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Women's Life in Chaucer Works

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Abstract

A major issue in the man-woman connection throughout the Medieval Era was the issue of who had the most authority. Every day, women competed with males for the right to be considered superior in terms of love, sexuality, and marriage, among other things. In light of their poor social standing, this was a difficult assignment for them to do. They were financially reliant on their male counterparts, and the majority of them had no formal training at all. Furthermore, the attitudes of the Church contributed significantly to the strengthening of the concept of woman's inadequacy, since even as a natural being, she was ranked secondary to man. Because she was created from Adam's ribs, she was unable to claim supremacy in social standing and was required to submit to man in all affairs. According to religious traditions, woman was considered "Flesh" while man was considered "Reason." When preaching on the "Fall of Man in Chaucer's own Parsons" Story the Parson states unequivocally, Man has fallen because of his own fault.

Keywords: Social Satire, Chaucer work etc.

Introduction

In all of this, Chaucer stands out as a notable exception. One of the primary goals of this research is to draw attention to Chaucer's considerably diverse approach to the processing and management of his female characters in his various works. In Chaucer's celebration of love, sexuality, and wedding, this was the woman that wielded the power and reigned supreme over her male counterpart. The one area where males, despite their superior physical abilities and social prestige, were dominated and vanquished by women was in the field of sports. The males were susceptible as a result of their excessive desires and need for fleshly pleasure, which caused them to lose their ability to think. Women are shown to be superior in both his especially early works, demonstrating the supremacy of women in the connection here between genders. The topic of woman's dominion over man is not openly apparent in his previous works, but is prominent in an indirectly or subtle way, as will become obvious in the course of my investigations of his previous works. "Anelida and Arcite, the male birds in The Parliament of Fowls, and the knight-in-black in The Book of the Duchess" are all examples of males who have fallen prey to the all-pervasive force of feminine beauty and allure, which has a catastrophic impact on the male mind. What is increasingly evident in his later writings is the realistic and level-headed behavior of women, as well as their capacity to remain calm and collected even in the face of adversity and disaster. Notably, women are awarded independent thinking power, which they frequently use to convince men - either to win an argument or to manipulate the media to meet specific needs and wants, for instance. Women are also granted the ability to think for themselves. According to Chaucer, there were many levels of judgment from which he regarded different persons. Due to the fact that woman has previously been designated as "Flesh," Chaucer assesses her even so, that is, as a "this - worldly" or "earthly" entity, he often justifies her for the materialistic errors she does. Man, but at the other hand, as "Reason," has the ability to communicate with the almighty and is hence subjected to harsher punishment. It is Chaucer, more often than any other author of his period, who criticizes him for his errant ways and failing to follow the "natural order." Nevertheless, I would want to point out that it is certainly salient of his recent works, notably "the fabliaux and Troilus and Criseyde", which I believe are particularly noteworthy. The issue of woman's control is expanded further in the Stories, where it is dealt in a much more

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detailed manner. While this is true, it is brought to a head in the fabliaux when a woman openly and unabashedly refuses to obey male (and in most instances, husband's) power is shown. It should be observed that in the fabliaux, boy's lack of reason and his following illogical behavior are not only condemned, but they are also often made the focus of derision by the author. The fact that both males and females make fun of in the fabliau traditions should be highlighted here: male characters were portrayed as cuckolds, while female characters were either forced to admit their crime or were ridiculed by the authors for their character flaws. For example, as we will see later on in this chapter, the ladies in Chaucer's fabliaux are still not subjected to any form of negative criticism. Their crimes are not prosecuted; on the opposite, they are not punished. This does not suggest implicit support on the part of the person for his actress's romantic exploits; rather, it seems to reflect a type of admiration for their natural capacity to live in a male-dominated environment, which is important to remember. Similarly, one might argue the same things with Criseyde, except the writer is more contrite in her case - he expresses more compassion for her predicament, but never rebukes or criticizes her for failing to adhere to her moral vow. Being able to treat women completely on their own conditions was a particularly difficult challenge to accomplish in an era replete with didactic works aimed to women, pushing them to be docile and subservient to their spouses. On the one extreme, woman was revered as Eve's companion and was seen as the source of all of man's ills. On the other hand, she was viewed as the cause of all of man's ills. Another side was represented by the literary culture of romance in which the heroines was exalted to a goddess-like status and venerated as such, which thrived throughout the Renaissance. In the meanwhile, there were anachronisms with insipid representations, and the worship of Mariolatry grew alongside them all. In contrast, Chaucer introduces a welcome refreshing change into the drab and boring realm of female characterisation with his unique perspective and imaginative treatment of the subject material. By maintaining a never-failing sense of truth, observation, and incisive judgment of human nature throughout his work, the author avoids devolving into either worship or ridicule. He distinguishes himself from the standard female characters of ancient English literature by creating "life-like" and realistic female characters that enhance the look of the pack. The author's representation of them is given to them. Hence, despite the poor social position of women, and also despite the biased religious attitudes against them, Chaucer demonstrates to us the importance of women in society "Women's de facto" standing in his writings. As a result, their seeming fragility was deceiving in a way. Chaucer, in a clever and creative way, draws out the hidden desire of his princesses to reign over men and displays the vast amount of their accomplishment, in the majority of instances, in doing so. "The Wife of Bath's Tale, Nun's Priest's Tale, the fabliaux, Troilus and Criseyde", and other works of Chaucer demonstrate, at about the same time, that it only women who are pragmatic and down-to-earth by temperament succeed in obtaining the advantage over their male family members. The writer makes it abundantly obvious that it is the innate wit and intellect that are inborn in woman that ensures her of a higher position over man, despite the fact that this superiority is essentially transitory in character and

