NOBLE COMPORTMENT AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL ORDER IN THE WORK OF M. DE LA CHETARDYE

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INTRODUCTION

As early as the ninth century there is evidence of the tripartite order of European Christian society. According to this model the clergy, or the first estate, was responsible for scholarship and the spiritual needs of society, the warriors, or the second estate, for justice and defense, and the laborers, or the third estate, for the physical needs of all. From the second estate grew the nobility who lived under a code that was theirs alone. The sword that a nobleman carried was double edged to symbolize justice and loyalty, and the right to carry that sword was an important part of being noble. Loyalty was to the Church and later to the state, but a warrior had a duty to justice and the protection of the weak above all. The characteristics of a knight: bravery, courage, loyalty and honesty, were dominated by his sense of honor. Honor was the quality which would justify the warrior's right to wield the sword that verified his nobility.[1] The responsibility of a noble depended upon his honor as only a man of overall virtue could be trusted with such important matters as justice and defense. When the Church eventually lost its monopoly on knowledge, when justice became a branch of the

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[1]Maurice Keen, Chivalry (New Haven, 1984): 3-7. Also see Georges Duby, The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined, transl. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980), for a study of the development of this tripartite order of society.

government, and when the feudal system deteriorated in favor of a new, money economy, the nobility had trouble justifying their place in society. Though societal restructuring challenged the traditional role of the warrior, the ideals of noble honor and superiority remained entrenched in the mind and culture of this elite.

These values are clearly recorded in M. de la Chetardye's books, Instructions pour un jeune Seigneur ou l'idée d'un galant-Homme and Instruction pour une jeune princesse ou l'idée d'une Honneste Femme, which were published in the late seventeenth century.[2] In the pages of these works there is evidence of the continuing importance of noble honor and the traditions behind it. However, as was fitting to the role of the traditional nobility in this period, Chetardye's books also attempt to designate proper behavior, obedience and ambition for the seventeenth-century noble. In effect, Chetardye attempts to create a balance between traditional noble ideals and seventeenth-century noble realities.

Because of the importance of the early modern period of French history to the social development of Europe as a whole and because Louis XIV's rule (1643-1715) stands as an archetype of absolutist rule, much work has been done regarding the economic, social, and political transformations which came to fruition in seventeenth-century France. The debate over the actual state of the nobility in seventeenth-century France is complex, but from the work of the many historians involved, we can determine that this period of transformation in the French social structure forced much of the

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[2]M. de La Chetardye, Instructions pour un jeune Seigneur ou l'idée d'un galant-Homme and Instruction pour une jeune princesse ou l'idée d'une Honneste Femme (Paris, 1688).

traditional nobility off-balance. We can also understand that many of these nobles were required to play a role in the elaborate system of court etiquette and ritual that Louis XIV created and that was indeed, the envy of other European powers. [3]

Noble titles were inherited. For this reason, and because of the need to justify

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[3] What follows can only be a brief sample of the more important works regarding these transformations and the actual state of the nobility under Louis XIV.

Roland Mousnier, The Institutions of France Under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789, 2 vols., transl. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago 1974), presents a gradual transformation of French society from orders to classes. Mousnier's analysis of France, under Louis XIV specifically, reveals a *noblesse d'épée* who lost their justification for rank and privilege except as tools for the King.

Davis Bitton, The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560-1640 (Stanford, 1969), traces a general decline in the French nobility as they found themselves in a confusion of changing legality, economics and tensions regarding the very nature of their nobility, as their social function and legal privileges were bought into question by the changing nature of French society.

Pierre Goubert, The Ancien Régime: French Society 1600-1750, transl. Steve Cox (New York, 1973), refers to the behavior of the *grands* under Louis XIV as a "gilded submission" because of the rebellious spirit which reawakened after 1700. Though as a ruling class the traditional nobility never regained their importance, Goubert highlights the enduring strength of the not-so-new political nobility and the continuing domination of the provincial *parlements* by the exceptional *grand seigneur*.

Richard S. Dunn, The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715 (New York, 1970) and Robin Briggs, Early Modern France, 1560-1715 (New York, 1977), both portray a court nobility that was forced into compliance through the rigors of court attendance and etiquette. This was orchestrated by Louis XIV in order to control the threat of noble rebellion. However, Briggs also notes that the nobility retaliated against royal control with evasion of authority rather than outright defiance.

Sharon Kettering, Patrons Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth Century France (New York, 1986), shows how Louis XIV commandeered the system of clientage and how, as a result, the traditional nobility lost military, political and social power.

A.D. Lublinskaya, French Absolutism: the Crucial Phase, 1620-29, transl. Brian Pearce (Cambridge, 1968), presents a Marxist argument that attempts to refute both Mousnier and Goubert. This argument states that by the end of the 1630s, traditional noble ambitions and power had been overcome by a group effort of the monarchy, bourgeoisie and the masses through a "feudalization of the bourgeoisie."

their rank, ancestry and bloodlines were important to the nobility.[4] Noble privileges were originally intended as compensation for the services of the warrior elite; however, as traditional noble roles in the army and the government became less exclusive, as the bourgeois and the *annoblis* infiltrated these posts, noble privileges and titles were questioned more and more. For this reason, in the seventeenth century, traditional nobility ceased to be based on birth and occupation and became solely a matter of birth.[5] The ennobled were not considered a part of this traditional, elite group because of their ancestry. They were lacking some inherent quality which was believed to be passed down through noble bloodlines. The divisions between the *noblesse d'épée* and the *noblesse de robe* grew from this point as the first group struggled to retain their prominence.

Chetardye urges his readers to remember where they come from and to follow the standards of honor set by their ancestors.[6] Some 160 years earlier, Castiglione had

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[4]See Mousnier, Institutions, vol. I, Chapter 4, for more on proofs of nobility, the science of heraldry, and the many armorial bearings and coats of arms which were used by families and organizations in this period.

[5]Ellery Schalk, From Virtue to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Princeton, 1986), notes a transformation in noble attitudes which adapted to the changing social reality of seventeenth-century France and the infiltration of the *noblesse de robe* into important political positions. As their traditional occupations and positions ceased to be a matter of course, and as nobility ceased to be considered a profession synonymous with virtue, it became instead a question of birth.

[6]Chetardye, Section I: 81.

> Songez souvent que vous estes sorty d'une Maison illustre, qui a produit des grands Hommes, & qu'il vous seroit honteux de ne les pas imitier.

