



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature Programme

**MEDIEVAL SELF-FASHIONING:
IDENTITY PERFORMANCES IN CHAUCER'S
*CANTERBURY TALES***

Oya BAYILTMİŐ ÖĐÜTCÜ

PhD Dissertation

Ankara, 2016

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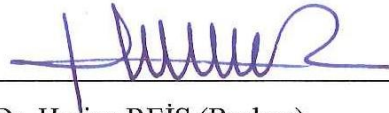
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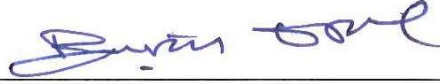
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KABUL VE ONAY

Oya Bayılmış Öğütçü tarafından hazırlanan “Medieval Self-Fashioning: Identity Performances in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*” başlıklı bu çalışma, 20 Ocak 2016 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



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Oya BAYILTMİŞ ÖĞÜTCÜ

To my dear husband Murat,
with love....

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ÖZET

BAYILTMİŞ ÖĞÜTCÜ, Oya. Ortaçağ Öz-Biçimlendirmesi: Chaucer’ın *Canterbury Hikâyeleri*’ndeki Kimlik Performansları. Doktora Tezi. Ankara, 2016.

On dördüncü yüzyıl sosyal, politik, ekonomik ve kültürel değişimlerin Ortaçağ İngiltere’sinin sosyal hiyerarşisinde değişimlere yol açtığı bir dönüşüm dönemiydi. Bu değişimler aynı zamanda Ortaçağ insanların kendi kimliklerini ve etraflarındaki insanları algılama şekillerini de etkiledi. Bu yüzden, Ortaçağ insanları üç sınıf sisteminin kimlikleri üzerindeki kısıtlamalarını sorgulamaya başladılar. Ortaçağ İngiliz toplum yapısına egemen olan üç sınıf kavramı, her bireyin sınıfına uygun şekilde davranmasını gerektiriyordu. Bu sebeple, sadece ait olduğu sınıfın kurallarına uymayanlar değil, aynı zamanda sınıflarının sınırlarını aşmış olanlar da sert bir şekilde eleştirilmekteydi. Ancak, şövalyelik kurumundaki gerileme, feodal değerlerdeki erozyon, Yüzyıl Savaşları’nın etkisi, ticaretteki gelişmeler, veba salgını ve üniversitelerin ortaya çıkışı gibi bazı sebeplerden dolayı, insanlar kimlikleri üzerindeki dayatmaları reddetmeye başladılar. Böylece, kimlik üzerindeki kontrol sadece soylular ve ruhban sınıfı için değil halktan insanlar için de önemli bir konu haline geldi. Bu insanlar, günlük yaşam faaliyetlerini ve mesleki niteliklerini kullanarak, kimliklerini kendi benliklerini algılamalarına uygun bir şekilde geliştirdiler. Bu yüzden, bu tez öz-biçimlendirmeyi bir performans olarak incelemektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu tez Chaucer’ın *Canterbury Hikâyeleri* eserinden seçilen hacıların öz-biçimlendirme performanslarını inceleyerek, Stephen Greenblatt’ın Rönesans dönemi için öngördüğü öz-biçimlendirmenin on dördüncü yüzyılın sonlarında başlamış olduğunu ve bunun dönemin en önemli eserlerinden *Canterbury Hikâyeleri*’nde gözlemlenebildiği savını irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Canterbury hacılarının öz-biçimlendirme performanslarını *Canterbury Hikâyeleri*’nin “Genel Prolog” kısmındaki maddesel performansları, ve hikâyeleri, (eğer varsa) hikâyelerin prologları ve hikâyeler arası geçişlerdeki retorik performanslarla şekillendirip sergiledikleri tartışılmaktadır. I. Bölüm Şövalye ve Silahtar’ın öz-biçimlendirmelerini soyluluğu bir performans olarak tartışarak incelemektedir. Baş Rahibe, Keşiş ve Afnameci’nin toplumsal cinsiyetlerini reddetmeyerek gerçekleştirdikleri dini kimlik performanslarıyla öz-biçimlendirmeleri II.

Bölüm’de tartışılmaktadır. III. Bölüm Üniversiteli ve Hekim’in öz-biçimlendirmelerini incelemekte ve onların öz-biçimlendirmelerini eğitilmiş özün performansının bir yansıması olarak tartışılmaktadır. IV. Bölüm Bath’lı Kadın’ın bedensel ve söylemsel kadınlık performansı ile öz-biçimlendirmesini incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak, Chaucer’ın *Canterbury Hikâyeleri*’ndeki bu hacıları kendi kimlik performanslarını sergilerken yarattığı, ve bunun nedeninin sadece toplumdaki değişimlerden etkilenen karakterler yaratmak değil, aynı zamanda toplumu ve toplumdaki bu değişimleri etkilemek olduğu tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Chaucer, *Canterbury Hikâyeleri*, Şövalye, Silahtar, Baş Rahibe, Keşiş, Afnameci, Üniversiteli, Hekim, Bath’lı Kadın, kimlik performansları, Greenblatt, öz-biçimlendirme, performans, maddesel performanslar, retorik performanslar

ABSTRACT

BAYILTIŞ ÖĞÜTCÜ, Oya. Medieval Self-Fashioning: Identity Performances in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. PhD Dissertation, Ankara, 2016.

The fourteenth century was a period of transformation, in which the social, political, economic and cultural changes led to changes in the social hierarchy of medieval England. These changes also influenced the way medieval people conceived their identities and the people around them. Hence, medieval people started to question the limitations imposed on their identities by the three estate structure. The three estate structure, which dominated the structure of the medieval English society, required each person to behave in accordance with the requirements of her/his estate. Therefore, not only those who failed in conforming to the rules of her/his estate, but also those who transgressed their estate boundaries were severely criticised. However, due to certain reasons such as the decline in knighthood, the erosion in feudal values, the influences of the Hundred Years War, developments in trade, the Black Death and the rise of universities, people began rejecting the impositions on their identities. Thus, the control over identity became an important issue, not only for the nobility and clergy but also for the commoners. Making use of their daily life activities and their professional qualifications, these people performed their identities in accordance with their self-conceptions. Therefore, this dissertation analyses self-fashioning as a performance. Accordingly, this dissertation aims at examining the self-fashioning performances of the selected pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and claim that what Stephen Greenblatt identifies as self-fashioning in the Renaissance had already started in the late fourteenth century, and it can be observed in the *Canterbury Tales*, which is one of the most important works of this time. It is argued that the self-fashioning performances of the Canterbury pilgrims are both shaped and displayed by their material performances in the "General Prologue" and their rhetorical performances in their tales, prologues to their tales (if applicable) and the links between the tales in the *Canterbury Tales*. Chapter I analyses the self-fashioning of the Knight and the Squire through a discussion of nobility as performance. The self-fashioning of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner through their performance of gendered religious identity is discussed in

Chapter II. Chapter III examines the self-fashioning of the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic, and discusses their self-fashioning as a reflection of the performance of the learned self. Chapter IV analyses the self-fashioning of the Wife of Bath through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. As a conclusion, it is asserted that Chaucer creates these pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* as performing their identity performances, and the aim of this is not only to create characters influenced by the changes in society, but also to influence society and the changes in society.

Key Words: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, the Knight, the Squire, the Prioress, the Monk, the Pardoner, the Clerk, the Doctor of Physic, the Wife of Bath, identity performances, Greenblatt, self-fashioning, performance, material performances, rhetorical performances

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INTRODUCTION

All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players.
 They have their exits and their entrances,
 And one man in his time plays many parts
 (Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 2.7.139-142)

Stephen Greenblatt, in his work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* explains self-fashioning and its relationship with literature. According to him, self-fashioning is “the achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving” (2). The focus in self-fashioning is on an individual’s effort to create an identity and develop a distinct manner. Greenblatt further states that the importance of self-fashioning comes from the impact of it on the control of identity, since self-fashioning enables a person to control and shape her/his identity. Self-fashioning means that the individual breaks loose of the restrictions and impositions of society or any other outside factor, and shapes her/his identity on her/his own. Self-fashioning makes it easier for an individual to question the social, economic and political limitations and impositions exercised on her/him, because, as Hall indicates, the shaping of identity is also related with “the *production* of self as an object in the world, the practices of self-constitution, recognition and reflection” (“Introduction” 13, emphasis original). Hence, identity becomes the construction of an individual. Hall defines this construction as “identification” which is “a process never completed” (“Introduction” 2).

During this construction process, the individual is threatened by outside factors for the control over the construction of identity. As a result, it is necessary to acknowledge the outside factors, because “the process of ego-formation [takes place] within its historical and social context” (Jones and Woolf 3). Accordingly, as Hall indicates, the discourse in which identity is formed is also of great importance, since the historical context and the socio-cultural power structures are influential on the identity formation process, because identities “emerge within the play of specific modalities of power” (“Introduction” 4). It

is for this reason that although it is the individual that has the control over identity construction, s/he is still affected by the outside factors such as social hierarchies and authorities.

Nevertheless, the control over identity by the individual herself/himself makes it more difficult for the authorities to have control over the identity of an individual since, the authorities do not have the entire control over shaping the identity of an individual as an outside factor. In this respect, the concept of social mobility arises as an important aspect of self-fashioning. Social mobility is important both for the society and the individuals as it creates “a new assertion of power [...] to determine all movement within the society,” which leads to “a heightened awareness of the existence of alternative modes of social, theological, and psychological organization” (Greenblatt 2). The changing social paradigms raise the consciousness of the individuals and they may thus become more and more aware of the constructed systems to which they are made to conform. As a result, the traditional systems in society might be disrupted and people might begin to search for new alternatives. Hence, self-fashioning becomes important especially in cases of social mobility, as social mobility itself is disruptive of the established hierarchies.

In line with these arguments, Greenblatt claims that such kind of a consciousness of self-fashioning increased in the Renaissance due to the social, religious and intellectual developments of the time. He argues that the lack of such consciousness in the previous periods is related to the dominance of Christianity over the individuals. In order to explain his ideas about the limitations imposed by Christianity on the individuals, Greenblatt gives a reference to the ideas of St. Augustine in his sermon 169: “Hands off yourself, [...] [t]ry to build up yourself, and you build a ruin” (2). Therefore, Greenblatt uses self-fashioning as a Renaissance concept. This can also be associated with the high learning of the Renaissance and the impact of Reformation on people’s lives. During the Renaissance, the individual gained importance and man came to be regarded as a superior being. Man explored himself through learning. Reformation introduced religious freedom to supplement this exploration, thereby enforcing the idea that there was no need for an intermediary between God and man. This decreased the dominance

of the Church and the Church fathers over the individuals. Accordingly, Greenblatt argues that “[s]elf-fashioning is in effect the Renaissance version of [...] [the] control mechanisms, the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment” (3-4).

Greenblatt suggests that the role of the writers in creating self-fashioning characters in their works is very important for the self-fashioning of the individuals in society, namely, “to fashion other selves” in society (3), since the individual needs role models to identify with and to constitute her/his self. This is also in accordance with the authors’ aim to shape their society. Accordingly, Greenblatt praises Spenser for the use of the word “fashion” with its contemporary connotations in *The Faerie Queen*, because Spenser’s aim in this specific work was “to fashion a gentleman” of the Renaissance creating his self-fashioning characters as examples for the people (2). In fact, Greenblatt begins his discussion of self-fashioning by praising Chaucer for his fashioning the characters in the “General Prologue” to the *Canterbury Tales*, as Chaucer exemplifies the idea that there has always been “selves – a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires – and always some elements of deliberate shaping in the formation and expression of identity” (1). Yet, as Patterson also argues, although Greenblatt explicitly refers to Chaucer and his *Canterbury Tales* in relation to the representation of the self and identity in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Greenblatt’s argument acknowledges but does not explore Chaucer’s presentation of self-fashioning. However, as Patterson also notes, the *Canterbury Tales* is mainly interested in the representation of the subject, whose main aim is to distinguish herself/himself from a community and to achieve individuality (“On the Margin” 99-101).

As a result, this dissertation claims that although Chaucer wrote the *Canterbury Tales* in the late fourteenth century, he created self-fashioning characters not only to display the changes in society but also to influence and to shape this change, because the fourteenth century, as a period of transformation, created the proper setting for the individuals for social mobility and self-fashioning. Therefore, this dissertation argues that Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning had already started in the late fourteenth century as it can be

observed in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Accordingly, this dissertation analyses the self-fashioning of the Knight, the Squire, the Prioress, the Monk, the Pardoner, the Clerk, the Doctor of Physic and the Wife of Bath through an analysis of their identity performances. Before giving an in depth study of self-fashioning as reflected in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a brief account of the political, social and economic changes of the period will shed light to the fact that, with these changes, people became able to fashion themselves as exemplified by Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, which would have a great impact on the individual's refusal of identities imposed on them by the estate divisions and roles in the fourteenth century.

The fourteenth century was a period of social and economic changes as well as increasing unrest among common people. The impact of the Norman Conquest on both culture and language was in decline. There was a change in the social structure due to the changing economic conditions of people. Moreover, "chivalry was in decay" (Coulton, *Medieval* 280) due to the rise of the mercenaries and the decline of the feudal system. Financial concerns became dominant in all estates. The change in society was from sworn loyalties and personal services to a materialistic and money based economy. The most important reflection of this change was the rise of merchants in the social strata (Coulton, *Medieval* 281). This was the age of "evolution," the age of transition from feudalism to capitalism, and from medieval to Renaissance (Holmes 140).

This transformation created a kind of void for some. For instance, there was a lack of substitute for feudalism, which would be filled by the birth of Parliament (The Model Parliament of 1275), which brought a change in the political life of medieval England. Parliament, with its two houses, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, which gave the right to be represented to the common people and to give voice to their problems, developed out of the king's Privy Council. The impact of Parliament grew during the reign of Edward III, since he was in constant need for money for the Hundred Years War with France. The influence of the Parliament continued to increase during the reign of Richard II, because both Richard II and his barons were not powerful enough to exist without the support of Parliament (Schultz 60-63). In addition to the increasing impact of Parliament in general, the influence of the gentry was increasing in

particular. For instance, the commoners were given, by the statutes of 1340 and 1362, the right to consent to or bargain all taxation through petitioning, which paved the way for the increasing impact of the commoners on political legislations (Given-Wilson 122).

The social transformation was furthered by the Hundred Years War, which undermined the traditional relationship between the aristocracy and the commoners a great deal. In fact, from the 1290s onwards, England was periodically at war with Scotland and France and as a result they “allied with each other, while England wooed Flanders. This quadrangular relationship was at the heart of English foreign policy during the period which led up to the Hundred Years War” (Given-Wilson 110). Yet, Edward III’s reign was the period of warfare in which England was to show its dominance over Scotland and to fight constantly with France. Actually, “[...] the Anglo-French struggles of the period fall into three phases stretching over a century and a half: the wars of the treaty of Paris from 1294 to 1360; the wars of the treaty of Brétigny from 1369 to 1420; and a war of the treaty of presence in France in 1453” (Ormrod 86). As Tuchman argues, the causes of the war were political, psychological and economic since Edward wanted to sustain his control over Guienne and Gascony, brought to England through the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II. However, the king of France still claimed sovereignty over these territories, which was unbearable for the English both politically and psychologically. Guienne’s significance for the English economy was another element, which contributed to the intolerance of the English for French sovereignty in Guienne. Likewise, the port of Bordeaux as a wine export and wool and cloth import centre was also very important for the English, who benefitted much from the taxes of export and import between the ports of Bordeaux and England. All these material benefits aroused the envy of the French (Tuchman 72). Accordingly, the dispute between England and France meant authority and money, both of which were very important for both of the countries.

Moreover, there was a change in knightly service between the 1290s and the 1340s. In fact, according to their feudal obligations, knights had to fight for free for their king for forty days and then they would be paid for their services (Slack 5-8). In addition to the

service of knights, there were also infantry forces constituted by free and unfree adult males, who were expected to defend their country in warfare. Edward I, Edward II and Edward III made the most of these obligations and enlarged them as well. For instance, the compulsory service of knights was extended to lands outside the country such as Flanders. Flanders was very important as a commercial centre and it was bound to England for wool. This was also the reason of pride in the English, because, as Matthew of Westminster wrote, “[a]ll the nations of the world, [...] [were] kept warm by the wool of England” although this wool was “made into cloth by the men of Flanders” (qtd. in Tuchman 76). Actually, England held great possessions in France since the Norman Conquest. However, due to rising nationalism in France, they wanted to take back all these lands, which would be regarded as “disgrace” and humiliation in England (Schultz 57). Hence, they needed the power of knights on foreign lands. This meant an increase in the need for money to pay them. Beside knights fighting on foreign lands, there were also foot soldiers fighting in Scotland. This meant that their own communities were to pay for their service rather than the state. This would also be highly influential in creating social unrest, since people would resist the increasing labour expectations and extra taxes both in money and manpower for the Hundred Years War.

Another important development that contributed to the dissatisfaction and social unrest during the Hundred Years War was the practice of indirect taxation in order to provide money for the expenses of the war. Direct taxation was already increased in the 1340s and 1370s. Additionally, indirect taxation was introduced through customs and subsidies, which would contribute to war expenses even more than direct taxation. Although the customs duties had already been established in 1275 in order to pay back the Italian bankers, it did not meet the expectations of the crown (Ormrod 91-93). Myers explains that Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III all had loans from the Italian bankers such as Bardi and Peruzzi. The amount of loans used by Edward III to finance the Hundred Years War and his not being able to pay it back ended up with their bankruptcy. This turned the attention of Edward III to the native financiers, who gained temporal monopoly over the wool export (66). After 1342, there was a great increase in the taxation of overseas trade and subsidies on wool export. A great amount of money

was in the hands of merchants, as they authorised these subsidies, but they were to pay taxes for this. After this was realised by Parliament, Parliament decided to have dominance over domestic traders. Thus, in a way, indirect taxation turned out to be a direct source of gain for warfare.

The importance of merchants was not limited to indirect taxation. They were also the suppliers of ready cash to the government, and in return they were granted rights and privileges in export trade by Edward III. In wool export, the Calais port, captured in 1347, was very important; and thus, war with France also turned out to be related to the security of English commercial interests. The defence of Calais would mean the preservation of merchants, wool producers and wool traders' interests. As a result, it was very important for the wealth of England, and it became the symbol of merchants who were gaining political and economic power. Hence, one of the main reasons of the Hundred Years War was to protect the interests of merchants (Ormrod 91-105). Although Schultz indicates that "[t]he underlying cause of the war was the heritage of hostility resulting from English possessions in France" (58), there were also some economic reasons. At the end of the Hundred Years War, England lost all territories in France, but came out of the war as a country that turned its attention to "internal solidarity" which gave way to a "self-contained national" entity (Keen, *The Pelican History* 259, 258). In line with the developments within the country after the Hundred Years War, people, especially merchants and mercenaries, began to be more and more conscious of their social status and their individual identities, which also contributed to the breakdown of the traditional hierarchies.

In addition to the impact of the Hundred Years War, the Black Death was also very influential on the increasing consciousness in society and the change of the social structure of late medieval England. The bubonic plague, which probably originated in Asia, spread to the Black Sea region, Middle East, Italy and Western Europe, and reached England in 1348-9. There were two forms of the plague: bubonic, which was carried by rats, and pneumonic, which occurred as a result of droplet infection similar to the cold (Thomson 9). Both forms of the plague existed in England, which led to the Black Death of 1348-9. Initially, black rats brought the fleas that spread the plague and

then the pneumonic plague followed, because it spread through human contact. Although it occurred intermittently, it caused the death of one-third of the population in England in 1348-9. Almost half of the clergy died, and there was a decline in the number of labourers which resulted in the increase of wages (Schultz 64). As the English chronicler Henry Knighton argues “[t]here was such a scarcity of labourers that women and even small children could be seen at the plough and leading wagons” (qtd. in Keen, *The Pelican History* 234). As a result, it was a “turning point” for medieval English society, since it started the period of change of the working force in society and “altered the climate and tendencies of English history” (Holmes 136-37).

First of all, the Black Death secured the balance between people and resources in addition to leading to a change in the distribution of wealth among people. Another important outcome of the Black Death was the increase in wages, which forced the landowners to lease their demesnes. Therefore, new land became available for the money-owning gentry and the peasantry. These developments would lead to the improvement in the living conditions of the gentry and the peasantry, which would accordingly lead to a change in the social status of the commoners (Ormrod 2-3), especially that of the gentry. As a result, as Reis argues, “the plague was not altogether destructive for certain groups in the society of the time, for the growing rich benefited financially from the shortage of labour and the difficulties experienced by the lords” (“The Black Death” 103). It reduced the dominance of landed people over the peasants. All these developments created unease among the nobility, who wanted to regain their dominance over the commoners through some legal actions such as the Sumptuary Laws and the Statute of Labourers.

A series of Sumptuary Laws were passed by Parliament during the reign of Edward III in 1363 in order to regulate the items and the kinds of clothes that each estate could wear. These regulations were laid down according to income and wealth, and aimed at sustaining the estate hierarchy through costume (Keen, *English Society* 10). In this way, costume became a means for social display and also a signifier of one’s estate. It was a reflection of the struggle to keep the commoners in their traditional estate. This

indicates the change in society as a result of the increasing consciousness about people's social status. As Thomson argues,

[...] the society of the late Middle Ages was acutely conscious of status, and that a man's degree in society was something which mattered greatly to him. Possibly this may have been a reaction to economic pressures; as a man found his income from land reduced by falling rents, declining prices for produce and the need to pay higher wages, he might well want to stress the one thing which remained unaffected by this, his social standing. The existence of such social gradations gave scope for ambition too, because [...] this period also saw considerable social mobility. (111)

As a result, it was necessary for the nobility to enforce regulations on the social climbers. Accordingly, in addition to the regulations emphasised by the Sumptuary Laws, the nobility also enforced the Statute of Labourers. However, the impositions of the Statute of Labourers created great "economic injustice" for the peasants (Schultz 64) and gave rise to criticism towards Edward III (Herlihy 358-59). These statutes "from 1351 onwards prescribed maximum wages and insisted that all able-bodied landless men must work" (Holmes 141). Furthermore, as Coulton argues, they "aimed at preventing any rise either in wages or in prices of commodities. That of 1349 not only fixed a maximum wage, but strictly forbade the migration of labourers in search of a better livelihood" (*Medieval* 98). This was to have a grip on the peasants' social and economic demands. Both of these governmental interventions into social developments, that is, the Sumptuary Laws and the Statute of Labourers, show that the decreasing gulf between the nobility and the commoners was not approved of by the nobility. Furthermore, this also signals that especially the gentry became more and more aware of their social status and they became "more socially self-conscious" (Keen, *The Pelican History* 236). All these led to the loosening of the traditional estate hierarchy, imposed by Norman feudalism, and led people to question and resist the traditional impositions on their identities.

The poll tax of 1377-81 also contributed to the unrest that had already been triggered by the impositions of the Sumptuary Laws and the Statute of Labourers. Poll tax was imposed on everybody by head and displeased the commoners, as it was too heavy for them (Holmes 142). There was already a great discontent among people about the

money collected for the Hundred Years War, and thus the military campaigns of the nobility were criticised. Especially, John of Gaunt was the focus of criticism, in that, the people believed that their money was mismanaged by the advisers of Richard II. Therefore, the poll tax was the last provocation for them.

As a result of all this unrest resulting from the inequalities among the estates, an increasing discontent spread among the peasants. As Hilton aptly states, “rural social relationships in the middle ages were characterized by conflict rather than harmony of lord and peasant interests” (234). Due to the growing discontent, they were not “bound together in the organic unities of ‘quiet’ consent and harmony” (Aers 9) as was expected by the traditional estate hierarchies. The peasants were becoming more and more conscious of their social status, which would lead them to seek equality. Actually, there were some sermons that voiced the equality of people. For instance, John Ball preached that the boasting of human beings was unnecessary. His well-known couplet of “When Adam dalf, and Eve span, / Wo was thane a gentilman?” attracted the support of the peasants especially after the Black Death (Thomson 29). He was praised for “egalitarianism” (Holmes 145), since he argued for “the abolition of serfdom and the achievement of free status” (Hilton 235). Moreover, as Reis asserts, “this politically charged claim of equality was also socially backed by the improved financial status of the villeins and their life standards” (“The Black Death” 99). As a result, the Peasants’ Revolt broke out in 1381. It began in Essex and then spread to Kent and East Anglia, and the rebels later moved towards London. They wanted the Chancellor, Sudbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Sir Robert Hales, the Treasurer, to be put to death (Thomson 26). Furthermore, they destroyed John of Gaunt’s manor. As Reis suggests, “[t]he Peasants’ Revolt was not so much of a rebellion of the disadvantaged than the rebellion of those who were better off than before, and who were seeking political advantages,” which was a result of “[t]he transformation of the system [...] towards a system that privileged the money holders who would then buy more freedom” (“The Black Death” 103). At last, King Richard II accepted to negotiate with the rebels who wanted the abolition of villeinage. The Mayor of London granted their demands at first, but later, the rebellion was suppressed and Wat Tyler was murdered (Holmes 142-43). Although it did not achieve its ideals but was suppressed by the Crown, the Peasants’

Revolt still symbolises that the power balance between the nobility and the peasants began to change. The Revolt formed “a sense of social solidarity” among the peasants (Keen, *The Pelican History* 236) and “individual liberty,” which helped them to “develop a consciousness of themselves” as a separate social group (Day 14).

In addition to these social changes, the fourteenth century society also “saw the erosion of confidence and the splintering of the *Corpus Christianum* of the High Middle Ages,” which ended with the discontent about the clergy and the weakening of the Church’s power especially following the Great Schism (1378-1417) (Schultz 53-54). When Pope Gregory died in 1378, the succession became a problem. At first, the citizens of Rome did not want the cardinals to elect another French pope. The common demand was for an Italian pope. Bartholomew was elected as Urban VI, but he turned out to have uncontrolled temper. Thus, the cardinals declared that Urban’s election as pope was invalid. A new election was held and Cardinal Robert of Geneva who was a Frenchman was elected pope as Clement VII. However, due to the fact that Urban’s election had already been notified, now there was a schism with two popes, Clement at Avignon and Urban at Rome. This schism led people to question the role of the papacy in the life of an individual Christian, which increased the demands for the reformation of the ecclesiastical system. Furthermore, the schism was very ironic, in that, it continued even after the deaths of Urban and Clement. The only way to end the schism was a general council formed by the Roman Church. However, at this point, there was a constitutional problem, because the wars between England and France caused a political problem about the reunion. England (together with Flanders and most of the Italian states) was to support Urban and France (together with Scotland and Castile) was to support Clement. Accordingly, in order to gather a council, it was first necessary to settle the diplomatic problems in Europe. All these problems alongside the schism were to destroy the solidarity in the Church and the need for a reform was to increase, since the council representatives’ were to vote as national groups, which would destroy the unity of the Church before the Great Schism (Keen, *The Pelican History* 284-89).

Furthermore, the Great Schism was influential not only on the countries but also on the people within the countries. For instance, taking advantage of the problems within the

Church, Wyclif started the movement known as Lollardy, which is defined as England's "first serious outbreak of heresy" (Given-Wilson 120). Actually, until the fourteenth century, there was the dominance of Latin and the Christian ideology over learning. However, as Janette Dillon argues, due to the developments in philosophy, people began to question the relationship between reason and faith; they believed that there was a gap between them (91). This kind of questioning stimulated the attention of William of Ockham and the Oxford master John Wyclif. Ockham was against the supremacy of the Church. He asserted that belief existed not in high Church but in poor priests and the commoners. This idea was strengthened by the rise of literacy, which would create a self-conscious piety in people (Keen, *The Pelican History* 281-83). Likewise, Wyclif questioned the position of the Church in an individual's religious life, as a result of which his ideas were thought to be anti-clerical. He believed in the supremacy of God and the existence of man's assigned duties. He rejected the land ownership of the Church and the doctrine of Transubstantiation (Schultz 65). His followers known as Lollards, meaning poor priests, spread his ideas, but they were suppressed by the Church as heretics. However, his ideas would spread to Bohemia and influence Jan Hus, who would greatly influence Martin Luther's ideas on Reformation (Schultz 65). The importance of Lollardy, just like the Peasants' Revolt, is that it represented the people's search for equality in society. Lollardy was a popular anti-clerical and anti-establishment movement that undermined traditional hierarchies like the Peasant's Revolt. Reducing the impact of the clergy, Lollards supported the view that the individual did not need the clergy in order to understand God. The Bible was translated into English, because the important thing was not the preaching of the clergy but "the dictates of Scripture and [...] the individual conscience" (Holmes 171). Wyclif did not regard the Church as an indispensable element in the relationship between man and God. Thus, he even questioned the dominance of the king over the Church and the clergy due to the claim of divine ordination. At this point, it would not be wrong to suggest that Wyclif's ideas would constitute the basis for the Reformation of the Church in the following years (Artz 301). Wyclif and Lollards were able to gain public support, since "Lollardy was not simply the little people's heresy," but their ideals had supporters from the members of the landed gentry as well as from the circles of knights, who petitioned the Parliament to disendow the Church (Given-Wilson 121). As a result,

when added to the influence of the Hundred Years War, the Black Death, increasing learning and the social transformation in late medieval England, Lollardy was regarded by the Church as a threat.

Owing to these important changes in economy and social life as well as the religious unrest and the rise of “embryonic” nationalism in England (Keen, *The Pelican History* 225), the fourteenth century was the period of communal action as in the case of the Peasants’ Revolt or Lollardy rather than individual struggle. This shows that the public began to gain consciousness about their situation and they began to act together. As a result, it was during the fourteenth century that England established the social and economic base for the Renaissance, Reformation and the economic expansion of the sixteenth century. Hence, it was the period of “formation” during which the Hundred Years War, expansion in trade, the Black Death, the Sumptuary Laws, the Statute of Labourers, poll tax, the Peasants’ Revolt, Great Schism and Lollardy had great impact (Keen, *The Pelican History* 226). However, despite being challenged by these social, economic, political and religious developments, the estate hierarchy was still dominant and was imposed on the people through a number of regulations such as the Sumptuary Laws (Huizinga 9). Thus, it can be argued that the estate hierarchy was functional in shaping and governing medieval identity.

Yet, although the nobility still tried to impose the traditional estate hierarchy on the commoners, as Janette Dillon states, “[t]he history of the fourteenth century shows that the lower classes did not willingly accept the social status framed for them as a moral paradigm by so many written authorities” (45). The Peasant’s Revolt and the increasing interest in money were the best signifiers of this change. Financial concerns became dominant in all estates. As Day argues, “[w]hat happens in the late medieval period is that money begins to usurp the estates model as a representation of the social order” (27). As stated, the change in society was from sworn loyalties to a materialistic economy, the most important reflection of which was the rise of merchants in the social strata (Coulton, *Medieval* 281). These changes brought great social mobility which created a great impact on the division of the medieval estates and the rise in self-consciousness among medieval people.

Similarly, despite Greenblatt's arguments about the lack of individuality in the Middle Ages, in his analysis of the history of the self, Foucault claims that if one is to draw "the genealogy of modern subjectivity," one needs to look "at the beginning of the Christian era," when the idea of knowing one's self came to the foreground and started "the hermeneutics of the self" ("About the Beginning" 204). Furthermore, in his discussion of the hermeneutics of the self, Foucault also argues that there are certain "forms of self-understanding" that are displayed through "techniques or technology of the self," which draws attention to the interaction between techniques of domination and techniques of the self (Foucault, "About the Beginning" 203). Likewise, the impositions of estate divisions on medieval people can be regarded as a technique of domination and suppression, and the practice and/or subversions of these limitations by the people can be regarded as their techniques of the self, which are shaped by their self-fashioning, which is both shaped and displayed by their identity performances.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*,¹ estate means "[a] class, order, rank in a community or nation" and "[a]n order or class regarded as part of the body politic, and such participating in the government either directly or through its representatives" ("estate"). Different from class defined as divisions in society due to economic differences (Day 1-8), estate divisions were not based on economic status but on "social" status (Day 9). Although Mann emphasises "the role played by a person's work in determining the estate to which he belongs" (*Medieval* 3), as Huizinga also argues, "[t]he idea of an 'estate' is not at all limited to that of a class; it extends to every social function, to every profession, to every group" (57). The estate divisions meant that an individual was expected to conform to and perform certain roles according to her/his estate in medieval society. It is for this very reason that the individual had a great influence on the division of the estates. Hence, estates were functional in shaping medieval identity. In this respect, it can be argued that self-fashioning stands out as a fundamental concept also in the Middle Ages, because the individuals would shape and present their selves to the society with certain features and values through self-fashioning rather than accepting the social status determined for them, which would challenge the traditional estate hierarchy, as reproduced by Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*.

The traditional estate hierarchy of the Middle Ages was designed by the three main estates: the nobility, the clergy and the commoners (Duby, *The Three Orders* 1-4, 105, 341, 356; Le Goff, *Time* 26, 116; Ormrod 131). The existence of the three estate structure was considered to be a result of the French model, on which the so-called bastard feudalism in England was established. As explained by Henry de Bracton, “a hierarchical ordering of estates [was established] with persons of eminence chosen to rule and others arrayed under them” (qtd. in Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 2). As Strohm states, “Bracton provides for emperors, kings, and princes; dukes; counts or barons; magnates or vavasours; and knights; following is a generalized body of freemen and villains” (*Social Chaucer* 2). John Gower also asserted this three estate division in the third book of his *Vox Clamantis*, indicating that the society was composed of three orders as the knights to fight for the society, the clergy to pray for the society and the peasants to work on the land for the society (113-164).

In fact, this idea of three estates was first expressed by King Alfred in his translation of Orosius. The main idea was that there was a need for men to fight for and men to work for the king. Keen argues that this three partite division goes back to Plato’s *Republic*, where the inhabitants were divided into three groups as philosophers, warriors and workers, which were the reflections of the Hindu three partite system of priests, warriors and peasants (*English Society* 2). Theoretically, the three estate structure was believed to be the source of “harmony” in society, since it provided a role for each estate and all the estates were interrelated (Aers 7). Moreover, it was impossible to disregard the three estate structure, as it was believed to be God-given. As such, it was very influential on the naturalisation of the roles and responsibilities of each estate constructed accordingly. In this respect, “[i]nnovation was a sin” and “[t]he Church made a point of condemning *novitates* or novelties” (Le Goff, *Medieval* 326). Hence, as Dyer states, medieval people believed that “anyone failing in his social duty was offending against the divine order” (16). This Christian framework was expressed by a homilist in the fourteenth century by the existence of three orders in the body of the Church as well. These were priests, knights and labourers who constituted the Christian community and thus the society in general. This put great emphasis on the duty of each man, which was explained by the homilist as follows:

And one thing I dare well say, that he that is not labouring in this world on studying, on prayers, on preaching for help of the people – as it falleth to priests; nor in ruling the people, maintaining them and defending them from enemies, as it falleth to knights; nor labouring on earth in divers crafts, as it falleth to labourers: when the day of reckoning cometh, right as he lives here without labour, so shall there lack the reward of ‘the penny’, that is, the endless joy of heaven. (qtd. in Keen, *English Society* 2)

Thus, the three estate structure was imposed on people through a Christian framework, according to which the priests were the highest in the hierarchy followed by the warriors, and the labourers were below these two groups (Keen, *English Society* 3). However, there were problems in society due to the division of the estates in terms of its upper and lower groups in the fourteenth century (Dyer 19). Although the three estate structure had a Christian framework, it was “firmly anti-egalitarian” and such kind of structure was “no warmer towards social mobility than it was to social equality” (Keen, *English Society* 3). Aiming to impose a “static” rather than “dynamic” (Huizinga 58) structure on society, the three estate model allowed no changes. Such kind of a hierarchical structure was not the source of harmony in a dynamic society as it was claimed to be although it was explained through body politics. For instance, John of Salisbury argued in *Policraticus* that the priests constituted the soul, the king the head, the senate the heart of the society while the judges and governors constituted the eyes, ears and mouth, the warriors the hands, treasurers the intestines and the peasants the feet (V, 2). The interconnection among the estates and their interdependence were expected to lead to harmony among people. The underlying aim in explaining the estate divisions through body politics was to naturalise this division for people and make them internalise this division. However, as a result of the changing social values which were mainly the outcome of economic, social, cultural and religious events in the fourteenth century as explained above, the three estate structure underwent questioning (Keen, *English Society* 6). This was an outcome of increasing self-consciousness and a precursor of social mobility and social change.

Dyer defines “social change” as “the overthrow of one class and its replacement by another” and he questions the social, economic and religious events of the fourteenth century as the source of social mobility which would disintegrate the three estate structure in the late fourteenth century: “Did these merely accelerate social mobility,

that is, cause the ruin of some individuals, and create the opportunities for the advancement of others? Or did the whole balance of society shift? Did the material conditions of individuals or social classes decline or improve?" (26). The answer to all these questions was that these social, economic and religious events would create a search for "an alternative social paradigm, which opposed the hierarchy of high medieval tradition a depiction of social relations as horizontally arrayed, communal, secular, and bound in finite time" (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* x). As a result, there must have been a "modification" of this traditional three estate structure (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* x), since the society was moving from sworn loyalties to a money based economy in the late fourteenth century. Therefore, all the sermons and legal documents of the time used this new form of relationship among people as in the case of the inclusion of the newly emerging social groups such as merchants and gentlemen farmers (Strohm, "The Social and Literary" 1-2). These people were exposed to a rigid three estate grouping especially by the Sumptuary Laws, which outlined and enforced the already existing structures and aimed, as Janette Dillon puts it, "to fix hierarchical theory in practise" (45). Because of all these impositions, people from lower estates started to reject the impositions of the three estate structure on their identity designed by the nobility as natural and God-given.

There started a search for political subjective rights among the commoners. For instance, the theologian and parish priest William of Pagula wrote the tract entitled the *Speculum Regis Edwardi III* in the 1330s. In this specific work, he emphasised the importance of the individual's economic rights. He put the blame on the prince if a rebellion occurred as a result of economic problems. His aim was to attract the attention of the poor in the reign of Edward III. Although he wrote in Latin, he succeeded in arousing people's interest writing about the common problems and hardships of the peasants, who were themselves illiterate and needed someone else to give voice to their problems (Nederman 324-30). This search for individual rights would destroy the relationship between lord and retainer in bastard feudalism and create a new form of relationship (Keen, *English Society* 19). Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the search for a new social system gained importance, since the feudal values with all the chivalric ideals and sworn loyalties were in decline (Huizinga 56-57). The importance

of land and tenure decreased as the status of a person was determined after all not by land but by money. This changing socio-economic structure gave birth to “anomalies” such as merchants that could not be placed anywhere in the traditional three estate division (Dyer 17). Thus, although the hierarchy could not be totally erased, there was a need for a kind of “alternative paradigm” (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* x). However, as Hall argues, creating an alternative could only happen through the “decentring” of the old hierarchical divisions through “a reconceptualization,” because “[i]t seems to be in an attempt to rearticulate the relationship between subjects and discursive practices that the question of identity recurs” in order to overcome “the question of *identification*” (“Introduction” 2, emphasis original), as exemplified by Chaucer in his self-fashioning of the Canterbury pilgrims.

Patterson criticises the condemnation of the Middle Ages in terms of its alleged lack of a sense of individuality and selfhood (“On the Margin” 93). He argues that such prejudices are especially due to the attribution of modernity and historical consciousness to the Renaissance, especially with the title Early Modern, and thus the attitude of the critics who centred the sense of individuality and selfhood in the Renaissance. This led to the condemnation of the Middle Ages as pre-modern. Yet, Patterson emphasises that it is impossible to write a history of the self without referring to the Middle Ages, when the transformation from a feudal system to a capitalist system started, since it is this socio-economic transformation that enhanced the increase of consciousness and individuality in the medieval mind (“On the Margin” 93-98).

Similarly, emphasising the interdependence of the community and the individual identity,² David Aers analyses the relationship between the assigned roles of a person in a community and her/his self. According to Aers, the individual is bound to her/his historical community and its socio-economic and cultural environment, since the construction of the self by an individual is not independent from the roles attributed to her/him by the community. In other words, an individual constructs her/his identity through her/his experiences in the community. Therefore, the community’s socio-economic and cultural conditions, religion, politics and gender hierarchy constitute not a mere background for the construction of an individual self, but they interact and have an

important influence on the formation of the individual identity. In line with these, it can be suggested that the formation of the self occurs as a result of the communication between the community and the individual (Aers 2-4). The individual identity confronts the communal identity and reflects its distinction from it despite its shared features in this context. This distinction of the individual identity is associated with self-fashioning.

At this point, self-fashioning comes to foreground as one form of identity performances. As Porter states, inherent in the concept of self-fashioning is the idea that the self is “just a construct, a trick of language, a rhetorical ruse” (12). Hence, it can be argued that self-fashioning is shaped and displayed by rhetorical means. Yet, self-fashioning should not be limited only to rhetorical means. It also has a material side, which means that self-fashioning is shaped and displayed by both material and rhetorical means. Thus, the concept of self-fashioning provides a wide range of material to be studied as performance.

Moreover, inherent in the idea of performance is performativity, that is, the idea that each performance is reiterative and thus “each performance marks out a unique temporal space that nevertheless contains traces of other now-absent performances” (Diamond 1). That is to say, each performance bears the traces of previous performances, since it refers to the acts or behaviours that are acted “not-for-the-first-time” (Schechner, “What Is Performance” 361) and, thus, each performance itself becomes ready to be reiterated by future performances. If the relationship between the community and the individual identity is combined with the idea of self-fashioning, it can be claimed that each individual identity performance, which will be added up to the line of previous identity performances, is shaped by self-fashioning. This newly fashioned identity becomes ready to be reiterated by future identity performances, but of course, with certain changes owing to future instances of self-fashioning.

With common features such as a specific time organisation, the necessity of specific objects, material or physical non-productivity and special rules; all performances including rituals, plays, games, music, sports and dance are associated with theatre and borrow much from the diction of theatre such as acting or role playing. Among these

common features, rules are of special importance, since it is because of the rules that these performative activities are distinguished from the activities of ordinary life (Schechner, *Performance Theory* 7-14). Hence, Richard Schechner defines performance as “a kind of communicative behaviour that is part of, or continuous with, more formal ritual ceremonies, public gatherings, and various means of exchanging information, goods, and customs” (“Performance & the Social Sciences” 3). According to this definition, performances include more formalised events in which there is a distinction between performance and everyday life.

However, as Erving Goffmann argues, performance takes place in everyday life and thus everyday life itself is made up of different performances. Goffman argues that, in fact, “reality is being performed” (23). Accordingly, Goffmann states that “[a]ll the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn’t are not easy to specify” (72). It is for this reason that the word “performance” has “diverse and extensive” connotations (Schechner, *Performance Theory* 290). Schechner also affirms that “[p]erformativity – or, commonly, “performance” – *is everywhere* in life, from ordinary gestures to macrodramas” (*Performance Theory* 326, emphasis original). Analysing the relationship between performance theory and social sciences, Schechner argues that, since performance takes place in everyday life and covers almost every aspect of everyday life from any type of public gatherings to rituals, performance theory and social sciences have at their centre everyday life practices (“Performance & the Social Sciences” 3-4). Likewise, drawing attention to the dramaturgical aspect of everyday life and claiming that the performance of the self occurs in every aspect of social life, Goffman defines performance as “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (8). In the light of these arguments, it can be suggested that everyday performances of people not only reflect the identity performance of an individual, but also aim at influencing the other performers.

Victor Turner argues that acting a role in daily life and acting in rituals are in fact not totally different from each other. The only difference between acting in daily life and in rituals is their frame. While the roles in rituals are acted to complete a kind of

transitional pattern to signify the transformation of a boy into a man or a girl into a woman, Victor Turner states that the roles of daily life are acted to conform to some expected roles such as being a wife or husband or queen (*From Ritual* 115-116). However, just like the specific roles in a ritual, each individual has a specific role to act out on the stage of everyday life as real-actors. As a result, Victor Turner suggests that social life is theatrical as is ritual (*From Ritual* 9).³ Hence, as Striff puts it, “performing in culture often involves making a spectacle of oneself” (13). The resulting performance is the performance of the self, which is performed on the stage of everyday life through certain everyday practices.

Certeau explains the importance of practices in everyday life for an individual and states that everyday practices are the means of a person to operate in certain ways. They are also the means by which the people use, disseminate and change the culture imposed on them by the authorities. Therefore, it is important to analyse how a person manipulates a representation. At this point, the act of speaking emerges as a significant means to help an individual present, represent and re-appropriate a specific performance for an audience. In such ways of operating, an individual represents and re-appropriates the already existent social and cultural norms. These ways of operating can be defined as the tactics of an individual to have control over representation. Hence, many everyday practices, from walking and eating to travelling and reading, should be regarded as the tactical means of operating in order to use and abuse, or manipulate, certain impositions on the formation of identity. Accordingly, speaking and the rhetorical skills of an individual appear as very important means of manipulation in everyday life. Speaking almost becomes an art, because the common man, who is speaking, is in fact telling tales to define and narrate everyday practices (Certeau xi-xxii). As a result, it can be claimed that speaking in everyday life is not only the process and the product of the individual’s self-fashioning, but also a means to display this self-fashioning through self-presentation.

Burke contrasts self-presentation and self-fashioning and indicates that “self-presentation implies a fixed self operating behind the façade” while self-fashioning implies “the ‘reconstruction’ or even the ‘invention’ of the self, which is now assumed

[...] to be a linguistic, cultural or social construct” (18). Still, it is necessary to note that self-presentation does not signal a stable, fixed self, since the self is not fixed but it is dynamic and shaped by self-fashioning. Thus, self-presentation can be defined only as a snapshot of the self, not as a total reflection. Therefore, it should be noted that self-presentation and self-fashioning are not concepts in conflict, but they are interdependent. Self-presentation is to present a self that is dynamic, and self-fashioning is a process of forming that self. Hence, since the self is not stable or fixed, self-presentation is bound to and shaped by the self-fashioning of a person in a theatrical way. It is for this reason that self-fashioning is a performance, which should be defined as theatrical, as represented by Chaucer through his depiction of self-fashioning in the *Canterbury Tales*.

As a matter of fact, there have been some studies on the theatricality of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, which recognises performance as part of the structure, the poetics and the politics of the *Canterbury Tales*. Yet, these studies dwell not on the self-fashioning of the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*, but on the theatricality of the relation between the pilgrims and their tales, emphasising the idea of the construction of the pilgrims’ through their tales. For instance, Lowes regards the *Canterbury Tales* as a “drama” (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 206) and Manly emphasises the “dramatic method” of the *Canterbury Tales* (294). In fact, there are two main lines of discussion about the theatrical aspect of the *Canterbury Tales* conducted by Kittredge and Lumiansky.

In *Chaucer and His Poetry* (1915), Kittredge argues that the *Canterbury Tales* is a “Human Comedy” and the pilgrims are “the *dramatis personae*” (154, 155). According to Kittredge, in this play structure of the tales, the reader/audience should search for more information about the pilgrims in their tales than the information provided by the “General Prologue,” since the tales accommodate the individualistic features of the pilgrims. Otherwise, just relying on the depictions of the pilgrims in the “General Prologue” might lead one to think that the pilgrims are types rather than individuals. As a result, the “General Prologue” can only be considered to be “the first act” of a whole play of the Canterbury pilgrimage (*Chaucer and His Poetry* 155). It is for this reason that Kittredge rejects the assumption that the pilgrims exist for the sake of their tales

(155). On the contrary, Kittredge claims that the tales exist for the sake of the pilgrims and the main function of the tales, which are shaped by the characteristics of a pilgrim and the situation in which s/he is situated, as well as her/his relationship with the others in the pilgrimage group, are to reveal more information about the pilgrims. Hence, Kittredge even argues that the pilgrims' tales can be resembled to "the soliloquies of Hamlet or Iago or Macbeth" although he accepts that the tales cannot be regarded as "mere monologues" as they are addressed to other pilgrims, which reproduces the relationship between the actors and the audience in a play (*Chaucer and His Poetry* 155). According to Kittredge, this even creates a possibility of reply as if they are "a part of the conversation" (*Chaucer and His Poetry* 155). Accordingly, it can be argued that Kittredge's arguments about the theatricality of the *Canterbury Tales* are based on his discussions on the relations between/among the tales and the tellers not on the theatrical construction of the self, which is shaped and displayed by the self-fashioning Canterbury pilgrims.

Influenced by the arguments of Kittredge, Lumiansky furthers the arguments about the dramatic nature of the *Canterbury Tales* in his book *Of Sondry Folk: The Dramatic Principle in the Canterbury Tales* (1980). Lumiansky emphasises the interdependence of the pilgrims and their tales. He argues that the tales and the tellers might exist independent from each other. Yet, he adds that their co-existence contributes both to the meaning of the tale and to the performance of the teller on the dramatic level. Thus, Lumiansky also claims that the tales and the tellers exist both for the sake of themselves and for the sake of each other, which enhances the dramatic mode (6). According to Lumiansky, this dramatic link between the tales and the tellers is enhanced by the links between the pilgrims, the Host's role to supervise the tale-telling game and his interventions throughout the tales, the journey from Southwark to Canterbury, which can be defined as "a movable stage" (7). In this dramatic approach, there are three main important aspects: first of all, the decorum of the tale and the teller as depicted in the "General Prologue;" secondly, the conflicts between the tellers as reflected in their tales such as the conflict between the Summoner and the Friar; and lastly, the dramatic representation of a pilgrim in three aspects, that is, the depiction in the "General Prologue," her/his prologue to the tale, like the Pardoner and the Wife of Bath, and the

tale itself (3-9). Indicating that the drama of the *Canterbury Tales* starts with the Host's suggesting a game of story-telling (I (A) 761-821), Lumiansky states that, with the Host's words, "the curtain rises, and the action begins" with the first act in which the Host invites the pilgrims to the tale telling contest (25). This opening scene is followed by twenty-three performances, that is, the twenty-three tales of the pilgrims. The word "performance" used by Lumiansky refers to the pilgrims' telling tales. As a result, the pilgrims' telling tales constitute the main core of Lumiansky's argument about the theatrical aspect of the *Canterbury Tales*, not their self-fashioning.

In his book *Chaucer's Drama of Style: Poetic Variety and Contrast in the Canterbury Tales* (1986), David C. Benson furthers the arguments about the dramatic approach to the *Canterbury Tales* and adds a new perspective to the theatricality of the *Canterbury Tales* discussed by Kittredge and Lumiansky. Benson indicates that "the dramatic principle is more comprehensive than its name might at first suggest; for its subject is not only the pilgrims' actions among themselves as they journey to Canterbury (the Roadside Drama proper), but also each of the tales as dramatic expression of their individual tellers" (*Chaucer's Drama* 5). According to Benson, the dramatic approach should be interpreted not as "a dramatic clash of different pilgrims" but as the drama of different styles of "different poets" in different tales, which turns the *Canterbury Tales* into a "literary contest" (*Chaucer's Drama* 20). As a result, the focus shifts not to the identity performances of the pilgrims but to the generic theatricality of the Canterbury pilgrims' tales in Benson's argument, which is also reflected in the title of his book.

John M. Ganim also joins the discussion about the dramatic approach to the *Canterbury Tales* in his book *Chaucerian Theatricality* (1990). He is more concerned with the theatrical presentation of the self as a performance through the manipulation of late medieval culture and literary forms in Chaucer's works. However, although Ganim analyses all the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* and emphasises the performativity of their reactions to each other, his focus is mainly based on stylistic theatricality. Still, his distinction lies in the fact that he includes the role of Chaucer the poet, his fictional pilgrims and his audience, because in this way, Ganim adds a social aspect to the dramatic approach to the *Canterbury Tales* and aims at analysing how Chaucer

manipulates the dominant culture of his day and the dominant literary discourses and forms (5-7). Besides, Ganim refers to Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* about the creation of the self and its social dimension, and claims that "Chaucerian characters both resemble and do not resemble the Renaissance dynamic" (6). Indeed, Ganim just takes into consideration the pilgrims, who have prologue to their tales. According to Ganim, through their monologues, only the Wife of Bath and the Pardoner can be regarded as the characters with a chance to fashion their selves. Yet, Ganim argues that "this apparent self-creation [by the Wife of Bath and the Pardoner] owes much to highly conventionalized and even ritualized forms such as the equally long self-descriptions of allegorical characters and the self-examination of the confessional mode that developed in the high Middle Ages" (6). Because Ganim pays special attention to the rhetorical performances of the pilgrims, he defines the Wife of Bath and the Pardoner as "theatrical performers" while he defines the Squire and the Franklin as "literary performers" (15). Through a Bakhtinian reading of the *Canterbury Tales*, Ganim argues that the transgression of the genre and social status division creates a carnivalesque depiction (19-21). Hence, he regards the "General Prologue" as a "pageantry," a "procession," or a "parade," which brings together people from different social backgrounds for this literary contest (33). Thus, it can be maintained that Ganim emphasises the generic theatricality in the *Canterbury Tales*, not the theatrical construction of the self, as Benson does.

It can be argued that although Lowes, Manly, Kittredge, Lumiansky, Benson and Ganim analyse the theatricality of the *Canterbury Tales*, their arguments are mainly about the theatricality of the relationship between the pilgrims and their tales. While these studies are functional in displaying the constructedness and the "construction in progress" of the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* through their tales, they do not deal with the theatrical construction of the self in the *Canterbury Tales*, which will be developed by this dissertation. To this line of discussion is added Donald Howard, who emphasises the bookness of the *Canterbury Tales* in his *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales* and thus the textuality of the pilgrims (63-67), and Marshall H. Leicester's studies on the textuality of the *Canterbury Tales* and the pilgrims. These two studies problematise the discussions on the individuality of the pilgrims and contribute to the lack of discussion

about their identity construction performances, let alone the theatricality of this construction. For instance, Leicester emphasises the importance of textuality in the discussion of the subject in the *Canterbury Tales* in his *The Disenchanted Self: Representing the Subject in the Canterbury Tales* (1990). Leicester dwells on the importance of references to textuality (I (A) 3177, I (A) 1201), which reveal the textuality of the pilgrims, and thus problematises and rejects their subjectivity as individuals through the self-conscious text. Thus, Leicester argues that the claims of the critics such as Lumiansky about the idea that the tales exist for the sake of the tellers, cannot be validated. On the contrary, according to Leicester, the dramatic approach to the *Canterbury Tales* disregards the voice in the tales that construct the tellers, which is defined as “impersonated artistry” (*The Disenchanted* 9). Contrary to Lumiansky, Leicester argues that the tales create their tellers, or in other words, the tales impersonate the tellers. Hence, Leicester focuses mainly on the tales and the voice in the tales, in order to find out more information about the tellers, and consults their depictions in the “General Prologue” only when these descriptions are in accordance with the impersonation of the tellers in their tales. Leicester’s main argument is that the tellers are produced by the tales, not the other way around, and thus these tales also shed light on the socio-cultural conditions of the fourteenth century. It is for this reason that the tales do not include original material but the already known narratives of medieval society, since the impersonated teller, that is the “disenchanted self,” needs to confront the generic expectations of the hierarchical society (*The Disenchanted* 2-28). Accordingly, he analyses the disenchanted selves of the Pardoner, the Wife of Bath and the Knight.

In addition to these studies on the textuality of the Canterbury pilgrims, there are also some studies, which emphasise that these pilgrims are not individuals but stereotypes. For instance, Jill Mann argues, in her book *Chaucer and the Medieval Estates Satire* (1973) that, despite their individualistic features, the Canterbury pilgrims should not be regarded as individual characters but as the stereotypical representatives of medieval estates. According to Mann, it is for this reason that the pilgrims are introduced by their professional titles. Hence, focusing mainly on the depictions of the pilgrims in the “General Prologue,” she defines the *Canterbury Tales* as an example of medieval estate

satire, and evaluates the individualistic features of the pilgrims as features that contribute to their moral failings in adapting to the norms of their estates (*Medieval* 1-16). Similarly, Olson argues that “[t]he seeming randomness of the order of the pilgrims in the prologue serves a further purpose in calling attention to the pilgrims not as characters but as sets of roles” (29). Thus, Olson claims that the pilgrims’ telling tales that are not in accordance with their estate roles and status reflect their breaching the limits of their estates and thus create indecorum (41). However, as Leicester states, the depictions in the “General Prologue” reveal that “the poem is in fact not an estates satire but a critique of an estates satire in the mode of deconstruction” (*The Disenchanted* 404). It can be claimed that it is through self-fashioning that this deconstruction is made possible, which means that an analysis of individuality in the *Canterbury Tales* is necessary and significant.

Patterson analyses the presentation of the subject in the *Canterbury Tales* in his *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (1991). He argues that due to their features that transgress their estate boundaries, Chaucer’s pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* should not be regarded as mere representatives of their estates but subjects with individual features. According to Patterson, while it is true that these subjects are influenced by the historical realities of their time, they also have distinctive and unusual features owing to which they have the “acts of self-fabrication” (*Chaucer and the Subject of History* 29). It is for this reason that Patterson emphasises the encounter of the externally imposed estate roles with internal desires of the pilgrims (Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 8-29). It is in this encounter scene that the individual pilgrims are depicted as shaping and displaying their identity performances.

In this respect, Susan Crane’s *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (2002) moves beyond all these studies in terms of its depiction of medieval individuality and identity performances. Incorporating performance studies into medieval studies, Crane deals with the identity performances of the aristocracy by analysing the formalised performances such as tournaments, feasts and maying ceremonies. She argues that these courtly ceremonies should be regarded as courtly performances, in which the courtly people shape and display their identities. As

a result, these courtly performances can be regarded as the reflections of externalised courtly identities (Crane, *The Performance* 1-9). Crane's main argument is that the members of the aristocracy perform and display their identities through some court performances, which draws attention to the performance of the self in the Middle Ages.

Furthering the arguments of Susan Crane on the performance of the self and combining them with Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning, this dissertation will claim that, through an analysis of self-fashioning in the *Canterbury Tales*, medieval identity performances can be extended to how ordinary people, people who were not aristocrats, that is, people who were not noble by blood, responded to the identity control in the Middle Ages. Chaucer does not represent the commoners only as the oppressed but as performing their identities in the *Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer displays that, through self-fashioning, they can fashion or shape their own identity politics, which will give them the power to resist the imposed identities of the medieval estate divisions, and fashion their selves through their identity performances, which are not courtly or elite but ordinary. At this point, it can be suggested that self-fashioning extends the identity performance of the individual, in that, it first deconstructs and then reconstructs the reiterative identity performances. Thus, presenting self-fashioning, Chaucer exhibits that the individual identity of each pilgrim becomes a product of her/his identity performance in the *Canterbury Tales*. This performance is constructed, performed and displayed in everyday life. Hence, everyday life practices stand out as important means for the ordinary pilgrims of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to fashion their selves.

As Pierre Bourdieu argues, the importance of everyday practices comes from the fact that they are the transmitters and agents of cultural signification systems unified in the habitus, that is, the centre where the practices are performed and thus realised, that is, actualised. A practiser needs to perform the expected practices in order to fit into and sustain the chain of cultural signification systems, in order to virtualise the socially constructed actual, which constitutes the core of identity performances as well (*Outline* 83-84). Yet, these performative practices do not mean mere imitation of previous practices but subversion and novelty, since although it is true that the practisers reproduce the practices, they reproduce these practices "in a *transformed form*" because

of their individuality (Bourdieu, *Outline* 97, emphasis original). This draws attention to the generative power of everyday practices. Although the reproduction of social practices implies that these are reproduced in the form of previous practices, this reproduction also includes new elements incorporated into these practices by the individuals according to their own conceptions of these practices, which results in reproduced social practices with some transformations. According to Phelan, “[t]his transformative becoming is the almost always elegiac function of performance theory and writing, if not performance itself” (11). It is this transformation that draws attention to the impact of self-fashioning as a subversive power on the social practices and signals an interaction between the individual identity and social practices.

There is the possibility of transformation in social practices, because in each reiterative performance, an individual’s identity meets the previous identity performances in her/his everyday practices and performs them according to her/his own individual reception. Hence, each identity performance carries the potential of transformation and thus of subversion, especially when the impact of self-fashioning is taken into consideration. Moreover, since each individual identity experiences this process, the community consisting of the identities of self-fashioning individuals tends to experience contesting paradigms due to the transformations in the identity performances of self-fashioning individuals, because they are empowered by their self-fashioning performances.

Victor Turner defines this contesting scene of conflicting paradigms as social drama, in which these conflicting paradigms, which are constructed by the individual identity performances of people, try to affirm their own paradigm or their ideals over the others (*Dramas* 14). This affirmation takes place in the form of social impositions. As, Bourdieu argues, the traditional, already fixed, social orders are eager to naturalise their arbitrary structure through the reproduction of a constructed-natural social structure, which limits the desires of the practisers in order to sustain the established social structure and help them internalise the constructed naturalness as in the case of the social classes and gender hierarchies (*Outline* 164-165). The impositions of the estates in the Middle Ages can be given as examples for such constructed naturalness.

According to medieval estate divisions, there were certain roles imposed on people by their estates and they were expected to conform to these roles. Yet, such impositions in fact do not have a totally negative control over (medieval) identities. On the contrary, there is the possibility of creating a change in these impositions, because, despite these impositions on the individual identities, owing to the evolutionary nature of social practices, these social dramas might give birth to new social paradigms and practices as explained by Victor Turner (*Dramas* 14-17) and Schechner (*Performance Theory* 193-194). Yet, the individual still needs other means to have control over her/his identity construction in addition to this possibility of change and thus renewal inherent in the social dramas, which accommodate a chance for the birth of new social paradigms. It is at this stage that self-fashioning comes to the scene and contributes to the formation of new paradigms first on the personal level and then, through the cumulative effect of such personal novelties, on the social level. Accordingly, as Victor Turner states, social dramas become the space “where conflicts are worked out in social action” (“Dewey” 34). Similarly, each performance in these social dramas becomes “a site of negotiation” (Carlson 20) between the individual identity and socially imposed roles. In accordance with these, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* can be defined as a social drama in which the identity performances of the pilgrims confront each other. In this social drama, Chaucer provides the pilgrims with a chance not only to display their self-fashioning, but also to receive the reactions of the society represented by other pilgrims. In this way, presenting them as the representatives of self-fashioning individuals, Chaucer sets these pilgrims as examples for medieval people to fashion their selves in their identity performances, which is also related with Greenblatt’s argument about the relationship between self-fashioning and literature.

Greenblatt draws attention to the relationship between literature and self-fashioning arguing that literature reflects human nature and thus literary characters become the reflections of living people (3). In this way, literature, as Greenblatt puts it, “invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one’s own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one’s control, the attempt to fashion other selves” (3). As a result, literary works are functional not only in reflecting human nature, but also in shaping it. Furthermore, according to Greenblatt,

literature acts “as a manifestation of the concrete behaviour of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behaviour is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes” (4). It is for this reason that the relationship between life and literature is very important. It is impossible to think literature as detached from society and social norms in which it exists, which might lead to the destruction of the social function of art. Likewise, it is also impossible to imagine literature just as a reflection of these norms, which might turn literature into a mere ideological structure. Rather, considering the social discourse of the texts and the fact that each text is embedded in its social, political and cultural background as Aers argues (4), it is necessary to note that literary works are also functional in shaping the society in which they are produced. This draws attention to the motive of Chaucer in representing self-fashioning in the *Canterbury Tales*.

Greenblatt draws attention to the encoding of the social norms by the author and the decoding of these norms by the reader during the reading process:

Social actions are themselves always embedded in systems of public signification, always grasped, even by their makers, in acts of interpretation, while the words that constitute the works of literature that we discuss here are by their very nature the manifest assurance of a similar embeddedness. Language, like other sign systems, is a collective construction; our interpretive task must be to grasp more sensitively the consequences of this fact by investigating both the social presence to the world of the literary text and the social presence of the world in the literary text. (5)

At this point, Stuart Hall’s ideas about “sender/message/receiver” (“Encoding” 91) relationship is also important, since he presents the role of language in this relationship. A sender encodes her/his message through language and sends it to a receiver through language again to decode it. Similarly, in the formation of identity, at first, the individual (the sender) tries to encode her/his identity (the message) in her/his behaviours and life style for the authorities (the receiver) to decode them. S/he also tries to decode the suppression of her/his identity by the authorities through questioning the impositions on her/his identity through legislations such as laws about costume or wages. These encoding and decoding processes also take place in literature. The authors are the encoders and the readers are the decoders of meaning. As a result, the message in communication through literature is again associated with the formation of “literary

and social identities” and the interrelationship between them (Greenblatt 6). In this process of communication, the role of the writer is very important. Greenblatt claims that “[a]mong artists the will to be the culture’s voice – to create the abstract and brief chronicles of the time – is a commonplace, but the same will may extend beyond art” (7). He draws attention to the motives of the author who wants to present a realistic depiction of her/his time. However, it is essential to note that the aim of the author is not just to create a work of art reflecting the social realities in her/his works but also to fashion these very realities (6-7).

Greenblatt lists the common features of such authors who represent self-fashioning in their works. First of all, these authors do not come from an upper class background, which implies that they might experience social mobility, which is influential on creating the proper setting for self-fashioning. Hence, they are able to give voice to the self-fashioning achieved by those who are considered to be different and strange, which turns the person into the “threatening Other” for the society since s/he will not conform to the social traditions and hierarchy, which might destroy the dominance of the authorities over the person (Greenblatt 9). Yet, Greenblatt indicates that “self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss” (9). It is this subversive formation that creates alternatives for the traditional system through the self-fashioning of the individuals.

As a self-fashioner himself, it was very appropriate for Chaucer to create self-fashioning characters. Chaucer’s life was shaped by different occupations that he had, the reflections of which can be seen in his writings. As the son of a wine merchant, he started his career “as [a] page” and later he became an “official in noble and royal households” (Myers 100). He succeeded to enter the circles of the aristocracy through upward social mobility. He worked as the Controller of Customs, a Justice of Peace, a Clerk of the King’s Works under the reign of Richard II and he was frequently sent abroad to conduct state business, which would give him the opportunity to experience Italian influence in literature through his encounter with Dante and Boccaccio (Baugh

250-51; Tuchman 298). Furthermore, as Janette Dillon suggests, the fact that he lived in London, “a national and international crossroads” of the fourteenth century, also created opportunities for him, in that, he was acquainted with a “great centre of business and trade” (79). This would enable Chaucer to have the first hand experience of the people that he represented in his works in addition to “the insight into character,” which would give him the title of being “the first Englishman who was a man of the world and created poetry out of what he saw around him” (Myers 101).

Besides, the most distinguishing feature of Chaucer is his choice of English in his works. Although Chaucer spent much of his time at court where the dominant language and culture was French (Baugh 252), as Janette Dillon argues, his Englishness in language and character elevates Chaucer as the father of English language and literature, which was already accepted by his own generation (142). In fact, Janette Dillon associates Chaucer’s use of the vernacular in his works with his acquaintance with Dante and Petrarch who also wrote in the vernacular (79). Yet, it would be restrictive to limit Chaucer’s use of English as an extension of Italian influence on him. Medieval England was a three lingual country due to the impact of the Norman Conquest: the Latin of the Church, the French of the nobility and the English of the commoners. However, in the second half of the fourteenth century, the dominance of English over French was prominent in England both in literature and everyday life. As Schultz explains, the preference for English was owing to the growing sense of nationalism in England as a result of the Hundred Years War and papal schism, which ended up with the choice of English rather than French for translation and interpretation of Latin at grammar schools and the choice of English as the language of pleading at courts, which would be followed by the choice of English as the language of chancellor in his opening speech at Parliament (65). There was a turn to English in almost all levels of life, from politics to literature. Accordingly, the English of the commoners became the “supreme” language (Holmes 135). The dominance of English throughout the country would symbolise the change of the relationship between the nobility and the commoners as well. Under such conditions, it would be inevitable for Chaucer to write in English, which can be interpreted as a part of his own self-fashioning as a poet. As a

poet, who achieved upward social mobility, English would be much preferable for him in order to reach more people as well.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is a very good example not only for his power in using the vernacular language, but also representing a society engaged in performances for self-fashioning. The *Canterbury Tales* has been praised greatly in terms of being "the best account of contemporary life" (Schultz 66) and as "a pageant of fourteenth-century life, a *comédie humaine*, in which a group of thirty people of various classes act their parts on this mundane stage in such a way as to reveal their private lives and habits, their changing moods as well as their prevailing dispositions, their qualities good and bad" (Baugh 260). This is very much in line with Paul Strohm's argument that the literary texts reproduce the social paradigms with certain changes, since the texts also display the search for alternative social paradigms as it happened in the fourteenth century (*Social Chaucer* ix-xiii). Indeed, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* reflects the social transformation from the feudal relations to more individual, monetary based relations in the fourteenth century England. However, it can be argued that Chaucer wanted not only to reflect but also to shape this social transformation in his *Canterbury Tales* (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 1-23). In the light of these, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is a very good example of the search for a new paradigm. This search for a new social paradigm is represented by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales* through his self-fashioning pilgrims. As a result, it can be suggested that the aim of Chaucer in presenting self-fashioning was not only to reflect or represent this search for a new paradigm, but also to influence and to shape this very search by setting his self-fashioning pilgrims as examples for the people of his time. Representing medieval life and people, as Cooper indicates, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* reflects the changing world of late medieval society, which lost the stability of feudalism and its hierarchical structure, and turned out to be a dynamic and evolving society, which was prone to social mobility due to the demographic changes following the Black Death and the increasing interest in money and professionalism to be able to sustain a place in the social hierarchy (*The Structure* 6). All of these social factors brought social mobility, which made it possible for the individuals to fashion their selves, as represented by Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims.

Actually, Mann defines the “General Prologue” to the *Canterbury Tales* as ““a satiric representation of all classes of society’ – the form of an estates satire” (*Medieval* 1). Mann mainly argues that these pilgrims are represented by Chaucer to satirise their failings to conform to their estate roles (*Medieval* 1-3). Yet, it should be noted that Chaucer does not reproduce the estate division in its traditional form but he prefers subverting the traditional boundaries, which is functional in his fashioning the Canterbury pilgrims. Hence, although Mann argues that Chaucer destroys the estates order in the “General Prologue,” since his depiction of the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* “destroys the idea of a total society in which all have their allotted place and relation to each other” (*Medieval* 7), it can be argued that this reproduction of Chaucer is functional in depicting the repercussions of the social, economic and religious changes on the individuals.

Accordingly, it can be claimed that the aim of Chaucer to make use of the estates form in the “General Prologue” is not to satirise the characters but to present their self-fashioning. As a result, although Blamires argues that “Chaucer is committed to the ‘dominant’ social view and categorically does not sympathize with political dissent” (“Chaucer the Reactionary” 524), it can be claimed that Chaucer, in fact, modifies the dominant view including the newly emerging social groups such as merchants and franklins in addition to the neglected group, that is, women. As a result, Chaucer’s aim is “to include new and previously unrecognized social groupings” in his alternative paradigm (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* x). It is true that Chaucer roughly acknowledges the three estate structure, but this was functional only in “gently criticizing this simple notion, and demonstrating that it was an unworkable model” in the fourteenth century (Dyer 17). With this aim, Chaucer exhibits the transformation of values from the feudal relations to the monetary relations in the late Middle Ages by incorporating the newly emerging groups (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 3-4) through the Merchant and the Franklin as well as the Wife of Bath.

The Wife of Bath is also a reminder of the fact that, besides the merchants and the bourgeoisie, women gained a significant higher status in the society in the fourteenth century. As Janette Dillon argues, this was an outcome of the fact that “[t]he Lollards,

followers of Wyclif from the 1380s onwards, were unorthodox [...] in their elevation of women to higher levels of literacy and power” ignoring St. Paul’s preaching about women’s place in society and in the Church activities (66). Therefore, women, who were always considered to be the descendants of either Eve or Virgin Mary, began to have an important social status. To this comparatively improved social status of women was added the influence of the women engaged in trade who presented themselves as able enough to work in the masculine sphere of trade (Shahar 1-10). Thus, it can be claimed that Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* transgresses the traditional three estate structure, which also proves that the definition of estate is not fixed but open to change due to the social and economic changes. This is both a reason and a result of people’s self-fashioning as in the case of the Canterbury pilgrims. It was this self-fashioning of medieval people that contributed to the change in the traditional three estate structure of medieval society as represented in the *Canterbury Tales*.

As a result of increasing individualism, the survivors of the plague, the commoners in general and the wealthy merchants, the tenants and the women in particular, rejected external limitations on their identities imposed on them by the three estate structure and they turned to “[s]elf-interest” (McIntosh 136). Hence, although Robertson claims that “the medieval world was innocent of our profound concern for tension” and it is “[w]e [who] project dynamic polarities on history as class struggles, balances of power, or as conflicts between economic realities and traditional ideals” while “the medieval world with its quiet hierarchies knew nothing of these things” (*A Preface* 51), the late medieval society, especially the society of fourteenth century England was a very dynamic one. It experienced many social contests and struggles due to the changing socio-economic and cultural values especially following the Black Death of 1348-9. These transforming values gave birth to the Peasants Revolt of 1381 and the change in the feudal relations from sworn loyalties to monetary relations. Therefore, the values of the post-plague community did not have much in common with the values of the pre-plague community and this meant increasing self-consciousness and individualism. All these changes culminated in increasing social mobility, as a result of which the late medieval English society became not a homogenous but a heterogeneous one (Aers 9-17). Recognising these changes, David Aers analyses the individual identity in late

medieval England. He chooses Langland's *Piers Plowman*, Margery Kempe, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and does not refer to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Neither does he refer to the identity performances. Yet, the performance of the self through self-fashioning, which had not been analysed before, is one of the most important aspects of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and it will be analysed in this dissertation. In this way, this dissertation will also contribute to the discussion of individuality in the Middle Ages.

In order to analyse the self-fashioning of the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*, it will be necessary to refer to the function and significance of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. Pilgrimage is one of the rites of passage, which creates liminality for the commoners. With its increasing importance in Christian culture during the Middle Ages, pilgrimage symbolised a departure from secular life through a journey, which meant a change in the stable life of medieval people. Hence, pilgrimage meant not only internal but also external change (Turner and Turner 3-7; Howard, *Writers* 11-12). This is also in accordance with the fact that pilgrimage is a processional performance, which is organised and ritualised (Schechner, *Performance Theory* 177-178). It liberates the pilgrim from her/his everyday obligations and limitations of her/his estate creating "voluntary liminality" in search of religious refinement (Turner and Turner 9). It is significant, therefore, that Chaucer's pilgrims represent a cross-section of fourteenth century English society. As Victor Turner indicates, the pilgrim in this liminal stage becomes an "actor-pilgrim" participating in ritualistic and symbolic activity to experience some form of either material transformation such as recovering from a sickness or spiritual transformation such as cleansing from sins (*Dramas* 197). Similarly, as Howard suggests, pilgrimage has a kind of "carnival spirit" and means "a fine way to escape duty, debt, or the law" (*Writers* 14, 15). As a result, pilgrimage was also regarded as "pretext for travel for pleasure" in the Middle Ages (Piponnier and Mane 130). It was believed that people went on pilgrimages for socialising or escaping their duties as well as for religious motives.

In this respect, pilgrimage becomes a cultural performance, which does not merely reflect the social structure, but also evaluates, criticises and fashions it. According to

Victor Turner, there is a mutual relationship between the performative cultural events such as pilgrimages and social systems (*The Anthropology* 21-24) and this change occurs at a liminal stage. All these form what Arnold van Gennep defines as the rites of passage in his book *Rites de Passage*, which was first published in French in 1908. Gennep argues that in ritualised cultural performances, such as pilgrimages, there are moments for the active participants in this performance to be freed from the constraints of socio-economic and political systems. Thus, these cultural performances become rites of passage. This is also defined by Victor Turner as a liminal condition, in which contesting social structures come together and constitute a potential for creating an “unlimited series of alternative social arrangements” (*Dramas* 14; *From Ritual* 11). Gennep lists three phases of rites of passage: separation (preliminal); margin or limen, that is, transition (liminal); and reaggregation or incorporation (postliminal) (10-11). In the light of these phases, Victor Turner argues that the performance of a person in the liminal stage is related to her/his pre-liminal status and influences her/his postliminal status (*From Ritual* 25-26). The liminal status gives a person the chance to play with the existing cultural performances and practices. Thus, it will be wrong to define the liminality as a negative status. Rather, Victor Turner claims that liminality should be regarded as a generative status, in which the individual can experiment with the previous performances and reproduce them in a new and probably altered way (*From Ritual* 34-41). Likewise, Victor Turner states that liminality can be defined as “a storehouse of possibilities, not a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structures” (“Dewey” 42) and it is achieved during a process. This process is the transmitter of “a continuous turbulent process of transformation” (Schechner, *Performance Theory* 156-157). As Victor Turner further argues, “[t]he social world is a world in becoming, not in being” (*Dramas* 24), which leads to a sense of evolution and transformation in the social paradigms and practices. Thus, social dramas take place among the groups with common values or traditions on a public stage in a public setting like the pilgrimage in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

Similar to Gennep’s three phases of the rites of passage, Victor Turner refers to the four phases in which the social dramas are performed: breach, crisis, redressive action and reintegration. In order for a social drama to start, it is necessary first of all to breach the

established social norms, which leads to a crisis in the established social norms. Hence starts the redressive action of the members of the established order to control crisis through some redressive action; then comes reintegration in which the contesting paradigms are reintegrated into social practices through recognition (*Dramas* 37-42; *From Ritual* 69, 92; “Dewey” 39). These phases explain the Canterbury pilgrims’ breaching the limitations of their estates, which results in a crisis in the reproduction of their traditional estate roles. This crisis is confronted by redressive action, which is symbolised by the pilgrims’ interrupting each other and having conflicts with each other. However, it can be claimed that the reintegration is achieved in the end, which can be inferred from the fact that, despite the crisis and redressive action, none of the pilgrims leave the group (at least in the existing form of the *Canterbury Tales*). This can be interpreted as a reflection of the fact that each pilgrim’s self-fashioning is reintegrated into the chain of reiterative identity performances. As a result, as Strohm states, it can be suggested that “Chaucer has used the vehicle of a temporally and socially defined pilgrimage to inscribe a community of mixed discourse that models the possible harmony of mixed state” (*Social Chaucer* 172). In order to achieve this *discordia concors*, Chaucer attributes to the Canterbury pilgrims, who are resembled to “the actors in the drama” and defined as “actor-Pilgrims” by Lumiansky (4), a chance to display their self-fashioning through their identity performances in the communal setting of pilgrimage.

As Victor Turner suggests, pilgrimage is bound to a sense of both *communitas* and individuality (*Dramas* 202-203). According to Victor Turner, although pilgrimage is a communal event, each individual performs her/his part/role in this communal performance according to her/his own conceptions, which leads to an interpreted version of the previous identity performances, as in the case of the social classes or gender hierarchies (*From Ritual* 45-46). A similar sense of *communitas* and individuality was also valid for the estate divisions of medieval society, in which each estate was expected to perform certain roles. However, the sense of *communitas* in the medieval estate structure did not mean that it led to a lack of individuality. Rather, the impact of individual performers and their individual identity performances was evident on the change in the estate structure in the late medieval period. It can be argued that

this change was a product of self-fashioning people represented by the self-fashioning pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Hence, it can be claimed that, through the pilgrimage setting in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer extends the identity performances, which were limited to courtly people by Susan Crane in her book *The Performance of Self*, to the commoners. In this pilgrimage setting, which makes it possible for a number of people from different social backgrounds to come together, Chaucer displays how the commoners respond to the impositions of the three estate structure on their identity through self-fashioning. Hence, pilgrimages can also be regarded as a liminal phenomenon, which brought different social groups and thus different social paradigms together. The pilgrimage provides questions whether the commoners are just in the position of the oppressed. Through self-fashioning, the pilgrims create their own identity politics problematising the traditional binary opposition between the oppressor and the oppressed. Such kind of a chance gives them the power to resist the identities imposed on them and fashion their own selves through their identity performances, which are not courtly or elite but ordinary and a very important source of power in identity politics.

In order to display pilgrims' self-fashioning performances, Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales* employs their costumes, their mounts, the food they consume, their relations with each other and their tales, all of which are part of their daily identity performances. Moreover, it can be argued that the pilgrims' aspirations, costumes, the food they like, their ways of understanding both themselves and each other cannot be limited to the estate literature arguments. Therefore, this dissertation analyses costumes, mounts and food of the pilgrims and their relations with each other in the *Canterbury Tales* as important everyday performances of the pilgrims that show how they fashion themselves. Actually, as Fred Davis states, costume or clothing has already been acknowledged as "a visual *language*, with its own distinctive grammar, syntax, and vocabulary" (3, emphasis original) and thus as a means of communication. Fred Davis defines clothing as "a code" which is "heavily context-dependent" (5, 8) and hence needs to be decoded. Costume is a social sign and the signifier of one's estate and rank within a specific estate. For instance, in the Middle Ages, there were differences in religious and secular clothing and the costumes of pope, bishop, monk were expected to

reflect their renunciation, as imposed by the Sumptuary Laws. Similarly, university gowns changed according to the degree of the clerks. Costume was also a signifier of one's religion even before the Sumptuary Laws, in that, the Lateran Council in 1215 set special signs on costume for the Jews and the Saracens (Piponnier and Mane 114-136). Furthermore, costume also indicated age, sex and affiliation so that clothes were both to reveal and conceal certain information about the individual (Schneider and Weiner 1-4). As a result, as Schneider and Weiner suggest, costume appears as "politically and socially salient" (3). Besides, compared with the performative acts, which are the direct constituents in a performance, Sedgwick defines costume as periperformative, since "periperformatives, signifying that, though themselves not performatives, they are *about* performatives and, more properly, that they cluster *around* performatives" (*Touching* 68, emphasis original). Accordingly, costume becomes a very important part of identity performances, which is also revealed through the argument that "the glory of God is man and the glory of man is his clothing" (Piponnier and Mane 121). Hence, all parts of everyday life practices, from dressing and eating to speaking, are functional in understanding how ordinary people outside courts, represented by Chaucer's pilgrims, conceived themselves in relation to the others in the Middle Ages. Similarly, the Canterbury pilgrims' daily practices become the embodiments of their distinctive individualistic features. Accordingly, their identity performances shaped by their self-fashioning become the arena for the past identity performances' being encountered by the present performances and give birth to a distinct performance which adds novelty to the sequence of performances.

As a result, the methodology of the dissertation will be to provide both a diachronic and synchronic analysis of both the performer (the pilgrim) and the performance (her/his profession), which is also functional in depicting the differences in the reiterative performances of these professions. In accordance with these, it can be claimed that Chaucer's naming his pilgrims with their professional titles also requires such kind of a unification of diachronic and synchronic analysis to reveal the distinctiveness of the performance of a certain performer, which is shaped by self-fashioning. At this point, it would be beneficial to remember the definition of profession as well. According to the *OED*, profession means "[t]he action of declaring, acknowledging, or avowing an

opinion, belief, intention, practice, etc.; declaration avowal” (“profession” 4) as well as “[t]he occupation which one professes to be skilled in and to follow” (“profession” 6). This is also in accordance with the meaning of “to profess” as well, in that, “to profess” means “[t]o declare openly, announce, affirm” (“profession” 2) as well as “[t]o make profession of, to lay claim to (some quality, feeling, etc.); often implying insincerity, as ‘to profess and not practise’; to make protestation of; to pretend to” (“profession” 3). In the light of these definitions, it can be suggested that Chaucer’s naming his characters first with their professional titles, which reveals their social identities such as the “Knight,” the “Prioress,” or the “Wife” of Bath, requires such kind of a combination of diachronic and synchronic analysis to reveal the distinctiveness of the performance of a certain performer, which is shaped by her/his self-fashioning performance.