hence relatively fleeting in nature. According to this reasoning, it will be shown as well that Chaucer despises the behavior of the pining and subservient types of women in general. Throughout his works, he frequently demonstrates that women who possessed practical "savoir-faire" or who were passionate by character received at the hands of males. However, one component that cannot be completely overlooked in discussions about the handling and therapies of female characters is the voice of dialectic that can be found in Chaucer's works when it comes to certain materialistic values, such as the closing of the Troilus and Criseyde or the concluding of the Stories, for instance. When Chaucer depicts some characters, Despite his worldly follies and passions like as adoration and sexual pleasure, he maintains a calm demeanor. Despite the fact that the article was conscious of both this planet and the next, he could not connect the two and instead decided to keep them apart. This, at times, caused him difficulties, leading to a type of ambiguous attitude toward some ideals. However, it is essential to mention that Chaucer lived on the cusp of a new period, one that was about to bring in profound changes in human attitudes toward life. Simultaneously time, he was bound to some medieval conceptions and practices from which he was unable to completely break free. So, despite the fact that Chaucer has often shown the victory of the body over reason, there is nothing in his works that suggests any disrespect for the Christian spiritual ideals that guide our lives. Both of these characteristics may be seen in his works at the same time, and nowhere is this more evident than in the portrayal of the connection between both the genders in his writings. Reed's "Chaucer's Women: Commitment and Submission" is a work of fiction (Nebraska University, 1973). According to Ms. Reed, nor were females in Chaucer's day with a subservient position, or that community placed them in such a role, but that women actively sought out this inadequacy in order to fulfill some form of promise is what she is attempting to prove. My view differs in that, despite the fact that women are in a subservient position (which is recognized), they attempt to obtain the advantage by applying their practical understanding to the situation. In addition to this, a number of publications and essays have been published in different publications and newspapers, each of which deals in brief with one or more of Chaucer's female characters. For even the most part, these investigations are of a generic character and are not intended to be comprehensive in any sense, as the current research claims to be. Studies pertaining to the "marriage group" have also been conducted on and off throughout the years. They are tangentially related to the man-woman interaction, whereas these studies concentrate their emphasis on a relatively small number of narratives, it cannot be argued that the treatment of females was validated in these criticism exposes.

In this part, I will make an effort to provide a succinct sociological portrait of the position of women throughout the Medieval Era. As was true until the 19th century, male-dominated society predominated in practically every sector of life throughout the Middle Ages and into the 19th century. Higher-ranking members of society included earls, nobles, and monks who were already active in battle, protecting their domains in times of danger, or in charge of the country in peace time. The General Prologue provides us with a snapshot of mediaeval civilization as a whole. FN