Please note that all of the quotations throughout this work are intact. I have not

(continued...)

gone a step farther and wrote that great virtue is inherent in nobility much as with a superior line of horses, and "if he swerve from the steps of his ancestors, he staineth the name of his familie."[7] Not only would a nobleman's dishonorable actions call his own honor into question, they would also stain the honor of his family name. A nobleman had a duty to his blood and to honor that supported the reputation of this entire elite race. If the honor of an important noble family was damaged, it would reflect badly on the general noble claim to status and precedence.

The debate over whether or not men obtained virtue through blood was heated, but ultimately a man's actions spoke the most clearly as to his honor. La Bruyère highlights the importance of personal merit to the man of quality. "If 'tis a Happiness to be nobly descended, 'tis no less to have so much merit that no body inquires whether we are or no."[8] For these men, birth was a requirement for nobility but merit was the proof. Honor may have been considered an inherited trait but that honor had to be preserved through correct action. The first gentleman and the epitome of the honor described here was, of course, the King. During the reign of Louis XIV, the highest ranking noblemen lived at court and were always near the presence of the King's example. Louis XIV set the standard of nobility with his own spotless sense of honor and courtesy. His actions

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[6](...continued)
corrected anything that would currently be considered poor syntax. Translations, where they occur in parentheses, are mine.

[7]Baldassarre Castiglione, conte. The Book of the Courtier (1528), transl. Sir Thomas Hoby (London, 1966): 32.

[8]La Bruyère, Works: The Characters, or Manners of the Present Age, vol. II (London, 1713): 36.

were those of a true gentleman. Marie Mancini was the first love of Louis XIV and Wolf recounts an entry from one of her letters concerning the chivalry of the young King.

> His Majesty wishing to give me his hand, and mine having struck against the pummel of his sword, hurting it slightly, he drew it bruskly from the sheath and threw it away. I will not try to tell with what air he did this; there are no words to explain it.[9]

Beyond chivalry and ideals of courtly romance, Louis XIV exercised strong control over his emotions and public actions. The King's life was on almost constant display, and he forced himself and his courtiers to adhere to a strict schedule of daily ritual and etiquette at Versailles. The personal control of Louis XIV, under all these circumstances was no less than extraordinary.[10]

Because Louis was the absolute center of this elite, everyone else's place was defined by their distance from him.[11] Louis was the "Sun King" and his court was designed to revolve around him. At Versailles the day began with the royal *levée* and ended with the *coucher*. The reference to the rising and setting of the sun cannot be missed in this strict ritual. The courtiers had to know their place in regard to the King. He was the center. When Louis married the *Infanta* of Spain, he insisted that she was to

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[9]Marie Mancini as quoted in John B. Wolf, Louis XIV (New York, 1974): 105.

[10]For more information on the personal control of Louis XIV, see Wolf and W. H. Lewis, The Splendid Century: Life in the France of Louis XIV (New York, 1947).

[11]Jorge Arditi, A Genealogy of Manners: Transformations of Social Relations in France and England from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries (Chicage, 1998): 134 and Norbert Elias, The Court Society, transl. Edmund Jephcott (New York, 1969): 100.

kiss no one but his mother and himself. The purpose of this protocol was to "establish the gap" between himself and the rest of his family.[12] His family may have been the highest ranking nobles in France, above the rest of the courtiers even, but they could not forget that they were subjects first.

The King established the place of the nobility as subjects, though the highest ranking subjects, of France. The required ritual and presence of his courtiers at the court of Versailles has been dubbed the "taming of the nobility" and there are obvious reasons for this reference. The Chevalier de Méré described the *honnête homme*, the perfect noble gentleman as:

> those who posses a gentle Spirit and a sensitive Heart; they are dignified and civil, bold and unassuming, neither miserly nor ambitious, and are not eager to command, or to occupy the first place alongside the king. They have no other goal than to inspire happiness everywhere, and their main worry consists in no other thing than to deserve the respect of all, and to be loved by all.[13]

A nobleman who aspired to this ideal would not be plotting against the King or trying to force the hand of the State with the threat of armed rebellion. The *honnête homme*, the ideal of a tame nobility, was a gentleman and an obedient servant of the King.

Louis XIV created a noble culture that was the envy of Europe. Paul Hazard wrote that in the seventeenth century "France is *par excellence* the home of polished manners, good breeding, intellectual refinement, of the art of living, of courtesy, culture,

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[12]Wolf: 116.

[13]Chevalier de Méré, as quoted in Arditi: 142.

and all the social graces".[14] In the seventeenth century France replaced Italy as the authority on correct manners for European elites, and Louis XIV's success, with the creation of Versailles, in setting his court above the norm, was an important part of this prestige.[15] Along with this success existed an extremely rigorous court of courtesy and etiquette with rules that were complicated and precise. The multitude of courtesy books that were published in this time were not meant to be translated and spread about Europe to increase the prestige of the French court; they were primarily written as instructions for young French nobles as to how they should comport themselves in order to find success within the elite circles of the nobility.

As mentioned earlier, the status of each noble was defined by his distance from the King and the highest ranking nobles were the members of the court. Among the court nobles there were further degrees of social standing and the highest group within this elite were those who were admitted to the "cercles de la cour".[16] Within this circle, the greatest benefits were to be found. Money and prestige and the slightest favors from the King were the prizes of this life and the courtiers competed for these favors with fierce rivalry. Louis kept his courtiers in this state of competition as he "substituted

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[14]Paul Hazard, The European Mind, 1680-1715, transl. J. Lewis May (Cleveland, 1963): 58.

[15]Anna Bryson, From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England (Oxford, 1998) and Esther B. Aresty, The Best Behavior: The Course of Good Manners - from Antiquity to the Present - as Seen Through Courtesy and Etiquette Books (New York, 1970) both present that France was the authority on correct comportment during the reign of Louis XIV.

[16]Mousnier, Institutions, vol. I: 153.

ideal rewards for real ones and these operated through jealousy, the petty preferences he showed many times a day, and his artfulness in showing them."[17] In order for a young nobleman to be prepared for life at court, especially if he grew up in the country, away from the intricacies of social politics, he needed advice from one who knew the ways of the courtiers. Courtesy books fulfilled these needs and were later translated for other Europeans courts that wished to imitate Versailles.[18]

Because of the importance of courtesy books to the ambitious nobles of seventeenth-century France, they are a valuable tool for the historian. These books present a certain picture of elite rules of etiquette and comportment. They identify the obstacles that could trip up a young hopeful as well as the aids that would help him achieve success. Courtesy manuals describe the proper goals of the nobleman and the vice that threatens these goals. However, it is imperative to recognize the personal bias of the author, the ways in which his own views are reflected in his advice. Every author has his own agenda and it is important to identify that agenda in order to understand the validity of the advice given.