This dissertation will analyse the self-fashioning performance of the pilgrims in two parts: their material performances and their rhetorical performances. The depictions of the pilgrims in the “General Prologue,” their costumes, food, horses, the accessories they carry such as relics and swords will be discussed as their material performances, because these material items are functional in contributing to the pilgrims’ self-fashioning performances materially. Their tales, their prologues to their tales and their interactions with each other will be examined as their rhetorical performances, since these rhetorical activities form and display the rhetorical part of self-fashioning performances. These material and rhetorical performances can also be defined as the pilgrims’ “visible and audible performances” (Crane, *The Performance* 175). As a result, the dissertation will exclude the pilgrims who have no tales, such as the Yeoman, the Guildsmen and the Plowman, since only dwelling on their material performances as reflected in the “General Prologue” would be limited, because they do not talk about themselves directly but there is only mediated access to them by Chaucer the narrator. Similarly, the pilgrims who have tales but who are not described in the “General Prologue,” such as the Nun’s Priest, the Second Nun and the Canon’s Yeoman will not be included in this dissertation either. Hence, the chapters of the dissertation will be formed according to the type of pilgrims’ identity performances.

Chapter I will analyse the self-fashioning of the Knight and the Squire through their nobility performances. The chapter will first analyse the background of the military estate and the development of the ideals of knighthood from its beginning to the fourteenth century in order to present the changes in the performance of knighthood. In relation to the concept of knighthood in the fourteenth century, the chapter will especially emphasise the emergence of the indenture system, which constitutes the basis of the chapter's arguments in relation to the Knight and the Squire's performance of nobility. Due to the impact of the indenture system, which had already started in the thirteenth century, the sworn loyalty system between the lord and his knights transformed into an indenture system, which meant a contract system between the lord and his knights. In this contractual system, the most important feature of a knight was his military skills. In this respect, referring to Chaucer's ideas on gentility in his "Gentillesse Ballad" and the Wife of Bath's arguments in relation to the individualistic nature of gentility in her tale, the chapter will argue that the Knight and the Squire claim gentility and nobility through their military deeds. Hence, they fashion themselves not as men noble by blood but as soldiers noble by deed, as a result of which nobility becomes a performance for the Knight and the Squire.

Chapter II will deal with the self-fashioning of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner through their performance of gendered religious identity. Although their "General Prologue" portraits reveal information about their gender identities, the Friar and the Summoner are not included in this chapter, because each tells tales, which aim at criticising the other rather than directly reflecting their religious identities as in the case of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner. The chapter will first present the theoretical discussion of gender performativity and the impositions of religion on gender identities. Then, in relation to the identity performance of the Prioress, giving brief information about the development of nunneries, which impose the renunciation of gender identity, the chapter will argue that the Prioress refuses to renounce her gender identity and fashions herself as a feminine religious figure. As for the Monk's self-fashioning, after discussing the importance of the masculinity performance of the male in society to have a recognised gender identity, and comparing the secular and religious masculinity conceptions in late medieval England, the chapter will claim that the Monk also refuses

to renounce his gender identity in order to achieve a socially accepted self and fashions himself as a masculine religious figure. When it comes to the Pardoner's self-fashioning, after giving a brief analysis of the development of the intolerance against homosexuality, the chapter will argue that the Pardoner also does not renounce his gender identity and fashions himself as a homosexual clergyman. It will be claimed that, despite their rejection of renouncing their gender identities in their material performances as reflected in the "General Prologue," the rhetorical performances of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner in their tales reveal that they perform their role as the members of the clergy soundly, which exhibit their self-fashioning through their performance of gendered religious identity.

Chapter III will examine the self-fashioning of the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic through the performance of their learned self. The chapter will start with the presentation of the historical development of universities and draw attention to the importance of university education in shaping one's estate during the medieval period. It will be argued that university education endowed one with a distinctive social status. Hence, the chapter will analyse the medieval university education as cultural capital, which provided one not only with a profession but also with social esteem. The chapter will claim that university education became a means for people to reject the social impositions on their identities and to fashion their own selves as learned men as in the case of the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic. The Man of Law is excluded from this chapter, because although he is also a learned man as revealed by his depiction in the "General Prologue," he might have been educated at the Inns of Court rather than university.

Chapter IV will evaluate the self-fashioning of the Wife of Bath through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. The chapter will argue that the Wife of Bath's body can be regarded as a space that helps her fashion her identity. Although the Wife of Bath's main concern is the performance of femininity and sexuality, this performance is bound to, and thus directly related with, her performance as a woman who is actively performing in the masculine market spaces. Therefore, it will be claimed that the Wife of Bath's body gains agency, first of all, economically as money (and thus

power) holder, providing its agent not only with the social status but also with the chance and the right to speak out her sexuality. Accordingly, it will be claimed that the Wife of Bath's body brings together her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity and becomes a space where the female desire for sexuality meets male desires and claims authority over the male presenting itself not as the passive recipient of male desire but an active producer of sexual desire as a female body. In this respect, the chapter will claim that the Wife of Bath's body becomes a liminal space where her sexuality and her material concerns act together to help the Wife of Bath fashion her identity through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity.

In the Conclusion, a general assessment of the self-fashioning performances of the Knight, the Squire, the Prioress, the Monk, the Pardoner, the Clerk, the Doctor of Physic and the Wife of Bath will be made, and it will be asserted that Chaucer presents self-fashioning in his *Canterbury Tales* although Greenblatt presents self-fashioning as a Renaissance concept. Hence, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* will be regarded as an example of medieval self-fashioning representing medieval identity performances.

CHAPTER I
NOBILITY AS PERFORMANCE: THE SELF-FASHIONING OF
THE KNIGHT AND THE SQUIRE

But, for ye speken of swich gentillesse
 As is descended out of old richesse,
 That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
 Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
 Looke who that is moost vertuouse alway,
 Pyrvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
 To do the gentil dedes that he kan;
 Taak him for the grettest gentil man
 [...]
 he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis
 (*The Wife of Bath's Tale*, 1109-1116, 1170)

To be of noble birth was not, indeed, absolutely essential to receiving the honour of Knighthood, for men of low descent frequently attained it. But it required a distinguished display of personal merit to raise such persons out of the class where they were born [...]. (Scott, "Essay on Chivalry," 112)

The Knight and the Squire are the representatives of the military group in the *Canterbury Tales*. Hence, their self-fashioning is based on their performance as military men who claim nobility by deed. Their self-fashioning can be observed in their material performances in the "General Prologue" and in their rhetorical performances in their respective tales and their interactions with the other pilgrims. They display a different concept of knighthood and accordingly a changed knighthood performance in their everyday life performances as members of the military estate. Thus, it would be beneficial to briefly take a look at the transformation of knighthood and its form in the fourteenth century. It is observed that the transformation in the performance of knighthood produced a continuous rise in the social status of knights because of socio-economic reasons, and created a space for the Knight and the Squire's self-fashioning as men noble by deed through their nobility performances. In this way, the diachronic

performances of knighthood will be confronted by the synchronic performance of knighthood in the fourteenth century exemplified by the Knight and the Squire in the *Canterbury Tales*, who will add up their own performances of knighthood to the line of knighthood performances.

Chivalry, which was an indispensable part of the medieval military ideal, went through important changes throughout the centuries both in terms of its ideals and the social status attributed to knights that came with it from its birth to its decline in the fourteenth century. Chivalry originated from “the Germanic concept of a youth entering man’s estate with the ceremonial gift of arms from his father, a kinsman, or his tribal chief” (Norman 143-144). Even in this very early dubbing ceremony of a knight, which can be defined as a moment of social performance, the idea of being dubbed by a figure of authority was existent. That is, to symbolically bear the chivalric past of the arm-giver signified the reiterative aspect of knighthood performance. This also brought the concept of honour into knighthood; the honour of the possibility of continuing the chivalric values of the past into the future.

Gautier defines this “German rite” as integrating “all the military elements of [...] future chivalry” and depicts the scene as follows: “The scene takes place beneath the shades of an ancient forest. The warrior tribe is assembled and a solemn ceremony is in preparation. A very young man advances into the midst of the assembly, and a chief of the tribe who is present puts into his hands a *framea* [double-edged javelin] and a shield” (4). The handing over of arms had an important ritualistic aspect, since it epitomised that the young man was after all not just a man of his family but a component of his society as a man who would always bear his arms as a pattern (Gautier 4). This emblematises the metamorphosis of a common man into a man of society who would work for the protection and thus the well-being of his society. As a result, the attribution of social responsibilities to a warrior contributed to the social aspect of this early type of warrior emphasising the significance of the warrior in society.

Following this Germanic rite of handing over of arms to a young man, the origin of chivalry can be traced to the sixth and seventh centuries and to the Byzantine and the Carolingian heavy cavalry of the eighth century. As Turnbull indicates, the introduction of heavy cavalry started “the more mundane question of expense” (7) of equipping a knight with a horse and expensive items, which would be solved by feudalism in the following years, since feudalism would provide knights with all the necessary items in return for their military service. The expense of equipment for a knight necessitated a certain economic status to supply the money required and it was natural that the men of high birth could meet this requirement (Keen, *Chivalry* 1-2). Thus, although a knight was low in social status at the early stages of knighthood performance, which was also reflected through the Anglo-Saxon word *cniht*, which meant a young servant (Norman 141; Jones 4), economic means became a determining factor to define the social status of a knight with the introduction of cavalry into knighthood.

This heavy cavalry tradition was developed by the Normans who brought their chivalrous tradition with the Conquest to England and combined this chivalric tradition with military aristocracy (Turnbull 7-8). This change in knighthood performance was revealed by the change of the words used for a knight. Actually, during the early years of feudalism, the term *cniht* was still used to signify a warrior, who was serving as a vassal to his lord with all the necessary equipment, fighting on horseback. Yet, William I distributed land among his followers after the Conquest, and so “William’s *cnihts* became the landed gentry of the future” (Jones 5). Therefore, although these knights were of lower status in origin, they would earn a higher social status as a result of the important role they played in the Conquest. This transformation was of great importance, because it demonstrated the changing social status of a knight from a low social standing to a higher one. Nevertheless, despite the fact that knights began to rise in the social strata with the introduction of feudalism after the Norman Conquest, the meaning of the word *cniht* was still confusing, since it was endowed with different meanings with the Norman Conquest. Hence, following the word *cniht*, the French word *chevalier* came into use as a reflection of this change in knighthood performance after the Norman Conquest. Meaning “horseman” (Norman 143; Gautier 5) or “a horse-warrior” (Jones and Ereira 140), the word *chevalier* draws attention to the fact that the

idea of a knight became inseparable from a mounted soldier, because horse was almost a prerequisite to become a knight.

In addition to the French word *chevalier*, the Latin word *miles*, or “chivalry *militia*,” was another word used for knight (Gautier 5). Duby argues that this term, in fact, began to be employed first in 1025, and “[a]fter 1175, the title *miles* regularly preceded the patronymic of all knights and was connected, as a rule, with another title: *dominus, messire*” (*The Three Orders* 294). Actually, this title was given to the personages of authority who were considered to be the representatives of the power of Christ on earth such as king, bishop and count in the eleventh century. Yet, towards the end of the twelfth century, the title was also given to knights, which again signified the rise in the status of knights. This signalled that the strict feudal hierarchy was loosening and this would generate new room for knights to climb up the social ladder.

However, Gautier argues that chivalry should not be confused and equated with feudalism. Feudalism was based on a commutation of land and military service, and the feudal rights were heritable unlike the chivalry of this early period (5). However, it should not be forgotten, at this point, that knighthood would also become hereditary in the following ages and, for a son to be knighted, it would be required that his father should also be a knight. As a result, although initially chivalry was an ideal rather than a socio-economic system like feudalism, it would also transform into an institution due to the changing socio-economic conditions of knights, which would lead to changes in knighthood performance. Still, it is necessary to point out that feudalism contributed much to the rising social status of knights.

As a projection of this rise, it was the period when the title “squire” came into use for the sons of knights who would have the right to be knighted in the future as “a sort of reserve,” which warranted that “they would not be confused with the common people” (Duby, *The Three Orders* 295). This was the testimony of the fact that the distinction of knights as a separate group was reinforced and guaranteed by the rules preserving the rights of squires as knights-in-the-making. Likewise, according to the *OED*, the first English usage of the term “squire” meaning “a young man of birth attendant upon a

knight” dates back to c. 1290 (“squire”), which signals that squires started to be recognised as much as knights as a distinct military group from the thirteenth century onwards.

In addition to these changes in the social status of knights from the twelfth century onwards, the twelfth century also brought changes to the performance of knighthood. As Bloch indicates, during the twelfth century, it was believed that “[a] knight was not merely ‘made’; he was ‘ordained’” which meant that “[t]he whole body of dubbed knights constituted an ‘order’, *ordo*” (314). In fact, the idea of order was initially used not as analogous to religious orders, but just as an indication of the institutionalisation of knighthood (Bloch 314). This would change with the decision of the Church to modify knighthood and to have it under control, because it included violence as opposed to the ideals of Christianity. As Keen asserts, the Church was disturbed by the fact that knighthood “had its origin in the violent *mores* of a violent society” (*Nobles* 2, emphasis original). Although it was a prerequisite for a knight to safeguard his society by killing the enemies, the bloody aspect of knighthood began to be questioned. This questioning initiated the need for civilisation and modification of knighthood, which would be supplied by the Church.

Accordingly, the Church undertook to modify “one of the worst aspects of chivalry,” that is, its bloody aspect (Norman 148). According to Gautier, the underlying reason for this was that “[b]eing unable to prevent war, the Church Christianized the soldier,” and thus chivalry became a transformed “Germanic custom idealized by the Church” (4). As a result of the rising status of knights in society, the Church wanted to get the benefit of knighthood leading the powerful and brave knights to secure the Holy Land from the attacks of the infidel. Thus, it should be noted that the Church, in fact, did not eliminate bloodshed, but only channelled it to its own benefit. The knight was charged with the duty of protecting the weak, the women and the children at home and to safeguard the Holy Land against the infidels during the Crusades. In this way, violence was directed to the infidel by the Church itself, and the knight was almost promised a divine reward for his duty in defending the Holy Land. This novelty in knighthood performance was the new code of behaviour for a knight to fulfill by refining “the brutish and callous

manners” of early knighthood performances (Norman 147). As a result, as Crouch indicates, while it is right that “knighthood emerged from the Teutonic forests,” it “was tutored into civilisation and chivalry by the Catholic Church” (12). Although Gautier claims that this was not the glorification of war but the protection of the Holy Land (3), it was still paradoxical, in that, it did not eliminate the violence of fighting and killing for whatever reason it was. Yet, the significance of the impact of the Church on the ideals of knighthood is that it stipulated the religious aspect of the knight as a Christian soldier promoting “the Christian theory of war” (Gautier 3), which forbade war among the Christians, but promoted it against the common enemy of all Christians, that is, the infidels. This produced another change in knighthood performance and led to the integration of knights into the upper estates with their mission to protect the Church and to fight for Christianity and the Holy Land.

The religious aspect of knighthood was glorified to such an extent that knight was treated as a soldier of Christ. Nevertheless, the brutal aspect of fighting, which was the so-called modified aspect of chivalry by the Church, was still persistent although it was channelled against the religious enemy. As a result, in order to enhance the religious aspect of knighthood, the need to define the chivalric duties of a Christian knight came to the foreground. John of Salisbury, for instance, in *Policraticus* listed these duties as follows:

To protect the Church, to attack faithlessness, to venerate the priesthood, to avert injuries to the poor, to pacify provinces, to shed blood (as the formula of their oath instructs) for their brothers, and to give up their lives if necessary. [...] But to what end? In order that they may serve either rage or vanity or avarice or their own private will? By no means. Rather, they serve in order that they may execute judgments assigned to them, according to which each attends not to his own will but to the will of God, the angels and men by reason of equity and the public utility. I have said ‘in order that they may execute’ because just as judges prescribe judgments, so soldiers perform their duty by executing judgment. Above all, ‘this is the glory of all His saints’. For those who act this way are saints and those who are most devoted in their faith in God serve the prince most loyally; and those who seek their faith in God amongst the glory of things most effectively promote the glory of their own virtues. (VI.8.116-117)

Evidently, knight was transformed almost into a saint on the condition that he acted as a brave soldier of Christ/God. Hence, all the chivalric activities were given a religious

significance. It is for this reason that Gautier defines the chivalry of the eleventh and twelfth century as “the chivalry of the Crusades” and enumerates the “ten commandments” of this new form of chivalry, which were the imitations of the Ten Commandments in the Bible (9). These commandments demanded not only full obedience but also declared knights as the protector of the country, the Church and the weak ordering them to fight against the infidel as their duty (Gautier 9-10). Moreover, as Keen emphasises, this religious aspect raised the status of knights more, since it added “a newly specific religious orientation to the role of knighthood, that helped to put the estate of chivalry on a par with the priesthood in its Christian service” (*Nobles* 2). Accordingly, while the clergy dedicated themselves to peace among Christian countries, knights dedicated themselves to war against the infidel in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, and they were collaborating with the clergy for this aim.

During the taming process of knights by the Church, the cult of Virgin Mary in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was also of great importance since it paved the way for knights’ gaining refinement through the concept of the ideal love of a noble lady (Norman 145-46), which would also be glorified in the romances of the period. Virgin Mary, as the mother of Christ, became the embodiment of the idealised virtues a lady needed to have. Therefore, if a knight could earn the favour of such a virtuous lady, this would help him improve his virtues as well. As a result, idealised love emerged as another very important aspect of chivalry. However, Gautier criticises this aspect of romances claiming that “[t]he setting is always a lovely pasture, clothed with beautiful flowers, and the air filled with birds, through which the young knight proceeds in search of the unknown. They are nothing but insolent defiances, magnificent duels, enchanted castles, tender love scenes, where saints mingle with magicians and fairies rub shoulders with angels” (28). On the contrary, Geoffrey de Charny praises courtly love in *The Book of Chivalry* emphasising the civilising aspect of love for a knight. Courtly love would lead a knight to fight for the honour of his lady and to gain fame as a result. The knight would learn to revere the lady even though it was a secret love and forsake bragging as a humble Christian knight. Furthermore, as Geoffrey de Charny indicates, such a lady would “rejoice greatly within herself at the fact that she has set her mind and heart on loving and helping to make such a good knight or good man-at-arms” (121). Therefore,

the knight was modified not only by the Church but also by the love of a virtuous lady in his process of civilisation and socialisation to become not a mere warrior and a brutal man of battles, but a civilised lover-warrior. In this respect, the roles of the lady and the Church were almost equated as both were expected to direct the knight to fight for chivalric ideals, and both gathered knights under the institution of knighthood as a distinct social group.

The pre-eminence of knights as a separate group paved the way for chivalry to become “a self-conscious medieval concept” in the thirteenth century (Crouch 8). Crouch explains the term *preudomme* dealing with the rise of knights in the social strata and their gaining self-conscience in this period. The French term *preudomme*, which actually appeared in the eleventh century “as the model of noble conduct,” was the embodiment of “an ideal type of mature, discreet and wise conduct” and it would be the basis for the chivalric values of the thirteenth century (Crouch 30). This meant that a knight was not only a man of a distinct social group, but also a man of noble conduct in the thirteenth century and he was conscious of his status in society. Therefore, nobility resulting from noble conduct stands out as a very significant feature of a knight from the thirteenth century onwards. It was owing to this feature that the social status of knights rose more, which also contributed to their self-consciousness about their social status.

It was in this period that knights started to be regarded as “a separate social order” (Barber 13). The traditional medieval division of the society into three estates had already placed knights in the estate of “those who fight.” According to this three estate structure, knights were supposed to be a part of the noble group, noble then referring to noble by blood. King Alfred was the first person to state this division in his translation of Boethius’s *On Consolation* and that the knights, the clergy and the commoners were indispensable for a king to govern society in a better way (Barber 13-14; Keen, *Chivalry* 3-4). The concept of interdependence and importance of these three estates contributed to the rise in the social status of knights accepting them as a distinct order. This would also contribute to the rise of the authority of knights in society as the figures fighting for society and for religion. The role attributed to knights in this three-partite society as the protector of society necessitated knights to be more responsible towards society, which

demanded them to be role models and have good manners. Otherwise, as Gower explains in *Vox Clamantis*, it was believed that “the wickedness on the part of the knightly estate harms and offends all other classes of society by its unseemliness” (207), since the other estates were dependent on “the knightly estate” to protect them. It was for this reason that, according to Gower, if a knight desired to become a “good knight,” he should “be zealous for virtues” and “resist vices” which included especially the desire for material gain (207).

However, there was an increasing concern with money in society as a result of the growing influence of the newly emerging merchants on politics from the thirteenth century onwards, and increasing taxation due to the need for more and more money to finance the Hundred Years War in the fourteenth century. Similarly, the desire for money increased among the knights, causing a decline in chivalric ideals (Coulton, *Chaucer* 191). This transformed military or knightly values from sworn loyalties to money-based relations. Indeed, there was a considerable decline in feudalism, which would affect the socio-economic status of knights enormously. Beginning with the thirteenth century, the decline of feudalism and feudal values started. It was first ascribed to the fashioning of knights in accordance with the ideals of the Round Table. These ideals, which were also reflected in the popular romances, were believed to be “effeminate and effeminating” (Gautier 28), because they emphasised love as a supreme feature of a knight. Likewise, romances were believed to channel the courage and heroic manners of knights from the battle field to love. Accordingly, the popular image of a knight was a courtier not a warrior. Knights had directed their attention to courtly life rather than to life on the battlefield, and they ignored their feudal obligations of fighting for their lord.

The Hundred Years War and the financial benefits of the Templars and the Hospitallers were other important factors that influenced the decline of chivalry in the fourteenth century. The Hundred Years War brought the problem of conflicting loyalties of the knights to the foreground as a result of the French origin of certain knights. This was the very reason why knights preferred going on the Crusades, which would bring them material gain besides respectability as the knights of Christ, rather than fighting for the

French or for the English in the Hundred Years War (Turnbull 84). Additionally, the increasing monetary opportunities of the Templars and the Hospitallers also influenced the decline in chivalry. These knights became richer as a result of their gains in the Holy Land (Gautier 28). Thus, the feudal relations based on sworn loyalties were no longer satisfactory for knights and this was the beginning of the transformation of the ideal of the poor but noble soldier of Christ fighting for salvation into knights in search of financial gain.

Consequently, the number of mercenaries increased in the fourteenth century. The mercenary soldiers wanted to continue fighting and pillaging in foreign countries in order to raise their living standards (Jones and Ereira 160). However, whereas Jones and Ereira claim that a mercenary soldier “did not fight for glory or honour” and “[h]e was simply a down-to-earth businessman – whose business happened to be war” (162-163), which meant “the commercialization of warfare” (164), it is also necessary to note that they filled in the gaps created by the knights that preferred court life to fighting. Furthermore, the desire for materialistic gain did not just belong to mercenaries but it was also shared by the Church during the Crusades (Coulton, *Chaucer* 190-191), which resulted in people’s disappointment with the crusading ideals. The Crusader knights returned home with much material gain, which was in direct contrast with the ideal of poor Christ, as well as the respectability provided by the image of the soldier of Christ. This created a great paradox not only in the minds of the commoners, but also in the minds of the knights, who did not join the Crusades. Therefore, the feudal ideal of fighting for feudal obligations faded away and knights preferred not to fight, which created great opportunities for mercenary soldiers.

Such developments effected also the change in the military system, and “the character of national armies altered radically, as mercenaries were no longer used as mere auxiliaries but as the backbone of the army” (Jones 13). These soldiers formed Free Companies to fight for the country that paid the money for their military service regardless of their nationality, which was criticised as the commercialisation of knightly ethic (Jones 17-19). Thus, as Keen argues, the fourteenth century was the period when “a crisis of chivalry” arose (*Nobles* 9). There were two main types of knights, the

feudal/courtly knights, who were interested in tournaments and courtly love providing the main subject matter for the romances, and the mercenaries, who were notorious for their interest in monetary gain in return for knighthood (Erol, "A Pageant" 63-64). However, it would not be historically right to claim that "the new commercial military ethic challenged the stability of the old hierarchical, feudal society where social roles were normally established at birth" (Jones 18), since this new ethic was the product of the socio-economic conditions of the period. It should be pointed out that both of the military types failed to provide the needs of society. Hence, the fourteenth century introduced the beginning of a change in the system of raising troops in England. Initially, the feudal bond necessitated a knight to provide military service for his lord. Yet, this system of sworn loyalties was being replaced by "personal contracts at all levels" (Norman 251). The monetary system was gradually being substituted for the feudal sworn-loyalty system in every aspect and military service was not an exception to this transformation (Macfarlane 161-162). As a result, in addition to mercenaries, the fourteenth century also experienced the rise of indentured knights.

The indenture system was based on a dual contract, which was initially a "verbally" set agreement, but then organised into a written format, the earliest example of which was seen in England in 1287 (Macfarlane 163). This indenture system began to be applied commonly in the fourteenth century. The Hundred Years War required more and more contracts to be drawn in order to meet the increasing demand for knights to fight in France. As Norman indicates, "[r]oyal officials had already begun the process of standardizing the form of agreement," in that, they had defined in these contracts the conditions of service and the amount of payment as well as the rank and the number of necessary military men ranging from knights to soldiers on foot (252). However, it was believed that the payment in return for military service transformed the feudal bond into a commercial one and it was not compulsory for a warrior in such kind of a contract system to be a man of high birth. This resulted with the men of lower birth constituting the infantry in the English armies of the fourteenth century (Norman 253). Still, the material aspect of the indenture system did not mean that indentured knights were equated to mercenaries. They differed from mercenaries, in that, they were professional soldiers. Although they might not be noble by blood, they were dedicated to the ideals

of chivalry and chivalric ethic. Furthermore, these warriors would earn money through their service and climb up the social ladder in the forthcoming years.

While being criticised for its monetary concern, the rise of the indenture system was appreciated for certain reasons as well. As Coss argues, the sworn loyalty system did not guarantee that the feudal inferior would provide military service for his superior more than the one required by his tenure, which created loopholes in the military system. Additionally, the land to sustain military tenure was becoming a scarcity (*The Knight* 114). The indenture system provided an alternative reward system through money in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Macfarlane 162). Accordingly, it can be argued that the indenture system was “mutually advantageous” (Coss, *The Knight* 114), as it warranted the military service for the lord and guaranteed a certain income for the knight. Thus, although the contract system did not directly replace the traditional feudal military service as a feudal duty, but they existed together; indentured knights increased in number in the fourteenth century to provide military service.

It was not required for an indentured knight to be a man noble by blood. The most important feature of this knight was his military skills. This meant that even if a man was of lower birth but had great military skills, he could become an indentured knight. Jones differentiates “‘gentil’ knight,” the traditional feudal soldier, and “indentured retainer” (11), and argues that indentured knights were self-knighted soldiers and they knighted their followers themselves disregarding the legacy of knighting by a king or lord. According to Jones, “all these anomalies were exploited to the full by the lower ranks of professional soldiers” and these soldiers had no feudal bonds and responsibilities (11). However, it should be emphasised that it was the changing social structure that paved the way for the rise of indentured soldiers, not just their hunger for money. If the impact of the Black Death and heavy taxation is considered, the turn to the indenture system becomes clearer. Due to increasing death numbers and rising taxation because of the Hundred Years War, living conditions became increasingly hard for knights, and war was the only job that they knew. Moreover, the indenture system did not mean that these knights were turned into mere war machines, but it just made them professional warriors. Hence, the rise of the indenture system should not be

considered merely as an “erosion of social values” (Jones 13), but the birth of a new military paradigm in society, as traditional hierarchies were thus erased, which was shaped by the individual choices of people under the changing socio-economic and political conditions of the fourteenth century.

Although “[t]he whole idea of fighting for gain, whether in the form of pay or booty, was entirely against the principles of the chivalric code” and “the growing commercialism of even the greatest nobles, and the rise of professional captains of lowly birth, [who were also] untrained in the tenets of chivalry” (Norman 256), were constantly disdained in terms of traditional feudal relations, the reality of the formation of new values in society should not be overlooked. The formation of new values was the product of not only the rise of indentured knights, but also the decreasing military concern of courtly knights, who were happy with their tournaments and feasts at court and who preferred paying taxes rather than fighting in the battlefield as a duty (Jones and Ereira 159). Hence, the approach of indentured knights to knighthood as a profession should not be undermined, since they preferred fighting as a way of earning their living rather than staying at court. According to the traditional feudal understanding, it was the responsibility of a knight to give military service and a knight was also required to provide the expenses of his military equipment and costume himself, because he would be rewarded with the booty of war. In time, these expenses increased so much that it became too dear for a knight to meet them. On the one hand, this led the sons of former knights not to take up knighthood even if it was their hereditary right (Barber 16-17), and on the other hand, there were also poor knights who had no means of survival other than fighting. The latter, as a result, preferring being professional soldiers, chose fighting as a way of life, and thus fighting became their daily life activity. This was regarded as a great incongruity in the history of knighthood, in that, the period included both the social glorification of knighthood and the rise of indentured knights (Hopkins 155-156). Yet, it would turn out to be a preferred system, since the indenture system would fill up the vacancies created by knights who did not want to fight.

Under such circumstances, it can be argued that it was the changing social paradigm of the fourteenth century that encouraged such kind of new formations in the military system, because the social structure was changing from the strictly divided feudal structure to a materialistic one, in which a person could earn enough money to facilitate upward social mobility, or vice versa. Therefore, it would be better to define the new military system, which was based on the indenture system, as “[a] sort of compromise between a contract of employment and a gentlemen’s understanding” (Hopkins 172). The items of the contract would define the duties of the knight, and determine the payment for his service. Consequently, the indenture system would create knights who would claim nobility by their deeds in the fourteenth century, which was in contrast with the nobility of traditional knights, that is, nobility by blood.

Besides, there was another factor that drew attention to the importance of military deeds for knights. In the fourteenth century, the title “knight” began to be used in different contexts other than the military one, such as in the civil sphere as in the case of the knights of the shire, which also affected knighthood performance (Hopkins 157-158; Jones 9; Gautier 28-31). This was the introduction of the title “knight” into civil life combining nobility and military service. Furthermore, knights had the means to afford the expenses and the life style required by knighthood such as horses, armour and servants. Shortly, the features of nobility as an estate were also embodied by the knights of the fourteenth century, who claimed nobility by deed. As a result, it should be emphasised that the concept of nobility was not just limited to the nobility by blood for indentured knights in the fourteenth century, but it was also extended to nobility by deed. Thus, the importance of military deeds came to the foreground for knights in preserving their status in the society as a military group. Under these circumstances, what was significant for knights was their military deeds, not their noble blood.

All of these transformations throughout the centuries created “changes in knightly belief and self image” (Turnbull 45) and hence in knighthood performance in the fourteenth century. As a result, as Keen asserts, the fourteenth century was also the time when knighthood performance was transformed from a totally military ideal into a more gentlemanly ideal, since knight became more like a gentleman and an officer dealing

with his troops under his command in a more professional way (*Chivalry* 240). As a result, the knight of the fourteenth century was different. As Hopkins suggests, “what distinguished a medieval knight from his predecessors, the mounted warrior of the early Middle Ages, was his consciousness of the ideal, including those aspects which were the hardest to live up to, and his desire for honour” (8). This change produced knights whose “belief in themselves as the ruling class continued to provide them with a valid role in the new world” as the embodiments of “the more peaceful outline of the European gentleman” (Hopkins 181). This was a result of the performance of the knight as a military leader and a man of authority in society as a result of his performance of nobility by deed.

Then arose a conflict between knights who claimed nobility by blood such as the knights of the Order of Garter, who were “famous for their birth *or* deeds” (Boulton 134, emphasis added), and indentured knights who claimed nobility just by their deeds. At this point, the definitions of nobility and aristocracy by Crouch may also be useful: “A nobility is a dominant group whose status is legally defined, while an aristocracy is the same group defined sociologically. So a nobility is a socially privileged group, whose privilege set it apart from others and was evident to contemporaries. An aristocracy, on the other hand, was a dominant group in society which drew its importance from its economic and social weight” (3). According to these definitions, although it would not be possible to define indentured knights as a part of the aristocracy in the fourteenth century, it would not be wrong to define them as a part of the nobility whose rights and status were protected by contracts.

Accordingly, the fourteenth century was the period when the concepts of nobility and chivalry were complementary. Similarly, Keen argues that the origin of nobility was the same as the origin of chivalry for the early writers, since “[t]o judge men and to fight were the original functions of nobility” just as in the case of the duties of knights (*Chivalry* 152). Moreover, knighthood “acted at several levels as a cement, binding the social order” owing to the emergence of knights as “the natural leaders within the localities” (Coss, *The Knight* 113, 114). The protection of justice in society and fighting for the weak, for the poor and, most important of all, for the Holy Land were the main

noble duties of a good knight according to his role in the traditional three estate structure.

The combination of nobility and chivalry was also highly associated with the ascent of esquires as well, which was reflected in the Sumptuary Laws of 1363. As Coss explains, the aristocracy was above all the social groupings and following them were the landed knights and women, or knights and women who had 400 marks or more annual rent (*The Knight* 127). They were followed by knights and their families who had £200 annual coming from their lands or rents. Next came esquires and other gentlemen who had £100 annual income from their land. The clerics were permitted to dress like knights and landed esquires. Merchants and rich townsmen with valuable movable goods could dress in the same manner with esquires and gentlemen who had £100 annual income (Coss, *The Knight* 128). This was the confirmation of the fact that there was “a widening of gentility” to include knights and esquires (Coss, *The Knight* 128), as a result of which knighthood became the basis of “the modern conception of gentility” (Coulton, *Chaucer* 188). Thus, a knight should be the embodiment of perfection in both military and civil life.

The influence of this change in the knightly performance increased when it is combined with the social changes in the fourteenth century created by the influence of the Black Death and the Peasants’ Revolt, which led to a decline in serfdom and a growing resistance among people in society, against traditional authorities and traditional hierarchies. The discontent among people increased due to the Great Schism and Lollardy. All these contributed to incertitude in society, and people began to question the traditional orders in society. Likewise, the fourteenth century proved to be a period when the traditional boundaries among the military groups were blurred and traditional hierarchies were erased. Yet, knighthood was still “a respected profession” (Calabrese 7). Even an “aristocratic” captain received payment in return for his military service, which can be considered to be the reflection of the birth of a new military paradigm as reflected in Chaucer’s Knight and Squire (Coss, *The Knight* 147). Accordingly, this chapter analyses the Knight and the Squire in the *Canterbury Tales*, who claim nobility by their profession and whose nobility comes from their deeds. This chapter claims that

nobility becomes a performance for the Knight and the Squire of the *Canterbury Tales*, which is a product of their self-fashioning as men noble by deed.

1.1. The Knight

Chaucer's Knight is the embodiment of the changes in knighthood performance and presents his self-fashioning as a man noble by deed through his performance of nobility. The Knight fashions himself as a member of the estate of nobility, whose nobility comes from his deeds, and thus he adds his own novelty to the line of knighthood performances. The Knight's depiction in the "General Prologue" can be analysed as a reflection of his material performance of nobility, which is constituted by his deeds, costume, horse and his small retinue. His tale and his intervention to the Monk's tale and into the dispute between the Host and the Pardoner can be analysed as his rhetorical performance of nobility.

Chaucer presents the Knight as the first figure among the pilgrims in the "General Prologue." In fact, Chaucer the pilgrim indicates that before going on with his tale of the Canterbury pilgrims, he will first give information about each pilgrim, her/his rank and clothing (I [A] 35-41). Although he does not say that he will follow the social hierarchy of his time and thus start with a knight, he still says that "[a]nd at a knyght than wol I first bigynne" (I [A] 42). Even if there is no distinct social hierarchy, the Knight is the first pilgrim to be described by Chaucer the pilgrim as the representative of "the seigneurial" estate (Strohm, "The Social and Lierary" 13). This might also be interpreted as an indication of the Knight's being regarded as the one with the highest status among the Canterbury pilgrims. He is a knight, and hence, he is a noble person. At this point, it should be emphasised that there is no direct reference to the Knight's being noble in the "General Prologue," and hence that he should be placed at the top of the social hierarchy. Still, the Knight is presented as the head of the pilgrims. It might be argued that the main reason for this is that the Knight deserves to be presented first, since he is a knight and, as a result, the performer of a noble job, that is, protecting the society and religion. It is also necessary to underline the distinction of the Knight's

nobility, since his material performance in the “General Prologue” reveals that he is not a typical noble knight.

The Knight fashions himself as “a worthy man” (I [A] 43) in the “General Prologue” clearly because of his military deeds as a knight, which provides him with nobility by deed and makes him earn the respect of all the others in the pilgrim group in particular and society in general. In this respect, the Knight’s material performance in the “General Prologue” is functional in exhibiting clues about the Knight’s self-fashioning as a man noble by deed. It is for this reason that the Knight fashions himself not as a noble but a worthy man is very important in signalling that he is not a traditional knight noble by blood, but an indentured knight noble by deed. Accordingly, the “General Prologue” presents the Knight as an honourable knight, and the Knight’s material performance formed by his deeds, costume, horse and small retinue, begins 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, fredom and curteisie. (I [A] 43-46)

Chaucer presents the Knight as the embodiment of the traditional ideals of knighthood as a lover of chivalry, truth, honour, freedom and courtesy. The knight of the fourteenth century was primarily “a fighting man, and war was the natural state of his life” and, therefore, warfare was for him “ennobling in itself” (Turnbull 47), because knighthood embodied “three essential facets, the military, the noble, and the religious” which were very important for the well-being of the society (Keen, *Chivalry* 17). In traditional feudal understanding, a good knight was a skilful fighter and a noble person who was a member of the knightly estate and a good Christian, in other words, a good soldier of Christ fighting for the security of Christendom. Likewise, the “General Prologue” reveals that there is “[n]o Cristen man so ofte of his degree” (I (A) 55), establishing the Knight as a great fighter, who has always loved chivalry, and is a superior Christian soldier. It can be argued that the combination of the adjective “worthy” with other typically important ideals of knighthood such as being a lover of chivalry, truth, honour, freedom and courtesy is functional in displaying that the Knight embodies both the

traditional ideals of knighthood and the novelties introduced into knighthood in the fourteenth century such as being a knight who is noble not by blood but by deed.

To start with the traditional attributes of the Knight, incorporating all the ideals of chivalry, honour is the basic feature for the Knight to be regarded as an ideal knight. Honour, in this case, refers not just to one's own perception of his value, but also to the other people's perception of his value. As a result, both one's conception of his worth and thus claim for the right for pride and the recognition of this claim by society is very important (Coss, *The Knight* 108). In order to have all these rewards, it was essential for any knight in the fourteenth century to desire war, which would glorify him more displaying his military skills, since being a knight noble by blood did not guarantee that he was an able fighter. As a result, the concept of honour is very significant in the self-fashioning of the Knight, whose honour depends not on his noble blood but on his military deeds.

Honour was also a very important concept in "the fashioning of the idea of gentleman" in terms of its impact on an individual's good conduct combining his social, courtly and military aspects (Keen, *Chivalry* 249). Honour idealised the combination of martial and civil values. Therefore, although there is no reference to court life in the Knight's material performance in the "General Prologue," the Knight embodies all the chivalric values to fashion himself both as a lover of "curteisie" (I [A] 46) and as a "meeke" knight (I [A] 69) in addition to his military performance as a great knight on the battle field. As Keen asserts, honour was at the centre of every aspect of a gentleman-knight's life (*Chivalry* 250). It referred to the combination of "the religious and secular obligations of the gentleman" of the early modern age (Keen, *Chivalry* 251). The Knight is the embodiment of this combination as a soldier of Christ on the battlefield as reflected by the long list of the battles that he has fought in, and as the source of order in civil life as reflected by his intervention into the dispute between his fellow pilgrim-friends (VI (C) 960-968).

Ramon Llull further comments on the importance of honour and lists the duties of knights in *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*. He argues that a knight's duties were

related both to the military and civil sphere. A knight was to protect the Church and the Holy Land and fight for his faith, which would bring him great honour as the soldier of Christ. He was to obey the rule of hierarchy in chivalry and serve his king or lord or duke. He was to work for the administration of justice in society. It was essential for him to join tournaments and go hunting as a way of knightly exercise. As Lull indicates, “[c]hivalry resides in no other place as agreeably as in nobility of courage, and no man can love, honour or profess Chivalry more than he who gives his life for the honour and the Order of Chivalry” (II.17). This depiction of honour and noble court life by Lull draws attention to the Knight’s distinction, in that, there is no reference to tournaments or hunting in the Knight’s depiction, which would have been in accordance with the traditional descriptions of a knight. Rather, the Knight in the “General Prologue” has only a long list of battles, which draws attention to his deeds. Accordingly, it can be claimed that, as a model of the fourteenth century indentured knight, the Knight is “a great military man and also kindly, noble, and Christian” (Calabrese 7), but his nobility does not result from the noble court life or the noble blood of the traditional knights at court, but from his noble military deeds.

Actually, nobility by blood is the most eminent feature of a knight, and Chaucer represents the knights in *The Knight’s Tale*, *The Tale of Sir Topas*, *The Physician’s Tale*, *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, *The Merchant’s Tale*, *The Squire’s Tale* and *The Franklin’s Tale* as noble knights. *The Knight’s Tale* refers to a “noble” (I (A) 873, 998, 2569, 2715, 2888, 2975) duke as the representative of “chivalrie” (I (A) 865) as well as “noble” or “nobleste” knights that come to support Palamon and Arcite in their combat (I (A) 2105, 2899) who included “noble” dukes, earls and kings (I (A) 2183).⁴ *The Tale of Sir Thopas* presents a knight, and “lord he was of that contree [Flaundes]” (VII 722). Sir Topas is a doubtful satirical knight who is a second rate example for ridicule. Yet, his depiction as a ‘lord’ is still functional in emphasising the necessity of the nobility by blood in order to be defined as a knight according to traditional understanding. *The Physician’s Tale* also refers to a knight “strong of [...] greet richesse” (VI (C) 4). *The Wife of Bath’s Tale* presents a “bachelor” knight who is a member of King Arthur’s court (III (D) 883) and he has “eldres noble” (III (D) 1154). Similarly, *The Merchant’s Tale* displays a “noble” knight, January (IV (E) 2023, 2042, 2069). In this case, even if

January is not a knight in the true sense, since he appears in a fabliaux, he is still functional in drawing attention to a knight's nobility by blood, as he has the title and is of the noble class. *The Squire's Tale* presents a "noble kyng" Cambyuscan with his chivalric court (V (F) 12, 28, 77, 275, 302, 338). *The Franklin's Tale* also displays a typical romance knight, a "worthy man of armes" (V (F) 1092), whose worthiness is related with his high social status as a knight.

However, as stated, the Knight in the "General Prologue" is not "noble." The Knight fashions himself through his material performance of nobility based on his deeds as reflected in the "General Prologue" and his rhetorical performance of nobility in his tale and in his intervention into the Monk's tale and into the conflict between the Host and the Pardoner. As an extension of this difference, although the Knight is not directly defined as noble in the "General Prologue," he can be defined as the transformed version of the knights mentioned in a number of other tales as explained above. Hence, the Knight can be considered to be the embodiment of the new type of the fourteenth century knights, whose nobility comes from their deeds. In this respect, the emphasis on the Knight's military deeds in the "General Prologue" is functional in revealing that knighthood is a profession for the Knight, since he has liked chivalry "fro the tyme that he first bigan" (I [A] 44) and devoted himself professionally to the world of military service, which constitutes his daily life activities as a knight. This can also be regarded as an implication of the Knight's being an indentured knight, and the emphasis on time may be a reference to the duration of military service of the Knight. In the fourteenth century, as stated, feudalism was already waning, and knighthood was a profession for the able people rather than a feudal bond. Hence, the indenture system, which was criticised for devaluing the feudal values, gave birth to a new type of military group. This new military group would claim nobility by their deeds, which were very important for the well-being and protection of society contributing to the nobility of their profession. Likewise, the Knight's love for chivalry from the time he first began might be regarded as the reflection of his military service times as an indentured knight.

Similarly, the long list of the places where the Knight has fought displays the Knight as a professional Christian soldier. The fact that "[f]ul worthy was he in his lordes werre, /

And therto hadde he riden, no can ferre, / As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse” (I [A] 47-49) reveals that he is an indentured soldier and serves his lords’ wars. It is for this reason that he is defined as a “worthy” knight (I (A) 43, 64) and his “worthynesse” (I (A) 50) is the source of his honourable status. The places where he has performed his military role signify the Knight’s professional achievements and his military performance as a great knight:

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.
 Ar mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
 And foughten for oure feith at Tramysse
 In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
 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. (I (A) 51-67)

The general attitude of the critics about this long list of the places, where the Knight has fought, has been controversial. For instance, Jones declares that the Knight is a mere mercenary rather than a soldier of Christ, and the wars he has taken up are “more often appalling massacres, scenes of sadism and pillage” (2). On the contrary, describing the list of the places, where the Knight has fought, as an example of *chanson de geste*, Mann argues that Chaucer’s aim is to praise the Knight through this long list, because, “despite the undoubted topicality of the campaigns in Chaucer’s list, its *framework* is a literary one, whose function is to place the Knight in a line of heroes of chivalry” (*Medieval* 111, 113, emphasis original). Accordingly, the Knight appears as a role model for the fourteenth century knighthood. As an ideal Christian knight, he “foughten for oure feith” (I (A) 62) against the heathens in various places. Keen suggests that the list of the Knight’s battles shows that he is a role model for knighthood performances, not a violent killer, since it is impossible for the Knight to have fought in all the battles mentioned, but he is the embodiment of all the knights that have fought in those battles

against the infidel (*Nobles* 116-117). However, Jones argues that it is possible for him to have fought in all the battles in the list (Alexandria, Prussia, Lithuania, Ruce, Alcezir, Belmarye, Lyeys and Satalye), yet these wars were of dubious repute, because these were the battles which contributed to the notoriety of mercenaries, who displayed their interest in pillaging, and there were many Christians killed in those wars as well as the heathens (42-73). Hence, Jones argues that Chaucer's use of the phrase "worthy man" (I [A] 43) for the Knight, who has taken part in all those battles, is for satirical purposes, since, in the fourteenth century, the Crusades created disappointment in society because of the atrocities committed even if the opponents were the infidels. Furthermore, some of the places, where the Knight has fought, such as Prussia, Alexandria, Turkey⁵ and Wallachia, were notorious as places where there were many mercenaries and where the ladies sent their lovers to display their power rather than fighting for religious aims (Jones 36-40).

Yet, it should be noted that if the Knight is merely one of those mercenaries, he might not have "hadde a sovereyn prys" (I [A] 67) which he has gained through his military performance in battles and his survival in the end. Thus, it can be argued that the Knight's love for his profession is beyond money, but brings money. However, Jones associates Chaucer's use of the word "prys" (I [A] 67) with the Knight's monetary concern and his mercenary background (91-93). Nevertheless, according to *A Concise Dictionary of Middle English*, "prys" means not only "price, prize" but also "value, excellence, high esteem" ("prys"). Remembering that the Knight displays nothing that can be associated with monetary concerns and that he only has a long list of battles, which is the reflection of his knighthood performance, it can be claimed that his battles contribute to his "prys," namely his respectability. Therefore, it can be suggested that the Knight fashions himself not with his material concerns but with his battles and his humble appearance as a soldier of Christ. His battles make him a "[f]ul worthy" man (I [A] 47) and contribute to his performance of nobility by deed.

Furthermore, West indicates that in the fourteenth century, the Crusades were revived because of the serious attacks of the Ottoman Turks on Christian Europe (249). As a result, even mercenaries were invited to join the Crusades. For instance, St. Catherine of

Siena wrote a letter to Sir John Hawkwood, the most famous mercenary soldier of the period, to remind him of the vehemence of the situation: “Messer Giovanni Condottieri: since you delight so much in making war and fighting, make no war upon Christians because it offends God. Rather go to fight the Turks, so that from being a soldier and servant of the Devil, you might be a manly and true knight” (qtd. in West 249). Thus, although Jones argues that the battles that the Knight has fought in are of dubious repute (42-73); as Rossignol also asserts, all the battles belong to the Crusades, a series of wars against the infidels, which contributes to the importance of the Knight’s profession made up of noble deeds (59). Therefore, the Knight is respected for his profession and deserves the title of the soldier of Christ as a knight who “fro the tyme that he first bigan / To riden out, [...] loved chivalrie” (I [A] 44-45). He has been serving to meet the increasing need for professional soldiers. Hence, it would not be right to call the Knight a mere killer as Terry Jones does (77), because he is not a mere soldier but an honourable Crusading knight (Cooper, *Oxford Guides* 335). The Knight has fought in the battles which have called for knights to fight against the infidel, which is a praised motive to fight for knights.

In the same line, if the Knight is accepted as an indentured knight, as Pratt suggests (“Was Chaucer’s Knight” 8-27), it can be claimed that he has followed his lords in all the battles in order to perform his military profession. After all, he is a professional knight who never refrains from fighting in battles. Hence, whether it is possible for him to fight in all those wars or not, the Knight stands out as a role model for the fourteenth century knights, who avoided the Crusades. It is for this reason that the Knight fashions himself as a lover of chivalry, truth, honour, freedom and courtesy. These ideals are indispensable parts of knighthood performance for the Knight, because he can claim nobility only through his performance of chivalric ideals. As a result, it can be argued that the Knight fashions himself as a gentleman with his love of “curteisie” (I (A) 46) as well as an able warrior. As a lover of honour, the Knight stands out as an honourable man and his relations with other pilgrims reveal that the other pilgrims also recognise his honourable status (VI (C) 960-968, VII 2767-2781)

At this point, although Jones declares that “[t]o riden out” (I [A] 45) means “to go on raids” for the Knight (32), clearly “[t]o riden out” (I [A] 45) shows that the Knight is very eager to fight as a knight in order to perform his military duty and in order to be able to win honour. The Knight can fulfil the expectations of society only by performing his military role, joining the battles to protect Christendom and thus performing as a lover of chivalry. He is a knight errant as different from a justice of peace and a knight of shire. Hence, the Knight carries out what is expected of him as a Christian knight and protects his honourable social status. He is so successful at his profession that there is “[n]o Cristen man so ofte of his degree” (I (A) 55). As a proper feature of a great knight, like the honourable knight in *The Franklin’s Tale* who is full of the urge to fight as he is “of chivalrie the flour” (V (F) 1088), the Knight in the “General Prologue” has the same desire to ride out as a respected warrior. It is for this reason that “[f]ul worthy was he in his lordes werre, / And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre, / As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse” (I (A) 47-49).

In addition to his desire to perform his knightly ability to fight and to win honour, the Knight performs also in the “General Prologue” as “wys” (I (A) 68), and he is “as meeke as is a mayde” (I (A) 69), which is a part of his civil life practices as a noble man. The Knight evidently performs an identity constituted by courtly manners as well although he might not be a man noble by blood. Hence, his self-fashioning emphasises humility, which is an important Christian virtue for knights as the soldiers of Christ. In this way, the Knight’s material performance suggests that he is the protector of the weak and an enemy of the infidel. He is a cruel opponent rather than a mere killer.

In this respect, the Knight’s horse is a very important element of his material performance, since it contributes to his humility and enhances the visibility of his nobility. Chaucer the pilgrim states that “[h]is hors were goode” (I (A) 74). In the Middle Ages, the mounts were regarded as significant signifiers of one’s social status (Erol, “A Pageant” 62).⁶ Although Chaucer does not give much information about the horse, the Knight’s horse is illustrated by the Ellesmere illuminator.⁷ As Ayton emphasises, it is important to note that the horse depicted by the Ellesmere illuminator is not a palfrey as would be expected of an aristocratic knight, which would also have been appropriate for travelling, but a very powerful horse with an “M” letter on its

flank, which stands out as the reflection of the Knight's military duties (31). Jones also comments on the illumination of the Knight's horse in the Ellesmere manuscript. He claims that the letter "M" on the horse's side implies that the Knight is a mercenary (29-30). However, it should not be forgotten that the Ellesmere illuminator adds certain details to his illuminations that do not take place in the depiction of Chaucer. Thus, even if the sign on the horse is the letter "M", it can be claimed that it might also be the abbreviation of the word *miles* which means soldier and this would be more appropriate for the Knight, the *miles* of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, like its rider, the Knight's horse is not clad in an elaborate fashion (Erol, "A Pageant" 68-69), which contributes to the humility of the Knight who is clad as a poor soldier of Christ. He is a humble knight who avoids pride through his humility and performs nobility through his deeds as a professional knight.

The Knight's costume plays an important part in his material performance in the "General Prologue." The Knight's costume exhibits that although the Knight is noble by his deeds, he is not interested in display unlike the men noble by blood. The narrator of the "General Prologue" states that "[o]f fustian he wored a gypon / Al bismotered with his habergeon, (I (A) 75-76). Ufuk Ege explains that gypon was a "close fitting, hip-length and padded" array, which had "scalloped edges" (51). It was "[a] garment" that had "equal length in front and at the back and tight-fitting body and loose skirts" (Ege 29). Fustian was a "garment, which should be of a coarse natural white material made of cotton and flax," and it was "the common material of doublets" (Ege 200, 324). The habergeon was "usually a chain mail garment on the body and arms" (Ege 19). Burçin Erol also comments on the costume of the Knight and indicates that fustian, of which the Knight's gypon is made, displays the Knight's humility, since this is not the proper costume for a noble person ("A Pageant" 64-65).

Moreover, the Knight's gypon is "[a]l bismotered" (I (A) 76). Actually, Hodges suggests that the physical uncleanliness of the Knight's costume is the symbol of the Knight's spiritual uncleanliness according to medieval pilgrimage allegory ("Costume Rhetoric" 281-285). Hence, Hodges argues that his stained gypon signals that the Knight is "stained, physically and spiritually" ("Costume Rhetoric" 288). Yet, as Ufuk

Ege also states, the bismostered gypon signals the Knight's "career as a military knight and veteran of many campaigns" (323). The Knight's unclean costume is a war-stained costume and thus the symbol of his reliance upon his deeds which constitute the source of his honour and nobility. Accordingly, it is important to draw attention to the values of knighthood that the Knight embodies. If the Knight had been the representative of nobility by blood, it would have been right to state that "the Knight is a nobleman in ignoble array" (Hodges, "Costume Rhetoric" 281). However, the Knight fashions himself as a person noble by deed and the only things he needs to display are his deeds, not his riches.

Moreover, as West argues, "[t]he knight's shabby appearance [...] [is] appropriate to a pilgrim riding to Canterbury" (247). When his shabby costume is combined with the long list of the battles he has joined, it can be claimed that the Knight appears as a poor soldier of Christ. Hence, although Jones indicates that the Knight "has no livery, no coat-of-arms, no shield, no belt and only a minuscule retinue," since he is not a noble knight (121); or, Hodges argues that all these mean that the Knight's description "contradicts chivalric values" ("Costume Rhetoric" 274), it can be suggested that these are, in fact, all related with the Knight's self-fashioning as a humble man of deeds due to which he has no need to display. The absence of the riches also reveals the Knight's distinction as a man noble by deed. It is proper for him to avoid the display of riches through his costume. Therefore, the Knight's modest clothing becomes a symbol of the fact that, even if he might not be a knight noble by blood, the Knight is a humble Christian soldier fighting against the infidel for his religion as an ideal soldier who is noble by deed, and so he is not interested in the display of worldly riches.

The Knight is so keen on his job that he is very busy and had no time to change his clothes, "[f]or he was late ycome from his viage, / And wente for to doon his pilgrimage" (I (A) 77-78). According to Hussey, this also reveals that the Knight intends to go on a pilgrimage immediately after his return from the battle to thank for his safe return (37). In this respect, it can be claimed that the Knight fashions himself as an able and professional knight who claims nobility by deed despite the decline of knighthood. As Mann suggests, "the aim is to suggest an ideal knight by associating

him with several recognised chivalric values” (*Medieval* 107). The Knight presents himself as a man who is devoted to his job and he did not have the opportunity even to change his clothes before going on a pilgrimage.

The Knight’s humility in costume is enhanced by his retinue constituted only by the Yeoman and the Squire. The Yeoman proves the Knight’s modesty since, even if he is a knight, he has “only the minimum number of attendants required to uphold the honor of his rank” (Conlee 29). The existence of the Yeoman is also functional in presenting the idea that the Knight’s social status should be visible in society by his retinue (Cooper, *Oxford Guides* 37). As Huey indicates, “[t]his time, however, the contrast is in terms of social class, thereby creating a real-life picture of fathers, sons, and servants” (17). The Yeoman is functional in the depiction of the humility of not only the Knight but also the Squire, in that, although they are the “members of the nobility” due to their noble military deeds, “the Yeoman is a commoner” (Conlee 27). As a result, through the Yeoman, the Knight affirms not only his modesty but also his superiority as a noble knight, whose nobility comes from his deeds.

All these aspects present the Knight’s self-fashioning as a noble man of noble deeds and his nobility by deed is asserted by Chaucer’s depicting him as a “gentil” knight (I (A) 72). Actually, Jones argues that nobility by blood was essential for being a gentil knight in the Middle Ages (116). However, as Saul suggests, “[g]entility, [...] has more to do with manner of life than with lineage or ancient riches” (44). The idea of gentility is based on one’s way of life and his deeds, which is exemplified by the Knight’s performance of nobility due to his military deeds rather than nobility by blood. Similarly, the Knight’s military life has been shaped by his ideals such as truth, honour and courtesy, all of which also contribute to his gentlemanliness.

This emphasis on the deeds to be defined as gentil is also in accordance with Chaucer’s ideas of gentility as illustrated in his ballad “Gentillesse”:

The firste stok, fader of gentillesse –
 What man that desireth gentil for to be
 Most 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)

These lines reveal that what makes one gentle is his “vertu” (“Gentilesse” 4). In relation to the word “gentle” as described by Chaucer in his ballad, Saul emphasises the fact that “[g]entility – ‘gentilesse’ – was seen as a personal, not a hereditary, quality” and indicates that, since the source of this gentility was Christ, those who follow Christ’s example were the truly virtuous people that avoided vices (43). Hence, those who loved virtue as Christ did should be regarded as gentle people, not those who had just noble blood.

Hence, the most important feature of gentility is avoiding vices and loving virtues, which is in keeping with the fact that the Knight “nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde / [i]n al his lyf unto no maner wight” (I [A] 70-71) and his fighting as a soldier of Christ. Otherwise, being “riche” (“Gentilesse” 13) alone does not bring gentility. In this respect, gentility becomes a very significant implication of nobility by deed. Thus, the Knight’s performance of knightly values as a lover of chivalry, truth, honour and courtesy as a Christian knight does not have “negative connotations” since it is not ironic as Pratt claims (*Chaucer and War* 79), but it exhibits his gentility and humble display of nobility.

According to Chaucer’s ballad “Gentilesse,” gentility is not bound to what one wears. It is not bound to physical display, but to the display of one’s inward features. Its performance is not through clothes but through practices:

This firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,
 Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,
 Clene of his gost, and loved besinesse,
 Ayeinst the vyce of slouthe, in honestee;
 And, but his heir love vertu as dide he,
 He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme,
 Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe. (“Gentilesse” 8-14)

These lines illustrate that it is not the monetary status that makes a man gentle, and thus noble, but his virtues performed through his deeds. It can be claimed that the importance

of deeds in defining one as gentle shows the function of the long list of the Knight's battles in the "General Prologue." Besides, the Knight's humble clothes are also in line with the requirements of gentility. The gentleman is defined as "vertuous noblesse" ("Gentillesse" 17). He is noble as a result of his individualistic features, not as a result of his blood. Therefore, as Saul indicates, "[g]entility was viewed [...] as a *quality*, and accordingly was assessed in qualitative terms" (49, emphasis original). Accordingly, the Knight's material performance in the "General Prologue" constituted by his military deeds, his horse, his clothes and his small retinue speaks for the Knight's gentility "in qualitative terms" displaying the Knight as a humble, professional soldier. In addition to this emphasis on the quality, it should be noted that the Knight's honourable list of military performances displays his gentlemanliness in quantitative terms as well.

In her definition of the meaning of gentility in relation to a knight in her tale, the Wife of Bath also refrains from any material aspect and emphasises nobility by deed, which can be interpreted as a reflection of her being the mouthpiece of the commoners in giving voice to what they conceive as gentility. In his search for the answer to the question what women like most, the knight in *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, meets an old woman who teaches him both the answer and the true nature of gentility and nobility. The Wife of Bath claims that the true nature of nobility comes from Christ, "[n]at of oure eldres for hire old richesse" (III (D) 1118). The true nature of gentility comes not from wealth but from "vertuous lyvyng" (III (D) 1122). Hence, the true gentlemen are those who "[p]ryvee and apert thanne wolde [...] nevere fyne / [t]o doon of gentillesse the faire office; / [t]hey myghte do no vileynye or vice" (III (D) 1136-1138). It is for this very reason that gentility is equated to nobility, and both gentility and nobility are bound not to "possessioun" (III (D) 1147) but to personal virtues:

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 hymselfen 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.
 For gentillesse nys but renomee

Of thyne auncestres, for hire heigh bountee,
 Which is a strange thyng to thy persone.
 Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone.
 Thanne comth oure verray gentillesse of grace;
 It was no thyng biquethe us with oure place. (III (D) 1150-1164)

The virtues give one the right to claim gentility and nobility. In this respect, in addition to his military deeds, the Knight's humility in dress again stands out as a very important part of his material performance, which displays him as a humble gentleman. He does not need to display worldly riches. After all, the Knight is "the product of a series of transformations" in the knighthood performance as an honourable Christian knight, who was born out of the Germanic fighter (Calabrese 3), and he has only his deeds to build up his self-fashioning as a man noble by deed. As Keen explains, the Knight who has fought both in his "lordes werre" (I [A] 47) and in the Crusades can be presented as the role model for virtuous behaviour to the members of the aristocracy who avoided fighting (*Nobles* 118). As a role model for the fourteenth century knighthood performance, the Knight fashions himself as the representative of nobility among the pilgrims with his distinction which comes from his nobility by deed. In this way, he becomes the embodiment of "a man who displayed the social, military, and religious evolution of medieval knighthood" (Calabrese 3). Thus, Coss asserts that the Knight is the representative of the first estate and, as an ideal representative figure together with the Parson and the Ploughman, he is "intended to supply a standard against which the remaining pilgrims are to be judged and found wanting" (*The Knight* 148). This is also in accordance with the Knight's being a poor soldier of Christ, since he is always for modesty and avoids display, which is clearly exhibited by his material performance in the "General Prologue."

As the embodiment of gentility and nobility, and thus as the representative of authority, the Knight becomes the first pilgrim to tell his tale as he is the first to be described by Chaucer the pilgrim in the "General Prologue" although Chaucer the pilgrim states that the first tale teller has been determined by drawing cuts (I (A) 835-855). In his tale, the Knight is given a chance to perform his nobility by narrating a romance. Accordingly, the Knight's choice of romance in his rhetorical performance in the tale telling game is also very significant. Romance was considered to be the domain of noble people who

lived at court, because the subject matter of romances were the lives of the nobles at court and their courtly love. However, the Knight, who has only his deeds to be defined as noble, also attempts narrating a romance. On the one hand, his choice of romance as his subject matter provides him with a chance to display his nobility by deed as a truly noble person, who is aware of the way of life of those who are noble by blood; on the other hand, this also provides him with a chance to fashion himself similar to Duke Theseus in his tale, which is exhibited by his presenting himself as the authority figure when he interrupts the Monk's tale and when he intervenes in the dispute between the Host and the Pardoner. Accordingly, the Knight's performance of nobility in his rhetorical performance can be analysed into two parts. The first part of his nobility performance in his rhetorical performance can be taken as the Knight's tale, and the second part as his interaction with the other Canterbury pilgrims.

To start with the first part of the Knight's rhetorical performance, the Knight tells a tale about noble people: a duke and two noble knights.⁸ Thus, as Patterson states, his tale becomes "an act of self-legitimization" for the Knight as "a form of authorial self-definition" since, as a knight noble by deed, he attempts at telling the story of men noble by blood (*Chaucer and the Subject of History* 169). Accordingly, it would be demeaning to define *The Knight's Tale* as "dull" (West 243). Rather, it should be noted that his tale is "an indictment of the worship of the god of war" (Coss, *The Knight* 151), which is very appropriate for a man of war. In this respect, the Knight's tale, which is about people noble by blood, legitimises the Knight's military self as a man noble by deed, who knows the world of people noble by blood through his profession. Moreover, his tale enables the Knight to combine his nobility performance in his material performance in the "General Prologue" with his nobility performance in his rhetorical performance. Hence, his tale becomes the means for the Knight to display his nobility as performance since, throughout his tale, the Knight displays how familiar he is with the world of chivalry, which has been considered to be the domain of knights noble by blood.

In addition to his first-hand military experiences as reflected in the "General Prologue," the Knight also exhibits his rhetorical experience with the world of nobility by blood

and proves that, although he may not be noble by blood like the characters in his rhetorical performance, he has a very important common point with them, knighthood, in which he is very efficient. Thus, his rhetorical performance provides the Knight with the chance to associate himself as a man noble by deed with the men noble by blood. As a result, the Knight's depictions of the men noble by blood in his rhetorical performance are very important in understanding the Knight's conception of his own self. For instance, the Knight's depiction of Theseus entering the city in the very beginning of his tale is significant:

Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,
 Ther was a duc that highte Theseus;
 Of Atthenes he was lord and governour,
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour
 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
 Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
 What with his wysdom and his chivalrie,
 He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
 That whilom was ycleped Scithia,
 And weddede the queene Ypolita [...] (I (A) 859-868)

These war references are very much in keeping with the military ideals of a knight, which are embodied by the Knight himself. Chaucer the poet deliberately uses similar depictions for the Knight and Theseus. Theseus is such a great lord and governor that he has conquered not only many lands as a witty and wise duke, but also the queen of the Amazons. It is for this reason that he deserves to be praised as the best under the sun. The Knight's war references go on as follows:

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,
 Til that he cam to Thebes and alighte
 Faire in a feeld, ther was he thoughte to fighte. (I (A) 975-984)

Theseus is carrying in his banner the representation of Mars, the god of war, which signals that he is the incarnated version of “this conquerour,” Mars (I (A) 981). Furthermore, he has been fighting in the battlefield until the time he has returned to Thebes, as a result of which he is defined as a flower of chivalry (I (A) 982). All the war references and the praise of Theseus as a flower of chivalry draw attention to the fact that the Knight displays his familiarity with and interest in the world of chivalry through his tale as well.

However, Brewer draws attention to the paradoxical aspects of the Knight’s tale (165-166). Theseus is presented as if he is a merciful duke when he encounters the sorrowful women, who complain of Creon’s villainy, as if he is not the person who has just returned from a war with the Amazons and had their queen as wife at the end of the battle (I (A) 864-885). Thus, Brewer indicates that the Knight’s tale should not be read “as expressive of the Knight’s subjective character,” since this would mean “dramatic fallacy which derives from reading the *Canterbury Tales* as if they were expressive of independently conceived personages speaking of their own volition independent of the poet, as if the tales were speeches in a play” (167). However, at this point, it is necessary to question why Chaucer attributes such a tale to the Knight. It is true that the Knight’s tale is not an original tale since it is a rewriting of Boccaccio’s *Teseida*, but this does not mean that “the tale does not necessarily reflect his character” (Calabrese 12). It is natural for a knight to tell a tale about knighthood. Therefore, the Knight’s tale is reflective of his self-fashioning as a noble man since, although he is not a man noble by blood, his rhetorical performance equates him with the characters noble by blood in his tale.

In this respect, as Leicester states, the Knight’s tale “functions as both a *representation of* and a *response to* the well-attested decline of chivalry in the period” (*The Disenchanted* 222-223, emphasis original). By presenting the military world of knighthood, which is embodied in Duke Theseus, together with the courtly world of knighthood, which is embodied in Palamon and Arcite, the Knight displays that, despite the decline of the chivalry of traditional feudal knighthood, the ramifications of this chivalric world still goes on. Besides, placing the men of arms noble by blood, that is,

Duke Theseus, Palamon and Arcite, in the world of his fiction, the Knight exhibits that such noble knights belong to the past. Now, it is time for new knights noble by deed to come to the foreground and those old type of knights only come to life through the narration of this new type of knight represented by the Knight. Therefore, it can be suggested that the Knight fashions himself similar to Duke Theseus, which is also functional in presenting his response to the decline of chivalry. Even if the Knight is not a knight noble by blood like Duke Theseus, he is a knight noble by his noble military deeds. He stands out as the embodiment of the fourteenth century chivalric ideal, who claims nobility by deed. As a result, the Knight's tale becomes both a presentation of the fictionalisation of knights noble by blood and a presentation of the authority of newly emerging knights noble by deed.

The Knight's rhetorical performance in his tale also shows that the Knight is interested in courtly love. Jones claims that the Knight's tale is "stripped [...] of all the underlying values of courtly love: generosity, sympathy, respect, humility and even love itself" (146). According to Jones, love is, for the Knight, like a "battle" which implies that he is not "a man who has grown up in the civilized elegance of the Court" (148). Furthermore, Jones suggests that the Knight's tale also destroys the most important love in the life of a knight: the love for his brother, which is destroyed for the sake of a woman (148-151). However, courtly love is so much influential in the attitudes of Palamon and Arcite that their love towards Emily is even superior to life itself:

'It nere,' quod he [Palamon], 'to thee no greet honour
 For to be fals, ne for to be traitour
 To me, that am thy cosyn and 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.
 Thus artow of my conseil, out of doute,
 And now thow woldest falsly been aboute
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
 And evere shal til that myn herte sterve. [...]' (I (A) 1129-1144)

These lines reveal the glorification of love, which signals the self-fashioning of the Knight as an adaptor of courtly values although he is an old knight. Despite the fact that he is not a young knight as his son, the Squire, the Knight suggests that he is aware of the courtly love tradition. Hence, as Leicester argues, it would be more proper to define the Knight's rhetorical performance as "an act of coming to terms with historical and social reality, an instance of the doing of knighthood" (*The Disenchanted* 223). In this respect, the Knight's rhetorical performance also displays the chivalric transformation in knighthood, since Palamon and Arcite's love for Emilie displays the idea that "war becomes something undertaken, if at all, in the service of love" (Leicester, *The Disenchanted* 231). Thus, the choice of courtly love as his theme in his tale becomes another aspect of the Knight's self-fashioning. Although the Knight does not perform love or courtly manners in his material performance in the "General Prologue," his rhetorical performance in his tale constitutes the courtly aspect of knighthood. He proves that he can, at least theoretically, conform to the expectations of courtly love tradition.

As a result, the Knight's rhetorical performance in his tale, combined with his material performance in the "General Prologue," displays the Knight's self-fashioning. The Knight fashions himself as a knight noble by deed and thus nobility becomes a performance for him. He fashions himself as a man who has only his military deeds to claim a status in the society and proves in his tale and in his everyday life that he is able to perform nobility, which shows that true nobility lies not in blood, but in deeds. In this way, the Knight also presents himself as an example for the other knights in the fourteenth century. In this respect, the narrator's expressing everyone's approval of the Knight's tale, which is displayed when the Knight has finished his rhetorical performance, is also very significant:

Whan that the Knyght had thus his tale ytoold,
 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;
 And namely the gentils everichon. (I (A) 3109-3113)

These lines display that the Knight's distinctive nobility performance is approved by the Canterbury pilgrims, who can be regarded as the representatives of diverse social groups. Although the Knight is not defined as noble in the "General Prologue," his tale deserves the title "noble," which is functional in reflecting the acceptance of his nobility performance by the Canterbury pilgrims. The Knight's tale is praised for being "a noble storie" (I (A) 3111) since, as the Host indicates, "the game [of story telling] is wel bigonne" (I (A) 3117). It is a good beginning for a noble knight to tell a noble tale and lead the pilgrims with his story, which reflects his noble status as a knight although his nobility is different from the nobility of traditional knights.

The Knight's social status is so high that the Host disdains the drunken Miller when he wants to tell the following tale after the Knight, because the Miller does not occupy the same place with the Knight in terms of social rank: "Abyd, Robyn, my leeve brother; / Som bettre man shal telle us first another" (I (A) 3129-3130). In this respect, it can be argued that the Miller is presented as a foil to the "worthy" (I (A) 43, 64, 68) Knight and he is functional in revealing the Knight's gentlemanliness and distinctive nobility. The Knight is not only a good soldier but also a good gentleman, which would be developed by his son, the Squire, into a totally courtly figure. It is for this reason that it is not the Miller but the Knight who is the role model for the pilgrims in terms of proper conduct as well. Thus, Keen asserts that the Knight is an ideal figure (*Nobles* 101-108). Accordingly, the Knight's depiction as a "worthy" (I (A) 43, 64, 68), "wys" (I (A) 68) and "meeke" (I (A) 69) knight is also functional in terms of his performance as an efficient knight. Hence, his comparison with the drunken Miller is also functional in displaying the Knight as a model figure of civil life as well.

In addition to the Miller, the Pardoner and even Harry Bailey, who are also depicted as foil characters to the Knight, contribute to the Knight's nobility performance and self-fashioning. When the Pardoner and Harry Bailey begin to argue following the Pardoner's tale, the Knight fashions himself as a peace maker taking up the role of Duke Theseus in his tale, who interferes in the dispute between Palamon and Arcite (I (A) 1706-1713). As a result, as Burçin Erol states, "[a]lthough, the innkeeper, Harry Bailey seems to be the leader of the group, when a situation requiring authority and power

arises, the Knight intervenes and establishes peace by reconciling the two sides, and thus asserts his supreme authority which is in keeping with the principle of knightly vow” (“A Pageant” 71). This scene also presents that the Knight performs his role as a member of the nobility whose duty is to sustain peace and order in society:

‘Hoo!’ quod the Knyght, ‘good sire, namoore of this!
That ye han seyed is right ynough, ywis,
And muchel moore; for litel hevynesse
Is right ynough to muche folk, I gesse. [...] (VII 2767-2770)

These lines reveal that Duke Theseus is created by the Knight as his double. The Knight fashions himself as the source of order in society and he acts like a judge, which presents him as a mirror image of Duke Theseus. For instance, in the beginning of the Knight’s tale, Theseus is just returning from a battle with the Amazons in full armour. Despite this, he does not refrain from helping women, whose husbands were killed by Creon as a fair knight, because it is his social responsibility as the source of justice in society (I (A) 915-1004), which is similar to the Knight’s intervention in the dispute between the Pardoner and the Host. As Patterson argues, the Knight embodies the ability “of knighthood to perform its role of policeman to society” (*Chaucer and the Subject of History* 189), which fashions the Knight as a leader and as the source of order and harmony among the pilgrims.

Likewise, the Knight’s interruption of the Monk’s tale also displays him as the authority among the pilgrims. The Knight interrupts the Monk’s tale about the fall of men since not only the Knight himself but also all the other pilgrims are bored with this tale and he acts as their leader:

But right anon the worthy Knyght bigan,
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
‘Namoore of this, for it is right ynough!
Sire Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere;
And ye, sire Hoost, that been to me so deere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.’
Anon they kiste, and ryden forth hir weye. (VI (C) 960-968)

The Knight's interruption of the Monk's tale is also functional in his performance of nobility, because, as the representative of knights who have transformed from the very early times and developed themselves as professional warriors claiming nobility by deed, the Knight values those who can climb up the social ladder as a result of their worthy deeds and merits:

I seye for me, it is a greet disece,
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. (VII 2771-2779)

This attitude of the Knight is also appreciated by the Host, since he does not want to hear "how fortune covered with a clowde" either (VII 2782). At this point, it should be recalled that the fourteenth century was the period of the birth of a new paradigm in the changing society. It seems that the Knight defends all the social climbers who deserve upward social mobility owing to their deeds and merits. This explains why *The Monk's Tale* "anoyeth al this compaignye" (VII 2789), who have great aspirations, and why they approve of the Knight's interruption, which can also be taken as the symbol of the society's acceptance of the Knight's self-fashioning through his performance of nobility by deed.

As a result, it can be claimed that the Knight's rhetorical performance not only in his tale but also in his interactions with the other pilgrims, such as the Monk, the Pardoner and Harry Bailey, together with his material performance in the "General Prologue" contribute to the Knight's self-fashioning as a knight noble by deed.

1.2. The Squire

In the "General Prologue," the Knight is followed by the Squire, who is stated to be "his sone" (I (A) 79). Although the Knight does not display features of courtliness in his

material performance, the material performance of the Squire in the “General Prologue” and his rhetorical performance in his tale suggests that the Squire’s self-fashioning is based on the intergenerational development of gentility and nobility by deed. The Squire is, in fact, “a model of youthful beauty and strength,” and Chaucer chooses to emphasise “his gentler side” in the “General Prologue” (Coulton, *Chaucer* 147). The Squire can also be regarded as a man noble by deed developing into a gentleman, which also signals the growth of meritocracy, since these men noble by deed, who can be defined as meritocrats, constituted the newly emerging gentlemen from the fourteenth century onwards.⁹ Thus, rather than emphasising the Squire’s chivalric aspects like his father the Knight, the Squire’s material performance in the “General Prologue” displays the courtly aspects of the Squire’s nobility performance. At this point, it can be asserted that even if the Knight is respected for his military performance rather than his courtly performance and his life is full of military adventures outside the court as an indentured knight, since he performs nobility of deed, the Squire performs the second important aspect of knighthood that embodies the transformed chivalric values and fashions himself as a gentleman. Hence, the Squire should be considered to be the representative of the “knights of Venus rather than of Bellona” (Saul 51).

In order to be a squire, one needed to have first of all, the proper physical features to meet the requirements of knighthood performance. The monetary status of squires was also influential due to the expenses of knighthood. Moreover, in order to be knighted, a squire had to be trained by a former knight, and then knighted by him in a ceremony (Keen, *Chivalry* 10). Accordingly, the relationship between a knight and a squire was like the one between a master and his apprentice. Likewise, the Squire in the “General Prologue” is in service of his father to learn and practice to perform knighthood from his father, the Knight. He fulfils all the requirements to be a squire as the son of a prominent knight. He has been educated in knighthood performance by his father, the Knight, who is also his master, and the Squire is expected to perform each demand of his master-father Knight.

Originally, squires were the servants of knights and they were in charge of their horses and arms. Their responsibilities were defined by the *Statute of Arms* of 1292 which was

prepared to maintain order in tournaments (Coss, *The Knight* 128). This meant that squires acquired the status of gentility and they began to be “recognized as a social rung immediately below that of knight[s]” (Coss, *The Knight* 129). The service to knights granted squires “*noble* service and traineeship” (Coss, *The Knight* 131, emphasis added), which also promised them the chance to be knighted following the end of their traineeship as a squire if they were the eldest son of a knight. This seems to be the prospect for the Squire in the “General Prologue” as well, although it is not clear whether he is the eldest son of the Knight or not. The significance attributed to squires signalled the widening of the nobility in the late Middle Ages and “the crystallization of the squires into a social rank” (Coss, *The Knight* 131). Squires were classified just below knights in the 1379 poll tax (Coss, *The Knight* 132).

As a representative of these squires, the Squire fashions himself as a potential knight-in-the-making through his material performance in the “General Prologue,” which can be analysed in three sections as his appearance, manners and etiquette. He has been receiving his knighthood training and has already been joining battles to prove himself as an able potential knight (Huey 19). It is this potentiality that provides the Squire with the chance to sustain claims to nobility by deed like the Knight. Hence, like his father the Knight, the Squire also performs nobility by deed, and his nobility is confirmed by his father’s position as a knight. Besides his bearing the chivalric past of his father who claims nobility by his military deeds, the Squire moves his claim to nobility by deed one step further and fashions himself as a gentleman, who is not only noble by deed but also able to claim a place at court as a result of this nobility by deed. Accordingly, rather than presenting his military aspect, the Squire’s material performance draws attention to his bodily features which fashion him as a courtly gentleman:

With hym [the Knight] ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER,
 A lovyere and a lusty bachelor,
 With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
 And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe. (I (A) 79-84)

This depiction reveals that the emphasis of the Squire's material performance is on his physical qualities and strength. The Squire has a fashionable appearance and seems to care for his beauty as a young man engaged in court life. In this respect, it is important to note that his hair is described "as if" it were put in the press. While curly hair is in accordance with the medieval ideals of beauty (Curry, *Ideal* 31), Chaucer the pilgrim implies that the curliness of the Squire's hair is not natural, but the Squire is curling it for the image he desires to create. This displays the Squire's concern about his performance as a courtly knight, who is concerned about his physical appearance. However, this is not presented in opposition to his chivalric aspect, as he has already been taking part in battles alongside his father (I (A) 85). As a result, it can be argued that the Squire's material performance presents him as the embodiment of the balance between the military and court life. Although the Squire's material performance foregrounds his courtly values, the father-son relationship between the Knight and the Squire reveals that the Squire is also in a "warrior and attendant" relationship with his father (Stillwell and Webb 46). This shows how the Squire prepares and trains himself for his military life, which is very important for a potential knight noble by deed.

Displaying a fashionable appearance, the Squire draws attention to his concern about court life as well. Therefore, the Squire also becomes the embodiment of "[t]he nature of chivalry, [...] with all of its complexity both on the battlefield and in the court, which required a training period before the rank and responsibility of knighthood (and its various ramifications)" (Huey 14). He has been trained by his father the Knight, and is preparing himself to be knighted. Yet, he also trains himself in courtly manners and etiquette. As a result of his young age, his interest in courtly life and courtly love as a bachelor and as a result of his concern about his physical appearance, the Squire stands out as a gentlemanly knight-in-the-making, who has not only military concerns like the Knight, but also courtly concerns.

Accordingly, Mann defines the Knight and the Squire as different parts of chivalry and states that "[t]he Knight and the Squire are representatives of chivalry, but in different aspects. [...] The difference does not merely derive from their individual personalities, nor even from their difference in age; it reflects aspects of the ideal of chivalry itself"

(*Medieval* 106). This, in fact, refers to the changes in knighthood performance, the change from the knighthood performance of the Knight, which is totally based on military deeds, to the knighthood performance of the Squire, which is based on courtly activities as much as military deeds. As a man noble by deed, the Squire not only fulfils the military ideals like his father does (I (A) 85-86), but also adds his own contribution to knighthood performance. He performs the courtly ideal in addition to military ideals. Hence, courtly love is a significant aspect of the Squire's material performance:

And born hym weel, as of so litel a space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
 Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
 Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day;
 He was as fressh as is the month of May. (I (A) 87-92)

The Squire is depicted in pursuit of courtly love in his fashionable attire. As a young squire, he is described as fresh as May. In the light of this depiction, the Squire can be defined as the embodiment of the change in knighthood performance and the transformation from military nobility by deed to courtly nobility by deed in knighthood. In this respect, it can be suggested that, while the Knight fashions himself in the form of Duke Theseus in his tale as discussed above, the Squire performs a knighthood similar that of Palamon and Arcite in the Knight's tale. In this respect, the difference between the material performances of the Knight and the Squire can be interpreted as the reflection of the development of nobility by deed. As Burçin Erol states, "[t]he young Squire reflects the ideal fourteenth century squire with his skills in singing, dancing, writing, composing, warfare and in the games of love" ("A Pageant" 72). Similarly, Coss indicates that "[t]he young squire is an *aristocratic*, courtly figure taken straight from romance. His early engagement in war was designed to impress his lady. He was fashionable in dress, he could dance, compose songs and write poetry. Everything about him was evocative of romance" (*The Knight* 153, emphasis added). All these courtly aspects of his material performance contribute to the Squire's fashioning himself as a gentleman knight-in-the-making and as a member of the court who is noble by deed.