Robinson observes that "as individual as the pilgrims are, they are also representational." FN Robinson: Several of them illustrate traits and qualities or professional behaviour that were evident in the literature of the time - the gentle Knight, the impostor in the guise of the Pardoner - that were recognizable to readers of the time. In addition, when regarded as a whole, they span practically the whole spectrum of life in medieval England. To be clear, the circle of monarchy and higher aristocracy is not explicitly reflected in this work of fiction. Men of such stature and status could scarcely have been considered for inclusion in the organization. Knights were a noble class that maintained the Art of Chivalry and were regarded in high regard. During the General Prologues, the Knight refers to himself as a "verray, parfit gentil knyght" (72) who has served in the Crusades. In "Langland's Piers the Plowman", we also receive a bird's eye perspective of the medieval landscape. On a summer's day, while William is falling asleep, he has a dream in which he sees "a lovely feldeful of folke," which includes "ploughmen, minstrels, jesters, beggars, knaves, pilgrims, palmers, hermits, and friars", among others. He also sees a monarch who is accompanied by his knights, which is a new sight for him. In the Middle Ages, the Churches, in addition to the King and the nobles, had a significant impact on the ordinary man's life and thought. It was a tremendously symbols, and it was capable of forming much of the theological and social philosophy of the time in which it existed. Characters from the clergy, whether good and terrible, may be found in plenty throughout early modern literature. Aside from the lords and the church, schooling, trade and business, law, and medical were all dominated by men, as was the military and the police. Historically, males dominated commerce, with women relegated to spinning and weaving as their only occupations. In the Early Chapters, the Merchant is described as a "good man with alle" (283) who is preoccupied with his "bargaynes" and "his chevyssaunce" (282). The Moore is a hearty, happy gentleman who has seen a lot of the world. He is browned and weather beaten from his travels. College men came from across all sorts of backgrounds, from the highest to the lowest social strata, from the wealthy to the impoverished. The two accountants in the Reeve's Tale are impoverished Cambridge graduates, while in the Miller's Tale, there is a "pourescoler" (3190) who is a guest of the carpenter who is staying with him. A Counsel of Oxenford married the Wife of Bath's sixth spouse, and we also have as being one of the pilgrimages someone Clerk of Oxenford married to her. Piers the Plowman also makes mention of clerks on a few occasions. When Meed is taken before the Emperor in Passus III, the Federal judges, as well as the clerks, swear to be of assistance to her. In exchange, she vows to adore them and elevate them to the position of lords. The Craftgilds were a group of talented men and women who worked together in the Medieval Era. This was one arena of existence wherein men and women were on more or less equal footing. Despite the indicates that the number of women employed within those gilds was far lower than that of males, there were some highly talented female laborers. The General Prologue also has a mashup of them, which is a nice touch. Our recent poll provides a vivid image to the mind of how man's status was dominating in medieval world, and this picture is reinforced by the data. Man dominated all aspect of existence, and he was completely and completely in

charge of his own destiny. Woman was treated poorly to man not just in regarding physical strength, but also in regards to social standing and intellectual capabilities. What was the actual state of affairs for women in such a culture? Originally, women were considered to be at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The fact that this had been the case for quite some time and had continued with no significant alteration until the turn of the 19th century, has been nothing unusual at the moment. As John Langdon - Davies points out, incremental changes were starting to take effect from the period of the Renaissance, even though they were not immediately noticeable. Although the Renaissance did not initially liberate women, he argues that it did much to free people's hearts from the tyrants of the previous age, and that as a result, things gradually started to take more natural dimensions. It was possible to improve the status of women in the respect that "religion, which had heretofore been essentially at odds with [their] pleasure and advancement, became humanized."

"Chansons de gestes" authors provide an equally bleak image of the world in which we live. As G.G. Coulton points out in his reference to Gautier, the lady was much too frequently treated as a mere attachment of the "fief", and "John LangdonDavies" draws from various chansons to highlight the situation of women during feudal times. The below is an example of a typical isolate: "In the Chanson de Geste known as the Charrol de Nimes, we find the following scene: One of these days, I said the King to the Knight William, one of my peers will die; I will give you his land and his woman, if you desire to take them. - Take the estate of the Marquis Berenger, who has just died, and take his wife with you", he adds at the end of the speech. 1,6 The fact that William doesn't really seize either the property or the wife is a separate issue that does not have to be discussed here, but this does serve to show the woman's powerless position in the story. What were the vocations and responsibilities of women during the period of the Civil War? Because of her financial pleasures, the upper - class girl did not have to do physical labor. These ladies often had a secluded existence, confined to the close circle of friends and family members. Although John Langdon-Davies argues that the woman of the castle had some essential elements of knowledge and could recite tales and loves that she purchased from itinerant minstrel shows, he summarizes her accomplishments in a simple manner. The fact that she knew how to sing and play chessboard as well as a little falconry, as well as enough medicines to set a fractured wrist and use a pestle and mortar, was a bonus. She also knew how to sew, spin, and embroidery as well as speak a few lines of Latin, was another bonus.