Joachim Trotti de La Chetardye (1636-1714) produced manuals of comportment for young noble lords and ladies. Instructions pour un jeune Seigneur ou l'idée d'un galant-Homme and Instruction pour une jeune Princesse ou l'idée d'une Honneste Femme were published as one volume in 1688 and are the principal documents for the

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[17]Le duc de Saint-Simon, The Age of Magnificence: the Memoires of the Duc de Saint-Simon, ed. & transl. Sanche de Gramont (New York, 1964): 143.

[18]Helga Reimann, "The Informal Code: Changes in Western Etiquette", Thought, 1989, 64 (252): 44.

purposes of this essay.[19] Louis XIV's taming of the nobility capitalized on the natural erosion of centuries of feudal tradition and arbitrary justice and established that which is sold by Chetardye as an older tradition. The tradition of the "grand Seigneur honneste Homme", the perfect noble gentleman, was the new ideal. The nobility of Louis XIV's France faced a changing role in French society and culture and Chetardye's book seems to stand as an example of the rules governing this newly passive role. But is this book indeed an example of the new ideal or is it simply a codification of Christian nobility, or of noble custom, that is desperately needed in a corrupt time? Through careful analysis of these documents, I will address the following questions: What is the ideal that Chetardye hopes to cultivate and what is its historical relevance? How does Chetardye reconcile this ideal with that of the traditional noble warrior? Is the ideal that Chetardye espouses a new construction or is it a reincarnation of noble, Christian honor as he would have his readers believe?

[19]See footnote number 5.

CHAPTER I
LA CHETARDYE

As the primary goal of this essay is to analyze two books of instruction which were written in the late seventeenth century, it is not my intention to join the debate over the material state of the French nobility under the reign of Louis XIV. Rather, I wish to use the works of M. de la Chetardye to examine an attempt to reconcile noble traditions with the demands of the absolute monarchy. From an historical perspective, the importance of manuals of courtesy and etiquette is largely based on what each volume reveals about its intended audience and there is an element of that in this work. However, these specific manuals seem to present an interesting portrait of their author. The ideals of noble comportment that are expressed in this work reflect largely on the character of Chetardye, and it is my intention in this chapter to discover some specific information about this man. Who was he? What was his general perspective and what influenced this view? How do these forces act together to create the expressed purpose of these instructions?

Joachim Trotti de La Chetardye, Chevalier, lived in the province of Angoumois in central-western France. His family name has Italian origins and many of his ancestors

were distinguished for their service to French kings.[1] Chetardye's name, title and family background suggest that he was familiar with the duties and behaviors of the French nobility, in court and in the country. We can infer that he was a member of the *noblesse d'épée* because when we consider all of the noble titles in this period, those of *chevalier* and *écuyer* were the most common designations for the 'true' *noblesse d'épée.*[2] Also, because his family name was distinguished through service and because of the prestige of the French court throughout his life, the influence of the court would have been important to our author as well. The rank and heritage of a *noblesse d'épée* family, along with the tradition of service to French kings, combined to create a man who understood the importance of central authority but at the same time empathized with the values and traditions of the French nobility. Indeed our author introduces himself in true noble fashion, as a man who had spent part of his life at the hunt and at war, two requisites of the traditional noble lifestyle.[3]

From this information it can be understood that Chetardye was a man of two important social anchors, his duty to his own noble heritage and belief systems, and his

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[1]Louis Bertrand, Bibliothèque Sulpicienne: ou Histoire littéraire de la Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice (Paris, 1900): 170. This work includes a biography of our author's uncle. While it only briefly mentions the man we are concerned with here, it does present valuable information about his family and their place among the French elite.

[2]Goubert, Ancien Régime: 157.

[3]Chetardye, Introduction I, "Quand on a passé une partie de sa vie à la Chasse & à la Guerre..." For the purposes of citation in this essay, I will refer to Chetardye's letters which he wrote to Louis XIV (for the first two sections) and to Madame la Duchesse de Bourbon (for the third section) as Introductions I and II respectively. Every other citation from the text will be noted by section number and page number.

duty to the crown. While on the surface these two matters may seem to have been cooperative in the seventeenth century, there is evidence that many nobles resented Louis XIV's "taming of the nobility" and yearned for the traditional noble autonomy that was fading to extinction. The forces which began to drive the nobility out of their traditional roles in the sixteenth century coincide with the strengthening of the central government and the growing importance of the court. In 1562 Jean du Peyrat wrote:

> The entire virtue and perfection of the gentleman, your lordship, does not consist in correctly spurring a horse, handling a lance, sitting straight in one's armour, using every kind of weapon, behaving modestly among ladies, or in the pursuit of love: for this is another of the exercises attributed to the gentleman. There is, in addition, service at table before kings and princes, the manner of adjusting one's language toward people according to their rank and quality, their glances, gestures, and even the smallest signs or winks they might give.[4]

While matters of *politesse* were important to survival in sixteenth and, more significantly, in seventeenth-century society, the nobility did not forget their proud warrior beginnings. Though men like Saint-Simon would yearn for noble autonomy and recall the 'historical' argument of race to support their claims to political power, there remains the fact that these nobles flocked to Versailles, to a life of political impotence. [5]

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[4]As quoted in Elias, Civilizing Process: 216.

[5]The mythical story of the Franks and the Gauls was considered historical fact by many nobles in this period. As conquerors, the Franks became masters over the conquered Gauls. It was understood that the Early Modern nobility was descended from the Franks while the commoners were descended from the Gauls. It made sense to some that the racial superiors, the warrior elite, should continue to rule. The ennobled were racially inferior and therefore biologically unfit to hold positions of social or political importance.

For a clear record of the discontent among the traditional nobility, see Le Duc de Saint-Simon, Age of Magnificence and Memoires of Louis XIV and the Regency, transl. Bayle St. John (Akron, 1901). Also, Andre Devyver, Le sang épuré: Les Préjugés

(continued...)

Noblemen like Chetardye, then, who embraced royal authority, occupied a position of importance to the crown. Our author was a noble who respected the authority of the King and was also acceptable to the *noblesse d'épée* because he was one of them. In fact, the introductions to Chetardye's *Instructions*, especially the one which is dedicated to the King, seem designed to reinforce that valuable duality and the fact that the author is qualified for the task which he has undertaken.