The costume of the Squire, which stands out as an important part of his material performance, is thus functional in reflecting his self-fashioning as a member of courtly nobility. His costume implies that the Squire is the symbol of youth, passion, liveliness, purity and signals that he is full of energy: “Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde” (I (A) 93). A gown was “a short garment” (Ege 117) and, as Burçin Erol explains, the short gowns were criticised immensely by the clergy as a reflection of vanity, and thus being fashionable, especially when the influence of wide sleeves was added to it, was not approved of (“A Pageant” 74-75). However, although it was true that the clergy condemned short gowns, associating them with lechery and pride, as Ufuk Ege argues, “the Squire may not be particularly proud or lecherous,” but his costume might just be the reflection of “the fashionable costume of an amorous youth” (300). His short gown, embroidered with white and red flowers, symbolises not only his freshness as the May flowers, but also, through colour symbolism, his purity (white) and his concern about love (red). Therefore, the Squire’s attire as his material performance draws attention to the Squire’s self-fashioning as a courtly figure interested in display, which is in opposition to the humility of the Knight. However, this should not be regarded as a negative feature, since this is the reflection of the Squire’s self-fashioning and his version of the nobility performance. Accordingly, his clothing reveals that the Squire does not avoid display as a figure who has established a balance between military and court life.

Furthermore, as Burçin Erol argues, “[t]he array of the Squire is the mirror of his ideals and aspirations as well as the insignia of his social status. He is dressed as a modish and handsome young squire. His vigorous, colourful and youthful nature has been portrayed by means of his festive and fashionable attire” (“A Pageant” 79). Actually, due to his fashionable clothing and curly hair, Mann defines the Squire as “a dandy” (*Medieval* 119). Yet, his attire, as stated above, helps the Squire’s self-fashioning, because it is, in fact, “linked to [his] manners or demeanor” and suggests “an adherence to mere outward ceremony [...] [and a] representation of [...] [his] nature or intention in speech or actions” (Greenblatt 3). In other words, the Squire’s costume externalises his aspirations. This is the reason why the Squire chooses to display his courtly features in

his material performance unlike his father, the humble Knight, and his performance of nobility is reflected through his physical appearance as well.

The Squire performs his identity as the knight-in-the-making in his manners and etiquette, too: “Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable, / And carf biforn his fader at the table” (I (A) 99-100). This both shows the reverence of the Squire to his masters and asserts his place among the nobility. In this respect, it can be argued that the Squire is closer to the Renaissance idea of the courtly gentleman than his father, the Knight. Combined with his interest in music and court life, the Squire’s identity performance shows that he serves not only his country in the battlefield and his master-father at the table, but also his lady at court. As Cooper states, “[h]e is not only young, strong, and in love; he is courteous, eager to serve, and in all respects perfect of his type, however different a type that may be from his father’s” (*Oxford Guides* 37). Therefore, it can be suggested that the Squire’s material performance not only helps him fashion himself as a courtly gentleman, but also helps him display the change in knighthood performing the distinction between his knighthood and the older knighthood performances, even that of his father’s.

The Squire furthers his courtly knighthood in his rhetorical performance, as well. As a potential-knight-in-the-making, the Squire tells a romance. Choosing a romance is a very important part of the self-fashioning of the Squire through his rhetorical performance as it is for the self-fashioning of his father, the Knight. Thus, his tale presents the Squire as a knight-in-the making devoted “to love and to his lady” (Mann, *Medieval* 117). That is, his rhetorical performance in his tale reveals that the Squire serves Venus as much as he serves Mars, as it has already been revealed by the “General Prologue”: “So hoot he lovede that by nyghtertale / He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale” (I (A) 97-98). It is for this reason that his tale refers neither to battles nor tournaments but to the beauty of the lady, Canacee, which influences strongly the knight in his tale.

The Squire’s rhetorical performance underlines courtly values. He is similar to the mysterious knight with great rhetorical skills that comes to the court of Cambuskan (V

(F) 81-90). The Squire himself performs a comparable rhetorical excellence in his tale telling. Yet, although the Squire performs excellent rhetoric, it is toned down by his humility. He asks, “[h]ave me excused if I speke amys” (V (F) 7). The Squire says,

I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng.
Myn englissh eek is insufficient.
It moste been a rethor excellent,
That koude his colours longynge for that art,
If he sholde hire discryven every part. (V (F) 36-40)

This is actually an example of the topos of the inadequacy of the poet, which the Squire makes use of as “a veiling modesty formula” (Curtuis 515). Saying that “I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing” (V (F) 36), the Squire employs the humility topos in his rhetorical performance, which is functional in fashioning himself as a humble knight-in-the-making despite his interest in display as reflected by his material performance in the “General Prologue.” It draws attention to his skills and as such is part of display culture.

In relation to the humility formula, Schwietering indicates that “[i]n order not to overlook the fact that the humility formula is a gesture toward God even when it is the audience that is addressed, we must not fail to note the form of prayer” (1283). Likewise, the use of the humility formula by the Squire is also functional in exhibiting his religious aspect, in that, he does not boast of his rhetorical skills, but rather chooses to be a humble person. This is the expected attitude of an ideal Christian knight-in-the-making. Hence, it can be claimed that the romance in his rhetorical performance reveals not only the Squire’s military identity and rhetorical skills, but also his humility. This also contributes to the Squire’s fashioning himself as a courtly figure who is an able humble knight-in-the-making.

Furthermore, the Squire’s rhetorical skills is, in fact, similar to the mysterious knight’s rhetoric in his tale, which is described by the Squire as follows:

He with a manly voys seide his message,
After the forme used in his langage,
Withouten vice of silable or of lettre;
And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,

Accordant to his wordes was his cheere,
As techeth art of speche hem that it leere. (V (F) 99-105)

These lines indicate that while the Squire presents his rhetorical skills in a veiled way through the use of the humility formula, he does not refrain from praising the rhetorical skills of the mysterious knight in his tale, who can be regarded as his mirror image. Thus, even if he makes use of the modesty topos in depicting his own rhetorical skills, the Squire still displays his rhetorical skills indirectly through his praise of the knight's rhetorical skills in his tale.

The Franklin's praise of the Squire's rhetorical performance is also functional in establishing the Squire's rhetorical skills. The Franklin praises the Squire's rhetorical excellence before beginning his own tale telling performance as a reflection of the Squire's gentility and wit:

In feith, squier, thow hast thee wel yquit
And gentilly. I preise wel thy wit, [...]
 [...] considerynge thy yowthe,
So feelyngly thou spekest, sire, I allow the!
As to my doom, 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 continuance!
For of thy speche I have greet deyntee. (V (F) 673-680)

The Franklin is impressed by the rhetorical skills and gentility of the Squire so much that he regards it as a reflection of the Squire's wit. The Franklin's praise is also revealed by his addressing the Squire as "sir." It is not surprising that the squire in the Franklin's own tale also seems to be the mirror image of the Squire. The Franklin depicts the squire of his tale as follows:

Upon this daunce, amonges othere men,
Daunced a squier biforn Dorigen,
That fressher was and jolyer of array,
As to my doom, than is the month of May.
He syngeth, daunceth, passynge any man
That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.
Therwith he was, if men sholde hym discryve,
Oon of the beste farynge man on lyve;

Yong, strong, right vertuou, and riche, and wys,
And wel biloved, and holden in greet prys. (V (F) 925-934)

Like the Squire in the “General Prologue,” the Franklin’s squire performs courtly knighthood. He is goot at dancing and singing, and he is fresh as May. He is young, strong, virtuous, rich and wise (V (F) 933). As Cooper argues, the Franklin’s squire reveals that, the ideal reflected by the Squire’s rhetorical performance is “acknowledged again later when the young and lovesick squire of *The Franklin’s Tale* turns out to be his double” (*Oxford Guides* 36). The squire in *The Franklin’s Tale* composes “[...] layes, / [s]onges, compleintes, roundels, virelayes” (V [F] 947-948). Like this squire, the Squire in the “General Prologue” “koude songes make and wel endite, / Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write” (I (A) 95-96). Hence, it can be argued that the Squire fashions himself not only as a soldier, but also as a gentleman and a gifted courtier through his rhetorical performance.

Similarly, the Squire’s rhetorical performance in his tale complements his material performance in the “General Prologue.” Thus, both his material and rhetorical performances help the Squire’s self-fashioning as a courtly gentleman who is noble by deed. He is a new role model for the traditional military group that claims nobility by deed. Therefore, it can be claimed that the Squire fashions himself as the embodiment of the newly emerging type of courtly gentleman, who both sustains his military identity and pays great attention to the courtly values such as singing, dancing and rhetorical abilities, and thus forms the basis for the Renaissance gentleman. As a result, it can be said that, in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer “offers us an experience in which a hierarchy is postulated and then penetrated or otherwise qualified” (Strohm, “The Social and Literary” 15). The estate of nobility is penetrated by the Knight and the Squire through their material and rhetorical performances of nobility and redefined. Hence, the Knight and the Squire’s self-fashioning as men noble by deed present a new group among the nobility who are meritocrats.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the Knight and his son, the Squire, who are the representatives of “two different stages of life” (Huey 23), are functional in exhibiting the intergenerational development of gentlemanliness, which can be observed through

their self-fashioning as the gentle members of nobility through their nobility performances. The Knight fashions himself through his performance of nobility by deed and performs the authority of the nobility among the pilgrims. Moving this self-fashioning performance one step further, the Squire fashions himself as a courtly knight-in-the-making, as a gentleman who has desires not only to perform in the battlefield, but also in court life. Thus, presenting the self-fashioning of the Knight and the Squire, Chaucer shows that, even in the fourteenth century, “there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process” (Greenblatt 2). Their self-fashioning through their material performances in the “General Prologue” and rhetorical performances in their tales and in their interactions with the other pilgrims, present new models of knighthood, exploiting the “possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force” (Greenblatt 256). Indeed, their self-fashioning through their nobility performances consists of a mixture of traditional military performances and the new, reconstructed knighthood.

CHAPTER II

THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDERED RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: THE SELF-FASHIONING OF THE Prioress, THE MONK AND THE PARDONER

The Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner in the *Canterbury Tales* are the members of the Church, who perform according to their clerical status although they also perform their gender identity. England had become almost a totally Christian country by the thirteenth century (Duffy 293) and the Church had become an institution with a great labour force, strict hierarchy, growing wealth and lands, which contributed much to the Church's power and authority. In accordance with its increasing authority, the impact of the Church on individuals both within the body of the Church and outside the Church was also increasing. It was an institution, which had a microcosmic reflection of the social hierarchy of medieval England and was prone to all the disasters of the age. Thus, as Southern states, "the history of the medieval church is the history of medieval society" (215). Following the social hierarchy of medieval England, within the body of the Church, monks and nuns were considered to be "the middling group of Christians" (Lynch 258). They were in between the papacy and lay religious people. Yet, no matter what the status of a clerical person was in this hierarchy, the renunciation of the self was at the core of religious life. This necessitated the person, who had chosen to be a member of the clergy, to renounce all the earthly desires and material or corporeal interests. With this ideal, there were people in the fourth and the fifth centuries who wanted to live totally religious lives leaving aside their earthly concerns.¹⁰ These people were the forerunners of monks and nuns. They devoted their daily lives to praying and religious meditation secluded from society. Because of their increasing numbers, institutionalised Christianity wanted to direct their influence on behalf of the Church. This can be marked as the beginning of male and female monasticism, which would go on with increasing numbers and effect in the forthcoming centuries (Lynch 17-18).

Monasticism in England was a wholly developed and established form of religious life by the thirteenth century. The monastics led a communal life in monasteries and

nunneries under the guidance of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, and their central motive was the renunciation of the self, which was made possible owing to the financial support of the ones living outside monasteries.¹¹ Their daily lives were devoted to prayer, study and work on land, all of which were conducted in strict silence (Burton 356-358). Another important religious ideal was poverty due to not external conditions but individual choice. Otherwise, it was believed that the clergy would not be able to follow the path of Christ. However, this was highly paradoxical, since the Church had accumulated a great wealth although it preached individual poverty to its adherents (Backman 356-357). On the one hand, the most indispensable part of clerical life was the renunciation of the self and abandoning individual desires; on the other hand, the Church was a kind of “papal monarchy” with its accumulating wealth (Lynch 316). This resulted in an increase in the Church’s power in the thirteenth century not only through its religious influence (preaching and excommunication), but also through its legal influence (papal law courts).

However, the Church was influenced by the social, religious and educational developments of the fourteenth century such as the famine of 1315-1322 and the Black Death of 1348, which led to problems not only in society but also within the body of the Church (Lynch 303). All these disasters led to the loss of faith and hope in religious people, because the death toll was increasing day by day, but the clergy was helpless against all these misfortunes. Moreover, the clergy itself was also prone to these disasters. The number of deaths in monasteries and nunneries was also increasing because of the plague and famine (Logan 275-276). The conditions were so bad that the bishop of Bath and Wells was reported to say that “[i]f the dying cannot find an ordained priest, they should confess their sins, according to apostolic teaching, to any lay person, even to a woman if no man is available” (qtd. in Logan 283). The commoners, seeing that the members of the clergy also suffered from these disasters (Hoy 169), lost their belief in the institutionalised Church. Similarly, following the decreasing number of the clergy after the Black Death, people started to question the traditional forms of cloistered religious life, which led to an increase in the number of mystics and hermits.

Beside these disasters, the Church was also influenced by *Devotio Moderna* in the fourteenth century. *Devotio Moderna* was born in the Netherlands in the fourteenth century and then spread to whole Europe. The adherents of *Devotio Moderna*, or the Modern Devotion, did not take formal vows of poverty or enclosure practised by the secluded clergy, which was defined by them as external display, but they lived as pious people emphasising inward features. Hence, they rejected monastic life with all its aspects from its monasteries to special clothes and from its wealth to vows. They believed that each individual should lead a religious life individually away from communal monastic life and its rules (Lynch 339-341). This meant a search for individual ways of religious life rather than adhering to the communal life of monastic tradition under the guidance of some rule.

The rise of literacy and nationalism¹² in the fourteenth century were also among the developments, which were influential on the Church and the clergy. To begin with the rise of literacy, although the clergy had the monopoly over learning until the eleventh century, as a result of the establishment of universities starting from the twelfth century onwards, literacy spread to merchants and lawyers, that is, to people outside clerical spheres. These educated people started to question and reject the teachings of the Church and the social as well as the religious status of the clergy. As for the rise of nationalism, although it was not in the sense of contemporary nationalism, the national feelings grew in the late medieval period, the impact of which was reflected in the Great Schism, the reason of which was mainly not religious but national (Lynch 319-329). All these reasons such as famine, the Black Death, *Devotio Moderna*, the rise of literacy and nationalism caused a decline in the belief and trust in the Church and clerical life both for the commoners and the clergy. An immediate effect was a radical decline in cloistered life. Monks and nuns ignored their religious responsibilities and started to have earthly concerns (Hamilton 36). This tendency was prevalent not only among the cloistered clergy but also among the secular clergy. However, the renunciation of the self was still at the core of religious life both for the cloistered and secular clergy in the fourteenth century (Burton 267-268). Moreover, it was the renunciation of the self that would lead to a decrease in the number of those who chose cloistered life in the fourteenth century and that would bring an end to the existence of monastic life in the

sixteenth century, since the renunciation of the self was not a favourite ideal for the clergy, either (Burton 368). The inhabitants of monasteries and nunneries deserted their claim for the renunciation of the self, mostly because cloistered life was not their choice, but a life imposed on them by certain familial, social and economic reasons. Furthermore, they began to question the ways of life imposed on them by cloister life and started to ask for more than what was offered to them behind monastery walls. Then, they started to reject the ideal of the renunciation of the self and began to fashion their own selves according to their own conceptions of their identities, particularly their gender identities. The same rejection was also seen among the members of the secular clergy.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the self-fashioning of the clergy in the Middle Ages was especially related to the rejection of the renunciation of the self, in that, the members of the clergy wanted to lead their lives without renouncing their gender identities. This chapter analyses the self-fashioning of the Prioress and the Monk, as the representatives of the cloistered clergy, and the Pardoner, as the representative of secular clergy in the *Canterbury Tales*. They shape and display their self-fashioning through the combination of their material performances in the “General Prologue,” which are mainly the reflections of their gender identities, and their rhetorical performances in their tales, which draw attention to their religious identities. Chaucer presents these clerical characters using preaching as a means of self-fashioning for the clergy, because although the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner’s material performances in the “General Prologue” are not in accordance with the renunciation of gender identities imposed on them, without renouncing their gender identities, they attempt to perform their religious identities in their rhetorical performances. At this point, gender comes to the foreground as a very significant part of one’s self-fashioning performance in the Middle Ages, especially if s/he is a member of the clergy.

As Judith Butler argues, “genders are performative” (*Bodies* ix). Gender is constructed by reiterative performances, which repeat certain aspects of previous gender performances while introducing certain changes and thus confronting the socially established norms of gender performances in the current gender performance. Such kind

of gender performances are not private performances but public ones, since an individual performer needs to confront the gender norms of society to place her/his own personal performance in the line of other gender performances (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 191; Butler, *Bodies* xii-xxi). Hence, gender can also be defined as a historical and material cultural construct produced through performativity (Butler, *Undoing* 10; Butler, *Gender Trouble* 35; Hearn 9). Therefore, in order to interpret any gender performance, it is necessary first to decode the temporal and material context of that specific gender performance.

In heteronormative societies, like the fourteenth century English society, the aim of each gender performativity is to conform to the heteronormative gender divisions. As Butler argues, “[i]n this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed” (*Gender Trouble* 34). There is a mutual relation between the construction of gender and subject, because as Butler states, “there need not be a ‘doer behind the deed,’ but that the ‘doer’ is variably constructed in and through the deed” (*Gender Trouble* 195). As a result, gender becomes an ongoing process, which takes place in the body. While performing her/his gender identity, a subject constructs not only her/his gender but s/he is also constructed by this gender performance. Thus, the body appears “as a set of boundaries, individual and social, politically signified and maintained” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 46). Hence, it can be argued that the body stands out as the site in which an individual achieves her/his social self, which is displayed by her/his physical appearance. The aim of the individual is to adapt herself/himself to the gender norms of society, which means embodying a socially natural gender identity. If s/he cannot succeed in conforming to these norms, s/he will be an intruder of not only the sexual politics but also the gender politics of society.

Likewise, as Neal suggests, the lives of medieval people can be defined as “socially performed lives,” which were highly influenced by their performances of gender identities that had to be in accordance with their social selves (243). It was at this point that there was the possibility of conflict, since such gender performances were likely not to conform to the social expectations. Because of the impositions on individuals’ social selves such as the Church’s imposition of the renunciation of the self, the medieval

clergy had a conflict between their gender identities and their social selves. Hence, they developed their distinctive means to perform their gender identities as well as to claim their social selves as the members of the clergy, which produced their self-fashioning through their performances of gendered religious identities as in the case of Chaucer's depiction of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner in the *Canterbury Tales*. This is also in accordance with Butler's argument that "gender is an assignment, it is an assignment which is never quite carried out according to expectation, whose addressee never quite inhabits the ideal s/he is compelled to approximate" (*Bodies* 176). It can be argued that the members of the medieval clergy also carried out their gender "assignments" despite society's expectations of the renunciation of the self. Furthermore, as Butler indicates, gender also becomes "a project which has cultural survival as its end" and "the term *strategy* better suggests the situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs. So, as a strategy of survival within compulsory systems, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences" (*Gender Trouble* 190, emphasis original). Similarly, the "assignment" of each individual in late medieval society, including the members of the clergy, was to perform her/his role through her/his strategy in order to adapt to her/his social environment, and to avoid punishment. It is at this point that there arose a "tension between social role and personal identity" (Kueffler 2), because, as in the case of the clergy, some had difficulty in performing their gender identities (or personal identities) along with their professional identities (or social identities).

Medieval society had a very strict gender matrix where the female was always marginalised as the embodiment of imperfection and incompleteness while the male was centralised as the embodiment of perfection and completeness (Kueffler 2). In addition to a strict gender hierarchy, as Foucault argues, medieval society also experienced the "scheme of transforming sex into discourse [...] in an ascetic and monastic setting" (*The History of Sexuality* 20). As a result of this, there was a problem for the male and female who chose, or had to choose, entering clerical life. Due to this ascetic discourse formation, especially the clerical figures themselves had great difficulty in their identity formation process, in that, there was a clash between their gender and religious identity performances. However, as a consequence of the social,

political and religious developments in the fourteenth century, the members of the clergy began disregarding the renunciation of their gender identity and they began to fashion themselves as gendered religious figures.

This chapter analyses the self-fashioning of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner in the *Canterbury Tales* through their performances of gendered religious identities. Because of the fact that during the medieval period, everybody, regardless of gender, “had a social self” which was influenced not only by sex but also by social status (Neal 8), gender identity can be divided into two parts as “social” and “psychological” or, in other words, “exterior” and “interior” (Neal 6). It is for this reason that Butler defines gender as “*a corporeal style, an ‘act’ as it were, which is both intentional and performative*” (*Gender Trouble*, 190, emphasis original). Hence, the depictions of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner in the “General Prologue” are analysed as their material performances, which reflect their gender identities, and their tales are analysed as their respective rhetorical performances, which reflect their religious identity.

2.1. The Prioress

It is, first of all, necessary to discuss briefly the general attitude of Christianity towards women in order to analyse the gender performance of the Prioress as a clerical figure. On the one hand, Christianity proposed “a mixture of equality” to everybody; but on the other hand, the “subordination” of women, preaching that wives should be submissive to their husbands (Jewell 154). Actually, from the fourth and the fifth century onwards, the impact of Christianity was great on the status and role of the female, especially under the influence of the arguments of St. Paul in relation to women (Uitz 153). Having been condemned because of the Original Sin, women were believed to be the embodiments of sensuality, physicality and thus imperfection as supreme temptresses. The living conditions of the female within the body of Church was reflective of this subordinate condition of the female outside religious spheres. They were also subordinate and had to be submissive to male dominance represented in this case by the Church fathers. As a result, although it was true that the Church offered a career opportunity for the female within its walls such as being an abbess, a prioress, or a nun,

it also enforced the same kind of subordination and submission to the male rule within its walls. Moreover, career opportunities for women were fewer than those of men who could be deacons, priests, canons or monks (Norris 287). Women were able to join enclosed convent life and become nuns, whose highest achievement was to be a prioress or an abbess. As a subordinate being, this was the highest point she could achieve through the renunciation of her self, at the centre of which was the renunciation of her gender identity as a descendent of Eve. At this point, the meaning of the word “nun” should also be noted as a reflection of this imposed renunciation of gender identity. The word “nun” comes from Latin *nonnus*, which means “a monk” (English 529). This definition reveals that even the professional title “nun” rejects the gender difference of the female from the male, and linguistically rejects her gender identity while centralising the male.

In this respect, it is also important to analyse the reasons for the establishment of nunneries and their social as well as religious functions in the Middle Ages in order to better understand the impact of gender impositions on the female in general and the gender performance of the Prioress in particular, which includes the manifestation of her gender identity and thus her self-fashioning as a professional female clergy. In the beginning, female religious houses provided religious life for the unwanted female aristocracy, that is, children, unmarried women and widows. From the early Middle Ages onwards, kings throughout Europe took advantage of convents by oblatting their children, who would have been guaranteed to become married to the Church. Until the eleventh century, child oblation, which was designed by the *Rule of St. Benedict*, became a widespread convention in Europe. The Anglo-Saxons also practised child oblation,¹³ as a result of which there were many oblates among Anglo-Saxon clergy (Norris 284). In most cases, these daughters were too young to be able to decide their own fate, because, for instance, according to St. Benedict’s rule for the convent of St. Jean, the age limit for child oblation was six or seven (Norris 284). Due to their claustration at an early age, it was believed that these girls could adapt to the rules of their convent more easily, since convent life would then be “the only” life they had known (Labarge 100). Still, this did not guarantee that these girls would fully conform to convent life when they grew up. Apparently, the life of the female was limited from

childhood onwards in the Middle Ages by the patriarchal society, and nunneries enabled this society to oblate and to enclose their daughters. Furthermore, oblatting their children, kings could not only have their unwanted or surplus daughters under control by cloistering them, but also get in close contact with the Church claiming a share in their authority and power (Norris 282-284).

Similarly, nunneries were also functional for unmarried women and widows. If a woman was unmarried until she was thirteen or fourteen years old, she was regarded as “an anomaly” (Southern 309). Yet, due to the impact of primogeniture, the first male offspring of the families inherited everything leaving the remaining male offsprings without financial and social opportunities to marry, which led to an increase in the number of unmarried women. Furthermore, it was not possible even for a wealthy family to provide each of the daughters with a dowry, which also decreased their chance to marry. Therefore, the conditions of the female were much worse than those of the male. They did not have the opportunity to enter military life like their male counterparts. Moreover, because of the increasing number of deaths in battles, there was an incongruity in the ratio of eligible males and females. Likewise, unfortunately, even if the female had the means to marry, in most cases, again because of the death tolls in the battles, they were left widowed at a young age. Under these circumstances, convents offered them an alternative life style. They provided the space for such female family members, who did not, or could not, get married or who were widowed. Besides, to their advantage, these women were able to sustain the same aristocratic way of life in convents, which accepted only the members of the aristocracy and the nobility and provided them with career opportunities as abbesses or prioresses (Southern 228; Labarge 99-100; Lynch 213). It was for these reasons that wealthy families tended to donate a considerable amount of land as dowry for the establishment of nunneries, which would embrace their unwanted daughters and widows, and thus also secure their noble blood in a safe environment.

In addition to these, nunneries provided women, who were even less religiously motivated, with “a respectable and protected alternative to marriage” (Norris 292). This meant that women, who had financial means to be admitted into a nunnery, chose

enclosed life not only for religious reasons, but also for social reasons. Consequently, as Norris puts it, nunneries were functional as “places of refuge, not only for women wishing never to marry but for widows either needing physical protection from the world or hoping to prepare their own souls for eternity” (281). Therefore, nunneries “became convenient prisons for noble or royal women who were either too important or too protected to be disposed of outright” in addition to being “a refuge for runaway wives,” who chose convent life not only for religious reasons, but also for social reasons such as avoiding the restrictions of their male family members (Norris 282, 283). Hence, nunneries served “[t]he intricate combination of purpose – public and personal, religious, social, and political” (Southern 228-229). They were the places to enclose rebellious widows or wives, places to free the noble families from the burden of dowries for the marriage of daughters, places to enclose unwanted children and wives, places of education for the girls of noble families, and places to offer career opportunities for the noble daughters through whom their families could claim a share in the power and authority of the Church. The only price for the female to pay was their freedom (Lucas 54-55). In this respect, it is necessary to note that no matter if a female chose, or had to choose, convent life, it was the male, who benefited most from nunneries. Accordingly, even if there was also religious motivation in the female to lead a secluded life, this motivation was enhanced by many other social and familial motives.

With such motives, the aristocracy of Anglo-Saxon England in the seventh and eight centuries started to establish religious houses and enclose unmarried and widowed female relatives in these houses in order to have their land and power under control, which displayed the gender inequality in the patriarchal society. However, these aristocratic women were to benefit from their aristocratic status in these convents and became administrators either as abbesses or prioresses (Norris 285). Hence, although there were monks attached to such kind of female religious houses for sacramental services and administrative duties, abbesses ruled their convents “in the spirit of one accustomed to command” repeating their aristocratic duty to rule (Southern 310).¹⁴ Yet, it was still paradoxical, because although the female heads of such houses were always aristocratic females and were the dominant power in the convents, they still needed

males to “serve as priests at the altar” (Logan 142) because of the secondary position of their gender according to the doctrines of the Church.

Nevertheless, this type of convent life was still appreciated by noble women, since it allowed them not only to act freely as rulers, which was prohibited for them in the outside world, but also to earn respect for their virginal life (Lucas 31-32), as it offered them the chance to become the virgin brides of Christ by marrying the Church, which also contributed to their social status. Hence, entering into convent life became a common choice among the noble women of Anglo-Saxon England, even if it meant that first they had to establish convents themselves (Lucas 36). These noblewomen established convents on their lands that they had inherited either from their family or their husbands. This shows that even in the early steps of monasticism, that is, from the fourth century onward, “monasticism was a family movement” (Norris 278). This can easily be observed in the example of the convent of St. Jean in Arles, France in the sixth century (Norris 280-281).¹⁵ This convent was also important in terms of presenting the first written rules for female monasticism. Yet, this first rule for female monasticism was written by Caesarius, the bishop of Arles, in ca. 512, under the title *Regula sanctorum virginum*. Hence, the religious life for women in the Middle Ages by a rule was started by a male who asked for the renunciation of earthly desires through enclosure and poverty, and required a totally cloistered religious life for women dominated by prayers in nunneries (Hourigan 39; Norris 281).

Although most of these nunneries were destroyed during the Viking invasions of England in the late eighth and ninth centuries, the monastic tradition was re-founded again with the support of the noble families, and it was influenced immensely by Benedictine monasticism in the tenth century. During this period, noble and aristocratic women again supported the monastic tradition as the patrons of both monasteries and nunneries. However, the main concern of these noble women was not their desire for enclosed religious life but patronising religious life. Yet, whatever their main motives were, during the years both before and after the Norman Conquest, there were still noble women entering convents as nuns. In this way, they succeeded in attaining the highest status in nunneries as abbesses or prioresses, and thus as the supreme religious and

administrative authority (Lucas 43-46). This also meant the spread of the nobility's power over the Church.

Despite these gender and estate based regulations, the institutionalisation of Christianity and the Church was almost completed by 1000 AD and all the monks and nuns were required to obey the *Rule of St. Benedict* written by St. Benedict in 529.¹⁶ The number of the men in Benedictine monasteries was much more than the number of women in Benedictine nunneries, who were still limited to aristocratic background. As Lynch indicates, compared to the Benedictine monasteries in 1066 in England, the numbers of which was about forty-eight, there were just thirteen nunneries, the numbers of which would increase in the twelfth century parallel to the increase in the number of religious orders (212-213).¹⁷ The religious orders of the twelfth century provided even women of lower social status with more space and opportunity to enter religious life. As a result, in Henrietta Leyser's words, the twelfth century was the period of "monastic renaissance" with "the foundation of well over a hundred houses for women, providing for around three thousand vocations" (190). These new religious houses of new orders for women meant new opportunities for women although they were still sustaining the gender hierarchy.

The Cistercian Order was one of these religious orders that influenced the development of religious life for women. The first Cistercian nunnery appeared in ca. 1120 following the stricter versions of the *Rule of St. Benedict*. The Cistercians emphasised enclosure and renunciation of possessions. There were at first double houses¹⁸ for monks and nuns but later the Cistercians did not want to sustain the support to the female houses because of sexual immoralities and economic burdens. Thus, towards the end of the twelfth century and during the thirteenth century, the Cistercians did not welcome the acceptance of females into their order (Norris 287; Labarge 107).¹⁹ The Cistercian Order enhanced this seclusion declaring itself as "a male order" (Logan 143) and rejected the entrance of nuns into their communities until the end of the thirteenth century. A similar attitude towards women was also present in the Order of Premonstratensians, which was established by St. Norbert in France again in the twelfth century and which established again double houses for lay brothers and nuns. The role

of the female was again secondary to the male for the Premonstratensians. The only function of the female was to help the canons in the abbey hospices, where they took care of the poor and the sick (Norris 289). In the thirteenth century, the Premonstratensians also started to disapprove of the female entrance to their order, since they found nuns as burden, and these female Premonstratensian houses also disappeared with the disavowal of double houses (Labarge 107; English 597).

The Gilbertine Order²⁰ was especially important in the development of female monasticism, because it was established by Gilbert of Sempringham only for females in 1147. However, ironically enough, there were again clerks or canons who would help the female communities. Nuns needed laymen for administrative necessities and clerks to conduct their liturgical ceremonies, which again meant that they were to live in double houses (Logan 143-145; Lucas 49-50).²¹ Thus, as Jewell states, it can be argued that “although the nunnery offered a complete women’s world, it was one long overshadowed by men” (157). Nuns in the Gilbertine Order were to live again together with lay brothers and sisters who would serve them and with canons, who were to help them with sacramental services. This affirmed that the female community needed male control and support in religious life as well.

Following the religious orders of the twelfth century,²² the emergence of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century also reflected the gendered nature of religious life. According to the traditional gender norms, the admittance of females to the mendicant orders was not suitable for the members of the weaker sex, who were not genderwise suitable to live according to the Franciscan ideals of wandering in towns and continuing their lives begging. Thus, St. Clare had to establish a distinct order, the Poor Clares, for women for their convenience (Hamilton 34; Norris 289-290). Although their lives were again based on almsgiving, they had to stay enclosed behind walls unlike their male counterparts wandering in towns. This meant that they could not live up to the truly Franciscan ideals of wandering preachers. Similar to the Franciscans, the Dominican nuns, the order of which was founded by Dominic de Guzman in ca. 1206, also had to live in seclusion contrary to the wandering life style of friars (Norris 290). As a result, it can be claimed that no matter to which order a nun belonged, her religious life was

always shaped by her gender. Although there was a rise in the number of women's religious houses in thirteenth century England, which reached about 142 nunneries accommodating about 3,000 nuns (Jewell 158), the gender inequality was on the foreground limiting the religious lives of the female as well as their social lives.

The developments in the religious houses for women continued in the fourteenth century as well. The fourteenth century experienced a decline in not only the number but also the standards of nunneries. The decline in the number of nuns in the fourteenth century was related to financial and moral deterioration in nunneries. The financial conditions of nunneries had already started to deteriorate especially after their separation from the double houses, because they were left with smaller places and less administrative means, since nuns were not as able in dealing with administrative duties like leasing of lands as men. Thus, although the number of females in need of religious seclusion was rising, the means of nunneries were not developing at the same rate. The main reason of this discrepancy was the conditions and problems of nunneries, which were basically gender-based, leading to decreasing facilities and opportunities in nunneries unlike the prosperity of monasteries. Nuns were not able to deal with the same agricultural work to provide their needs and manage their manors. As a result, in order to sustain not only certain religious routines but also administrative duties, nuns needed a greater number of male workers, which resulted in financial problems (Labarge 213-215). Hence, the Church authorities, who intended to control sexual immoralities in the double houses and wanted to reject the responsibility of the female houses, in fact, left nunneries vulnerable to poverty, which was also related with the admittance of daughters from lower social standing unlike the noble and gentle nuns of the previous periods. There were reports even about food shortages in nunneries and they were mostly in debt (Jewell 158-159; Power, *Women* 90-91).

As for the moral deterioration in nunneries in the fourteenth century, although there were some nuns with great religious inclination, who were living in accordance with the requirements of the age, in which the "[p]rayer and praise of God was a mode of life," there also were some nuns who were not religiously oriented, but who had chosen monastic life just because they had no other choice (Power, *Women* 90). In this way,

women found “a seemingly alternative way of life within the framework of the Catholic church,” which also provided them the chance for education in nunneries (Uitz 156). Despite these financial and moral problems, it was still owing to these nunneries that the women of fourteenth century England reached a better life in terms of both social and religious facilities, which were not existent outside convent walls. In convents, nuns had the opportunity not only to have education but also to learn administration and liability, of which they were deprived in secular life. Despite certain problems, nunneries were still functional in providing nuns with a respectable career in the fourteenth century (Power, *Women* 90).

Furthermore, even if there was a decline in the standards of education in nunneries in the fourteenth century, nunneries still provided women with the only chance of education. Hence, although Labarge indicates that nuns in the fourteenth century were not concerned with education as much as the nuns of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (115), the education that nuns received in nunneries provided them with social as well as religious respect as clerical figures. Besides, it can be claimed that nuns were also greatly influenced by the *Devotio Moderna* in the fourteenth century, which put great emphasis on the internal acts of religion rather than external display. The adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* rejected not only the priestly authority of the Church in relation to penance, confession and absolution, but also taking vows and choosing cloistered life. They started confessing to each other and joined life outside cloisters from time to time. As a result of all these developments, the Church attributed great importance to education in nunneries, because, only through “good education,” nuns had the chance to be holders of power and authority within the body of the Church spreading its doctrines and ideology (Lucas 37-38). As Henrietta Leyser states, nunneries were not just “refuge centres” for women (203) but also the only places where women could be educated in the Middle Ages, since they were not accepted to schools or universities (Hamilton 34).²³ The copying of manuscripts in nunneries during the Middle Ages was another important factor, which contributed much to the education of nuns (Norris 285). Thus, nunneries provided women with a number of advantages that were unavailable to them in the outside world, which contributed both to their self-

respect and to the respect for them in society, which would bring them “an honourable profession” (Power, *Women* 99).

Chaucer’s Prioress, Madame Eglentyne, is a prioress owing to such kind of education and her probable noble background. It has been argued that there are two possible Benedictine houses to which the Prioress may belong: Barking, Essex or Stratford, Bowe (Hourigan 40). Although her title refers to the fact that she comes from a small priory rather than a big abbey, her position as a prioress gives her great authority and power. In order to better understand Chaucer’s Prioress and her authoritative position as a female clergy, it will be beneficial to take a brief look at the duties of a prioress. This authoritative position is very important for the self-fashioning of Prioress, since it is due to and a result of this authoritative position that she fashions herself as a professional clerical figure without recouping her gender identity.

The duties of a prioress were very important for the well-being of nuns in the priory both in religious and social terms. As the head of nuns, a prioress was the source of order in convent and thus she was the centre of authority. She needed to consult other nuns in important decisions, but still the last judgment fell upon her. In most cases, prioresses were of noble or gentle origin. Hence, they were used to exercise their power and rule. Yet, this opportunity to exercise power in certain cases was especially important, because in certain nunneries, which were free from bishop’s administration and thus his intervention and authority, the head of the house was second only to the pope in authority (Hamilton 34). However, this supreme authority led to certain problems from time to time, because some prioresses, or abbesses, tended to have a luxurious life style; they tried to behave like an autocratic ruler or they could display favouritism (Labarge 98-99).

Furthermore, due to the growth of trade and urbanisation, the duty of a prioress was extended to business issues. She needed to deal with the accounts of the priory to see whether farms were profitable, the priory churches paid their tithes and convent goods were purchased at good prices by merchants as well as dealing with staff and providing spiritual needs in her convent (Hourigan 43). In this respect, a prioress needed to be not

only a spiritual leader but also an administrative one. As Olson states, she had to “have the administrative skill of a baron and the spiritual authority of a parson” (134). Combining these two aspects, the duty of a prioress was to oversee the conduct of the life of renunciation in her priory, because, as stated above, the core of cloistered life was the renunciation of the self. This was believed to be possible only in claustration with the families’ financial aid. The only concern of a cloistered nun was to be the renunciation of the self, and it was believed that the communal life gave her necessary social support to achieve this aim (Burton 356-358). First of all, a prioress had to follow these rules, and then she needed to make other nuns obey them as well.

Moreover, because nunneries were also functional in protecting the virginity and independence of the female (Norris 279), a prioress had to be very careful about the conduct of strict claustration and physical, sexual and religious protection of nuns. The preservation of virginity was the most important part of the renunciation of the self, and even the widows could lead such a chaste life after separation from, or the death of their husbands. In all religious treatises written by males, it was emphasised that the preservation of virginity was more difficult and more important for the female than the male. The reason of this difference was totally gender-based. The female was regarded as weak because of her virginity and thus her virginity needed to be protected. It was for this reason that nuns needed to be protected behind walls and the rule of enclosure was stricter for females (Burton 365-366). For instance, Gower draws attention to the importance of virginity and argues that the virginity of the male and the female was not alike: “For a woman’s foot cannot stand as steady as a man’s can, nor can it make its steps firm. Neither learning nor understanding, neither constancy nor virtue such as men have flourishes in woman. But you often see woman’s morals change because of their frail nature, rather than by conscious choice” (179). This was the assertion of the inferiority of women as the embodiment of flesh and bodily pleasures. According to Gower, women always desired what was forbidden for them and they “rarely” acted according to what was allowed for them “without mentally grumbling” (179). Similarly, Gower argues that “[j]ust as a rose springing from thorns rises above them, so the status of a virgin surpasses others. Just as a white pearl is pleasing, being highly valuable, so a virgin in a cloister is pleasing, having professed her vows to God” (181).

This was an example of the glorification of virginity preserved in cloisters imposed by the male authorities. It was believed that, through the preservation of virginity and the renunciation of the self and sex, the female “became a man, the virile woman” (Burton 366). Since woman was inferior to man due to her gender, she achieved higher status only by renouncing her sexual desires and femininity. Because the man was superior in the gender hierarchy, it was assumed that it was only when a woman renounced her gender identity that she got closer to the ideal. Accordingly, virgins needed to be protected and controlled. The emphasis on virginity also drew attention to the importance of the body for the male as a means to have control over the female.

As Butler argues, the body is “a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself. In either case, the body is figured as a mere *instrument* or *medium* for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related” (*Gender Trouble* 12, emphasis original). In this respect, the arguments of the religious authorities for the preservation of virginity in the Middle Ages appear as a reflection of the instrumentalisation of the female body for the male to assert his authority in the gender hierarchy. Furthermore, by assigning the duty of preserving virginity in nunneries to prioresses, the patriarchal authorities aimed at controlling the female with the help of another female. However, as Burton claims, this was very paradoxical, since nuns renounced their gender identity through the renunciation of the self and sex, but they also retained “their sexuality as the brides of Christ” (366). Evidently, the protection of virginity was totally gender-based and was used and abused by the patriarchal society to have control over the body and the soul of the female. Thus, nunneries were functional for the patriarchal society in many ways with prioresses representing and guarding dominant ideals. Yet, mostly because nunneries recruited nuns through imposed or enforced entrance, the number of nuns, including prioresses, who did not conform to the rules of cloister life increased. Rather, they displayed worldly habits in the fourteenth century (Norris 282; Hourigan 41).

Chaucer’s Prioress is formed by the gender norms of the fourteenth century. Yet, she develops a self-fashioning through her material performance in the “General Prologue.”

This self-fashioning is the reflection of her gender identity performance, which at certain points dovetails into her religious identity performance. Her self-fashioning continues in her rhetorical performance, that is, her tale, which endorses her religious identity. The Prioress fashions herself as a woman of religion who is not only professional as a clerical authority as reflected in her tale, but also determined to preserve and display, rather than renounce, her gender identity, through her gendered religious identity performance.

To begin with the Prioress's material performance in the "General Prologue," which is based on the display of her gender identity, Chaucer the pilgrim first refers to her smiling describing it as "ful symple and coy" (I (A) 119). Thus, the very first feature of the Prioress's material performance is her "coy" smile, which draws attention to her femininity rather than her religious status. Furthermore, "[h]ire gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy" (I (A) 120). St. Loy, that is, St. Eligius, was a strict follower of monastic tradition, whose rule was introduced to a French convent (Foster and Carey 79). While it is appropriate for a nun to pledge her oath to a saint, this detail raises the question why the Prioress's oath is to a saint who had an impact on a French convent. Contributing to the ambiguity of the Prioress's oath by St. Eligius, Chaucer the pilgrim reveals her name as "madame Eglentyne" (I (A) 121). Hence, it is important to analyse the name symbolism of the Prioress, which reflects not only her noble background but also femininity.

First of all, "madame" suggests that the Prioress might be a widow. According to the *OED*, "madame" is glossed as a form of "madam" and is used "by people generally in speaking to a lady of high rank" and/or "station" ("madam" (1)). In addition to nuns' being "called *madame* down to the Reformation," the *OED* also states that "[i]n Chaucer's time [...] to be addressed as *madame* was one of the advantages which a citizen's wife gained by her husband's being made alderman; this probably indicates the lowest social grade in which at that time the title could be claimed as a matter of customary right" ("madam" (1), emphasis original). Moreover, the title "madame," as in the case of the Prioress, is "[t]he title prefixed to the surname of French married women (corresponding to the Eng. 'Mrs.', 'Lady', etc., according to degree of rank)"

(“madame” (1)). Accordingly, whether “madam” or “madame” is accepted as the title of the Prioress, it refers not only to her professional status as a prioress, but also to the possibility that she might have been of similar social origin with those rich widows, who had established convents for themselves. After all, it was not possible for an ordinary female to be a prioress. Therefore, it can be suggested that the implication about the Prioress’s sexual identity as a probably widowed woman is stronger. In this respect, her tale about a little child can also be considered to be the reflection of her maternal feelings. She might have had her own children, whom she left behind while entering convent life. Hence, rather than presenting an implication of the Prioress as the virgin bride of Christ, her title “madame” stands out as an indication of her sexual identity, which refers to the corporeal experiences the Prioress had before entering a convent. She might have entered nunnery either after the death of her husband or after his acceptance of her entrance to a nunnery. Although she might have had a certain period of marital life, as implied by the title “madame,” she might have chosen religious life for either some familial or religious reasons.

Likewise, the Prioress’s forename, “Eglentyne,” which is not a saint’s name, as it would be expected of a nun, comes from French and means “[t]he sweet-briar” (“eglantine” (1)), the name of a flower, which blooms till winter. Hence, her name is also performative. It can be argued that the importance of the physical beauty of the Prioress does not disappear within convent’s walls. Furthermore, combined with her title “madame,” the French origin of her name also implies that the Prioress might be of a noble family that was of French origin. Similarly, it can be claimed that “[...] Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly, / After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe, / For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe” (I (A) 124-126) refers again to both her professional status and her noble background (Erol, “A Pageant” 89). As a prioress, although she cannot speak the French of Paris, she is noble enough to be equipped with the knowledge of French. French was the language of the court and the nobility during the Middle Ages despite its decline in the fourteenth century. Furthermore, French was also reflective of her religious profession. During the medieval period, bishops wrote to prioresses either in Latin or in French until the decline of this condition in the fourteenth century. In the late medieval period, because of the decline in the standards of education in nunneries,

nuns were not able to understand Latin. Thus, bishops started to write their letters to nuns in French rather than in Latin. However, even this condition was to change in time and the bishops started to write to nuns in English, because the number of nuns with the knowledge of French was declining (Jewell 159).²⁴ Thus, if the deterioration of the education in nunneries is taken into consideration, which reached such a level that nuns needed to read the *Rule of St. Benedict* and other religious handbooks in their English translations (Power, *Women* 96-97), the French of the Prioress, though not the French of Paris, displays her professional efficiency, since she knows French at least “[a]fter the scole of Stratford atte Bowe” (I (A) 125). Accordingly, the Prioress stands out as an educated and possibly a noble nun.

Additionally, Chaucer the pilgrim notes that “[f]ul weel she soong the service dyvyne / Entuned in hir nose ful semely” (I (A) 122-123). The Prioress’s singing the divine service refers to the daily prayer routine in nunneries as well as to the fact that singing was a quality of the noble ladies. Therefore, the Prioress’ singing, on the one hand, draws attention to her feminine identity; on the other hand, it suggests that she was careful about her religious identity. Actually, as in the case of education, moral conditions and religious standards were also in decline in nunneries in the late medieval period. Nuns started to ignore their religious duties and were incautious about their attendance to matins. They were sometimes murmuring during matins and were not able to sing in harmony (Power, *Women* 97-98). However, the Prioress’s singing the divine service signals her religious identity displaying her religious concern. Accordingly, a brief look at the daily routine in a nunnery is also important, because it displays the limitations, impositions and temptations that nuns had to deal with.

The basic occupation of nuns was praying not only silently in heart, but also aloud during the recitation of the divine service. However, excluding the times of prayer and short periods of recreation, nuns had to remain silent. They had to close themselves to the outside world devoting themselves to prayer. Yet, there was also the duty of housekeeping. Nuns had to deal with the daily affairs in nunneries such as the conduct of manual work or dealing with lay brothers and sisters (Power, *Women* 91-93; Hourigan 40). Hence, the daily lives of nuns were ordered by strict regulations, because

a nunnery was not only “a religious unit” but also “a social one” (Power, *Women* 93). Accordingly, as Power states, they had to follow a balanced life of praying, studying and working:

A nun had seven monastic offices or services to say daily. She rose at 2 a.m., went down to choir for Matins, followed by Lauds, returned to bed at dawn and slept for three hours. She got up for the day at 6 a.m. and said Prime. Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline followed at intervals through the day; the last at 7 p.m. in winter and 8 p. m. in summer, after which she was supposed to go straight to bed. All in all she got about eight hours’ sleep broken in the middle by the night service. She had three meals – a light repast of bread and ale after prime in the morning, a solid dinner to accompany reading aloud at midday and a short supper after vespers. From 12 to 5 in winter or 1 to 6 in summer nuns were supposed to devote themselves to work of some kind (digging, haymaking, embroidering, reading) interspersed with a certain amount of sober recreation. (*Women* 92-93)

Despite this strict routine, a nun had to have enough education to cope with the required duties as a religious person. In this respect, the Prioress presents herself as an efficient female clergy who sings the divine service very well. However, considering her probable noble background and the fact that singing was also a very important feature of noble ladies at courts, it can be suggested that the Prioress performs like a courtly figure, since singing is also reminiscent of the love songs at courts. Therefore, although she is singing in a totally different setting, it can be claimed that the Prioress still achieves creating the image of the courtly lady. In this respect, it can be argued that her singing is functional in exhibiting not only her efficiency in her profession as a prioress, but also her femininity.

Similarly, the Prioress’s material performance in the “General Prologue” also includes her eating habits and her concern about her manners, and fashions her as a gendered prioress:

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. (I (A) 127-135)

In order to better understand the Prioress's eating habits as revealed by these lines, it might be beneficial first to give brief information about the typical food of nuns in nunneries. Nunneries were not self-sufficient in terms of food production. They could get certain dairy products, certain vegetables, bread and meat from their farms, but the remaining needed to be bought. For instance, especially, the fish, salt and spices were very important, since they were expensive and consumed a lot. Yet, they were among the typical food of nuns, because they mainly ate salted or dried fish, pottage enriched with almonds, raisins and figs during Lent. Similarly, there were fish days, when nuns ate either fresh or salted fish, and meat days, when they ate beef, pork or bacon. They were allowed to eat fowl only on festive days. Apart from these festive days, they had to do with the daily allowance of bread and ale (Power, *Women* 94). Food was limited except for some holy days. However, there is no direct reference to what the Prioress eats in the "General Prologue." The main focus is on her table manners. She is very careful about her manners; she eats her meals without letting any morsel fall, not wetting her fingers in her sauce, not dropping any morsel on her breast and wiping her lips when she finishes.²⁵ In relation to such mannerism, Price argues that the Prioress's "concerns and priorities, which seem to be primarily social rather than spiritual" reveal "her highly performative external behaviors" (198). She is concerned about her eating manners as if she is a courtly lady. The Prioress's main concern seems to be the messages about her gender identity encoded by her for the society to decode. Therefore, it can be suggested that she is basically careful about her performing as a courtly lady. Yet, although "[t]he Prioress is obsessed with noble conduct and fashions as indicated by her refined tablemanners" (Erol, "A Pageant" 88), Cooper claims that she cannot succeed in being a perfect "courtly lady either" (*Oxford Guides* 38). Although she is very careful about her manners, her performance of these manners is not in the proper place. She is not a member of the court but a member of a nunnery, where such courtly manners were not approved of. As a result, the Prioress's behaviours during meals can be defined as the overlapping of her past courtly gender identity and her recent religious identity. Furthermore, her courtly manners during meals are also in accordance with her oath by St. Eligius, a saint famous for his feasts (Farmer 130). Hence, her concern about

her courtly manners can also be associated with her oath to St. Eligius. Her choice of St. Eligius is functional in conveying her interest in manners as well as displaying the traditional requirement of taking an oath by a saint expected by nuns. In this respect, it can be claimed that she uses and abuses the expectations of the religious traditions on her gender identity in order to perform her gender identity and fashion herself as a gendered clerical figure.

As Price states, “the Prioress is a bastion of remarkable personal hygiene and decorum in an unsanitary world” (198). There is the plague outside, but “[h]ir over-lippe wyped she so clene / That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene / Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte” (I (A) 133-135). This can be interpreted not only as a reflection of the Prioress’s search for a clean or sanitary life against plague and death, but also as a reflection of her concern about hygiene and her concern about her good appearance. It can be claimed that her gender and religious identity dovetail into each other in the Prioress’s material performance in the “General Prologue.”

In this respect, Chaucer the pilgrim’s emphasis that “[...] for to speken of hire conscience, / She was so charitable and so pitous” (I (A) 142-143) also draws attention to the Prioress’s tender heart not only as a female but also as a woman of religion:

She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
 Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
 Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
 With rosted flessch, 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. (I (A) 144-150)

This depiction reveals that the Prioress has a tender heart. Yet, her concern and affection are directed towards pets, which have been aptly defined as “mislocated and misdirected” (Spector 185). Actually, pets were criticised highly as an indication of worldly interests in nunneries. Dogs, monkeys, squirrels, rabbits and birds were among the pets that nuns had, but the favourite ones were dogs and cats. Despite the prohibitions in relation to keeping pets in nunneries, nuns continued their interest in pets (Power, *Women* 98; Labarge 100-101). This interest was, in fact, claimed to be rooted in

the influence of boarders on nuns. During the medieval period, nunneries were also functional as boarding houses for rich and aristocratic women, a practice which brought financial relief to nunneries. Hence, a prioress was also “a hostess” entertaining “neighboring lords and ladies” or “visitors travelling from one estate to another” (Hourigan 43). Additionally, the prioress of a nunnery needed to help the boarding of rich and aristocratic women in the absence of their male protectors, who were away for business, pilgrimage or battle and did not want to leave them alone (Hourigan 43; Power, *Women* 90-91). Because it allowed interaction with the outside world, this practice was a favourite activity among nuns. This practice also provided money they needed although it introduced fashionable dresses and pets (especially dogs) into nunnery. Moreover, as Hourigan puts it, this practice also tempted “those gently born prioresses who shared the spirit, manners, and tastes of their race” (43). This was the main reason for the criticism of this practice. Hence, boarding was considered to be “a great distraction to the nuns, who saw and imitated their [the boarders’] gay clothes and pet dogs, and were willing to gossip with them” (Power, *Women* 91). Accordingly, as Erol suggests, the Prioress’s “charity and pity are not to the poor and needy but to mice and dogs” (“A Pageant” 90). However, in line with her gender identity, the Prioress’s concern about pets can also be associated with her maternal affection, and it can be claimed that the Prioress directs her maternal feelings to pets as a result of the loss of her maternal status in the outside world.

Another result of the contact with the outside world was that nuns were going outside their convents ignoring the strict enclosure rule. The severest criticism to such kind of religious laxness came from Boniface VIII towards the end of the thirteenth century, who argued in his *Periculoso* as follows:

We the present constitution, which shall be irrefragably valid, decree with healthful intent that all and sundry nuns, present and future, to whatever order they belong and in whatever part of the world, shall henceforth remain perpetually enclosed within their monasteries; so that no nun tacitly or expressly professed in religion shall henceforth have or be able to have the power of going out of those monasteries for whatsoever reason or cause, unless perchance any be found manifestly suffering from a disease so great and of such a nature that she cannot, without grave danger or scandal, live together with others. (qtd. in Power, *Nunneries* 344)

Actually, until the tenth and eleventh centuries, there was an improvement in the financial conditions of nunneries, because they were accumulating wealth and land due to the noble and gentle women entering convent life. However, these financial opportunities when combined with the interaction with the outside world led to worldliness and deterioration in religious ideals in nunneries. Nuns started to ignore the ideals of the *Rule of St. Benedict* and disobeyed the rule of strict claustration. There were even certain instances when some of them were reported to join wedding ceremonies and grew interest in rich clothing and jewels. Some abused pilgrimages to leave the convent and stayed at different places with their servants. All these drew much criticism both from the society and from the Church fathers, which resulted in the restriction of leaving convents even in order to join pilgrimages in 1381. This was, in fact, not the first time of this restriction. Joining a pilgrimage was banned in 791, and then a second time in 1195. Yet, this would not be sufficient to prevent religious and moral deficiencies, the increase of worldly interests, the ignorance of education and immorality in nunneries (Hourigan 41). The Church fathers still could not succeed in controlling nuns. Moreover, the prohibitions of Pope Boniface VIII's bull, *Periculosus*, were almost protested by the nuns (Power, *Women* 99; Labarge 101). For instance, as Power notes, "[a]t one nunnery in the diocese of Lincoln, when the bishop came to read the Bull and deposited a copy in the house, the nuns pursued him to the gate when he was riding away and threw the Bull at his head" (*Women* 99). Nuns disappointed the Church fathers, who desired their submission, silence and claustration; these expectations remained just a part of the patriarchal expectations which were not fulfilled (Labarge 101). Likewise, the Prioress is a bit of a rebel and is seen on a pilgrimage and not in her convent. She performs an identity contrary to the traditional norms. Yet, the pilgrimage provides the necessary space for the Prioress to fashion and display her gendered religious identity.

The Prioress's material performance continues with her facial beauty, which displays that the Prioress rejects the renunciation of the self and overtly exhibits her feminine beauty. It is due to this display that the Canterbury pilgrims realise that the Prioress is the embodiment of the medieval ideals of beauty (Erol, "A Pageant" 84). As Hodges also states, through the deception of the Prioress, Chaucer displays "the medieval

rhetorical tradition of delineating ideal beauty” (*Chaucer and Clothing* 30). The depiction of her facial beauty is as follows:

Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was,
 Hir nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
 Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed.
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe. (I (A) 151-156)

To begin with her nose, which is an important part of her material performance, Curry states that “[a] beautiful nose should be well set on the face, neither too large nor too small but in all manner well proportioned, slender, straight (‘even’), high, and of a graceful length” (*Ideal* 63). Accordingly, the Prioress’s “tretys” nose (I (A) 152) signals that her nose is well situated on her face as a mark of feminine beauty. Likewise, the Prioress’s “greye as glas” eyes (I (A) 152) are also the indicators of her beauty. Grey did not mean the grey colour in the Middle Ages, as it does in the contemporary sense. It referred to “a bluish-grey inclining to light green or yellow” (Curry, *Ideal* 52). It symbolised the brightness and light in the eyes, which was employed greatly in the descriptions of Christ and thus symbolised the beauty of the eyes (Curry, *Ideal* 51-52). As for her “mouth ful small” (I (A) 153), it is again in line with the beauty requirements, since big mouths were not considered to be beautiful. Furthermore, when such a mouth is described with “softe and reed” lips (I (A) 153), which are like invitations for kisses, the feminine beauty of her mouth increases (Curry, *Ideal* 66-67). Yet, while it is easier for the Prioress to display her red lips, there arises a question about the quality of her lips: How does Chaucer the pilgrim know that her lips are soft? This can be regarded as an implication about the Prioress’s sensuality drawing attention to her femininity. Hence, these details about her mouth reveal not only her sensuality, implied by her “soft” lips, but also that she is passionate, implied by her “red” lips. The colour red symbolises both sin and the artificiality of the colour of her lips. Therefore, her small mouth together with her soft and red lips are functional in displaying the Prioress’s facial beauty and femininity.

Her “fair forehead” (I (A)154) is the last part of her face that adds to the Prioress’s beauty as another important ideal of medieval beauty, since the narrow forehead was the reflection of ugliness as in the case of big mouths. Similarly, the broad forehead was again employed frequently in the depiction of Christ (Curry, *Ideal* 42-43). However, the Prioress’s forehead is “almoost a spanne brood” (I (A) 155). Cooper states that “eight inches is too much” to be defined as beautiful (*Oxford Guides* 38). Yet, the important point is that, although it was not allowed for a nun to display her forehead, due to the fact that “[f]ul semyly hir wympul pynched was” (I (A) 151), which means that the Prioress was following the fourteenth century fashions (Erol, “A Pageant” 85), everybody could see her forehead. Hence, the Prioress’s veil, which is expected to be the symbol of her religious identity covering her forehead, stands out as an important item, which is functional in displaying her femininity.

Such detailed depiction of the Prioress’s physical beauty reveals that she does not try to conceal her femininity, which is also in accordance with her oath by St. Eligius, a handsome “courtier-turned-saint” (Bowden 49). As a woman, who is noticeably beautiful and is interested in displaying her physical beauty, her oath by St. Eligius implies that the Prioress is still attracted by physical beauty. As a beautiful nun, she chooses to take an oath by a former-courtier saint, which is also functional in contributing to the Prioress’s performance of gendered religious identity. In addition to displaying her religious identity through her profession and her religious tale, the Prioress also needs to display her gender identity in order to achieve her role in the reiteration of gender performances. Thus, besides being a woman of religion, she also incorporates the messages in her material performance that add ambiguity to her religious identity. She displays her physical beauty on a pilgrimage and implies, through her oath by St. Eligius, that she is still attracted by male beauty as well. Accordingly, it can be argued that the Prioress presents herself also as a social being, and gender identity constitutes an indispensable part of her public performance despite her religious profession.

Her costume and accessories are also important in the Prioress’s material performance in the “General Prologue.” They contribute to the gender identity of the Prioress and

exhibit the Prioress's concern about femininity. Chaucer the pilgrim states that "[f]ul fetys was hir cloke" (I (A) 157) and,

[o]f 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*. (I (A) 158-162)

In relation to this depiction, Burçin Erol argues that the costume imagery of the Prioress reveals her worldliness and "her non-committance to the convent" ("A Pageant" 91). Actually, there was an increasing tendency to follow worldly interests by nuns in the fourteenth century. They were undisciplined and violated rules by indulging in the "three D's (dances, dresses, dogs)" (Power, *Women* 98). Nns were thus severely criticised for developing interest in fashionable attire, which was, as Power states, "merely one way of aping the fashions of the world" (*Women* 98). Furthermore, the coral beads signify the Prioress's noble aspirations, in that, "the red coral beads were favoured mostly by the high class ladies and were fashionable" (Erol, "A Pageant" 87). At this point, the colour draws attention to the sensuality of the Prioress which has already been implied by her red lips. Besides signifying her noble aspirations and sensuality, the costume imagery employed in the depiction of the Prioress also implies that the Prioress has interest in fashion. However, this interest in fashion was highly criticised as an implication of vanity and as a reflection of the assumption that women were the weaker sex interested in earthly vanity. Likewise, the Prioress's golden brooch has also been interpreted as a symbol of material wealth, which is, as Erol states, "in direct contrast to the vows of humbleness of the convent" ("A Pageant" 88). At this point, the Prioress's golden brooch can also be related to her oath by St. Eligius. St. Eligius was a very skilful goldsmith and became the patron saint of goldsmiths and blacksmiths (Farmer 130; Delaney 158). Accordingly, her choice of St. Eligius is again functional in displaying the Prioress's worldly interests under a religious veil. As Hodges indicates, it is proper for a pilgrim to carry rosaries during pilgrimage (*Chaucer and Clothing* 82), although gold was not allowed for them. Yet, the Prioress takes an oath by the patron saint of goldsmiths and has a golden brooch on her rosary, which on the one hand displays her as a follower of St. Eligius, and on the other hand, reveals her

worldly concerns. The *A* standing for *Amor vincit omnia*, “love conquers all,” can also be associated with her devotion. While it can be argued that she chooses *amor* to refer to religious love, it can also be claimed that, considering her oath by St. Eligius, the Prioress abuses her religious identity in order to perform her gender identity. Hence, her costume and accessories draw attention to the combination of femininity and religious feelings in the Prioress.

As a result, it can be claimed that the Prioress’s material performance in the “General Prologue” is mainly about her gender identity, which she does not hesitate to display, although it sometimes dovetails into her religious identity. It can be argued that the Prioress’s main concern about asserting her femininity is to become a woman and perform her gender identity, since, as Simone de Beauvoir indicates aptly, “one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one” (301). Similarly, as a social being, for whom gender is a very important part of her identity, the Prioress needs to perform her gender identity to achieve a more unified sense of self. With this aim, throughout her material performance, the Prioress reiterates the performance of femininity through her explicitly displayed physical beauty and costume, which help her to use and abuse “the performative construction of gender within the material practices of culture” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 35). Yet, she still performs her religious identity as well. The Prioress’s fashioning herself as a gendered religious figure is displayed first by her material performance in the “General Prologue” through the convergence of her gender identity and religious identity, which will be performed thoroughly in her rhetorical performance in her tale.

The Prioress tells a religious tale in order to enhance the combination of her feminine identity with her religious identity, and to claim that she performs as an efficient woman of religion without renouncing her female self. Accordingly, her rhetorical performance in her tale, which constitutes the performance of her religious identity, is in line with the doctrines of the Church. She tells the story of the violent murder of little Hugh, which is claimed to be undertaken by the Jews. Hence, although *The Prioress’s Tale* has been criticised as “an anti-semitic tale” dating back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Patterson, “The Living Witnesses” 507), the ideology of her tale is in accordance with

the attitude of the Church towards the Jews in the fourteenth century. Hence, the choice of the subject matter for her tale is helpful for the Prioress to perform her religious identity, and to convey the message that she can perfectly perform her religious duty and become the mouthpiece of the Church in relation to the Jewish problem despite her gendered self. In this respect, in order to understand the rhetorical performance of the Prioress which enhances her religious identity and thus contributes to her self-fashioning through her performance of gendered religious identity, it will be beneficial to briefly take a look at the rise of the anti-Jewish feelings in society and in the Church from its beginnings to the fourteenth century.

The Jews first came to England with the Norman Conquest on the invitation of William the Conqueror, and they were considered to be a part of the conquering French, which gave them “immigrant status” (Chazan 156). They mainly dealt with banking business and thus settled basically in towns with the support of the royalty. This royal support both meant protection and exploitation. The royalty not only protected the rights of the Jews in banking business, but also increased their control over and exploitation of the Jewish business, which led to the Jews “being regarded legally as the property of the crown, or *servi Camerae*” (Edwards 44). In order to enhance the control over the Jewish moneylending business, the Exchequer of the Jews was founded in the twelfth century, which also provided the government with the records of the Jewish business. The existence of the wealthy Jews were profitable for the kings of England, since they were constantly taking advantage of the moneylending business of the Jews. The crown was both protecting their settlements and their rights in business although the Jews had to pay for this protection by lending money to the crown, which would not return to them. Henry I was among these kings who had profited from the presence of the wealthy Jews in the kingdom. Despite the fact that the Jews were, in fact, being exploited by the crown, their association with the royalty combined with their monetary success led to the increase in the anti-Jewish sentiments in society. However, it was the Church itself that “gave the Jews a monopoly as lenders,” since, in the Third Lateran Council in 1179, the Christians were prohibited from dealing with moneylending and interest business. This naturally meant a growth in the prosperity of the Jewish moneylending business, which led to the envy of the Christian debtors. The Jews had high interest rates not only

because of their being the only moneylenders, but also because of social precariousness, which triggered the start of the social strife (Bredero 275). During Henry II's reign, there was an increase in both the anti-Jewish sentiments and Jewish settlement in England. However, Henry II and his court also profited much from the Jewish moneylending business, which gave them the chance to access not only the Jewish wealth but also, through the financial pressures on their debtors, that of the Christians (Chazan 154-159; Sapir Abulafia 256-257; Edwards 43-44). The royal exploitation of the Jews also continued during the reign of King John. Following the military defeats and conflict with the papacy, the crown was in great financial distress, and hence, it directly turned to the financial resources of the Jews. A similar type of economic exploitation went on during the reign of Henry III, who protected the rights of the Jews in order to benefit from their wealth (Chazan 161-163).

Despite providing such financial benefits to the crown, from the tenth century to the thirteenth century, the Jews were among the “outsider’ groups” in society along with lepers, homosexuals and heretics (Whitney, “Witches” 296). Especially, under the impact of the Crusades, the anti-Jewish feelings in society started to increase in the twelfth century and the social segregation of and the legal limitations imposed on the Jews increased. They had to wear special clothes to display their difference. They had to live in houses that were in poor physical condition. They were forbidden to have Christian slaves. They were not to have Christians as tenants. They were not to marry Christians. They had to surrender their wealth and possessions to the authorities if required. They were not to join any guilds, because most of such organisations were religiously oriented. They were prohibited from buying lands and holding a position in local governments, since this would mean the exercise of power and authority by the Jews over the Christians, which was never allowed (Whitney, “Witches” 296-297; Bredero 274-275). Actually, the Jews were the scapegoats for every evil in society: they were believed to be the ones responsible for the plague, heretic movements, leprosy and poisoning of wells. The anti-Jewish sentiments were constantly increasing despite Pope Clement VI's announcement for tolerance (Whitney, “Witches” 297-298; Bredero 275-276, 295-296; Logan 284-285). As Whitney states, the Jews were regarded as the embodiments of “a virtually interchangeable stereotype of the enemy,” and thus

“demonized,” they were “the arch-enemy of Christendom” (“Witches” 298, 299, 300). Similarly, during Richard I’s reign, the hostility toward the Jews increased more under the impact of his Crusading ideals, reminding the violence of the Jews against Christ. Therefore, there were instances of riots, even in London simultaneously taking place with the coronation of Richard I from which the Jews were excluded (Chazan 160; Sapir Abulafia 258-259).

The anti-Jewish sentiments increased to such an extent that there were also accusations of sodomy and the ritualistic murder of Christian children by the Jews from the twelfth century onwards, and the Jews were considered to be a potential threat to Christianity. In Sapir Abulafia’s words, it was believed that the “Jews crucified Christian children in derision of Christ’s Passion” (261). However, the change in the crown’s attitude to such accusations displays the change in the fate of the Jews in England. For instance, in the twelfth century, in 1144 in Norwich, a young Christian boy, William, was found dead and the immediate target was the Jews with their assumed hatred for Christ and Christianity. Then, the authorities were able to calm down the Christians and protect the Jews in the town (Chazan 157; Edwards 45). However, a similar case of the thirteenth century, which took place in 1255 in Lincoln, did not end in such a compromise. This time, a young Christian boy named Hugh was found murdered and again the Jews were the suspect. Yet, this time, the violence against the Jews could not be prevented, and a Jewish man was hanged as the suspect. A number of other Jewish men were put on trial and executed while little Hugh was declared a saint. Additionally, during Henry III’s reign, the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils reinforced the social segregation of the Jews. The Third Lateran Council in 1179 advised conversion to the Jews, which would provide them with a safe life. Likewise, the Fourth Lateran Council introduced the wearing of special costume by the Jews to signal their difference. Following the Fourth Lateran Council in the thirteenth century, a House of Converts was founded in England, which can be defined as a means of institutional segregation. Such kind of houses were established in Southwark, Oxford and London where there was already one established in 1223 by Henry III (Chazan 163-164; Edwards 50). The function of these houses was to teach Christianity to the converts, and to prevent their return to Judaism. The social segregation of the Jews was enhanced by the Fourth Lateran Council and it was

reinforced with the inclusion of these limitations into secular law by Henry III in 1253.²⁶

The reign of Edward I was to witness the end of Jewish existence in England. Because of his loyalty to the Church, Edward I reinforced social segregation of the Jews and their conversion. The Statute for Jewry by Edward I, laid down in 1275, prohibited the Jews from moneylending business under great threats of penalties, which deprived them of their basic occupation. He rejected the royal support provided for the Jews by the previous kings. The anti-Jewish hostility reached its peak in 1290 with Edward I's declaration of the expulsion of the Jews under the influence of his wealthy barons, who were not happy with the Jewish success in the moneylending business. The Jews were not contributing much to the royal treasure. The barons promised to provide the same financial support to the Crown on condition that the Jews left the country. Under these circumstances, the Jews were either to convert to Christianity or to leave the country. All these resulted in the expulsion of many Jews from England mainly to France (Chazan 165-167; Sapir Abulafia 263-264).

In the light of these historical facts, it can be argued that the Prioress's tale, that is, her rhetorical performance, by her "equation of Jews, usury, feces, and, eventually, inevitably, corpses, lingering as it does upon images of physical damage and bodily waste and corruption" (Price 200), is in perfect accordance with the arguments of the Church and thus the ideology of the clergy to which she belongs. The Prioress herself is influenced by the tale she would tell so much that she has a different time concept. Even though the story she tells goes back to the events of a previous century, she narrates the story as if the event happened "a litel while ago" (VII 686), which might at first seem like the reflection of "one who is unable to distinguish between present events" and the past (Patterson, "The Living Witnesses" 507). However, this time conception may also be associated with the intensity of the Prioress's religious feelings and her religious identity. In this respect, by referring to herself as a nun whose "konnyng is so wayk" like "a child of twelf month oold, or lesse (VII 481, 484), the Prioress presents "the clergeon's song as a model of linguistic innocence, a privileged speech that the Prioress seeks to imitate" (Patterson, "The Living Witnesses" 508). Hence, her rhetorical

performance becomes a means for the Prioress to perform and display her religious identity. It is also for this reason that the Prioress presents her prologue to her tale as “an extended invocation to the Virgin Mary,” the symbol of Mother and religious perfection, and her tale, which is in the form of “a brief saint’s life,” as “an account of a miracle performed by the Virgin Mary” (King 121). Therefore, it can be claimed that, in addition to exhibiting the anti-Jewish sentiments of her age, the Prioress’s tale evokes many religious elements as a reflection of her religious identity. Just as the anti-Semitic feelings following the murder of Hugh in the thirteenth century, the Prioress also reflects the same anti-Semitic feelings in her tale about the murder of little Hugh. As Patterson indicates, her tale “is a song both to and about the Lamb” through “a wholly innocent language” (“The Living Witnesses” 509). Throughout her tale, the Prioress not only repeats the *exclamatio*, *O alma redemptoris!* as “a stylistic feature characteristic of Marian poetry,” but also presents a sort of “liturgy, both the Little Office of the Virgin and the Mass of the Holy Innocents” (Patterson, “The Living Witnesses” 510). The references to the sufferings and the passion of the innocent, to the dirty world created by the plague, to the maternal affection in line with the relation between Virgin and Christ are all proper to the profession of the Prioress as well as her gender identity. Accordingly, the choice of the subject matter in her rhetorical performance enhances the impact of the Prioress’s rhetorical performance, and strengthens her status as an efficient prioress.

As a result, although the Prioress displays her gender identity in her material performance as reflected in the “General Prologue,” her rhetorical performance in her tale becomes the performance of her religious identity. Her tale reiterates the ideology of the estate she belongs to and clarifies the point that her femininity does not prevent the Prioress from having a religious identity. Hence, the Prioress fashions herself as a nun who helps the Church spread its ideology. She proves that she can perform her religious duty without renouncing her gender identity. Thus, although Price argues that the Prioress “is a woman who, for all her concern with avoiding the pollution of appetite, tells a remarkably dirty tale in which the child and the Jews are in turn associated with excrement, symbolically and literally” (198-199), it should be noted that the Prioress’s tale becomes a “self-evident” narration, which reflects her search for

“theologically conceived innocence” embodied by the little Hugh in her tale (Patterson, “The Living Witnesses” 516). In order to reach and sustain this religious innocence, the Prioress performs her clerical role as a woman of religion under the impact of the dominant ideology of the Church by telling a tale, which reflects anti-Jewish sentiments. It is also for this reason that the Prioress reproduces in her tale the ideology of the estate she belongs to. In this respect, although nuns were criticised for their interest in telling tales (Jewell 160), the combination of the Prioress’s rhetorical performance in her tale with her material performance in the “General Prologue” neither reveals that the Prioress is “the engagingly imperfect submergence of the feminine in the ecclesiastical” (Lowe, *Convention* 60) nor displays “the distance between the woman and her office” (Cooper, *Oxford Guides* 39). On the contrary, it can be argued that it shows the balance the Prioress has established between her gender identity and her religious identity. Accordingly, rather than condemning the Prioress as a nun because of her gender identity performance in her material performance in the “General Prologue,” it is necessary to redefine her identity performance. It can be claimed that the Prioress fashions herself as an efficient female clergy by not renouncing her gender identity and femininity but combining the display of her femininity with her religious identity in her performance of gendered religious identity.

2.2. The Monk

As for the Monk’s self-fashioning through his performance of gendered religious identity, it is necessary to start by analysing the gender identity performances of monks in the Middle Ages. As in the case of nuns, monks also had a central conflict between their gender identity and religious identity, since religion did not leave a space for the male to perform his gender identity freely. The clerical males were expected to renounce all the gender activities that would contribute to the formation of masculinity in the life outside monasteries, which meant the renunciation of gender identities. Yet, this renunciation of gender was still represented as a form of masculinity, which was clerical masculinity, the main aim of which was to prevent the conflicts between gender identity and religious identity. However, the Monk in the *Canterbury Tales* fashions himself as a man of religion who has established a balance between his gender and

religious identity. He shapes and displays this self-fashioning through his performance of gendered religious identity as does the Prioress.

In this respect, in order to better understand the performance of gendered religious identity of the Monk, it might be beneficial to present an overview of the development of monasticism and its impact on men's gender identity in the Middle Ages. Monks led secluded communal lives under a rule. The renunciation of the self was the rule that was to shape their lives, because it was very important for a monk to renounce the earthly pleasures, comforts and riches. The main goal of a monk in his secluded life was to devote himself to the love of God through self-denial. Originally, the eremitic monks were the initiators of monasticism as they led solitary lives.²⁷ Yet, although eremitic monks were the initiators of monasticism, coenobitic monks were the ones to introduce communal life, rejecting the solitary lives of eremitic monks. Coenobitic monks preferred solitary lives integrated into communal lives, because they believed that this type of life would be more beneficial for a monk. Leading such a communal life, they took the opportunity of serving the others in the community, which would contribute to their spiritual ideals. These monks believed that they achieved a sort of spiritual unification with God through their spiritual union with other monks in their communal lives (Hermann 69-70; English 496). The word "monk" "descends from the Anglo-Saxon *munuc*, which itself is simply the English form of Greek *monachos*, ultimately deriving from Greek *monos*, 'lonely' or 'single'" (Hermann 70), and displays the emphasis on solitude. In their solitude in the communal life, monks were expected to perform their religious duties.

St. Benedict of Nursia²⁸ introduced "[a] less harsh form of monasticism" than eremitic monasticism in the sixth century and aimed at creating "a community which [...] [was] run like a well ordered household rather than like a highly disciplined regiment" under the guidance of his *Rule* (Hamilton 27). Actually, there were some earlier monastic rules such as the rules of St. Martin of Tours and Caesarius of Arles. Although St. Benedict was influenced by these earlier rules while writing his *Rule*, the *Rule of St. Benedict* was, in fact, an adaptation of the anonymous *Regula Magistri* (*Rule of the Master*), which was again written in the sixth century. Although his rule was not an

original one but was influenced especially by the anonymous *Regula Magistri*, St. Benedict's rule aimed at regulating monastic life and sustaining order, which led his *Rule* to be more influential and more prevalent than the previous rules in the eighth and ninth centuries under the royal support of the Carolingians (Lynch 31). He avoided the strict regulations²⁹ and the emphasis put on leading a solitary life. On the contrary, he argued for communal life in monasteries under the guidance of an abbot, who was to be elected by monks. Furthermore, he resembled the relationship between an abbot and monks to that of a father and his children. As for the ideals of Benedictine monasticism, St. Benedict especially demanded a life time of full obedience, humility, chastity, studying hard (both the Bible and the other writings of the Church fathers), physical labour, the renunciation of property, self-discipline and prudence (English 103; Hermann 70; Lynch 32-33).

Moreover, according to St. Benedict, especially the rule of stability was of great importance and so, unlike his predecessors, he urged monks to take a vow of stability, which was to sustain order both in the personal sphere of each monk and in the communal sphere in monasteries. Although St. Benedict rejected the strict renunciation of the self and allowed not only moderate food and wine, but also sleep for monks, there were still restrictions. Monks were not allowed to eat more than once a day and drink much wine, and they had to interrupt their sleep for prayers. He emphasised the importance of strict enclosure behind the walls of monasteries and the limitations of the relations with the outside world presenting curiosity as "a monastic vice, not a virtue" (Hermann 71). The *Rule of St. Benedict* aimed at sustaining an ordered life in monasteries for those who volunteered to avoid worldly interests by entering monasteries. Although it was a brief rule, its concise nature, which put great emphasis on order and discipline, attracted many monks. Despite these concise descriptions, the rule avoided strictness and harshness leaving a space for adaptation for each monastery according to their own conditions. It presented a framework for the daily prayer routine, the duties of monks, proper conduct and monastic education for newly admitted monks. As a result, the impact of the *Rule of St. Benedict* spread greatly after his death. The daily prayer routine, *Opus Dei*, was constituted by the day and night offices. There were seven day offices which began at sunrise and ended at sunset (Matins/Lauds, Prime,

Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline) and a long night office. Furthermore, *Opus Dei* required monks to recite the Psalter every week and read the whole Bible every year in addition to readings from the texts of other holy fathers. The most important part of this daily routine was that it was to be enacted not individually but communally. In addition to prayers, the daily routine also included agricultural labour and housekeeping, since monasteries were self-sufficient institutions. Yet, St. Benedict did not impose any manuscript copying or the education of the sons of noble families who did not intend to be monks in monastic schools although he did not forbid child oblation. His main concern was to sustain the worship of God in monasteries (Southern 218-221; Hermann 71-72; Lynch 32-34).

The beginning of the Benedictine Order can be traced back to the early periods of Gregory I's papacy. It was during this period that the number of monasteries following St. Benedict's *Rule* increased and they began to define themselves as Benedictines. It was St. Augustine, who was commissioned by Gregory I who introduced the *Rule of St. Benedict* to Anglo-Saxon England (Hamilton 27-28; English 102).³⁰ However, the monastic monopoly of the Benedictine Order came to an end in the twelfth century, since monks started to think that it was not "the only safe road to heaven" as reflected through the emergence of new monastic orders in the twelfth century (Southern 217). The main reason for this was that the Benedictine Order was prone to spiritual and economic weaknesses. To start with spiritual weaknesses, monks had difficulty in coping with the never ending prayers for the salvation of founders and benefactors, and with their internal struggle against evil. They had to pray not only for their own salvation, but also for the salvation of the others. Besides, monks were under the impositions of communal life, which led to the lack of individualism. Monks sought individual spirituality and personal religion. They were disillusioned by the authority of monasteries and asserted that even Christ did not claim himself as Truth, which the Benedictine Order claims to reveal through its daily customs. As for economic weaknesses, although the Benedictine houses had large lands, these lands were scattered in accordance with the feudal culture, which led the monastic lands to spread into secular lands. This meant that these lands required good administration, which resulted in administration's becoming an expensive and important part of daily routine in

monasteries. Furthermore, it also necessitated more and more for monks to live outside monasteries with administrative duties on monastic lands, which destroyed the sense of communal life in monasteries (Southern 230-233). Therefore, towards the end of the eleventh century, the decline of the Benedictine monasticism started, and it destroyed the monopoly of the Benedictines over monasticism. This was followed by the religious reform movements of the twelfth century as well, giving birth to many new religious orders such as the Augustinians, the Cistercians and the Carthusians increasing the emphasis on praying and the renunciation of the self (English 497). This increase in the number of religious orders was the reflection of the search for new religious ways of life.³¹

Among the new orders of the twelfth century, the Augustinians and the Cistercians were of special importance, since they had the greatest success and impact. They appealed to different interests of the different groups of the Benedictines. As Southern argues, “[i]n a social sense they occupied the right and the left wings of the Benedictine position, and they succeeded because they developed in opposite directions and fitted into the pattern of an expanding society at two quite different levels” (241). The Cistercians and the Augustinians satisfied different needs of religious communities although their establishment year was almost the same, the Augustinians being just a few years older. The Augustinians did not lead secluded lives, but served the needs of society. The rule of the Augustinian canons was not strict and represented a break with the Benedictine monastic tradition. On the contrary, the Cistercians led secluded lives and they supported strict asceticism. They regarded themselves as the true adherents of the Benedictine monastic ideals. Moreover, in their search for religious truth, the Augustinians and the Cistercians had different claims: the Cistercians accepted the Gospel as the source of truth while the Augustinians claimed that the truth was in “the early apostolic church” (Southern 251-252). This meant that while the Cistercians claimed that they were following and imitating Christ in their simple and poor life, the Augustinians were following apostolic ideals such as preaching and converting, which led them to reject seclusion.