Women from the merchant - professions were also wealthy, although they were busier than their male counterparts. The women were responsible for supervising home chores and looking after kids, and they enjoyed their spare time reading or embroidery. According to legend, the shopkeeper in the Shipman's Story lived in a huge home. The mistress was responsible for supervising and caring for the home. According to her husband's desire, May in the Merchant's Story conducts social calls by paying a visit to Damian, who is ill. She is, of obviously, accompanied by a professional. The manorial and peasant groups, on the other hand, presented a different image. The mistress of the manor had a very busy day ahead of her since she had many responsibilities to attend to. In her book Mediaeval

Women, Eileen Power goes into great length on this topic. A lady must be knowledgeable about the finer points of tenancy and feudal legislation, in case the king's rights are violated; she must be well-versed in estate management, so that she can oversee the bailiff; she must recognize her own field of expertise as a homemaker, so she must be able to afford to pay her expenses wisely. ¹ It's clear from the Paston Letters just how accurate this image is! Margaret Paston's responsibilities included a broad range of tasks ranging from household chores to defending her husband's lands and estates when he was away. Her primary responsibility, on the other hand, was housework. As Professor H.S. Bennett so eloquently puts it: "If we wish to see the medieval lady correctly, we must go to her place of residence and observe her. All other aspects of her life were subordinate to her housekeeping responsibilities. Margaret Paston, like many women in a lower social stratum, was compelled to strategize and organize in order to keep her kitchen and pantry stocked and well-stocked."

Women were employed in a variety of vocations, including sewing and spinning, as well as preparing food for the family in advanced. She says the following to her spouse on one event:

"I pray zw pat ze wylvowche -save to don bye for me j li of almandis and j It of sugyre, and patze wille do byensumme frese to maken of zwrchilderisgwnys; ze xall .haue best chepe and best choyse of Hayiswyf, as it is told me ..."

When it comes to pe childreisgwnys, and I have fabric, I xal sew hem together. In addition to supplying clothing for her household, the lady of the home was responsible for overseeing the performance of other household duties. The whole home, such as the kitchen and the staff, functioned under her direct direction. She was responsible for ensuring that food supplies for the whole family were available at all times, as well as overseeing the manufacture of butter and cream, ale, and bread. Aside from that, there were kids who needed to be cared for, fed, and dressed in the correct manner. Consider the following passage from St. Bernadino's Mission-Sermons, which sheds significant information on a female's housekeeping talents during Middle Ages: When the excellent housewife is in charge of the whole family, that guy is aware of his possession of her. She is responsible for the granary, and she ensures that it is kept clean so that no defilement may penetrate it. She keeps the container of oil and takes careful note of the ingredients. This jar is for usage, while the other jar is for storage. She keeps an eye on it to ensure that nothing falls into and that no dog or even other beast comes anywhere near it. She devotes all of her time and attention to ensuring that the jars do not spill. Firstly, she orders the salt steaks, first in the adding salt and then – in the preserving – she cleanses and orders them as follows: - This here is for sale, and that over there is for storage. - She looks forward to the winding process, and subsequently to the production of linen fabric from the yarns. She sells the bran and uses the money to purchase even more fabric for her family. "The Menagier de Paris" was a valuable text in the Middle Ages, providing detailed advice on how to govern a home effectively. The novel was designed for a specific wife by a specific husband, and it provides us with a vivid image of a bourgeois family home in the process.

The concept was written either by menagerie, or the Goodman of Paris, specifically for the training of his young

bride, who was at the time a young girl himself. He is well aware of the responsibilities that come with being the head of family. As he puts it:

"The weather may bring some respite to spouses, but housewives' affairs will never come to an end. A complete description of how to care for a husband's wants and comforts is provided in one place: Therefore, treasure your husband's person with great care, he says; and maintain him in clean linen, because it is your business, he says. Inasmuch as the care of external matters is in the hands of men, a husband must take heed, and travel back and forth in rain and wind, snow and hail, now drenched, now sweating, now shivering, ill-fed, ill-lodged, ill-warmed, and ill-bedded; and nothing harms him, because he is upheld by the hope that he has of his wife's care of him on his return. It appeared as though the responsibilities of a woman at home were endless".