In the first introduction, Chetardye passes himself off as "un méchant Ecrivain" who dares to produce a book of this sort and to further dedicate it to the King. He hopes that the King, "qui a plus d'egard à la force des pensées, qu'à la politesse du discours," will overlook the roughness of his writings, see the importance of the thoughts beneath, and not disapprove of his meager offerings.[6] This humble introduction is meaningful because Chetardye is writing to a person of much higher rank, the King; it is necessary from the beginning for the author to establish his 'place' as it were. Indeed, without the

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[5](...continued)
de race chez les gentilhommes français de l'Ancien Régime (Brussels, 1973), presents an interesting view of the growing divisions between the *noblesse d'épée* and the *noblesse de robe* and specifically the racial argument for *épée* precedence which flourished alongside the social, economic and political changes of this period.

Chandra Mukerji, "Unspoken Assumptions: Voice and Absolutism at the Court of Louis XIV" Journal of Historical Sociology (Great Britain) 1998, 11 (3): 283-315, points out that the nobles who squandered their fortunes to keep up with the "required material obedience" of the court did so because of their desire to belong, because they *wanted* to be courtiers.

[6]Chetardye, Introduction I, (...an insignificant writer.) and (...who has more consideration for the strength of thoughts, than for the politeness of speech.).

"proper marks of respect" a letter such as this would have never been accepted.[7] Chetardye also points out that his main goal is to instruct young men of quality how to be great noblemen and accordingly, how to better serve the King despite the "corruption of the age."[8] Here Chetardye establishes that the primary focus of his work and his ideal purpose for the nobility are service to the King. The corruption that Chetardye writes about is keeping the nobility from doing their duty correctly and it is obviously a major concern for our author as he refers to it throughout his work.

The corruption of the age is the main evil that Chetardye attempts to combat through his Instructions. Our author must be careful though, because this corruption exists among the ranks of people of quality. He is instructing the young how to avoid this corruption but he must do so without insulting the high-ranking courtiers or, for that matter, the King, who is the first courtier and who is supposed to be in control of his subjects. Chetardye neatly avoids this problem by writing that while some courtiers more advanced in age than those he instructs may find these ideas useful, he would never have such a high opinion of himself as to believe that he could instruct those "qui ayant tous les jours devant les yeux le premier Livre du Monde."[9] Despite this careful

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[7]Orest Ranum, "Courtesy, Absolutism and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660" Journal of Modern History 1980, 52 (3): 428.

[8]Chetardye, Introduction , "J'ay crû que ce seroit luy rendre un service, que de donner aux jeunes Gens, que leur naissance destine à la Cour, l'idée d'un grand Seigneur honneste Homme, & qu'en leur donnant de bon-heure des instructions qui peuvent servir de preservatif contre la corruption du siecle, V. MAJESTE' en seroit mieux service."

[9]Ibid. (...who have, everyday, in front of their eyes, the first Book of the world.).
(continued...)

disclaimer, Chetardye's instructions could have been seen to be aimed at nobles who were contributing to the aforementioned "corruption du siècle." Our author's goal, service to the King, stands however, and if he alienated nobles by his demand that courtiers focus on the same goal, he does not seem concerned.

Though it is doubtful that the King himself ever read this introduction, the work of La Chetardye, "le tres-humble & tres obeïssant serviteur & Sujet" of the King, must have sufficiently impressed the powers that be because it was granted *Privilege du Roy* in 1682.[10] This is an indication that the book may have been recognized as the important tool that it was, a tool to aid Louis XIV's "taming of the nobility" and contribute to the stability of the absolutist government. Or at the very least, it was not considered subversive.

The introduction to the third section is a dedication to Madame la Duchesse de Bourbon, one of the daughters of Louis XIV. This letter is much shorter than the previous one and consists mostly of compliments and words of respect. Again Chetardye does not intend to instruct the princess, he merely wishes to dedicate this work to her as a mark of his respect for "une des plus accomplies Princesses de la

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[9](...continued)
This is a reference to the influence of the King, that he is the best example of the *honnête homme* and that would be the best sort of 'book' of instruction. Because the courtiers always have the Sun King's example to learn by, they would certainly not be in need of Chetardye's instruction.

[10]Ibid. (...the very humble and very obedient servant and subject.). Mousnier, Institutions, vol. 1: 455. *Privilege du Roy*, or the Permission of the King, was necessary in order for any book to be printed and sold in France. This is another way that Louis XIV imposed his control on his subjects.

Terre."[11] In the first introduction, Chetardye clearly establishes his respect for the King and in the second, for his family. Madame la Duchesse was one of Louis XIV's favorites.[12] This in itself is important because Chetardye could undoubtedly have found more perfect examples of his ideal man and woman among the current nobility or among French historical figures. However, by focusing on these two individuals, Chetardye further establishes that his role and the purpose of his work are to serve France.

From this purpose, service to France, comes Chetardye's dedication to Christianity which, as we shall see, plays a primary role in his instructions. Christianity is the rule in seventeenth-century France and Chetardye was no exception.[13] The focus on Christianity is not common to all courtesy books of this period however. Self-restraint was important to the noble before the efforts of the Catholic Reformation and was often independent of Christian education. La Rochefoucauld, for example, wrote,

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[11]Ibid., Introduction II, "Le seul dessein que j'ay eu en luy dédiant cet Ouvrage, a esté de luy faire agréer cette marque de mon respect." (...one of the most accomplished princesses of the earth.).

[12]See Lewis and Wolf on Louis' relationships with his family.

[13]Chetardye was a Catholic and was influenced considerably by his uncle, for whom he was named, who was a dedicated priest and the author of several catechisms. See Bertrand for a detailed list of publications by Chetardye's uncle, also named Joachim Trotti de La Chetardye. In this biography, it is noted that the elder Chetardye spent all of his vacations at the home of his nephew, La Chetardye, Chevalier.

Edmond-René Labande, Histoire de Poitu, du Limousin et des Pays Charentais (Toulouse, 1976): 277, identifies an active Counter-Reformation push in the diocese of Limoges, where the Château de la Chetardye is located. Under the direction of Bishop François de la Fayette (1625-1676), there was a great seminary built in this region, meant to ensure a solid theologic foundation for future priests. This made the Catholic Reformation strong in this area. Perhaps this also affected our author's religious views.

"Le vrai honnête homme est celui qui ne se pique de rien," and as Dens points out, this self-restraint was about image, not morality. As previously mentioned, the work often takes on aspects of the author. La Rochefoucauld was a cynic and while he was a Christian in the most basic sense of the term, Christianity was not the central influence in his Maxims or his life.[14]

In 1630, Nicolas Faret defined the *honnête homme* as a man who has the mind and comportment necessary to be successful at court.