The Augustinians searched for and represented a separation with the past monastic traditions challenging the Benedictine monasticism. Unlike the Cistercians who were also Benedictines and who aimed at the revival of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the Augustinians aimed at, beyond the revival of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, going back to the Bible. The Augustinian order was established by the followers of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), whose letter constituted the rule of the order. This letter was written by St. Augustine to his sister, who was a widow, for spiritual consolation and to encourage her and other women in her religious community towards a religious life. He explained to them how to pray, how to dress, how to lead a communal life under the guidance of an authoritative figure. He just gave information about the general outlines of communal life and left the details for the individual communities. Yet, in the fifth century, this letter was changed to a certain significant extent and transformed. The whole community that St. Augustine was addressing in his letter was transformed, with some additions and omissions, from a female community to a male one aiming at creating a male religious community. This was the rule accepted by the Canons Regular, who were later defined as the Augustinian Canons. This was very important, since the Augustinians were not monks but canons, which meant that they were priests leading a communal religious life. Accordingly, there were two main types of religious life for the male in the medieval Church: the monastic, which was based on secluded religious life, chosen by the followers of the Benedictine rule, and the canonical, which was based on leading a religious life without seclusion and was chosen by the followers of the Augustinian rule. The Augustinian canons were further divided into two groups: Canons Regular, who adopted a rule and thus were strictly bound to the rules of asceticism, silence and labour; and Canons Secular, who did not follow a rule and thus were less severe with its allowance of a certain amount of meat and denial of manual labour (Logan 136-137, Southern 241-244; Hermann 72-73).

With the increase in the number of monasteries following these orders, from the ninth century to the twelfth century, there was a parallel increase in monastic schools. This development was out of necessity, in that, monasteries accepted illiterate children who needed to be educated in both religious matters such as prayers and intellectual matters as well as social matters such as the proper conduct in monasteries. It was necessary to

teach them monastic intellectuality, which was based on the knowledge of the Bible and of the writings of the Church fathers. Thus, they were to learn Latin, which was the language of the clergy and the Bible. Furthermore, they needed to be educated in the Church's conventional ways of thinking. For instance, it was important to teach them that social disasters such as war and plague were sent by God as punishment to sinful people, or social harmony and welfare were God's benediction. Hence, it was very important for every monk to know and practice the *Rule of St. Benedict*, which put great emphasis on education in monasteries. This was valid for both young recruits and adults. Yet, the education of young children was specifically significant. Similar to nunneries, monasteries also practiced child oblation especially from the ninth century to the twelfth century. Rich families donated their sons for certain reasons. Because such oblates had not experienced worldly temptations, it was believed that these children were suitable to be educated to be priests. Generally, it took about fifteen years for a ten-year-old oblate to reach priesthood after a long process of education in monastic schools. Furthermore, these educated monks also had the chance to be chosen as bishops. Apparently, monastic schools provided monks with a professional clerical career, which would contribute to their honourable status within society as well. Moreover, besides serving as educational institutions for monks, these monastic schools also educated the sons of some noble families, who, in fact, had no intention of leading clerical lives or taking up such professions. Furthermore, monastic schools were also functional in the survival of classical texts through manuscript production and copying. Additionally, through teaching the texts of the Church fathers and classical texts, monks were also educated in military terms as they were being prepared for internal battles against evil and vices, which might otherwise lead to their spiritual separation with God (Lynch 241-243; Hamilton 29; Hermann 72). In this respect, it was very important for a monk to learn to subdue his desires, for which the renunciation of gender identity was very important.

During the religious turmoil of the fourteenth century, the different claims of each monastic order to the true and perfect way of life led to the questioning of the reliability of these orders among common people. As a result, there was a decline not only in monastic services, but also in people's desire to enter monasteries. This also coincided

with the arguments of Wyclif and the Lollards in relation to the question of whether the religious institutions and orders were legitimate or not (Pantin 130). This meant that the religious orders and their followers had to justify their beliefs and way of life not only to common people but also to the members of the clergy. It was true that a monastery provided a man with a high social status in the hierarchical medieval society. Yet, it was getting harder and harder to adapt to the strict monastic life. In this respect, especially the conflict between gender and religious identity was very significant, because although monasteries guaranteed religious identity for monks in terms of their professions, the ideal of the renunciation of the self, especially of the gendered self, was very problematic for most of the males. However, for a male to be defined as masculine, it was very important that this masculinity was to be overtly displayed in the social sphere. Yet, such type of masculinity performances would create problems for the performance of religious identities. In this respect, the Monk performs as a distinctive monk who does not renounce his masculine self. Rather, the Monk chooses to display his gender identity socially, and claims a gendered religious identity through his performance of gendered religious identity. The Monk's material performance in the "General Prologue" displays mostly his gender identity while his rhetorical performance in his tale displays his religious identity. When these two performances are combined, the Monk's self-fashioning is formed, and the Monk presents the balance he has established between his gender identity and his religious identity. He fashions himself through his performance of gendered religious identity and he performs his religious profession as a monk without renouncing his gender identity.

At this point, before analysing the Monk's self-fashioning through his performance of gendered religious identity, it is also necessary to take a brief look at the motives for entering monastery in order to better understand the clash between monks' gender and religious identities. St. Benedict lists three groups of people who can enter a monastery in his *Rule*: adult laymen, the members of the clergy, and the sons of noble families. In this respect, especially, the sons of noble families constituted the greater number of recruits into a monastery, because child oblation was a common practise especially in the tenth century (Southern 223-224). Actually, recruitment into a monastery was based on three main reasons in the Middle Ages: familial, religious and social. Namely, it was

mostly the result of external reasons rather than internal reasons that a man would become a monk (Hermann 69). To begin with familial reasons, monasteries served as an outlet for the extra sons of noble families. It was true that there were some men who wanted to enter a monastery for spiritual motives. Yet, familial and societal reasons were also influential in the recruitment into a monastery. Under the changing social conditions in the Middle Ages, there were not as many opportunities to meet the demands of increasing male population. The resources of noble families were not sufficient to provide their sons opportunities in secular life. Because of primogeniture, it was only the eldest son who inherited the lands of the father in order not to divide the lands. Thus, other sons had to choose either military life or cloister life. As a result, monasteries were functional as an “outlet” for the sons of noble families contributing to their nobility, as their noble blood was believed to be the signifier of their noble soul (Southern 228). Furthermore, these noble families donated lands to monasteries as gifts. Such endowments were, in fact, necessary for monasteries. Their expenses were increasing as a result of the noble background of monks, their aristocratic life styles, ritualised prayers and the grandeur of the Church. The land endowments and the financial support of the founders and their noble families were important for monasteries to sustain their existence (Burton 356) as “a replica of heaven on earth” (Southern 230). As for penitential reasons, under the impact of the penitential system, which dominated the early Middle Ages, not only the need for the establishment of monasteries, but also the need for monks increased. The penitential system required harsh penances for sins, making it necessary for a noble man to either pay the penance himself through strict prayer and fasting or find monks to take over his penance, as it was considered to be a debt, which should certainly be paid in order to reach salvation (Southern 227). Thus, penitential system meant that monasteries became centres to pay penances through the help of monks. The penitential system also increased the importance attributed to the *Opus Dei*, that is, the prayers of monks, because, through their individual prayers, monks attained salvation not only for themselves but also for their benefactors (Southern 227-228). This signified the role of monks as a part of the clergy in the three estate structure of the Middle Ages: their function was to pray for the salvation not only of their own selves but also for the whole society. It is for this reason that it would not be wrong to define the daily prayers of a monk as his profession, which

gave a man a respectable social status as well. Yet, they needed to sacrifice their gender identities for this respectable status. However, the Monk fashions himself in the *Canterbury Tales* through his performance of gendered religious identity.

Within this context, the Monk's material performance in the "General Prologue" starts with a reference to his being an outrider: "A monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie, / An outridere, that lovede venerie" (I (A) 165-166). On the one hand, being an outrider was not an approved behaviour according to Benedictine ideals, which argued for strict claustration. Similarly, Gower criticised the monks who were outriders resembling them to fish out of water: "The sea is the proper habitat of a live fish, and the monastery is the right home for a monk" (171). It is for this reason that Gower argues, "[a] fish ought not to be out of the water, nor ought a monk to be away from his cloisters" (171-172). Hence, a monk who went out to fulfil his worldly interests was regarded to be "a renegade" and "a monster of the Church" (Gower 172). In this respect, the rule of stability was very important to sustain order in monasteries. It meant the acceptance of the renunciation of leaving cloisters to be able to go to different places. Such kind of wandering monks were at the target of criticism and suspicion. In order to avoid these criticisms and limit the relations with the outside world, the monastic administrative duties, service at the parish churches, nunneries and hospitals were left to lay brothers, who were incorporated into monastic life by the Cistercians. The intended aim was to guarantee that monks needed not to leave their monasteries (Hermann 71; Burton 358-359, 365). On the other hand, being an outrider was also a part of monastic duties, which was very important to confront the economic weaknesses in monasteries. Administrative duties outside monasteries were also a part of their profession. For instance, such outrider monks were responsible for selling and buying necessary products of the monastic holdings. Among these products were timber, salt and fish, which were legally monopolised by monasteries. Furthermore, as Hermann indicates, "they collected tolls on cargo traveling past the monastery by road or on the river" and controlled winemaking, horse-raising and mining (74). Thus, rather than condemning the Monk as an outrider, who "persistently flout[s]" the Benedictine rule by being an outrider (Rice ix), the Monk can also be considered to be a person of authority conducting administrative duties for his monastery.

Reinforcing the Monk's fashioning himself as an authoritative figure, which has strong masculine connotations, he also seems to be "[a] manly man, to been an abbot able" (I (A) 167). At this point, the adjective "manly" is very important in the depiction of the Monk's masculinity. To exemplify the masculine connotations of "manly," to take a look at other occurrences of the adjective "manly" throughout the *Canterbury Tales* will also be beneficial. For instance, the Knight uses the adjective "manly" in his tale to describe Duke Theseus in his fight against Creon (I (A) 987). Likewise, there is another knightly figure who is described as manly in *The Knight's Tale*. The Knight describes the King of Thrace, who accompanies Palamon to the court of Theseus in order to help Palamon's fight for Emily, and his description is as follows: "Blak was his berd, and manly was his face" (I (A) 2130). In both of these examples, the adjective "manly" is functional for the Knight to emphasise the masculinity and virility of Duke Theseus and the King of Thrace. Hence, "manly" becomes the signifier of knightly prowess as well as strength. Contributing to this usage of the adjective "manly," the Wife of Bath also uses the adjective "manly" in her tale to describe the knight's excitement before announcing to the court of Arthur what the women want most. The Wife of Bath says that the knight starts his speech "[w]ith manly voys, that al the court it herde" (III (D) 1036). The adjective, again, emphasises the masculinity of the knight. The description of voice as "manly" is also used by the Squire in his tale while describing the unknown knight in the court of Cambuscan. The Squire states that the unknown knight "with a manly voys seide his message" (V (F) 99). Apparently, every use of the adjective "manly" is about the masculinity of a certain knightly figure, who is the embodiment of masculine ideals. It is also for this reason that the Parson in his tale also refers to good deeds as "manly dede" (X (I) 601) and courage as "manly" (X (I) 689), which associate good deeds and courage with manliness. Moreover, the emphasis on manliness has sexual connotations as well. In addition to masculine power, "manly" also refers to "sexual competence" (Erol, "A Pageant" 93). For instance, it is functional in the Merchant's description of Damyan, the young lover of May in his tale, as "manly, and eek servysable" (IV (E) 1911). In line with these, it can be claimed that the Monk's being "[a] manly man" (I (A) 167) refers not only to his masculinity but also his sexual potential. Thus, as "[a] manly man" (I (A) 167), being defined as "fair for the maistrie (I (A) 165) is not "an odd initial description of a cleric" (Hermann 75) but an indication of

his gender identity. It signals that the Monk has masculinity and sexual potential inasmuch as a typical knight and he displays it despite the fact that he is a monk. This is in accordance with the fact that masculinity or manhood in the Middle Ages was also related with physical qualities that signalled strength and sexual prowess as well as a social self (Neal 126). Thus, it is also interesting that it is not the Friar but the Monk who is defined as “manly,” because it draws attention to the Monk’s “phallic self-indulgence and pride” as a strong manly man, which is reinforced by his interest in hunting and his healthy body that can be defined as the sources of “his social confidence among men” (Neal 131). Therefore, it can be argued that his manliness is important for the Monk not only to perform his gender identity, but also to assert his social self among his peers.

Enhancing his manliness, there are also the implications of the Monk’s involvement in sexual affairs through his interest in horses, which is functional in contributing to his masculinity:

Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
 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. (I (A) 168-172)

These lines reveal the Monk’s interest in horse riding, which can be considered to be the reflection of his earthly interests and his disregard of monastic rules. In accordance with this interest, Chaucer the pilgrim indicates that “[h]is palfrey was as broun as is a berye” (I (A) 207). The palfrey was the type of horse that was owned by knights, which meant that they were expensive (Erol, “A Pageant” 94-95). Hence, not being a knight, the Monk’s ownership of a palfrey can be claimed to exhibit his interest in showing off and the reflection of his social aspirations. In this respect, as Erol argues, the bells of his bridle were very functional in not only presenting the Monk’s interest in ornamentation and fashions³² as well as social display, but also presenting his disregard of his religious monastic duties, because the bells of his bridle also remind the reader and the Monk himself of the chapel’s bells (“A Pageant” 95-96). However, it is necessary to note that “[h]orsemanship” continued to be a temptation for monks, who were accustomed to ride

proper to their estates (Murray, “Masculinizing” 31). If the reasons to enter a monastery for the surplus children of the nobility are taken into consideration, it can be said that the Monk’s interest in horses is the indication of the fact that he is from a high social estate for which, as Ross states, horse-riding is normal as a sign of nobility (111). Furthermore, horses have also been associated with women, in that, horse riding or horse ownership metaphorically meant sexual relations with women (Rowland, *Animals* 105-106). Hence, if the symbolic meaning of horses is combined with the social messages encoded by them, it can be argued that his horses stand out as the means for the Monk to perform both his social and masculine self.

It can be argued that the Monk’s performance of masculinity displays that he has his own way of leading a monastic life. It is for this reason that he is also depicted rejecting monastic rules:

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.
 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;
 And I seyde his opinion was good. (I (A) 173-183)

Ignoring monastic rules was criticised severely both by the monastic authorities and by the literary figures of the period. For instance, Gower severely criticised the failings of monks in following monastic rules stating that “[t]he rule of St. Bernard or St. Maure is of no use to our modern fellow monks; on the contrary, it displeases them. A greedy fellow sets himself against St. Bernard and St. Maure, as does another, proud and envious; they now refuse to carry out the precepts of their order” (173). However, the *Rule of St. Benedict* was, in fact, written to be the “master” of monastic life as St. Benedict said that none in the monasteries should be allowed to “follow his own will” (35). It was only by this way that the order and organisation in a monastery was possible. With this aim, St. Benedict listed seventy-two items of good work in his rule

(37-45). Among these items, the rule of obedience was of special importance, which is in direct contrast with the Monk's ignorance of it. St. Benedict put great emphasis on obedience, associating disobedience with the disobedience in the Original Sin. Obedience was important in taking body and soul under control, especially obedience to both the *Rule* and the abbot were very significant. After all, an abbot was regarded to be the reflection God, and thus obedience to the teachings of an abbot meant obedience to God (Southern 219-220). Moreover, according to St. Benedict, the "obedience to his superior" would lead a monk to humility (65). Hence, one had to obey the rule and the commands of an abbot immediately "without delay" and with "the speedy foot of obedience" (Benedict 47). Furthermore, this obedience had to be without murmuring, because "[i]f the disciple obey with ill-will, and murmur, not only in words, but also in heart, although he fulfill what is commanded him, it will not be acceptable to God, Who considereth the hearth of the murmurer. For such a work he shall not have any reward, but rather incurreth the penalty of murmurers, unless he amend and make satisfaction" (Benedict 49-51). Yet, rather than murmuring, the Monk voices his rejection of monastic rules aloud presenting himself as the authority. This does not mean that the Monk is not proficient in his religious duty. On the contrary, when he starts his rhetorical performance telling his tale, it is revealed that the Monk is, in fact, a professional clergyman. Hence, in his material performance, the Monk builds up the idea that he neither rejects his gender identity nor regards it as a barrier for his performance of his religious identity in his rhetorical performance. It is also for this reason that he is described as "[a] manly man, to been an abbot able" (I (A) 167).

However, according to the traditional attitudes, the Monk's implied desire to become an abbot (I (A) 167) seems again in conflict with the Benedictine rule which associated obedience with humility (Burton 358). According to the fifty-ninth item of St. Benedict's seventy-two items of good works, one was "to hate self-will" (43). Moreover, St. Benedict stated that "[t]he Scripture also forbiddeth us to do our own will" and "[w]ith good reason, therefore, are we taught to beware of doing our own will" (61), since "death sitteth close to the entrance of delight" (63). Thus, an ideal monk had to be "not wedded to his own will" (Benedict 65). What was expected from monks was that they should not follow their free will but the will of the liturgy, which

could be achieved by praying for individual and communal salvation (Burton 358). Yet, the question arises here about the Monk's aspirations. Rather than following the rule of obedience and self-abnegation, which was believed to be "the source of all other virtues" since, through it, one achieved the qualities of an ideal monk under the support and guidance of an abbot (Southern 220), his manly appearance and authority give the message that the Monk is an able man to be an abbot. Furthermore, it is also important to note that it is in relation to his being "[a] manly man" that Chaucer the pilgrim refers to his being able to be an abbot (I (A) 167). If the abbot is the symbol of authority for his community, it can be suggested that the Monk desires to be the one to authorise rather than to be the one to be authorised, which can also be associated with his masculine urge to be the superior one.

Contrary to St. Benedict's emphasis on humility in his rule (65, 69), the Monk seems to be a proud figure. It can be suggested that his pride does not stem from his looking down upon the religious way of life as he understands it, but from his means of coping with the limitations imposed on him by the monastic authorities who cried for the renunciation of gender identity. Although the Monk is well aware of all these teachings, he just disregards them and proves that he can have both a masculine and religious self. It is also for this reason that the Monk rejects St. Augustine's arguments about manual labour as well:

What sholde he studie and make hymselfen 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! (I (A) 184-188)

In fact, there were three basic types of work in monasteries. The first was the *Opus Dei*, which meant the work of God. Monks were to perform the daily prayer routine day and night communally. The second main type of monastic work was *Lectio Divina*, which meant spiritual study. Monks had to spare time for individual prayers, reading the religious writings of the Church fathers, and for contemplation. Lastly, *Opus Manuum*, which meant manual labour, was also very important for a monk, since monasteries were self-sufficient institutions (Hamilton 26-27). At this point, there also seems to be

an estate issue, because the Monk refuses manual labour as it is demeaning and it is associated with lower estates. Therefore, as a man of possible noble origin and as a clergyman, the Monk almost condemns manual labour. Besides ignoring St. Augustine, the Monk here again reflects his rejection of the ideals of St. Benedict as well, who argues that “[i]dleness is an enemy of the soul” and “[t]herefore the Brethren ought to be employed at certain times in labouring with their hands, and at other fixed times, in holy reading” (Benedict 201). In line with his rejection of manual labour, the Monk wants to be the one who is the guide of his own life rather than being guided by somebody or some rule. Hence, the Monk seems to be a man whose physical and intellectual self accepts no control and impositions. Furthermore, the “General Prologue” reveals that, even if he rejects the type of labour imposed on him by the monastic authorities, the Monk is not idle. He is engaged in other activities especially horse riding and hunting, which was prescribed for noble males both to prevent idleness and to keep their martial or physical training.³³ Therefore, it can be argued that, just as the Prioress uses and abuses the courtly components of her material performance as reflected by her physical beauty and costume, the Monk also uses and abuses noble pursuits such as horse riding and hunting to assert his gendered religious identity.

Because of the fact that the interest in hunting was also associated with masculinity in the Middle Ages, it can be suggested that the Monk takes advantage of this social context to reflect his masculinity even if he is a clergyman, for whom hunting was not approved of. Yet, hunting becomes another means for the Monk to perform and display his masculinity. Another feature of the Monk’s material performance that draws attention to his masculinity is that “he was a prikasour aright” (I (A) 189) and “[g]rehoundes 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” (I (A) 190-191). “Prikasour” means “a horseman, mounted warrior” (“prikasour”). Furthermore, it also means “one who follows the ‘pricks’ (hare’s track)” (Ross 168). Likewise, to “priken” means “to spur a horse” (Ross 167). Thus, through his interest in horse riding and hunting, that is, noble pursuits, the Monk performs masculinity as much as a noble man displaying interest in the same pursuits. Moreover, the Monk’s interest in pricking and hunting draws attention to his sexuality, since these activities are metaphorically associated with sexual

activities (Erol, "A Pageant" 93). Similarly, Mann draws attention to the pun in the use of "hare" in relation to the Monk's interest in hunting. She argues that the word "hare" comes from the Latin word, *lepus*, which evokes *lepos* that meant "charm, attractiveness" (*Medieval* 25). Contributing to this argument, Rowland indicates that the dog is the symbol of man while the hare symbolises the woman in a symbolic hunt (*Animals* 88). Accordingly, it can be argued that the Monk's interest in horse riding and hunting can be regarded as a reflection of his interest in hunting for the beauty and sexuality embodied by the hare. In accordance with these arguments, the Monk's interest in pricking and hunting can also be considered to be the reflection of the Monk's lechery (Hermann 76).

Although he is supposed to be a cloistered monk, who has renounced all the pleasures of the flesh, the Monk's interest in horse riding and hunting display that he performs manliness, which is expected of every male by the society. Therefore, the sexual connotations of this hunting imagery draw attention to the Monk's masculinity. The Monk is always concerned about showing off his gender identity since, during the late Middle Ages, the members of the clergy were involved in displaying their concern about masculinity as much as laymen. They needed to secure their place in the gender hierarchy not only against women but also against their lay peers. As a result, as Neal suggests "the social masculinity of the late medieval clergy was fundamentally the same as that of laymen, despite their celibacy" (8). Hence, as in the case of his being a "manly" monk, the Monk's interest in horse riding and hunting, both of which have sexual overtones, also serve to display the Monk's masculinity. In relation to this, Hermann argues that the Monk's interest in hunting suggests that he again deviates from the monastic vows, since hunting was regarded as an activity of entertainment and relaxation and was not allowed for monks (75-76). This is in accordance with the Monk's interest in venery (I (A) 166), which means "hunting" and "copulation" (Ross 229). The Monk is interested in hunting so much that he even has greyhounds, which were also forbidden for monks (Hermann 76). However, it can be argued that, aware of the fact that hunting has been among the "amorous pursuits" and the "outdoor activities of pleasure" (Erol, "A Pageant" 93), the Monk uses and abuses these cultural activities to perform his masculinity. Although this is in direct conflict with the twentieth item of

St. Benedict's seventy-two items of good works, which is "[t]o withdraw ourselves from worldly ways" (39), the Monk takes advantage of these worldly activities to perform his gender identity.

Yet, in a masculine society, in which "[c]elibacy operated [...] as an extreme form of self-command that lay society demanded of all men, with respect to both sexual and nonsexual behaviors" (Neal 101), the gender performance of the men of religion was not only highly problematic but also highly important. The *Rule of St. Benedict* became the basis of monastic life endorsing obedience and hard spiritual work, the renunciation of worldly riches through a life in poverty, the renunciation of gender identity and sexuality, and celibacy was very important for every monk like the other members of the clergy. The imposition of celibacy meant the declaration of conflict between the religious identity and gender identity of monks, which gave birth to clerical masculinity. Monks' religious identities were on the foreground and, thus, they needed to reject their gender identities in order to conform to the ideals of asceticism through self-denial. In this respect, although there is no direct reference to any sexual relations, the Monk's material performance makes use of the masculine performances of his age such as hunting and horse riding to display his gender identity. Although "celibacy as self-control never lost its fundamentally masculine significance" and it was accepted as "the manliest of battles against the temptations of the flesh" (Neal 119), its problems for the performance of social masculinity was unavoidable. In this respect, the activities in which the Monk is interested, that is, horse riding and hunting, can be interpreted as indicators of the Monk's masculinity.

The Monk's costume is another important part of his material performance, through which he performs masculinity:

I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
 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. (I (A) 193-197)

Actually, the depiction of the Monk's costume has been the target of criticism. For instance, Erol argues that the Monk's costume is the reflection of another trespass of monastic rules by the Monk as it is fashionable and expensive ("A Pageant" 97). Likewise, the Monk's costume stands out as another item that is in conflict with St. Benedict's seventy-two items of good work, since the fifty-ninth item is "[n]ot to fulfil the desires of the flesh, and to hate self-will" (43). However, the Monk's costume shows that he follows the fashions of his time. "Grys" referred to "the back of the grey northern squirrel and was very valuable and was used by aristocracy," and it is for this reason that the use of it as well as other types of fur-linings and silk was forbidden for monks by the Council of London and the Council of York in the fourteenth century (Erol, "A Pageant" 91-92). Although "monks received a cash allowance from the common fund with which they could buy clothes, books, and luxuries" (Lawrence 222), extravagance in costume is in contradiction with the Benedictine rule, which required that the clothes of a monk should have been "bought at the cheapest rate" (225) unlike the furred sleeves of the Monk, which was very expensive, and thus was not allowed for monks (Hermann 76; Erol, "A Pageant" 91-92).

It was not only the Monk's furred sleeves that makes his costume reflect his earthly ways. His golden pin, which is itself a phallic symbol, with a love-knot can also be interpreted as another indication of the Monk's worldliness. First of all, gold was not allowed for monks. Then, apparently, the function of the clasp is just adornment. Furthermore, when it is combined with the Monk's interest in horse riding and hunting, the love-knot can also be associated with his sexual involvements (Erol, "A Pageant" 92-93). Although this is in conflict with the Monk's religious identity, it is in accordance with the idea that "[m]edieval society highly invested masculine identity in a form of social performance that demanded the appearance, and often the reality, of open honesty" (Neal 247). Hence, although he is a clergyman, the Monk performs as a man who is keen on the display of his gender identity through his activities and attire although this is not in accordance with his clerical identity, because, as a man, he needs to display his masculinity in public as a form of social performance.

In this respect, his boots are also functional in contributing to the Monk's performance of masculinity: "His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat. / Now certainly he was a fair prelaat" (I (A) 203-204). His boots are defined as souple "as only the best leathers are" (Hermann 76). They give the message that the Monk likes displaying his riches rather than humility. In relation to humility, St. Benedict claimed that it was very important for the ascension of souls to heaven (59). Nevertheless, the Monk's costume reveals that he rejects humility. On the contrary, as Erol states, "[t]he Monk is dressed in imitation of the fashions of a high class personage" ("A Pageant" 96). Rather than a humble man of religion, the Monk's costume conveys the idea that he is more like "a country gentleman" (Cooper, *Oxford Guides* 39), who has many material possessions. In this way, the Monk presents himself as stated in Gower's argument that "some of them [monks] are noted for property" (165). Similarly, the renunciation of material possessions was a very important ideal according to the Benedictine rule. St. Benedict said, "[e]specially let this vice be cut away from the Monastery by the very roots, that no one presume, or hold as his own, anything whatsoever, either book, or tablets, or pen, or anything at all; because they are men whose very bodies and wills are not in their own power" (151). Despite the ideal of the renunciation of material possessions, the wealth of monasteries were accumulating especially from the twelfth century onwards, which led to severe criticisms in the thirteenth century by newly emerging friars and their leader St. Francis, who questioned the material possessions of monasteries. The criticisms continued in the fourteenth century and voiced aloud by John Wyclif and the Lollards, who argued that monasteries could only achieve primitive monastic ideals by leaving their wealth and lands (Burton 362-365; Hermann 74). Yet, the Monk depicts a contrary image at this point, which can be interpreted both as a reflection of the material possessions of monasteries and as his desire to have control over his identity. He displays that, without renouncing his gender identity, which has been made visible through his material possessions such as rich costume and boots, he can still profess himself as a monk. Thus, the Monk uses and abuses the masculine images of his society and, exhibits that he performs as a gendered religious person.

Furthermore, as Neal states, it is also necessary to note that "being fashionable itself accentuated masculinity" in the Middle Ages (Neal 174). As Murray further argues,

there is a strong relationship between clothing and masculinity, in that, “male physical and emotional identity was linked to dress, something that could be put on, taken off or changed, something that could accentuate or disguise the physical attributes it covered” (“Masculinizing” 33). This again created problems for monks, because while it was essential for them to dress in a fashionable manner to assert their gender identity, it was forbidden for them to wear fashionable clothes. Despite such religious impositions, the Monk’s costume reveals that he does not renounce “[t]he phallic exuberance of fashionable men’s clothing” in medieval society, which resulted “not only from its emphasis on the male form but also from its display of wealth” signalling that “[g]ender and social status were intertwined” (Neal 172). Since the Monk is not allowed to perform his social masculinity through any sexual acts, he uses and abuses the fashion of his day to assert his masculinity.

Although the Monk’s material performance does not explicitly emphasise his physical attractiveness, due to his being a fashionable and healthy man, it can be assumed that he is an attractive man. After all, “[h]is heed was balled, that shoon as any glas, / And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt” (I (A) 198-199). According to medieval beauty standards, long hair was regarded to be the sign of beauty for males and baldness was not attractive (Curry, *Ideal* 26-31). The same is also valid for the lack of hair on the face, that is, being a beardless man, since it symbolises lack of masculinity (Curry, *Ideal* 37-38). The Monk seems to have failed in these aspects, yet, he has “[...] eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed, / That stemed as a forneys of a leed” (I (A) 201-202). His “stepe” eyes are attractive features, since “stepe is descriptive of beautiful eyes” (Curry, *Ideal* 56). At this point, it should be noted that emphasising physical beauty was not enough for the male to assert his masculinity in the Middle Ages. As Neal argues, it was necessary for the male to explicitly display “the open indulgence of bodily appetite (in drinking, fighting, and illicit sexual acts) just as powerfully as authority might insist on its strict restraint” (9). In this respect, the Monk’s disregard of the monastic rules in relation to cloistered life, fashionable clothes, horse riding and hunting can be considered to be the Monk’s performance of masculinity.

Likewise, the Monk is depicted as “a lord ful fat and in good poynt” (I (A) 200), which is again in direct contrast with monastic ideals, but draws attention to his bodily fitness presenting him as a healthy man. The thirteenth item of the seventy-two good works of St. Benedict is “[t]o love fasting” (37) but the Monk likes eating roasted swan (I (A) 206). St. Benedict put great emphasis on providing the sufficient amount of dishes without excess in order to avoid gluttony and thus a monk needed to be content with less food (171). St. Benedict said “[l]et all, except the very weak and the sick, abstain from eating the flesh of four footed beasts” (171). As Gower also argues, a monk should be in control of his belly, and rather than meat he should eat herbs (167). St. Benedict, in fact, allows only “two dishes of hot food” a day, which included, if available, “any apples or young vegetables” as the third dish with only “one pound weight of bread” (Benedict 171). Yet, the Monk breaks these limitations and becomes “nat pale as a forpynd goost” (I (A) 205), which can also be regarded as a reflection of his gluttony. Furthermore, his fatness is associated with his health. His strong and extremely healthy body again contributes to his gender performance drawing attention to his fit body and thus masculinity. It can also be suggested that, as an outrider monk who constantly violates the rule of claustration, he also has a tan, which also draws attention to his body that provides him with the space to display his masculinity.

In the light of these arguments, it can be claimed that the Monk’s material performance is mainly concerned about his gender identity performance. The impact and the acceptance of this gender identity performance by the society is observed in the Host’s praising words for the Monk’s physical appearance when he invites the Monk to tell the next tale following *The Tale of Melibee* by Chaucer the pilgrim (VII 1924-1925). After questioning the Monk about his name, and from which order he comes from, the Host starts praising the Monk’s gender performance saying that “I vowe to God, thou hast a ful fair skyn; / It is a gentil pasture ther thow goost” (VII 1932-1933). According to the Host, the Monk has a fair, sort of handsome complexion despite his being a fat man. The Monk’s physical features assure the Host of his masculinity, in that, the Host has difficulty in believing that the Monk is a cloistered person:

Thou art nat lyk a penant or a goost:
Upon my feith, thou art som officer,

Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,
 For by my fader soule, as to my doom,
 Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom;
 No povre cloysterer, ne no novys,
 But a governour, wily and wys, [...] (VII 1934-1940)

It is owing to the physical features of the Monk, which encode the Monk's masculinity, that the Host is able to decode the Monk's gender performance and claims that, with such masculine prowess, the Monk seems to be more than a cloistered monk. His physical body presents the image of a master, a governor and a higher officer such as a cellarer. The Monk is the embodiment "[...] therwithal of brawnes and of bones" (VII 1941) and thus is "[a] wel farynge persone for the nones" (VII 1942). The Host has so much sympathy for the Monk's masculinity that he condemns the person who has put the Monk into a monastery (VII 1943-1944). It is an unfortunate event for a man like the Monk to become a cloistered clergyman. The emphasis on the Monk's physical prowess leads the Host to stress the sexual potency of the Monk as well:

Thou woldest han been a tredefowel aright.
 Haddestow as greet a leeve as thou hast myght
 To parfourne al thy lust in engendrure,
 Thou haddest bigeten ful many a creature.
 Allas, why werestow so wyd a cope?
 God yeve me sorwe, but, and I were a pope,
 Nat oonly thou, but every myghty man,
 Though he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,
 Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is lorn!
 Religioun hath take up al the corn
 Of tredyng, and we borel men been shrympes.
 Of fieble trees ther comen wrecched ympes.
 This maketh that oure heires been so sklendre
 And feble that they may nat wel engendre.
 This maketh that oure wyves wole assaye
 Religious folk, for ye mowe better paye
 Of Venus paiementz than mowe we;
 God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye! (VII 1945-1962)

Thus, the Host almost laments that a man like the Monk has become a monk. According to the Host, the Church has taken away all the able bodied men as monks and what is left behind in the outside world is not as able as the cloistered ones. Therefore, the Host thinks that it is understandable that wives want to have sexual affairs with monks, which is exemplified in *The Shipman's Tale*.

The Shipman's Tale presents an example for the masculinity performance of another monk. The Shipman tells the story of a sexually motivated monk, who seduces the wife of a very decent merchant. This monk is an outrider and a hunter like the Monk. Yet, the "hunted animals" are explicitly the husbands in this case (Hermann 77). The hunting imagery here is again associated with sexual relations. In this respect, this monk becomes a foil to the merchant in terms of religious adherence and morality, since it is the merchant not the monk who is full of brotherly love and religious devotion (Rice 41). The monk gives a certain amount of money to the wife of the merchant in order to gain her sexual favours. Yet, he borrows this money from the merchant himself. The monk's only concern throughout the tale is about his sexual gains. Hence, this monk is depicted as "a flesh-and-blood monk" contrary to monastic norms (Rice 39). He is an adulterous person contrary to the fourth item of the seventy-two good works of St. Benedict, that is, "[n]ot to commit adultery" (37) Furthermore, he is also the embodiment of deceit, which is again in direct contrast with the twenty-fourth item of the seventy-two good works of St. Benedict, "[n]ot to foster guile or deceit in our heart" (39). He deceives not only the merchant but also his wife turning himself into a "hybrid of the monastic and the mercantile" (Rice 41). Moreover, as Neal argues, displaying a sexually motivated monk, the Shipman also reveals that "the problem for clerical masculinity was not that, being celibate, clergymen were considered asexual and unmanly. It was rather that they might be too sexual, unable or unwilling to keep those vows" (108). Likewise, the material performance of the Monk makes use of the masculine activities of his time such as horse riding and hunting, which also have sexual connotations, in order to assert his masculinity. However, the Monk's self-fashioning is not just bound to his masculinity performance. Performing his masculinity in his material performance in the "General Prologue," the Monk also claims clerical authority as a man of religion as revealed by his rhetorical performance. Performing his duty as a man of religion through his rhetorical performance, the Monk exhibits himself as a man of religion who does not renounce his gender identity.

In this respect, the monk of *The Shipman's Tale*, who is just concerned about his masculinity and sexuality rather than his clerical position, is also functional in depicting the masculinity performance of the Monk, who brings together his gender and religious

identity. Although there are implications about the Monk's involvement in sexual affairs, because of the fact that unlike the monk of *The Shipman's Tale*, who is only concerned about his masculinity and displays nothing in relation to his clerical position, the Monk's exhibition of his masculinity in his material performance in the "General Prologue" is completed by his performance of religious identity in his tale. Thus, his self-fashioning through his performance of gendered religious identity differentiates him not only from the monks who renounce their gender identities for the sake of their religious identities, but also from those monks who are only concerned about the performance of their gender identities. In this respect, while the Host condemns the monk in *The Shipman's Tale* for being a totally sexually motivated man (VII 438-442), he praises the masculinity of the Monk. This can be interpreted as the reflection of the fact that although the Monk has sexual potency as an able man, he also performs his religious identity. It is actually for this reason that the Monk displays his masculinity performance without hesitation. Moreover, when the Host refers to sexual relations and implies the ongoing relations between men in cloisters and women outside cloisters, he is anxious that the Monk might get angry (VII 1963-1964). Yet, interestingly enough, the Monk remains silent (VII 1965). It is necessary to question why the Monk remains silent. It might have been expected from a man of religion to reject the association of the men of religion with sexual relations. However, the Monk remains silent, which can be interpreted as an acceptance. The Monk performs the masculine activities of his society such as hunting and horse riding as well as his costume in order to endorse his gendered religious identity. In this respect, the Host's praise of the Monk's physical features and his sexual potential can be considered to be the impact of the Monk's gender performance and its approval by the heterosexual society. Therefore, instead of opposing the Host, the Monk just says that he will tell his tale (VII 1966-1968). Rather than referring to the Host's praises, the Monk directs the subject matter of the talk to his tale, since he has already experienced the approval of his gender identity by the society. It is the Monk's turn then to tell his tale, which is functional in displaying his religious identity in order to experience its approval as well.

The Monk starts, like a very professional rhetorician, to tell his audience first his choice of subject matter and how he himself has learned the subject (VII 1969-1977). At this

point, it is revealed that the Monk knows the religious stories of the fall of men, which exhibits his professional efficiency, although he has been reported to have disregarded the *Rule of St. Benedict* (I (A) 173-176) and the teachings of St. Augustine in relation to studying hard (I (A) 184-188). Furthermore, the Monk also explains the versification of the stories he will tell, which reveals his rhetorical skills:

And they ben versified communely
Of six feet, which men clepen *exametron*.
In prose eek been endited many oon,
And eek in meetre, in many a sondry wyse. (VII 1978-1981)

He warns the audience that he might not be following the chronological order (VII 1984-1990). Although he defines such a narration as his “ignoraunce” (VII 1990), it displays the importance that the Monk attributes to the content rather than the chronology of his subject matter. What is important for him as a man of religion is not the chronology but the messages in those tales for the audience. After explaining his methodology, the Monk starts performing his religious identity in his tale.

The Monk’s tale about the fall of man displays some of the ideals of St. Benedict’s seventy-two items of good works such as the forty-fourth item, “[t]o fear the day of judgment” and the forty-seventh item, “[t]o have death always before our eyes” (41). Although the Monk does not refer to death awaiting people, he makes use of the fall as the imagery of death. In his tragic depiction of the fall of man, the Monk lists the fall of every one of the protagonists in his tales, who are in fact leading happy lives, but fall finally either due to Fortune or due to personal mistakes. Lucifer (VII 1999-2006), Nabugodonosor (VII 2143-2182), Balthasar (VII 2183-2246), Nero (VII 2463-2550), De Oloferno (VII 2551-2574), De Rege Antiochus illustri (VII 2575-2630), Cresus (VII 2727-2767) fall because of excessive pride, which is one of the Seven Deadly Sins. De Petro Rege Ispannie (VII 2375-2390), De Petro Rege de Cipro (VII 2391-2398), De Barnabo e Lombardia (VII 2399-2406), De Alexandro (VII 2631-2670), De Julio Cesare (VII 2671-2728) fall because of betrayal emphasising the impact of deceit in people’s lives. Adam (VII 2007-2014), Samson (VII 2015-2094) and Hercules (VII 2095-2142) fall because of women, which displays the misogynist discourse of the

clergy. *Cenobia* (VII 2247-2374) and *De Hugelino Comite de Pize* (VII 2407-2462) fall due to Fortune.

In this respect, although it has been claimed that the Monk's tale does not refer to any moral messages but just mourns for the loss of worldly pleasures (Hermann 77; Erol, "A Pageant" 96-97), his tale is, in fact, not only a depiction of the fall of man, but also an exemplum for his pilgrim-audience. While it is true that the stories also refer to the loss of worldly pleasures, they also warn people about the potential fall. The Monk performs his religious identity and conveys to his audience the message that there is no guarantee in the world even for the very important personages. When the tale is contextualised in the setting of the Black Death as well as in the transforming social structure of the fourteenth century, the message of his tale becomes clearer. The Monk warns each of the pilgrims against the potential fall and loss of happiness, which might also be regarded as a reflection of the reasons that led to the Monk's entering a monastery due to either social or familial reasons. It is for this reason that the Knight as a social climber, who has claimed nobility by deed, feels uneasy about the stories of the fall of man, and interrupts the Monk's narration:

"Hoo!" quod the Knyght, "good sire, namoore of this!
That ye han seyde 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! (VII 2767-2773)

The Knight's interruption proves the Monk as a professional clergyman. The Monk succeeds in arousing fear in people, which might lead them to penance and God. Although the Monk has intended to warn his pilgrim-audience against tragedies awaiting them, which is in fact a very suitable motive for the pilgrimage setting, they turn out to be escapist and choose to ignore the tragedies of life. Following the Knight's interruption, the Host also wants the Monk to stop telling such tragic tales:

Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse!
Youre tale anoyeth al this compaignye.
Swich talkyng is nat worth a boterflye,

For therinne is ther no desport ne game. (VII 2788-2791)

The Host says that the Monk should stop telling his tale, since the pilgrim-audience does not like his subject matter, that is, the fall of men (VII 2801-2802). According to the Host, everybody is sleepy because of the Monk's tale (VII 2794-2799). This attitude of the Host is interesting, because while he has praised the Monk for his gender identity performance, he does not like the Monk's rhetorical performance. In relation to this, it can be claimed that the reason of the Host's reaction is not that the Monk is not an efficient man of religion, but that they want to hear some merry tale. This is the reason why his "tale anoyeth al this compaignye" (VII 2789). Because of their uneasiness about the religious tales that the Monk tells, the Host wants him to tell another tale, "somewhat of hunting" (VII 2805). Yet, the Monk rejects this offer saying that he has "no lust to pleye" despite his interest in hunting, whether literal or metaphorical (VII 2806). This scene reveals not only that the Monk's reaction signals people's vain interests, but also that the Monk has achieved his religious identity as well by arousing fear in people. The Monk achieves this through his rhetorical performance, which gives the Monk the opportunity to perform his religious identity and present himself as an efficient clergyman. Hence, although Gallick claims that the Monk is one of those "religious pilgrims whose personal life styles are at odds with their chosen vocations" (460), it can be claimed that the Monk's rhetorical performance in his tale reveals that the Monk fashions himself as a professional masculine clergyman although he may be at odds with his profession in terms of traditional clerical gender identity performances.

In Harris's words, in a culture, where "[g]ender-role messages men receive from their surroundings are like scripts an actor follows in a play, except here the drama is a man's life" and where "[m]any men described these messages as a driving need" (14), monastic life presents a problematised gender identity for monks. The renunciation of gender was as problematic for the male as it was for the female since, as Bhabha argues, masculinity meant "the 'taking up' of an enunciative position, the making up of a psychic complex, the assumption of a social gender, the supplementation of a historic sexuality, the apparatus of a cultural difference" (58) by which monks gained their masculinity. In this respect, the Monk's self-fashioning is very important, since he not

only performs his gender identity through his masculine pursuits, but also performs his religious identity. He is one of the “public men” who have “existence and activity in the public domains” (Hearn 19). In this respect, the pilgrimage offers the Monk a chance to encode and decode the messages of masculinity since, as Ian M. Harris indicates, “[m]en learn about male messages both by being directly taught and by observing other males. Throughout their lives they receive feedback from peers, parents, and others about how well they are performing as men” (38). Thus, by professing himself as a monk and telling a tale on the fall of man, the Monk guarantees his religious identity and, in his material performance, he professes himself as a gendered religious clergyman. In this way, the Monk problematises the traditional systems in cloisters that had different means for monks to display their masculinity. Rather than adapting clerical masculinity by renouncing his male body and its masculine pursuits as expected by the monastic authorities, the Monk challenges this traditional attitude and chooses not to renounce his gender identity, because it was also due to the impositions of those authorities on the male body that monks might be regarded as effeminate (Murray, “Masculinizing” 30-31). Hence, instead of following the monastic norms about the renunciation of gender identity, the Monk fashions himself as a man of religion who not only rejects renunciation, but also overtly displays his gender identity. Besides, owing to his tale, the Monk also proves that he has brought together his gender identity and his religious identity. After all, as Neal elucidates,

[...] a masculine identity in late medieval England depended on a social presence. Being a man meant being present, visible, accepted among and interacting with a community of other males in the formal and informal structures of a man’s immediate community: the marketplace, the guildhall, the manor court, the vestry meeting. Manhood, to use a more medieval word, was reserved for adult males, but adulthood in itself was not enough. Rather, the values of mature social masculinity were those that enabled a man to maintain his place among his peers without encroaching on, or endangering, theirs. (7)

Here lies the Monk’s self-fashioning, in that, not being able to present himself as a husband or father, which are important significations of manhood in heterosexual societies (Neal 121), the Monk compensates this lack with his performance of gendered religious identity and fashions himself as a gendered man of religion.

As a result, rather than following the traditional monastic argument about the monks' "bodies as the enemy, ready to betray them at the slightest cause" (Murray, "Men's Bodies" 22), the Monk brings together his body and his profession, which is both shaped and reflected by his performance of gendered religious identity. Hence, the portrayal of the Monk should not be regarded as "somewhat critical" (Hermann 75), and he should not be defined as "'a manly man' in a thoroughly inappropriate profession" (Cooper, *Oxford Guides* 39) who is at a wrong situation in life as a man. Rather, his performance of religious gender identity needs to be emphasised as the reflection of the Monk's control over his gender and religious identity through his own means, which are reflected by his material performance in the "General Prologue" and his rhetorical performance in his tale.

2.3. The Pardoner

The Pardoner also fashions himself through his performance of gendered religious identity and contributes a homosexual performance to the gender performances in the *Canterbury Tales*. The Pardoner represented the group of religious men who were "licensed by the Church to supply absolution to sinners whose penitence showed itself in their willingness to make financial contributions" (Spearing 165). Yet, despite his clerical position, the Pardoner enters the scene singing with the Summoner "a love-song," which is not in accordance with their professional status as men of religion (Hoy 171). Both the Summoner and the Pardoner are members of the religious estate. The Summoner works for the ecclesiastical court, and his duty is to summon people to the court while the Pardoner's duty is to sell indulgences to people. Although they are the men of religion, Chaucer presents them as follows:

With hym [the Summoner] ther rood a gentil PARDONER
 Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
 Ful loude he soong 'Com hider, love, to me!
 This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;
 Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun. (I (A) 669-674)

Chaucer depicts the Pardoner as a friend and companion of the Summoner. This reflects the destruction of expected masculinity performances of the Summoner and the Pardoner. Masculinity required not only a man's control over other men, but also his control over his own self (Neal 2). However, Chaucer shows the explicitly displayed friendship of the Summoner and the Pardoner, which has homosexual connotations as implied by the "love song" they sing together. Since the Summoner and the Pardoner are expected to be masculine figures by the heterosexual medieval society, there arises a problem. Yet, neither the Summoner nor the Pardoner has a concern to have control over another to enhance his masculinity. Furthermore, neither of them are interested in the expected control over the self. Although they are the men of religion, they do not try to hide their companionship, which has homosexual overtones. Moreover, the Pardoner takes this freedom of self one step further as reflected by his material performance in the "General Prologue." If there is any sexual relationship between the Summoner and the Pardoner, the physical depiction of the Pardoner is more problematic according to the ideals of masculinity compared to that of the Summoner.

In Elton E. Smith's words, the Pardoner's "eccentric" appearance (316) as described in the "General Prologue" presents a feminised depiction according to the medieval understanding of masculinity. This is very important for his relationship with the other pilgrims and has a great impact on how they conceptualise the Pardoner. Hence, it can be claimed that the above mentioned first encounter of the pilgrims with the Pardoner creates a homophobic tension among the pilgrims. Because homophobia is highly influential in shaping the attitudes towards a homosexual man, a brief overview of the change in the attitude towards homosexuality from the classical period to the fourteenth century will be useful in decoding the meaning of the Pardoner's material performance, and thus his self-fashioning through his gendered religious identity performance.

The negative attitudes towards homosexuality have been claimed to have started with Plato who referred to sexuality without procreation as unnatural or contrary to nature in his *Laws* (636B-C; 825E-842). It was this argument that was revived in the thirteenth century constituting the basis of the reaction towards homosexual relations (Boswell 13-15). During the classical period, male friendship was idealised and regarded as a part of

a man's initiation process (Greenberg and Bystryn 517). For instance, the Greeks "represented gay love as the only form of eroticism which could be lasting, pure, and truly spiritual" (Boswell 27). Likewise, during the Roman period, the forms of homosexual relations were legal until the sixth century. It was first in the sixth century that the legal prohibitions of all homosexual relations started. It has been claimed that this intolerance against homosexuality was in line with the decline of Rome, since homosexual relations were widespread in Rome during the period of republic, and even prostitution of gay people was frequent, which drew attention to the tolerance of homosexuality. Similarly, male prostitution was also common and legal until the third century. Male prostitutes had certain legal rights and they even had their special holidays. Moreover, male prostitution was also taxed, and this meant an important income for the state. In addition to male prostitutes, slaves could also be sexually abused by their owners. However, later, homosexual relations started to be problematised. Homosexuality was associated with effeminacy, which meant that person was not active in his sexual relations and this was directly associated with political impotency. The Romans believed that such passivity was proper for either women, boys or slaves. As a result, if a man had such passivity, he was to experience social condemnation and loss of dignity (Boswell 69-79). This meant that if one was the active part in his homosexual relations, it would not lead to any problems, since his masculinity was not totally destroyed.

This tolerance for homosexuality was to continue until the spread of asceticism, which argued for the renunciation of fleshly pleasures. In fact, asceticism rejected all types of sexual pleasures both heterosexual and homosexual (Greenberg and Bystryn 520-524). Yet, it would be very influential in marginalising the homosexuals by the society. The Christian theologians began condemning homosexuality associating it with "animal behaviour" (Boswell 137) and "unsavoury" acts such as pedofilia, incest and male prostitution (Boswell 143, 144-145). Homosexuality was also regarded as failure in fulfilling gender roles. It was believed to be an act against nature, since homosexuality failed not only in procreation, which was the goal of heterosexuality, but also in the protection of celibacy and chastity, which was recommended for every ideal Christian (Boswell 148-156; Lochrie 92-93). Therefore, starting from the late fourth century

onward, the members of the clergy were required to be celibate, and sexuality was allowed only in marriages for the sake of procreation (Greenberg and Bystry 526).

The Scriptures also had an impact on the attitudes towards homosexuality in the early years of Christianity. Certain passages of the Old Testament on sodomy became the source of the negative attitudes towards homosexual relations. There were many passages in the Bible that were full of negative attitudes towards homosexuality, or sodomy.³⁴ The Bible explicitly condemned sodomy and the sodomites. In the same line, the *OED* states that sodomy means “[a]n unnatural form of sexual intercourse, esp. that of one male with another” (“sodomy” (1)). Likewise, according to the *Middle English Dictionary*,³⁵ sodomy meant “[u]nnatural sexual intercourse, esp. between men” (“sodomī(e)”), and the association of sodomy with any type of unnatural sexual relations including homosexuality continued until the seventeenth century (Boswell 98).

Yet, it was first in 533 by Justinian the emperor that homosexual relations were condemned as part of adultery, punishable by death. First in 538 and then in 544, homosexuals were called to penance. In accordance with these developments, homosexuals were accused of causing plagues and earthquakes as a result of their sinful acts (Boswell 171-172). Hence, this period can be defined as the period in which “the criminalization of homosexuality” started (Boswell 173). St. Paul’s arguments also contributed to this intolerance against homosexuality. For instance, St. Paul listed sodomites among the “wrongdoers” who would “not inherit the kingdom of God” (I Corinthians 6:9). Likewise, he listed sodomy among “the unholy and profane” acts along with matricide, patricide, fornication, lying and perjury (I Timothy I:10). Therefore, being a sodomite meant being condemned by religious authorities. Due to the assumption that a sodomite was committing a sin against nature, his affections were regarded as despicable and filthy (Romans I:26-27). This led to the classification of sodomites as dreadful sinners who lost the mercy of God.

Accordingly, although homosexuals were not deprived of recognition until the sixth century, starting from the fourth century onwards, there was an increasing intolerance in the Roman Empire against homosexuals especially under the influence of Christianity,

which reinforced the renunciation of bodily pleasures, including the sexual one. In addition to the impact of Christianity, the Judaeo-Platonists, the Dualists and the Stoics also reinforced the negative attitudes towards homosexuals. The Judaeo-Platonists rejected all acts against nature, namely, the acts which were in conflict with either law, the Bible or customs (Boswell 148). This meant rejection of same sex relations. The Dualists rejected all forms of bodily pleasures and thus sexuality, since pleasures were believed to distract man's soul from achieving good deeds. On one hand, for some of them, heterosexual pleasures were worse than the homosexual pleasures, since they believed that heterosexual people married merely for their sexual pleasures. Still, on the other hand, some regarded homosexual pleasures as worse than heterosexual pleasures, because homosexuality did not contribute to procreation. This is the reason why the Stoics also criticised homosexuality, as they also emphasised the importance of the natural end of sexuality, that is, procreation. Similarly, the Christian writers mostly chose to remain silent on the issue of homosexuality and the New Testament drew attention to heterosexual relations which were to contribute to procreation and the regulations of sexual life in marriage. All these reflected the common discontent with homosexual relations (Boswell 114-130, 147-152). It is for this reason that Mark Jordan dates the start of sodomy as a Christian sin back to the eleventh century (29).

Despite the silence against homosexuality introduced by the New Testament, the homoerotic love again started to be approved following the introduction of feudalism. Since feudalism was a sworn allegiance system and the relationship between a lord and a vassal was very important, it was believed that love could only enhance this relationship (Greenberg and Bystryn 532). Thus, as Boswell states, “[w]hat is perhaps most striking about the years from the eleventh to the twelfth century is the reappearance for the first time since the decline of Rome of evidence for what might be called a gay subculture” (243). Boswell argues that homosexuality became functional in sustaining the loyalty of vassals for lords (219). It was also in the twelfth century that homosexual feelings were integrated into religious life, namely monasticism, putting the emphasis on the importance of monastic friendships, which combined spiritualism with human affection. In fact, monastic life style itself was influential in leading men to homosexuality, in that, it made men live totally separated from the females (Boswell

219; Greenberg and Bystryn 536-538). Furthermore, since it was not allowed for monks to marry, they found outlets for their desires through homosexual relationships within monastery walls.

The twelfth century which brought about the romance and courtly love tradition also reinforced love between men. Love was on the foreground and it did not matter whether it was heterosexual or homosexual love (Boswell 209). Additionally, the classical revival in the twelfth century drew attention to the writings of classical authors such as Plato and Ovid who wrote on homosexual love. These developments gave birth to two different stands towards homosexuality. On the one hand, the ascetics claimed that homosexuality was a sinful act. They tried to influence the Church authorities to take action against such sinful acts, which ended up without any legal prohibition by the ecclesiastics. On the other hand, there was a group of clerics who claimed that homosexual love was not sinful, and they glorified it through the production of gay literature (Boswell 209-210). However, as Burgwinkle suggests, homosexuality again became the target of criticism when the concept of courtly love, which was of course heterosexual love, became an important aspect of idealised knighthood (4). Therefore, towards the end of the twelfth century, attitudes towards homosexual love became harsher, and courtly love itself became a weapon against it, since negative attitude towards homoerotic relations became also influential in shaping the heterosexual courtly love tradition. Burgwinkle also states the importance of “the invention of sodomy [...] to the institution of a new model of heroic and highly monitored masculinity in the twelfth century” (2). The combination of courtly love and knighthood drew attention to the knight, who was to be the performer of idealised masculine profession, that is, chivalry, and this meant again condemnation of homosexuality.

The heterosexual courtly love tradition meant the establishment of the imposition and constructed naturalisation of heterosexuality that is based on the binary relationship between the masculine and the feminine, which is sustained in the performance of heterosexual love (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 31). Accordingly, idealised knighthood was centred around heterosexual love displaying the link between masculinity and knighthood. Hence, homosexuality came to be regarded as a part of “peripheral

sexualities” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 39). In order to perform chivalric identity, it became necessary for a knight to act according to the norms of masculinity (Burgwinkle 9-15). As a result of this, a sodomite started to be regarded as a threat to the heterosexual order. Sodomitical relations meant the feminisation of man, because being a sodomite meant that the man left being a man and a masculine figure and turned into a woman and a feminine figure. However, as Butler argues, this attitude revealed the constructedness of heterosexual relations as natural and as “the original” (*Gender Trouble* 43). Although heterosexuality was a cultural product and enhanced its status in medieval society due to the ideals of courtly love, it meant the denaturalisation of any other sexuality. According to the heterosexual norms, the homosexual relations meant “the inevitable site of the denaturalization and mobilization of gender categories,” that is, a deviance from the natural and the original, which was itself a constructed norm transforming the condition of a homosexual person to that which “is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 43, emphasis original). This means that heterosexuality was not itself the original but a copy, since it was just a product of cultural constructedness. This displayed “not only the constructedness of gender, its unnatural and nonnecessary status, but the cultural universality of oppression in nonbiologicistic terms” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 51). These arguments shed light on the reasons of intolerance against homosexuality in medieval society, which constructed the gender binaries according to the ideals of the heterosexual norms and thus excluded the so-called deviant genders. In this respect, the constructed gender binaries in medieval courtly love tradition acted as a form of “*regulatory* operation of power” to regulate the gender binaries as masculine and feminine (Butler, *Undoing* 43, emphasis original). Hence, according to the heterosexual norms of medieval culture, the homosexual or the sodomite was not in the sphere of social acceptance and approval.

As a result of such heterosexual and homophobic culture, the ecclesiastical regulation on homosexual relations started with the Council of London in 1102. It was agreed that it was necessary to inform people of the sinful nature of such acts, and that they should confess such sinful acts. Likewise, the Church started to turn against sexual relations among the clergy to such an extent that the marriage of the clergy was denounced as

declared in the First Lateran Council of 1123. Yet, this was believed to lead to more homosexual relations depriving the clergy of heterosexual marriages (Boswell 215-216; Greenberg and Bystry 533-536). Furthermore, the prohibition of marriage and thus sexual relations of the clergy led to bigger problems, as sexuality was regarded as an indispensable part of masculinity (Neal 89-90). As Neal states, “[w]hile that sense of self depended on many things,” and even if one had a clerical identity to sustain, “gender has to be regarded as one of its central anchors” (25). Accordingly, gender stands out as an important and indispensable part of one’s identity and this was valid not only for the commoners but also for the clergy including homosexuals. However, homosexuality was especially condemned as a mere act of fleshly pleasure and associated thus with the Seven Deadly Sins such as greed and lust. In line with these arguments, being the first council to deal with homosexuality (Boswell 128), the Third Lateran Council in 1179 directed attention to homosexuals, grouping them with the Jews, merchants, infidels and heretics, and claimed homosexuality as an unnatural act, since it did not contribute to procreation (Greenberg and Bystry 540-541). These arguments were then integrated into canon law in the thirteenth century. Similarly, although it did not refer to sodomy among the laity, the Fourth Lateran Council which took place in 1205 also emphasised the celibacy of the clergy and the importance of avoiding sodomy (Boswell 277-278). Hence, their bodies became the source of sin for the sodomites. From the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, the dominant idea about homosexuality among theologians was that homosexual acts were against nature and thus unnatural (Boswell 305-330; Greenberg and Bystry 542). Therefore, sodomy was placed among “the list of grave sins” and among the “category of forbidden acts” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 38, 43). This meant not only the social but also the religious condemnation of sodomites.

Similarly, especially from the fourteenth century onwards, homosexuality was associated with the infidel and with heretics as well as with femininity. To begin with its association with femininity, homosexuality came to be characterised as “feminine masculinity” as well as “a Christian sin” (Burgwinkle 2). Hence, a homosexual man was considered to be “a nonman” (McAlpine 12). Secondly, during the Crusades, homosexuality was associated with the infidel and thus became a totally condemned act

for the ideal Christian (Boswell 279-283). Moreover, homosexuals were also associated with heretics and heretic movements during the late Middle Ages, which turned them into the enemies of Christianity (Boswell 283-284; Dinshaw, *Getting* 6, 58-59). As a result, the association of sodomites and heretics along with the Jews and lepers as “a virtually interchangeable stereotype of the enemy” who “had unnatural or excessive sex” was the dominant attitude in medieval society (Whitney, “Witches” 299). These groups were othered by the dominant cultural norms as potential threats to society and as the reasons of social calamities such as the Black Death. This was the transformation of the tolerant attitudes towards homosexuality into intolerance, which had increased from the late twelfth and the thirteenth century onwards (Boswell 269-272). As a result, the othering of the homosexuals in heterosexual societies became dominant.

Within this context, as Elton E. Smith states, the Summoner and the Pardoner are regarded as an “oddly united” couple by the heterosexual pilgrims when they see them singing a “love song” together (314). Furthermore, the Pardoner’s material performance contributes to the idea that he is a homosexual and it clarifies the negative attitude of the pilgrims towards the Pardoner as a clerical figure. At this point, the physiognomy of the Pardoner is very important in bringing together his given and chosen physical features. It should be emphasised that the Pardoner’s bodily or corporeal signs are first of all constituted by the signs given to him by nature and he does not have much choice about them. These signs are his yellow thin hair, voice and beardlessness. However, his gestures and his glancing eyes have more of his say, which contributes much to his gender performance. Similarly, his costume and his relics that can be defined as his means of deceiving people are also more of his own choice, through which he dresses for the part he wants to play. Therefore, the Pardoner’s material performance consists of two groups of materials: the first group includes his yellow thin hair, voice and beardlessness, the signs which are given to him by nature; and the second group includes his gestures, his glancing eyes, his costume and accessories for his tricks, the signs which are chosen by him consciously to perform his gendered religious identity.

To begin with his yellow thin hair, the “General Prologues” reveals that

[t]his Pardoner hadde heer as yellow as wax,
 But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
 And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;
 But thynne it lay, by colpons oon and oon. (I (A) 675-679)

In fact, yellow hair was an indication of beauty especially if it was long and curly according to the medieval ideals of beauty both for the male and the female (Curry, *Ideal* 12-32). However, the Pardoner's hair does not conform to the standards of male beauty although his hair is yellow and long. His hair is thin while thick hair is desired. Besides, the simile of wax implies dirtiness. His hair is straight and smooth not curly, which is the reason why his hair is "ugly" (Curry, *Ideal* 14). Moreover, the type of hair that the Pardoner has, that is, long but straight, is "a conventionally feminine attribute" (Neal 132), which contributes to his feminine appearance and effeminacy (Hoy 171). Moreover, although he keeps his hair long following the beauty standards, due to its straightness, the Pardoner's hair creates not the image of male beauty but the image of a homosexual due to his other physical attributes.

When it comes to his voice, Chaucer the pilgrim states that "[a] voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot" (I (A) 688). The information about the Pardoner's voice exhibits another implication of the Pardoner's lacking masculinity, in that, his voice resembles that of a goat, and thus it is small. However, according to the traditional understanding, men were expected to have loud voice like the battle clamour or a roaring lion (Curry, *Ideal* 72). This constitutes another point where the Pardoner fails to perform normative masculinity. Yet, as in the case of his yellow thin hair, the Pardoner's voice is also given by nature and he does not have a choice. Hence, it becomes another natural element that contributes to his effeminacy. Additionally, the reference to the goat in the depiction of the Pardoner's voice is also functional in revealing his lecherous nature. According to Rowland, "the goat has been a symbol of libido and procreation" (*Animals* 80) as well as lasciviousness (*Animals* 81, 85). Similarly, this lasciviousness is also in accordance with the depiction of the he-goat as a "butting animal who is always burning for coition" (White 74). This animal imagery is also in accordance with the sexual evocations of the "love song" sung by the Pardoner and the Summoner. Yet, it can be argued that this "love song" creates discord not only because of the implied

homosexuality, but also because of the fact that sexuality was forbidden to the members of the clergy. Hence, the Pardoner appears as a member of the clergy who transgresses both his gender and religious identity imposed on him by the heteronormative and clerical authorities. He is not only a lecherous man but also a homosexual.

His being a beardless man is another factor that is given to him by nature and that contributes to the effeminate appearance of the Pardoner: “No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have; / As smothe it was as it were late shave” (I (A) 689-690). During the medieval period, beard was the symbol of “manly strength and vigor” and so it was a significant element in defining manhood, or masculinity (Curry, *Ideal* 36). Being a beardless man, or even shaving one’s beard meant the opposite of masculinity; and thus, if one was beardless, he was subject to public mockery. Similarly, if one was called beardless, it was regarded as “an insult” (Curry, *Ideal* 37). Likewise, although Hoy states that the Pardoner’s being a beardless man is “an image of sexual impotence” (171), his being beardless should be taken as a reflection of his effeminacy. As revealed by the goat imagery, the Pardoner is a lecherous man; but, it can be suggested that his lechery is not the lechery of a heterosexual man but that of a homosexual. Hence, defining his beardlessness as an indication of his sexual impotency might be a heteronormative argument. Rather, it can be suggested that his being a beardless man is a feature given to him by nature and he does not have a choice about it. Yet, beardlessness does prevent him from having sexual affairs. In order to clarify the Pardoner’s position in his relationship with the Summoner, it is necessary to point out that the Summoner has a beard while the Pardoner does not, which can be interpreted as the implication of the fact that the Summoner has the masculine role, while the Pardoner has the feminine one in their implied homosexual relationship.

As for the Pardoner’s chosen corporeal signs, to begin with his glaring eyes, Chaucer the pilgrim says that “[s]wiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare” (I (A) 684). Although “[t]he eyes of both men and women, to be considered beautiful, must be bright and shining” (Curry, *Ideal* 51), still “[b]ulging, outstanding, pop-eyes are also no mark of beauty” (Curry, *Ideal* 61) as in the case of the Pardoner. His eyes are glaring as the eyes of a hare. According to the *MED*, if one is compared to a hare, it means that

person is “a timid person” (“hāre,” (1a. (d))). Being a timid person is again a feminine attribute, since being fearful or scary is not in accordance with the ideals of masculinity. Hence, if the Pardoner has a male body, it is not proper for him to be a fearful person, or if he is a fearful person, it is not proper for his male body. Furthermore, Cummins notes that hare is a hermaphroditic animal that can change its sex (110).³⁶ Moreover, as in the case of goat symbolism, the hare is also associated with lechery and sex and it has been known as the animal of Venus (Rowland, *Animals* 91-92), which draws attention to the Pardoner’s involvement in sexual affairs and his lechery. Combined with his corporeal signs given to him by nature, which create the image of a homosexual, Dinshaw argues that this detail about the Pardoner’s eyes also contributes to the idea that “this character seems illegible” for medieval society that expects a masculinity performance from a seemingly male body (*Getting* 117). It can be claimed that his illegibility is related with his homosexuality that does not conform to the heterosexual norms.

After depicting the Pardoner as a “physically repugnant” man (Hoy 171) through the depiction of his hair, eyes, voice and beardlessness, Chaucer the pilgrim expresses his uncertainty about the gender identity of the Pardoner, and says that “I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare” (I (A) 691). In relation to this confusion about the Pardoner’s sexual identity, Whitney argues that, rather than directly defining him as a homosexual, it would be more proper, in the light of humoral theory, to define the Pardoner as a phlegmatic man due to his hair and beardless face, which still have the implications of sexual impotence and effeminacy as a result of excessive phlegm (“What’s Wrong” 360-368). Yet, this argument does not help to explain the relationship between the Summoner and the Pardoner. Moreover, if it is accepted that the Pardoner is a phlegmatic man, it again draws attention to his effeminacy associated with being phlegmatic. In any case, whether the Pardoner is phlegmatic or homosexual, the Pardoner cannot provide the expected masculinity performance, since the pilgrims cannot interpret the physical messages of his body to affirm and accept his masculinity. At this point, the Pardoner’s being defined as “gelding” or “mare” is also functional in displaying this confusion about his gender identity. According to the *OED*, gelding means “[a] gelded person, a eunuch” (“gelding” (1)) and mare means “[t]he female of any equine animal (as the horse, ass, or zebra)” (“mare” (1)). Accordingly, if mare was

used in the depiction of a man, it was his effeminacy that was intended to be emphasised and this effeminacy was reflected by his physical appearance (McAlpine 11). Additionally, there is another confusion about being defined as a mare and a eunuch. The mare refers to a homosexual man while the gelding refers to an eunuch. According to McAlpine this differentiation is important since while homosexuality was considered to be a condemned sin as a filthy act, eunuchry was not regarded as a sin (14). Although the description of the Pardoner as either a “mare” or a “gelding” presents him as a “sexually ambiguous, [and] foreign” figure (Burger 122), Melvin Storm associates the Pardoner’s being a gelding or mare with his sterility as a man of religion; if he is an eunuch, it means that he is sterile, or if he is a homosexual, it means that he is sterile and leads others to be sterile as well, because he cannot contribute to procreation (813). Yet, even if he can avoid sin by being a sexually sterile man, the Pardoner cannot avoid failing in his social mission to become a masculine figure in his male body in a heteronormative society. On the contrary, his material performance displays that, in addition to his given corporeal signs, he consciously contributes to this gender performance through his chosen signs. Whether he is a gelding or a mare, the Pardoner fails in providing the expected performance of masculinity and becomes a “defective man” according to the heterosexual norms (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 156). In both cases, the Pardoner cannot perform masculinity and thus becomes the representative of the nonconforming, deviant figure for the heterosexual society as the embodiment of the “absence of something” both physically and discursively (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 157). He is the symbol of something that is absent physically, because, despite his seemingly male body, he lacks the physical enactment of his expected contribution to the heteronormative society. He is also the symbol of something that is absent discursively since, due to the dominance of heteronormative discourse, his homosexual body can neither conform to the discourse of the heteronormativity nor make this heteronormative discourse incorporate his homosexuality by incorporating its queer discourse.

Apparently, the ambiguity in the depiction of the Pardoner’s material performance and corporeality is directly related with his gender identity. Although, with a seemingly male body, he is expected to perform masculinity, he fails in this performance. However, as Neal argues, masculinity needs to be both social and corporeal (123-125).

In order for one to be decoded by the society as a masculine self, it is necessary for him to have proper physical qualities to encode his body as manly. Thus, physical appearance is functional in one's displaying himself as a masculine figure not only to himself but also to the others in the heterosexual society. However, the Pardoner's body, lacking the physical masculinity also lacks "[p]hysical manhood" (Neal 126). It can be claimed that the Pardoner himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, draws attention to this lack, in that, the wallet in front of his lap (I (A) 686) can be regarded as "a gendered reference to the location of the Pardoner's actual masculinity" (Neal 132). As a result of this ambiguous depiction, the Pardoner stands out as a homosexual religious figure.

In order to explain the gender performance of the Pardoner, it is also necessary to point out that it was important for the members of the clergy to sustain their status among the other males in the society in terms of gender hierarchy to guarantee their masculinity although they were required to be celibate men (Neal 8). However, this seems difficult for the Pardoner due to his physical appearance. In this respect, the Pardoner's interruption of the Wife of Bath's speech in her prologue can at first be regarded as an implication of such kind of a social display:

'Now, dame,' quod he, 'by God and by Seint John!
Ye been a noble prechour in this cas.
I was aboute to wedde a wyf; allas!
What sholde I bye it on my flesh so deere?
Yet hadde I levere wedde no wyf to-yeere!' (III (D) 164-168)

As Harris suggests, the Pardoner's intervention shows not only the influence of women on men's gender construction and the role of women in decoding this construction "through the approval, love, and friendship they share with men" (28), but also that the Pardoner needs to claim masculinity at least in the eyes of the pilgrims to gain social approval. Despite his feminine outlook, he claims that he was about to marry a female. It is really provoking to ask why the Pardoner revolts saying that "[w]hat sholde I bye it on my flesh so deere?" (III (D) 167). It is not clear why he considers marrying a wife "so deere." Is it because of his desire for not being bound to a wife or is it because of his

homosexuality? It can be claimed that this intervention serves as a cover for the Pardoner to show off himself in a masculine guise.

The material performance of the Pardoner continues with the depiction of his costume as another element of his chosen signs:

But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare. (I (A) 680-683)

Erol states that the Pardoner's "most modish costume" displays "[h]is foppishness" ("A Pageant" 128, 130). He only wears a cap and his hood is put in his wallet, since he follows the fashion of his day. Men also followed the fashion in the Middle Ages, which signalled worldliness and displayed their manliness (Neal 172, 174; Murray "Masculinizing" 33). As stated above, the fashionable attire of the Squire, the epitome of a masculine ideal as a young knight-in-the-making, and the Monk, the embodiment of masculinity despite his religious profession illustrate that. In this respect, it can be suggested that the Pardoner has this interest in fashion to display himself as a homosexual who is interested in fashion as much as a heterosexual man.

The Pardoner's material performance continues with the depiction of his vernicle, another important item of the Pardoner's chosen signs to perform his role: "A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe" (I (A) 685). The vernicle was a badge carried by Christians who went to Rome for pilgrimage. It was a piece of cloth which had the image of Christ on it. St. Veronica gave that cloth to Christ to wipe his face on His way to Crucifixion. It was for this reason that the vernicle had great spiritual importance and was the most suitable badge for the seat of Christianity, Rome. Hence, the Veronica vernicle became very popular and well-known among pilgrims. Accordingly, displaying his vernicle, the Pardoner claims respectability and places himself in the context of religious love and Christian love for Christ (McAlpine 19; Rhodes 34). It can be said that the Pardoner, despite his effeminate physical appearance and failure in the

performance of physical masculinity that is expected by the heteronormative society, claims a strong religious identity.

Besides his vernicle, the Pardoner also presents himself as a Christian display owing to his relics as a man of religion. In Dinshaw's words, although he looks like "a sodomitical shadow" with his hair, eyes, voice, beardlessness and his friendship with the Summoner (*Getting* 121), the Pardoner presents himself as a man of religion who has "[b]retful of pardoun, comen from Rome al hoot" (I (A) 687). With this reference to pardons, the emphasis is shifted from the Pardoner's gender identity to his religious identity in his material performance. Pardons were very important for the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. Baptism was the first type of pardon and was functional in absolving sins of adults till the seventh century. However, with the spread of baptism during infancy, the absolution of sins through baptism became pointless, and other forms of pardons became necessary for the sins following baptism. Therefore, the absolution of sins through indulgences provided by pardoners became a very important part of the process of penance as a result of the growing reverence for relics. Yet, this led to abuses in the penitential system and indulgences got out of the Church's control. It is for this reason that, as Elton E. Smith indicates, the Lateran Council in 1215 tried to regulate the granting of indulgences, which would result in failure (314-316). Furthermore, in order to prevent such abuses in relation to the selling of pardons, the Church also issued licenses to its legitimate officers (Hoy 172). This meant that the role and the status of pardoners also gained importance since the legitimate pardoners were granted their rights to sell indulgences by the Church and this contributed to their high status in society. Similarly, since pardons had great importance and impact in late medieval England, the value of relics and indulgences was attested by the Church (Burger 150-151) in order to prevent "simony, the sin of trading in spiritual things" (Dinshaw, *Getting* 61). As Dinshaw puts it, this argument brings out the following chain: "Murder-sodomy-simony-leprosy-heresy" (*Getting* 63). This chain shows the equation of sodomy and leprosy as the sins of body that led to the murder of the pure body, with simony, a spiritual sin that led to the murder of the soul as in the case of heresy. All these brought the issue of simony to the foreground, because especially in the fourteenth century, simony was condemned by religious reformists claiming that it

meant merchandising spiritual goods for financial benefits. As Patterson argues, simony meant for them “a materialism that took the literal for the spiritual, the sign for the signified” (“Chaucer’s Pardoner” 664). Accordingly, pardoners’ activities necessitated greater religious attention in order to prevent abuses in the penitential system. Despite abuses, there was a continuous rise in the social and religious influence of pardoners, because people were turning to them more and more, especially following the impact of the Black Death in the fourteenth century. There was also a continual rise in the abuse of indulgences and pardons to such an extent that the council of Vienne harshly criticised pardoners, indicating that they claimed they could save the souls in purgatory through their indulgences. However, in fact, such indulgences were granted in the fourteenth century at the Portiuncula chapel and in the fifteenth century by the popes (Burger 153). The main aim was to control indulgences and to prevent abuses of the penitential system that led to simony.

In this respect, Elton E. Smith argues that the Pardoner’s situation is also suspicious, because the Pardoner is from Rouncivale, where the fraudulence of indulgences was so common and notorious that it went through two investigations, in 1382 and in 1387, and hence it became a target of criticism (316). Therefore, in addition to the confusion of his gender identity in terms of heterosexual norms, the first suspicion about the Pardoner’s religious identity and thus religious reliability also arises because of his place of origin. However, when it comes to his professional skills, it can be argued that the Pardoner knows how to perform his clerical role through his surpassing skills:

But of his craft, fro Berwyk into Ware
 Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
 Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl;
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
 That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente
 Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.
 He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones,
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
 But with these relikes, whan that he fond
 A povre person dwellynge upon lond,
 Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
 He made the person and the peple his apes. (I (A) 692-706)

The Pardoner presents the source of his craft as his relics, which are made up of a piece of cloth which he claims to be Virgin Mary's veil, a piece of St. Peter's sail, a cross and a glass of pigs' bones. According to the relic cults in the Middle Ages, although all valuable relics were parts of body, not all parts of body were regarded to be important relics (Malo 84-85). Yet, the Pardoner's relic collection seems to be influential enough to make him better than other pardoners in his region. Relic custodians had a significant role for the Church and its institutional power in the Middle Ages. It was through relic custodians that the Church offered the community a passage to God's mercy. Thus, relic custodians were to protect relics and control their access by pilgrims. In this respect, the Pardoner appears "as a parodic relic custodian" (Malo 84). He confesses that his relics are false relics, they are not genuine but artificial. Despite the fact that the Pardoner praises his relics and their power, when they are combined with his physical appearance, he appears, in Erol's words, like "a quack doctor selling magical remedies for all ills" ("A Pageant" 131). In fact, it is not the Pardoner's relics' power but the susceptibility of the populace, and his manipulation of the public that enhances the Pardoner's performance. Through his rhetorical skills, he makes the most of his relics and abuses people. Still, his relics are functional in displaying the Pardoner's "[s]heer expertise" (McAlpine 14), since owing to his relics, which cover almost half of his description in the "General Prologue," Chaucer the pilgrim is able to depict the Pardoner's professional identity as a man of religion as well without limiting his description only to his effeminate appearance and thus his gender identity. In this way, the Pardoner performs his self-fashioning as a homosexual man of religion through his gendered religious identity performance.

The Pardoner stands out as a man of religion who consciously uses and abuses his clerical status. His rhetorical skills that are revealed in his prologue to his tale contribute to his acting his performance in a more manipulative way. It is possible to say that the Pardoner has turned himself into a Christian display through the extreme amount of objects, that is, relics, he uses. He is a person who is consciously acting out a part with all the props of the act. Thus, his relics can be defined as his props to help him perform his clerical duty and earn money. With his naturally given features such as his yellow thin hair, voice and beardlessness, he might be aware of the possibility of

disapproval by the society that centralises and idealises the masculine. Therefore, although the Pardoner is a liar and a fake, he knows how to make people donate as a preaching pardoner. The Pardoner consciously chooses other material means such as his relics to display his clerical status. It can be claimed that, preparing himself for the clerical role he will play as a man of religion; the Pardoner uses and abuses his entrapments to present himself as a man of religion despite his homosexuality. Thus, preaching just becomes a professional skill for the Pardoner, the influence of which is enhanced by his relics.

In his rhetorical performance in his prologue to his tale, the Pardoner explains how he conducts his business with his relics. He indicates that before telling people his tales, he first shows them his bulls and seals in order “to warente” his “body” (VI (C) 338). His aim is to make them believe in his reliability and authority, and prevent any priest or clerk accusing him of disturbing “Cristes hooly werk” (VI (C) 340). The Pardoner also says that “in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe, / To saffron with my predicacioun, / And for to stire hem to devocioun” (VI (C) 344-346). These lines exhibit the Pardoner’s “roguish boasting and self-confidence” (Hoy 172) and his abuse of Latin. As Elton E. Smith suggests, although the Pardoner is himself aware of the fact that “his relics are meretricious,” he still “claims [...] effectiveness” (316). He is well aware of the possibility that he can manipulate people through his rhetorical skills. After preparing the atmosphere for telling religious stories and taking people under his influence, the Pardoner shows them his relics and wants them to believe in his words (VI (C) 352). He knows that his relics and his papal bulls and seals are the proper props for him to perform his religious identity as a pardoner and hence to claim authority over people despite his homosexuality. Afterwards, the Pardoner lists the power of his relics to people and shares his business tricks with the pilgrims. He reveals how he explains the potential power of his relics as follows:

‘Gooded men,’ I seye, ‘taak of my words keep;
 If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
 That any worm hath ete, or worm ystonge,
 Taak water of that welle and wassh his tonge,
 And it is hool anon; and forthermoore,
 Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every soore

Shal every sheep be hool that of this welle
 Drynketh a draughte. Taak kep eek what I telle:
 If that the good-man that the beestes oweth
 Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,
 Fastynge, drynken of this welle a draughte,
 As thilke hooly Jew oure eldres taughte,
 His beestes and his stoor shal multiplie.
 ‘And, sires, also it heeleth jalousie;
 For though a man be falle in jalous rage,
 Lat maken with this water his potage,
 And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,
 Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste,
 Al had she taken prestes two or thre.
 ‘Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se.
 He that his hand wol putte in this mitayn,
 He shal have multipliynge of his grayn,
 Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
 So that he offre pens, or elles grotos. [...]’ (VI (C) 352-376)

These lines clarify that it is not the Pardoner’s relics that give him the power and authority over people but his rhetorical skills, which he abuses to manipulate his profession to earn more money. He is apparently proud of his professional skills of persuasion. Listing the potential benefits of his relics through his rhetorical skills, the Pardoner asks the commoners to believe in his words. It is for this reason that he constantly says that people should take his word for what he says (VI (C) 352, 360). As a result, although Elton E. Smith suggests that it is because of this belief in his relics and their potential impact that the Pardoner is full of pride (316-317), it should be noted that it is not due to his relics but due to his preaching skills that the Pardoner is so proud of himself. His rhetorical skills are also praised by Chaucer the pilgrim in the “General Prologue:”

But trewely to tellen ate laste,
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
 Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
 But alderbest he song an offertorie;
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
 He moste preche and wel affile his tonge
 To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;
 Therefore he song the murierly and loude. (I (A) 707-714)

Chaucer the pilgrim indicates that the Pardoner stands out as a very talented “orator” (Volk-Birke 248), which is proper for a member of the clergy. However, it should be

emphasised that the Pardoner's rhetorical skills are important not only to show that he is a member of the clergy, whose main duty is to preach, but also to display his acting. Thus, his rhetorical skills constitute the basis of his pride and self-confidence as exemplified by his rhetorical performances in his prologue to his tale and in his tale itself. The Pardoner is so proud of his rhetorical skills that he says in his prologue to his tale when he preaches in church, "I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche, / And ryng it out as round as gooth a belle, / For I kan al by rote that I telle" (VI (C) 330-332).

