Theology," *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*, eds. Mark D. Jordan and Kent Emery, Jr. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1992) 311-312.

[23] Martin explains how the religious authorities struggled against the keeping pets in the convents as follows:

> Pets were forbidden in religious houses, and the authorities waged war against them for centuries in vain. The dogs and cats always got back. They must have met an emotional need for a large number of people who were in religious order but had no religious vocation. The Prioress is clearly one of these. On the sternest view, her dogs arouse idolatrous devotion which should be offered to God. A more humane response is that they are a godsend to her affectionate nature. Priscilla Martin, *Chaucer's Women: Nuns. Wives, and Amazons* (Iowa City: Iowa UP, 1990) 34.

[24] As the nuns were mostly distracted by the females who were in luxurious clothes, in one of the nunneries, a bishop ordered that: "Let Felmersham's wife, with her whole household and other women, be utterly removed from your monastery within one year, seeing that they are a cause of disturbance to the nuns and an occasion to bad example, by reason of their attire and of those who come to visit them." Alexander Hamilton Thompson, ed. *Visitation of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln: Alnwick's Visitations (1436-49)* (London: Canterbury and York Society, 1919) 67.

[25] According to Mann, the reason for the dual-sided character of the Prioress lies in antifeminist satire in which writers mostly ascribe the same traits of the secular women to nuns. According to this antifeminist satire of the time, as Mann suggests, the medieval satirists indicated that even after women entered monasteries, their womanly aspirations did not come to an end. Thus, the women could not entirely adapt to the religious world. Accordingly, in estates satire, the flaws assigned to nuns are similar with those mostly ascribed to women in general: sensuous, contentious, deceptive, and interested in extravagance. Mann finally points out that Chaucer does not obviously relate the Prioress with the mentioned shortcomings of the women; yet, his portrait of the Prioess suggests the same traits. Indeed, in relation to the antifeminist satire, the Prioress can be regarded as a feminine Other in the male dominated monastic world. Likewise, according to Farrell, "[. . .] the Prioress is for Chaucer an intractably feminine "Other" " (80). Similar to Farrell, Topping notes that the Prioress is a woman who resists against the male religious authority by joining a pilgrimage, keeping dogs, and claiming her earthly nature through her courtly manners. As Topping further suggests, living as an Other in the world of the males, the Prioress associates herself with the suppressed such as mice and dogs (85). Jill, Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973) 128, 134-137. Thomas J. Farrell "Hybrid Discourse in the General Prologue Portraits." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 30 (2008) 80; A. E. Topping "Chaucer's Failed Feminism: The Pilgrimage Towards Potential of the Wife of Bath, the Prioress and the Second Nun." (MA Thesis, University of Manitoba Winnipeg, 2006) 85.

[26] As Frank suggests, the courtly depiction of the Prioress is also mostly associated with the Virgin Mary since the Virgin Mary is generally depicted as a woman who is always young and beautiful, emphasising her moral beauty, along with priceless gems. The Virgin Mary is also frequently reflected in literature as a courtly lover. Thus, the Prioress also imitates the Virgin Mary, her clothes, manners and beauty. Hodges also states that the depiction of a nun as a beautiful bride was a convention in literature as it symbolised spiritual beauty. Hodges later remarks that according to the convention, "God is the courtly lover; the nun is his bride who must adorn her soul as the courtly lady adorns her body in luxurious garments". Similarly, Mann notes that Chaucer, like Gautier, regards the nun as the bride of Christ and his courtly mistress. Hardy Long Frank, "Chaucer's Prioress and the Blessed Virgin." *The Chaucer Review* 13 (1979): 350-51; Laura F. Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing: Clerical and Academic Costume in*

the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales (New York: D.S. Brewer, 2005) 56-5; Jill, Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973) 134-137.

[27] See Phillipp R. Schofield's "England: The Family and the Village Community." *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages*. Ed. S.H. Rigby (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 26-46 for a short survey of medieval peasantry, especially in relation to family ties, the manor and the bond between lords and peasants.

[28] For a detailed study on the nature, development and decline of serfdom, see, among others, T. H. Aston, "The English Manor." *Past and Present* 10 (1956) 6-14; R.H. Hilton, "Freedom and Villeinage in England." *Past and Present* 31 (1965) 3-19; John Hatcher, "English Serfdom and Villeinage: Towards a Reassessment." *Landlords, Peasants and Politics in Medieval England*. Ed. T. H. Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 247-83; see particularly Chapter 3 and 5 in Paul H. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999); and Mark Bailey, *The Decline of Serfdom in Late Medieval England: From Bondage to Freedom* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014).

[29] As Herlihy points out in the following extract, one of the duties of the sheriffs was to assemble people on behalf of the king:

> The king to the sheriff of Northamptonshire. Since we intend to have a consultation and meeting with the earls, barons and other principal men of our kingdom with regard to providing remedies against the dangers which are in these days threatening the same kingdom, and on that account have commended them to be with us on the Lord's day next after the feast of St. Martin in the approaching winter, at Westminister, to consider, ordain, and do as may be necessary for the avoidance of these dangers; we strictly require you to cause two knights from the aforesaid county, two citizens from each city in the same county, and two burgesses from each borough, of those who are especially discreet and capable of labouring to be elected without delay, and to cause them to come to us at the aforesaid time and place [. . .]. David, Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism* (New York: Walker and Company, 1970) 280.

[30] For a large-scale historical survey on the meaning and status of vavassours especially in English and French context, see Coss' "Literature and Social Terminology: The Vavasour in England." in which Coss traces the ambiguous position of vavassours by making use of various literary texts and documents. P. R. Coss, "Literature and Social Terminology: The Vavasour in England." *Social Relations and Ideas: Essays in Honour of R. H. Hilton*, eds. T. H. Aston, P.R. Coss, Christopher Dyer, and Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 109-150.

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APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK

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My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

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