> Certes c'est bien mon dessein de representer icy comme dans un petit tableau les qualitez les plus necessaires, soit de l'esprit, soit du corps, que doit posseder celuy qui se veut rendre agreable dans la Cour.[15]

Self-restraint and propriety are necessary factors for Faret's construction but they are contained within the proper degree of Christian morality. Without belief in "the eternal wisdom and infinite goodness" of God, there is no point to any sort of integrity.[16] Faret's rules of comportment for the *honnête homme* are thus based on the principles of Christianity.

Chetardye's *honnête homme* is a Christian first and his instructions partially echo the Counter-Reformation push for 'Christian' self-restraint. Based on a study of N.

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[14]La Rochefoucauld as quoted in Jean-Pierre Dens, L'Honnête Homme et la Critique de Goût: Esthetique et Société au XVIIe Siècle (Lexington, 1981): 5 (...the true honest man is one who takes offense at nothing.).

[15]Nicolas Faret, L'Honnête Homme ou l'art de plaire à la Cour (Genève, 1970): 9 (Certainly it is my intention to represent here as in a small painting the qualities most necessary, of the wit, of the body, that he must possess who wants to make himself pleasing at court.).

[16]Ibid.: 32.

Caussin, La Cour Sainte (1624), Sebastien de Senlis, Le Conduite des Illustres (1659), and Yves de Paris, Gentilhomme Chrétien (1666), Alain Couprie proposes that the Catholic Reformation tried to integrate a degree of Christian morality into the lives of the nobility by building on preexisting ideals of self-restraint and comportment. This would ideally bring the nobility into the reformed Catholic fold without disrupting the traditional importance of worldly obligations.[17] To put Christian morality first was possible, as in the work of Chetardye and Faret, but does not seem to have been necessary to works of this sort. So the importance of Christian values could play a secondary role in the life of the Christian gentleman. He did not need to change much about his real priorities in order to be considered Christian. In this way the nobleman could reconcile his noble priorities with his religion and satisfy both the Church and the crown's push for religious conformity.

Louis XIV took his position as a ruler by divine right seriously.[18] He required observance of it by his subjects and elevated himself as a virtual demigod above them. The notion of a divinely appointed monarch enjoyed Church support and Louis could claim moral authority over his subjects. Besides adding to his own legitimacy, religious conformity within France encouraged piety and obedience from Louis' subjects.

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[17]Alain Couprie, "Courtisanisme et Christianisme au XVIIe siècle" Dix-Septième Siècle (France) 1981, 33 (4): 371-391.

[18]The best known apology for the divine right monarchy is found in the work of Bossuet. This apology is explained in Jacques Truchet, Politique de Bossuet (Paris, 1966): 79-81. From the Bible, Bossuet supported his two propositions: that God established kings as his ministers to reign for Him over His people, and that the person of the king is thus sacred.

Catholicism was the official religion of France and Louis required conformity from his courtiers.[19] Christian self-restraint and morality fed into this obedience and were encouraged by the state and the rules of the court. However, Christian values were not accepted beyond the surface by many of Louis' courtiers. In 1674, Madame de Sévigné was appalled at the lack of respect for God that was evident among the courtiers. "When the king was not present in the royal chapel they behaved as if God also were absent."[20] The court would obey the King as was necessary but religious conformity was not as profound as Catholic reformers would have wished. It could be argued that Louis was regarded as a near incarnation of divinity and thus when he was absent, the divine

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[19]The religious history of France under the rule of Louis XIV is complicated. For the purposes of this essay, a description of religious conformity as it was required at court will suffice. However, for a more complete look at the religious problems which occurred under the Sun King's reign, there are many works, only a few of which can be listed here. Dunn, H. Daniel-Rops, The Church in the Seventeenth Century, transl. J. J. Buckingham (New York, 1985), John Bossy, Christianity in the West, 1400-1700 (New York, 1985) and Henry Phillips, Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France (Cambridge, 1997), present broad pictures of the religious situation in seventeenth-century France. Also see: Frederic J. Baumgartner, Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion 1547-1610 (Durham, 1986), Norman Ravitch, The Catholic Church and the French Nation 1589-1989 (New York, 1990), W. J. Stankiewicz, Politics & Religion in Seventeenth-Century France (Berkeley 1960), and Elizabeth Rapley, The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France (Montreal, 1990). For information on the Catholic Reformation and its effects in France see: Malcolm Greenshields, "What Happened in Quibou? The Catholic Reformation in the Village," Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History, 18 (1991), 80-88, and J. M. Hayden and Malcolm Greenshields present an interesting view on the French clergy in this period in: "The Clergy of Early Seventeenth-Century France: Self-Perception and Society's Perception," French Historical Studies, 18, no. 1 (Spring 1993), 146-72. The Protestant group, the Huguenots, is thoroughly discussed in N. M. Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition (New Haven, 1980).

[20]Madame de Sévigné as quoted in Ravitch: 170.

presence was absent. However, the royal chapel was holy ground and this necessarily demanded a certain amount of respect which was lacking according to Madame de Sévigné. Perhaps this is an aspect of the corruption that Chetardye wishes to eradicate. Though Chetardye may hold a measure of contempt for the reigning elite and their corrupt ways, he is enough of a realist to understand that it is they who make the ultimate decision about who belongs and succeeds within the strict confines of the court and high society.

The image of the courtier was defined by society according to several qualities which fell under the heading of *savant*. A young hopeful either had it or he did not. In modern French the word *savant* means learned. However, in the seventeenth century, this quality implied competence and adaptability to any situation.[21] The ability to converse with a variety of individuals, as well as familiarity with rituals of etiquette and precedence, were all important for the courtier or member of high society. One's conversational skills and ability to 'fit in' to any situation would in many ways be a ticket to invitation and entry into the elite circles of seventeenth-century France. The ideal of the *homme* or *femme savant* incorporated many qualities further defined by the terms *honnêteté*, *bienséance* and *bel esprit*. Because of the nature of words such as these, and because they define the essential virtues of the courtier, they demand an extensive definition.

There is a subtle meaning evident in the quality of *honnêteté* which simply

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[21]Jean Dubois et al., Dictionnaire du français classique, le XVII^{e} siècle (Paris, 1992): 451.

translated means decency. For our *honnête homme* or *honnête femme*, this term "implied modesty, discretion and the refusal to assert oneself" boisterously in polite society.[22] The importance of self-restraint for a group of elite noble warriors can be considered a none too subtle irony. Nonetheless, self-restraint was an essential possession for the person of quality. *Bienséance* as well, implied deeper meaning than its modern equivalent: appropriateness. Apart from simple propriety, *bienséance*, for the courtier, meant charm and pleasantness.[23] It appears that image and acceptance were the determining factors for the success of a social elite. *Bel esprit* is understood as the modern definition of wit but extends to the ability to carry on a conversation which is distinguishable from the norm.[24] A noble who possessed this quality provided stimulating conversation which was able to enhance the general mood. A good conversationalist could go far in the *salons* and a certain amount of finesse would not have hurt at court as well. To impress an important courtier or the King, who was significantly impressed by wit, could have meant entry into elite circles wherein the most benefits were to be found.