Moreover, by claiming the power to absolve sins and by preaching, the Pardoner presents himself like a priest (Minnis 322-324). As Patterson suggests, "[h]e is a simoniac who sells spiritual goods; a false preacher who performs only for money" and "he is a spiritual sodomite sunk in the gross commercialism and materialism that pervert religious truth" ("Chaucer's Pardoner" 670). The Pardoner does not deny that he preaches to win silver. Rather, he himself explains how he creates devotion in people in order to sell them indulgences, first making them believe in his authority, granted to him by the papal bulls and seals, and then showing them his relics, which would prepare the atmosphere for his preaching. Evidently, in Elton E. Smith's words, he has "professional pride" as a clergyman (317). He is an efficient man of religion who professes his duties as a clergyman by selling pardons and thus feels self-confident about his profession despite his homosexuality. As a proud clergyman, after praising his relics, the Pardoner is ready to warn people against sin offering his relics:

Goode men and wommen, o thyng warne I yow:
 If any wight be in this chirche now
 That hath doon synne horrible, that he
 Dar nat, for shame, of it yshryven be,
 Or any womman, be she yong or old,
 That hath ymaked hir housbonde cokewold,
 Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace
 To offren to my relikes in this place. (VI (C) 377-384)

Although Hoy indicates that this is the revelation of "an insidious and sinister evil in the Pardoner" (171), these lines, in fact, reveal the self-confidence of the Pardoner in his skills in cheating people. He has authority granted by the papal bull and it is owing to this bull that he has won a hundred marks since he became a pardoner (VI (C) 387-390).

It is his profession to sell indulgences; and hence, the Pardoner is proud of his being authorised by a papal bull. Therefore, he openly expresses that his aim is not to lead people to virtue but to gain money. Pardoning is his business and he explains how he conducts his business in his prologue to his tale:

I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
 And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,
 I preche so as ye han herd bifoore
 And telle an hundred false japes moore.
 Thanne peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
 As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne.
 Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne
 That it is joye to se my bisynesse. (VI (C) 391-399)

Apparently, the Pardoner presents himself as a man of religion who is performing his role consciously. He says that he stands like a clerk in front of the lewed people, who are ready for his preaching as a man of religion. Then, he confesses that he tells them false tales watching their reactions stretching forth his neck and he speaks in loud voice to attract their attention. Using all dramatic tricks, he finishes his job quickly and feels the joy of his business. Following his preaching, ignorant people are ready to buy indulgences from him, making him earn more and more. All these reveal the theatricality of the Pardoner's preaching. As a man of religion, he performs his role and finishes his business by selling indulgences. Although the Pardoner seems to be a corrupt clerical figure who regards indulgences only in terms of material profit, as he says "I preche of no thyng but for coveityse" (VI (C) 424)," he is an efficient person at his job with his ability to exploit people's devotion and thus lead them to penance even if he is not interested in penance. In this way, as Elton E. Smith states, he exemplifies how one's profession "elevates" him if he is really efficient at his job even if he does not have idealised features as a man of religion (317).

Despite "a strong sense of delusion and emptiness" in the Pardoner's material performance in terms of the heterosexual norms of the society as reflected in the "General Prologue" (Hoy 171), the Pardoner's prologue to his tale presents a "confessional" Pardoner (Dinshaw, *Getting* 104; Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of*

History 371). Likewise, Hoy states that, his prologue is “a confession, a deliberate revelation of motives and techniques” which is “highly appropriate to the Pardoner whose self-confident pride demands an outlet of confessional exhibitionism” (173). The Pardoner is aware of the fact that he is also sinful. Yet, he still believes that he can make other people avoid avarice and guide them to repentance although he again emphasises that his main aim is not this (VI (C) 429-433). As a result, the Pardoner appears as a self-conscious avaricious man, but the prologue to his tale gives him enough space to confront and confess his avarice:

What, trowe ye, that whiles I may preche,
 And wynne gold and silver for I teche,
 That I wol lyve in poverte wilfully?
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it nevere, trewwly!
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry landes;
 I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,
 Ne make baskettes, and lyve therby,
 By cause I wol nat beggen ydelly.
 I wol noon of the apostles countrefete;
 I wol have moneie, wolle, chese, and whete,
 Al were it yeven of the povereste page,
 Or of the povereste wydwe in a village,
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
 Nay, I wol drynke licour of the vyne
 And have a joly wenche in every toun. (VI (C) 439-453)

He explicitly states that he preaches to win gold or silver, which shows his materialistic concerns. Due to his preaching, he is not a poor man and so he does not have to live in poverty. Similar to the Monk’s rejection of manual labour and the impositions of the monastic authorities, the Pardoner also renounces manual labour and imitating the apostles. Rather, he declares that he will lead a life of wealth and abundance. Furthermore, he also states that he will have lovers in every town, which again displays his lecherous nature. All these add “a wealth of realistic detail” about the Pardoner and shows “his hypnotic power” (Hoy 173). None of the pilgrim-audience intervene in his prologue. As a result, it can be argued that he manipulates his pilgrim-audience inasmuch as he has been manipulating poor people.

Moreover, it is necessary to point out that the Pardoner regards himself to be a man guilty of avarice. At this point, it is noteworthy to ask in terms of which aspect of his

identity the Pardoner considers himself to be avaricious? Is it because of his religious identity which is full of the abuses of the penitential system? If it is so, why does he present his professional pride and skills, and define his religious role as business? Thus, the reason must be related with something beyond his religious profession. Then, is it because of his gender identity which has not achieved any social acceptance and most probably will never have such an achievement? This seems more plausible since, as a homosexual, the Pardoner is aware of the fact that he will not gain social approval. He is a homosexual religious figure which makes his social exclusion more and more evident and hard to change. It is for this reason that the Pardoner does not avoid displaying either his physical features or his tricks of the business. It is due to his religious profession that he has a prominent place among people. As a result, he speaks in confidence and presents himself as a proud religious figure despite his abuses.

The Pardoner's rhetorical performance is functional first in listing the sins of his time in his prologue, which he embodies, and then in exemplifying them in his tale turning his tale into, as Elton E. Smith states, "a superbly succinct tale, a stunning survey of social and religious evils of late fourteenth-century England" (319). The Pardoner's rhetorical performance in his tale associates all the sins with avarice, since avarice refers not only to greed for money, but also to being gluttonous, drunk, lecherous and displaying interest in gambling as exemplified by the three figures in search of Death in his tale. Thus, he says "[o]f avarice and of swich cursednesse / Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free / To yeven hir pens, and namely unto me" (VI (C) 400-402). Of course, his motive is again not to absolve sins but to earn money. Yet, the Pardoner's interest in earning money should not be merely associated with materialistic concerns. Money here also represents a sort of approval from society. It can be argued that, because the Pardoner can never achieve social acceptance as a homosexual, he makes the society accept his religious identity. Therefore, the money the Pardoner earns through preaching and his relics can be regarded as the symbol of the social acceptance of his religious identity despite his gender identity.

It is for this reason that, despite his greed for money as a professional preacher, the Pardoner preaches against gluttony in his rhetorical performance in his tale depicting the

greedy men in search of material wealth. As a result, his tale provides him with the chance to display his professional skills and, throughout his tale, he presents himself as “an individual who is a master of his/her trade or profession” (Volk-Birke 247-248). As Hoy puts it, he is the “master of his material” (175). Although Elton E. Smith defines the Pardoner’s tale as “memorized homily” (317), his tale still exhibits the professional skills of the Pardoner. He recites his sermon rather than reading it aloud from a text. This makes it easy for the Pardoner to have control over his audience, because he can watch how they respond to his sermon and he can immediately respond to them (Volk-Birke 248). According to Elton E. Smith, the Pardoner is “almost ludicrous, a caricature, as he perches high in the raised pulpit, looking down on the people right and left below” (317), since he himself has certain moral failings. Although Volk-Birke has suggested that the Pardoner could have been an ideal pardoner if he was not corrupt morally (248), it can still be claimed that the Pardoner is a professional preacher. He makes use of the social background, especially the impact of the Black Death, and abuses “cunning death” which refers to “a clever psycho-scope into the fear that lurks within others” embodied in the Old Man figure in his tale (Twombly 265). Thus, all the parts of the Pardoner’s rhetorical performance including his prologue and epilogue as well as the tale itself can be defined as a sermon (Gallick 467; Spearing 165; Volk-Birke 275). Sermons were delivered by preachers in the Middle Ages for a certain occasion like a religious or festive celebration and the rhetorical skills of preachers were very important in influencing their audience (Gallick 456). The Pardoner performs “as a preacher” although preaching was not allowed for him as it was the duty of a priest (Hoy 172). Therefore, despite the fact that preaching was not allowed for him, due to his being an overreacher in search of any sort of social acceptance, the Pardoner turns to preaching in his tale, which will give him enough social acceptance as a religious figure in society.

Furthermore, his choice of subject matter, that is, death, which was one of the main themes in sermons (Hoy 169), makes it easier for the Pardoner to achieve his goal in influencing people. Hence, the Pardoner’s tale can also be defined as an *exemplum* (Dinshaw, *Getting* 133). Actually, *exempla* was used commonly by medieval preachers especially from the thirteenth century onwards and as a skilful rhetorician and preacher, the Pardoner presents his tale as an “exemplary narrative” (Spearing 165). Furthermore,

while preaching on avarice, the Pardoner also refers to the penitential treatises, designed by the Lateran Council in 1215 for confessional motives (Yeager 46). When his tale is contextualised in the atmosphere of the Black Death, it makes it easier for the Pardoner to arouse the pilgrims' feelings, since all of them are, in a way, on a quest on their way to Canterbury and they are trying to complete their own quests within their souls. Thus, as Hoy states, it can be suggested that the three rioters in search of Death in his tale bring out "the idea of a quest" (176). In this respect, the Pardoner's reference to avarice is also very functional. Because avarice was directly related with the body, it can be argued that the Pardoner displays "an obsessive concern with the body as the source of sin, the instrument of sin, and the victim of sin" (McAlpine 15). This can be interpreted as another reflection of the influence of the Pardoner's homosexuality and the negative attitudes in medieval society towards homosexuals.

Moreover, the Pardoner's description of the encounter with Death can also be considered to be a part of spiritual growth and a reflection of "a theatre-within" the Pardoner (Twombly 257). Twombly suggests that "the Pardoner's Old Man is a pilgrim [...], a pilgrim within a Pilgrim" and functions as "a corrective image of the self-exploring self" (259, 260). Hence, the Pardoner can be defined as "a self-inventor" who invents and displays himself "in a social context fraught with devotional and ascetic possibilities" (Twombly 250). He presents himself as a preacher, that is, the figure to correct the sins of people as is the Old Man. It can be claimed that, although the first encounter between the Pardoner and his pilgrim-audience is reflective of his gender identity, he does not let his gender identity dominate their relationship and exhibits his religious identity as well. Thus, he invents his own self not only in the social but also the religious context in his tale, associating himself with the Old Man. Exhibiting that all sins are interconnected (Hoy 174) and sins do not only refer to spiritual failings as in the case of being envious, proud or angry, the Pardoner conveys, as Elton E. Smith suggests, the message that sins also refer to physical failings as in the case of gluttony and drunkenness (317).

As Leicester suggests, the Pardoner's tale becomes one of the tales that is the embodiment of the decorum between the teller and the tale (*The Disenchanted* 35).

Telling a tale about avarice in both physical and spiritual aspects, the Pardoner displays an example of “medieval men’s dis-ease with their bodies” and “with the masculine experience of human embodiment” (Murray, “The Law of Sin” 12, 18). This can also be regarded as a reflection of the Pardoner’s own discontent with his body, which is a result not of his conception of his gender identity as a homosexual, but his not being integrated into the heterosexual society. This is important for the self-fashioning of the Pardoner, in that, the Pardoner’s emphasis on the physical reflections of sin as the reflections of his failing body can also be associated with his homosexual identity, which lacks social approval. The Pardoner is aware of the fact that he has a homosexual body, which is sinful according to traditional heterosexual norms. Yet, rather than trying to hide his deviant body in the heteronormative society in which he lives, the Pardoner explicitly displays his homosexuality as a man of religion. In this way, he takes advantage of his tale telling performance to claim social appreciation in order to reach relief as a homosexual man of religion, which is achieved following the end of his rhetorical performance in his tale.

Yet, in addition to being a good rhetorician, “[t]he medieval preacher was [also] a teacher or instructor,” or in other words, he was like a “pedagogue” for his audience guiding them away from sin, setting himself up as an example and role model (Gallick 459). However, the Pardoner’s material performance in the “General Prologue” and his rhetorical performance in his prologue to his tale, “which is a mixture of confession and boast, half-apologetic, half-proud” (Volk-Birke 247), reveal that the Pardoner is not an ideal role model either in terms of his gender identity for his heteronormative society or in terms of his religious identity. It can be claimed that rather than aiming at presenting himself as an instructor for people in religious aspect, the Pardoner presents himself as an example through whom the condition and the social exclusion of sexually deviant people in general and sexually deviant religious people in particular in a heteronormative society is displayed. Therefore, he presents his tale as the reflection of his professional skills and displays that he performs his religious profession despite his own moral failings and homosexuality.

In order to check the impact of his rhetorical performance as well as his professional self-confidence, addressing first the Host, the Pardoner asks his pilgrim-audience to kiss his relics and to open their purses (VI (C) 943-945). As a professional man of the religion, he has finished his exemplary sermon in his tale, and now invites the pilgrim-audience to pay for their sins and kiss his relics. However, as Elton E. Smith states, the Host is “singled out as a notorious sinner” (319) and he gets very angry. The Pardoner cannot realise that he cannot have the influence to impress all the pilgrims when the Host confronts him. Thus, the end of his tale exhibits “the total rejection and humiliation of the preacher” (Gallick 470). The Pardoner cannot achieve his intended aim, failing to create the influence on the pilgrim-audience, which is directly reflected through the Host’s reaction following the invitation of the Pardoner to kiss his relics:

‘Nay, nay!’ quod he [the Host], ‘thane have I Cristes curs!
 Lat be,” quod he, “it shal nat be, so theech!
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde breech,
 And swere it were a relyk of a seint,
 Though it were with thy fundement depeint!
 But, by the croys which that Seint Eleyne fond,
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
 In stide of relikes or of seintuarie.
 Lat kutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;
 They shul be shryned in an hogges toord!’ (VI (C) 946-955)

In relation to this threat by the Host, which reveals, in Blamires’ words, the “personalized violence of the Host’s resort” (*Chaucer, Ethics* 103), McAlpine indicates that the Pardoner’s false body, that is, his homosexual body, and his false relics are almost equated (16). This is also reflected by the Host’s condemnation of his relics (VI (C) 948-55). Dinshaw suggests that the relics are the “masculine substitutes for the Pardoner” (*Chaucer’s* 164). The Host threatens the Pardoner saying that he wants to cut his testicles. In this respect, as Elton E. Smith suggests, the Host’s threat is directed at what the Pardoner lacks (316). Burger suggests that the implied violence in the Host’s and other pilgrims’ attitudes towards the Pardoner presents an example of medieval “queerbashing” (121). Similarly, Dinshaw defines this scene as “[t]he first threatened queer bashing in English literature” (*Getting* 134). This conflict between the Host and the Pardoner is very important in displaying the traditional gender roles in medieval society. It presents not only the attitudes towards homosexuality, but also the

understanding of masculinity. In this respect, the Pardoner's performance as a homosexual is functional in both revealing his own gender identity as a homosexual, and in displaying the Host as the representative of traditional masculinity. Nevertheless, the Pardoner's invitation of the Host to kiss his relics following his tale does not "turn the scene into one of implied seduction or even rape," as it is encoded by the Host, but it only reflects the Pardoner's "cry for acceptance" by the heterosexual society (McAlpine 17). It shows the Pardoner's search for social acceptance and approval as a homosexual man of religion. However, unfortunately, this search is just confronted by "*sodomitical panic*" as revealed by the Host's reaction (Burger 123, emphasis original). The homophobia against the Pardoner shows that homosexual men are regarded as a threat by heterosexual men. The Pardoner creates a problem as a homosexual man destroying the heterosexual binary structure. With a seemingly male body, what is expected of the Pardoner is to perform masculinity. However, he cannot, which leads to suspicion about his physical appearance. This suspicion, also, creates a problem for the Host as well since, as a man again with a male body, he feels threatened by the existence of the homosexual body of the Pardoner. Therefore, the Host's reaction to the Pardoner's invitation to kiss his relics should be regarded not only as the reflection of his condemnation of the Pardoner's false relics, but also as the reflection of his discontent with the gender performance of the Pardoner.

Moreover, this scene is about the working out of masculinity among males in society. Joining public affairs, as in the case of pilgrimage for the Canterbury pilgrims, men need to display that they are not feminine but masculine in the heterosexual society (Neal 250). Accordingly, the reasons of the extreme rage of the Host against the Pardoner are related to the performance of masculinity among men. As Mathew Kuffeler indicates,

[f]or one man to describe another as unmanly or effeminate, then, not only condemns the other man as inferior but also distances him from the one doing the describing. In the denunciation of unmanliness, the speaker in the same breath insists on his own manliness (not only to himself, but also to all of his listeners). To a careful listener, however, he reveals his own doubts about his own manliness, about his ability to live up to the impossible ideal set for him as a man, about his claim to exercise authority legitimately. Accordingly, he intensifies his

denunciation of unmanliness in other men, comparing himself favorably to the men around him so as to preserve his own masculine 'self' intact. (4)

In this respect, the function of the Pardoner for the Host to assert his masculinity is also very important. As Burger explains, the extent of the Host's masculinity and authority is based on the extent of the Pardoner's lack of masculinity and thus lack of authority (144). As a result, as Connell claims, gender is "a structure of social power" and "an area" where the power structures of different gender performances confront each other to assert their authority over the others (736). Yet, the homosexual Pardoner meets "conventional masculinity" in this heterosexual society through the Host and gives the message that there is "the potential for change in the gender order" (Connell 735). However, when he displays himself as an alternative to the heterosexual binary structure, he becomes the other for both the female and the male, and cannot resist the threat by the Host, since he stands out as the embodiment of "sexual and gender indeterminacy" in the heterosexual society (Dinshaw, *Getting* 112). Thus, the Pardoner fails in both the encoding and decoding of masculinity for the Canterbury pilgrims. Accordingly, the Host's threat, combined with the other pilgrims' silence about this threat, signifies the homophobia of the heterosexual society, which results in the Pardoner's "phobic othering" (Burger 122). Hence, although the Pardoner himself sells absolution from sins, he himself cannot find absolution. Rather, as a homosexual, the Pardoner is marginalised for his queerness (McAlpine 10) although they move on together.

In relation to the silencing of the Pardoner by the Host (VI (C) 956-957), it can be argued that this silence is in fact functional. Here, the silence becomes a sort of speech act which is made up of "a series of silences!" (Sedgwick, *Tendencies* 11). Namely, it can be claimed that the Pardoner's silence should be regarded as his speaking. He is the other for the heterosexual Canterbury pilgrims; yet, this does not erase his sexual deviance. He might be silent, but he still exists among the Canterbury pilgrims. Therefore, this scene can be regarded as an example of Butler's argument that homosexuality, or "taboo against homosexuality, [acts] as one of the generative moments of gender identity, the prohibitions that produce identity along the culturally intelligible grids of an idealized and compulsory heterosexuality" (*Gender Trouble*

184). Although the Pardoner's gender identity performance does not conform to the heteronormativity of the Middle Ages, it generates a new gender identity performance. He is a homosexual and a man of religion who is efficient at his profession. Thus, the gender identity of the Pardoner as a man of religion needs to be negotiated by the Host as the representative of masculinity since, in Sedgwick's words, "[s]exuality, like ideology, depends on the mutual redefinition and occlusion of synchronic and diachronic formulations" (*Between Men* 15). It is for this reason that Butler also defines gender as "a form of social power" (Butler, *Undoing* 48) and argues that the traditional heterosexual gender matrix "regularly punish[es] those who fail to do their gender right" (*Gender Trouble* 190). According to these heterosexual norms, the Pardoner is one of the "subordinated men" like a slave or any other religious or social other (Kueffler 3). In this respect, the power relation between the Host and the Pardoner explains why the Host can freely voice his threat towards the Pardoner, and the Pardoner remains silent.

Furthermore, the conflict between the Host and the Pardoner seems to be appeased by a kiss as suggested by the Knight, the source and protector of the order in society, as well as the protector of masculinity as the embodiment of the highest representative of it. This is a reflection of the idea that, in gender binaries, there is no place for homosexuals. At this point, it is the duty of the Host and the Knight to appear as the "forces of ordering and naturalization" while the role of the Pardoner is just being silenced by these masculine figures (Dinshaw, *Getting* 132). Nevertheless, it can be argued that while this so-called peace between the Host and the Pardoner is just functional in affirming the power of masculinity by silencing the Pardoner, it cannot destroy the Pardoner's gender identity performance.

Sedgwick's discussions about the image of "closet," which "is the defining structure for gay oppression" and the concept of "coming out" are also functional in discussing the Pardoner's self-fashioning as a gendered clerical figure (Sedgwick, *Epistemology* 71). The image of closet and coming out of the closet represent the steps of the Pardoner's transgression and re-transgression of the heterosexual gender structure. First of all, he transgresses the heterosexual gender binary as a homosexual, which needs to be closeted by the heteronormative society. Yet, he moves one step further and re-

transgresses this heteronormative structure, since he presents himself as a homosexual clerical figure, who is himself aware of the fact that he does not conform to the gender norms of his society but still does not avoid performing his clerical role. In this respect, it can be claimed that, to accomplish a coming out of the closet, the Pardoner needs first self-assertion as a homosexual and then the approval of this assertion by society. However, presenting his self-assertion about his gender identity, the Pardoner just encounters the homophobia of the heteronormative society. Still, this does not prevent him from performing either his gender identity or his religious identity. Accordingly, although McAlpine refers to the Pardoner's "self-hatred" because of his homosexuality and argues that "the man who cannot confess the unnamed and unnameable sin is the Pardoner himself" (15), it can be claimed that the Pardoner has no "self-hatred;" rather, he explicitly performs his gender identity not only through his naturally given features, but also through his self-conscious choices as his material performance shows. Although he knows that he is also sinful and abuses his rhetorical abilities to win gold and silver, this explicit performance signals that he does not think that he is sinful for his gender identity, which is implied by his professional pride.

In this respect, the kiss between the Host and the Pardoner is also very important for the gender performance of the Pardoner. Despite the fact that it is not clear whether the kiss between the Host and the Pardoner is a kiss on the mouth or cheek, during the medieval period, the kiss on the mouth was common public performance with certain social and religious connotations. Yet, both types of the kisses destroy the line between public and private. Kisses were endowed with different connotations referring to different discursive moments: it might be a kiss of reconciliation, a kiss of feudal homage, or a kiss of physical desire (Burger 142-146). However, as Burger indicates, "the kiss of peace" between the Host and the Pardoner is aimed at incorporating the Pardoner into the society although he has to pay for this incorporation by remaining silent (147). Due to this kiss, the Pardoner's performance ends with "the uncomfortable image of the Host kissing the Pardoner" (Burger 146) and "the immediate threat of his queerness diffused by that careful kiss of peace" (Dinshaw, *Getting* 136). Hence, the dominant gender norms conveyed by the Host and the Knight need to standardise the Pardoner. Thus, the kiss is also functional for this peace since, as Butler indicates, "gender is a norm" and

“[a] norm operates within social practices as the implicit standard of *normalization*” operating “as the normalizing principle in social practice” (*Undoing* 41, emphasis original). Accordingly, it can be argued that the aim of the kiss between the Host and the Pardoner is to normalise the Pardoner, yet, not through approval of his homosexuality but through silencing him, as he is deprived of saying the last word about his gender identity. Only in this way will the masculinity of the Host and the Knight be exhibited as the ideal norm and thus deserve a voice while the Pardoner is left voiceless as the representative of a deviant group.

Furthermore, according to traditional gender divisions, the male is regarded as the superior one being the representative of reason and the female is regarded as inferior being the representative of body (Murray, “Men’s Bodies” 1). Thus, according to the Host and the Knight, the feminised Pardoner should remain silent here in order not to destroy the binary opposition between the male and the female. However, it is possible to say that the queer Pardoner has already destroyed the assumed strictness of the medieval hierarchies and displayed “the disturbance of a traditional understanding that would see medieval sexuality as only rigidly controlled by a patriarchal heteronormativity” (Burger and Kruger xvii). He has presented an alternative to heterosexual hierarchy as a homosexual. However, because the heterosexual understanding almost limits the division of genders to the division of sexes, if one has a male body, he is to have a masculine self, or if one has a female body, she is to have a feminine self. Yet, as Butler puts it, the understanding of gender as a cultural construct, in fact, means that “there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two” (*Gender Trouble* 9). That is, the constructedness of gender destroys this ideological understanding and provides space for new possibilities. Thus, the role of the Pardoner is very significant, in that, even if he is still a silent “abject being” who is “not yet” a subject but in the process of constituting his subject position (Butler, *Bodies* xiii), he succeeds in coming out in the heterosexual society and offers an alternative to heteronormativity. Even if the Canterbury pilgrims silence the Pardoner and do not hear him, they can see him, which means the corporealisation of his silenced and thus othered homosexuality.

The pilgrimage setting is thus functional for the Pardoner in performing his queerness, since it provides him with the chance to display himself as a homosexual man of religion in a religious setting. It is also an opportunity for the Pardoner to test both his self-fashioning and its acceptance by the pilgrim audience. If the Pardoner needs to fashion, perform and thus display his gender identity constantly, since “gender is always a doing” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 34), it is necessary for him to confront society. Social support is also very important for an individual to perform and sustain her/his gender identity since, as Butler argues, “individual agency is bound up with social critique and social transformation” (*Undoing* 7). However, the Pardoner cannot find the social support he expects. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that the importance of the Pardoner’s gender performance lies in this lack of social support, because disturbing the heterosexual binaries, the Pardoner contributes to the transformation of traditional gender hierarchies. The Pardoner’s body undoes the Pardoner revealing the “public dimension” of the body, which is made up of the influence of “the world of others, bearing their imprint, formed within the crucible of social life” (Butler, *Undoing* 21). He needs to display his body to the public in order to exhibit his given and chosen corporeal signs that contribute to his gender performance. This public interaction is necessary not only to display his own version of gender performance, but also to receive the response of the public to this performance. The Pardoner displays “an unmanly body” (Neal 132), the homosexual body of “a not-man” to the public (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 158). In return, he ends up with silence, since he does not conform to the heterosexual norms. Still, as a queer man, the Pardoner does not avoid exhibiting his self-fashioning as a gendered man of religion. He exhibits his homosexual self without self-censorship (Burger xi) and without paying attention to the external impositions on him about heterosexual gender norms. Rather, through the combination of his material performance in the “General Prologue” and his rhetorical performance in his prologue to his tale and his tale itself, the Pardoner also reveals that he shapes and displays his self-fashioning through his gendered religious identity performance.

To conclude, Chaucer presents the self-fashioning of the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner through their gendered religious identity performances. The Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner display that they can perform their religious identities without

renouncing their gender identities. Rather, they all prefer exhibiting their gender identities in their material performances in the “General Prologue” through their physical appearance, costume and attitudes, which affirm their gender identities although they seem to be in conflict with their religious professions. Displaying their gender performances, the Prioress as a feminine clerical figure, the Monk as a masculine clerical figure and the Pardoner as a homosexual clerical figure offer new alternatives not only to the reiterative gender performances but also to the religious identity performances. Presenting their self-fashioning through gendered religious identity performances, Chaucer shows that the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner perform as the professional members of the clergy who assert their new composite identities out of the tension between their gender identities and their clerical identities.

CHAPTER III
THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LEARNED SELF:
THE SELF-FASHIONING OF THE CLERK AND THE DOCTOR
OF PHYSIC

Chaucer presents the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic in the *Canterbury Tales* as the two examples of the learned in the fourteenth century. During the early Middle Ages, learning was in the hands of the Church, and monastic schools were the main centres of education (Erol, “Ortaçağ” 82). Only the members of the clergy and the children of noble families had the means of education. However, the end of the twelfth century gave birth to universities due to the growth of learning and economic prosperity, which meant the spread of education in society. Universities started to appear by the 1200s first in Bologna, famous for the study of civil and canon law, then in Paris, famous for the study of logic and philosophy, and then in Oxford, famous for the study of mathematics and natural science (Janin 27). Hence, the means of education became more and more accessible for the other people in society such as the gentles and people from lower social status from the twelfth century onwards.

During the Middle Ages, as Moraw states, “the world of the universities was in the main that of the church” (245). The Church had the control over universities in terms of curriculum and the members of universities were regarded as the members of the clergy. As a reflection of the patriarchal world of the Church, university students were all males and there was no space for the female in universities (Janin 31; Schwinges, “Student” 202). Because of the increasing number of the churches in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there was an increasing need for university educated people as clerks (Moraw 253). Thus, the main reason for the establishment of universities was to meet the demand for educated people who would work as clerks at both ecclesiastical and secular positions (North 337). Accordingly, university education became a necessary and promising study not only to get benefices and religious positions, but also to earn a title to have a secular profession, because universities were also to meet the increasing demand for educated people in secular life (Janin 25). University education meant for an

individual both a social status as a learned man in the urbanised society and a legal status against the abuses of this status in this urban society. As a result, the emergence of universities signalled a change in the social structure as well. Due to universities, there arose a new social group, that is, the clerks, or the intellectuals, who started to claim a special status in society for their learned selves in the Middle Ages. It was their education that provided them with a distinct position as educated men and with the means of survival in the status conscious society. As Leff indicates, learning turned out to be “an independent professional activity” for all the people who could find a teacher (*Paris and Oxford Universities* 116). Consequently, the main aim of teaching in a university was to teach students the learning coming through Greek, Roman, Arabic and Christian authorities. Generally, masters, as the supporters of scholasticism, did not criticise the established norms and ask for novel arguments (Janin 30). Despite this dominant scholastic method, university education provided students with social status in the Middle Ages, as they were provided with theoretical information which was preserved only for university students.

In this respect, it can be claimed that university education in the Middle Ages served as what Bourdieu defines as “*cultural capital* which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (“The Forms” 82, emphasis original). Education became the main source of capital for university students and graduates in the Middle Ages. Capital refers to not only cultural capital but also, in Bourdieu’s words, economic capital, “which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” as well as the social capital which is “made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (“The Forms” 82). Although all these three forms of capital might be interrelated and can be converted into each other, it was the cultural capital that constituted the basis of the distinction of a learned person from the unlearned people in medieval period and thus had a great impact on the change in social structure. It can be further argued that, since it was convertible to economic and social capital, cultural capital was very important for an individual in the Middle Ages. Therefore, cultural capital was also very influential on

the way how people fashioned their selves through their education and claimed a new space in society for their learned selves. As a result, university education in the Middle Ages became the cultural capital of university students, most of whom did not have the social opportunities provided for them by their education. University education acted as a means for medieval people to reject social impositions on their identities in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds and helped them fashion their own selves as learned selves. In line with these, this chapter analyses how the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic fashion themselves as learned men as shaped and displayed by their material performances in the “General Prologue” and their rhetorical performances in their tales.

3.1. The Clerk

The Clerk fashions himself as a learned man who claims respectability and authority in society owing to his education. The Clerk performs as a learned man in his material performance in the “General Prologue” and in his rhetorical performance. He fashions himself as a learned man, who devotes himself to learning and learns just for the sake of learning rather than for the sake of earning money, office or any other material gain. In the same way, in his material performance in the “General Prologue,” the Clerk performs through his humble nature, his devotion to learning and intellectual development as well as his love for books and studying.

As Bert Dillon indicates, Chaucer depicts the Clerk in the “General Prologue” between the Merchant and the Man of Law, who appear as “two very crass materialists” (108), in contrast to the unworldliness of the Clerk. According to Bert Dillon, this can be interpreted as a reflection of Chaucer’s drawing attention to the Clerk’s difference as a man of mind and intellectual wealth from the Merchant and the Man of Law as men of material wealth abusing their profession (109). Hence, even Chaucer’s depiction of the Clerk between the Merchant and the Man of Law serves to draw attention to his distinct personality. He performs as a learned man, who pays attention not to worldly riches but to his clerkly position and learning.

At this point, it might be beneficial to give the definition of the title “clerk” in order to better decode the identity performance of the Clerk. According to the *MED*, clerk means, on the one hand, “[a] member of the clergy (as distinguished from the laity), an ecclesiastic, cleric” (“clerk” 1(a)) such as the clerk in the *Miller’s Tale*. This definition reveals that universities were mainly “clerical institutions” and university students were regarded as “clerics” (Moraw 253). The clerical status of students was displayed physically with the tonsure, shaving the top of the head (Janin 31). As Astell indicates, being regarded as the members of the clergy provided medieval students with the clerical privileges as well (154). This included not only social and religious prestige but also legal privileges (Janin 32), since the members of the clergy were subject only to the ecclesiastical law, which helped clerks escape from punishment from the secular courts or authorities. However, it can be claimed that even if the social status of clerks was mainly defined and guaranteed by their clerical status and religious identity, this would change starting from the fourteenth century onwards in England due to the changes in education, which brought the dominance of logic and natural philosophy at Oxford University rather than theology, and the changes in the mentalities of educated people. In relation to this, Johnston’s definition of “clerk” is also very functional. He defines “clerk” as “a person who has benefited from some kind of academic or comparable education, and who derives his living from a form of activity that he would not be able to fulfil except for his education, or that is greatly facilitated by it” (62). This definition is very much in accordance with education as cultural capital. Similarly, according to the *MED*, “clerk” also means “[o]ne who is educated; a learned person, scholar, master (of some subject)” (“clerk” 2 (a)) and “a man of letters, writer, author” (“clerk” 2 (b)) as well as “a pupil, student; esp., a university student” (“clerk” 2 (c)) like the Clerk in the “General Prologue” and the clerk in *The Reeve’s Tale*. When these different definitions of clerk are considered, they display two main features of the Clerk in the “General Prologue”: He is a university educated student and he is regarded as a member of the clergy. Thus, university education is at the centre of his life providing him not only with intellectual development but also with religious, social and legal privileges.

The emphasis on the opportunities, provided by university education to the Clerk, draws attention to the importance of education as cultural capital. It was this cultural capital,

which would form a basis for a medieval student to build up a distinct personality as a learned man, which might also be regarded as the signifier of the split between clerical and academic status of students in the later medieval period. As Johnston argues, university educated clerks of all kinds, that is, students, physicians, lawyers or theologians, all “form a coherent group,” because their university education provided them with a “common means of social reproduction,” which had certain cultural influence as well (77). For this distinct social group, the centre of life was universities, which can be defined as “the marketplaces of learning and intellectual debate” where “students and masters traded in ideas” (Janin 10). The only products they could buy and sell were their ideas. In this respect, the Clerk appears as a member of this intellectual trading world. However, the Clerk fashions himself not as someone in search of any material gain but only in search of intellectual gain through the study of logic and philosophy. That the Clerk is from Oxford University (I (A) 285) presents him as a clerk of secular learning. This is an important detail, because the Clerk appears as a student at Oxford University, not for instance, Cambridge or Paris or Bologna. Oxford University was a university renowned for the study of logic and philosophy rather than theology, law or medicine. In this respect, in order to better understand the investment of the Clerk in his cultural capital to fashion himself as a learned man, it might be beneficial to take a brief look at university life in medieval Oxford as well as the requirements of admission, education and graduation in a medieval university.

Oxford University, which was established around 1214 by the runaway teachers of Paris University, was one of the two universities, the other being Cambridge University, providing people with the chance of higher education in medieval England (Erol, “Ortaçağ” 85). In order to be admitted into a university as a clerk, one had to be, first of all, male and Christian. Then, he had to guarantee that he could undertake the finance of living and education in university. He also needed to have acquired a knowledge of Latin to be able to follow lectures. Besides, in order to achieve matriculation, which meant the recognition of a student’s status legally and formally, he had to find a master. For admission, the mutual acceptance of master-student relationship was necessary, because matriculation meant that the student undertook to follow the lectures of his master and the master, in return, undertook the responsibility of the student and the

protection of his rights. This relationship started when the student paid the matriculation fee and swore an oath, which turned the relation between a master and a student into a sworn-loyalty relation (Schwinges, "Admission" 171-182, Janin 35). Only after accomplishing these requirements of admission could a male be accepted as a clerk at a university. At this point, the Clerk stands out a student who has accomplished these requirements to be admitted to Oxford University.

As for the methods of teaching in medieval universities, which were crucial for the cultural capital of medieval students, there were two main types of teaching: the *lectio* (reading) and the *disputatio* (oral disputation). In *lectio*, students followed the reading of the master in their copies and his explanation of the texts and they took notes. These courses were taught by students preparing for their master degree. In *disputatio*, students were also active in the discussion of the text. There were two types of disputation. The first was the type that took place once every week. It started with one of the masters' question, to which other masters and bachelors tried to find answers while beginners were just listening. The session ended with the final words of the master about the subject, which was the reflection of the scholastic method at medieval universities.³⁷ The second type of disputation was the one that took place one or two times a year. This was a public disputation in which students made use of the authorities that they learnt in their courses. In addition to lecture and disputation courses, there were also dictation courses in order to protect students from the economic burden of manuscripts for their courses (Schwinges, "Student" 232-233; Janin 51-52; Hanna 184-185).

Medieval university education was composed of the study of seven liberal arts divided as *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, which can be defined as the basis of their cultural capital. This division came from Boethius, who had adopted it from Varro (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 118). Seven liberal arts included rhetoric, grammar, logic, astronomy, music, geometry and arithmetic. These were known as the liberal arts. Because the word "liberal" was derived from the Latin *liberalis*, which meant free, the study of the liberal arts was believed to be appropriate for free men not for servile men. As Janin argues, they were superior to the manual arts (42), which also differentiated

the learned from the lewed. *Trivium* meant “the three roads” (Janin 4) or “the triple way” (Hanna 185). It was composed of grammar, rhetoric and logic (reasoning). Grammar was the basis of *Trivium* as it was the basis of Latin, the language of education. For the teaching of grammar, Priscian’s *De constructinibus* was read by students to learn the details of the Latin language. The study of grammar was the path to the study of rhetoric and logic. As for rhetoric, it was again very important and was learnt through the study of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and Boethius’s *Topics*, Cicero’s works, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Virgil’s works in a one-year’s course. When it comes to logic, students read Boethius and Aristotle for the study of logic; but it was Aristotle, whose works constituted the basis of dialectical reasoning, that is, thesis, antithesis and synthesis (Janin 43-45; Hanna 185; Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 146). As for *Quadrivium*, it meant “the four roads” (Janin 45) or “fourfold way” (Hanna 186). It was composed of music, astronomy, geometry and arithmetic. As North states, the *Quadrivium*, again like the *Trivium*, descended from Greek learning, which was followed by Pliny and Varro (337). Students studied Boethius for music, Ptolemy for astronomy, Euclid for geometry and Boethius for arithmetic (Hanna 186).

The twelfth century brought a transformation to the study of the seven liberal arts with the translations of Aristotle as well as Greek and Arabian thinkers. Actually, Aristotle was already known in the arts courses, but only as a logician. A new phase started with those new translations, which signalled the inclusion of philosophical works into the curriculum and the removal of the emphasis from the study of grammar and rhetoric to the study of philosophy. This also meant the inclusion of philosophy into the study of theology exclusively at Oxford (and also at Paris) and the emphasis was on natural philosophy. The study of those newly translated texts also led to a new way of analysis, which emphasised the dialectical method. In this respect, Peter Lombard’s *Book of Sentences* was regarded as an example of this method and started to be analysed in detail in courses (Erol, “Ortaçağ” 83; Leff, “The *Trivium*” 311-328; Schachner 95; Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 120-121). This signalled the start of the turn to natural philosophy at Oxford, which would increase the influence of secular learning on the cultural capital of students at Oxford, as the Clerk in the “General Prologue.”

Following the study of the seven liberal arts, there were three high faculties that a student could choose: medicine, law and theology. To start with the faculty of medicine, the textbooks were translations of Greco-Arabian authorities in the twelfth century. They were the texts by Constantinus Africanus, Hippocrates, Galen, Theophilus, Al-Djezzar, Nicholas of Salerno, Giles of Corbeil, Ali ben Abbas and, from the fourteenth century onwards, Avicenna and Averroes. A student, who completed the faculty of medicine, attending lectures for about four years, disputations and examinations, was granted not only a licence but also the right to practice, which attributed a social importance to the holder of this licence (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 181). As for the faculty of law, it “was second only to theology” in terms of popularity (Courtenay 40). Civil law and canon law belonged to two different faculties. As Courtenay explains, one could study either civil law or both civil and canon law, but it was not possible to study canon law without studying civil law before although it was possible to study civil law without any study of canon law (40). Among the three high faculties, theology, was not only the most famous and honoured but also the hardest one, since it was based on the interpretation of the Bible (Janin 31). Theology was the “queen” of the other two faculties (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 119, 163; Hanna 183) and was regarded, as Leff puts it, “as the end of the profane knowledge” (“The *Trivium*” 308). The significance attributed to theology was so high that the chancellor of the University of Paris claimed in 1402, that compared to the other faculties, theology was “granted the role of *domina* (mistress)” and the others were just “*ancillae* (handmaidens) to theology” (Janin 31). It was because of the importance attributed to it that the teaching of theology required “a special license from the pope,” which was granted only to Oxford and Paris (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 119) leading to a kind of “virtual monopoly” (Leff, “The *Trivium*” 308). As Courtenay indicates, in order to be able to enter the faculty of theology, it was necessary to have a background in the arts known as the MA in addition to two more years of study in theology, which meant that one would be at least twenty-one years old (41). The main textbooks of the faculty of theology was the Bible and Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, commentaries on the Bible (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 161; Asztalos 409). Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* was a product of dialectical reasoning and it was accepted “as a school-book” in the 1215 Lateran Council (Asztalos 409). Thus, studying theology meant “prestige within

and outside the university communities” (Courtenay 365), especially when the clerical status of students was taken into consideration. It can be argued that a medieval clerk who chose the faculty of either medicine, law or theology could convert his cultural capital into economic and social capital. If he could graduate from any of these faculties, this would mean that he was not only endowed with a special education, but also was granted special economic and social rights due to this education. At the age of about fourteen, one started studying the seven liberal arts. Only when one completed the study of the seven liberal arts aged about twenty-one, he would go on studying at three main faculties: theology, law and medicine, which would be completed in about fourteen years. Graduating from any of these faculties meant that one was about thirty-five years old (Courtenay 21). It can be argued that one had to invest a long period of his life in order to perform as a university educated professional.³⁸

The study of theology was the main reason that brought universities and the Church into conflict with the municipalities and the bishops for authority, in which the crown and Parliament constantly intervened (Astell 57). In this respect, since Oxford University taught logic and philosophy, it was comparatively far from papal control in doctrinal subjects (Moraw 250, Asztalos 413). The main reason of this freedom was that Oxford was not a centre for theological studies but the study of philosophy. Oxford gained full freedom from all ecclesiastical authorities from 13 June 1395 onwards granted by the Bull of Boniface IX (Astell 57-58). As Astell notes, although the “[c]harges of forgery subsequently brought the authenticity of the bull into question” (58), this was the start of the secularisation process of universities and university education. Similarly, especially with the impact of two great personages, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, Oxford was to have a great influence on philosophy (Piltz 170). As a reflection of the dominance of logic and philosophy at Oxford, the Clerk’s portrait in the “General Prologue” does not reveal any implication about the Clerk’s being a student at the faculty of theology. Rather, the Clerk fashions himself as a clerk who has devoted himself “unto logyk [...] longe ygo” (I (A) 286), which draws attention to the Clerk’s secular studies.

The Clerk's material performance in the "General Prologue," which signals nothing about the fact that the Clerk directs his study towards the faculty of theology but reveals his interest in logic, gives the Clerk a "relative secularity" (Astell 55). The Clerk's secularity can also be regarded as the reflection of the transformation of the idea of a clerk from a totally clerical one to a secular one. He is not a truly clerical or priestly figure but an intellectual one. Therefore, it is necessary for the Clerk to spend his time studying logic to improve his learning and to contribute to his cultural capital. The study of logic, which dealt with the relation between dialectic and grammar, was a very important part of the studies in philosophy (Courtenay 221). As J. A. W. Bennett suggests, the reference to the Clerk's study of logic for a long time ago indicates that he might have started his studies at the *Quadrivium* (62). Similarly, the emphasis on the duration of the Clerk's study of logic, "longe ygo" (I (A) 286), is also very important in displaying the importance the Clerk attributes to secular learning and cultural capital. Although Bert Dillon suggests it is ironic that the Clerk continues studying logic instead of starting to study theology (109), it can be claimed that this emphasis on the long time of study draws attention to the idea that the Clerk is carefully and intensely investing in his cultural capital. As Bourdieu argues, "[t]he accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor" ("The Forms" 83). This refers to the "personal cost" of the investment the Clerk has made in his education (Bourdieu, "The Forms" 83). As a careful investor, during his process of cultural investment, the Clerk invests in and pays attention to nothing material but his education.

In this respect, the Clerk's physical appearance as "nat right fat" (I (A) 288) displays the material poverty of the Clerk which is, in fact, a reflection of the poverty that most of medieval students suffered. Medieval students lived under harsh conditions due to their expenses such as fees for admission, registration and examination, money for clothing, lodging and free time activities in towns (Schwinges, "Student" 235-236). Thus, most of them were so poor that they were even licensed to beg (Janin 17).³⁹ All these indicate that most of medieval students were from poor families, who were not able to provide

material support to their sons. Bourdieu argues that “the scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family. Moreover, the economic and social yield of the educational qualification depends on the social capital, again inherited, which can be used to back it up” (“The Forms” 83). Yet, the prospects of medieval students were not promising as most of them were living in poverty.⁴⁰ Hence, university education required a kind of patronage system. The medieval student was always in need of economic support not only before but also after he started a university. As Hanna states, this system was more like “a potential employer’s investment in a young man of promise whose career he would later facilitate (and benefit from)” (184). The expectations from a student was that he would convert his cultural capital into economic and social capital, which would provide not only the student himself but also his patrons with certain financial and social advantages. As a result, economic status was a very important help or hindrance for medieval students. However, not all medieval students were poor, as rich clerk Nicholas in *The Miller’s Tale* illustrates. Although the Miller states that he is “a poure scoler” (I (A) 3190), Nicholas seems to be just the opposite of the Clerk:

A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
 Allone, withouten any compaignye,
 Ful fetisly ydight with herbes swoote;
 And he hymself as sweete as is the roote
 Of lycorys, or any cetewale. (I (A) 3203-3207)

Nicholas is a rich clerk to be able to rent a room for himself rather than sharing it with others as many medieval students did. He has more possessions than an ordinary student, which makes him “a very unusual student” (North 353). Apparently, there was, in Bourdieu’s terms, an “unequal distribution of capital” among medieval students (“The Forms” 84). The Clerk does not have the material advantages of Nicholas. Rather, the Clerk is more like the “povre scolers” John and Aleyn of *The Reeve’s Tale* (I (A) 4002). However, it is necessary to note that this is a reflection of the Clerk’s performing as a poor and humble clerk and as a man who has material poverty but intellectual wealth owing to his learned self. Thus, the Clerk fashions himself as a humble man, whose interest lay not in material gains but in education.

Chaucer's depiction of the Clerk's mount "[a]s leene [...] as is a rake" (I (A) 287) is another aspect of the Clerk's material performance that contributes to his performance as an educated but humble man. Bert Dillon states that the Clerk was "probably riding a College horse or a rented one: in either case, such an unappealing mount" (110). Nevertheless, it can be argued that the physical appearance of the mount is in direct harmony with that of the rider, drawing attention to the poverty of the rider. His horse's appearance is in line with the Clerk's thin appearance. Therefore, it can be claimed that there is no discrepancy between the Clerk's material performance as reflected through his horse and his idealistic self-presentation as a humble man.

Moreover, although Hodges argues that the Clerk seems not only physically but also intellectually thin because of his depiction as "holwe" (I (A) 289) associating this hallowness with the lack of not only physical but also intellectual lack of nourishment (*Chaucer and Clothing* 193-194), it is necessary to note that it is due to his material poverty that the Clerk does not have money to spend either on books and lodging or on meals. Yet, as a result of his status as a university student, even if he does not have money to spend on books, he can still invest in his cultural capital through the courses at the university. As a result, it can be suggested that the Clerk's being "nat right fat" (I (A) 288) is the reflection of his thin body, but it does not necessarily signal the hollowness of his mind. Rather, it can be stated that, although he may not have the means to nourish his body, he has the means to nourish his mind through education, which helps him fashion himself as a learned man, who has material poverty but intellectual wealth.

The material performance of the Clerk includes also his costume, which contributes to his self-presentation as a humble man of learning. Chaucer states that "[f]ul thredbare was his overeste courtepy" (I (A) 290). *A Dictionary of English Costume: 900-1900* dates the use of courtepy, "[a]n upper garment akin to the Surcoat," to the fourteenth and fifteenth century noting that it was used both by the male and the female, and the male version was a short one ("courtepye"). Likewise, the *MED* defines courtepy as "[a] short woolen coat or jacket; tabard, pea jacket" and the first usage of the term comes from *Winchester Court Roll* in 1270 ("cōrte-pī"). Additionally, Hodges indicates that

courtesy “is a lay garment, not part of any kind of scholarly, clerkly, or academic costume” (*Chaucer and Clothing* 166). According to all these definitions, courtesy was a kind of outer garment which was short. Traditionally, as Hodges argues, this was not a usual costume for a clerk, who was expected to wear a long garb, because short gowns implied lack of professional and moral authority and integrity (*Chaucer and Clothing* 168). However, it is not clear whether the courtesy is the Clerk’s choice or it is his only choice. Hence, it can be suggested that the Clerk does not have the economic means to have a better garment. Furthermore, the Clerk is not concerned about exhibiting himself as a clerical figure in a clerical garb. During the medieval period, there was not a uniform costume type for undergraduate students. The costume of graduates was more important as a means of display than the costume of undergraduates. Still, undergraduates were required to wear not ordinary clothes but clerical costume, which was to draw attention to their clerical status (Cobban 28). However, the Clerk wears “lay dress” (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 162). This can be interpreted, on the one hand, as a reflection of the Clerk’s undergraduate status. On the other hand, this depiction also reveals that the Clerk is not interested in wearing the clerical garb, which suggests that the Clerk “has higher things on his mind than the propriety of appearance” (Morgan 297). Similarly, it can be claimed that the Clerk’s material performance in relation to his poor but secular costume is again a product of his self-fashioning as a learned man, who fashions himself not as a part of the clerical world but as a part of the intellectual and secular world. This does not mean that the clerical world is not intellectual. It means that the intellectuality sought by the Clerk is not in the world of the clergy but in the world of logic and philosophy. Consequently, the Clerk’s material performance as revealed by his costume makes it possible for the Clerk to display that he concentrates only on his studies rather than concentrating on material display through costume.

Enhancing this possibility, the Clerk’s courtesy is defined as “[f]ul threadbare” (I (A) 290). The *MED* states that threadbare means “[o]f a garment, clothing, etc.: worn to the foundation threads; worn-out, shabby, threadbare” (“thread-bāre” (a)) and “inadequate, poor” (“thread-bāre” (b)). In relation to these definitions, Hodges argues that, although the threadbare quality of the courtesy displays the Clerk as “the opposite of what would

be called foppish or dandified dress, such as is worn by Absalon [in *The Miller's Tale*]" (*Chaucer and Clothing* 170), the reference to threadbare signals certain negative features as reflected in the second definition of the term in the *MED*. Hodges claims that although this might also be taken as a reflection of the humility of the Clerk, which is a very important Christian virtue, it might also be taken as a signal of not only the economic but also the moral and social deficiencies of the Clerk (*Chaucer and Clothing* 177-184). However, Morgan believes that the threadbare coat reflects "a kind of academic affectation" in the Clerk (297). Likewise, it can be claimed that the threadbare courtesy of the Clerk is in line with the connotations of poverty in his physical appearance. Therefore, instead of regarding the Clerk's costume as a symbol of his intellectual hollowness, it is possible to associate the Clerk's material performance through his costume with his intellectual concentration. Rather than indicating that he is "a raggedly dressed" man as Bert Dillon suggests (110), the Clerk's poor costume shows, as Ege states, that he is "ignoring the trappings of wealth" and material display (342). Similarly, although Hodges interprets the Clerk's costume as a reflection of his "less positive characteristics" such as his "*curiositas*," because he spends whatever he has on books rather than buying proper clothes (*Chaucer and Clothing* 161), his costume is in accordance with "the ideal of poor scholar" (Ege 343) presenting the Clerk, in Erol's words, as the embodiment of "a more respectable and sober image" ("A Pageant" 101). It can be claimed that the Clerk fashions himself as an educated man, whose interests are not in earning and displaying worldly riches but in intellectual development. It is for this reason that Chaucer the pilgrim indicates that "[...] he hadde geten hym yet no benefice, / Ne was so worldly for to have office" (I (A) 291-292).

Earning a benefice or an office was the ideal end for medieval students. Yet, graduation from a university was not common for them. Most of medieval students were just content with being a university student and its privileges while some of them had to leave university because of financial problems. As a result, the number of graduates was not high and the number of graduates with a professional career was even lower (Janin 28; Moraw 245; Schwinges, "Student" 196). As Janin suggests, the aim of those who continued their university education was not mainly intellectual development, but the desire to have necessary qualifications for clerical or secular positions (28). As Leff puts

it, medieval “university education was vocational” and its aim was to train students to be able to qualify for clerical and secular benefices and practice their skills as licensed people (*Paris and Oxford Universities* 117). Among the career opportunities that were accepted as successful were the positions of bishop, dean of cathedrals, royal councillor, judge in secular or ecclesiastical courts, canon, archdeacon, senior official, schoolmaster, parish clergy, chantry priest and chaplain (Cobban 30). These career opportunities were correlated to the social background of students and the options of poor students were not many. To exemplify, the records of New College, Oxford from 1380 to 1500 reveal that more than half of the students, 63.2 per cent, came from rural background while 21.8 per cent came from urban areas, only one out of seven from the aristocracy and 12.5 per cent from the gentry (Moraw 269). The careers of these figures show that there is “the overwhelming predominance of church posts” either as parish clergy or schoolmasters or officers in ecclesiastical courts in addition to some secular posts in the administration of justice (Moraw 269).

Nevertheless, the Clerk performs as a clerk with no benefice or office. Taking into consideration the Clerk’s interest in studying logic and the long time that he has already invested in his cultural capital, it seems that the reason why the Clerk does not still have any benefice or office is neither to spend his time just to abuse the privileges of university nor to graduate with a profession to make money. The Clerk’s motive is to devote himself to learning and teaching (I (A) 308). He is concerned not about earning an office or a benefice, but about learning and teaching. It is for this reason that “[...] al that he myghte of his freendes hente, / On bookes and on lernynge he it spente” (I (A) 299-300). It can be claimed that the Clerk is content with leading an intellectual life of learning and teaching. He seems to be one of “the opinion-makers of society, the legal theorists, philosophers, logicians and theologians” who were “to pursue non-utilitarian lines of intellectual inquiry which transcended the immediate concerns of society” (Cobban 30, 31). The Clerk performs accordingly:

For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie.
 But al be that he was a philosophre,

Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
 But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,
 On bookes and on lernynge he it spente,
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye. (I (A) 293-302)

Apparently, the Clerk's material performance identifies as the most valuable, indispensable and desirable things for him not his clothes, his mount, benefices or offices, but his books, which are, in Bourdieu's terms, the source of his cultural capital in "its embodied form" and constitute the cultural capital "in the objectified state" ("The Forms" 85). The Clerk can obtain cultural capital only through his books, the material sources of cultural capital. In the Middle Ages, books were a great source of economic capital as well, because, before the introduction of the printing press, there was the dominance of manuscript culture. Manuscripts were held by certain stationers and they were copied by hand by scribes in return for money, which meant that they were very expensive (Janin 53). It is for this reason that it could only be a dream for the Clerk to have twenty books on his bedside, which was a monastic custom as explained by John of Salisbury in *Policraticus* (vii.19). Considering medieval book culture, Hodges states that twenty books mean "a virtual fortune" and thus she finds the Clerk greedy (*Chaucer and Clothing* 195). Yet, it should be noted that even if the Clerk was "living poorly and subduing the avaricious instinct" in relation to material gains (Green 3) and he was relying on the support of his friends to meet his needs, his only concern is to have books, which are, for a learned man like the Clerk, the "intellectual status symbols" (Johnston 150). They are the objects through which the Clerk can contribute to his cultural capital. In this respect, although Bert Dillon claims that "the Clerk's study of logic quite illogically prompts him to [...] physical poverty" (110), it can be suggested that the intellectual richness that would be provided by books is more important for the Clerk. After all, his costume, mount and physical appearance indicate that the Clerk is not interested in worldly riches and display. Therefore, his books and learning become the investment of the Clerk in achieving upward social mobility and fashioning himself as a learned man. Only through the help of his books, the Clerk's self-fashioning will become a learned performance, which will be analysed in detail in his rhetorical performance in his tale. As Erol states, "[t]he reference to books in garment terms – 'clad in blak or reed'" is also functional in showing that the Clerk is

interested in learning for the sake of learning rather than following worldly interests (“A Pageant” 10). Hence, instead of performing as a man of greed who is interested in earning money, the Clerk stands out as the representative of those devoted to learning for the sake of learning, which will constitute the basis of the knowledge that will provide him with social prestige. As his performance suggests, “[o]f studie took he moost cure and moost heede” (I (A) 303).

Likewise, the Clerk is not interested in the vain ways of student life, which was in fact very popular in medieval universities. Because students belonged to “[a] new ‘middle class’ of city dwellers” together with merchants, physicians, men of law and artisans (Janin 10), they lived in rented houses or rooms in towns and thus, because of their direct relation with towns, the conflict between town and gown increased day by day as male students, aged from fourteen to thirty, were constantly in conflict with townsmen. Despite the control of students by masters, townsmen constantly complained about the students, who could not avoid the temptations of seductive town life. They were notorious for brawling, bawling, playing dice and card games, following fashions, carrying weapons and making use of them, insulting the authorities, whoring, spending nights out, missing Matins, keeping pets, hunting, fishing, swimming, drinking, visiting taverns and brothels, pursuing women and fighting with townsmen (Janin 32; Schwinges, “Student” 223; Cobban 27-28; Schachner 189-190). It was for these reasons that Gower criticised them in *Vox Clamantis* saying that “[a] cleric used to go to school with a patient spirit, but now worldly glory is his master. He rambles here and there, a lazy, wandering drunkard, wayward and given to lust” (II, 28). Such kind of clerks can be exemplified through the other clerks in the *Canterbury Tales*. There are six more clerks in the whole of the *Canterbury Tales* other than the Clerk in the “General Prologue”: two in *The Miller’s Tale* (Nicholas and Absolon), two in *The Reeve’s Tale* (John and Aleyn), one in *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue* (Jankyn, the fourth husband of the Wife) and one in *The Franklin’s Tale* (the clerk from Orleans that will help Aurelius). However, whether they are still a student or a clerk with an office, they all lead to problems in people’s lives abusing their education unlike the Clerk. Hence, all of them can be defined as foil characters for the Clerk.

The clerks in *The Miller's Tale* are womanisers. The story takes place in Oxford again, which means that the clerks in the tale might be the companions or acquaintances of the Clerk in the "General Prologue." There are two clerks, Nicholas who is a university student lodging with the old reeve John and his young wife Alison, and Absolon who is the parish clerk. Thus, *The Miller's Tale* presents a clerk, Nicholas, who is continuing his education, like the Clerk, and another clerk, Absolon, who has completed his education and become a parish clerk, which means that he has chosen clerical life for his years to come and is supposed to have left the interests of secular life behind. However, the tale exhibits that both of them are interested in worldly affairs of love and make use of their education to abuse the people around them. Both Nicholas and Absolon are in love with Alison, the wife of John. The theme of the tale has already been revealed when the Miller interrupts the Host following the end of the Knight's tale and says that he will tell "[h]ow [...] a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe" (I (A) 3143) of a carpenter and his wife. Nicholas is studying astrology and seems to be a consulted person in related matters (I (A) 3190-3202). Hence, if one has a question about astrology, he is to ask Nicholas. It means that Nicholas holds a social status due to his education. Namely, he has converted his cultural capital into social capital. Furthermore, the depiction of Nicholas's shelf, which is full of books of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music reveals his education level (I (A) 3208-3220). As North argues, his shelf is the reflection of the *Quadrivium* (353). Moreover, his shelf exhibits that Nicholas has what the Clerk dreams of, that is, having twenty books at his bed's head. This reveals the unjust distribution of capital among medieval university students as exemplified by the Clerk and Nicholas. However, Nicholas, as a young clerk, instead of spending his time studying like the Clerk, spends his time to seduce Alison. He was "[f]il with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye, / Whil that hir housbonde was at Oseneye, / As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte" (I (A) 3273-3275). While narrating Nicholas's desire for Alison in this way, the Miller states a common idea about the worldly clerks seducing wives. Nicholas tries to convince Alison to make love crying "[...] love me al atones, / Or I wol dyen, also God me save!" (I (A) 3280-3281). Furthermore, the definition of Nicholas throughout the tale is very functional in revealing his nature. He is defined as "hende" Nicholas throughout the tale (I (A) 3199, 3272, 3386, 3397, 3401, 3462, 3487, 3526, 3742, 3832). According to the *MED*, hende

means “[s]killed, clever, crafty; of a blow: skillful” (“hēnde” 3 (a)). Accordingly, Nicholas displays his skills at seducing Alison. Actually, John is a very jealous husband, because his wife is very young and he is too old for her (I (A) 3224-3226). However, when the wife warns Nicholas about the jealousy of her husband, Nicholas says “[n]ay, therof care thee noght, [...] / A clerk hadde litherly biset his whyle, / But if he koude a carpenter bigyle” (I (A) 3298-3300). Apparently, Nicholas is proud of his education and his wit, and looks down upon the uneducated carpenter. He devises a plan to seduce Alison easily without arousing the suspicion of the carpenter. This means that he abuses his cultural capital to deceive the carpenter. On a Saturday, when John is to leave his home for business, Alison and Nicholas devise a plan. Nicholas takes food and drink to last two days and does not leave his room. John starts to feel anxious about Nicholas thinking that he might have died and goes to his room to check on him. He sees that Nicholas has been taken into his study of astronomy and almost pities him thinking that he does not seem to be happy because of his educated self. As a result, John says that “[...] blessed be alwey a lewed man / That noght but oonly his bileve kan!” (I (A) 3455-3456). However, in fact, Nicholas has just been putting his plan into action abusing his education to deceive the carpenter presenting himself as “the Oxford prognosticator” (Ginsberg 240). His plan is the product of his education. He says:

Now John, [...] I wol nat lye;
 I have yfounde in myn astrologye,
 As I have looked in the moone bright,
 That now a Monday next, at quarter nyght,
 Shal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,
 That half so greet was nevere Noes flood.
 This world, [...] in lasse than an hour
 Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour.
 Thus shal mankynde drenche, and lese hir lyf. (I (A) 3513-3521)

John gets very anxious about the possible death of Alison during the expected flood. Nicholas advises him to get tubs for each of them and place them to the roof to avoid the flood on Monday. In this way, while preparing to “[...] be lordes al oure lyf / Of al the world, as Noe and his wyf” (I (A) 3581-3582), the carpenter is actually being cuckolded by Nicholas. Furthermore, Nicholas abuses his education not just to sleep with the wife of carpenter but also to enjoy making him ridiculous.

As in the case of Nicholas, the clerk as a womaniser can also be seen in the depiction of Absolon in *The Miller's Tale*. Although he is a parish clerk (I (A) 3312), he is the embodiment of worldly clerks, who visit taverns often and seduce the wives of townsmen (I (A) 3334-3343). Since he is also in love with Alison, Absolon comes to the window of the carpenter's wife at the very night when she has been with Nicholas and starts wooing her (I (A) 3371-3380). However, because Alison loves Nicholas, "[...] she maketh Absolon hire ape, / And al his earnest turneth til a jape" (I (A) 3389-3390), and all he can get is a misdirected kiss. Accordingly, it can be claimed that although both Nicholas and Absolon have a special social status due to their education like the Clerk, both of them just spend their cultural capital to abuse the wife of a carpenter unlike the Clerk.

As for the clerks in *The Reeve's Tale*, there are again two clerks, John and Aleyn, who are students at Cambridge. Oswald the Reeve gets angry because of the Miller's tale about a carpenter being cuckolded by his wife and a clerk, and decides to tell, in return, a tale about a miller cuckolded by clerks again. He is upset, because he was a carpenter before (I (A) 3861-3862). The most interesting thing about the clerks in these two tales is that, in both of them, the narrators make use of the term "cherles" to refer to their subject matter (I (A) 3169, I (A) 3917). Hence, it can be suggested that both the Miller and the Reeve presents clerks as antagonists in their tales, which can again be considered to be the reflection of the conflict between town and gown, "the learned" and "the lewed."

The clerks in *The Reeve's Tale* are "lusty for to pleye" (I (A) 4004). These two clerks, John and Aleyn convince their warden to go to the mill to oversee the miller, who might otherwise steal from the corn of their hall. Although they are supposed to be clerical figures due to their status as clerks, they go "[w]ith good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde" (I (A) 4019). When they arrive, both become interested in the young daughter of the miller. Meanwhile, what the miller thinks about the clerks reveals not only the prejudices of the miller towards the clerks, but also how he views their education:

They wene that no man may hem bigyle,
But by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir ye,

For al the sleighte in hir philosophye.
 The moore queynte crekes that they make,
 The moore wol I stele whan I take. (I (A) 4048-4052)

Underestimating their educated selves, the miller thinks that “[t]he gretteste clerkes been nocht wisest men” (I (A) 4054). Hence, he plays a trick and releases their horse to be able to steal from their corn easily (I (A) 4057-4069) and show how “[...] kan a millere make a clerkes berd / For al his art [...]” (I (A) 4096-4097). Running after their horse for a long time, the clerks realise that the miller has stolen their corn and turned them into fools (I (A) 4111). Tired of running after their horse and being sorry for their stolen corn, they ask for a place to spend the night. At this point, the miller again displays his contempt for the education of the clerks and says:

Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
 Ye konne by argumentes make a place
 A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
 Lat se now if this place may suffise,
 Or make it rowm with speche, as is youre gise. (I (A) 4122-4126)

Although the miller looks down upon the education of these clerks, it is time for the miller to pay for his theft, because the clerks are not only to seduce the daughter of miller, but also to take advantage of his wife (I (A) 4317). Being robbed of his precious corn, that is, his daughter and wife, the miller cries, “[y]e, false harlot, [...] / A, false traitour! False clerk!” (I (A) 4268-4269). John and Aleyn not only cuckold the miller, but also beat him and steal his corn (I (A) 4308-4312). Hence, compared to these clerks, the Clerk performs, in Bert Dillon’s words, “the exemplary demeanor of the pilgrim” (108) as a humble clerk.

Despite the contempt of the miller towards the education of the clerks in *The Reeve’s Tale*, the Franklin presents a positive image of the clerks in his tale. In the beginning of his tale, the Franklin accepts the authority of the clerks in terms of rhetoric saying that “[t]o clerkes lete I al disputison” (V (F) 890). In this way, he accepts the authority of the learned over the lewed. Then, he starts his tale about the knight Arveragus and his wife Dorigen, who went through a difficult process of promise keeping because of the intervention of a clerk, introduced to the tale by the suggestion of the brother of

Aurelius, who is also in love with Dorigen. She says that she will accept his love on the condition that he removes all the rocks from the coast, which she sees as a threat to her husband's return (V (F) 857-894). In the meantime, Arveragus returns home. Seeing him very unhappy, Aurelius' brother decides to take Aurelius to Orleans to find a clerk that can help him with his occult science. He remembers that he has met students interested in the occult arts and remembers a book, which might magically help Aurelius gain the love of Dorigen (V (F) 1152-1164). In keeping with his expectations, a clerk of Orleans magically make Dorigen think that Aurelius has removed the rocks. Hence, it can be suggested that *The Franklin's Tale* too presents a cunning clerk although it acknowledges the education of clerks.

Contrary to all these examples, the Clerk's material performance in the "General Prologue" draws attention to the difference between the Clerk, who is a humble, decent and ideal student,⁴¹ and the indecent clerks. As Schwinges indicates, in the Middle Ages, an ideal student was expected to avoid certain activities such as having contact with women, bearing arms, following and displaying the dress fashions and insulting either peers or superiors ("Student" 225-226). In this respect, the Clerk seems to be the embodiment of the ideal student, who avoids all indecent behaviour and devotes himself to his studies. Accordingly, his material performance in the "General Prologue" continues as follows:

Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
 And that was seyde in forme and reverence,
 And short and quyke and ful of hy sentence;
 Sownyng in moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche. (I (A) 304-308)

His material performance reveals that the Clerk is moderate in every aspect. He does not speak too much or too little, and his speech reflects his rhetorical skills as a student of logic and philosophy. Furthermore, he is interested not only in learning but also in teaching. Teaching was not a distinct profession in the Middle Ages but a part of university education, which was necessary for one to complete his degree and to earn a certain amount of money for one's own education (Courtenay 25). Yet, the Clerk's eagerness to teach can also be regarded as a reflection of his humble self, since it

exhibits his intellectual motives. As Astell claims, the Clerk becomes the embodiment of “an original vision of the new social order being shaped by the book-learning fostered preeminently at the universities” and “[i]n a uniquely open-ended way, [...] represents an independent fourth estate, not a simple subdivision of the *cleri*” (56). This is also in accordance with the Clerk’s learned self and cultural capital. As stated, he represents the group of learned men, whose education is the main source of their cultural capital. Although the Clerk is still a student without an office or benefice, “who is ‘unfinished,’ *in potential*, and therefore uniquely potent” (Astell 59, emphasis original), he claims a space in society as an authority figure owing to his education. Although he has not completed his education, that is, he is not still a finished learned man, his education still provides him with the chance to claim a higher social status and authority.

The Clerk is attributed authority towards the end of the “General Prologue” when the Host calls the Clerk together with the Knight and the Prioress to draw lots in order to decide who will be the first tale teller (I (A) 840-841). This is another moment when the Host’s address reveals certain clues about these characters. He addresses them as follows: “Sire” Knight (I (A) 837), “lady” Prioress (I (A) 839) and “Sire” Clerk (I (A) 840). This form of address reveals that the Host attributes importance and reverence to the Clerk as much as the Knight. At this point, it is necessary to draw attention to the social status of the Clerk. It can be argued that it is natural for the Host to invite the Knight, as the voice of the nobility, and the Prioress, as the voice of the clergy, to draw cuts. However, interestingly enough, he also calls the Clerk. Noting that the Clerk does not belong to the estate of commoners, or in other words, those who work, it is significant to differentiate the social status of the Clerk from that of the Knight and the Prioress. It can be maintained that this importance attributed to the Clerk comes from his learned self, which is also displayed by his rhetorical performance in his tale.

The Clerk’s rhetorical performance starts with the prologue to his tale and displays the rhetorical skills of the Clerk as a learned self. The Clerk’s rhetorical performance is very important for his self-fashioning as a learned man, because he sets an example for the use of rhetoric for the Miller, the Reeve, the Wife of Bath, and the Franklin. These

uneducated figures not only give voice to the discourse of clerks and tell tales about them, but also imitate the Clerk and the rhetorical skills special to the Clerk as a learned self (Astell 59). Thus, rhetoric becomes the Clerk's main tool to employ his cultural capital in order to prevent his learned self from being associated with the clerks portrayed by other pilgrims, who are different in their morals. It is also functional in differentiating the Clerk's learned self from the uneducated pilgrims like the Miller, the Reeve, the Wife of Bath and the Franklin. Rhetoric will exhibit the university educated self of the Clerk, in that, as Leff maintains, rhetoric, which was based on the teaching of grammar and logic, was the main subject of the study of arts ("The *Trivium*" 310). The rhetorical skills of the Clerk are very important for him in defining, displaying and securing his clerklly authority, which is functional in differentiating him from the other uneducated pilgrims. In this respect, the Host's invitation to the Clerk to tell his tale is also reflective of the Clerk's cultural capital, which is lacking in the other pilgrims including the Host himself:

I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme;
 But salomon seith 'every thyng hath tyme.'
 For Goddes sake, as beth of bettre cheere!
 It is no tyme for to studien heere. (IV (E) 5-8)

Both voicing the Clerk's distinction as a learned man and reminding him that he is not the teacher, the governor of the class there, the Host almost criticises the Clerk saying that he might be studying philosophy, but it is not the right time then to talk about philosophy. This can also be interpreted as the reflection of the anti-clerical attitude among the lower groups in the *Canterbury Tales*. The Host wants the Clerk just to "[t]elle [...] som myrie tale" (IV (E) 9) rather than something of high style. In this way, the Host draws attention to the rhetorical skills of the Clerk as well as the difference between the learned and the lewed:

Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures,
 Keepe hem in stoor til so be that ye endite
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write.
 Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, we yow preye,
 That we may understonde what ye seye. (IV (E) 16-20)

The Host explicitly states that the Clerk should leave his elevated style as a learned figure and speak as plainly as possible in order to make it easier for the uneducated pilgrims to understand his tale. Therefore, it can be argued that the Host almost equates the Clerk with the stereotypical shortcomings of clerks, that is, as Bert Dillon states, “intellectual wool-gathering [...] and high-flown language” (113). Still, this depiction displays the Clerk possessing a very professional skill. However, rather than defending himself, the Clerk accepts what the Host demands, which means that he seems to have accepted the authority and governance of the Host:

Hooste, [...] I am under youre yerde;
 Ye han of us as now the governance,
 And therfore wol I do yow obeisance,
 As fer as resoun axeth, hardily. (IV (E) 22-25)

Nevertheless, even this acceptance cannot prevent the Clerk from displaying his learned self. Paying “tribute to Petrarch” (Howard, *The Idea* 258), the Clerk states that he has learned his tale from “a worthy clerk” (IV (E) 27) named “Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete” (IV (E) 31) that he met in Padua. His depiction and praise of Petrarch is functional in not only displaying his knowledge of Petrarch’s rhetoric, but also the Clerk’s own rhetoric. The Clerk defines Petrarch as a poet,

[...] whos rethorike sweete
 Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie,
 As Lynyan dide of philosophie,
 Or lawe, or oother art particuler;
 But Deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer,
 But as it were a twynklyng of an ye,
 Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we dye. (IV (E) 32-38)

Almost mourning for the death of such a “worthy man” (IV (E) 39), the Clerk believes that Petrarch’s tale, that he will re-tell, brought him immortality through art, which came to Petrarch through his skills as a rhetorician and poet. Therefore, as Scheitzeneder notes, the Clerk’s praise for Petrarch not only immortalises Petrarch, but also promises the same sort of immortality for him, presenting him in his footsteps as an educated man (56). His tale will provide him with not only the chance to give voice to a dead but “worthy” poet (IV (E) 39), but also the chance to present himself as the

embodiment of Petrarch's rhetorical skills. Hence, it can be claimed that the Clerk has the urge to be known as much as Petrarch, as a result of which he chooses to re-tell Petrarch's tale. As a result, even if the Host has asked the Clerk to avoid high style, as Raby states, "[o]ne can take the Clerk out of Oxenford, but taking Oxenford out of the Clerk requires some disciplining" (223), which the Host did not have. Thus, first in his prologue and then in his tale, the Clerk presents himself as the governor of his rhetorical performance rather than accepting the authority of the Host.

The Clerk's rhetorical performance confirms his learned self, in that, as the Clerk himself also states in his prologue to his tale, his tale of patient Griselda is a retelling of Petrarch's tale. As Finlayson (257), Schwebel (275) and Bert Dillon (114) indicate, he has himself translated the tale from Boccaccio's *Decameron* (X.10). Accordingly, as Bert Dillon suggests, it can be argued that the Clerk also implies that his tale belongs to "a scholarly, clerical source" (113). The Clerk "deals with the tradition of 'translation' and the questions of authority that arise from it" in his re-telling performance as the representative of the academic world (Scheitzeneder 48). In the same line, it can be suggested that the Clerk achieves in his tale (or his translation) what Petrarch achieves in his version of the Griselda story. Therefore, he also adds his own commentary to his version of Petrarch's story sometimes as a result of esteem or appreciation, and sometimes as a result of criticism as if he is a translator and at the same time a literary critic (Raby 224). It is for this reason that, as Ginsberg puts it, the Clerk stands out as both a "copyist" and "magister" (265). He not only copies Petrarch's story, but also adds his commentaries to this story as the author of the current version of the story. Hence, it can be suggested that, translating and thus imitating Petrarch, the Clerk performs not merely as a "copyist" but as an autonomous voice, who is able to comment on the text freely revealing his own commentary about the actions of the characters. In this way, the Clerk presents himself as "the supreme reader" of Petrarch's tale (Ashe 935) as well as the writer through his use of the authorial "I" in his tale. This can easily be observed through his comments, which can also be defined as "asides" (Howard, *The Idea* 258; Longworth, "Chaucer's Clerk" 65). For instance, in the very beginning of his tale, the Clerk comments on and criticises Walter's actions as follows:

I blame hym thus: that he considered noght
 In tyme comynge what myghte hym bityde,
 But on his lust present was al his thought,
 As for to hauke and hunte on every syde.
 Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,
 And eek he nolde – and that was worst of alle –
 Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle. (IV (E) 78-84)

The Clerk criticises Walter for being a selfish man, who acts without considering the outcome of his actions. It is for this reason that the Clerk defines him as the worst husband, who cares only for his own wishes. Similarly, the Clerk also cannot help commenting on Walter's plan to test Griselda and his way to test her, which shows the Clerk's "vitality of reading" (Ashe 936). In each case, the Clerk presents his own ideas about the situation. He is an interfering narrator, which also displays that the Clerk is clearly performing a tale telling. For instance, after telling that Walter has decided to test Griselda, he says "[b]ut *as for me*, I seye that yvele it sit / To assaye a wyf whan that it is no need, / And putten hire in angwyssh and in drede" (IV (E) 460-462, emphasis added). Explicitly stating his own opinion about Walter's plan, the Clerk suggests that one should not test his wife if there is no need, since this will just destroy the wife without any reasonable cause. Likewise, whenever he tells the type of tests Walter designs for Griselda and Griselda's obedience to his wishes, the Clerk interferes and almost mourns for the unnecessariness of testing such a wife as Griselda and praises Griselda (IV (E) 561-563, 621-623, 696-707, 752-753, 932-938, 1139-1148). In Longworth's words, his comments can also be defined as a "pedagogical tactic" ("Chaucer's Clerk" 66), because, through his comments, the Clerk illustrates to the uneducated pilgrims how to analyse a text and how to see the messages in a text. He sets an example of the active reader for his pilgrim-audience. Rather than passively repeating Petrarch's story, he creates his own version of the story, which is embellished by his comments. As Longworth suggests, the Clerk's version of the Griselda story can also be regarded as "a tutorial session," in which there is a public display of the Clerk's rhetorical skills for the uneducated pilgrims ("Chaucer's Clerk" 62). If the Clerk's concern about his desire for and display of rhetorical skills is compared to his lack of interest in having offices or benefices and displaying material wealth as exhibited by his material performance in the "General Prologue," it can be suggested that this reveals

how the Clerk fashions himself as a learned man, who is interested only in intellectual activities.

As Scheitzeneder also notes, another important aspect of the Clerk's rhetorical performance is that his tale is based on the concepts of "authority and (un)certainty" (57), which is reflected through the power relationship between Walter and Griselda. The Clerk constantly criticises the authority of Walter and the uncertainty of Griselda's situation in this power structure. Griselda is always bound to the unreasonable authority of Walter. Still, she does not renounce this authority. Analysing this power relation between Walter and Griselda, Ginsberg argues that, although the Clerk seems to be criticising the authority of Walter and the suppression of Griselda due to Walter's wishes, the Clerk is "already a Griselda and a Walter" at the same time (26). The Clerk is, on the one hand, a Griselda in terms of his being suppressed by authority, which is embodied in the university regulations and impositions for students as well as his economic problems. Besides, the "Griselda-ness of the Clerk" (Ashe 937) is also reflected in the depiction of the Clerk as "maidenly" (Astell 57). He is depicted like a humble and naive maiden as reflected in his material performance in the "General Prologue" and his interest in learning rather than women unlike the other clerks in the *Canterbury Tales* as explained above. On the other hand, the Clerk is a Walter, because he is as much interested in holding and using authority as reflected in the process of his re-telling of Petrarch's tale of patient Griselda. Thus, he presents himself as the authorial authority of the current Griselda story in his re-telling performance. In this respect, it can be argued that the Clerk has "[t]he struggle with and the wish for authorial power" as embodied by Griselda and Walter in his tale (Scheitzeneder 52). In line with these, it can be claimed that the Clerk's rhetorical performance in his tale displays that he is aware of the fact that this authority can only be attained through his cultural capital, owing to which he can claim a special status in society.