Many have observed that the medieval woman was often an active force on her husband's side, and this has been noted. As a starting point, let's look at what H.S. Bennett would have to say regarding the Paston ladies: "With few exceptions, there seems to be little question that the women of the Paston family, particularly Agnes and Margaret Paston", would be more than capable of managing their own financial situations. Participants were equally at ease whether they would be bargaining for a marriage, bill payment, or working out the specifics of a new homeowner's lease contract in the same room. The sophisticated legal and geographical battles that had surrounding them for so often were not too tough for Margaret to comprehend and cope with on her own. Because the family's patriarch was not present in London, it is likely that she and Agnes Paston were forced to make difficult choices on a regular basis. Margaret, in fact, became so used to taking on this duty that her spouse routinely left her in control with the utmost trust that everything would turn out OK. Professor Bennett's review also contains examples of other optimized and efficient women who handle their spouses' financial and other issues when their spouses are away from home. Amongst them are "Elizabeth Stonor, Lady Isabel Berkeley, and the wives of the Celys", who worked as Merchants of the Staples and were required to be gone from home usually by their jobs.

Eventually, we come across a woman from the upper income as we continue our descent down the social ladder. It was necessary for her to labor both outside and within the house in order to make a living. To the contrary, she led a life of apparent freedom in opposition to the high-ranking female official. She went about her work with her own, and that she was not constrained to any of the myriad social stigmas that are prevalent today. She was practically a supplementary wage job, and it is exactly possible that the reason we are able to see her entry into the financial milieu of the ancient moment that we are now researching. The very same trades and occupations were available to women as were available to men, and she and her husband regularly worked alongside one another in their own domains of expertise. It is crucial to note that at this bottom level of society, both men and females are engaged in the very same occupations. This is a sign of progress. It used to be that only males entered the same jobs as females among these belonging to the upper middle and working classes; nevertheless, this is changing as more and more women join the upperclass.

It is via Chaucer that we acquire various images of the able to work peasant lady. The widower in *The Nun's Priest's Story* lives a simple life, as does her son. A dairy woman's responsibilities were many, including baking, milk, and cheese production, to name a few. As in the *Reeve's Story*, the miller's woman assists her spouse in his laborious tasks. She is also a co-conspirator in her husband's criminal activities. A half-bushel of flour is stolen from a horse by the miller, who then orders his wife to "knead it in a cake" as the clerks chase after their horses. (4094) Furthermore, the miller's child travels into town to get ale and bread for the family. She follows in the footsteps of "the peasant girl in *The Wife of Bath's*" Story, who journeys alone. Rose the Regrater, the spouse of "Avarice in *Piers the Plowman*", is not only a weaver, but she is also a brewer and a hawker, as seen in the following passage:

"My wyf was a webbe * and wollen cloth made; She spak to spynnesteres ' to spynnen it oute.... I boua^te hir barlymalte * she brewe it to selle, Peny ale and podyng ale ' she poured togideres; For laboreres and for low folke '^pat lay by hymselfue.... Rosejjeregrateres' was hir ri^te name; She hath holden hokkerye ' al hire lyf tyme."

But what, if anything, was the status of the female? As a married woman, as a spouse, and as a mother, what else was her fiancée like? In what ways did her education have its boundaries and reach, and what sort of lifestyle did these women who didn't marriage lead? When it came to love and relationships in the Middle Ages, they didn't always go together. In the courtly-love custom, love was seen to be an experienced that took place beyond the confines of wedlock, or so the proponents of the institution maintained. In the majority of situations, marriage was seen as a legal agreement and a commercial transaction. Despite the fact that the Church did not recognize child weddings, not many people followed this regulation. The Church did not attempt to "matrimoine for monye'maken and vnmaken". Wife-beating was also a common occurrence. In a book produced for the teaching of his children, "the Knight of la Tour Landry" makes a statement about the noncompliance of spouses, which is included in one of the chapters:

"After this a woman in no manerwyse ought stryueageynsther husbond/ ne answere, hym so that he takes therbydisplaysye". He then goes on to recount what fate a wife who had the audacity to answer her husband back in the presence of others met with — "... /that he bicam angry and felle to see hym self so rewyld to fore thepeple/ that - he had therof shame/ ... And smote her with his foote on the vysage so that he brake her nose/ by whiche she was euerafteral disfigured ' And soo by her ryotte and ennoye she gate her acroked nose"