All of these elements combined to make the perfect courtier, and were important for Chetardye's *honnête homme* or *honnête femme*. A breach of this image, of 'proper' comportment, would have been socially fatal for an inexperienced courtier. These

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[22]W. D. Howarth, Molière, A Playwright and his Audience (New Haven, 1982): 57.

[23]Greimas and Keane, Dictionnaire du moyen français, la Renaissance (Paris, 1992): 65.

[24]Français classique: 202.

attributes were a serious consideration for acceptance among the chosen nobility of seventeenth-century France. Indeed, even an experienced member of the court elite could falter and land in disgrace. One particularly arresting example illustrates the importance of physical bearing and knowledge of the rules of etiquette at the Sun King's court.

Most courtiers spent their days standing and seated relief was only available at certain times. Attendance at a theater production, a musical performance, or at one of the popular gambling parties, were among these. However, at a gambling party, only those who were risking their money at the tables could sit. This story relates the experience of an unfortunate duchess who was seated at such a party when Madame de Maintenon approached her and asked if she was playing. The duchess was forced to admit that she was not, whereupon Madame asked, "Is it then permitted to enquire why you are seated?" The duchess rose from her seat, offered a deep curtsey and left Versailles, never to return again.[25] A breach of etiquette like this was considered *forte mauvaise* and the duchess left the court in disgrace.

Awareness of one's place, of the rules, was imperative for acceptance in the elite world and the rules were complicated. In Antoine de Courtin's Traité de la Civilité, the author gives a definition of civility as he has observed it. Civility "is in my opinion

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[25]Lewis: 40. There are many studies that examine the specific rigors of court etiquette and competition. Both Lewis, in his portrait of the Sun King's court, and Wolf, in his single volume biography of the French king, provide extensive explanations of the strict ritual and infighting which could be juvenile and sadistic at times. These works each discuss how Louis XIV used the court to occupy his nobility and keep them close so that he could control dangerous intrigue and reinforce that the nobility were privileged subjects, rather than peers.

nothing else, but the modesty and decorum to be observed by everyone according to his condition."[26] This definition corresponds directly to the matters of image and self-restraint that were mentioned previously. Courtin further speaks of appropriateness, humility, displays of virtue, and very specific examples of what to do and what not to do in certain situations. For example, when offered snuff by a person of higher rank, "though we have an aversion to it, we are bound to accept, and pretend to make use of it." Even knocking at a door could be an exercise in propriety.

> To begin with the door of a Prince, or Great Person, it is uncivil to knock hard, or to give more than one knock. At the door of his Bed-Chamber or closet, to knock, is no less than brutish; the way is to scratch only with their nails.[27]

The rules of civility could be very specific to etiquette and precedence, but all were centered around the importance of image. If a courtier did not conform to the rules of etiquette, his disgrace would prevent him from social success. Proper image, which was dependent on rules of comportment, was necessary in order to belong in the elite world.

Though Chetardye is writing for the purpose of French elite instruction, there are certain precedents from the wider spectrum of European writings that must be examined, if only briefly, here. Perhaps the most important example is the Book of the Courtier, written by Baldassare Castiglione in 1528. In this forerunner to French manuals of the same type, Castiglione presents an ideal courtier who is noble by birth, well mannered, brave, accomplished in arms and letters, Christian, chivalrous and

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[26]Antoine de Courtin, The Rules of Civility, transl. Roger L'Estrange (London,1671): 3.

[27]Ibid.: 58 and 21-22.

virtuous in every way.[28] This "universal man" is certainly talented, but there is also a considerable emphasis on unique style and image.[29] The emphasis on these attributes is not only found in Castiglione's work but also in those of Machiavelli, Erasmus, Della Casa, and in Benvenuto Cellini's somewhat narcissistic autobiography.[30] Though these works provide only a small sample of the available literature dealing with European elite, they do present a common thread of universal manliness.

Lester K. Born's introduction to his translation of Erasmus' The Education of a Christian Prince identifies a literary genre which gives instructive ideals of comportment and which extends as far back as Martin of Bracara (d. 580). Born summarizes the ideal qualities of the perfect prince as expressed in works from the sixth to the sixteenth century . He is "wise, self-restrained, just, a pattern in virtues" and "interested in the true religion of God."[31] Though seventeenth-century French ideals for the nobility are defined by the terms *honnêteté*, *bienséance* and *bel esprit*, the origins of these qualities and their importance have a longer history. The importance of self-restraint, wisdom

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[28]Castiglione: 261.

[29]Peter Burke, Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy, 1420-1540 (New York, 1972): 190.

[30] Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince (New York, 1952), Desiderius Erasmus, The Education of a Christian Prince, transl. Lester K. Born (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965), Benvenuto Cellini, Autobiography (London, 1956), and Della Casa, Giovanni, Galateo, transl. Konrad Eisenbichler and Kenneth R. Bartlett (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1986).

[31]Lester K. Born, "Introduction", Erasmus, The Education of a Christian Prince (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965): 127.

and virtue predate the ideal of the *honnête homme* and Born gives us an idea of the foundation for these social rules.

For a clear example of correct comportment and morality, as it manifests itself in the nobility of seventeenth-century France, we need look no farther than our own author's introductions. Chetardye identifies himself as a nobleman, experienced with war and the hunt. He is humble, he defers to those of higher rank, and he attempts to be gentle and appropriate in his method of instruction. Indeed, in his introductions, the first bit of his work to be presented to the reader, Chetardye has created a fitting defense of his own standing as "grand Seigneur honneste Homme". This standing, as it is established here, supports the qualifications which Chetardye holds and which entitle him to act as instructor. The children and young people, who learned from this work, were taking instruction from a Christian, a loyal man of the crown, and a member of the *noblesse d'épée*. His purpose then, is to combat the corruption that has infiltrated the age and to help young nobles learn how to better serve the King. Louis XIV, in his attempt to fit the traditional nobility into his absolutist state, certainly had an ally in Joachim Trotti de La Chetardye, Chevalier.