In relation to authority, the relationship between the Clerk and the Wife of Bath, who has a clerk husband, is also very important. Before telling his tale, the Clerk has heard the Wife of Bath claim authority through her experiences in married life. The Wife of Bath claims in her prologue to her tale that "[e]xperience, though noon auctoritee /

Were in this world, is right ynogh for me / To speke of wo that is in mariage” (III (D) 1-3). Furthermore, she asserts this authority in her tale as well through the old hag, who can be regarded as a reflection of the Wife of Bath. In both cases, that is, both in her prologue to her tale and in her tale itself, the Wife of Bath renounces the authority of the learned people and supports the authority of experience. The main problem between the Wife of Bath and her fifth husband, Jankyn, is the clash of authorities, which constitutes the same sort of problem for the Wife of Bath and the Clerk. The Wife of Bath claims authority in matters (particularly “woe”) concerning marriage through her own experience, and Jankyn claims authority through book-learning. In this respect, Jankyn, who is also an Oxford clerk (III (D) 527), is similar to the Clerk. Jankyn is also a book-lover and book-authority to such an extent that he even beats the Wife of Bath for a leaf (III (D) 634-635), which leaves her deaf. At this point, the reason of the Wife of Bath’s being beaten for a leaf is important, since it reveals her rejection of bookish/clerkly authority. The Wife of Bath says that she has torn a leaf from the book of Jankyn as he was reading, every night, from sections on the “wikked wyves” (III (D) 685). Hence, the Wife of Bath’s opposition to Jankyn can be regarded as her reaction not only to husbands in general but also to clerks in particular, the authority of whom is embodied in books. Thus, she asks “[w]ho peyntede the leon, tel me who?” (III (D) 692) and criticises the clerks as follows:

Therefore no womman of no clerk is preysed.
 The clerk, whan he is oold, and may noght do
 Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
 Thanne sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
 That women kan nat kepe hir mariage!
 But now to purpos, why I tolde thee
 That I was beten for a book, pardee! (III (D) 706-712)

This is the reflection of the Wife of Bath’s criticism of the book learned clerks and their authority. Therefore, the fact that she was “beten for a book” (III (D) 712) is very symbolic. The book is the weapon of the learned man, Jankyn. Yet, according to the Wife of Bath, Jankyn “pretty well exhausted her tolerance for learning” (Longworth, “Chaucer’s Clerk” 62). With no more tolerance for learning, the Wife of Bath revolts against the authority of the learned by first tearing a leaf from the book of wicked wives and then by fighting with their representative Jankyn. Yet, as a result of the fight

between them, guaranteeing her authority, the Wife of Bath becomes the winner of the battle between the learned and the lewed. After beating her, Jankyn thinks that she has died and panics, which is abused by the Wife of Bath to the end claiming and gaining the authority in marriage over Jankyn. (III (D) 797-822) This can be defined as the victory of the unlearned Wife of Bath over the learned Jankyn.

As Ginsberg suggests, it can be argued that the Clerk's aim in his tale was also "to show [that] the Wife's a Walter" (266). The Walter-Wife of Bath is the opponent of not only Jankyn but also the Griselda-Clerk. As a result, the Clerk's tale will be his chance to reclaim the authority of clerks in general and himself in particular. It is for this reason that his rhetorical performance in the epilogue to his tale is in direct contrast with his shy and humble nature as revealed in his material performance in the "General Prologue." As Bert Dillon states, his rhetorical performance in the epilogue is reflective of "the combative behavior we would expect of an Oxford scholar" (114). He openly praises submissive Griselda, who is the contrary image of the Wife of Bath. In this way, the Clerk frees the authority of clerks from the domination of the Wife of Bath. Yet, although the Clerk believes that he has liberated clerkhood from the Wife of Bath's arguments about it, as Ginsberg states, "he and the Wife have translated one another the way Walter and Griselda do in the tale" (266). Although the Clerk's opposition to the Wife of Bath is functional in asserting his clerkly authority, this also turns himself into a Walter, who is full of desire for authority. It is for this reason that, in his tale, the Clerk presents himself as "man enough to beat the Wife at her own game" by reading "Petrarch in the same manner that Alice reads Scripture" although he seems to be as "[m]eek as Griselda" (Ginsberg 267). Scala argues that both the Wife of Bath and the Clerk have the same "desire for (and to be) the Other's desire" and so "the Clerk's ideal of passive suffering, Christ-like in its exemplification, is driven by a disavowed desire to dominate, seemingly un-Christian in its very aspiration" (87). The Clerk's interest in authority and power is reflected even in the prologue to his tale when he says that he will be under the governance of the Host and will avoid high style but performs the opposite. This is very much like Walter's attitude towards his people when they want him to marry. Walter's first reaction to marriage is defining marriage as servitude (IV (E) 146-147), but then he accepts marrying. At this point, it can be claimed that the aim

of Walter's tests is to prove that he is not in service but in authority in marriage. Although Walter says that he will go under the service of marriage and accepts in a way to obey the wishes of his people, he says,

I truste in Goddes bountee, and therfore
 My mariage and myn estaat and reste
 I hym bitake; he may doon as hym leste.
 [...] Lat me allone in chesyng of my wyf, –
 That charge upon my bak I wole endure. (IV (E) 159-163)

Likewise, Walter says that he will marry, but he will marry the person he wants and his people should not reject his choice:

And forthermoore, this shal ye swere: that ye
 Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve;
 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
 At youre requeste, as evere moot I thryve,
 Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;
 And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
 I prey yow, speketh namoore of this matere. (IV (E) 169-175)

As a result, it can be suggested that Walter is only concerned about the idea that everybody had “to his comandement obeye” (IV (E) 194). It is also for this reason that when Walter goes to the house of Griselda to take her as a wife, the dialogue between Griselda's father and Walter refers to the governance of Walter in marriage. Griselda's father accepts her obedience to Walter even at the very beginning (IV (E) 322). It is for the same reason that Walter just asks for Griselda's obedience and her assent to his will in order to marry her (IV (E) 348-364).

Likewise, the Clerk appears, like Walter, both an “active agent and passive sufferer” of his actions (Scheitzeneder 58). Hence, he stands out both as the embodiment of the anti-Christian ideal of desiring authority and the Christian ideal of suffering. He appears, like Griselda, as a passive-aggressive figure. Griselda can never reject Walter's wishes about their children, but just wants them to be buried in order to protect the defilement of their bodies by birds (IV (E) 569-572, 680-683). The same is also valid for the scene when Walter sends a message and calls Griselda back to the palace after

sending her to her father's house as his third test (IV (E) 736-772). He wants her to help preparations for his new marriage and prepare his new wife, all of which she accepts (IV (E) 946-973). She only says to Walter,

O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,
 That ye ne prikke with no tormentynge
 This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;
 For she is fostred in hire norissyng
 Moore tendrely, and, to my supposynge,
 She koude nat adversitee endure
 As koude a povre fostred creature. (IV (E) 1037-1043)

Although she warns Walter not to test his new wife, it is, in fact, Griselda herself who accepts submission to Walter without any opposition. Similarly, the Clerk is both the director and the actor of his life and actions. Thus, it can be argued that the reason for the Clerk to pity Griselda is that she lacks the authority of Walter, and as Scala suggests, "the Clerk envies Walter's sovereign will" (107), which is recognised by the Host following the tale of the Clerk as reported by Chaucer the pilgrim:

[...] By Goddes bondes,
 Me were levere than a barel ale
 My wyf at hoom had herd this legende ones!
 This is a gentil tale for the nones,
 As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille;
 But thyng that wol nat be, lat it be stille. (IV (E) 1212a-1212g)

Evidently, the Host wants to govern and authorise in his marriage like Walter does. However, there is a big difference between Walter and the Host's understanding of authority and governance, and the Clerk's understanding. Both Walter and the Host concentrate on authority in marriage while the Clerk desires clerkly authority like that of Petrarch. It can be claimed that, full of desire for clerkly authority, the Clerk is aware of the importance of his education as his cultural capital, which is highly influential in constituting, increasing, performing and displaying this authority. It is owing to this cultural capital that the Clerk performs as a learned man, who regards himself as distinct from all the other uneducated people and claims a special status in society.

Hence, the rhetorical performance of the Clerk reveals that although the Clerk is depicted in the “General Prologue” as “[...] coy and stille as dooth a mayde / Were newe spoused, sittynge at the bord” (IV (E) 2-3), he is not “a shy, witty, and acerbic young man who is representative of academic life of the fourteenth century” as Bert Dillon claims (114). Rather, throughout his rhetorical performance, the Clerk presents himself as a man ready to fight for his clerkly authority in order to be able to fashion himself as “[t]he key symbolic figure” of the “clericalized society” of fourteenth century England (Astell 60). Accordingly, his tale becomes functional in his “act of self-invention” (Ginsberg 265), which helps him claim authority and esteem in society as a learned man displaying that although he is a poor clerk, he is rich in knowledge. Thus, the Clerk does not perform, in Green’s words, as one of “the most highly conventionalized” figures in the *Canterbury Tales* (1). Rather, the Clerk fashions himself as a learned figure who claims a space in society owing to his learned self as his material performance in the “General Prologue” and his rhetorical performance in his tale show.

3.2. The Doctor of Physic

The self-fashioning of the Doctor of Physic as a learned man is shaped and reflected in his material performance in the “General Prologue” and his rhetorical performance in his tale. The Doctor of Physic fashions himself as a man who claims a special place in society owing to his educated self like the Clerk. The “General Prologue” introduces the “DOCTOR OF PHISIK” (I (A) 411) following the depiction of the Shipman. Presenting himself as a university educated professional man, the Doctor of Physic claims a distinct social status, because his university education has provided him not only with a respectful profession but also with the knowledge, which was preserved only for those who could attend university in the Middle Ages. In his material and rhetorical performances, which both shape and display his self-fashioning as a learned man, the Doctor of Physic performs the privileges of a learned self.

The Doctor of Physic’s material performance in the “General Prologue” introduces his skills as a medical practitioner, and starting even from his very first introduction, draws

attention to his learned self. According to the *MED*, “doctour” means “[a]n authority on medicine or surgery, doctor of medicine” (“doctour” (3)). Likewise, Bullough explains that the title “doctour” “is derived from the Latin *docere*, to teach” and it was first used for the graduates of higher faculties, not only for theology but also for medicine and law, in medieval universities (“The Term” 263). Hence, “doctor” referred to a man, who was a learned authority as a university educated person and who was regarded as the authority on his subject with the right to teach and authorise. Considering that university education constituted a very important element in the conception of a man as a respected man in the Middle Ages, it can be argued that the title “doctor” contributes to this already prestigious status. Hence, his profession as a doctor of physic draws attention to the cultural capital of the Doctor of Physic. He can be defined as a person, who has invested his time and money in earning his cultural capital and, as a physician, he has already converted his cultural capital both to social and economic capital as revealed by his material performance.

Evidently, his investment in cultural capital provided the Doctor of Physic with both a title and profession, which can be defined as cultural capital in the “embodied state” and in the “institutionalised state.” Bourdieu defines cultural capital in the “embodied state” as “the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” and cultural capital in the “institutionalised state” as “a form of objectification which must be set apart because as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (“The Forms” 82). It can be argued that the Doctor of Physic’s title “doctor” reveals his cultural capital in the “embodied state,” since it refers to the extent of his cultural investment during his education process. As a doctor, he embodies all the requirements to be defined as the holder of cultural capital. Similarly, his being licensed to practise as a doctor can be regarded as a reflection of the Doctor of Physic’s cultural capital in the “institutionalised state.” In this respect, in order to better understand the requirements and the advantages of the Doctor of Physic’s cultural capital, it would be better to briefly analyse the development of medical faculties at universities in the Middle Ages. It was through these faculties that men invested in their cultural capital, and then converted this cultural capital into social and economic capital.

Medical education was not very popular and prestigious in medieval England. Yet, faculties of medicine at the universities in Salerno, Montpellier, Bologna and Paris were regarded as the centres of medical education (Bullough, "The Study of Medicine" 12). The first major faculty of medicine was at Salerno, Italy while the second major centre was Montpellier, France. The faculty of medicine at Montpellier was fully developed by the twelfth century and the faculty members were mainly from the medical faculty at Salerno. These important centres of medical education were followed by the faculties of medicine at Bologna and Paris. The establishment of these faculties of medicine was very important, since it ended the monopoly of the Church on medical education, which was regarded as a part of monastic life. As Byrne indicates, this meant that physicians would after all be regarded as the members of secular clergy, not as monks or priests (18). Still, although its monopoly was broken, the Church continued to retain control over universities through their interventions in the curriculum and the influence of Christian dogma was still observed on the philosophy of medical education. As Robert S. Gottfried explains, it was believed that the body was not as significant as the soul, which influenced the curriculum of the faculty of medicine and almost ruled out the study of anatomy and physiology from medical education at universities (10).

In England, the establishment of a faculty of medicine at Oxford was much later than those of Paris or Montpellier, that is, towards the end of the thirteenth century. As Talbot explains, "the earliest statute of the medical faculty dates from 1273-4" and "[t]he earliest mention of a medical faculty at Oxford occurs about 1303 when two statutes were carried by the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Medicine" with just one regent master (68). Robert S. Gottfried indicates that the first faculty of medicine at Cambridge dates fifty years later than the one at Oxford (11). Compared to Oxford, the faculty of medicine at Cambridge was even smaller and less popular (Talbot 69-70; Eleazar 226). As Robert S. Gottfried explains, the study of medicine was not only less popular but also less prestigious than the study of theology or law at Oxford and Cambridge (11, 170). There were certain reasons for this unpopularity. For instance, those studying medicine had to take priestly orders, which meant that they were not allowed to lecture on medicine. This meant a discontinuity in the teaching of medicine as well as decreasing the numbers of teachers in the faculty of medicine (Talbot 69). As

a result, the number of graduates from the faculty of medicine was lower than the ones from the faculty of theology or law. As Rawcliffe notes, there were just forty students during the fourteenth century, and only fifty-four students during the fifteenth century at the faculty of medicine at Oxford; and there were only fifty-nine students who graduated from the faculty of medicine at Cambridge from 1300 to 1499 (*Medicine and Society* 108). The main reason of this was the dominant and prestigious status of theology. This becomes clearer if the number of the graduates of doctorates from these two faculties at Oxford are compared: there were only forty doctorates at the faculty of medicine while there were almost five hundred at the faculty of theology (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 108).

Apparently, the study of medicine was not very popular at Oxford or Cambridge. During the fourteenth century, there were not many students studying medicine in England. It is estimated that there were not more than forty medical students and teachers in total during the fourteenth century, and most of them were the members of the clergy either beneficed or secular (Eleazar 225, Siraisi 56). Moreover, the study of medicine was also discouraged and sometimes forbidden by statute as in the case of Merton College (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 108; Talbot 69). Archbishop Peckham complained that, while he was visiting Merton College in 1284, which was the only unit that provided a medical curriculum at Oxford, he encountered some scholars who were not interested in divine service but in medicine. Thus, the Archbishop “forbade the study of medicine as a breach of the founder’s statutes and intentions as proved by custom” (Bullough, “Medical Study” 64). Hence, there were not many doctors of physic in England in the fourteenth century. According to Ussery, there were not more than twenty doctors of physic in England in 1387 (94). Therefore, the Doctor of Physic stands out a member of a privileged but small group.

At Oxford, there was not a degree of Bachelor of Medicine. Thus, both the ones with a degree of Master of Arts and those without a degree were accepted to the faculty of medicine, which constituted a major difference between medical students at Oxford and their counterparts at continental universities. However, as a reflection of the classical influence on the study of medicine, the study of arts through *Trivium* (grammar, rhetoric

and logic) and *Quadrivium* (mathematics, music, geometry and astronomy) was regarded to be very important for a medical student. First of all, he would need a working knowledge of Latin to be able to read medical texts and commentaries. Then, he would need grammar and rhetoric to better understand medical texts. He would need logic to participate in disputations, which were necessary for graduation, and to better investigate the causes of an illness. He would need mathematics and geometry to better calculate the workings of humoral theory. He would need music to cure the sick, and astronomy to better understand the place of man in the universe and the impact of the stars on human body (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 106-107; Curry, *Chaucer* 4-5; Siraisi 375). Still, as stated, those without a Master of Arts degree would also enter the faculty of medicine. However, the length of their studies differed. Those with a Master of Arts degree were to study medicine for six years in order to have the license to teach while those without a degree were to study medicine for eight years. Besides, the license to practice required an additional four-year period of study. Following admission, a student of medicine needed to follow and participate in disputations for forty consecutive days and lecture the remaining days of his first and following two years. Disputations were generally held weekly; but if there was only one regent master, it was held once a fortnight. During these disputations, doctorate candidates were examined on the medical curriculum, the medical texts by Galen, Hippocrates, Gaddesden as well as the texts on diets, urines and drugs. All these meant that one needed to spend thirteen to fifteen years at university to earn a doctorate in medicine, which was followed by two more years of lecturing in residence (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 181; Bullough, "Medical Study" 65-68; Talbot 70; Getz 68-69). Such was the training required for a doctor's cultural capital in the Middle Ages.

Evidently, the "Doctor" of Physic has this training. However, unlike the Clerk of "Oxford" in the "General Prologue," it is not clear where the Doctor of Physic has been educated. He may have been educated either at Oxford or Cambridge or at a foreign university. According to Ussery, this is in line with his profession, because physicians were not local but international in the medieval period. Physicians mostly moved from one place to another in order to treat their patients. Only noble families had special physicians. Therefore, if the Doctor of Physic was ascribed to a specific place, this

would most probably reveal a specific family, since there were not many physicians (96-97). The Doctor of Physic's material performance concerns his learned self, not where he developed it. As his material performance reveals, no matter from which national or international university he has graduated, the Doctor of Physic has great theoretical knowledge. He has read many medical authorities included in the curriculum at medieval medical faculties:

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
 And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,
 Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
 Serapion, Razis, and Avycen,
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn. (I (A) 429-434)

This list of medical authorities that the Doctor of Physic knows exhibits the curriculum of medieval medical education. University education of medieval medical students was derived from the medical information of the classical times and the Muslim world. This was a product of the development of curriculum at the faculties of medicine at medieval universities. The faculty of medicine at Salerno was the first one to blend Greco-Roman, Muslim and Jewish medical traditions together, "the whole corpus was known as the *Ars medicinae*" (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 180). As stated above, it turned out to be the best faculty of medicine by the twelfth century especially due to the contributions of Constantine the African, who was a member of the abbey at Monte Cassino and who translated major Arabian and Greek medical authorities into Latin. This meant not only the spread of these Islamic and classical medical texts to Christian Europe, but also the expansion of medical practices. Following the translations of these texts, faculty members started to write commentaries on these texts, which contributed much to the education of their students in a scholastic manner. In addition to theoretical education, medical students at Salerno were also taught surgery (Schachner 51-52, Talbot 39-41; Siraisi 27).⁴² In this way, Salerno had triggered the study of surgery at universities and had established the standards of medical education at universities. The Doctor of Physic's list, including Constantine the African, reveals that he has invested in his cultural capital adapting the standards set at Salerno.

Galen, Hippocrates, Rhazes and Avicenna in the list of medical authorities learned by the Doctor of Physic are evocative of medical education at Montpellier. It was much influenced by the tradition of Salerno, which combined the Greco-Roman, Muslim and Jewish traditions. Monks at Montpellier contributed much to the translations of medical texts into Latin providing students with access to new works by Galen and Hippocrates as well as *Chirurgia* by Albucasis, *De elementis* and *De definitionibus* by Isaac Judaeus, *De gradibus* by Al-Kindi, *Almansor* by Rhazes, *Canon* by Avicenna and *Breviarium* by Serapion. These tides of translations contributed to medical education at Montpellier to such an extent that medical education at Montpellier became even better than the one at Salerno in the thirteenth century. As a result, Montpellier became a popular centre for the study of medicine for more and more students including the English students (Talbot 57-60; Eleazar 227). Similarly, although there is no explicit information about the possibility of the Doctor of Physic's being educated at Montpellier, it can be maintained that his list of medical authorities signals that the Doctor of Physic's knowledge comes from medical authorities, such as Rhazes and Avicenna, whose new works were introduced to the world of medical education at Montpellier.

This "intellectual revival" in medical study introduced the medical inheritance from the ancient world and the Arabic world to the Christian West, which meant an enlargement of medical knowledge and increase in the importance attributed to dialectic and natural philosophy in medicine (Siraisi 360). In this respect, especially works by Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle and Avicenna as well as Constantinus Africanus, Dioscorides and Rasis contributed very much to the study of medicine (Norton 78; Siraisi 377-378; Byrne 19). As a reflection of his theoretical education, all of these medical authorities take their place in the list of the authorities that the Doctor of Physic has studied excluding Aristotle. However, even if Aristotle does not appear in the list, it can be argued that the Doctor of Physic must have read his works as a university educated practitioner. The Doctor of Physic's list of medical authorities, which is like "[...] a bibliography of medieval [medical] education" (King 65), exhibits the quality of education that the Doctor of Physic received. Besides, as Curry argues, the Doctor of Physic enjoys the privileges of this education to such an extent that he does not care about the chronological order of the medieval authorities in his list, since he is surrounded by

laymen, who cannot realise this (*Chaucer* 29). After all, they all belong to a special area of knowledge about which none of the Canterbury pilgrims are informed as much as the Doctor of Physic. It can also be argued that these medical authorities constitute the Doctor of Physic's learned identity performance and his cultural capital.

Among the medical authorities in the list of the Doctor of Physic, Gaddesden is of special importance in terms of the Doctor of Physic's learned identity performance. Gaddesden was a physician at Merton College, Oxford and wrote *Rosa medicinae* (*Rose of Medicine*) in ca. 1320. This medical work made him the first major English medical writer to write in Latin not only for physicians but also for surgeons, which meant that Gaddesden was writing in Latin for those outside university circles as well (Getz 42). Evidently, Gaddesden acknowledged the importance of both physicians and surgeons in medicine, one being a master of theory, and the other being a master of practice. In this respect, it is important to note that the Doctor of Physic is efficient enough "[t]o speke of phisik and surgerye" at the same time (I (A) 413). In order to better understand the importance of the combination of physic and surgery in the self-fashioning of the Doctor of Physic as a learned man, it is necessary to analyse the relation between physicians and surgeons and the attitudes towards these two groups of medical practitioners in medieval society.

The world of medieval medical practitioners was a reflection of the hierarchical medieval social structure, in that, medical practitioners had different social status according to their treatments. As Robert S. Gottfried explains, physicians regarded themselves as superior to surgeons due to their university education, who in turn regarded themselves superior to barber-surgeons, who looked down upon barber-tonsors, who looked down upon unlicensed practitioners (52). According to this hierarchy, physicians enjoyed the highest level owing to their university educated selves. It can be argued that, although medical men had already been around before the establishment of universities, it was the establishment of medical faculties within the body of universities that brought the men of medicine a distinct status within society owing to their educated selves. Medical faculties provided students with the social, religious and legal privileges of universities. These privileges were special since they

belonged only to the learned men, not to the unlearned men. Besides, medical education provided the degree holder not only with a prestigious social status, but also with the privileged licence to practice (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 180). Therefore, all the other medical practitioners were looked down upon by the university educated men of medicine because of their lack of a formal university education and because of the clerical status attributed to them by their university education. They were regarded as the members of secular clergy.⁴³ As Bryne indicates, they also had guilds to protect their rights as university educated physicians (47).

However, despite the privileges of their university education, physicians were not the only men of medicine. Although Byrne states that physicians “reigned supreme as the master of theory and practice” (13), because of their theoretical education and lack of practice, physicians were not the master of practice, that is, surgery. Actually, during the early years of medical education at universities, the practice of medicine was not separated from surgery as it was also revealed by medical education at Salerno, as it has been argued above.⁴⁴ Yet, in time, attention was directed to speculative studies rather than empirical knowledge at universities. Because universities were under the control of the Church and it was necessary to join clerical orders in order to receive the arts degree, university educated physicians were the members of the secular clergy unlike surgeons who were laymen originating from the apprentice system (Ussery 29-31; Talbot 51). The clerical status, on the one hand, contributed to the social prestige of physicians, since they were esteemed not only because of their educated selves, but also because of their clerical position. On the other hand, it required them to avoid surgery, because, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 forbade bloodshed to the clergy, which required physicians to avoid bleeding as the medical elite (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 126; Siraisi 26, Ussery 31). All these led to the separation of surgery from physic. In Bullough’s words, as “an intellectual discipline” that had to compete with theology and law, medicine put emphasis on speculative learning leaving aside manual treatment, which meant “a gulf between the speculative professional, the physician, and the manual practitioner, the surgeon” (“Emergence” 134). In order to secure his speculative status, it was forbidden for a physician to use manual treatment. A physician’s duty was to speculate on the causes of illness and deal with sick people.

Manual treatment meant technical treatment and thus was regarded as a part of the duty of the technical labourers (Bullough, "Status" 205-210; Bullough, "Emergence" 131-132).⁴⁵ As a result, it was not proper for a university educated physician, like the Doctor of Physic, to use manual treatment methods. This separation led to a great distinction between speculative physicians and manual surgeons.

As practical education was looked down upon as part of manual work and was forbidden to medical practitioners at universities by the Church, there was a change in the curriculum of medical education as exemplified by the one at the University of Paris. Medical faculty at Paris followed the same medical curriculum with the other mentioned centres with a major difference. At the University of Paris, texts at the faculties of medicine were mainly from the Greco-Arabian origin.⁴⁶ Yet, while Salerno, Montpellier and Bologna taught medical students theoretical knowledge and surgery, the faculty of medicine at Paris did not teach surgery to medical students (Siraisi 59-60; Talbot 68; Ussery 11). This was the reflection of the exclusion of practical treatment from medical education at universities, which would result in physicians' lack of practice (Getz 69). In this respect, although the students of medicine were theoretically educated, they did not have practice, which, as Robert S. Gottfried maintains, constituted the main difference between physicians and surgeons (170). Thus, practice turned out to be the deficiency of physicians, which was filled by surgeons.

Surgeons did not have university education but they were educated through apprentice system. Surgeon candidates were to spend five or six years under the supervision of their masters. During this apprenticeship period, it was very important for them to learn anatomy, because surgeons were to deal with manual treatments such as surgery, dentistry, bone setting, bleeding and wound dressing. As a result, they performed the technical part of medical treatment. Accordingly, a surgeon was a layman, who was provided by the local authorities with a licence to practice after he was taught the craft by a master surgeon in a guild (Eleazar 225). The theoretical part of treatment belonged to university educated physicians, who used not their hands but their minds during treatment. As Byrne indicates, "[t]he heaviest physical labor a physician might expect to perform was lifting a glass jar of urine to examine it or taking a patient's pulse" (33).

This exhibits the great gap between physicians and surgeons: one was the embodiment of theory, the other was the embodiment of practice, which meant that the cultural capital was limited to physicians owing to their university education. Thus, due to their university education as well as their clerical status, physicians always claimed and sustained higher social status. They were men of mind, not men of hands like surgeons. After all, as Ussery states, “*surgery was a manual craft*, as distinguished from *physic*, an *intellectual profession*” (11, emphasis original). Thus, as Robert S. Gottfried states, while surgeons were regarded as mere “craftsmen,” physicians were considered to be “the social and to some degree the professional elite among doctors” (17) because of their learned selves.

However, following the Black Death and taking advantage of the failure of physicians during the Black Death, surgeons organised and formed the Fellowship of Surgeons in 1368-1369. As Robert S. Gottfried explains, they aimed at protecting their rights to practice through the Fellowship although it was not an organisation like a guild (18-19). Furthermore, especially during the Black Death, surgeons gained greater importance. They visited patients at their homes, and some surgeons even had a shop for their patients to come for treatment. These shops were advertised by a bowl of blood (Byrne 35). Although surgeons did not have formal university education, they had empirical knowledge. Still, they paid attention to the stars, since the position of the stars and the specific time of a day was important for a surgeon for bleeding. They also had charts of the zodiac man or vein man in order to be more efficient in bleeding. Because of their unwillingness to deal with manual treatment during the plague, physicians hired surgeons. However, physicians were not the only people to hire surgeons. They were also hired by towns or cities to deal with the sick and the poor either in general hospitals or pest houses, which were specially designed as plague hospitals (Byrne 34-37). Furthermore, as Talbot indicates, surgeons were more aware of the earlier ethical rules, and thus “[w]hilst the physicians’ manuals limit themselves to purely medical matters, the surgeon’s treatises almost invariably begin with a chapter on the necessary qualifications, both moral and technical, which the student of surgery should possess” (140). This meant a privilege of surgeons over physicians and influenced their prestige both during and after the Black Death. Besides, as Robert S. Gottfried argues,

“[p]rinting, too, hurt the physicians’ image,” because the printing of surgeons’ knowledge on anatomy and surgery in vernacular rather than Latin meant that the monopoly of physicians over theoretical knowledge was broken and surgeons’ knowledge was thus esteemed as well (55).

Nevertheless, despite their success and efforts during the plague, as Robert S. Gottfried notes, physicians still looked down upon surgeons (72). Moreover, because they were university educated, physicians had a higher fee rate than surgeons who had higher fee rate than barbers.⁴⁷ Therefore, as Bryne indicates, “[b]ecause of their lack of university education and generally lower income and status, surgeons often were second-class citizens within physicians’ guilds” (35). However, it is necessary to note that their practical knowledge was recognised, which meant the continuation of the power struggle over medical authority between physicians and surgeons. Therefore, surgeons also regarded themselves as important figures in medical practice, in that, although they did not have the theoretical education of a physician, they believed that their manual experience also conferred upon them medical authority.⁴⁸

The Doctor of Physic’s performance is described in the “General Prologue” as follows: “In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik, / To speke of phisik and of surgerye” (I (A) 412-13), should be considered in this context. The Doctor of Physic has not only theoretical knowledge as a university educated man, but also the practical knowledge of surgeons. His skills in both areas of medical practice will make him earn more money, because there were not many physicians who had both theoretical and practical knowledge. In other words, he converts his cultural capital into more and more economic capital. Thus, Hodges suggests that what Chaucer the pilgrim states is not practising but speaking of physic and surgery. Hence, the reference to surgery is a reference to the Doctor of Physic’s theoretical knowledge (*Chaucer and Clothing* 203). Yet, it is still necessary to note that, bringing together physic and surgery, the Doctor of Physic performs as an authority on both aspects of medical treatment. This combination is thus functional in conveying the Doctor of Physic’s medical authority not only as a very knowledgeable man as revealed by the long list of medical authorities that he knows, but also his knowledge of surgery. It can be suggested that the combination of

physic and surgery contributes to the Doctor of Physic's self-fashioning as an efficient doctor who claims a distinct social status owing to his learned self.

The Doctor of Physic's medical authority is also reflected by his competence in astronomy and thus efficiency in dealing with his patients:

For he was grounded in astronomye.
 He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
 In houres by his magyk natureel.
 Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
 Of his ymages for his pacient.
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,
 And where they engendred, and of what humour.
 He was a verray, parfit praktisour:
 The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,
 Anon he yaf the sike man his boote. (I (A) 414-424)

These lines exhibit that the Doctor of Physic is very efficient at astronomical calculations he uses to treat his patients. Astronomy and astrology are functional in his determining the cause of illnesses and the true remedies for them. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that heavens, as a macrocosm, had a great influence on the human body, which was a microcosm (Talbot 127). Both heavens and the human body were composed of four elements, that is, fire, air, earth and water, which embodied four qualities, that is, heat, cold, dryness and moisture. According to the dominance of either of these qualities, man was believed to be sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric or melancholic respectively. These qualities were the results of four humours in the body: blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm. In this respect, these humours were very important in keeping a person healthy, or in curing an ill person, because the body of a person was in direct correspondence not only with his zodiac sign, which governed his anatomy, but also with the planets, which governed his inner organs. It was believed that both decrease and increase in any of these humours made a person ill upsetting the humoral balance of his body, which could be cured through phlebotomy, that is, bloodletting. Physicians used charts to better decide the suitable time of the year and the suitable part of the body for bloodletting (Talbot 127-128; Siraisi 382-384). Therefore, a physician's knowledge of astronomy and astrology was very important for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. As Grigsby indicates, "[d]uring the medieval period, the body

reflected one's state of health, and medieval doctors relied on the body as text," since "[t]he body provided medieval doctors with a series and symbols which needed to be read and interpreted in order to provide an effective cure" (16). Although there were many types of medical practitioners, who were bound to this text, a physician was the one to decide if the patient had plague and if he needed phlebotomy (Byrne 58). By observing the hourly position of the moon, the physician tried to understand the start and development of the illness. This was also necessary for him to decide which medicines should be given at which hours or when a crisis might occur. In this respect, the Doctor of Physic not only diagnoses the disease, but has that "uncanny knowledge and ability" to cure it (Curry, *Chaucer* 13). Hence, although Getz defines the Doctor of Physic as one of the "false healers and hypocrites" (89), it can be argued that the Doctor of Physic's working knowledge of astronomy and astrology shows that he has already completed his studies at arts faculty through the study of *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, which includes astronomy and astrology (Getz 67). Accordingly, he could even draw the horoscopes of his patients to treat their illnesses through true remedies (I (A) 417-24).⁴⁹ Therefore, the Doctor of Physic performs as a very efficient physician being good at diagnosing the reasons of every illness, by which humour it is caused, treating his patients perfectly ascribing them the necessary treatment and drugs, which is very important especially during plagues. It is through his efficient performance as a medical doctor and surgeon that the Doctor of Physic fashions himself as a learned self and claims a special social status.

The efficiency of a physician has always been very important for the well-being of his patients and thus of the whole society in certain conditions as in the case of the epidemics. This was also valid for the physicians of the Black Death. During the plague, correct and quick diagnosis was very important, and physicians had their own means to diagnose illnesses. They had charts of the eclipses of the sun and moon, the zodiac man, venous man and urine, which can be defined as "ready-reckoners" (Talbot 126). Furthermore, his senses were also very helpful for a physician during the diagnosis process. He relied upon certain indicators such as pulse rates, the quality and colour of urine, faeces, blood, the smell of breath and skin, vomiting, insomnia, the smoothness or greasiness of the skin, and external examination of the organs by touching. The

examination of urine in a glass jar called Jordan by holding it up to light and swirling was the typical symbol of a physician's profession. During his examination process of the urine jar, he made use of certain charts, which displayed the relation between different colours of urine with certain illnesses (Byrne 55-56). All these led to a physician's being regarded as one who "discourses rather ostentatiously upon the occult philosophy of medicine" (Curry, *Chaucer* 28). Considering the importance of the Black Death, it can be argued that the performance of the Doctor of Physic as an authority figure completes his self-fashioning as "[...] a verray, parfit praktisour" (I (A) 422). It can be claimed that the Doctor of Physic deserves to be defined as a perfect practitioner owing to his medical education as his cultural capital. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Doctor of Physic's cultural capital as an efficient practitioner during the plague time provided him also with economic as well as social capital.

In relation to the relationship between the Doctor of Physic's cultural and economic capital, his good relation with apothecaries is also very important:

Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
 To sende hym drogges and his letuaries,
 For ech of hem made oother for to wynne –
 Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne. (I (A) 425-428)

These lines reveal the mutual dependency between physicians and apothecaries. Physicians needed apothecaries for drugs, which made both parties win. During the Middle Ages, apothecaries, who also belonged to the medical world, were infamous as figures of "[t]hief, fraud, sorcerer, and healer" (Byrne 38). Although they were regarded to be "skilled craftsmen who compounded the drugs used by physicians," apothecaries were also interested in trading goods overseas, which meant that they were mostly wealthy and they were, in Robert S. Gottfried's words, "merchants before doctors" (52). Apothecaries were thus defined by Bullough as both "herbalist and spicer" as well as "merchants or traders" ("Emergence" 208). Yet, as Curry states, although the Doctor of Physic's relationship with the apothecaries is a reflection of "his astuteness as a business man, of which his general appearance and bearing suggest that he is inordinately proud," his relation with apothecaries is a natural outcome of his profession as a physician and their "medical fraternity" (*Chaucer* 29, 32). The relation between

apothecaries and physicians was natural and mutually beneficial, since physicians were bound to apothecaries for the preparation of drugs, and apothecaries were bound to physicians for having the prescriptions of drugs and selling them. Yet, in order to prepare drugs prescribed by physicians, apothecaries needed spices, which were brought from South Asia through overseas trade. This meant that apothecaries were also acting as spice traders. As Robert S. Gottfried states, they became related with the spicers and pepperers in the thirteenth century (79). Although apothecaries did not trade full time like the spicers and pepperers, they still earned a lot during their trading ventures. Hence, Robert S. Gottfried suggests that apothecaries gained not only economic and political status but also social status as wealthy men, who were wealthier than even physicians and surgeons in some cases (80-81). Furthermore, the role of apothecaries was still very important for the medical world. According to Byrne, “[b]ecause drugs could kill as well as heal, and because of the opportunity for fraud, apothecaries tended to be carefully watched and regulated by guild and civic officials” (38). Hence, physicians also tried to keep apothecaries under their control not only to oversee and regulate their preparation of drugs, which also meant the control of their spice trade, but also to sustain their superiority over apothecaries as medical authorities (Bullough, “Emergence” 133, 208). Similarly, the Doctor of Physic also enjoys his relationship with apothecaries. He enjoys the material advantages of his profession which enables him not only to have a prestigious social status, but also material gains through his professional relations as in the case of apothecaries. Therefore, the fact that “[...] each of hem made oother for to wynne” (I (A) 427), which is presented as the cause of “[h]ir frendshipe” (I (A) 428), is just a natural outcome of their profession for both the Doctor of Physic and apothecaries. It is his educated self that makes the Doctor of Physic indispensable within this professional friendship. Namely, he always wins due to his cultural capital. Aware of the fact that, in the hierarchical medical world, physicians have nothing but their university educated selves to secure a high place in this hierarchy both within and outside medical circles,⁵⁰ the Doctor of Physic enjoys the privileges of his cultural capital. Therefore, the relationship between the Doctor of Physic and apothecaries stands out as a reflection of not only the medical authority of the Doctor of Physic as a university educated practitioner over apothecaries, but also his superiority over them due to his social capital. Although apothecaries were also very rich due to

their involvement in trade and drug production, the Doctor of Physic is still well above them owing to his learned self. Due to his cultural capital, he has surpassed apothecaries in terms of not only esteem and prestige in society, that is, his social capital, but also monetary gains, that is, his economic capital.

Similarly, enjoying the privileges granted to him by his cultural capital, the Doctor of Physic attributes great importance to his diet, which is also functional in drawing attention to his cultural capital about humoral theory: “Of his diete mesurable was he, / For it was of no superfluitee, / But of greet norissyng and digestible” (I (A) 435-437). In the Middle Ages, the humoral theory emphasised the importance of diet for the health of a person and for avoiding diseases especially during the plague. As Byrne explains,

[t]he foods one ate were naturally warming or cooling, humidifying or drying. People themselves were considered ‘warm and dry,’ ‘cold and moist,’ and so on according to their age, sex, physical condition, and general disposition. Since plague was considered ‘warm and moist,’ the best prevention to avoid warm/moist foods and make one’s humors as well balanced toward the cold and dry as possible. One should also avoid foods that are not easily digested and that lay long in the body and naturally ‘corrupt’ it. Fatty or boiled meats, dairy products, and fish generally fit the pattern, as did juicy fruits and vegetables, fried foods, and pastries. (50-51)

Thus, the Doctor of Physic’s attribution of great importance to his diet “reflects his professional duty, knowledge, and practice, and is in every way complimentary” (Ussery 114). This also reveals that, as a learned man, the Doctor of Physic knows how to guide his patient to eat the proper food through a proper diet to be healthy (Getz 87-88). Hence, it can be argued that the Doctor of Physic as an educated man learns, practices and teaches medical knowledge, to which he has special access owing to his university education.

Despite his theoretical education, his combining physic and surgery, his knowledge of astronomy, astrology and humoral theory, the “General Prologue” reveals that “[h]is studie was but litel on the Bible” (I (A) 438). Yet, this cannot be associated with his lack of professional knowledge or his being a heretic (Ussery 107). Moreover, there is not any implication about the Doctor of Physic’s being a heretic either in his material

performance or in his rhetorical performance. Hence, as Curry states, the Doctor of Physic can be defined as “a cold-blooded rationalist” and “a strictly scientific man who boasts that his study is but little upon the Bible” (*Chaucer* 29), but not a heretic directly. His little interest in the Bible can be regarded as a reflection of the secularisation of medical knowledge and medical authorities. It can be claimed that, as a man of medicine who fashions himself as a learned man, the Doctor of Physic aims at drawing attention to his professional efficiency rather than clerical status. Although he is a member of secular clergy, it can be maintained that he presents himself as a professional medical practitioner despite his little interest in the Bible. His intellectual wealth comes from his study of a long list of medical authorities. It is owing to this long list that the Doctor of Physic signals that the development of medical faculties gave birth to “a distinct type of professional and intellectual formation that shaped a new medical élite” (Siraisi 360). He is not a mere practitioner but a doctor of physic, which draws attention to his learned self. It is this learned self that differentiates the Doctor of Physic from uneducated people and other medical practitioners, who lack university education.

In addition to his medical knowledge, which can be defined as the Doctor of Physic’s intellectual array or his intellectual richness, the material performance of the Doctor of Physic in the “General Prologue” draws attention to his costume, too. His costume is a manifestation of his self-fashioning as a man who claims high social status as a learned self. It can be suggested that, after presenting the speculative knowledge of the Doctor of Physic through his knowledge of medical authorities, his combination of physic and surgery, his knowledge of astronomy and astrology, and the importance of diet despite his little study of the Bible, the material performance of the Doctor of Physic draws attention to the materialisation of his cultural capital in the form of costume and monetary gains. Unlike the Clerk’s humble appearance and costume, the Doctor of Physic makes use of every means of costume rhetoric in order to openly display his learned self. His costume represents the professional identity of Doctor of Physic not only in terms of colour, but also in terms of material (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 116): “In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al, / Lyned with taffata and with sendal” (I (A) 439-440). Both “sanguine” and “pers” refer to colour and fabric of the costume. According to the *MED*, sanguine as a noun means, “[a] blood-red color; also, rosy hue”

(“sanguine” (a)) and “a rich cloth of a blood-red color; also, a piece of such cloth” (“sanguine” (b)). Likewise, sanguine as an adjective means, “[o]f a blood-red color; of a garment: made of blood-red cloth; also, of persons: ruddy, usu.[ally] as the result of a sanguine complexion” (“sanguine” (a)). Apparently, sanguine reflects not only colour but also fabric, which is both of good quality and price. Besides, it is the colour of blood, which is a very important symbol of a physician’s profession, because the flow of blood influenced the pulse beat, which might be the indicator of health or disease. As Hodges notes, the colour sanguine is suitable for a physician also as a reflection of blood-letting even if a physician is not directly the one to perform it (*Chaucer and Clothing* 211). Moreover, blood was also related with the humours referring to the sanguine temperament.

As for “pers,” it “definitely refers to superior or fine cloth” (Ege 343) and was the symbol of high social status (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 215). According to the *MED*, “pers” means, “[b]lue, bluish; purplish; blue-grey” (“pers” 1 (a)) and “one such color; cloth of such color; a kind or quality of cloth” (“pers” 1 (b)). Furthermore, “pers” also refers to “[t]he land of the Persians, ancient Persia” (“pers” 2 (a)). In line with these definitions, it can be suggested that the Doctor of Physic’s colour and material choices signal not only his economic wealth but also the Eastern source of his medical education. Hence, “pers” has two symbolic aspects: colour (referring to the Doctor of Physic’s wealth) and profession (the Eastern influence on medical education) (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 216-217, 225). Therefore, as Hodges perfectly puts it, “if there were emblematic coats of arms for physicians, ‘sangyn and pers’ would be the obvious choice of symbolic colors for them” (*Chaucer and Clothing* 217). Accordingly, it can be suggested that the Doctor of Physic’s colour and/or fabric choice for his costume is a reflection of his position as a doctor in terms of both economic and intellectual aspects. Through his choice of colour and/or fabric, the Doctor of Physic displays that he has converted his cultural capital into economic capital, which also provides him with the proper social capital.

Besides, the Doctor of Physic’s rich sanguine and pers costume was “[l]yned with taffata and with sendal” (I (A) 440). “Taffata” means according to the *MED*, “[a] costly

woven, glossy silk fabric” (“taffata”) while “sandal” means “[a] kind of costly fabric (apparently of linen or cotton); silk” (“cendāl” 1). Silk was known as an Eastern or Mediterranean product in the late fourteenth century England, since, as Hodges explains,

[s]ilk of all types was an import in England during this period and was purchased by the ounce, costing between 10d and 1s per ounce, or by the ‘begen, or becket’, with an average price for lining during the second half of the fourteenth century £1 8s 1½d. (We may compare this to the price a tailor charged to make a robe – 1s.) Less expensive than samite or ‘tartaryn’, sandal was a silk often used for garments linings for the robes of kings and queens, as well as for clerks’ livery, and ‘taffata’, too, was used as lining material. (*Chaucer and Clothing* 217-218)

As a result, silk was the symbol of wealth and high social status. However, the Oxford Statute did not allow it for those who were not associated with some faculty as a master or who were not noble by birth and by economic means (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 218). As physicians were allowed to wear more flamboyant and elegant costume than other practitioners, as Robert S. Gottfried explains (56), it is usual for the Doctor of Physic to wear silk. In this way, he presents himself as “the most lavishly dressed of any of the pilgrims” (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 219) although he is reported to be careful about spending his money: “And yet he was but esy of dispence” (I (A) 441). In this respect, some critics argue that, in addition to signalling the wealth of the Doctor of Physic, his silk lined costume can also be considered to be a “gift” by one of his rich patients, patrons or lords, which was presented to him instead of fee (Ege 345; Ussery 110, 97; Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 220). Even if it is a “gift,” his silk-lined taffata can be regarded as another indication of the Doctor of Physic’s professional skills. It can be suggested that he is such an efficient practitioner that one of his rich patients presented this expensive taffata as a “gift” for him or payment, since “medical men accepted payment in kind” (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 115). It can also be claimed that, unlike the Clerk, the Doctor of Physic has been receiving the outcome of his cultural investment as “economic capital” as well, “which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, “The Forms” 82) although Hodges interprets this as a reflection of the Doctor of Physic’s “bourgeois materialism” (*Chaucer and Clothing* 223). His costume is in keeping with his social and professional status displaying not only his

economic wealth but also his intellectual wealth (Ussery 97). Wearing a costume, which can be defined as “a fortune, *invested* in garments” (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 219, emphasis original), the Doctor of Physic displays his wealth. Thus, although he has been allowed to wear academic or clerical dress (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 220-221), it can be suggested that he prefers lay dress in order to better display that he has converted his cultural capital to economic capital as well as social capital.

Furthermore, according to Thrupp, “in the imagination of the age scarlet and other bright dyes and the smoothness and the sheen of fine fur and softer materials were associated with power and importance” (147). This was also related with the idea that making the red dye, mostly produced from female kermes, fast through the use of alum, which needed to be imported from the Mediterranean region was very expensive in the Middle Ages (Schaefer 36-38). Thus, it was regarded as the symbol of wealth and high social status (Munro 36-37). Hence, the material performance of the Doctor of Physic through his costume refers not only to his economic status but also his social status. As a result, as Erol states, his costume displays “[t]he self-importance and materialistic side of the Doctor” (“A Pageant” 111). He is a man conscious of his status and does not refrain from displaying it through his materialistic means. Like the other Canterbury pilgrims, the Doctor of Physic is aware that identities needed to be performed through display in order to be exhibited, recognised, accepted and sustained by society. In this respect, as Hodges indicates, the Doctor of Physic “knows and practices the principles of effective public presentation” (*Chaucer and Clothing* 201). Presenting him as a member of the “wealthiest bourgeoisie” as a physician, as Robert S. Gottfried puts it (57), the Doctor of Physic’s costume encodes the message that he is rich enough to be able to pay for “too rich” attire (Ussery 110). It can be argued that the material performance of the Doctor of Physic in relation to costume displays that he fashions himself as a rich and educated professional man, who owes everything he has to his educated self and thus displays his educated self through every means of costume rhetoric in his material performance.

In fact, the the Doctor of Physic is a doctor made rich by the plague: “He kepte that he wan in pestilence” (I (A) 442). Actually, what was expected of physicians was that

“ffirst it bihoueth hym that wil profite in this crafte that be sette god afore euermore in all his werkis, and euermore calle mekely with hert and mouth his help; and som tyme visite of his wynnyngis poure men aftir his myȝt, that thair by thair prayers may gete hym grace of the holy goste” (John of Arderne 4). Thus, Eleazar severely criticises physicians claiming that they were “materialistic atheists who practiced medicine only for profit, and not for charity’s sake” (221). Although healing was also associated with charity, that is, healing the soul of the healer, there was an increase in the number of healers who were interested in money rather than charity (Siraisi 361). Furthermore, people were eager to pay any amount in order to be protected or cured from diseases, which meant that they were open to abuse. As a result, the ongoing plague meant not only that the medical practitioners were not able to stop pestilence, but also that this promised material gain for all types of healers from those who were licensed to practice to those who were not licensed (Byrne 43). Under these circumstances, physicians might have been “attendant upon one or more noble households, either retained upon an annual basis, or, at least, for occasional consultation” as well as engaging with other households (Ussery 95). Especially, during the plague, the rich households did not refrain from any expenses to remain healthy and always looked for the best local and foreign practitioners, who were mostly university educated people (Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society* 106). There was almost “a set clientele among wealthy merchants, bakers, and nobles, while others exclusively served great households of kings, dukes, bishops, or the pope” (Byrne 45-46). According to Rawcliffe, these practitioners were employed either “by long-term contracts similar to those used by the Crown or nobility to recruit retainers, or else (as was more usually the case) undertook to cure a specific malady in return for a pre-arranged sum of money or payment in kind” (*Sources* 39). Furthermore, during the plague, many physicians either failed to treat patients or they feared to treat them. Thus, if a physician worked really hard with patients and earned much money, this did not turn him into “the stock figure of the grasping, avaricious, and generally incompetent practitioner as a social parasite [...] [who] exploited the fear and suffering of vulnerable men and women, being at heart little more than a confidence trickster” (Rawcliffe, *Sources* 53) but into an efficient practitioner like the Doctor of Physic. Besides, as Ussery also notes, the Doctor of Physic “kepte that he wan in pestilence” (I (A) 442) which means that he “is close-fisted,” since there is no implication about the

possibility that the Doctor of Physic prioritised his fee over his patients' health (114). Although it would be an exaggeration to say that the Doctor of Physic might be the representative of those physicians who “were also the saints and heroes of plague time, overcoming fear and revulsion to live up to the Hippocratic Oath” (Byrne 47), it can be argued that he is just an efficient doctor, who is also interested in material gains. It can be claimed that, as a man of medicine who has invested in his cultural capital, the Doctor of Physic takes advantage of his cultural capital in economic and social aspects as well. It is his cultural capital that enables him to claim a higher social status.

Significantly, the Doctor of Physic loves gold: “For gold in phisik is a cordial, / Therefore he lovede gold in special” (I (A) 443-44). Howard claims that his “motive is evidently *pure* avarice – he is not in love with buying land [...], nor with *making* money [...] but with gold itself, with *having* it” (*The Idea* 335, emphasis original). Similarly, Kirk L. Smith argues that his love for gold indicates the “apparent greed” of the Doctor of Physic (66). However, in the fourteenth century, besides being the symbol of material wealth, talismans, or in other words, amulets, were very popular. These included not only sacramentals and relics but also gems. People believed that certain gems had “special power against poison” and that they were “associated with celestial effects, drawing down the power of stars” (Byrne 52). Hence, many practitioners turned to gem cordials:

A number of healers suggested cordials made of pearls, gems, and especially gold. Gold was thought to possess the powers of sun and serve as a natural purifier. The problem was keeping it in suspension in a liquid. One answer was to drink fluids like barley water or rose water in which it had been soaked. Distilled water and alcohol (known as *aqua vitae*, or the “water of life”) were solvents developed by early alchemists, including monks, in which powdered gemstones and gold were thought to be soluble. (Byrne 60)

However, because even “a little of it greatly increases the price of the medicine” (Curry, *Chaucer* 34), the use of cordials by physicians was criticised. According to Kirk L. Smith, this was the reflection of the “juxtaposition of expertise and opportunism,” because such attitude was “at odds with received notions of charity” (67). Yet, as in the case of the ambiguity about the relationship between the Doctor of Physic and apothecaries, Chaucer the pilgrim states that the Doctor of Physic loved gold “[f]or gold

in phisik is a cordial” (I (A) 443). Hence, his love of gold can be considered to be a reflection of his interest in material gain as well as his professional attitude towards valuable gems. These can also be related to his interest in converting his cultural capital into economic capital. Hence, it can be claimed that the material performance of the Doctor of Physic in the “General Prologue” is mainly the reflection of his learned self as a doctor, who enjoys all the advantages of his cultural capital, which will be completed by his rhetorical performance in his tale.

In his rhetorical performance, the Doctor of Physic performs a clerical identity as a university educated man and thus contributes to his self-fashioning as a learned man with high social status. It can be suggested that his rhetorical performance displays two aspects of his self-fashioning performance: his university education and his clerical identity. His choice of tale reflects his educated self, because the tale he chooses to tell comes from Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la Rose* which is a version of Livy’s *History of Rome* (Hanson 134; Eleazar 225; Harley 2). Similar to the Clerk’s paying tribute to Petrarch, the Doctor of Physic pays tribute to Livy citing his name in the very beginning of his tale, “as telleth Titus Livius” (VI (C) 1). This tribute helps the Doctor of Physic not only to display his knowledge of the classics, but also to display his authority comparable to the authority of Livy as a learned man. In addition to reflecting his knowledge of the classics, his tale also displays that the Doctor of Physic has made certain changes to his sources as does the Clerk. As Harley explains, there are

four substantial additions to the versions of Livy and Jean de Meun [...] (1) the account of Nature’s creation of Virginia and the catalogue of Virginia’s physical and spiritual virtues (11. 9-71, 105-17); (2) the address to governesses and parents (11. 72-104); (3) the exchange between Virginius and Virginia preceding her death (11. 207-53); and (4) the moral conclusion (11. 277-86). (2)

These changes to the main sources are functional in displaying the Doctor of Physic as an active reader like the Clerk. Furthermore, through all these additions, as Hanson states, that he “considerably Christianized the Virginia story” (135), which is appropriate for him as a cleric. Hence, it can be argued that his tale provides the Doctor of Physic with a chance to display his education, his clerical status and rhetorical skills as well as his claim for rhetorical authority.

Since the Doctor of Physic is a member of the secular clergy, he regards his tale telling turn as a chance to perform his clerical identity and further his self-fashioning as a learned man with good education. In fact, it is natural for him to tell a tale about virtue, which is embodied in the character Virginia. This is also in accordance with the Host's praising him saying that "[...] thou art a propre man, / And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan!" (VI (C) 309-10). The Host signals that "the Physician *is* a clerk, and almost certainly either is, or hopes to be, a prelate" (Ussery 97, emphasis original). Therefore, he chooses to tell the tragic story of Virginia, who is the embodiment of not only physical beauty but also virtue, and Virginius the knight, who is the father of Virginia. Unfortunately, Apius the judge, attracted by her beauty, devises a plan to have Virginia, abusing his position as a judge with the help of Claudius. The plan is that Claudius will go to court and claim that Virginia is, in fact, his servant stolen from his house and ask Virginius to return her (VI (C) 154-174). Realising the conspiracy between Apius and Claudius, Virginius decides that the only way to save the honour (virginity) of Virginia and his family is to kill Virginia, to which she yields obediently (VI (C) 213-250). Virginia can also be described as the incarnation of Christian virtue, since she accepts death rather than losing her virtue. Although the plot of Apius and Claudius was punished by the people of the town, imprisoning Apius and sending Claudius into exile, this punishment comes after the death of Virginia, emphasising the importance of virginity (VI (C) 263-274).

In this respect, although the Doctor of Physic's tale has been defined, by Middleton, as a "dull little moral tale" (9) and, by Howard, as "a dramatic example of misguided moralism" (*The Idea* 334), it is, in fact an allegorical and hence "moral" tale. As a result, there is no indication that "the Host is struck by an incongruity between tale and teller" as Ussery suggests (115). Similarly, although Kirk L. Smith claims that "other than the title, there is nothing in the "Physician's Tale" to indicate any clear connection between the narrator and the healing art," this does not "suggest poetic misconduct, a disregard for dramatic measure and coherence of theme" (63, 65). Rather, it can be claimed that the tale is functional in contributing to the Doctor of Physic's performance of his clerical identity. He has achieved displaying his self-fashioning as a learned man, who claims a higher status in society due to his educated self in his material

performance as reflected by the “General Prologue.” Then, he needs to display his clerical identity in his rhetorical performance in his tale, which will contribute to his social status attributed to him by his learned self.

Thus, although Hirsh argues that the Doctor of Physic’s tale is “strangely unconnected” to his identity (387), it is necessary to note that, against the criticism of physicians about their greediness and lack of charity and morality, and “[m]otivated by a sense of outrage, the Physician responds with a narrative condemning self-interest” as stated by Kirk L. Smith (70). It can be argued that the Doctor of Physic aims at displaying his disregard for selfish behaviour in his rhetorical performance in his tale. It is for this reason that he condemns Apius and Claudius, which signals his moral concerns. It can be suggested that the Doctor of Physic is aware of the fact that his medical skills are not enough for him to claim a high social status. As Kirk L. Smith argues, it is his tale that will provide him with a chance to display his concern about moral healing rather than self-interest, which contributes to the respect for him in society (71). In order to secure his position and esteem in society as a physician, the Doctor of Physic chooses a moral tale, which will assert his social status. Hence, he makes use of “[t]he additions, deriving from the religious handbooks and sermon literature of the period” in order to perform his clerical identity (Harley 16). This is directly reflected by his concluding remarks of the tale: “Fosaketh synne, er synne yow forsake” (VI (C) 286). In Rowland’s words, the Doctor of Physic presents himself as “no mechanic but a master of moral philosophy earnestly offering advice to parents and guardians, and exhorting his readers to forsake sin” (“The Physician’s” 178). In this respect, although he has been criticised by the critics for attributing no place for Virginia in the closing part to give his message (Hanson 137), the Host’s words indicate that the Doctor of Physic has succeeded in conveying his moral message without a reference to Virginia in the end:

But trewely, myn owene maister deere,
 This is a pitous tale for to heere.
 But nathelees, passe over, is no fors.
 I pray to God so save thy gentil cors,
 And eek thyne uryngals and thy jurdones,
 Thyn ypocras, and eek thy galiones,
 And every boyste ful of the letuarie;
 God blesse hem, and oure lady Seinte Marie!

So moot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan! (VI (C) 301-310)

In addition to displaying the successful decoding of the Doctor of Physic's moral message, these words by the Host also reveal the successful decoding of the Doctor of Physic's self-fashioning in both his material performance and his rhetorical performance. It is for this reason that, at the end of his tale, the Host addresses him as "myn owene maister deere" (VI (C) 301) "with literal correctness" since, in this way, the Host reveals three aspects of the Doctor of Physic: he is a master practitioner, the holder of master of arts and maybe a master teaching at a university (Ussery 95, 115). Moreover, it can be claimed that the Host's addressing the Doctor of Physic as "maister deere" (VI (C) 301) can also be interpreted as the reflection of the general attitude of society towards the Doctor of Physic, because the Host acts as the mouthpiece of the community as the governor of the tale-telling game. Therefore, it can be suggested that the self-fashioning of the Doctor of Physic as a learned man who claims a distinct social status owing to his educated self has been accepted, or at least not rejected, by the community as reflected by the attitude of the Canterbury pilgrims after he finishes telling his tale.

To conclude, it can be claimed that both the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic fashion themselves as the owner (the Doctor of Physic), or the future-owner (the Clerk), of the three forms of cultural capital:

in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee. (Bourdieu, "The Forms" 82)

Both the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic have concentrated on their studies at university and thus acquired cultural capital in the embodied state. Yet, there is a difference between the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic in terms of the acquisition of cultural capital in the objectified state and in the institutionalised state. The Clerk, for the time

being, is not able to have cultural capital in the objectified state as reflected through his desire for having twenty books at his bedside. Furthermore, although the Clerk is still a student who is going on investing in his cultural capital at the university, he has not acquired cultural capital in the institutionalised state either, since he has not graduated with a professional title yet. However, the material performance of the Doctor of Physic reveals that he has acquired cultural capital both in the objectified state as reflected through his costume rhetoric and cultural capital in the institutionalised state as a medical practitioner. The reason for this difference is related with the age, and thus status difference between the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic. Hence, the Doctor of Physic can be defined as a man fully made and awarded by cultural capital while the Clerk is a man being made, and will be awarded by, cultural capital in due time. Yet, they still have a major common point: Both the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic perform as men who claim a distinct social status as educated selves. They fashion themselves as learned men through their respective material performances in the “General Prologue” and rhetorical performances in their tales.

CHAPTER IV

**THE CORPOREAL AND DISCURSIVE PERFORMANCE OF
FEMININITY: THE SELF-FASHIONING OF THE WIFE OF BATH**

[...] the body, or rather, bodies cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself. (Grosz x)

Medieval women were grouped into two female stereotypes based on the Virgin Mary and Eve, and their lives were limited by the proper behaviour attributed to them by the patriarchal and misogynist society according to their estates. Hence, a medieval woman's life was organised by the estate she belonged to. "Estate" defined not only the socio-economic differences between different female groups, but also their sexual state. Following the tripartite estate structure of medieval society, the life of a woman was also divided into three "estates."⁵¹ A woman could be either a virgin, a wife or a widow.⁵² These divisions reveal that a woman's social status was determined by her relation to the males in her life. Only nuns, who had chosen a secluded, religious life were exempt from this classification, because they were accepted to have chosen the best way of life on earth and thus they were, to some extent, above the estate divisions and they were freer from male domination in secular life by their devotion to God despite the dominance of male clerks in religious life. As for secular women, their proper behaviour was determined by males in their lives. The social status of a secular woman depended on the estate first of her father and then her husband. Likewise, the proper conduct for a female was also determined by the male authorities who would emphasise chastity and faithfulness as the best feminine qualities (Hallisy 2-6). There were two main roles for a woman in the Middle Ages: she could either be a nun, that is, a virgin, or a wife, and these roles could further be extended to Mary and Eve archetypes (Martin 31). Therefore, there were both corporeal and discursive impositions

on the female. If a woman had chosen to be a wife, there were many duties for her to accomplish both at home and outside in order to avoid the Eve archetype. Since choosing to be a nun as a professional career meant that a female achieved the utmost proper conduct on earth, the proper conduct for the married female was very significant in having a good professional career as a wife. This constituted an important part of the conduct books, which warned married women against wicked women stereotypes, who were the embodiments of bad conduct such as shrewishness and disobedience. Through the representation of such female stereotypes, sermons in these books emphasised the importance of good behaviour in marriages, with the main aim of avoiding the archetype of Eve and encouraging women to try to become like Virgin Mary, in this case by giving birth to children. This meant that the female had to live under strict limitations imposed on her by the patriarchal society and conduct literature, as well as by the clerical tradition, all of which were the sources of the corporeal and discursive impositions of patriarchy on the female body, arguing for the importance of submission and renunciation of pleasures.

In contrast to such impositions and limitations, women, who were dealing with trade, that is, women from the rising bourgeois estate, enjoyed economic and thus social freedom owing to their economic power as a money-holding group. This was strongly related with the change from land-based feudal tradition to money-based relations. In the feudal tradition, the male had the upper hand, because power was related with landholding and in-return providing military service to lords, which was not possible for the female. Hence, excluding noble women, medieval women had no property rights as well as economic and social rights that came with property-holding. Yet, the development of trade from the late thirteenth century onwards introduced the idea that power came to a person not only through land-holding but also through money-holding; hence, the male monopoly over power-holding was broken by women engaged in trade (Hallissy 17-18).⁵³ This development led to the rejection of the corporeal and discursive impositions on the female, since this change provided women engaged in trade with the freedom from male domination on the socio-economic level, which would also provide them with the right to speak for themselves.

Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* is a product of these developments in the fourteenth century society. Accordingly, the *Wife of Bath* fashions herself against all the corporeal and discursive impositions of the misogynist society, not only in socio-economic terms but also in sexual terms. As a woman, who needs to fight against both the corporeal and discursive impositions on her identity, she fashions herself through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Thus, the *Wife of Bath*'s body can be regarded as a space that helps her fashion her identity through the combination of her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Actually, the *Wife of Bath*'s main concern is the performance of femininity and sexuality through her speaking body, which constitutes her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity and is reflected in material performance in the "General Prologue" and her rhetorical performances in her prologue to her tale and her tale. However, these rhetorical performances are bound to, and thus directly related with, her performance as a woman who is actively performing in the masculine market spaces, which provides her with the material means to claim and sustain her sexuality as reflected in her material performance in the "General Prologue." It can be suggested that the *Wife of Bath*'s body gains agency owing to her economic status, first of all, corporeally as a sexual being providing its agent with an out-spoken feminine self. Her body brings together her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity and becomes a space where the female desire of sexuality meets male desires not only corporeally but also discursively. Her body claims authority over the male, presenting itself not as the passive recipient of male desire but as an active producer of sexual desire as a female body to confront all the antifeminist discursive traditions. The sexual agency of the *Wife of Bath*'s body is formed and sustained by her economic agency, which has been constituted by her inheritances from her marriages and from her trade activities. As a result, the *Wife of Bath*'s body gains agency economically as money and thus power holder, providing its agent not only with a distinct social status, but also with the chance and the right to speak out her sexual activities and desires. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to analyse how the *Wife of Bath*'s body becomes a liminal space where her sexual and economic concerns act together to contribute to her self-fashioning through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Hence, her material performance in the "General Prologue" and her rhetorical performances in her prologue to her tale and in her tale itself will be analysed as the reflections of her

corporeal and discursive performance of femininity, which constitute the Wife of Bath's self-fashioning.

When the Man of Law finishes his tale about "Custance," the Wife of Bath intervenes in the dispute between the Shipman, the Parson and the Host about the next tale-teller (1163-1183). Supporting the Shipman's argument against the Host's call for the Parson to tell the next tale saying "heer schal he nat preche; / He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche" (1179-1180), the Wife of Bath exclaims that

[a]nd therefore, hoost, I warne thee biforn,
 My joly body schal a tale telle,
 And I schal clynken you so mery a belle,
 That I schal waken al this compaignie.
 But it schal not ben of philosophie,
 Ne phislyas, ne termes queinte of lawe.
 Ther is but litel latyn in my mawe! (II (B) 1184-1190)

As Patterson states, these lines reveal that the Wife of Bath "substitutes in no uncertain terms her carnal enticements for his [the Parson's] moralistic preaching" through her "analogy between her 'joly body' and the *corpus* of her text [which] invokes a powerful medieval connection between sexuality and reading" (*Chaucer and the Subject of History* 289, emphasis original). This is also the Wife of Bath's explicit presentation of "herself [as] a textual construct" (Cox 19). She offers her text/body for society to read. As a result, her body needs to be interpreted as a "carnal text" (Chance 214). In this way, the Wife of Bath's body comes to foreground as a text, which is not free from discourse. Consequently, contrary to the traditional understanding of the body as merely a physical entity, two important aspects of the body stand out: the body is, as Barad puts it, "material-discursive" (153) and it is a text. In relation to the first aspect, Barad's arguments about entanglement and intra-activity are of great importance. Barad suggests that there is a "casual relationship" between the material and the discursive (34). She draws attention to the "intra-action" of the material and the discursive, and argues that they have "ontological inseparability" (128). Similarly, the body appears a product of the inseparable entanglement of the material and the physiological, or in other words the corporeal being, and the discursive construction of it in and by society.⁵⁴ That is, there is a reciprocal relationship between the construction of the

material and the discursive as in the case of the body. The body is both a material entity (a corporeal being) and a discursive entity constituted by the discourse of the society and the culture in which it is situated. As a result, the body is formed or materialised through “*an iteratively intra-active process of mattering*” (Barad 210, emphasis original). It is throughout this process that the material and discursive formation of the body takes place. Barad’s arguments draw attention to the importance of the materiality of the body, which is as important as the discursive formation of the body, and is highly influenced by the arguments of Foucault and Butler about the significance of the matter in the discussions of the body.

Foucault suggests in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* that it is necessary to analyse the “deployments of power” which are very important for the study of the body (151). This would reveal how the material, that is, “the biological,” and the discursive, that is, “the historical” act together for the formation of the body (Foucault 152). Likewise, Butler also suggests a “return to matter” (5), namely, “a return to the notion of matter, not as site or surface, but as *a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*” (*Bodies* xviii, emphasis original). This turn to the matter actually signals the emergence of corporeal realism, which emphasises the relation between and the interdependency of the body and society. This is of great significance, since when the body meets society, it also encounters discourse, which can be defined as the meeting of the corporeal and the discursive (Shilling, *The Body in Culture* 12-16). As Barad states, it can be argued that when this meeting takes place, the “entanglement” of the matter and the discourse takes place for the discursive embodiment of the subject (33).

Similarly, Grosz argues that there is no nature/culture dualism in the formation of the body. Rather, the formation of the “*embodied subjectivity*,” namely, the corporeality, is influenced by “spatiality and temporality” (Grosz 22, 90; emphasis original). A specific space and time create specific bodies. Similar to the Wife of Bath’s reference to her body as a text, Grosz makes use of “the metaphor of the body as a page or strip” (90), on which society inscribes its influences. Hence, she suggests that the body should be regarded as “a palimpsest” of the “networks of meaning and social significance” (117).

The social inscription of the body creates the discursive regulations of or impositions on the material body (Grosz 118). Hence, the body becomes the palimpsest of the discursive traditions in society about the body. As a result, as Grosz puts it, the “body functions, not simply as a biological entity but as a psychical, lived relation” (27). It is for this reason that the socio-cultural context in which the bodies are situated gains importance. Yet, while this implies that the analysis of the body can reveal some information about the society in which it is inscribed, it is still necessary to note that “[t]he body is not simply a sign to be read, a symptom to be deciphered, but also a force to be reckoned with” (Grosz 120). As an inscribed embodiment, the body might be “capable of reinscription” as the Wife of Bath aims at. In other words, an individual can reinscribe all the corporeal and discursive impositions on her/his body, in a way similar to writing back in which the individual questions, fights against and renounces these impositions, and re-fashions her/his body and identity.

Accordingly, it becomes necessary to reject, as Weiss states, the conventional understanding of the body as merely a “biological organism that is separate from (and usually viewed as resistant to) cultural influences” (25). The body is a discursively constructed embodiment, which means that despite its material existence, the body cannot be analysed separately from the discourse that culturally constructs it. The body is bound to the socio-economic and discursive limitations that surround it. In accordance with these, Weiss argues that, as a text itself, “the body serves as a narrative horizon for all texts, and, in particular, for all of the stories that we tell about (and which are indistinguishable from) ourselves” (26). It carries the influences of all the other social, economic, cultural, sexual and religious contexts, each of which can be regarded as a separate text. They all come together at the same focal point, the body, and contribute to the material (corporeal) story of the body. Hence, the body appears as “a semantic impertinence” as a place for knowledge production as well as a knowledge producing space (Weiss 32).⁵⁵ In accordance with this, Shilling suggests that the body is also “a generative source of society,” in that, it becomes a site to produce knowledge about society as well as being produced by society (*The Body in Culture* 14). Consequently, the body stands out as both “a recipient of social practices *and* an active creator of its milieu” (Shilling, *The Body in Culture* 18, emphasis original). It is not

only “the basis for human agency,” but also “the lived experience of social actors” (Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory* 206). Therefore, the body can be defined as the carrier of knowledge not only about an individual’s private life, including one’s gender and sexuality, but also about public life, including the socio-economic and cultural conditions in which it was situated. Thus, the body gives information both about the microcosmic life of an individual and the macrocosmic life of the society to which that individual belongs.

Similarly, according to the medieval ascetic ideal, “the present human person was an unfinished block, destined to be cut into the form of an awesome model,” that is, the ideal Christian (Brown 442). As a result, the body, especially the female body, had to be under control.⁵⁶ Hence, the body stands as an important site of “corporeal signification” for the misogynist medieval English society (Cohen and Weiss 1). Yet, this signification is also very important for each individual, because this would provide an individual with a chance to reject the hegemonic powers and to secure her/his body from the binary impositions of normality vs. abnormality, morality vs. immorality, or permitted vs. forbidden (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 83). Against these hegemonic impositions on the body, which were highly exercised on women during the Middle Ages, the female needed “to *learn* how to feel at home within the flesh” (Cohen 168, emphasis original). Yet, it can be claimed that, during this learning process, the female can renounce these impositions through self-fashioning as does the Wife of Bath through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Hence, if it is not possible to separate the textual, material and historical aspects of the body (Cohen and Weiss 4), the Wife of Bath’s self-fashioning through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity proves that her body is an “omnipresent horizon for all the narratives” that the misogynist society tells about it (Weiss 34). Yet, it is also the space where the Wife of Bath questions and renounces all these narratives.

As the body of a wife, the Wife of Bath’s body is already a liminal space where the material and discursive come together, since wifhood is an already liminal concept. Wifhood not only means physiological change in the formerly virgin female body, but also encompasses a wide discursive tradition about proper wifhood. As Cohen and

Weiss indicate, the Wife of Bath's "body encompasses communities (social and political bodies), territories (geographical bodies), and historical texts and ideas (a body of literature, a body of work)" (4). She is a bourgeois wife from Bath and the representative of women engaged in trade in the fourteenth century. Thus, it can be claimed that the performance of the Wife of Bath in the "General Prologue," which constitutes her material performance, reveals the Wife of Bath's body as a liminal space for her to fashion her identity through her corporeal performance of femininity. Her material performance evokes and fights against a huge discursive tradition about femininity, against which she will explicitly revolt in her rhetorical performances. Therefore, it can be claimed that, like the entanglement of the matter and discourse, or the body and society, the Wife of Bath's material and rhetorical performances are also entangled by her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity, because it is not possible to separate the corporeal and the discursive aspects of femininity which can be defined as a product of the Wife of Bath's material-discursive female body.

It might be beneficial to start with the analysis of the Wife of Bath's material performance in the "General Prologue." This corporeal and discursive performance of femininity is very important in revealing the performance of the female body in order to assert the agency of the female body. In order to analyse the Wife of Bath's corporeal and discursive performance of femininity, her material performance can be analysed in four main sections: her trade activities, her costume, her interest in travelling and lastly her deafness.

The "General Prologue" introduces her as "[a] good WIF [...] OF biside BATHE" (I (A) 445). Her role as a wife is emphasised, which can also be interpreted as a profession for her if the introduction of other pilgrims with their professions is taken into consideration. Chaucer the pilgrim introduces all the other pilgrims through their professions such as the Knight, the Prioress or the Clerk. Likewise, while introducing the Wife of Bath, he refers to her as "wife." At this point, it should be questioned why Chaucer the pilgrim introduces her as "wife" but not as "trader" although she is also involved in trade activities. It can be claimed that this is because wifhood is her profession, or in other words, she is a wife by profession. Accordingly, it can be

suggested that her title “wife” should be considered to be the reflection of the Wife of Bath’s profession as in the case of the professional titles of other pilgrims. This professional introduction with its corporeal and discursive connotations signals that the Wife of Bath has left behind the possibility of accomplishing the stereotype of Virgin Mary choosing to perform the potential image of Eve through her sexual state as a married woman, who has lost her virginity, and through her regarding wifedom as a profession. Furthermore, there seems to be a conflict between the wifedom the Wife of Bath understands and performs, and the wifedom described by conduct books, which were written to regulate the lives of wives teaching them proper behaviour such as being obedient to their husbands. According to these conduct books, for instance, a wife was required to be responsible for the needs of the household, children and servants at home and she was required to support her husband at his trade, to none of which the Wife of Bath refers. Moreover, although it was proper for a wife to join trade activities to help her husband, it was not appreciated for her to take the upper hand in trade matters, since this would mean that she would have transgressed her gender roles through her attempt to be the main breadwinner of the house; and such transgressions would lead to conflicts between a husband and a wife. A husband was assumed to be the head of the house, and it was he who had legal rights over his wife and her property due to coverture (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 117-118). Yet, although it was not appreciated for a wife to join trade activities more than her husband did, either because husbands were away on business or because of the impact of the Hundred Years War, as a result of which many husbands were either taken prisoners and wives were required to provide the ransom to save their husbands’ lives or husbands had to spend long years fighting in the army against France, more and more women started to join trade activities in the fourteenth century (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 6, 123-124).

The Black Death also contributed to the participation of women in trade activities. Because of the demographic changes following the Black Death, there was an increasing need for more and more working people, and women took advantages of this need. As a result, trade in urban and rural areas provided them with material gains although they were not paid as much as males. Yet, such economic developments still

contributed to the economic freedom of the female against all the patriarchal limitations (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 160-163).

It was not only married women who took part in trade activities, single women and widows were also interested in trade. Single women, also known as *femme soles*, dealt with trade individually without assisting a husband, and their rights were secured by civil law (Hallissy 18; Gies and Gies 175). Likewise, widows also dealt with trade without being assisted by a male figure. Because “[w]idowhood placed a woman immediately in the position of acting as her own agent,” there were many widows who also executed the wills of their husbands and paid their debts through trade (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 174). Such kind of trade activities contributed to the social status of women in general, providing them not only with socio-economic freedom but also with a kind of sexual emancipation, because, as a result of their free status as money holders, these women presented themselves as the controller of their bodies and sexual desires, too.

In this respect, the introduction of the Wife of Bath as a woman who is in the cloth-making industry is of great significance: “Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt / She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt” (I (A) 447-448). Cloth-making was already a developing and profit-promising industry, which included many crafts from shearing and weaving to spinning and dying in the Middle Ages. In this textile industry, Ypres and Ghent were the leading centres of cloth-making in Flanders. This commercial textile industry introduced more and more women to trade activities although there was still the impact of gender on the choice of certain crafts such as spinning and weaving, which were considered to be more proper for the female. However, it was still important for the female to join such kind of trade activities, which meant that women transferred from homes to urban spaces in accordance with the urbanisation of the textile industry. This meant that women could also benefit from economic developments and join trade guilds to protect their rights legally. The case of widows was of special importance, since they could continue the trade of their husbands after their husbands’ death, and they could be accepted as guild members. Furthermore, they could also train apprentices, who were not only boys but also girls. Developments in trade meant the growth of cities and the inclusion of women in the economy, which contributed to the

economic independence of women from the fourteenth century onwards (Gies and Gies 165-183). In this respect, it is interesting that the Wife of Bath reveals information neither about the fact that she was introduced to trade through one of her husbands nor that any of her husbands was a trading man. Hence, it can be claimed that this is related to her desire to secure her freedom in trade. She presents herself as an independent, and maybe a self-trained cloth-maker, who is free from any male authority in business matters.

Moreover, as Strohm states, the Wife of Bath's being a cloth-maker signals that she is involved in "a vocation at once deeply traditional in its association with the woman's task of spinning and very much of the moment in its association with a British cloth trade involving independent women jobbers in the second half of the fourteenth century" (*Hochon's* 140). The particular duty of the Wife of Bath in cloth-making is not specified, and it is not clear whether she has been spinning or weaving or performing some other job. However, because she is compared to the cloth-makers of Ypres and Ghent, it can be claimed that she is interested in "entrepreneurship;" as Strohm suggests, "her widely recognized assertiveness is given a material basis in the exercise of a stipulated, income-producing activity" (*Hochon's* 140). Likewise, Carruthers argues that "[t]he Wife is not a weaver but a capitalist clothier, one of those persons who oversaw the whole process of cloth manufacture-buying the wool, contracting the labor of the various artisans involved in manufacture, and sending bales of finished broadcloths off to Bristol and London for export," many of whom were wealthy widows (210). Furthermore, cloth-making was "the most lucrative trade possible" in the fourteenth century, since it targeted not only domestic markets but also foreign markets through export (Carruthers 209). This was the outcome of the legislations that protected the rights of the English cloth makers over foreign cloth makers through low prices, which resulted in their surpassing their rivals to such an extent that there was severe recession in Flanders both in monetary and qualitative terms (Carruthers 209-210). In this respect, the comparison of the Wife of Bath with the cloth-makers of Ypres and Ghent, the two famous cloth-making centres, is functional in drawing attention to her economic success as a woman engaged in trade since she has even surpassed the cloth-makers of Ypres and Ghent (I (A) 448).

To enhance her success in her trading career, the Wife of Bath's coming from Bath is also very functional. There have been various interpretations of the Wife's origin in Bath. On the one hand, Weissman draws attention to the ambiguity resulting from Alison's being associated with Bath, and argues that it does not necessarily refer to trade activities in Bath. According to Weissman, although St. Michael's parish near Bath was considered to be a West-country cloth-making parish, Bristol would have been more appropriate as a famous centre of cloth-making. Thus, Weissman suggests that the reference to "Bath" should be regarded as a reference to "bath," which combines the cleansing and healing aspects of baths with nudity and thus lust and sexuality. This is also in line with Alison's depicting herself as the embodiment of Venus (III (D) 603-620) which brings her closer to the image of Eve rather than Mary as the embodiment of carnality (Weissmann 11-17). On the other hand, other critics such as Carruthers and Robertson argue that Bath has direct connotations for her trade activities. For instance, Carruthers suggests that although Bath was not an important centre of cloth production, it was beside the Avon valley, which was famous for its clothiers, who benefitted not only from closeness to the Cotswolds wool areas, but also to Bristol, one of the important ports for trading (210). Likewise, Robertson also indicates that the place name, "beside Bath," might refer to "any village near Bath or simply a birthplace, as does the name 'Alicia Bathe'" although it has been assumed to be "the parish of St. Michael's 'juxta Bathon,' where there are said to have been weavers" ("Land Tenure" 409). As a matter of fact, because of the developing cloth-making industries in the rural areas of medieval England, it is possible that the Wife of Bath comes from a rural background, but still she is not "a mere weaver" but "a clothier" (Robertson, "Land Tenure" 410). Being a cloth-maker provided the Wife of Bath with all the economic means to free herself from the limitations imposed on her by the patriarchal and misogynist society, which contributes to the agency of her body. As a result of her economic independence, the Wife of Bath has many means to display the agency of her body to society such as being charitable, her costume and her travelling experience.

Chaucer the pilgrim indicates that there is not such a wife in her parish that offered to the Church more than the Wife of Bath does. Rather than a reflection of her religious concern, her "charity" is an extension of her wealth that comes through her economic

success as a woman engaged in trade. She is rich enough to make the largest offering to the Church, even more than the offerings of males in the parish. Hence, if anyone preceeds her, she gets angry, since it destroys her display (I (A) 452). Thus, her offerings at the Church can be defined not only as an economic but also as a corporeal show, in that, by means of going to the Church for offerings, the Wife of Bath also displays her physical generosity by displaying her body. This shows that the Wife of Bath conforms to the advice of the Old Woman in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose*:

A woman should be careful not to stay shut up too much, for while she remains in the house, she is less seen by everybody, her beauty is less well-known, less desired, and in demand less. She should go often to the principle church and go visiting, to weddings, on trips, at games, feasts, and round dances, for in such places the God and Goddes of Love keep their schools and sing mass to their disciples. (233)

Similarly, the Wife of Bath goes to the parish Church not because she is charitable, but because she wants to show off not only economically but also physically. If someone offers more or goes to the altar before her, this gives damage to her display. Furthermore, this also reveals that being charitable at the Church is a part of the Wife of Bath's displaying her body. By going to the Church, she has the chance to display her body, which can be interpreted as a corporeal display of her femininity, or the display of her female wares.