In the case of a chanson "Blancheflor, also known as the Death of Garin, travels to her husband, the emperor Pepin, and begs him to intervene on behalf of the Lorrainers". When the king heard this, he becomes upset and smacks her in the face with his fist, causing four droplets of blood to drip from her nose, prompting the Lady to exclaim, "Thank you, and if thou will, give me another blow." This was the usual award given to a lady who ventured to provide advice to her husband on important matters. However, the situation was not quite as gloomy as it seems now. Some religious figures, like St. Bernadino of Siena, were outspoken in their opposition to wife-beating:

"There are men who can bear more patiently with a hen that lays a fresh egg every day, than with their own wives;

and sometimes when the hen breaks a pipkin or a cup he will spare it a beating, simply for love of the fresh egg which he is unwilling to lose. Raving madmen! who cannot bear a word from their own wives, though they bear them such fair fruit; but when the woman speaks a word more than they like, then they catch up a stick and begin to cudgel her; ... Don't you see the pig too, always squeaking and squeaking and making your house filthy; yet you suffer him until the time for slaughtering... Consider, rascal, consider the noble fruit of thy wife, and have patience; it is not right to beat her for every cause, no!"

Women were not supposed to be representations of submission in the manner of the Nut-Brown Maid, but they have been expected to be subservient to their spouses' wishes instead. Humble and devotion were thought to be the most important characteristics of a good wife, as well as those who refused to live up to these expectations were reprimanded, often harshly, even by men who've been typically sympathetic to the plight of women. Women's clothing is criticized by St. Bernadino, who says, "Oh, if it were my business, and if I were your husband, I would give you such a drubbing with feet and fists that you would remember for a while!" The Menagier of Paris, for example, does not feel inclined to compare a wife's devotion to her spouse to the loyalty of a greyhound or a mastiff to its master. The assumption that all spouses mistreat their wives, on the other hand, would be erroneous. Many mediaeval wills bear witness to the fact that this was not the case. When referring to his spouse, one guy refers to her like a "my hert and love", while someone else refers to her as "my most adored wife." An additional testament reveals the strong link of care and devotion that prevailed between both the married couple. "And I give and bequeath to Alice my wife, and Thomas my son, all my cattle and commodities movable, requesting my wife, for all the love and trust that hath existed between us," the husband gave. In the case of Margaret and John Paston, their marriage provides a good example about what a medieval marriage may develop into if both spouses wanted it to. Her writings to her spouse are professional, yet we can see how her affection for him comes up every now and again in her messages to him. She expresses the following in one of them:

In fact, her biological father has been turned from the society and has accepted the monastic vows, while her mom is too destitute to ever consider purchasing her daughter a seat in any wealthy convent or convent-like institution. For, despite the fact that the damsel has a tincture of learning, the bad tradition of preferring money above knowledge persists in the old monasteries of our region. As a result, I have determined that it is necessary to seek shelter in prayer to thy Order, which is undoubtedly immune to this virus. Accept my request, loving brother; it is made more for the benefit of whoever is the father of orphaned and the judgment of widows than for my own benefit alone; nonetheless, please be advised that I will cheerfully concede unto thee anything thou mayest see appropriate to ask of my humility. Even while it would be an overstatement to say that the church buildings supplied all of the schooling for females in the Medieval Era, it cannot be disputed that they offered a significant portion of both mental and political instruction for young women. In reality, boys and girls were occasionally taught in the same classroom at the same time. When it comes to determining

if "Froissart's poem *Espinette Amoureuse* is autobiographical, J.W. Adamson" points out that he attended a school where both adolescent girls and boys were educated together. It's likely that Froissart's school was located in a nunnery whether the same procedure was adopted in the United Kingdom. "For the vast majority of girls, the standard of school instruction (where any was provided) varied but little throughout the centuries; to become proficient in home-making and scrupulously to discharge their religious duties sufficed." Nunnery discipline was exceedingly harsh, albeit not all of the restrictions were strictly adhered to at all times. The nuns were required to pray multiple times a day, and they were required to follow this regulation to the letter. For instance, in the *Ancren Riwle*, we could see the number of services a nun was forced to attend as well as the importance of each ceremony. "The nuns had seven monastic offices that they had to recite every day," Eileen Power summarizes concisely. After midnight, the night offices were said; they all jumped out of bed as soon as the bell sounded and hurried down to the Church choir, where they sang Matins, quickly followed by Lauds, in the bitter cold and darkness of the early morning hours. Then they took a nap, just as the sun began to rise in the sky, and had it for another 3 hours before finally getting up at six o'clock and saying Prime. Following that, there was "Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline", which were held at regular times during the day.

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