CHAPTER II
L'HONNÊTE HOMME

Chetardye immediately establishes his purpose, service to France, in his introductions and also impresses upon his readers that which qualifies him to write such a manual of instruction. He is an *honnête homme* and as such speaks for both the crown and for his peers, the members of the *noblesse d'épée*. An *honnête homme* is defined through the qualities of *honnêteté*, *bienséance* and *bel esprit*, but seventeenth-century society's definitions of these terms are not sufficient for Chetardye's ideal. His instructions are full of that which he considers to be necessary to the young man of quality and as such we must examine these necessities closely. As the purpose of this essay is an examination of Chetardye's book, the questions that this chapter must address are concerned with his ideal. What is the construction of Chetardye's ideal man? What are the evils that work against this ideal? How does Chetardye attempt to achieve his expressed purpose, service to France, through these instructions for young men?

As previously noted, Chetardye intends to instruct young men how to become ideal nobles and courtiers. From this intention springs our author's primary instruction;

"apres Dieu, rien ne vous doit estre si cher en ce monde que vostre honneur."[1] Though God is necessarily the first priority for any Christian gentleman or woman, honor is presented as the next, and connected responsibility. Indeed, if we consider the role of the nobility in seventeenth-century France, as dictated by Louis XIV and the Catholic Church, duty to God and King directly correspond to ideals of honor. Chetardye further writes that while God is the ultimate judge, society will also judge.[2] And what use would God have for a Christian without honor or would society have for a nobleman without honor? In order to serve these demanding masters, and because the regard of society was so important to the livelihood and the very definition of the nobility, honor is a crucial aspect of Chetardye's ideal.[3] Though one could certainly argue that the morals of the Christian faith and of seventeenth-century elite society seem most often to be at odds, our author seems to have no difficulties reconciling the two. Christian honor, or at least Chetardye's representation of it here, seems to be able to satisfy the demands of God and society.

God and society are presented as forces of justice in Chetardye's work and this reinforces the necessity of honor. When judgement of either force falls, the man of

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[1]Chetardye, Section I: 3 (...after God, nothing must be so dear to you in this world as your honor.).

[2]Ibid.: 4.

[3]For information regarding the importance of honor as it applied to the construction of the French nobility, see Kristen B. Neushel, Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France (Ithaca, 1989). Neushel explores the importance of personal honor to the definition of the noble. It was the very essence of their social identity and as such, was jealously guarded.

honor would ultimately come out on top. "Tost ou tard le merite se fait connoistre, & qu'il est impossible que le mensonge subsiste."[4] Chetardye has established a conflict-free ideal here. He can reconcile God and society under a common purpose, justice, and at the same time excuse injustice as 'not yet resolved'. There are supernatural forces that ultimately play a role in an individual's success or failure and it is imperative that young men understand this and respect these powers of divine justice. Chetardye has noticed that there is corruption in society however, so his definition of society as a force of justice is not entirely clear. It seems that justice is the ideal of social organization and though evil may exist within, society must work, as a whole, to prevent this. Perhaps the social obligation is what Chetardye means when he refers to the ways nobles can better serve the king. Naturally, the element of divine justice serves to punish those elements of corruption that fall through the cracks of social justice and this is Chetardye's warning to those who would stoop to evil means to achieve their goals.

In accordance with these ideas of supernatural justice and social obligation, an *honnête homme* must strive to follow certain guidelines. Chetardye reduces this ideal to a single-phrase definition, "to be kind hearted," but this entails many things.

> Il ne suffit pas d'avoir de la valeur pour estre honneste Homme; il faut avoir de la probité, estre bon Amy, Homme de parole, chercher à obliger tout le monde, plaindre les Malheureux, sur tout ceux qui ne méritent pas de l'estre, & se faire un plaisir de les soulager quand l'occasion s'en présente; en un mot se faire un bon coeur.

These elements may fall under the jurisdiction of applied Christian morality, but

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[4]Chetardye, Section I: 5 (Sooner or later merit will make itself known and it is impossible for a lie to endure.).

Chetardye only specifically concentrates on the fact that the perceptions of others can be influenced by these sorts of right action.[5] Chetardye further asserts that noble nature is aligned with virtue; therefore the presence of hatred and vice in the heart of a nobleman, contradicts nature. "Quand on a le coeur bien fait, on ne doit haïr que le vice."[6] Chetardye's ideal of honor has to do with image and Christianity but he downplays the Christian element in favor of society's perception. It is apparent that honor and reputation are tied together and the author seems to assume that Christian values speak for themselves to the seventeenth-century reader.

From this point Chetardye leads into a brief discussion of friendship and the importance of seeking out those with a good heart as defined above. The young gentleman must choose his associates wisely. Here our author cites the Spanish proverb: "Dy-moy qui tu voy, je te diray qui tu es." Obviously a young man should avoid bad influences, and a man without honor would be a poor friend. Chetardye concentrates on the way friends contribute to image and honor because many people would judge a man to have the same qualities as his friends. Chetardye further asserts that society's original perceptions will be a factor for the young man throughout his life.[7] Despite Chetardye's

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[5]Ibid.: 7-9, 19. Quotation: 7-8 (It is not enough to have merit to be an honest man; one must have integrity, be a good friend, a man of his word, strive to be kind to everyone, pity the unfortunate, especially when they do not deserve it, and to take pleasure in relieving them when the occasion presents itself; in one word, have a good heart.).

[6]Ibid., Section II: 69-70 (When one has a good heart, one must hate nothing but vice.).

[7]Ibid., Section I: 14-17. Quotation: 14 (Tell me whom you see, I will tell you

(continued...)

earlier claim that God must come first, he seems to be primarily concerned with the judgement of society and the effect that judgement could have on a man's life.

As it is an especially important aspect of "un bon coeur", Chetardye emphasizes that a friend must be trustworthy. He suggests testing potential friends with information of little importance to see if they are capable of confidence. "C'est un talent que Dieu n'a pas donné à tout le monde."[8] It is also important to surround oneself with friends who will be honest about one's faults. Chetardye believes that the opinions of enemies can be more constructive than those of friends and this is not the way it should be. A friend who does nothing but praise is no friend at all. Everyone needs constructive criticism in order to perfect themselves and safeguard their honor.[9] Honesty and trustworthiness are two of the features of a good and honorable heart and they are important criteria by which the young man is judged.

Reliability is also an important aspect of a man's honor and Chetardye approaches this matter through a discussion of virtue and vice. He instructs his readers to hate all vice but primarily dishonesty and drunkenness. We understand the aversion to dishonesty because it was of singular importance to be a man of one's word and it was also a sin to lie. A man's reliability and personal honor were dependent upon his word. As Courtin wrote: "And above all things let his word be as his bond, and as

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[7](...continued)
who you are.).

[8]Ibid.: 56 (It is a talent that God has not given to everyone.).