The Wife of Bath's costume is a very important part of her material performance in the "General Prologue," because her array contributes to the performance of her body displaying her material wealth and embellishing her body. Hence, as Grosz suggests, costume appears as one form of the "procedures of corporeal inscription" as a means of marking the body (142). Similarly, according to the sumptuary legislations in the Middle Ages, the costume of women was very important, because costume was regarded to be functional in reflecting not only the social estate of a woman, but also her spiritual state (Hallissy 113-114). As a result, there should be decorum in dress both in terms of social status and in terms of spiritual status, since clothing was believed to be the signifier of the spiritual shortcomings as well. Thus, a woman was expected to wear

clothing to display her estate, as it is emphasised in *The Good Wife's Guide / Le Ménagier de Paris* (57), which was very important especially for the newly emerging bourgeois group, to which the Wife of Bath belonged. The members of this social group claimed a place in the social hierarchy not because of their birth and blood, but because of their money, which mainly came from trade; their existence in society needed to be visible as well. This meant that, on the one hand, it was significant and symbolic for a bourgeois woman to wear clothes to display her (husband's) wealth. On the other hand, she was also expected to be careful and moderate especially during religious services and avoid showing off (Hallissy 114-117).⁵⁷ As a member of "[t]hese nouveaux riches" (Hallissy 115), the Wife of Bath's costume contributes to her material performance, drawing attention not only to her wealth but also to her corporeality, since her costume draws attention to her body as the bearer and displayer of her femininity. Wearing such extravagant costume, the Wife of Bath displays both her wealth and her pride in her wealth, which is the reflection of her economic success as a woman engaged in trade (Hodges, "The Wife of Bath's Costumes" 359).

As Hanawalt argues, clothing was one of the main means of the patriarchal ideology to have control over women and their bodies in the Middle Ages, because "[w]omen's space could be confined by means other than simple geography" such as clothing ("Medieval English" 22). Moreover, clothing was functional as a social code and as a religious code. Thus, Christian teaching also emphasised humility in dress in order to avoid becoming a temptress, but stressed inward ornamentation (Matthew 6:28-30, Proverbs 7:10; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1. Peter 3:3-4).⁵⁸ Additionally, as Hallissy argues, people believed that the "[c]ontrol of clothing choices" reflected the "control of the wearer's sense of self" (134). Therefore, clothing choices were important for individuals to assert their control over their identities. Likewise, the Wife of Bath's clothing choices are part of her material performance that contribute to her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. As Hodges suggests, the Wife of Bath's material performance reflected through her costume should be analysed in two parts. The first part of the Wife of Bath's costume is constituted by "her Sunday attire," which is very rich, (I (A) 453-57) and the second part reflects her "traveling outfit" (I (A) 470-473),

which is not as lavish as her Sunday costume but rather functional or practical (“The Wife of Bath’s Costumes” 359, 360).

In the “General Prologue,” the Wife of Bath performs through her material belongings. She is presented through her extravagant hat and stockings:

Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe. (I (A) 453-457)

Hanawalt indicates that coverchiefs were headdresses, which “were either veils or hoods that served like horse blinders when they [women] walked in the streets” (“Medieval English” 23). According to the traditional understanding, these veils were not to be elaborate and expensive in order to avoid lavishness and pride. However, in time, with the spread of headdresses, veils moved away from their original aims to cover the body and were transformed into a means to display one’s estate. Therefore, the Christian ideal of covering the face and the forehead was defeated by the concern of showing off. Similarly, widows left the ideal image of Virgin Mary with a simple veil, and began wearing elaborate headdresses (Hallissy 120-122). That is, they tended to display their bodily attractiveness with fashionable headdresses like the coverchiefs of the Wife of Bath. As Martin notes, “[t]he narrator exclaims over the *weight* of her headdress as one might over a soldier’s armour or equipment” (38, emphasis original). The Wife of Bath indeed seems to have other aims in wearing such a heavy headdress as well as displaying her physical attractiveness, since there is no information about the length of her headdress. The most important feature seems to be its weight, “ten pound” (I (A) 454). Hence, the Wife of Bath’s headdress becomes a very important symbol of her economic success, as well. It reflects the economic success of a woman engaged in trade who has gained not only in trade but also through the inheritances of her husbands, which is implied by the fine cloth of her headdress and its ten pound weight, which also displays excessive elaboration. Therefore, as Hodges asserts, the weight of her headdress can also be accepted as the symbolic reference to the Wife of Bath’s economic weight as well as the weight of her physical beauty (“The Wife of Bath’s

Costumes” 360-364). Although Weissman defines her headdress as “the brand of Eve’s carnality” (25), it can be argued that, as Hodges puts it, “her coverchiefs serve as her hallmark; they adorn at the same time [...] they advertise, both for business and pleasure” (“The Wife of Bath’s Costumes” 363). Despite the fact that sermons continuously emphasised the importance of avoiding excess in headdresses in order to avoid pride, the Wife of Bath’s heavy headdress displays both her hidden agenda to draw attention to her body and to display her economic status. Thus, her main aim is “parading her huge headdress” (Erol, “A Pageant” 111). Although Mann argues that her headdress turned the Wife of Bath into “a comic caricature” (*Medieval* 125), it can be suggested that the Wife of Bath’s headdress can be regarded as the symbol of both her success at trade and her corporeal display.

The Wife of Bath’s material performance is developed with the depiction of her “hosen” which “weren of fyn scarlet reed, / Ful streite yteyd [...]” (I (A) 456). It is, first of all, necessary to note that “scarlet” might refer both to colour and fabric of her stockings. According to the *MED*, “scarlet” meant both “[t]he color,” that is “red” (1) and “[a] kind of rich cloth” (2 (a)). According to the sumptuary legislations, red could be worn only by the rich although it was not necessary for them to be from upper classes (Hodges, “The Wife of Bath’s Costumes” 364-365). Likewise, whether “scarlet” refers to the colour or fabric of the Wife of Bath’s stockings, it reflects her wealth, since red coloured attire was regarded as the symbol of wealth in the Middle Ages (Munro 36-37). Similar to her headdress, her red stockings also contribute to the Wife of Bath’s performance of her economic success. She presents herself as a woman rich enough to wear red stockings in an everyday (religious) occasion. Furthermore, if it is the colour red, the colour symbolism is also important, because it contributes to the Wife of Bath’s corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. The colour red was used by the misogynist tradition in the Middle Ages, as it was employed in the depiction of the Whore of Babylon in the Bible (Revelation 17:3-6) (Erol, “The Garb” 164-165). Erol further argues that the colour red has been the symbol of desire and feminine interest in fashionable clothes as exemplified by the Old Woman of the *Romance of the Rose* and Lady Meed in *Piers Plowman* (“The Garb” 165).⁵⁹ In accordance with these, it can be argued that her red stockings stand out as important means of the Wife of Bath to draw

attention to her body. In this way, she displays not only that she is governed by her desires, which is criticised by the misogynist tradition, but also that she is rich enough to buy such a bright and elaborate costume item. Hence, it can be suggested that the colour red again helps the Wife of Bath perform corporeal and discursive femininity, different from that of the misogynist tradition.

Moreover, the Wife of Bath's "shoes ful moyste and newe" (I (A) 457) draw attention to her wealth, too. Her new shoes display her concern with her appearance, the main aim of which is not only to exhibit her wealth, but also to draw attention to her body. At this point, it can be argued that the Wife of Bath fashions herself as a follower of the advice of the Old Woman in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose*:

If her dress drags or hangs down near the pavement, she should raise it on the side or in front as if to have a little ventilation or as if she were in the habit of tucking up her gown in order to step more freely. Then she should be careful to let all the passers by see the fine shape of her exposed foot. (233)

Due to the depiction of her shoes, it can be suggested that she makes people see her shoes and thus most probably her legs, which was not allowed for women in the Middle Ages. Yet, as she displays her female wares through displaying her body at the Church, the display of the Wife of Bath's shoes are functional in displaying her female wares. It is apparent that the depiction of her Sunday costume in general, which was expected to be the reflection of her religious devotion, mainly reveals the Wife of Bath's displaying her wealth, which is functional in both exhibiting her economic success and drawing attention to her body. Hence, presenting her body from head to foot, from coverchiefs to shoes, the Wife of Bath's material performance presents the Wife of Bath as a "walking wealth" (Hodges, "The Wife of Bath's Costumes" 364) despite the disapproval of the Church for "flamboyant" costume (Ege 204, 301). According to Barbara Gottfried, the Wife of Bath's extravagant clothes openly display the Wife of Bath's "love of self-fashioning and of self-projection" as well as her desire to be the centre of attention in society (205). She aims at being seen and recognised by others economically and corporeally. It is for this reason that she displays her female wares freely as it contributes to her performance of corporeal and discursive femininity.

The second part of the Wife of Bath's material performance is concerned with her travelling costume. The performance prioritises her hat: "Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat / As brood as is a bokeler or a targe" (I (A) 470-471). Although wimples were not fashionable in the late fourteenth century and were worn generally by nuns, or widows, or old women, it can be argued that the Wife of Bath's wimpled hat acts as a practical means of protection while travelling owing to its width displaying "her cosmopolitan experience," since it is "a practical protective hat that announces her wandering by the way" (Hodges, "The Wife of Bath's Costumes" 366). Hence, her hat reveals that the Wife of Bath cares about her body while travelling. In addition to being a humble hat unlike her rich Sunday costume, the depiction of her hat also reveals her "masculinity" displaying her as a "parody of a knight-errant" (Martin 38), because the hat is being compared to a buckler and a targe. A similar martial reference is used in the Wife of Bath's defining herself as a woman of Mars and Venus in her prologue to her tale (III (D) 603-620). Thus, her hat evokes "the sexual overtones of the jousting metaphor" (Hodges, "The Wife of Bath's Costumes" 366). It can be suggested that her almost buckler-wide hat protects the Wife of Bath's body from potential threats on the way. She has the means to fight against the possibility of being pierced physically and sexually.

The Wife of Bath also has "[a] foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large" (I (A) 472). Beidler claims that large refers not to her large hips⁶⁰ but to her large foot mantel, which was used for protection against the cold and mud in the Middle Ages (389). Thus, Beidler argues that she does not wear a foot-mantle on her large hips but wears a foot-mantle which is pulled largely, that is, loosely, over her hips (388-394). Whether "large" refers to her large hips or large footmantle, the adjective "large" is again reflexive of the material largeness of the Wife of Bath, whether corporeally, referring to her large hips, or economically, referring to her large footmantle. Furthermore, her use of a foot-mantle while she is riding astride, which is the masculine form of riding, is functional in protecting her dress from mud and in protecting her body from cold. In this respect, since she is able to ride astride, it can be suggested that the Wife of Bath transgresses gender roles. In this way, she presents herself both as an experienced traveller and as

equal to men, which contributes to her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity.

Furthermore, the Wife of Bath has “on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe” (I (A) 473). The spurs also contribute to “the traditional iconography of war,” which has already been signalled by her buckler-wide hat (Alford 120). As in the case of her hat, Hodges suggests that her spurs also present “her image as experienced traveler and one who knows how to manage” her horse, and contribute to “the martial and erotic imagery provided by her buckler-targe hat” (“The Wife of Bath’s Costumes” 367). It can be further argued that this is another implication of the Wife of Bath’s desire to reverse gender roles by presenting her as the figure above her husbands through the invocation of horse and its rider topos due to her spurs. Hence, she becomes a woman, who has control over the body of her husbands and her spurs help her sustain her control drawing attention to “[h]er easy mastery of a saddle horse” (Desmond 119). Although Hallissy defines the Wife of Bath “[a]s a clothing consumer” and thus as “a stock character” (128, 129), it is possible that “the Wife of Bath’s status-conscious love of finery” (Delaney 107) reflects not only her wealth but also her experienced nature in travelling (Hodges, “The Wife of Bath’s Costumes” 367). Displaying her travelling body in comfortable clothes, the Wife of Bath draws her spectators’ attention to her corporeality as well as to the discursive tradition about the proper ways of clothing for women, which is there for the Wife of Bath only to be used and abused. She abuses this discursive tradition to reverse gender roles as explained above through her riding astride, buckler-wide hat and spurs, and to assert her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity.

As a woman who has her economic means to embellish her body and sustain a respectable socio-economic status, the Wife of Bath does not present herself as humble or shy. Rather, “[b]oold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe” (I (A) 458), which can also be regarded as a signifier of her bodily boldness. Although Martin claims that “[t]he Wife seems, like many feminists, not very feminine,” which is implied by her attributes of a “parody” knight with her hat and spurs (37, 38), this argument is the reflection of the patriarchal point of view, in that, according to patriarchal expectations,

a woman should not seem much bold, since boldness is the feature of a man. Therefore, instead of appearing with a bold face in public, women were advised by the patriarchal authorities, as in the case of the husband teaching his wife in *The Good Wife's Guide / Le Ménagier de Paris*, saying “[w]hen walking in public keep your head upright, eyes downcast and immobile” (59). In direct contrast with this, the Wife of Bath performs as a bold female. In this respect, her profession, wifhood, can be considered to be the acceptance of this boldness in a female body, because her wifhood is the very reflection of her femininity.

In accordance with her bold physical attributes, the Wife of Bath also performs as a wandering wife, which displays the travelling female body and reveals her as a bold traveller:

And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
 She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
 In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne.
 She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye. (I (A) 463-467)

Although the Wife of Bath had been to Jerusalem, Rome, Bologna, Galicia and Cologne, there were strict spatial limitations for the female pilgrims in the Middle Ages. They were required to stay in the spaces determined by their estate. For instance, while it was not approved for nuns to leave their convent as stated above, or for housewives to leave their houses, it was not acceptable for urban women, including women engaged in trade, to leave their cities. In this respect, even the *femme sole* travelling outside their cities were criticised and marginalised as they did not conform to spatial limitations. Physical spaces provided a means for patriarchy to keep women under control (Hanawalt, “Medieval English” 19-26). Moreover, the idea of enclosure was not limited to nuns, and it was valid for women of all estates. It was not approved of them to leave their allotted spaces, which were in most cases enclosed spaces. In this respect, a woman joining pilgrimages was also regarded to be a stereotypical target for the misogynist tradition. Women, especially widows, who were travelling, were regarded to be the embodiments of licentiousness, and they were accused of abusing pilgrimages to have illicit relationships with men (Rigby 140; Hallissy xvi, 89-90, 101). Yet, such

spatial limitations were overcome by women engaged in trade from the late thirteenth century onwards. Likewise, the Wife of Bath, who is a very talented cloth-maker in the masculine market places, presents herself with a “fatal attraction to the outside world” (Owst 388).⁶¹ As well as working outside her home, she has been to Jerusalem three times and she has been to Rome, Bologna, Galicia and Cologne on pilgrimages. This reveals that the Wife of Bath does not observe the spatial limitations presented for her by the patriarchal enclosure system.

In accordance with her physical boldness, the Wife of Bath also draws attention with her laughter: “In felawshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe. / Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce, / For she koude of that art the olde daunce” (I (A) 474-476). She is a woman experienced in “the old dance,” and this experience results from her marriages and extramarital affairs as well as her relations in youth: “She was a worthy womman al hir lyve: / Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve, / Withouten oother compaignye in youthe” (I (A) 459-461). Her being five times married at the Church, except for her other relations, displays that she had remarried (at least) four more times following the death of her first husband, creating “her much-married experience” (Weil 31). Furthermore, her knowledge in the “old dance” of love, particularly her sexual experience, is again the outcome of her bourgeois status and her socio-economic freedom. It can be suggested that she is a serial wife, who accumulated wealth due to her inheritances from her husbands and from her trading activities. This brought her economic liberation, which created her social liberation. In fact, during the feudal period, a woman was always socially, economically and sexually under the control and governance of a man, first a father, then a husband. However, due to the influence of trade and its privileges for the female, women’s property rights improved, which also led to an improvement in their economic conditions. Moreover, the bride and the bridegroom both contributed to family property during marriage at the Church, which might be interpreted as the reason of the emphasis on the Wife of Bath’s marriage five times at the Church door. The dowry provided by the family of a bride and the dower by a bridegroom were brought together at the Church door for the newly married couple. The most important thing at this point was that lands brought as dower by a husband would be inherited by his wife if he died earlier. Although lands would revert to the

husband's family if the wife preferred remarriage, she still had the right to inherit a certain amount, known as the widow's third⁶² (Gies and Gies 27-33; Shahar 91, 95-96). Hence, the Wife of Bath's wealth seems to be acquired not only from her trading activities, but also from her inheritances in her marriages.

Although widows were regarded to be the embodiments of sexuality and licentiousness, especially as a result of the improvements of such property rights and the increasing number of women engaged in trade, as Hallissy indicates, widowhood turned out to be a phase of woman's life, which was much more independent compared to maidenhood and wifehood (xvi). Similarly, it can be argued that the Wife of Bath's experience in "the old dance" and marriage provides her not only with socio-economic advantages but also with corporeal experience. In this respect, her five marriages can be described as schools to educate her body. Although this education process cost her much and left her with damaged corporeality due to her deafness (I (A) 446) because of domestic violence in one of these marriages, the Wife of Bath still has a bold body. As Mel Storm suggests, it can be further claimed that being deaf might be an advantage for her, preventing her from hearing antifeminist discourses (125). Reflecting the power struggle between the masculine and the feminine discourse over the female body, her deafness stands out as the most important feature of her performance, which again combines her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity.

Before analysing the Wife of Bath's rhetorical performance, it is necessary to note the last but one of the most important part of her material performance, which again reveals some information about her body: "Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye" (I (A) 468). According to Mel Storm, her being gap-toothed is not only "a physiognomic symptom," but it also evokes "undisciplined speech" (124), which will be revealed in her own interpretation of the Bible and references to the learned clerks in her prologue and tale. Thus, her being gap-toothed is both corporeal and discursive. Hence, the Wife of Bath's material performance reveals that she is the embodiment of three main features of women in misogynist tradition: she is a traveller, she does not follow the rules of moderation in dress and she speaks too much (Hallissy 58), as revealed by her rhetorical performance.

The Wife of Bath's rhetorical performance, which has two parts, that is, her prologue and her tale, is important, first of all, in emphasising the role of the pilgrim audience in the Wife of Bath's corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Although the audience of the Wife of Bath is mainly constituted by males, the Clerk is the most important among them, as he is the embodiment of the learned clergy, who preach women submission and obedience in silence due to their inferior status in the gender hierarchy as embodiments of emotion and lust. Hence, when the Wife of Bath starts her prologue with a declaration of her authority indicating that "[e]xperience, though noon auctoritee / Were in this world, is right ynogh for me / To speke of wo that is in mariage" (III (D) 1-3), she explicitly designates the Clerk as her target. This means that she openly challenges the learned authorities in her rhetorical performance, there represented by the Clerk, in terms of preaching people as teachers about women (Kittredge, "Marriage" 7). This also draws attention to her body again, because her experience in marriage, that is, the corporeal experience of her body, is the very authority that "authorize[s] her to speak" (Desmond 116). Hence, as Barbara Gottfried states, in her "recreative act of speaking," that is, her turn in the tale telling game, the Wife of Bath performs "her re-creative power" (202) to subvert the authority of the Clerk in particular and clerks in general. Moreover, their performances reveal that while the Clerk is "Logic personified," the Wife of Bath is "Dame Rhetoric herself" (Alford 110), which enhances the opposition and the difference between the Clerk and the Wife of Bath. The Wife of Bath's rhetorical skills help her reject the gender impositions of the patriarchal learned and lewed traditions, and fashion her self through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity.

In line with these, as a woman who has the upper hand in her marriages, the Wife of Bath becomes the personification of the image of Eve, and evokes the woman-on-top image according to the patriarchal understanding of gender roles. Hence, it is mainly the group of the learned clerks, rather than husbands, that become the main rival and opponent of the Wife of Bath (Hanning 594-595). Her aim is not only to refuse gender stereotypes and sexual identities constructed for the female by these clerks, but also to fashion herself as a rival for these very clerks in her rhetorical performances, in which she speaks against these authorities. It is for this reason that, among the marriage group

tales, that is, the tales of the Clerk, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant and the Franklin,⁶³ “[t]he Wife of Bath, whose literacy is in question, makes more learned allusions than any other teller” (Benson, “Literary” 131). Therefore, the Clerk becomes the rival for the Wife of Bath not only as the representative of the learned patriarchy, but also as the embodiment of its misogynist narrative tradition, which denies women textual space to defend themselves. As a result, the Wife of Bath creates her own textual space by telling her tale, which is rhetorically embellished by its prologue. In her prologue to her tale, she abuses the misogynist narrative tradition of patriarchy through her body, which provides her not only with the chance to speak out her sexuality, but also with the corporeal experience to challenge the discourse and hence the authority of clerks. Accordingly, although the “Envoy” of the Clerk’s tale presents Griselda as the embodiment of perfect silent and submissive wife (IV (E) 1177-1188), the Wife of Bath is aware of the fact that “speech is a woman’s best weapon” (Hallissy 73) although it is also a very important element of antifeminist literature (Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 290).⁶⁴ Hence, she gives voice to not only the corporeal but also the discursive experiences of her body in her prologue to her tale.

The first part of the Wife of Bath’s rhetorical performance, that is, her prologue to her tale emphasises her experience, which has come to her through her five marriages as well as through her other relations. Therefore, the Wife of Bath’s body comes to the foreground as the space where her rhetorical performance will be added to her material performance in the “General Prologue.” Hence, the Wife of Bath’s body becomes a liminal space where her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity merge. She speaks against the clerkly tradition to liberate her sexuality and thus her body, which is made possible by her sexual experiences. Thus, her marriages are very important in forming her formal education owing to which the Wife of Bath presents herself as the authority to speak about marriage:

For, lordynges, sith I twelve yeer was of age,
 Thonked be God that is eterne on lyve,
 Housbondes at chirche dore I have had fyve –
 If I so ofte myghte have ywedded bee –
 And alle were worthy men in hir degree. (III (D) 4-8)

As Kittredge puts it, the Wife of Bath is “a woman of many schools” (“Marriage” 19) and her education, all conducted in worthy schools, started at the age of twelve. Her husbands are her schools to learn first-hand knowledge about marriage, contrary to the theoretical knowledge of the Clerk in particular and patriarchy in general, and they form the basis of her experience “to anatomize marital woe” (Longworth, “The Wife of Bath” 375). By explicitly advocating experience over authority, the Wife of Bath starts “a debate between books and life, between the written word and the spoken word, between the medium of masculine discourse and the medium of female discourse” (Hallissy xvii). This debate provides her in her prologue with the means to challenge the patriarchal dominance not only over social distinctions between the male and the female, but also over the narrative traditions produced and controlled by misogynist male clerks/authors.

As Patterson suggests, the Wife of Bath’s rhetorical performance in her prologue to her tale may be analysed in three sections. In the first section, she presents her defence of marriage against virginity; in the second section, she presents the story of her first three husbands; and in the last section, she narrates the story of her fourth and fifth husbands (“For the Wyves” 676, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 307). In all these three sections, the Wife of Bath presents her own story, which is actually the story of her body, by writing her version of the story of her husbands, which also means the story of her own body. It is for this reason that the Wife of Bath’s prologue has been defined as an autobiography (Chance 216, 231; Martin 5, 218; Hanning 584; Wilson and Makowski 157) and a monologue (Hallissy 165, Muscatine 205) as well as “a compressed marital autobiography” (Longworth, “The Wife of Bath” 382). Furthermore, Oberembt defines the Wife of Bath’s prologue as the “quasi-biography of her five husbands” (290), which turns her prologue into a “biographical” narrative as well (Thomas, “The Problem” 90). Thus, the Wife of Bath creates a textual space for the story of her body’s experiences in her marriages, and presents her body as a free space to fashion her identity by writing the story of her experiences with her husbands. This means a transgression, in that, the conventional speaking subjects of misogynist texts are transformed into objects to be spoken about by a female speaker/narrator. Hence, the “confessional” tone of her prologue (Martin 93; Hanning 584, 585; Root 252) reveals

that the Wife of Bath's main motive was, in fact, to display the misogyny of the patriarchal discourse although she "issues a disclaimer" in her prologue by saying that her intention is just to "play" (Straus 529; III (D) 192). The Wife of Bath's motive in questioning the representation of women in the literary spaces created by male authors is to reject the misogynist attitude of theoretically educated men. With this aim, she presents herself as the speaker of the story of female corporeality in public although male writers such as Juvenal argued that wives should not be allowed to be public speakers (6.448-51). Hence, it is the Wife of Bath's "mode of autobiographical self-disclosure," as Mark Miller puts it (192), that turns her prologue into a confession. In her narration of her experiences in marriage and her arguments for marriage instead of virginity, "the subversive potential of the confessional hermeneutic" (Root 255) not only helps the Wife of Bath to reveal more about her private life in marriage, but also contributes to her sincere tone, which draws her audience's attention. As a result of this, Crane suggests that her prologue reveals an "assertive, female, marriage-minded narrator" ("Alison's Incapacity" 20). Owing to the privileges of her socio-economic status as a widow engaged in trade and her inheritances from her dead husbands, the Wife of Bath is a self-confident woman and performs her confidence in her prologue with an intention to face and reinscribe the concept of ideal wifhood created by the misogynist textual tradition as exemplified by the Clerk and his tale of patient Griselda (Carruthers 209).

The Wife of Bath starts her prologue presenting "anti-ecclesiastical satire" (Kamowski 1). She extends her defence of experience over authority by interpreting the Bible according to her own point of view. In this subversive interpretation, her main concern is fighting against the impositions of virginity by misogynist male authors. She starts questioning the authority of clerks over the interpretation of the Bible, which transforms her into "Alisoun the intellectual rebel" in the eyes of misogynist writers (Hallissy 172). As Longworth argues, the Wife of Bath thus exhibits the arbitrariness of the relation between the text, the Bible, and its phallogocentric interpretations by male clerks. She presents her own version of the Biblical interpretation in her prologue through "a new reading," which is not phallogocentric ("The Wife of Bath" 381). The Wife of Bath's first Biblical interpretation against conventional clerkly interpretation is about the proper

number of marriages. Speaking against the clerky tradition of the Bible interpretations, she starts by saying that

[b]ut me was toold, certeyn, nat longe agoon is,
 That sith that Crist ne wente nevere but onis
 To weddyng, in the Cane of Galilee,
 That by the same ensample taughte he me
 That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
 Herkne eek, lo, which a sharp word for the nones,
 Biside a welle, Jhesus, God and man,
 Spak in repreeve of the Samaritan:
 ‘Thou hast yhad fyve housbondes,’ quod he,
 ‘And that ilke man that now hath thee
 Is noht thyn housbonde,’ thus seyde he certeyn.
 What that he mente therby, I kan nat seyn;
 But that I axe, why that the fifthe man
 Was noon housbonde to the Samaritan?
 How manye myghte she have in mariage?
 Yet herde I nevere tellen in myn age
 Upon this nombre diffinicioun. (III (D) 9-25)

As Hansen states, the Wife of Bath’s use of “me was toold” (III (D) 9) presents her passive status “as a person acted upon rather than acting, a human being whose behavior is subject to the criticism and correction of some higher authority” (30). She draws attention to the fact that she needs to defend herself against an unknown authority, implied by her use of the passive voice. Hansen defines this as “Orwellian mystification of the power behind language” (30) and its discursive constructions about the female. In her counter-attack to this passive voice structure, the Wife of Bath makes use of “I,” which emphasises her body’s agency as an active speaking voice.⁶⁵ She conveys the message that “the literal text – her body – can speak for itself” (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 115). Furthermore, in order to enhance the reliability of the female “I” and her arguments about the proper number of marriages, she refers to the Biblical story of the marriage of the Samaritan woman in Cana (John 4:17). She argues that Jesus did not refer to any numbers in relation to the marriage of the Samaritan woman although he said that she had married five times, and that last man was not her husband (III (D) 17-19). Hence, she asks why she cannot marry more than once, since it was clear that the proper number of marriages was not uttered by Jesus. This questioning attitude draws attention to the idea that “[s]he asks her bold questions of no one in particular, and of everyone” (Hansen 30). Although these questions are directed to everybody, these are in

fact rhetorical questions raised by the Wife of Bath to challenge the authority of the male interpreters of this passage.

Following this rhetorical challenge, the Wife of Bath, again favouring the female “I,” asserts that she has never heard the proper number (III (D) 24-25). It is for this reason that the Wife of Bath’s interpretation of the Scripture has been defined as “a Utopian ‘group fantasy,’ directed against the ‘anti-feminist’ tradition,” which presents the relationship between writing and reading, in this case the Scripture and its interpretations (Ingham 41). Her aim here is to show the difference between the interpretation of the same case, the marriage of the Samaritan woman, by the male authorities and herself as a woman. In this way, she becomes the mouthpiece of all women, who are highly criticised in this misogynist tradition, and presents the need for a new form of interpretation that does not marginalise the feminine. In relation to the Wife of Bath’s position as a reader, Lindley indicates that the Wife of Bath is a woman “with many fathers, nearly all of them – from St. Jerome to Jean de Meun – priests,” and defines the Wife of Bath as “the summation of a tradition of men writing through, at, about, and especially over women, condensed and dramatized by another man (Chaucer) who must, literally or figuratively, have performed her,” and hence also defines her as “a drag act, a female impersonation” (4). Similarly, Cox argues that the Wife of Bath is only “a fictional voice articulated from moment to moment by narrative structures” and thus she “does not control the agency of her own narrative, her ‘own’ voice, even as the narrative voice constructs the illusion of character” (18). Thus, Cox suggests that “the Wife ultimately does not replace or supplant the masculine with what could be constructed as an *écriture féminine*” (Cox 18-19). Yet, it can be claimed that the Wife of Bath still questions the patriarchal representations of women although she is not able to write this down herself. The Wife of Bath’s speech, which reflects her reading process, still provides her own interpretation although it comes to the readers through Chaucer the pilgrim. By questioning the interpretation of the Bible by clerks and the Church fathers, the Wife of Bath gives voice to her need and desire for a new reading, which might seem “incongruous” for the misogynist tradition (Brooke 212). With this aim, the Wife of Bath problematises the Biblical interpretations of the misogynist Church fathers, by which, as Tinkle states, she places herself “in the

discursive place of the Church Father, privileging ‘carnal’ hermeneutics and elaborating a gendered scriptural argument” (“Contested” 270). In order to achieve her aim, the Wife of Bath’s choice of marriage as a starter is actually very appropriate, because, as Judith M. Bennett argues, “[m]edieval marriage was both a private matter and a public institution” (111). Abusing this private/public marriage concept, the Wife of Bath brings together the private/public world of marriage in order to problematise the private/public problems married women had to cope with. Moreover, this enables her to speak against the conventional misogynist discourse about women, especially about married women. Although this also implies that she has become the representative of the ungovernable women of the misogynist society as depicted in the Bible (1 Tim. 2: 8–15), her main aim is just to present herself as the authority to speak about marriage owing to her experience rather than theoretical knowledge. Hence, “the surprisingly belated appearance of the Samaritan woman as a role-model” for women about remarriages (Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethics* 195) triggers the Wife of Bath’s re-reading and questioning of the interpretations of the Bible by the male authorities. Thus, she directs her critical arrows to the “unidentified” male interpreters of the Bible (Longworth, “The Wife of Bath” 374):

Men may devyne and glosen, up and doun,
 But wel I woot, expres, withoute lye,
 God bad us for to wexe and multiplie;
 That gentil text kan I wel understonde.
 Eek wel I woot, he seyde myn housbonde
 Sholde lete fader and mooder, and take to me.
 But of no nombre mencion made he,
 Of bigamy, or of octogamy;
 Why sholde men thanne speke of it vileynye? (III (D) 26-34)

Following the example of the Samaritan woman, referring to Genesis (1:28; 9:1), the Wife of Bath furthers her arguments about marriage indicating that she knows that God bid people procreation by marriage (III (D) 27-28). Rather than bidding virginity, she argues that God bade multiplication. Therefore, the Wife of Bath preaches against virginity by referring to the virtues of marital sex as also stated by God (Genesis 2:24, John 2:2-10, Matthew 5:32; 19:19, 1 Corinthians 7:28, Hebrews 13:4 and 1 Corinthians 7:2). In this way, she defends marriage and rejects critical attitudes towards sex, which

transformed from the Sex of Paradise, which was without lust and sin (Payer 18-41), to the Sex of Fall, which led one to sin after the Original Sin (Payer 42-60). The Wife of Bath refers to the Old Testament and God's bidding multiplication, which means that "she glosses the New Testament with the Old Testament and inverts the ascetic misogynous ideal by superimposing the Genesis passage over Christ's teaching" (Wilson and Makowski 154). According to her interpretation, "in marriage there was a *duty* to procreate" (Payer 7, emphasis original). Although this blending of the New and Old Testaments sounds strange, it helps the Wife of Bath display the unreliability and the arbitrariness of patriarchal interpretations.

Emphasising the different interpretation of men and the female "I," the Wife of Bath displays her ability to interpret the Bible herself, as she declares herself as able to understand and interpret "[t]hat gentil text" (III (D) 29). In this way, speaking against men, who gloss the Bible in a phallogocentric way, the Wife of Bath presents how this phallogocentric interpretation shapes and governs the female. This enables her to criticise this misogynist discourse and its abuse of language (Straus 527). Moreover, her saying "wel I woot" (III (D) 27, 30) and "kan I wel understonde" (III (D) 29) displays her agency as well. She does not accept the interpretation of men passively, but rather fashions herself as an active interpreter of the same text. In this way, she exhibits that the clerical interpretation of the Bible is not its one and only interpretation. Rather, there might be other different interpretations.

In order to enhance her argument about the proper number of marriages, the Wife of Bath exhibits the inequality and the partiality of the patriarchal discourse about marrying more than once by referring to the wives of Solomon (III (D) 35-36). Her main argument is that if Solomon had more than one wife (2 Timothy 5:9-12), it is her right too to marry more than once (III (D) 37-43). She claims her right for equal sexual pleasure and refreshment. It is for this reason that she prefers wifedom as a profession rather than maidenhood or widowhood. At this point, it is important to note that the Wife of Bath equates herself as a woman to a man from the Bible. Traditionally, she should be taking a female as her example. Yet, through cross-role model adopting, the

Wife of Bath challenges male superiority and presents herself as equal to men to speak against the phallogocentric discourse.

Marrying more than once was in fact an outcome of social conditions. Becoming a widow in the Middle Ages was a common case because of a number of reasons such as the impact of the Hundred Years War, wives outliving their husbands, and the age difference between husbands and wives. Nevertheless, under the influence of inheritance and property laws as well as economic improvements, especially owing to the development of trade, widows in the fourteenth century desired to stay as widows, which also contributed to their prestige in society, because widowhood was regarded to be a second chance to live a chaste life (Hallissy 136). There is also a reference to the desirability of widowhood in the Wife of Bath's tale (III (D) 928). However, a widow was also a potential lusty woman, in that, widows were regarded as potential threats against the moral life of society due to their sexual experience. Because of such social oppression and the need for heirs as well as the need for economic support in families, remarriage was very common. Yet, the reaction of society to the remarriage of widows was again biased, since while it was acceptable for a widower to remarry, it was not that much approved of a widow to remarry, especially because this would mean the loss of chaste life for the second time (Hallissy 136-142; Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 292-294). Accordingly, as Clark indicates, medieval widows had "a blessed but liminal position" before remarriage, which can be resembled to "purgatory" (169). They were provided with the chance of a chaste life, and threatened by the assumption of their sexual promiscuity at the same time. Thus, it was not appropriate for them to travel as temptress figures. Rather than taking part in social life, they were required to mourn for their husbands⁶⁶ and wear dark clothes after their husbands' death although there was not a specified time span for this mourning (Hallissy 136). Furthermore, as Clark suggests, under the influence of belief in Purgatory from the late eleventh century onwards, a widow was required to work and pray for her dead husband, who might have been in Purgatory (170-171; 174-175). If a woman prayed for her husband, she might be a means for her husband to leave Purgatory and go to Paradise, which would also signal her chastity, purity and morality. Still, contrary to the expectations of the patriarchal society, "[f]ree of father and husband, the widow was her own woman at last" (Hallissy

160). A medieval widow had greater rights compared to a virgin and a wife. As a result, the economic and legal independence of a widow led to anxiety among moralists, because they believed that a widow who had sexual experience posed a threat as the image of the lustful woman, and she might like to seek sexual independence as well.

Nevertheless, despite all these impositions on widows, they were allowed to remarry, especially the younger ones, to avoid the sins of flesh. If they were inclined to sexual pleasures, the better way for them was to remarry. This meant that widows could also accumulate material wealth from the inheritances from their husbands' owing to the "marriage contracts," which had replaced the conventional "widow's third" in the late medieval period (Gies and Gies 232). Because of their economic means, widows' remarriage was also functional in transferring the legal right of property ownership to the male. Hence, a widow was a chance for a man to get great economic means through the control of her inheritance(s) from her previous husband(s) or through the control of her money coming from her trade (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 104-108). These legal improvements contributed to the ambiguity of widows' agency (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 110) although they also brought their material and social independence following the death of their husbands. It can be claimed that the Wife of Bath chooses remarriage not only to avoid the ambiguities of widowhood, but also to exercise the agency of her body over the male. It is for this reason that whenever she becomes a widow, as Hanawalt puts it, the Wife of Bath chooses to "serially marry" (*The Wealth* 111). Hence, she blesses her five marriages and welcomes her sixth husband (III (D) 44-45). As Isabel Davis notes, her main motive may be to avoid being defined as a widow (73), which is also reflected in her depiction as a wife rather than a widow. As a result of this, as Isabel Davis indicates, the Wife of Bath reveals herself "in the process of perpetual formation, a process whose end is infinitely deferred" (75). This process is formed by her reiterative corporeal and discursive performance of femininity, which can be perfectly performed in married life rather than widowhood. Consequently, she wants to be a perpetual wife, which is possible only through remarriage if her husband dies.

In order to justify her arguments about multiple marriages, the Wife of Bath adds Abraham and Jacob and many other holy men as examples of men, who had more than

one wife (III (D) 55-58). Then, she asks “[w]hat rekketh me, thogh folk seye vileynye / Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamy?” (III (D) 53-54). As in the case of her equating herself to Solomon, the Wife of Bath again equates herself as a woman to a man from the Bible while she should be taking a female as her example. Through this cross-role model adopting, the Wife of Bath again challenges the phallogocentric discourse on women and claims equal rights. Accordingly, following the example of those holy men, she declares that:

For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chaast in al.
Whan myn housbonde is fro the world ygon,
Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon,
For thanne, th’apostle seith that I am free
To wedde, a Goddes half, where it liketh me.
He seith that to be wedded is no synne;
Bet is to be wedded than to brynne. (III (D) 46-52)

Clearly evoking 1 Cor. 7:9, the Wife of Bath repeats St. Paul’s argument that it is better to marry than to burn. Although St. Paul also says that to do neither is better, the Wife of Bath aims at justifying her arguments about remarriage morally instead of sinning (Weil 33). Although this displays her “self-interested exegesis” to legitimise her desire to remarry instead of renouncing her sexual desires (Tinkle, “Contested” 268), by citing these very authorities, the Wife of Bath turns them into means to justify her own arguments about remarriage. Thus, she uses and abuses the phallogocentric discourse on remarriage to her own ends. Then, combining her argument about remarriage and sexuality, she asks “I pray yow, telleth me. / [...] where comanded he virginitee?” (III (D) 61-62). In this way, in her own interpretation of the Bible and its teachings, the Wife of Bath emphasises that virginity, though more perfect than marriage, was sent as a choice, not a commandment by God (III (D) 59-94).

Following her preaching against virginity, which turns her prologue into a *sermon joyeaux* (Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 308) or a parody sermon (Martin 211), the Wife of Bath declares that she has devoted herself to marriage:

I graunte it wel; I have noon envie,
Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamy.
It liketh hem to be clene, body and goost;

Of myn estaat I nyl nat make no boost [...]. (III (D) 95-98)

Indicating that she is not envious of virgins, the Wife of Bath starts explaining the differences between virgins and married women (III (D) 99-112, 144-148). Drawing attention to the idea that God created human beings and gave each a different gift (III (D) 102-103), she rejects the perfection of virginity and almost proudly declares that she is not a virgin (III (D) 112). Rather than accepting the idealised state of virginity for her body, she declares that “I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age / In the actes and in fruyt of marriage” (III (D) 113-114).⁶⁷ In this way, as Dinshaw states, “the Wife makes her autonomous desire the very motive and theme of her performance” (*Chaucer’s* 114), and attributes her body agentic power as a desiring subject.

Devoting herself to marriage, her comparison of virgins and married women helps her explain the necessity and utility of married women for the well-being of society. In line with these, she has many “play[s] of associations” (Weil 27) such as the gold and wood imagery (III (D) 99-101) and the bread imagery (III (D) 144-148) to explicitly state the difference between virgins and married women. The gold imagery enables the Wife of Bath to emphasise that even if they are not like gold but like wood, married women “doon hir lord servyse” (III (D) 101). Although it seems that she has accepted the secondary position of married women, she, in fact, emphasises the goods of married women for “servyse,” which has sexual connotations.

The Wife of Bath also makes use of the wheat and barley bread imagery, and argues that virgins might be like pure wheat bread, but widows, like barley bread, are necessary to refresh many a man (Mark 6:35-44):

Lat hem be breed of pured whete-seed,
 And lat us wyves hoten barly-breed;
 And yet with barly-breed, Mark telle kan,
 Oure Lord Jhesu refresshed many a man.
 In swich estaat as God hath cleped us
 I wol persevere; I nam nat precius. (III (D) 143-148)

Drawing an analogy between the wheat and barley bread to refer to “two sexual states” (Hall 60), that is, virginity and wifhood, the Wife of Bath turns bread into “a sexual metaphor for the comparison” (Wilson and Makowski 155). Moreover, as Allman and Hanks argue, the Wife of Bath’s bread imagery helps her make use of “[c]onsumption” as “a traditional figure for female sexuality” (55), since she refers to the refreshment of men by bread (III (D) 146-146). At this point, if it is remembered that the Wife of Bath has “a captive audience” (Van 180), mainly constituted by men, it is a very useful imagery for her to draw attention to their “hunger.” The most important aspect of these two imageries is that they enable the Wife of Bath to draw attention to the corporeality of women. In both cases, she emphasises the influence of women’s bodies on men. Although the female bodies in these two imageries seem to be attributed a passive status as something to serve the lord as in the case of the gold and wood imagery and something to refresh men as in the case of the wheat and barley bread imagery, it can be claimed that the Wife of Bath in fact attributes the female body agency as a pleasure producing body, and emphasises its utility.

In order to enhance the agentic power of her body as a desiring subject, the Wife of Bath starts explaining the function of genitals. She believes that genitals “were nat maad for nought” (III (D) 118). As well as being functional in differentiating man from woman, she knows by “experience” (III (D) 124) that they have other functions, too. Here again, emphasising the authority of corporeal experience, she confronts the clerks and argues that genitals are made for “office, and for ese / Of engendrure” (III (D) 127-128). At this point, the Wife of Bath also subverts the arguments of the Church fathers in relation to the marriage debt. Reminding that all these men write that man should pay his marriage debt, she asks how he can make his payment without using “his sely instrument?” (III (D) 132). Thus, abusing the marriage debt arguments, the Wife of Bath draws attention to sexuality.

Questioning the authority of the Church fathers, the Wife of Bath further says that although some might follow the example of Christ in virginity (III (D) 138-142), genitals are both “[t]o purge uryne, and eek for engendrure” (III (D) 134) as well as to pay the marriage debt, which was also in line with the teachings of the Bible (1 Cor.

7:3). In this respect, what she argues in relation to the function of genitals is in accordance with the impact of the Fall, and the idea that “not to procreate offspring creates fornicators, not spouses” (Payer 63). Yet, it is paradoxical that although the Wife of Bath refers to the function of genitals in procreation (III (D) 134, 137), she never refers to her own children, and appears to be “a barren *wife*” (Chance 218, emphasis original). Hence, it seems that her reference to the importance of procreation is just functional in drawing attention to sexuality. Although she emphasises the function of genitals in order to sustain the multiplication of children in marriages, what multiplies in the Wife of Bath’s marital experience appears to be not children but the experience of her body, the source of which is sexual pleasure. In this way, she celebrates the female body, which is interested in following its sexual desires. She multiplies the experience of her body in her marriages, which help her multiply her sexual desires as well.

Accordingly, it would not be right to assert that the Wife of Bath has “barren sexuality,” since she does not refer to any children (Martin 39). After all, she had three old husbands at first and then she might be too old to have children in her last two marriages. Rejecting the role of motherhood, as Pugh indicates, the Wife of Bath presents “the marriage bed as a means to achieve both independence and sensual gratification” (122). Hence, using the “legal loopholes” (Hallissy 170) in the marriage debt arguments, she multiplies both her sexual pleasure and material gains in her marriages and thus achieves “marital har-money” (Delaney 104). Interestingly enough, despite her concern about multiplying sexual pleasure, the Wife of Bath’s tale of her body in her prologue never refers to an adulterous relationship although it is implied that she had such relations in youth (I (A) 461). This exhibit that, even for the Wife of Bath, the “representation of the erotic experience of adulterous female desire [...] stands as a taboo” (Allman and Hanks 56). Thus, remaining within the limits of marriage as a professional wife, the Wife of Bath says “[i]n wyfhod I wol use myn instrument / As frely as my Makere hath it sent” (III (D) 149-150). This choice lets her secure her sexual pleasures in wifehood, which has not been approved by the misogynist clerks who have presented themselves as the authority over the issue of sexuality in marriage despite their lack of first-hand experience.

The Church desired to have marriage under its control to regulate sexual relations and to prevent excess in sexual pleasure which was regarded as sinful. With the help of canon law and the formalisation of marital ceremony, the Church gained control over marriage (Hallissy 12). This meant that marriage became a public matter as well as a private matter. In this way, the Christian moralists adopted and enlarged the critical attitude of Stoics about sex as the enactment of sensuality. They argued that having sex without the intention of having children⁶⁸ or paying the marital debt was sinful, deafening the rational faculties.⁶⁹ If sex took place outside marriage, it was worse, because it meant fornication (Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethics* 78-79).

Yet, through her own interpretation of the marriage debt, the Wife of Bath “liberated” her sexuality from all these constraints, and performs it for the sake of pleasure (Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethics* 84). Although there was warning against lust, as also indicated by the Parson in his tale (X (I) 942-45), the Bible also bid the payment of the marriage debt for both the husband and wife (1 Corinthians 7:3). This created a “moral dilemma” between the arguments of the marital debt and the condemnation of sexual pleasure in marriage (Kamowski 5). Abusing this situation, the Wife of Bath moves her arguments for marriage debt one step further, and declares herself as the supreme debtor of her husbands:

Myn housbonde shal it have bothe eve and morwe,
 Whan that hym list come forth and paye his dette.
 An housbonde I wol have – I wol nat lette –
 Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
 And have his tribulacion withal
 Upon his flessh, whil that I am his wyf.
 I have the power durynge al my lyf
 Upon his propre body, and noght he.
 Right thus the apostel tolde it unto me,
 And bad oure housbondes for to love us weel.
 Al this sentence me liketh every deel –(III (D) 152-162)

She indicates that she will pay her marriage debt to her husband whenever he wants, which will also help her control his body. Robertson regards the Wife of Bath’s declaring herself as the controller of her husbands’ bodies due to the marriage debt as “a means of prostitution” (“Land Tenure” 404). Similarly, Leicester argues that the Wife of

Bath uses marriage “as a form of prostitution” (*The Disenchanted* 76). Likewise, Hallissy argues that the Wife of Bath regards the marriage debt as “an admission ticket to an orgy,” which could have been very offensive if it was a man talking about his wife (168). Yet, it is necessary to note that this interpretation helps the Wife of Bath present herself as the one and only controller of bodies, both her own and her husbands.⁷⁰ Thus, this interpretation should be regarded as a reflection of the Wife of Bath’s attributing agency to her desiring body.

In this respect, the intervention of the Pardoner into the Wife of Bath’s rhetorical performance (III (D) 163-168) is also functional in the acknowledgement of this agency. As a preacher himself, the Pardoner defines the Wife of Bath as “a noble prechour” (III (D) 165) owing to her interpretation skills. If the Pardoner is a representative preacher and thus “a judge of good preaching” (Kittredge, “Marriage” 6), the Wife of Bath, due to “her asides and editorial comments” to the clerkly interpretation tradition (Weil 34), succeeds in convincing him about her preaching abilities as a female who displays her body as a free space to experience sexual pleasures subverting the marriage debt impositions. The Pardoner is worried about the impositions of marriage on his body (III (D) 167), through which he also draws attention to the Wife of Bath’s liberated body in marriage. While the Pardoner regards marriage as a kind of suffering for his body, the Wife of Bath celebrates it as the source of pleasure for her body. As a result, the Pardoner’s praise of the Wife of Bath’s preaching can be accepted as a reflection of the idea that her presenting herself as the authority to preach on the matters of marriage and sex, which were vital for the corporeality of a medieval woman, has been “meekly accepted” by the Pardoner, and this signals that the “male discourse passes into female control” (Mann, *Feminizing* 60). Just as she claims authority over the body of her husbands, the Wife of Bath also claims authority over the discourse about marriage and sexuality. In this way, she challenges patriarchy’s both corporeal and discursive control and authority over women. Thus, she presents herself as the teacher of patriarchy as well.

Accordingly, the Wife of Bath resembles her body to a barrel and her rhetorical performance to something to be drunk (III (D) 170-177). Similar to the bread imagery,

this barrel imagery, too, presents her body as something to refresh men. Hence, although it seems that the Wife of Bath “takes over a passive, objectified image of female sexuality” as she does in her use of bread imagery as stated by Allman and Hanks (56), it can be suggested that she implies that her barrel-body filled by sexual desires is ready to teach the male body. She can teach them by making them drink from her barrel-body. As a result, it can be claimed that the barrel imagery again contributes to the agency of the Wife of Bath’s body, since her body is thus attributed power to have influence on the body of men.

The Wife of Bath’s use of whip imagery is also functional in drawing attention to the agency of her body. Despite the teaching of the Bible that “[y]our desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16), the Wife of Bath indicates that she is “the whippe” over her husbands (III (D) 175). In this way, she also makes use of an “equestrian metaphor” (Desmond 122), which evokes the topos of the woman-on-top. This metaphor of horse and its rider also signifies the control of senses/body by reason. Although Friedman argues that this metaphor signals the Wife of Bath’s “misinterpretation of the horse and rider topos” as in the case of the mounted Aristotle image, in which Aristotle is presented as a horse ridden by Phyllis, his wife (177), the subversion of this metaphor displays the agency of the Wife of Bath’s body in control of her husbands and her sexual desire. She presents herself as the whip over her husbands, and enhances her experience. Moreover, challenging her audience as a whip, she quotes Ptolemy as her source and directs them to read Ptolemy if they do not believe her (III (D) 182-183). Although she refers to Ptolemy, a male authority to support her argument, giving voice to Ptolemy, the Wife of Bath implies that Ptolemy’s discourse is also under her control now, which again contributes to her authority.

Following the invitation of the Pardoner to tell her tale (III (D) 184-187), which displays the acceptance of her teachings by a man who assumes the role of preacher, the Wife of Bath is ready to tell her tale revealing her liberation from the corporeal and discursive impositions of the misogynist tradition as a speaking body. Although she notes that her main intent is just “to pleye” (III (D) 192), it can be suggested that her main concern is to play with the misogynist discourse of clerks. Hence, although she

says that she will start telling her tale (III (D) 193), she continues her narration of the tale of her body in her marriages.

This is the beginning of the second part of the Wife of Bath's rhetorical performance in her prologue, that is, the part about her three old husbands. In general, the Wife of Bath's narration of married life with these three old husbands displays, as Mann puts it, "how she cowed her first three husbands into submission by her lengthy tirades against them" (*Feminizing* 60). Her narration is reflective of Eustace Deschamps's *Miroir de Mariage*, the *Lamentations of Matheolus*, Theophrastus's *Liber Aureolus de Nuptiis*, the *Romance of the Rose* and the *Epistola Valerii* (Lindley 5; Mann, *Feminizing* 60). The Wife of Bath's behaviour towards her first three husbands is very much in line with the arguments of the authors of deportment books, the most famous of which were *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* and *Le Menagier de Paris*, which aimed at teaching young females how to become good wives. This is similar to the attitude of the Wife of Bath in her attempt to teach her husbands how to become good husbands (Carruthers 211-213). It is important to note that the Wife of Bath reverses the roles. Contrary to the image of male clerks teaching females how to be good wives, the Wife of Bath presents herself as the teacher of males. Thus, in addition to the religious/clerkly antifeminist discourse, she also renounces and speaks against the secular antifeminist discourse of male authors and their literary works in her self-fashioning through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Claiming equal rights again, she displays that she can be a teacher of the male.

In this section of her rhetorical performance, the Wife of Bath displays not only the story of her husbands, but also the secrets of her trade, that is, professional wifedom. The Wife of Bath groups her husbands and thus marriages into two as good and bad: "As thre of hem were goode, and two were badde. / The thre were goode men, and riche, and olde" (III (D) 196-197). As Reis suggests, she is not only ageist but also materialist in her evaluation of her husbands as good and bad (*Chaucer* 88-113, 129-130). The good husbands are old and rich, because they die early, and leave her much material wealth while the bad husbands are young and poor, which means that they reversed the Wife of Bath's advantages in marriages to their own benefit. Yet, although

the Wife of Bath defines her old husbands as good, she “[p]ublicly” humiliates them for sexual impotency (Pugh 125):

Unnethe myghte they the statut holde
 In which that they were bounden unto me.
 Ye woot wel what I meene of this, pardee!
 As help me God, I laughe whan I thynke
 How pitously a-nyght I made hem swynke! (III (D) 198-202)

The Wife of Bath explicitly states that she pitied the sexual inadequacy of the old men for her young body. She not only looks down upon these old men, but also replaces the dominance of masculine desire with feminine desire, and challenges and rejects “male sexuality its privileged position” (Pugh 125). She subverts male authority in sexuality challenging male authority over the female body. The old male body becomes insufficient for the young female body.

By humiliating her old husbands in a public space in front of many men, the Wife of Bath also transgresses the privacy of their home. According to patriarchal understanding, home is the place controlled by the male not only economically but also sexually (Duncan 128, 131). The husband has the authority in every aspect. However, the Wife of Bath’s revelation of the private life in her house becomes an indication of the fact that “[d]omestic and even intimate relations are political relations” (Duncan 135). Hence, the house stands out as a private space which is the arena for the power struggle between the male and the female. Yet, the Wife of Bath’s humiliation of her old husbands shows that she has gained the upper hand in this power struggle in her house.

Despite this humiliation, the Wife of Bath does not refrain from revealing that

[a]nd, by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.
 They had me yeven hir lond and hir tresoor;
 Me neded nat do lenger diligence
 To wynne hir love, or doon hem reverence.
 They loved me so wel, by God above,
 That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love! (III (D) 203-208)

She is almost proud of the fact that she has a great amount of property coming not only from her trade but also from her rich old husbands, which was protected by customs and law, both canon and common law, from the fourteenth century onwards.⁷¹ This is the reason why the Wife of Bath regards old husbands as good husbands. She would have the right to her dowry and the dower of her husbands at her old husbands' death (Carruthers 210-211), which constitutes her main concern in her marriages with these old men.

Thus, the Wife of Bath does not even feel the need to tell the stories of her rich old husbands individually, but depicts her marriages with them as a group. She argues that as a "wys womman" (III (D) 209), who has the love of her rich old husbands in hand, she does not try to please them, because she already has "al hir lond" (III (D) 212). It is for this very reason that she explicitly asks why she should try to please them if it is not for her own profit or pleasure (III (D) 214). As Carruthers argues, this reveals that the Wife of Bath regards "[t]he root of marital 'maistrye'" in these marriages as "economic control" (214), due to which she declares her liberation from her husbands not only economically but also sexually. Presenting that "men, not women, represent easily exploitable emotional patsies caught up in the swirl of love" (Pugh 126) as in the case of her marriages with her old and rich husbands, the Wife of Bath displays that, as an economically liberated female body, she should enjoy sexual liberation as well (III (D) 215-223). Unable to satisfy her bodily desires, the old husbands become the targets of her cynicism and humiliation despite their wealth.

In this respect, although the Wife of Bath is the only secular woman in the pilgrim group, and her audience is mostly comprised of men, her address "[y]e wise wyves" (III (D) 225) can be interpreted as a reflection of her interest in showing the secrets of wise wives', not women's or widows', tricks of the trade. Thus, she starts listing her tricks to deal with her old husbands such as lying, false accusation, weeping, false swearing and not abiding in bed (III (D) 226-451). Making use of the stereotypes of misogynistic narratives such as presenting women as professional liars (III (D) 228), the Wife of Bath tries to show her husbands the true way to behave. She presents herself as the teacher of

her husbands deconstructing their arguments against her by directly confronting their discourse.

The Wife of Bath's use of "[t]hou seist" (III (D) 248, 285, 293), "seistow" (III (D) 251, 273, 302), "[t]hou seyst" (III (D) 254, 257, 263, 337), "seyst" (III (D) 271), "[t]how seyst" (III (D) 278, 282), "[t]hou seydest" (III (D) 348, 362), "[t]hou seyest" (III (D) 376) and "[t]hou liknest" (III (D) 371) is very functional in her depiction of the conflict with "thou," husbands in particular and patriarchy in general, and "I," the Wife of Bath in particular and the female in general. Likewise, as Thomas suggests, confronting her husbands with such addresses with their "pleading colour" helps the Wife of Bath appropriate "the barrister's rhetoric" and present herself as "Dame Barrister" ("What the Man of Law Can't Say" 262, 263, 264). Hence, it can be claimed that the Wife of Bath regards patriarchy as the guilty party in the conflict between "us" and "them," or the female and the male.

In this respect, the Wife of Bath's use of "I," as in the case of "I woot" (III (D) 27, 30, 55, 63, 79, 849), "I wel understonde" (III (D) 29) and "I trowe" (III (D) 36, 217, 317, 513, 600) is functional in attributing agency to her speaking body, since this displays that her speech provides the Wife of Bath with the chance of both "self-expression" and "self-glorification" (Hallissy 165). Thus, she not only represents but also recreates and fashions her self through language. Although silence was suggested for the female and being talkative was criticised in the Bible through the representations of talkative women as shrews (Ephesians 5:21-24; Proverbs 5:8-9, 7:11, 9: 13, 7:21, 21:9, 21:19; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-14), the Wife of Bath presents herself as the embodiment of a female "verbal artist" (Hansen 28). This also exhibits that, speaking in the name of women in general, the Wife of Bath presents herself both as the "prosecutor (of clerks and her husbands)" and the "defense attorney (for herself and other women)" (Benson, "Literary" 139). In this way, she not only displays her "powerful ego," but also abuses the idea that "[p]ublic speech is a male prerogative" (Hallissy 172, 173). This can be further interpreted as the Wife of Bath's conquering another masculine sphere. She starts with the interpretation of the Bible, continues with the sexual liberation of women and now she performs as a public speaker. This gains more importance if it is

remembered that the public in front of which the Wife of Bath has been speaking is mainly constituted by males.

In this respect, if the identity performances of the Prioress and the Wife of Bath are compared, it is easier to see the corporeal and discursive liberation of the Wife of Bath, who emphasises the agency of her body and thus fashions herself as the master of her body and goods. The Prioress performs her religious identity without the renunciation of her gender identity in her performance of femininity as reflected by her material performance in the “General Prologue.” Yet, while the Prioress does not renounce her gender identity in contrast to the expectations of the misogynist society, she still gives voice to the same discourse of her religious estate. However, the Wife of Bath moves one step further and presents her body as a free space to fashion her identity through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. It is owing to her “bureaucratic mentality” (Delaney 114) that she manages to gain the upper hand in the masculine world not only in mercantile activities and in sexual matters, but also in speaking out loud about her sexual identity. It is for this reason that the Wife of Bath’s corporeal and discursive performance of femininity appears as an “enormously affirmative and adversative” performance (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 116). She aims at both asserting the agency of her body and renouncing male authority over her body. Her concern is not only about economic independence but also about corporeal independence. Hence, she needs to fight against masculine dominance on both economic and corporeal level. Thus, abusing the idea that “[m]edieval sin and virtue were not gender-neutral” (Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethics* 14), the Wife of Bath presents herself as the embodiment of all the sins attributed to the female by patriarchy in order just to subvert them. As a result, the Wife of Bath presents herself as the transgressor of the stereotype of the feminine on both economic and corporeal level. As a woman who is “of an independent and robust nature” (Delaney 104), she moves one step further in combining her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity and “she publicizes herself in speech” (Justman 345), advertising her body. Accordingly, it can be claimed that this self-advertising is functional in undermining the corporeal and discursive femininity inscribed by patriarchy.

In addition to her direct confrontation of her husbands, the adjectives the Wife of Bath uses to define her old husbands are also very significant. She constantly refers to them as “[s]ire olde kaynard” (III (D) 235), “[s]ire olde lecchour” (III (D) 242) and “sire shrewe” (III (D) 355, 365), and thus presents “the men as outsiders” (Straus 533). In this way, the Wife of Bath not only subverts the traditional gender hierarchy, but also presents her body as the authority to talk about this hierarchy. At this point, especially her definition of her old husbands as “shrew” is very important, in that, “shrew” is generally used for women. Since it is the Wife of Bath who is speaking, she subverts the female stereotypes created by patriarchy to define males; she is the one to define and label her husbands. This is another moment of her transgressing traditional gender roles and asserting the agency of her body. Furthermore, as Justman notes, this subversion also reveals “the dis-placement of the middle classes” in the traditional three estate structure (349). She cynically chooses the adjective “sir” in her humiliation of her old husbands since they are rich. This also signifies the difference in the economic status of the Wife of Bath and her rich husbands. It can be suggested that although her main concern is to liberate her femininity corporeally and discursively, the Wife of Bath is aware of the fact that this can be possible only through her economic liberation. As Delaney suggests, this reveals that

[...] the Wife of Bath has thoroughly internalized the economic function of the bourgeoisie in reducing quintessentially human activity—love and the marriage relation—to commercial enterprise. She understands that as a woman she is both merchant and commodity: her youth and beauty the initial capital investment, and her age—the depreciation of the commodity—a condition against which she must accumulate profit as rapidly and therefore as exploitively as possible. (105)

It should be remembered that she was just twelve years old when she married her first husband. Most probably, as a young, twelve year old girl, “[s]he was sold off to a rich husband at the first opportunity” (Martin 39). Thus, while it is true that this turns their marriage into a “mercenary” relation in Barbara Gottfried’s words, (216) and a “shrewd business” as Carruthers puts it (211), it does not mean that she might have had another choice then. As a young, inexperienced female, she did not have the authority over her body. Rather, it might be claimed that she developed and improved that authority in her marriages. This does not mean that “she is reduced to trading sex for money” (Martin

97).⁷² As Carruthers suggests, aware of the fact that marriage is the only chance of survival in this misogynist and capitalist society for a female, she believes that “the true fruits of marriage [...] are set in the marriage bed,” and they are about “neither children nor sensual gratification but independence” (214). Hence, realizing that she has only her body to sell, the Wife of Bath starts regarding “conjugal sexuality as part of the wider market economy” (Desmond 128). This constitutes her “survival tactic, adopted in reaction to masculine oppression” (Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethics* 146). As Martin argues, “[i]n a world where sex is regarded as a sin, a pleasure and a commodity, the Wife defends, enjoys and trades in it” (96). As a female who is explicitly motivated by “economic endeavour,” the Wife of Bath displays that “within the contested ground of her first three marriages her sexual favors are strictly for sale” (Strohm 141). It is for this reason that she states

I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
 If that I felte his arm over my syde,
 Til he had maad his raunson unto me;
 Thanne wolde I suffre hym do his necetee.
 And therfore every man this tale I telle,
 Wynne whose may, for al is for to selle;
 With empty hand men may none haukes lure. (III (D) 409-415)

Although the old men can possess her owing to their money (Martin 94), she succeeds to subvert this authority in her marriages “with the household the battleground, with sexuality the weapon, and with control of property the prize by which success is to be reckoned” (Strohm 142). Although Pugh defines this tactic of the Wife of Bath as a reflection of her “blatant consumerist impulse of self-prostitution in marriage” (124), it is necessary to note that playing the “Devil’s advocate” through her “Lysistrata style” argument (Hopper 59), the Wife of Bath draws attention to the agency of her body. Attributing agency to her body, the Wife of Bath leaves “male *agency* [...] meaningless without female consent” as she will develop in her tale (Pugh 124, emphasis original). Hence, the Wife of Bath’s body again becomes the embodiment of not only her sexual liberation but also economic liberation. By “[m]erchandizing her sexual favors” (Oberembt 292), the Wife of Bath performs “her position as a female in the marketplace” (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 118). Yet, this is the market place of marriage and she trades not in products but in her body, which displays that she is aware of and is an

active performer of “sexual economics,” and it is for this reason that “her sexuality is as capitalistic as her trade” (Delaney 104). As a member of the bourgeoisie and as a female active in the masculine trading space, she is concerned about what she gains (pleasure and/or money) through what she sells (her body). Thus, since the old men are not able to please her, she starts regarding her “wedlock as a cash-nexus” (Justman 346). As Martin indicates, “[i]f sex is convertible into money, what is hers to bestow is also hers to reserve” (95). Hence, she states that her husbands cannot be the masters of both her “body” and her “good” (III (D) 314). Rather, she claims the authority not only over the property and lands of her husbands, but also over her husbands’ bodies and her own body. Yet, it should be noted that even if she has gained authority and sexual liberation through economic liberation, “her freedom is hard earned” (Carruthers 214). She needed to sell her body as a merchandise to her customers, that is, old and rich husbands to gain authority on her body. Even if she re-bought her merchandise (body) through the money provided by her investment in her marriages, she had to endure the harsh conditions of exchange for a long time. Therefore, although Patterson claims that “[t]he account of the first three husbands presents the Wife as object rather than subject” (“For the Wyves” 679), it can be suggested that it is functional in presenting that the Wife of Bath fashions herself as “a consumer of men” (Justman 348) and the “[s]courge of old husbands” (Strohm 144). Furthermore, these marriages form the basis for the Wife of Bath to liberate her body first economically, then corporeally and sexually.

As Garbaty states, Chaucer develops the Wife of Bath’s identity from the misogynist stereotypes to a liberated corporeality, “from archetype, through stereotype, and finally to the portrayal of a unique personality” (342). Aware of the misogynist discourse both in the social and textual space, the Wife of Bath chooses to subvert this very discourse by imitating it. As Dinshaw argues, in “her process of mimicry” of the misogynist discourse in her own subversive manner, the Wife of Bath “appropriates the place of the Other that ideology openly creates” (*Chaucer’s* 119). In this respect, her rhetorical performance in her prologue can be defined as “a transcript of her rhetorical performance” in her marriages (Desmond 131). This helps her reveal not only her discursive control in this rhetorical performance by “the re-presentation of their [husbands’] words through her mouth” (Root 264), but also “the ironic disparity

between the male pretension to mastery and its want of merit in actuality” (Oberembt 290). Contrary to the traditional understanding of mastery in gender hierarchy, the Wife of Bath reveals that her husbands are doomed to fail in front of their young, desiring wife. In this way, she herself becomes the master in this hierarchy not only economically but also sexually. Although it is not clear whether her husbands really said all the things that she claims they said, still by “bullying her husbands” in her rhetorical performance, the Wife of Bath stands out as reminiscent of the husbands who bully their wives (Mann, *Feminizing* 64). As a result, her long “tirade” becomes both a revelation of a wife’s bullying her husbands and a representation of the bullying of patriarchy. Hence, this can be interpreted as another example of the Wife of Bath’s transgressing gender roles. Rather than being the one to be bullied by men, she chooses to be the one to bully men. In this way, the Wife of Bath “strips men of their patriarchal (and generic) control of female sexuality” (Pugh 129). However, although the Wife of Bath was easily dominant in her first three marriages, it would not be the same in her last two marriages. Nevertheless, as the survivor of three old and rich husbands, the Wife of Bath is now more experienced and powerful economically and sexually for her next two marriages to young husbands. She has still not only her body, which is not that young, but also material means and land to sustain her mastery in married life.

The third section of the first part of the Wife of Bath’s rhetorical performance in her prologue starts with her account of her fourth husband. Following three old and rich husbands, the Wife of Bath’s relationship with the fourth husband is a bit different. Although she does not refer to his wealth or his age, it can be anticipated that he is younger than the three previous husbands, maybe even younger than her, since she puts him into the second group of her husbands and she has a kind of nostalgic attitude when she remembers him:

But – Lord Crist – whan that it remembreth me
 Upon my yowthe, and on my jolitee,
 It tikleth me aboute myn herte roote.
 Unto this day it dooth myn herte boote
 That I have had my world as in my tyme.
 But age, allas! that al wole envenyme,
 Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith.
 Lat go, farewell! the devel go therwith!

The flour is goon, ther is namoore to telle;
 The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle;
 But yet to be right myrie wol I fonde. (III (D) 469-479)

The Wife of Bath is aware of the fact that she is not as young as before, but she is more experienced. Again using food imagery as in the case of the wheat and barley bread, she indicates that “[t]he flour is goon, ther is namoore to telle; / The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle” (III (D) 477-478). Her young age, “the flour,” has gone and now she has only “bren” to sell, which reveals that her merchandising of her body still goes on, which is “as much mercantile as sexual” (Strohm 141). Even if she is not as young as before, she is more independent, economically and sexually, which reveals that, as Carruthers argues, the “independence of spirit blooms with economic independence, the freedom to give freely” (215). Thus, although her fourth husband was chasing other women, she says that “I made hym of the same wode a croce; / Nat of my body, in no foul manere” (III (D) 484-485) and achieves arousing jealousy in him, too. Thus, the fourth husband also leads the Wife of Bath to woe in marriage, and she tried hard to “twiste” (III (D) 494) him. In this respect, her revealing that “[h]e deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem” (III (D) 495) and her comment, “[i]t nys but wast to burye hym preciously” (III (D) 500), explicitly display that the Wife of Bath did not care much about her fourth husband’s death and she always cared more about her financial situation, which was very important for her to sustain her liberation from male domination.

Following the shortest tale of her husbands, that is, the tale of her fourth husband, the Wife of Bath goes on to tell the tale of her fifth husband, Jankyn, as the source of her woe in marriage. Jankyn was an Oxford clerk, which means that she needs to confront the misogynist discourse of clerks in person now. Yet, her description of Jankyn is far more different than the description of her previous husbands:

And yet was he to me the mooste shrewe;
 That feele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
 And evere shal unto myn endyng day.
 But inoure bed he was so fressh and gay,
 And therwithal so wel koude he me glose,
 Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose*;
 That thogh he hadde me bete on every bon,
 He koude wynne agayn my love anon.

I trowe I loved hym best, for that he
Was of his love dangerous to me. (III (D) 505-514)

The Wife of Bath reveals that “it is the erotic violence of Jankyn that she ultimately celebrates” (Desmond 132). Although he was dangerous, she still loves him most, because she finds him in bed “so fressh and gay” (III (D) 508) unlike her previous rich but old husbands and her womaniser fourth husband. It should be emphasised that she defines Jankyn as “shrew” which reflects that her transgression of gender roles still continued even if she was married to a clerk. Furthermore, the Wife of Bath reveals that she married him not for economic concerns but for love (III (D) 526). However, she still uses “[m]onetary language” (Karras, *Common Women* 94) to describe her disappointment about her fifth husband: “[g]reet prees at market maketh deere ware, / And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys” (III (D) 522-523). As Strohm indicates, “[i]n fact, her downfall with her fifth husband is a matter of economics, of pricing her goods too cheaply and thus allowing him to hold them in little regard” (141). Marrying a poor man like Jankyn becomes her hamartia, which is a result of her loving him most and favouring sex with a young man and thus devaluing the market-price of her body.

Jankyn was an Oxford clerk, who lived beside Bath, since he had left school (III (D) 527-528). He was a boarder at the Wife of Bath’s close friend’s, or the confidante’s, house, where she had met him. She was wandering in the fields together with her gossip, who was also named Alison, and Jankyn “to heere sondry talys” (III (D) 547). Contrary to social expectations, whenever her (fourth) husband was away in London, she “hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye, / And for to se, and eek for to be seye / Of lusty folk” (III (D) 551-553). Despite the spatial limitations of patriarchy, she states that

[...] [w]hat wiste I wher my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
Therefore I made my visitaciouns
To vigilies and to processiouns,
To prechyng eek, and to thise pilgrimages,
To pleyes of myracles, and to mariages,
And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes. (III (D) 553-559)

Renouncing all spatial limitations, she declares that she was free to go wherever she liked. She went to vigils, processions, listening to preaching, pilgrimages, miracles plays and marriages. Clearly, it was not only through Jankyn that the Wife of Bath heard the interpretations of the Scripture. She had different means to hear different interpretations of the Bible while attending vigils or going on pilgrimages as “an attentive listener” (Longworth, “The Wife of Bath” 378). In this way, she familiarised herself with the interpretations of the Bible, which prevented her from regarding Jankyn’s interpretation as the one and only true interpretation. Furthermore, in addition to these, the Wife of Bath has also learned a lot from her “dame” (III (D) 576). As Curry suggests, “dame” refers to the Wife of Bath’s astrological sign, “the love-star,” Venus (*Chaucer* 94). Yet, this can be considered to be a reference to her mother, too. In any case, as Martin argues, her indicating that “[m]y dame taughte me that soutiltee” (III (D) 576) also draws attention to the idea that she is “the graduate of the school of wives, calling attention to her skills in fabrication” (100), the knowledge or education of which is much more useful and beneficial for her to work in her trade, that is, the profession of wifhood. Owing to this education, she knows how to manipulate even a clerk who has “enchanted” her (III (D) 575). Influencing Jankyn with such words, the Wife of Bath tries to tempt him and wants him to marry her if her husband dies. This is another instance of the Wife of Bath’s reversal of gender roles, because she undertakes the role to ask for her lover’s hand.

When her fourth husband dies, the Wife of Bath performs her wifely duty to mourn for him although she weeps little (III (D) 587-592). While her husband’s funeral procession is being conducted at church, Jankyn is also there, which turns all her attention from mourning to sexual attraction. She realises that Jankyn has “[...] a paire / Of legges and of feet so clene and faire” (III (D) 597-598). During this scene, the Wife of Bath reveals that she is attracted not by love but by sexual desires towards Jankyn. As Mark Miller argues, the Wife of Bath discloses that she has found Jankyn “sexy” as revealed by her reference to his legs (193). This is just another important instance, in which the Wife of Bath challenges and subverts gender roles. As Pugh puts it, “[t]he lascivious pleasures of her gaze” deprive Jankyn of “the privileges of the male subject and metamorphoses [him] into a feminized object” (127). Jankyn becomes the “object” of the Wife of Bath’s

desires. Although some critics argue that this reveals the Wife of Bath as one of the “erring daughters of Eve” (Hallissy 140) or “a latter-day Eve” as a desiring woman (Martin 38), it can be argued that this again draws attention to the agency of her body. In fact, as a woman, what is expected of her is to be the object of male desire. Yet, she displays that she is an active producer of desire rather than the passive recipient of male desire.

Additionally, although she is a desiring woman, there is a significant difference between Jankyn and the Wife of Bath. He is only twenty years old while she is forty (III (D) 600-601). However, despite her age, the Wife of Bath confesses that she has always had “a coltes tooth” (III (D) 602), that is, she is still a woman with desires. The Wife of Bath explains her desiring self with her astrological sign:

Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel;
 I hadde the prente of seinte Venus seel.
 As help me God! I was a lusty oon,
 And faire, and riche, and yong, and wel bigon,
 And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde me,
 I hadde the beste *quoniam* myghte be.
 For certes, I am al Venerien
 In feelynge, and myn herte is Marcien.
 Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
 And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardynesse;
 Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
 Allas, allas! that evere love was synne!
 I folwed ay myn inclinacioun
 By vertu of my constellacioun;
 That made me I koude noght withdrawe
 My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.
 Yet have I Martes mark upon my face,
 And also in another privee place. (III (D) 603-620)

The Wife of Bath has the influence of both Aries and Taurus. Comparing the Wife of Bath’s depiction with the fortune treatises such as Ptolemy’s works, in relation to her astrological sign, that is, her being born in April in Taurus sign, it has been argued that not only the Wife of Bath’s personal traits such as her being attractive to men, the marks on her body and face such as the moles, her multiple marriages, her interest in wandering, rich clothing and sexual pleasure, but also her interest in property and mercantile business as a cloth-maker have been considered to be a product of her

astrological sign and the influence of the planets (Curry, *Chaucer* 91-118; Friedman 167-173). All the non-conforming features of the Wife of Bath have been regarded as the outcomes of astrological influences. Yet, besides astrological influences, the Wife of Bath's desiring body should also be taken into account, albeit it, too, seems to be produced by the stars. Furthermore, the most important aspect of the Wife of Bath's description is that she defines herself as the embodiment of not just Venus. Rather, she defines herself as the combination of Venus and Mars. She regards herself as the embodiment of love and sexuality as well as war and fighting although "we are never sure whether her preferred field of battle is the bedroom or the schoolroom" (Hanning 597). Evidently, as a desiring woman, she needs to fight against both the corporeal and discursive impositions of the misogynist society. Yet, it can be argued that she derives the energy to fight from her desiring body:

For God so wys be my savacioun,
I ne loved nevere by no discrecioun,
But evere folwede myn appetit,
Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit;
I took no kep, so that he liked me,
How poore he was, ne eek of what degree. (III (D) 621-626)

As Pugh maintains, these lines reveal the Wife of Bath's "egalitarian nature" in the matters of love or sex (127). She says that she will love any man, whether short or tall, white or black, poor or rich if he loves her. Following the funeral of her fourth husband, she marries Jankyn. However, this marriage means that all her land and money are transferred to the control of Jankyn, which she regrets bitterly (III (D) 630-633). It can be claimed that although the Wife of Bath acts like a "maniser," she still puts first her material concerns about land and money. Hence, when Jankyn disappoints her, she feels like "a generous master whose free gift has been abused by an ignorant apprentice" (Carruthers 216). She seems to forget, or at least, ignore the fact that when Jankyn marries her, all her lands would go under his control as the husband and the head of the house, because when a man married a widow, he gained the right over the property of the woman coming from her previous husbands as dower or inheritance (Martin 101, Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 9). Yet, their marriage also starts the experience of Jankyn with "a wealthy woman with an excellent record of outlasting husbands" as well as his rise in

the social strata due to his wife's wealth (Carruthers 215). Furthermore, as the embodiment of clerkly authority, he needs to confront the Wife of Bath's authority. Although he is an educated clerk and the bearer of all the misogynist textual tradition, the Wife of Bath is also an educated woman as the survivor of at least four husbands. Therefore, he also needs to be educated by the Wife of Bath in her school of marriage. Yet, this requires Jankyn to leave aside his lecturing position and accept the authority of the Wife of Bath as a lecturer.

This education process would take some time for Jankyn and would lead to physical damage in the Wife of Bath, leaving her "somedel deaf" (I (A) 446), because Jankyn once "smoot" her to the floor (III (D) 668). Jankyn, as a typical clerk tries to "preche" (III (D) 641) and "teche" (III (D) 642) his wife. Accordingly, he constantly reads her passages from other clerks and from the Bible to teach her how to behave (III (D) 642-660) without realizing how stubborn she is "as is a leonesse" (III (D) 637). Hence, the Wife of Bath presents herself revolting against the lecturing Jankyn and the discourse of the texts he lectures from:

*Ne I wolde nat of hym corrected be.
I hate hym that my vices telleth me,
And so doo mo, God woot, of us than I.
This made hym with me wood al outrelly;
I nolde noht forbere hym in no cas. (III (D) 661-665, emphasis added)*

As an economically and sexually liberated woman, she renounces Jankyn's authority. However, Jankyn does not stop lecturing her and reading from his books the examples of other women to teach the Wife of Bath how to be a good wife (III (D) 669-681). As Coleman explains, he "transgressed the rules of British recreational reading, in which the hearers [were] expected to participate in the choice of text and the manner of its reading" (166). Jankyn is just interested in reading from his book of wicked wives. In this respect, as Mann notes, the Wife of Bath's repetitive use of "tho redde he me" (III (D) 724), "tolde he me" (III (D) 647, 747, 757) and "[h]e tolde me" (III (D) 740) implies "the presence of a [passive] listening woman" (*Feminizing* 65) presenting Jankyn as the active speaker or lecturer. What Jankyn cannot understand is that the Wife of Bath has been wise enough to educate her uneducated self through her husbands

(Weil 30). Although Jankyn has clerky authority and his legal right to control her land and money, he appears inadequate in controlling his experienced wife (Carruthers 215). Furthermore, he does not know how to deal with such an experienced wife. He is just twenty years old, and he has only theoretical knowledge about women and marriage in contrast to the long experience of the Wife of Bath as a wife.

Besides, the gap between Jankyn and the Wife of Bath is not only intellectual but also physical. As Lindley states, “[a]s Jankyn reads, the book stands literally between himself and Alisoun, a physical as well as mental intermission” (11). Apparently, “Jankyn is described as preferring the book to his wife, substituting the eros of the text for the eros of the marital relationship” (Cox 20-21). In this way, he ignores the Wife of Bath’s femininity as well. As a result, the book becomes a problem for the Wife of Bath not only discursively but also physically. It draws a line between Jankyn and the Wife of Bath through both its discourse about wives and its physical existence.

Moreover, as an inexperienced clerk-husband, Jankyn most probably does not expect the Wife of Bath to question the discourse of his books. However, fed up with the stories of wicked wives, the Wife of Bath cannot help asking “[w]ho peyntede the leon, tel me who?” (III (D) 692) and questions the misogynist textual tradition in her long “tirades” (Martin 7; Mann *Feminizing* 60) (III (D) 693-710). She problematises the discursive authority of the texts produced by old and impotent clerks about love and women. Bringing together the corporeal and the discursive, the Wife of Bath argues that old clerks write stories about the wickedness of women, because the discourse is their only means to have authority over women, as their bodies are of no help to them. Hence, she makes use of “[t]he apostrophe or *apostrophatio*, a rhetorical technique characteristic of classical satire” (Malvern 240) when she asks who painted the lion. This is just a rhetorical question which is functional in the Wife of Bath’s drawing attention to the point of view in such kind of texts. Similarly, she does not forget to add that if women could have written stories about males, they could have written more about their wickedness (III (D) 693-696).⁷³

One night, while Jankyn was reading passages from his book of wicked wives on the wickedness of women that led mankind to “wrecchedness” (III (D) 716), the tension rises to its highest level between the Wife of Bath and Jankyn. Jankyn’s aim with his “anthology of seduction and betrayal by women” (Martin 10), is to “browbeat Alisoun with the tales of evil wives contained in his book” (Rigby 137). Hence, this long list of evil wives rehearsed by Jankyn reflects the core of antifeminist satire and misogynist texts. However, the Wife of Bath’s reproduction of this long list of wicked wives in her rhetorical performance (III (D) 720-771), rather than just referring to the book, is also functional in her challenging the misogynist discourse. By reciting the discourse of this book of wicked wives, the Wife of Bath exhibits her real opponents. In this way, she not only confronts the misogynist Jerome and his antifeminist teachings, of which Jankyn is an embodiment, but she also “strip[s] off the impersonal disguise of ‘auctoritee’ and [...] reveal[s] the biased individual behind the mask” (Mann, *Feminizing* 57, 58). The opponents here are not just Jankyn versus the Wife of Bath but male versus female. Thus, with “her own anti-misogynist agenda” (Kamowski 13), she reveals that there is incongruity between what marriages really are, and how the misogynist textual tradition represents them (Crane, “Alison’s Incapacity” 20). Although this implies that the Wife of Bath appears as “a palimpsest of misogynist citations,” her reproduction of the misogynist discourse is necessary to “put in motion the object/subject transformation” (Root 261), through which the Wife of Bath can turn herself from the object of these arguments to the subject position. Thus, the Wife of Bath attributes agency to her body as a speaking subject. She revolts against this textual tradition not only discursively by problematising the metanarratives about women constructed by clerks and the Church fathers, but also physically by tearing a page from Jankyn’s book of wicked wives. Therefore, although Mann argues that this is “the only [...] case in medieval literature where antifeminist satire is uttered by a woman” other than Heloise⁷⁴ (*Feminizing* 42), the Wife of Bath thus reveals that “[t]he worst thing men have done to women is create these images of them” (Martin 8). She gets very angry and woeful because of the psychological influence of the examples Jankyn has been reading from his “cursed book” (III (D) 789). Then, the Wife of Bath’s physical revolt starts when she sees that he will not give up reading from his book. She takes the book⁷⁵ while Jankyn is reading it and tears out three leaves of his book and also hits him on the cheek (III (D) 788-793).

Yet, Jankyn responds to the Wife of Bath's physical violence with physical violence. Jankyn, who gets very angry, gets up like a "leoun" (III (D) 794) and returns the blow by hitting on the Wife's head and leaving her lie on the floor although he then gets very anxious (III (D) 795-99). However, although she has been "beaten for a book" (III (D) 712), the Wife of Bath's challenging Jankyn is very important. She accuses him of murdering her for her land and thus defines him as a "false thief" (III (D) 800). Once again, the Wife of Bath reveals the importance of monetary relations in marriage. As Robertson suggests, since she is not young, she thinks that Jankyn might wish her dead in order to attain full possession of her properties, which would also enable him to have a young wife ("Land Tenure" 407). Yet, she does not want to lose either her property or power in her marriage based on her property. Thus, in order to be the last one to strike, the Wife of Bath calls Jankyn and says that she wants to kiss him before dying, which is in fact just a trick. Upon this invitation, Jankyn comes closer only to be hit on the cheek once more (III (D) 802-809). With the impact of violence on both sides, they make peace but on the condition that

[h]e yaf me al the bridel in myn hond,
 To han the governance of hous and lond,
 And of his tonge, and of his hond also;
 And made hym brenne his book anon right tho.
 And whan that I hadde geten unto me,
 By maistrie, al the soveraynette,
 And that he seyde, 'Myn owene trewe wyf,
 Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf;
 Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat' –
 After that day we hadden never debaat. (III (D) 813-822)

The conflict between the Wife of Bath and Jankyn is resolved only after Jankyn accepts the mastery of the Wife of Bath. Following their marital peace upon Jankyn's handing over all the control to the Wife of Bath, she proves that she can challenge, experience and survive an "ordeal by literature" (Martin 6). Although Mann argues that "the Wife's victory is won not by aggression but by pathos" because of her trick (*Feminizing* 69), it is necessary to note that she has earned her victory at an expensive price. Although their fight, which was at first a discursive fight but then turned into a physical fight, reminds "the knockabout humour of the Punch and Judy show," they are "not puppets" and "[t]heir blows hurt" (Martin 11). Their fight leaves the Wife of Bath with damaged

corporeality, or as Hansen states, with her “mutilation” (32). Yet, it is still necessary to note that this mutilation is partial corporeally, since she is deaf just in one ear and discursively temporary, because, following the short interval, the Wife of Bath gains her authority in marriage. Hence, Jankyn, who is “[a]rmed with book-learning,” cannot help being beaten by the Wife of Bath whose “main weapon [...] [is] her tongue” during the fight (Hallissy 175). She gains full authority afterwards and transforms the bookish Jankyn into “the classic henpecked husband” (Hallissy 176).

In this respect, the Wife of Bath’s making Jankyn burn his book is also very symbolic, drawing attention to the victory of the Wife of Bath over clerks and their texts. Furthermore, being burnt is a proper end for a “heretical” text as argued by Wilson and Makowski (159) and Warren S. Smith (142). It is the celebration of the Wife of Bath’s victory against “a record of emotional, physical and verbal violence against women” (Taşdelen 62). Moreover, the Wife of Bath’s making Jankyn burn his book of wicked wives can also be interpreted as her victory over the whole antifeminist textual tradition. By burning the book, in Warren S. Smith’s words, she “seeks to break the cynical spell of the misogynistic treatises which regularly close in defeat and despair” (144). This time, the Wife of Bath presents an alternative ending, which is radical for patriarchy. As a woman, she gains full authority over her husband. In this respect, the burning of the book can also be defined as “an erasure” of the corporeal and discursive arguments of the misogynist tradition (Longworth, “The Wife of Bath” 382). What remains alive is a dominant Wife of Bath and a submissive clerk-husband.

The Wife of Bath enhances her authority through the bridle imagery: “He yaf me al the bridel in myn hond” (III (D) 813). She subverts the authority of clerks in general and Jankyn in particular, evoking and subverting the bridle imagery (Rowland, “The Horse” 246-259). Although Barbara Gottfried defines the Wife of Bath’s prologue as “an anti-climax” because of the marital accord (223), it is necessary to note that this accord is the beginning of the total submission of her clerk-husband. This is implied by the bridle imagery, through which the Wife of Bath presents another instance of her transgressing gender roles according to traditional understanding. The Wife of Bath achieves speaking and living as a subject, and sacrifices an important part of her body for this

achievement, which leaves her with a damaged corporeality. As a result, she decides to paint her own lion in her tale.⁷⁶ Therefore, her indicating that “my joly body shal tell you a joly tale” (II (B) 1185) becomes “a lesson” not only to teach “an ignorant pupil” like Jankyn (Chance 225), but also to teach misogynist clerks in general. Thus, contributing to her aim of teaching husbands, the Wife of Bath goes on with her rhetorical performance, painting her own lion in her own tale-telling turn following the intervention of the Friar and the Summoner.

The Friar and the Summoner’s intervention in the Wife of Bath’s speech in her prologue to her tale and the Host’s silencing them is functional in drawing attention to idea that the Wife of Bath’s male audience is ready to be taught by the Wife of Bath’s tale. When the Friar intervenes in the Wife of Bath’s rhetorical performance in her prologue to her tale, exclaiming that “[t]his is a long preamble of a tale!” (III (D) 831), the Summoner regards this as an opportunity to attack the Friar, which in return leads to a conflict between the two. The conflict between the Summoner and the Friar can also be interpreted as the silencing of the Wife of Bath and the transfer of the speaking voice to the male. This attitude of the Friar and the Summoner, the two “parasites” who live on their abuse of sinners (Kamowski 2), can be interpreted as a reflection of their “professional resentment as much as moral (or masculine) outrage” for the Wife of Bath’s teachings in her prologue (Hanning 591). It seems that they consider the Wife of Bath and her rhetorical performance as a revolt not only against their religious estate, but also against their gender identity. As Straus suggests, the woman who is a public speaker speaking out about her experiences is regarded by patriarchy as a threat (531). In this respect, the Host’s call for the Wife of Bath to tell her tale is very significant: “Pees! And that anon! [...] Lat the womman telle hire tale” (III (D) 850-851). The Host’s intervention and his silencing the Friar and the Summoner can be interpreted as a reflection of the social acceptance of the Wife of Bath’s corporeal and discursive performance of femininity in her material performance in the “General Prologue” and in her rhetorical performance in her prologue to her tale. Hence, it also displays that, attributing agency to her body, the Wife of Bath fashions herself as a subject to speak out her sexuality, not an object to be spoken about. She is there not to be the “represented” one, but to be the “representing” one (Root 260).

As for the second part of the Wife of Bath's rhetorical performance, that is, her tale, it would be better to start emphasising the generic importance of her tale, which has the elements of both antifeminist satire and romance. Martin suggests that *The Shipman's Tale*, which is a fabliaux, would have followed the Wife of Bath's prologue, which also has fabliaux features (91-92). Since she is a bawdy woman and an archwife, some critics believe that a fabliaux would have been more proper for the Wife of Bath, considering her performance in her prologue (Weil 36, Pugh 115). However, interestingly enough, she moves beyond the borders of her bourgeois estate and chooses to tell a romance, not a fabliaux. This choice will help her "defeat the romance and the men who represent a romantic ethos" (Pugh 116). Thus, she turns out to be the only female to tell a romance among the Canterbury pilgrims. Yet, she does it in her own subversive manner.

As Crane explains, the Wife of Bath's decision to tell a romance in her rhetorical performance is "a strategic one" ("Alison's Incapacity" 21). Her tale combines romance and antifeminist satire to subvert the traditional female stereotypes both in romance (beautiful, emotional but not intellectual) and antifeminist textual tradition (nagger, sexually-oriented and aggressive). In this way, the Wife of Bath can display that both romance and antifeminist satire reflect the female as inferior to the male. Her romance has neither military adventures and achievements nor beautiful and emotional women. The Wife of Bath presents a new version of romance with female characters and their desires in the foreground. Thus, incorporating the elements of both romance and antifeminist satire into her tale, the Wife of Bath reveals that neither of these genres reflects the desires of the female (Crane, "Alison's Incapacity" 21-26). It is for this reason that the Wife of Bath formulates a new genre in-between romance and antifeminist satire not only to display their disinterest and disregard of the desires of the female, but also to create a textual space for these desires. Therefore, although Carruthers suggests that the Wife of Bath's choice of romance can be defined as a "flight of comic fantasy in the idealists' mode" (209), as Leicester argues, the Wife of Bath turns to romance, which is "in its original form an instrument of the dominant ideology" ("Of a Fire" 160), in order to use and abuse it to tell her own version of romance. This subversion would help her manipulate the elements of both romance and

fabliaux, as a result of which she can challenge the patriarchal discourse over authority. Furthermore, she aims at displaying the workings of discourse in her genre choice (Pugh 119). Romance becomes a very functional weapon for the Wife of Bath. Telling a subversive romance, the Wife of Bath has the chance to represent the partiality of romance that limits the potential of woman through the “built-in ‘glass ceiling’” in romances (Weisl 14). Romance is the genre that cannot exist without women, but these women can never achieve attaining subject positions. As Weisl argues, women are always in the object position as the beloved and damsels in distress in romances, since romances always foreground the desires of the male (14). Thus, in Pugh’s words, a “queering” of fabliaux and romance will be a great chance for the Wife of Bath to display her desires as a woman (117). Contributing to her “queering” of male discourse and desire in her prologue, the Wife of Bath queers romance in her tale. In this way, as Pugh suggests, “Chaucer allows female agency to queer genres and to batter back against the narrative violence inflicted upon women in the preceding romances and fabliaux” (123). This will enable the Wife of Bath to question both the authority of the nobility over romance and the authority of men over the representation of women in romances. Although the Wife of Bath presents herself as the new reader and narrator of romance, she starts with an introduction, in which she depicts a typical Arthurian setting:

In th’olde dayes of the Kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
The elf-queene, with hir joly compaignye,
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.
This was the olde opinion, as I rede;
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago. (III (D) 857-863)

Although this introduction seems to be stereotypical, it draws attention to the Wife of Bath as a reader of romances (III (D) 862). This presents her as an active meaning producer in the encoding process rather than as a listener, which also sustains her image that she has built up in her prologue. Thus, although Hallissy interprets this Arthurian setting in her tale as a reflection of the Wife of Bath’s desire to reflect the “idealized world” of romances (177), Ingham rightly associates the Wife of Bath’s use of Arthurian setting with the material concerns of the fourteenth century and argues that

such kind of “utopian images of lost times and places” are functional in “register[ing] a desire to transform the world” and “to reorganize material relations” (36, 37). Hence, the Wife of Bath’s choice provides her with the chance to deconstruct not only the literary representation of women in romances, but also the social status of women as love objects or as silent, submissive and ideally noble lady stereotypes endorsed by Arthurian romances. As the representative of bourgeois women, who took active part in trade and thus gained socio-economic liberation, the Wife of Bath fashions herself as a new reader questioning the literary and social implications of romances. According to Barbara Gottfried, her tale will thus reflect both the social and literary “dis-ease of the Wife of Bath in a world in which men are the progenitors of the dominant ideology” (203). Therefore, the Wife of Bath goes on with her rhetorical performance in her tale with the depiction of rape, which is also functional in drawing attention to the corporeality of the female:

And so bifel it that this kyng Arthour
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelor,
 That on a day cam ridyng fro ryver,
 And happed that, allone as he was born,
 He saugh a mayde walkyng hym biforn,
 Of which mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
 By verray force, he rafte hire maydenhed [...]. (III (D) 882-888)

A young knight “[f]resh from hunting” sees the young maiden “as one more target or prey” (Van 185). Presenting the “bodily economy of piercing men and pierced women” through the depiction of a rape scene (Allman and Hanks 59), the Wife of Bath places the corporeality of the female in the foreground and starts questioning “the patriarchal power structure of possession” in the body of the knight (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 127). Interestingly enough, thus, as Allman and Hanks notes, the Wife of Bath narrates “the only example in the *Canterbury Tales* of an accomplished act of uninvited coitus that is unequivocally rape” although the victim is left voiceless and the Wife of Bath never refers to her again throughout her tale (49). At this point, it can be claimed that the Wife of Bath aimed at drawing attention to the crime, that is, rape, and the criminal, that is, the knight – a male, rather than the victim, that is, the raped maiden in order to present rape as an insult to the female body and her corporeality in general. Hence, rather than individualising the raped, she puts emphasis on the rapist in particular and the male in

general, and presents rape as “a manifestation of masculine ‘maistrye’ in its ugliest form” problematising the agency of the female body (Mann, *Feminizing* 70). During the medieval period, a woman could go to court only for two reasons: complaint against rape and her husband’s murder. In case of a rape, theoretically, there were many severe punishments ranging from castration to death, but in most cases, these were not put into practice.⁷⁷ The severity of punishment was dependent on the sexual state of the woman. For instance, if she was a nun or a virgin or a widow, punishment was supposed to be more severe (Hallissy 179). Likewise, since the lady in the Wife of Bath’s tale is a virgin, the knight is condemned to death (III (D) 889-893).

The Wife of Bath presents the female as the judge of the crime of the knight against the female body. When the knight is condemned to death in accordance with the laws of King Arthur’s court, the Queen and some other ladies intervene. They urge the King to grant the knight’s life to the Queen (III (D) 895-898). Although this intervention might, at first, seem as a means to save the life of the knight, it is, in fact, the beginning of his punishment for not paying attention to the will and the desires of a woman. Upon the King’s granting the wish of the ladies, women become “the exclusive judges of a crime uniquely against them” and thus become the representatives of “an idealized criminal justice system” (Hallissy 178). The crime is committed against a female and thus the just punishment can only be decided by the female, which also “legitimizes the female desire for ‘maistrye’” (Mann, *Feminizing* 73). In line with these, it is also necessary to emphasise the decision of the Queen. She addresses the knight as follows:

Thou standest yet [...] in swich array
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
 I grante thee lyf, if thou kanst tellen me
 What thyng is it that wommen moost desiren.
 Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from iren!
 And if thou kanst nat tellen it anon,
 Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and leere
 An answeere suffisant in this mateere;
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
 Thy body for to yelden in this place. (III (D) 902-912)

The Queen explicitly states that his life is not safe unless he can find the true answer, in a year and a day, to the question what women desire most; otherwise, he needs to yield his body there.⁷⁸ This means that, with the lady's wish, the knight "has to put aside his role of hunter and predator" as a rapist (Van 186-187). In return for his transgression of the desires of a female and violating her corporeality, he needs to offer his own corporeality. Yet, still, the aim of the Queen, or the Wife of Bath, is that the knight needs to accomplish "the required psychological growth" (Hallissy 180) and should learn that "[h]e may nat do al as hym liketh" (III (D) 914). In order to save his body, the knight starts his quest to find the true answer to the question of what women desire most and "[t]o lerne what thyng wommen loven moost" (III (D) 921). In her depiction of the knight's quest, the Wife of Bath again displays herself as the spokesperson of all women through her constant references to "we," "us" and "our." Moreover, this can also be interpreted as a reflection of the Wife of Bath's presentation of rape as a crime against all women.

In her narration of the knight's quest, the Wife of Bath diverts from the knight's story and starts commenting on the things the knight has been told such as women's love for freedom and for being regarded as stable (III (D) 932-950). While going on with her comments, the Wife of Bath refers to the tale of Midas and his ass's ears, which can be interpreted as the Wife of Bath's "digression into the realm of classical scholarship" (Patterson, "For the Wyves" 656). Yet, she makes a number of changes to the Midas story. For instance, she transfers the male servant, who reveals the secret of Midas, into Midas's wife. In this way, the tale of Midas becomes another tool for the Wife of Bath to play with misogynist stereotypes (Leicester, "Of a Fire" 163). Furthermore, this digression also provides the Wife of Bath with the chance to comment on a classical tale as a female reader, who presents her own version of the tale, and advises her audience, who wants to hear the rest of the story to "[r]edeth Ovyde" (III (D) 982). The Wife of Bath explicitly presents herself as an active reader, who does not consume whatever she reads without her own interpretation, which enhances her authorial authority in her own rhetorical performance.

Following the Midas digression, the Wife of Bath turns to her tale of the knight. While he is sorrowfully wandering in the forest, the knight sees a group of dancing ladies (III (D) 991-992), which has been defined as “an antidote to any male rape fantasy” (Van 187). He gets closer to the female group hoping that “som wysdom sholde he lerne” from them (III (D) 994). However, when he gets there, the knight finds not the dancing young ladies but an “olde wyf” (III (D) 1000), not an old widow or an old woman. It might be argued that this is because the Wife of Bath believes that wisdom lies in wives not in any other female. When the old woman presents herself as the experienced voice saying that “[t]hise olde folk kan muchel thyng” (III (D) 1004), he addresses her as “[m]y leeve mooder” (III (D) 1005) and says that if he cannot find the answer to the question, he will die. In return, the old lady says that she will give him the answer on the condition that he promises “[t]he nexte thyng that I requere thee, / Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might” (III (D) 1010-1011), which he immediately accepts. Only then she whispers in his ears the answer (III (D) 1021) and they come to the court of King Arthur together, and find themselves in front of their audience, that is, the female judges of the knight. Then, the knight, almost in a challenging way, gives the answer:

Wommen desiren to have sovereynetee
 As wel over his housbond as hir love,
 And for to been in maistrie hym above.
 This is youre mooste desir, thogh ye me kille.
 Dooth as yow list; I am heer at youre wille. (III (D) 1038-1042)

As Lindley suggests, the question asked by a woman about a woman in return for an insult to a female body can only be answered by another woman, and the knight is only a mediator to convey this answer since, as a man, it is not possible for him to know the true answer (13). According to Dinshaw, in this scene, in which the “feminine desire will be acknowledged, publicly, by a man,” the main aim of the Wife of Bath is to reveal that “it’s more important to acknowledge *that* women desire than to specify *what* it is that pleases them most” (*Chaucer’s* 127, emphasis original). Yet, it is not enough for the knight to give voice to this desire. He needs to practise and thus “learn” it (Martin 57). Hence, the old hag interferes and asks for her due:

Mercy, [...] my sovereyn lady queene!
 Er that youre court departe, do me right.

I taughte this answeere unto the knyght;
 For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
 The firste thyng that I wolde hym requere,
 He wolde it do, if it lay in his myghte.
 Bifore the court thanne preye I thee, sir knyght,
 [...] that thou me take unto thy wyf,
 For wel thou woost that I have kept thy lyf.
 If I seye fals, sey nay, upon thy fey! (III (D) 1048-1057)

Although the knight has assumed that he might save his life by answering the question, he has to pay for his insult to the female body in rape with his own body by marrying the old lady. Afraid of this corporeal punishment, he urges the old lady to ask for something else and says “[t]aak al my good, and lat my body go” (III (D) 1061), which recalls his forceful taking of the maiden’s body. Apparently, his body is very important for the knight, at least more than his property. However, the old hag does not seem to liberate the body of the knight. She says that, despite being ugly, old and poor, she wants to be his wife and love (III (D) 1063-1066). The knight regards all these words as insult to himself, or, in other words, his body, and cries “[m]y love? [...] nay, my dampnacioun! / Allas, that any of my nacioun / Sholde evere so foule disparaged be!” (III (D) 1067-1069). These words, in fact, reveal that the knight is only giving voice to the dominant idea about marriage among the gentlemen, that is, “one can marry up or across but never down, certainly not without a great deal of money to offset the match” (Carruthers 217). As a knight, he does not want to endow his body to an ugly, old and poor woman. In this way, the knight also evokes the image of “the randy widow,” who is “searching for a new husband” (Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 292). It is for this reason that the Wife of Bath digresses commenting and reminds the reader/audience that it is the female “I” speaking:

Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
 That for my necligence I do no cure
 To tellen yow the joye and al th’array
 That at the feeste was that ilke day.
 To which thyng shortly answeren I shal:
 I seye ther nas no joye ne feeste at al;
 Ther nas but hevynesse and mucche sorwe. (III (D) 1073-1079)

Despite his resistance, the knight cannot avoid the old lady and marries her secretly in sorrow (III (D) 1080), which is reminiscent of the sorrow of the young Wife of Bath in

her marriages to old men. Yet, the knight does not want to sleep with her, since his wife is very ugly. However, rather than behaving as a submissive wife, the old lady chides him for his unkindness as a knight (III (D) 1087-1090), and speaks as a self-confident woman, who questions the behaviour of her husband:

I am youre owene love and eek youre wyf;
 I am she which that saved hath youre lyf,
 And, certes, yet ne dide I yow nevere unright;
 Why fare ye thus with me this firste nyght?
 Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit.
 What is my gilt? For Goddes love, tel me it,
 And it shal been amende, if I may. (III (D) 1091-1097)

Although she reminds him that she is the one that saved his life, she cannot convince her husband, who still looks down upon her for her physical appearance, age and social status.⁷⁹ It is for this reason that she gives her a long sermon on gentility and thus confronts all of the knight's arguments about her (III (D) 1109-1216). In her long speech on gentility, which has been defined as her "pillow lecture" (McKinley 359) or "pillow sermon" (Crane, "Alison's Incapacity" 25), the old hag becomes the teacher of the knight for the second time. Arguing that nobility lies not in blood or lineage but in "the gentil dedes" (III (D) 1115), as Isabel Davis states, the old hag calls for "a renunciation of all social names" (67). Although Leicester argues that in her gentility speech, "[t]he Wife of Bath uses the mask of the hag, as an image of her own diminished powers and vanished 'flour,' to try out this rhetoric, to see what the bran is worth" ("Of a Fire" 168),⁸⁰ this is in fact functional for the Wife of Bath to question the social norms about nobility as well, as the Knight does in his performance of nobility above.

This long sermon on gentility provides the Wife of Bath, the member of the bourgeoisie as a woman engaged in trade, with the chance to question the conventional estate divisions by claiming that nobility comes from deed (Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* 280). In addition to associating the Wife of Bath with the old hag in terms of age, it can be claimed that they should be associated in terms of their social status as well. The old hag's arguments about the importance of gentil deeds draw attention to meritocracy rather than aristocracy, who dominate romances, and these

arguments conform greatly with the bourgeois mindset of the Wife of Bath. Moreover, while emphasising the importance of corporeal liberation of the female, the Wife of Bath never forgets the importance of socio-economic liberation as a woman in her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. In this respect, the old hag's constant references to the learned authorities, such as Dante (III (D) 1125-1126), St. Valerius (III (D) 1165), Seneca and Boethius (III (D) 1168) as well as Juvenal (III (D) 1192), are functional in both enhancing the Wife of Bath's self-assertion as a female reader and fashioning herself as the new reader.

Turning back to the old hag's long sermon on gentility, she confronts each argument of the knight in terms of low social status (III (D) 1172-1176), poverty (III (D) 1177-1206), old age (III (D) 1207-1212) and ugliness (III (D) 1213-1216), representing the arguments of male clerks. Thus, she constantly emphasises the benefits of her socio-economic and physical status. However, she consents to please the knight: "But nathelees, syn I knowe youre delit, / I shal fulfille youre worldly appetit" (III (D) 1217-1218). She asks him another question, which seems to be a second trial for the knight by another female:

Chese now, [...] oon of these thynges tweye:
 To han me foul and old til that I deye,
 And be to yow a trewe, humble wyf,
 And nevere yow displese in al my lyf,
 Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
 And take youre aventure of the repair
 That shal be to youre hous by cause of me,
 Or in som oother place, may wel be.
 Now chese yourselven, whether that yow liketh. (III (D) 1219-1227)

Asking her husband to choose "between sex object and status symbol" (Martin 63), the old hag offers him the chance to practise gentility. Thus, his acceptance of the old hag's mastery in their marriage can be interpreted as a product of her lesson. He yields to her mastery saying

[m]y lady and my love, and wyf so deere,
 I put me in youre wise governance;
 Cheseth youreself which may be moost plesance
 And moost honour to yow and me also.

I do no fors the wheither of the two,
For as yow liketh, it suffiseth me. (III (D) 1230-1235)

Presenting the double teaching process of a man, the Wife of Bath's tale can be defined as "an exemplum that turns the ideas of the male deoprtment-book writers upsidedown" (Carruthers 217), and thus presents the knight of her tale as a "straw man" (Leicester, *The Disenchanted* 142). Following the knight's acceptance of his wife's mastery, the old hag indicates that she will be "bothe fair and good," both "good and trewe" (III (D) 1241, 1242). Then, she wants him "[c]ast up the curtyn, looke how that it is" (III (D) 1249). The Wife of Bath depicts the transformation of the old hag into a beautiful young woman as follows:

And whan the knyght saugh verrailly al this,
That she so fair was, and so yong therto,
For joye he hente hire in his armes two.
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse.
A thousand tyme a-rewe he gan hire kisse,
And she obeyed hym in every thyng
That myghte doon hym plesance or likyng.
And thys they lyve unto hir lyves ende
In parfit joye [...]. (III (D) 1250-1258)

The critics generally criticise the Wife of Bath's conclusion to her tale. For instance, Patterson defines this transformation as "a masculine wish-fulfillment," which constitutes a paradox with the Wife of Bath's arguments in her prologue ("For the Wyves" 682-683). Similarly, Hansen argues that the transformation of the old hag is a reflection of the fact that she "transforms herself into a Constance or Griselda," which is again in conflict with the self-portrait of the Wife of Bath in her prologue (33). Likewise, Thomas argues that, this transformation, in which the old hag acts like a "cinematic illusion-maker," manipulates "her image for the knight's consumption," which draws attention to the masculine desire rather than the feminine ("The Problem" 91). Scala interprets this transformation as a reflection of the Wife of Bath's "wish to submit to masculine power" and her "desire for (and to be) the Other's desire" (87). However, as Crane also suggests, the transformation of the old hag should be interpreted as a reflection of the "carnavalesque" physical appearance of the Wife of Bath (*Gender* 129) as depicted by her material performance in the "General

Prologue.”⁸¹ Although the Wife of Bath is also old like the hag in her tale, she has material means such as costume to embellish her body, which has transformative impact on her appearance, which can be resembled to the transformation of the old hag into a young woman. The Wife of Bath’s concluding remarks at the end of her tale, which are in the form of a “closing prayer” (Martin 65), are functional in emphasising the significance and necessity of this change. The Wife of Bath prays,

[...] Jhesu Crist us sende
 Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fressh abedde,
 And grace t' overbyde hem that we wedde;
 And eek I praye jhesu shorte hir lyves
 That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
 And olde and angry nygardes of dispence,
 God sende hem soone verray pestilence! (III (D) 1258-1264)

She wants young husbands that will die early if they will not be governed by their wives. Although Pugh defines these words as “inconsistent” and “dichotomous” (131) because of her asking for young husbands despite her old age, the Wife of Bath again reminds the reader/audience that she is the mouthpiece of all women. In this respect, her use of “us” (III (D) 1258) and “we” (III (D) 1260) while she was praying as the “I” (III (D) 1261) is also very functional. Hence, if the closing remarks of the Wife of Bath and the transformation of the old hag following the total submission of the knight to her mastery are regarded as a whole, it can be claimed that what the Wife of Bath is concerned about is mastery in marriage not only in socio-economic terms but also in corporeal terms. In this way, the Wife of Bath, who “speaks as the excluded feminine” (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s* 129), sets an example to her male listeners as a perfect speaker⁸² by becoming one of Chaucer’s “clever wordsmiths” as a female speaker (Benson, “Literary” 143).

As Leicester argues, the Wife of Bath’s technique in her rhetorical performance both in her prologue and tale can be defined as “the *appropriation* of the instruments and institutions of masculine authority,” or in other words “to womanhandle the traditional instruments of male domination in the interests of her feminist message” (*The Disenchanted* 72, emphasis original). As an “extrovert and overpowering” body (Hopper 62), the Wife of Bath speaks “as the excluded Other” (Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s*

115). She speaks against the discourse of misogynist texts from within the discourse itself. Thus, she uses and abuses the means of the misogynist tradition, such as fabliaux in her prologue to her tale and romance in her tale. Yet, her aim is not only to question the representations of women in those texts and to offer her own interpretation of them in a subverted manner, but also, as Chaucer's "revisionary agent" (Patterson, "For the Wyves" 685), she aims at displaying the growing influence and demands of a bourgeois woman, who takes active part in the masculine market spaces as a woman engaged in trade and thus challenges, the traditional estate hierarchy as well as the traditional gender hierarchy. Hence, as Patterson states, "[t]he Wife's Prologue and Tale [...] do not bespeak 'Alisoun-ness' but are on the contrary spoken by it. No longer merely the protagonist of a fictive narration, the female is a force that both controls her own verbal world and the tale-telling game itself" ("For the Wyves" 687). It can be argued that "this unlikely woman preacher" (Tinkle, "The Wife of Bath's" 67) challenges the authority of traditional learned clerks and presents herself as an alternative female clerk, whose education comes from her corporeal experience. In this respect, Chaucer's advising Bukton to read the Wife of Bath in "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton" (29-30) can be regarded as the extension and acceptance of the Wife of Bath's posing herself as a clerk.

It is also for this reason that the Wife of Bath chooses two significant genres of the misogynist narrative tradition (Knapp 45): antifeminist narratives, against which she fights in her prologue, and romance, against which she fights in her tale. In both of these genres, the Wife of Bath puts the female body in the foreground in order to emphasise the agency of the female body. In this context, in her prologue to her tale, the importance of bodily experience to sustain the agency of the body is achieved by sexual pleasure as well as by the fruits of the marriage bed, which come to her in the form of inheritances. Similarly, in her tale, she draws attention to the outcomes of the transgressions of the agency of the female body by the male body. Hence, in both parts of her rhetorical performance, the Wife of Bath fashions herself through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity emphasising the agency of her body.

To conclude, the Wife of Bath fashions herself through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity both in her material performance as reflected by the "General

Prologue” and in her rhetorical performance in her prologue to her tale and her tale itself. In this respect, her body comes to the foreground as a liminal space where the Wife of Bath’s material and rhetorical performances come together. In this liminal space, combining her socio-economic freedom with her corporeal freedom, the Wife of Bath performs as the embodiment of the new bourgeois woman, who is free from masculine limitations not only economically and discursively but also sexually. As a result, her title “wife,” which draws attention to wifedom as profession, comes to represent a display and celebration of her femininity. Accordingly, it can be claimed that the Wife of Bath fashions herself as a new woman, who claims authority over not only her goods but also her body through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity.

CONCLUSION

Greenblatt presents self-fashioning as a Renaissance concept in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* arguing that people had the chance to fashion their selves owing to the changes in society. Although Greenblatt refers to Chaucer and praises him for his character creation in the *Canterbury Tales*, he criticises the Middle Ages for the lack of individuality and ignores Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims. However, self-fashioning had already started in the late fourteenth century owing to a number of social, economic, religious and cultural changes, which paved the way for social mobility and the change in social structure. It was within this context that Chaucer created self-fashioning in the *Canterbury Tales*. In the liminal space of pilgrimage, which provides pilgrims with the freedom and the free space to perform their identities, the pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, exemplified by the Knight, the Squire, the Prioress, the Monk, the Pardoner, the Clerk, the Doctor of Physic and the Wife of Bath, which this study focuses on, exhibit examples of self-fashioning, which are shaped and displayed by their material performances in the "General Prologue" and their rhetorical performances in their tales, prologues to their tales (if applicable) and the links between the tales. Their physical qualities such as costume, apparel, mount, physiognomy are the material mediums, which they use to communicate their performance. Their interaction with the other pilgrims and their tales are their rhetorical performance, in that, the genre they choose, what stories they narrate and their prologues display their personal point of views, and hence their perception and manipulation of their selves.

Displaying their self-fashioning, Chaucer shows that these pilgrims not only reject the impositions of the estates on their identities, but also create new alternatives, which are functional in shaping social changes. For instance, the Knight and the Squire suggest a new look at the concept of nobility fashioning their selves through their nobility performances. In his material performance in the "General Prologue," the Knight displays himself as the embodiment of military ideals such as chivalry, truth and honour, and how he has devoted himself to his military profession as exhibited by the long list of his battles. Drawing attention to the importance of deeds in his material

performance, which does not refer to his nobility as would be expected of a typical knight noble by blood, the Knight claims nobility owing to his deeds. This can be interpreted as a reflection of his being an indentured soldier, who does not have to be noble by blood but who has to be efficient at his military profession, which is the main reason for his claim for nobility by deed. The Knight's rhetorical performance in his tale enhances his claim for nobility, in that, the Knight shows how familiar he is with the world of the nobility by blood through his choice of romance in his tale and his representation of Duke Theseus, Palamon and Arcite, all of whom are traditional military men noble by blood. The Knight offers himself as an alternative knight noble by deed and performs the role of authority, traditionally attributed to knights noble by blood, as reflected by his rhetorical performance in his interruption of the Monk's tale and in his intervention in the dispute between the Pardoner and the Host. Similar to his father, the Squire also fashions himself as a potential knight-in-the-making through his nobility performance. He moves one step further and fashions himself in the form of a courtier as reflected by his material performance. He is not only a man of war and fighting but also a follower of the courtly love tradition and courtly manners such as singing, composing, wearing fashionable clothes and having knowledge of courtly etiquette. Accordingly, in his rhetorical performance in his tale, the Squire also chooses romance, which is functional in not only reflecting his nobility and his claim for being a member of the world of courtly love, but also displaying his rhetorical skills, which surpass the other pilgrims as asserted by the Franklin's praise. In the light of the Knight and the Squire's material and rhetorical performances, it can be argued that nobility becomes a performance for them to perform as military men noble by deed. Presenting nobility as performance, the Knight and the Squire exhibit not only the intergenerational development of nobility by deed but also require a redefinition of the estate of nobility.

Likewise, through their performances of gendered religious identity, the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner bring new perspectives not only to the reiterative gender performances but also to the religious identity performances. If gender is an assignment performed through reiterative acts, the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner display that they do not renounce their gender despite their religious identities in order to enact their assignment. Therefore, femininity becomes a performance for the Prioress as reflected

by her material performance, which explicitly displays her physical beauty and courtly manners. This femininity performance does not prevent her from performing her religious identity as revealed by her rhetorical performance in her tale, which gives voice to the discourse of her clerical estate about the Jews. Thus, the Prioress exhibits that she does not renounce her gender in order to perform her religious identity. Likewise, masculinity becomes a performance for the Monk. Using and abusing the masculine activities of his time such as horse riding and hunting, both of which are evocative of sexual connotations drawing attention to his masculinity, the Monk displays his healthy masculine body embellished with elaborate costume in his material performance, which is in direct contrast to the impositions of monastic rules. Still, the Monk performs his religious identity in his rhetorical performance so aptly that, through the tragic tales he tells, he succeeds in arousing fear in the pilgrims about the fall of man. In this way, the Monk shows that he can perform his religious identity without renouncing his gender. Similarly, homosexuality becomes a performance for the Pardoner. Although there was the dominance of negative attitudes towards homosexuality throughout the Middle Ages, the Pardoner does not avoid displaying his homosexuality in his material performance through his given physical traits such as his yellow thin hair, small voice and beardlessness, which results in Chaucer the pilgrim's describing him as a gelding or a mare. In addition to these given physical traits, the Pardoner also has some chosen attributes such as his glaring eyes, costume and entrapments, that is, relics, which problematise his religious identity. Enhancing this problematisation, the Pardoner reveals his tricks of the trade, namely, his clerical profession of selling pardons and deceiving the commoners in his rhetorical performance in the prologue to his tale. Yet, despite this revelation and his homosexuality, the Pardoner performs his clerical profession in his rhetorical performance in his tale as expected of a man of religion by telling a tale about death and arousing fear in people. Like the Prioress and the Monk, the Pardoner also asserts that he does not have to renounce his gender in order to perform his religious identity. However, unlike the Prioress and the Monk, whose gendered religious identity performances are approved by the Canterbury pilgrims, the Pardoner experiences a problem due to the dominance of heterosexual norms. The Host silences the Pardoner as one of the representatives of the heterosexual order in the *Canterbury Tales*. Although

he is silenced by the Host following the dispute between them, which can be interpreted as the silencing of “the Other” by the heteronormative society, the Pardoner’s existence among the Canterbury pilgrims can be regarded as his display of his gender identity. He becomes the embodiment of how sexually deviant people in general and sexually deviant men of religion in particular are excluded by the heteronormative society. It can be claimed that the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner present new alternatives for both gender and religious identity performances. Without renouncing their gender or religious identities, the Prioress, the Monk and the Pardoner prove that they have “gendered religious identities,” not “clerical genders” as imposed on them by the clerical authorities.

Similarly, the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic fashion themselves as the members of a new learned group, and claim a special social status owing to their cultural capital. The Clerk’s material performance reveals that although he is still being made by his investment in his cultural capital as a university student, who has not yet earned an office, his investment still helps the Clerk to display his learned self through his interest in books, learning and teaching rather than material riches. Fashioning himself as a man interested in learning for the sake of learning, the Clerk exhibits himself as an avid reader, translator and commentator of Petrarch’s story of patient Griselda in his rhetorical performance in his tale, which is functional in displaying his clerical status and his distinction from the lewed men as a university educated clerk. Likewise, the Doctor of Physic also stands out as a learned man, who has completed investing in his cultural capital, as revealed by his title “doctor”, and started gaining the material advantages of his learned self as indicated by his material performance through his rich costume and wealth, which are the outcomes of his cultural capital. Furthering the Clerk’s claim for a higher social status as a learned man, the Doctor of Physic has achieved converting his cultural capital into economic and social capital as well, which enhances his claim for a higher social status for his learned self. It is also for this reason that the Doctor of Physic also displays his learned self in his rhetorical performance in his tale re-telling the Virginia story of Livy, which is also functional in his claim for the authority of Livy as a learned man. Furthermore, his rhetorical performance about the importance of virginity helps the Doctor of Physic display his clerical status as a

university educated man as well, drawing attention to the fact that the Doctor of Physic's cultural capital is not as secular as that of the Clerk. Still, the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic perform as learned men who own cultural capital, which is the main quality that differentiates them from the lewed men. Thus, displaying the rise of the learned men in the social strata, the Clerk and the Doctor of Physic offer new alternatives to the established social hierarchy.

In the same line, the Wife of Bath fashions herself through her corporeal and discursive performance of femininity. Despite the dominance of misogyny in the Middle Ages, the Wife of Bath speaks against all the impositions on her identity as a female. Transgressing traditional gender roles as a woman engaged in trade and as a woman subverting the interpretation of the Bible to her own ends, the Wife of Bath displays that she has liberated her femininity from the corporeal and discursive constraints of traditional misogynist tradition owing to her economic liberation as a woman engaged in trade as revealed by her material performance in the "General Prologue" and by her rhetorical performance in her prologue to her tale. As a result, her body stands out as a liminal space where her corporeal and discursive performances of femininity merge and fight against the corporeal and discursive limitations imposed on medieval women by the clerical misogynist authorities. She presents herself as an economically and sexually liberated woman, who claims authority over her body, femininity and sexuality. In this way, the Wife of Bath sets herself as an example for women that desire corporeal and discursive freedom. Hence, she fashions herself as a teacher not only of the male, as reflected by the teaching process of the knight in her rhetorical performance in her tale by an old hag, but also of women who need role models to liberate their bodies corporeally and discursively.

These examples reveal that medieval identity is formed at the meeting point of the external and internal forces. It is influenced both by one's self-conception and by the social, political and cultural context in which this self is situated. Hence, the control over the construction of identity is important both for an individual to fashion her/his self and for the authorities to sustain the established social hierarchies, since identity politics involves the power struggle between an individual and authorities. Self-

fashioning appears as an important means for individuals to assert their control over their identities as exemplified by Chaucer's presentation of the self-fashioning Canterbury pilgrims. It helps the individual reject the external impositions on her/his identity. In this respect, self-fashioning can be regarded as a performance, which both shapes and displays one's identity. In a self-fashioning performance, the current identity performance of an individual, which is shaped by self-fashioning, confronts the social impositions on her/his identity. Hence, it can be argued that the construction of the self is as theatrical as everyday life, in which this construction occurs. This theatricality of the construction of the self, as depicted by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*, is both a reason and a result of the self-fashioning of individuals. Therefore, it can be asserted that self-fashioning extends the scope of identity performances. It first deconstructs and then reconstructs the reiterative identity performances, and thus has a great influence on the conception and performance of identity bringing together the external and internal forces.

As this study has demonstrated, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* presents the connection between self-presentation or daily practices of each character and her/his identity performance in a ritualistic pilgrimage atmosphere. In this way, both the pilgrims' self-fashioning performances and the responses of society, in this case represented by the whole pilgrim group, to these performances are revealed. At this point, the role of the audience in defining these activities as performance gains importance.⁸³ The pilgrims' reactions to each other's material and/or rhetorical performance are functional in displaying the impact of their self-fashioning performances. At this point, the role of Chaucer the pilgrim as an audience member, who mediates the material and rhetorical performances of the Canterbury pilgrims, can also be analysed in order to reveal his role in the reception and representation of these self-fashioning performances. Without any means for the festive ceremonies or spectacles of the nobility and their courtly performances in order to present their identity performances, the commoners, here referring to all the people excluding the elites of the courtly sphere, represented by the pilgrims of the *Canterbury Tales*, perform alternative identities through their everyday life practices according to their professions, and thus exemplify medieval self-fashioning.

Evidently, the informal everyday life practices of the Canterbury pilgrims such as eating, dressing and speaking constitute their performances that help their self-fashioning. These informal practices are brought together under the unifying structure of pilgrimage, which is a type of formalised practice. In this respect, the *Canterbury Tales* can be regarded as an arena in which informal everyday life practices are performed by individuals in the formal context of pilgrimage. In this context, the Canterbury pilgrims get the chance to deconstruct the impositions on their identity and offer alternatives through their identity performances. Thus, the everyday life practices of ordinary people can be analysed as means to aid the understanding of the identity performances of individuals in the fourteenth century. In the formalised pilgrimage setting, the informal performances of the characters in the *Canterbury Tales* assert that people did not accept to be defined by authorities through impositions constructed as estate divisions in the late fourteenth century. Rather, they began to fashion themselves ignoring these impositions as exemplified by Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, and they enacted and displayed this self-fashioning through their material and rhetorical performances.

The identity performance of each Canterbury pilgrim becomes the product and reflection of this self-fashioning. As a result, self-fashioning differentiates the identity performance of an individual from the previous identity performances. In line with these, as a self-fashioner, Chaucer presents self-fashioning in his *Canterbury Tales*. The Canterbury pilgrims reveal their ways of establishing and maintaining their identities in their material and rhetorical performances ignoring the stereotypical depictions in estate literature both as ideal and satirical figures. Therefore, defining the characters in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* either as satirical figures or as ideal figures, would mean, in any case, a kind of stereotyping. Their identity performances should be regarded as their ways of establishing and maintaining their identities ignoring the stereotypical depictions in estate literature both as satirical and ideal figures. Their new ways of fashioning their identities in new forms that are different from the ones in estate literature display their distinctive identity performances as a reflection of their self-fashioning. Hence, the Canterbury pilgrims' aspirations, costumes, ways of understanding both themselves and each other cannot be limited to estate literature arguments. These are functional in understanding how ordinary people outside the

courts conceived themselves in relation to each other in the Middle Ages. As a result, their everyday life practices become the embodiment of their distinctive individualistic features constituted by their self-fashioning, since self-fashioning begins to be activated in the room for change in each identity performance. In accordance with this, the Canterbury pilgrims' identity performances shaped by their self-fashioning become the arena for the past identity performances being encountered by the present identity performances and give birth to distinct identity performances, which add novelty to the sequence of repetitions reflecting the identity performances of individuals in the fourteenth century. In this respect, further studies can be conducted to analyse the self-fashioning of the Franklin and the Merchant in the *Canterbury Tales* through their performance of bourgeois identity.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* not only displays the self-fashioning of the pilgrims but also, through the impact of this self-fashioning, the distinctiveness of an individual's identity performance from the sequence of other past performances as well as the reception of this new identity performance, which is shaped by self-fashioning. In this respect, it can be claimed that Chaucer's referring to the pilgrims first with their titles, which reveal their social identities, is functional in drawing attention to this specific group, and then comes the individualistic features of each pilgrim that differentiate her/him from previous performers through her/his self-fashioning performance. Namely, Chaucer's style of naming the Canterbury pilgrims through their professional titles, such as the Knight, the Prioress, the Clerk or the Wife of Bath, displays both the shared identity (knight, prioress, clerk or wife) and the singular identity ("the" Knight, "the" Prioress, "the" Clerk or "the" Wife of Bath). The singular identities of the ordinary people outside courts confront shared identities and assert their superiority over them. Hence, it can also be suggested that the pilgrimage setting in the *Canterbury Tales* provides the public forum for the ordinary people to perform their identities due to the lack of the means of material display in authoritative sense as in the case of courtly identity performances through tournaments, feats or maying. Through a story telling competition, the pilgrimage setting in the *Canterbury Tales* imitates, in a way, those competitions of the nobility (evoking the competition in tournaments), beginning with a

meal in an inn to end with a food reward for the best story (imitative of feasts and maying where people come together).

In conclusion, it can be suggested that self-fashioning is innovative, re-productive, generative, creative, transformative, subversive and thus empowering, as exemplified by the self-fashioning of the Canterbury pilgrims. In this respect, it can be claimed that Chaucer's presentation of self-fashioning in his *Canterbury Tales* is functional not only in reflecting the changes in society, which resulted in the disruption of the traditional impositions on identity, but also influencing and shaping these changes. In this way, Chaucer displays the mutual relationship between literature and life. On the one hand, his Canterbury pilgrims can be regarded as the representatives of fourteenth century English people, who experienced a number of socio-economic and religious events and hence rejected the impositions of the three estate structure on their identities; on the other hand, they can be regarded as a reflection of Chaucer's aim at influencing these changes in society and the changes in medieval people's self-conception. Hence, the analysis of the Canterbury pilgrims' self-fashioning contributes to the study of the hermeneutics of the self in the Middle Ages. Therefore, through the analysis of self-fashioning in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, this dissertation also contributes to the study of individuality in the Middle Ages using the scope of performance studies drawing attention to the identity performances of late medieval people represented by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*. As a result, this dissertation asserts that the analysis of the pilgrims' self-fashioning in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* through their material performances in the "General Prologue" and through their rhetorical performances in their tales and in their prologues to their tales (if applicable), as well as the links between tales reveal that Chaucer displays examples of Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning in the late Middle Ages.

NOTES

¹ Hereafter, the *Oxford English Dictionary* will be abbreviated as the *OED*.

² Also see Giles and Middleton for the discussion of the importance of social context in identity construction, 32-38.

³ Also see Carlson, 34.

⁴ Boccaccio's depiction of the Duke Theseus as "noble Theseus," and Palamon and Arcite as the knights "of royal blood" (111) in his "Teseida" is also significant. Being the source of *The Knight's Tale*, "Teseida" emphasises these noble characters' nobility by blood. Hence, it can be argued that the depictions of Duke Theseus, Palamon and Arcite by Boccaccio in "Teseida" and by Chaucer in *The Knight's Tale* draw attention to the continuity of nobility by blood as an important feature of knights. A similar depiction of the knightly figures as "noble" can also be seen in Henry Knighton's *Chronicles*. For instance, Knighton describes Henry, who was the earl of Derby, as "noble" (29, 39) and Sir Thomas Dagworth as a "noble knight" (111) as well as the knights who died on the expedition in France together with Guy of Warwick and Sir Robert Morley as "noble" (179). However, Chaucer's presenting the Knight as a "worthy" knight noble by deeds reveals the discontinuity in knights' nobility by blood, and displays the change in knighthood performed by the Knight in the "General Prologue" on the one hand, and Duke Theseus, Palamon and Arcite in Boccaccio's "Teseida," Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and Henry Knighton's *Chronicle* on the other hand. In this respect, it should also be noted that Knighton uses the adjective "worthy" to describe a man noble by blood, that is, Sir Oliver Ingham (3). Accordingly, it can also be suggested that Chaucer's choice of the adjective "worthy" to describe the Knight in the "General Prologue" as a knight noble by deed also displays the discontinuity in describing the knights noble by blood.

⁵ See Himmet Umunç's article, "Balat'ta Bir İngiliz Şövalyesi: Beylikler Döneminde Türkiye'nin Batı ile İlişkileri [An English Knight at 'Palatye': Relations with the West during the *Beyliks* Period]" for a discussion of the reference to the Knight's fighting in Balatia as a reflection of the economic, trade and political relations between Turkey and the West during the *Beyliks* period.

⁶ Furthermore, during the Middle Ages, an analogy was drawn between the horse and the body (woman), and the rider and the soul (man), as a result of which efficiency at horse riding was interpreted as one's control over his senses. See Rowland's article "The Horse and Rider Figure in Chaucer's Works" for a detailed discussion of this analogy.

⁷ See Azer Banu Kemaloğlu's article, "Ellesmere Miniatures of *Canterbury Tales* as Medieval Portraits" for a discussion of the portraits of Canterbury pilgrims in the Ellesmere Manuscript. The article is not referred to in this chapter since it mainly presents a discussion of the miniature portraits of the pilgrims and the dissertation is focused on the textual information about the Canterbury pilgrims, that is, the pilgrims' depiction in the "General Prologue" and their tales as well as their interaction with each other, rather than their illuminations. Yet, the article would be beneficial for those interested in the Ellesmere miniature portraits.

⁸ See Murat Öğütçü's article, "Chaucer ve Müphemiyet: Chaucer'in Şövalye Betimlemesinin Ardında Yatan İdeolojik Nedenler [Chaucer and Ambiguity: The Ideological Reasons behind

the Portrait of Chaucer's Knight]" for a discussion of the ideological reasons for the choice of romance as a genre by the Knight in accordance with the expectations of his time in order to be regarded as an ideal knight (510-513).

⁹ Burçin Erol further comments on the development of the gentleman figure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries out of the ideals of medieval knighthood in her article, "The Changing Concept of Chivalry as Reflected in the Works of Malory, Scott, Tennyson, Twain and White." See the article for a detailed discussion of the growth of a gentleman through the changes in chivalric ideal in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

¹⁰ See Sema Doğan's article, "Ortaçağ Manastır Sistemi" ["Medieval Monastery System"] for a discussion of Eastern monasticism as the origin of the Western monasticism.

¹¹ This was the first and most important monastic order, but there were other religious orders as well, which will be explained later on.

¹² As it has been discussed in the Introduction, due to the decline of feudal values and increasing central power of the kings rather than feudal lords, the national feelings started to develop in the fourteenth century. Although this type of nationalism was different from the contemporary definition of nationalism, still it triggered the nationalist feelings and gathered the people under the notion of a nation rather than a manor or religion.

¹³ For instance, "Oswy, king of Northumbria (d. 670), dedicated his daughter Aelfled to a Northumbrian victory in battle" (Norris 284), which displays that a daughter could be a gift for the Church to celebrate male victory in battles.

¹⁴ Besides serving the needs of the aristocratic women, nunneries also served the needs of lower social groups. Even if lower social groups could not manage to provide the dowry for their daughters to be admitted into nunneries; nunneries, still, meant for them career opportunities. The girls from lower estates were accepted as lay sisters to work as servants for wealthy nuns from noble families (Uitz 169-170; Power, *Women* 91; Lucas 50). Moreover, because some nunneries had large manors and estates, they needed servants to work on land as well. Therefore, not only women but also men of lower estates became "dependent on the nunneries as landowners or employers" (Power, *Women* 91). The numbers of such servants continued to increase to such an extent that in the thirteenth century "[i]n some of the larger houses individual nuns even had private servants" (Power, *Women* 95). It can be argued that, despite this hierarchical structure in which nunneries "provided a career for girls of gentle birth," who brought dowries to the nunnery in order to be brought up to be abbesses or prioresses, nunneries were still functional for the lower social groups (Power, *Women* 89). This was totally the replica of the medieval social hierarchy in the religious sphere. This reveals that "social class also determined the kind of religious life open to" women in the Middle Ages (Labarge 98). Thus, noble women first established convents and then these religious houses "founded by noble ladies continued to be ruled by noble ladies, the rule often passing from mother to daughter" (Lucas 37) which can be defined as the extension of the social hierarchy to the religious sphere as well. Evidently, "the social world was a very stratified one and the church did little to change this," on the contrary, "Christianity thus made formal places for elite women in all stages of life (as defined by the ritually acknowledged roles of a female): as virgin, married woman, or widow" (Norris 284).

¹⁵ This specific convent was established by Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, and the first abbess was his sister Caesaria, who would be followed by one of their noble relatives, Caesaria the Younger.

¹⁶ After the *Rule* of Caesarius in 512, St. Benedict of Nursia established a monastic order at Monte Cassino, Italy and wrote a monastic rule, the *Rule of St. Benedict*, in order to organise monastic life and regulate monasteries and nunneries in 529. The *Rule of St. Benedict* was, in fact, an adaptation of feudal social hierarchy into a religious one, in that, the abbess or abbot, or the prioress or prior, was to protect her/his community and guide them in spiritual matters. They had some aids such as cellarer or cellaress, but they were to govern monasteries and nunneries as the supreme source of order (Hourigan 40). Moreover, the ideals of the Benedictine rule were functional in standardising female and male monasticism. With this aim, “[a] round of liturgy with eight services in each twenty-four hours, known as the *Opus Dei*, characterized the center of the Benedictine life” and “[i]t was the only liturgy open to women as celebrants” (Norris 286). However, in addition to these regulations, the acceptance of the *Rule of St. Benedict* meant the limitation of the authority of female since the acceptance of the *Rule of St. Benedict* required submission of the abbess/prioress to the bishop. As Norris explains, with the *Rule of St. Benedict*, abbesses came under the control of local bishops. Furthermore, it also meant a break with founding noble women and their successors as abbesses, since the *Rule* introduced election (Norris 286).

¹⁷ Apparently, as Henrietta Leyser states, “the greater opportunities for women in the [convents of] twelfth century have both a class [...] [and] a gendered context” (193). In this respect, the admittance of females of lower social status was a very important development although it did not last long. For instance, the Order of Fontevault in France, which was the counterpart of the Order of Gilbertine in England in terms of being an order for women, was very radical. The order was established by Robert of Arbrissel in ca. 1100 for the outcasts, the poor, the women (including the prostitutes) and for the lepers. Shortly, the Order of Fontevault aimed at “the Other” in society. They also had a double house consisting of a nunnery and a religious house for men, which were both under the control of an abbess. They were following the *Rule of St. Benedict* but, as an extension of its radical nature, the first abbess of the Order was not a virgin but a widow. However, as the popularity of the Order increased, the Order drew attention of aristocratic ladies, including Eleanor of Aquitaine, the wife of Henry II, which meant a break with their ideals (Logan 143; Norris 288-289).

¹⁸ As a matter of fact, there were double houses for monks and nuns even during the seventh century. It was first the Celts, who brought this double house tradition to Anglo-Saxon England, which was to continue until the ninth century Viking invasions. The most important feature of these double houses was that the abbess was the ruler and the head of double houses and had great power over them (Hamilton 34).

¹⁹ However, even in double houses, leaving aside living as “co-equals,” nuns became almost the servants of canons “sewing and doing laundry for the men,” which was totally a reflection of gender roles in secular life and, in the end, led to the separation of double houses and nuns started to move away to newly established only-female houses in the twelfth century (Logan 142).

²⁰ As Henrietta Leyser argues, among the orders of the twelfth century, the Gilbertine Order was especially important as “the one wholly English order [...] founded specifically for women and

its history graphically illustrates the needs fulfilled by such an order as well as the kinds of tensions it could generate” (190-192).

²¹ Also see Henritta Leyser, 193-194.

²² Evidently, during the twelfth century, “there were fashions in religious orders, as there were in dress or in styles of castle building” (Labarge 12), and their numbers were constantly increasing for the male and the female. When it comes to the reason of the increase in the number of the new houses for females in the twelfth century, as Norris indicates, “[t]he population explosion had, for a number of reasons, created a surplus of young unmarried – and unmarriageable – women” (288). Thus, the foundations of new orders led more and more women to join cloistered life in the twelfth century, and “Benedictine nunneries reached their height of foundation around 1160” (Jewell 156).

²³ Education was very important for females in order to prevent them from questioning the ideals of the Church as in the case of Lollardy. In the fourteenth century, Lollardy had an impact on nunneries, as well. John Wyclif and his followers rejected the institutional intermediary between God and human beings. According to them, the Bible was the supreme source of authority and man did not need the practices of priests such as absolution or penance, since priests might also have been among the sinful. Thus, the best way for an individual woman/man to communicate with God was to do that without any mediator (Jewell 172-173). Putting emphasis on the individual, the Lollards influenced the way of thinking not only of the congregation but also of the religious commissionaires of the Church implying the idea that the members of the Church might also have been sinful and they themselves might have been in need of penance and absolution. This almost equated ordinary people with the *religiosi* and put the role of nuns and nunneries into question not only for the commoners but also for nuns themselves. In relation to this, Norris indicates that “[p]erhaps, because their role within the church was so circumscribed, historians have theorized that women were more vulnerable than men to the lure of heterodox activities” which promised them “the leadership roles” not provided for them by the Church hierarchy (292). Thus, the women, who were subordinated by male authority and dominance within Church walls, found status and authority outside conventional institutions of the Church. They rejected celibacy, some of them got married and had children.

²⁴ As Henrietta Leyser argues, it was for this decline in educational standards in the nunneries that the Order of Brigittines, established in c. 1344 by Bridget of Sweden who was not a nun but a married woman with eight children, put the emphasis on the importance of learning. Although it was first in 1415 that the followers of the Order of Brigittines were able to found a house in England during the reign of Henry V, it can be claimed that their desire for learning and books was very influential on the individual development of nuns (204).

²⁵ This evokes the Old Woman’s advice about proper behaviour at the table in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun’s *Romance of the Rose* (231).

²⁶ As Edwards explains,

Jews were not to build synagogues in places which they had not previously settled; they were not to remain in England at all unless they had financial means and guarantors; they were not to make excessive noise while worshipping, and they were not to have Christian women as their servants. Jews were not to buy or eat

meat during Lent, they were not to disparage Christianity or debate religious matters with Christians, they were not to have sex with Christians and, to avoid such outcomes, they were to wear identifying badges. Jews were not to enter churches, or persuade their co-religionaries against converting to Christianity. They were not to move to new places of settlement without a licence. (49)

²⁷ The origin of monasticism goes back to the late third and early fourth century Egypt. Although eremitic monks were not part of the institutional Church at first, presenting themselves as ideal religious people against the corruption not only in society but also within the Church itself, the Church would in time incorporate them as coenobitic monks into its body in order to have control over them (Hamilton 26; English 496; Lynch 17-18, 29-31).

²⁸ The only biographical information about St. Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-545/560) is in the second book of the *Dialogues*, which includes information about the monks in Italy, and was written down by Pope Gregory the Great. St. Benedict was born into a wealthy family in Nursia and he was educated in Rome. Yet, he was greatly influenced by the moral corruption in Rome, which led him to lead the life of a hermit for three years. Although his devotion was appreciated by many to the extent that he received an invitation from a monastery to be the abbot, certain monks in the monastery did not like him and attempted at poisoning him. Following this event, he left the monastery and went to Monte Cassino, where he founded a monastery in c. 529 and where he was buried after his death (Lynch 31; English 103).

²⁹ For instance, according to the *Rule of the Master*, it was believed that monks had to be very careful while spitting and coughing since they were surrounded by angels, and hence, they needed to lead an angelic life. As Conrad Leyser argues, this was also the reflection of the association of the monks with angels (9-12). Yet, St. Benedict found such details about spitting and coughing too strict and omitted them; but still, he emphasised that monks were accompanied by angels. Furthermore, Conrad Leyser (20) and Southern (221-223) argue that the main difference between the two rules was that St. Benedict reduced the angelic side of monks and he emphasised their humane side. Hence, he was, in fact, rewriting the *Rule of the Master* with some changes, omissions, and additions. St. Benedict introduced some novelties in motive; unlike his predecessors who aimed at a harsh spiritual life, St. Benedict aimed at shaping a moderate, orderly life for his monks, which was based on common sense and stability.

³⁰ As a matter of fact, the role of Pope Gregory the Great was especially important for spreading the Benedictine rule, since he was the one who familiarised Rome with the rule after the destruction of Monte Cassino by the Lombards in 577. He also introduced the rule to England commissioning St Augustine to Canterbury, who was a Benedictine monk. This placed Canterbury among the first places outside Rome that followed Benedictine Order. Accordingly, the recruitment as a monk meant that person adopted the *Rule of Benedict* as a guide for his life (Hermann 71).

³¹ As a result of the increasing search for a simpler religious life, monastic reforms went on with the emergence of mendicant orders such as Franciscans and Dominicans in the thirteenth century. The increasing wealth of the Church and moral corruption of the clergy, who turned to earthly riches, were the main reasons underlying the emergence of friars. People wanted a new type of ideal Christian life, which was in the form of Christ's life. Thus, they rejected communal life and enclosure in monastic houses and preferred living in the outside world in chosen poverty and devoting themselves to religion like Christ. It was this search for "a new piety" and "the desire for a more personal form of religion" that gave birth to the emergence of friars and

the establishment of Franciscan and Dominican orders (Logan 202). Yet, despite these efforts, the richness of the monasteries both in terms of land and money could not be prevented. As a result, the monasteries became “economic units” as well as religious and social units (English 497). It can be claimed that although the twelfth century introduced many new orders to monastic tradition, which appealed to different social groups in different parts of society, all of these orders deviated from their original claims. For instance, the Cistercians turned out to be very rich landowners, the Augustinians preferred comfort, the Premonstratensians directed themselves to individual spirituality, the Fontevraults started to be under the governance of the aristocrats, and the Sempringham Order became a totally male order (Logan 145).

³² It was, in fact, fashionable at the times, which is also reflected by the Monk’s woodcut picture and his portrait in the Ellesmere Manuscript.

³³ Hunting was regarded as a noble pursuit in the Middle Ages, see Almond, 28-60. For instance, see the hunting scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which reflect hunting as a pursuit of noble people; 64-66, 71-72, 74-59,80-82, 84-86, 92.

³⁴ For instance, “[t]here shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel” (Deuteronomy 23:17), or “[a]nd there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel” (I Kings 14:24:), or “[t]hou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination” (Leviticus 18:22), or “[i]f a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:13).

³⁵ Hereafter, the *Middle English Dictionary* will be abbreviated as the *MED*.

³⁶ See Cummins for a discussion of the hare as uncanny due to its hermaphroditic nature (116).

³⁷ At this point, it is also necessary to note the importance of scholasticism as a very important part of medieval university education. As Janin states, the main aim of scholasticism, which can be defined as “the intellectual powerhouse of medieval universities,” was “to produce a systematic body of knowledge in every important arena of intellectual enquiry” (40).

³⁸ Rainer Christoph Schwinges classifies medieval student into five groups. According to his arguments, the first type included the students aged fourteen to sixteen at the faculties of arts who came mostly from middle-class background and had never matriculated at a university before. They were supposed to have acquired certain knowledge of Latin in their previous schools in addition to the ability of reading and writing. After matriculation, they went under the supervision of their masters to go on their education. They had no specific aim to finish their studies at university, as a result of which, in most cases, they received no title. The second type also referred to the students of the faculties of arts and had similar features with the first type in terms of age and social or educational background. Yet, they differed from the first type in terms of their intention to attend a university. They had aspirations of upward social mobility through education, which signalled that there were more students from low social groups among this type. Hence, the main aim of this type of students was to earn *baccalarius atrium* under the guidance of their masters after two or two and a half years, which meant that those students would be aged then sixteen to nineteen. As for the third type, this type of students was again a part of the faculty of arts. They shared the same social background with the previous two types of students, but the range of poor students in this group was fewer than the ones in the second

type. They were aged from nineteen to twenty-one, which meant that, following their bachelor of arts, they continued their education for two or three more years and gained the degree of the Master of Arts. This degree paved the way for them to the faculties of medicine, law or theology following two years of teaching period in the faculty of arts. During this period, they might have been chosen as a master by the first and second type of students, or they might have been offered bursaries by a university or by the Church, or they might have served in official positions at a faculty such as dean or even rector (mostly in Paris). This meant that they could sustain their financial needs. The fourth type was totally different from the previous three types of students in terms of social status and belonged to the faculty of law. These students came from noble background and brought their servants with them, including their private tutors, to the university. As a result of their already advantageous social status, they had no concern about the prospects that would be provided by their university education. When it comes to the last type of students, they needed to finish their education with examination, which would grant them the doctorate degree at their twenties or thirties. If one belonged to this group, it meant that he completed his bachelor degree and was licensed to teach in the faculties of theology, medicine or law. Hence, the number of students that belonged to this group was fewer compared to other groups. Achieving this status meant for a poor student great upward social mobility and prestigious status in the society owing to his doctorate and license to teach (“Student” 196-200). The most prestigious ones among these groups of students were the ones who studied theology.

³⁹ As a result, the dietary concerns of medieval students were not very prospective either. They mostly started the day without having any breakfast although they got up early. They would have bread and wine about 10:00 am. They were allowed only three or four pounds of bread daily. They were also allowed to have just one pint of wine with fruit or cheese, but it was mostly diluted wine. They would have dinner at about 4:00 pm (in winter) or 5:00 pm (in summer). The most expected meal was the Sunday meal, because it consisted of meat and undiluted wine (Janin 46-47).

⁴⁰ It was only the ideal that before a student started a university, his family members or acquaintances were to arrange his material needs including his tuition and money for books and accommodation, which was not possible in most cases.

⁴¹ See Asuman Yüce’s “Medieval Universities and Chaucer’s ‘Clerk of Oxenforde’” for an analysis of the idealised depiction of the Clerk, which is in direct contrast with the other clerks in the *Canterbury Tales*. According to Yüce, compared to the other clerks, the Clerk is an ideal student but not “a representative of a fourteenth century university clerk” (88).

⁴² Interestingly enough, there were not only male but also female students, the most famous of whom was Trotula, who produced the first genealogical text as a female. However, the admission of female students came to an end in the thirteenth century at Salerno, as a reflection of the exclusion of females from universities (Schachner 51-52; Talbot 39-41).

⁴³ Thus, as Robert S. Gottfried notes, physicians were not allowed to marry until 1452 although many of them did not pay attention to this rule (53-56).

⁴⁴ Beside theoretical education which consisted of lectures, disputations and oral exams (Siraisi 379-380), the most important distinction of the medical faculty at Bologna was that the students also attended “anatomical demonstrations on the human cadaver,” which “were openly held by 1316” (Siraisi 380). Thus, they were taught not only theory but also practice. The main text was

the *Surgery* of Bruno Longoburgo, which was written in 1252 and was highly influenced by the Arabian Albucasis (Talbot 68-70).

⁴⁵ Also see Robert S. Gottfried, 53-55.

⁴⁶ It included the works by Constantinus Africanus, Hippocrates, Galen, Nicholas of Salerno as well as the translations of the treatises by Avicenna and Averroes from the fourteenth century onwards (Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities* 180).

⁴⁷ In this competitive world, physicians were confronted not only by medical practitioners and surgeons, but also by those who claimed practicing through spiritual or supernatural ability (Siraisi 361).

⁴⁸ Surgeons started to consider themselves as superior to barbers. Following surgeons, barbers ranked third in medieval medical hierarchy. As Robert S. Gottfried states, barbers were “the most poorly trained of the licensed practitioners” and so “[t]hey provided the most mundane treatments and charged the lowest rates, and most of them offered tonsorial as well as medical services” (73). Thus, again regarded as craftsmen, barbers were divided into two as barber-surgeons, who were closer to surgeons, and barber-tonsors, who not only practiced medicine but also served as hairdressers, which led to their downfall in the medical hierarchy.

⁴⁹ The inclusion of astrology to medicine was a result of the influence of Islamic medical tradition, which, in fact, dated back to Ptolemy (85-165 C.E.), the Roman Egyptian astronomer. According to medical astrology, every element of the universe, the stars, the planets, the sun, and the moon had a certain impact on the human body and humours. Furthermore, it was believed that certain times of the day and year had certain impact on the human body as well. Because this impact could not be seen directly, it was regarded as occult and thus part of “magyk natureel” (I (A) 416). Medical men believed that if there was an illness, or even an epidemic disease, it was because of the influence of skies and could be sorted out through astrology, because each of the twelve zodiac signs was believed to govern a specific part of the body (Byrne 18-20).

⁵⁰ The rivalry between physicians and the remaining groups of medical men was so great that physicians, led by Gilbert Kymer, even petitioned King Henry V in 1421 to ask for licence to practice medicine. This shows not only the extent of malpractices, but also the physicians’ need to secure their position legally. However, because of the lack of physicians and their reluctance to deal with poor people, their petition did not achieve physicians’ aim. Physicians’ trials to have control over other medical men continued in 1423, as well. This time, they came together with the rich and learned (though not university learned) surgeons, and together they established the Conjoint College of Physicians and Surgeons (or in other words, the College of Medicine). This college was to be presided over by a physician-rector (that is Kymer himself) and to provide education to both physician and surgeon candidates through readings and disputations to prevent malpractices. This was the acting of physicians and surgeons against barbers. However, as Getz (70) and Robert S. Gottfried (63-64) explain, this college did not seem to have lasted long, since there is no information about this college from 1424 onwards.

⁵¹ Ruth Mazo Karras argues that the attitude towards “feminine sexuality” was also influenced by “social difference” (“Because the Other Is a Poor Woman” 211), because the attitude changes according to the estates.

⁵² Bryan S. Turner indicates that it was St. Paul who designed this “new hierarchy of virtue: virginity, widowhood and marriage” (5).

⁵³ See also Eileen Power’s arguments about women working in urban trading spaces (*Women* 53-69).

⁵⁴ Karen Barad explains the inseparability or entanglement of the material and the discursive arguing that “materiality is discursive (i.e., material phenomena are inseparable from the apparatuses of bodily production; matter emerges out of, and includes as part of its being, the ongoing reconfiguring of boundaries), just as discursive practices are always already material (i.e., they are ongoing material [re] configurings of the world)” (151-152).

⁵⁵ As a result, the body can be defined as “not only a source of and location for society, but is a vital *means* through which individuals are *positioned* within and *oriented towards* society” (Shilling, *The Body in Culture* 11, emphasis original).

⁵⁶ The uncontrollable female body was also associated with monstrosity. For the discussion of the female body as a type of medieval monstrosity, see Sarah Alison Miller (1-7), who argues that the female body was regarded as “the Other,” like the Saracen or the Jew, which extended the concept of monstrosity in the Middle Ages. Also see Elizabeth Grosz for a discussion of how the female body is still regarded to be the embodiment of “the Other” because of instability, permeability and overflowing due to the body fluids, or seepages such as menstruation and lactation (187-210).

⁵⁷ Good dress was “a satiric characteristic of merchant women” in the Middle Ages (Ladd 105).

⁵⁸ Similarly, the Parson also warns his audience against excess in clothing (X (I) 411-431, 935).

⁵⁹ See Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun’s *Romance of the Rose* (230) and William Langland’s *Piers the Plowman* (ll. 7-14).

⁶⁰ See the Ellesmere portrait of the Wife of Bath.

⁶¹ Barbara A. Hanawalt argues that wandering around was considered to be a reason for the ill reputation of urban women in the Middle Ages (*Of Good*, 81, 109).

⁶² Although the common law required the maintenance of land in male bloodline, one third of a husband’s dower, which included land as well, would pass to a widow after the husband’s death and she might bring this dower to her following marriages. She had the right to use her dower throughout her life, and when she died, the dower would revert to the family of her former husband. Still, this contributed to the accumulation of the wealth of the widows, especially those, who were the survivors of the Black Death (Hanawalt, *The Wealth* 6-8).

⁶³ See G. L. Kittredge’s article, “Chaucer’s Discussion of Marriage,” for the grouping of these tales as the marriage group tales (435-467).

⁶⁴ Although the Wife of Bath’s rhetorical performance in her prologue might be regarded as the reflection of her “heretical views on marriage” according to the Clerk’s point of view, the rhetorical performances of the Wife of Bath and the Clerk constitute “a pair” of “two historically opposed modes of discourse” (Alford 108). Thus, while the Clerk presents himself as the authority to speak on women and proper conduct as exemplified by Griselda in his tale,

the example of whom can no longer be found, the Wife of Bath presents herself as “a clerk of marriage” through her corporeal experience in her marriages and thus she “imitates” the rhetorical skills and motives of the clerks to re-create and confront their misogynist discursive conventions (Hanning 596).

⁶⁵ As Bryan S. Turner states, “[t]he ‘I’ is the response of an individual in a total fashion to the variety of attitudes of others; the ‘me’ is the organized attitudes of others” (35).

⁶⁶ See for instance 1 Kings 17:10-16, Job 27:15 and Psalms 78:64.

⁶⁷ According to Isabel Davis, through her use of the word “bistowe” (III (D) 113), the Wife of Bath implies that “she is a tenant in, rather than owner of, her own body, enjoying it not by right of freehold, but instead only in usufruct” (69).

⁶⁸ According to Georges Duby, “the Church saw sexuality as the principal means by which the Devil secured his hold on the creation,” and hence allowed marriage “only as a remedy against carnal lust” (*Medieval Marriage* 16, 17).

⁶⁹ For the views over potential threats posed by sex as a sinful activity in marriage during the fourteenth century, see James A. Brundage, 503-504.

⁷⁰ Barrie Ruth Straus argues that, according to the Wife of Bath’s interpretation, it was necessary for a husband to pay his marriage debt to his wife through his body in order to avoid fornication, which can be resembled to “a loan of a body part that can be added on to the female’s body to rectify her lack of a phallus” (535).

⁷¹ Alice S. Miskimin’s description of the Wife of Bath as “the antitype of the humble figure of the modesty topos” (126) can be directly related with this pride in the Wife of Bath.

⁷² Ruth Mazo Karras also evaluates this as the Wife of Bath’s trading sexuality (*Common Women* 91-92).

⁷³ At this point, although Arthur Lindley suggests “[t]hat women have not written-and, even in this case, are not writing- the stories is precisely the point of Chaucer’s own version of the book of wicked wives” (6), it is still necessary to note that Chaucer at least gives the Wife of Bath a chance to give voice to her reaction to misogynist texts.

⁷⁴ Mark Miller argues that this displays how the Wife of Bath “is imprisoned by the historical conditions of her strategy” (196).

⁷⁵ In this way, as Susan Schibanoff also states, “she emblemizes the new reader par excellence even though, ironically” as “an ear-reader, not an eye reader” and so “[h]er literal act of taking the book into her own hands demonstrates the power of new reading and dramatizes her female textuality” (104).

⁷⁶ Huriye Reis interprets this attempt of the Wife of Bath, in her article “Kitaplarda Kadın Olmak” [“Being Woman in Books”] as an example to problematise the discourse of the antifeminist literary tradition (495-499).

⁷⁷ Despite this, James A. Brundage argues that the cases of rape and abduction were still common in English courts from the late fourteenth century to the fifteenth century (530-533).

⁷⁸ It is for this reason that Kathleen E. Kennedy defines this punishment as a product of “rehabilitative justice” (54).

⁷⁹ This might be interpreted as a reflection of the rapist knight’s “narcissistic egocentricity” (Coss, *The Lady* 179).

⁸⁰ Through the representation of “a bedroom drama which produces a mock gloom on the wedding night” (McKinley 361), it is implied that there is an association between the old lady and the old Wife of Bath, as a result of which Peggy A. Knapp regards the old lady as “a tribute to the Wife’s self-acceptance” (48).

⁸¹ Moreover, rather than defining the old hag as “a straw woman” or a “man-eating monster” (Leicester, “Of a Fire” 174), the transformation of the old hag can be interpreted as the reflection of the transformation of the knight from a rapist into a submissive husband (Mann, *Feminizing* 70).

⁸² Hence, Patterson argues that the Wife of Bath is mainly concerned about “the rights of selfhood” and “subjectivity” which is denied to her by the traditional medieval hierarchies, that is, by both gender hierarchies and social hierarchies (*Chaucer and the Subject of History* 282). This is also in accordance with Shulamith Shahar’s arguments about the status of women in medieval society (1-10). Thus, it is necessary to note that the subjectivity of the Wife of Bath is constructed by and thus bound to her sexual identity and her social status.

⁸³ For a discussion of the role of audience in performances, see Striff 1-2; Carlson 38; Schechner, *Performance Theory* 94; Goffman 13, 90.

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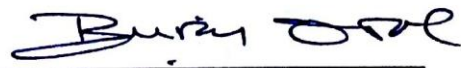
APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

- Clerical gender: Ruhban sınıfına özgü toplumsal cinsiyet
- Construction of identity: Kimlik oluşturma
- Corporeal femininity performance: Bedensel kadınlık performansı
- Courtly performance: Saraylı usulü performans
- Cultural capital: Kültürel kapital
- Cultural performance: Kültürel performans
- Discursive femininity performance: Söylemsel kadınlık performansı
- Economic capital: Ekonomik kapital
- Everyday practice: Gündelik yaşam eylemi
- Formalised practice: Resmileştirilmiş eylem
- Gendered religious identity: Toplumsal cinsiyetli dini kimlik
- Generic theatricality: Edebi tür tiyatrallığı
- Hermeneutics of the self: Öz yorumlama
- Identity performance: Kimlik performansı
- Liminal space: Ara alan; arada kalmış yer, alan
- Material performance: Maddesel performans
- Performance of the self: Özün performansı
- Performative practice: Edimsel eylem
- Performativity: Edimsellik
- Reiterative identity performance: Tekrarlayan kimlik performansı
- Rhetorical performance: Retorik performans
- Rite of passage: Geçiş töreni
- Self-fashioning: Öz-biçimlendirme
- Self-presentation: Öz-sunum
- Social capital: Sosyal kapital
- Social discourse of the texts: Metinlerin toplumsal söylemi
- Social drama: Toplumsal drama
- Social paradigm: Toplumsal paradigma
- Social practice: Toplumsal eylem
- Theatrical construction of the self: Özün tiyatral oluşumu
- Theatricality: Tiyatrallık

SÖZLÜKÇE

- Ara alan; arada kalmış yer, alan: Liminal space
- Bedensel kadınlık performansı: Corporeal femininity performance
- Edebi tür tiyatrallığı: Generic theatricality
- Edimsel eylem: Performative practice
- Edimsellik: Performativity
- Ekonomik kapital: Economic capital
- Geçiş töreni: Rite of passage
- Gündelik yaşam eylemi: Everyday practice
- Kimlik oluşturma: Construction of identity
- Kimlik performansı: Identity performance
- Kültürel kapital: Cultural capital
- Kültürel performans: Cultural performance
- Maddesel performans: Material performance
- Metinlerin toplumsal söylemi: Social discourse of the texts
- Öz yorumlama: Hermeneutics of the self
- Öz-biçimlendirme: Self-fashioning
- Öz-sunum: Self-presentation
- Özün performansı: Performance of the self
- Özün tiyatral oluşumu: Theatrical construction of the self
- Resmileştirilmiş eylem: Formalised practice
- Retorik performans: Rhetorical performance
- Ruhban sınıfına özgü toplumsal cinsiyet: Clerical gender
- Saraylı usulü performans: Courtly performance
- Sosyal kapital: Social capital
- Söylemsel kadınlık performansı: Discursive femininity performance
- Tekrarlayan kimlik performansı: Reiterative identity performance
- Tiyatrallık: Theatricality
- Toplumsal cinsiyetli dini kimlik: Gendered religious identity
- Toplumsal drama: Social drama
- Toplumsal eylem: Social practice
- Toplumsal paradigma: Social paradigm

APPENDIX 2: ORIGINALITY REPORTS

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU
	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA
	Tarih:17/02/2016
<p>Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Ortaçağ Öz-Biçimlendirmesi: Chaucer'ın <i>Canterbury Hikâyeleri</i>'ndeki Kimlik Performansları</p> <p>Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 334 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 17/02/2016 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turmitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı %7'dir.</p> <p>Uygulanan filtrelemeler:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç, 2- Kaynakça hariç 3- Alıntılar hariç 4- 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç <p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p> <p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p>	
<p>Adı Soyadı: <u>Oya Bayılmış Öğütçü</u></p> <p>Öğrenci No: <u>H08148632</u></p> <p>Anabilim Dalı: <u>İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</u></p> <p>Programı: <u>İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</u></p> <p>Statüsü: <input type="checkbox"/> Y.Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr.</p>	 17.02.2016
<p>DANIŞMAN ONAYI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UYGUNDUR.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  Prof. Dr. Burçin Erol </p>	



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date:17/02/2016

Thesis Title / Topic: Medieval Self-Fashioning: Identity Performances in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 17/02/2016 for the total of 334 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 7%.

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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Name Surname: Oya Bayılmış Öğütçü
 Student No: H08148632
 Department: English Language and Literature
 Program: English Language and Literature
 Status: Masters Ph.D. Integrated Ph.D.



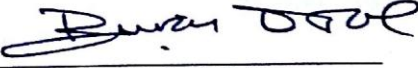
17.02.2016

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. Burçin Erol

**APPENDIX 3: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS FOR THESIS
WORK**

	<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU</p>	
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA</p>		
<p>Tarih: 17/02/2016</p>		
<p>Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Ortaçağ Öz-Biçimlendirmesi: Chaucer'ın <i>Canterbury Hikâyeleri</i>'ndeki Kimlik Performansları</p>		
<p>Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır, 2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir. 3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir. 4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir. 		
<p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p>		
<p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p>		
<p>Adı Soyadı: _____ Öğrenci No: _____ Anabilim Dalı: _____ Programı: _____ Statüsü: _____</p>	<p>Oya Bayılmış Öğütücü H08148632 İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı <input type="checkbox"/> Y.Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr.</p>	
<p> 17.02.2016</p>		
<p><u>DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI</u></p>		
<p> Prof. Dr. Burçin Erol</p>		
<p>Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr</p>		
<p>Telefon: 0-312-2976860</p>	<p>Faks: 0-3122992147</p>	<p>E-posta: sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr</p>



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY**

Date:17/02/2016

Thesis Title / Topic: Medieval Self-Fashioning: Identity Performances in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Name Surname: Oya Bayılmış Öğütçü
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17.02.2016

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Prof. Dr. Burçin Erol