[9]Ibid., Section II: 48-55.

sacred even in the smallest matters. Nay, it should be more carefully observed than a bond; for herein his honour and honesty are the security."[10] Chetardye urges his readers to avoid deceitfulness. Deceit is a vice that Chetardye sees as so common that it is almost not seen as a vice anymore. He reminisces about years past when dishonest men were dishonored. He feels that today deceitfulness often passes for *esprit* and this may also be a part of the corruption which is devaluing the noble ideal.[11]

Drunkenness was also tied to reliability and to reason as well. Chetardye obviously feels quite strongly about this vice.

> On devient malpropre, stupide, incapable de secret; qualité, de toutes les qualitez, la plus necessaire à la Guerre & à la Cour, pour un Homme qui aspire à des grandes choses; car quelle apparance y-a-t il qu'on confie de grands Emplois à un Homme, qui est toûjours à la veille de perdre sa raison?[12]

Indeed, no one would trust an unreliable drunk or a dishonest man with anything important. As Castiglione wrote, such men "can be set to no better use than to keepe sheepe."[13] There is a strong emphasis on war and the court here which reveals Chetardye's idea of proper employments for the nobleman and of noble accomplishments. Also, society's perception of the young noble plays out here through

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[10]Courtin: 164.

[11]Chetardye, Section II: 55-58. Also see Neuschel on the importance of honesty to honor.

[12]Ibid., Section I: 23-24 (One becomes dirty, stupid, incapable of discretion; the quality, of all the qualities, the most necessary at war and at court, for a man who aspires to important things; because what appearance would one have if he confided important things to a man who is always at the brink of losing his reason?).

[13]Castiglione: 129.

reputation. Because Chetardye believes that a reputation for discretion is the key to promotion and advancement to a position which would involve delicate information and confidence, this aspect of image and honor is truly imperative to the success of the *honnête homme*.

Chetardye asserts that trusting someone unreliable could cost a man his life someday. This maxim is especially important for those who may command armies. To command men successfully requires a certain knowledge of character that must be employed with prudence. This book is designed to help the young man with these types of human knowledge and correct judgement. Chetardye hopes to instruct the young man who is headed for noble positions at court, ambassadorial posts or military commands. "Les Livres de Morale, ny les sentimens des Philosophes, ne vous instruisent point de la meme maniere."[14] Here Chetardye emphasizes the importance of his own work. He apparently feels that he is providing the truth with no fancy trimmings. Clarity and honesty are the author's tools and by virtue of his own reliability, he is establishing his own status as a true *honnête homme* who has a good and honorable heart.

In his instructions thus far, Chetardye has repeatedly emphasized the importance of proper image for the young nobleman. Though he does consider God to be the absolute priority, and though he does refer to supernatural forces of justice, Chetardye obviously realizes the weight of society's regard. It is not just the idea of honor that Chetardye is trying to plant in his reader's mind, it is the appearance of honor as well.

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[14]Chetardye, Section I: 59-62. Quotation: 60-61 (Neither books of morality, nor the sentiments of philosophers, instruct us at all in the same manner.).

The single-phrase definition of "un bon coeur" however, implies that these must be a part of a man's essence. It would not be enough to project these qualities for the sake of image. Chetardye's *honnête homme* is infused with virtue. It would serve no purpose to be quietly virtuous though; Chetardye wants his readers to enter positions of importance in the army and at court. He wants their excellence to be recognized and embraced by France. He wants them to influence social morality and prevent injustice. But before this success can be realized, the young man must perfect himself and gain entry into the proper circles. For this reason, an important part of Chetardye's job is to prepare his readers for this journey.

Chetardye acknowledges the privilege and leisure of the nobility and he writes that a man of quality consequently has certain opportunities which he should not pass up. Equestrian sports and games of physical skill, not to mention swordsmanship and proficiency with other arms are all available for the man of means to learn. Our author deems these important skills because they contribute to talent at war and the ability to preserve life and honor. Other skills that Chetardye emphasizes are dancing, singing and playing musical instruments. These more refined arts add a certain air of grace, of "je ne sçay quoi."[15] However, the young man must not let a strength become a weakness. If a man is only known for his ability to sing, for example, he could become a sort of social curiosity, asked only to sing and in essence, made ridiculous.[16] In keeping with his priorities, Chetardye focuses his instruction on image and acceptance,

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[15]Ibid.: 25-27.

[16]Ibid., Section II: 8-12.

and the proper occupations of the nobleman, war and court.

"La Guerre est la suite ordinaire des Voyages, & le chemin le plus honorable qui puisse conduire à la Fortune." For Chetardye, money made by marriage, business or gambling, cannot measure up to that which is made through war. War also leads to honor and glory. "Un Homme de qualité a donc grand intérest d'aimer la Guerre, & d'apprendre un Métier qui est le seul qu'on puissse appeller le Métier des honnêtes Gens." Aside from bravery, the most important element of war is intelligence and strategy. Thus Chetardye urges his students to learn Geography and Mathematics and to also read books of history and military strategy in order to contribute to their skill in this domain of the nobleman.[17] Chetardye considers war to be the most honorable occupation for the nobleman and he believes it is conducive to, as well as dependent upon, ideals of honor and nobility.

Chetardye identifies himself as a military man in his introductions and he obviously prefers this occupation for the nobleman. Traditionally the French nobility were the military order in France, the leaders who organized and commanded their own men; but the feudal system and the dependance of the French crown on grand nobles and their armed retainers had deteriorated over the centuries. By the seventeenth century, the existence of a standing army and modern warfare had eliminated the dominance of

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[17]Ibid.: 130-138. Quotations: 130 (War is the ordinary result of expeditions and the most honorable route that can encourage fortune.) and 132-133 (A man of quality is in his best interest to love war, and to learn an occupation that is the only one that we can call the occupation of honest men.).

the old feudal military tradition.[18] Despite these transformations, many French nobles attempted to retain their identity as members of the warrior class and Chetardye illustrates this point nicely. The army, therefore, is "le Métier des honnêtes Gens" and Chetardye's ideal occupation for his readers. Unfortunately, it was not a simple matter for a young nobleman to enter into a military office. There were men from other levels of society who competed for military commissions. For many noblemen, the best road to military glory began with "presentation" at the royal court.[19] Once again, society's acceptance held the key to the young man's success.

Our author urges the young man to not neglect any quality which could be effective for him in his journey into society. Chetardye feels that ignorance is one of the biggest problems insofar as this is concerned. The solution to ignorance is, of course, study. Books and education are Chetardye's answer but he emphasizes understanding rather than memorization. The author also feels that the best way to reinforce this learning is to discuss what one has read "avec quelque Personne d'esprit." Of course the young man must not show conceit in regard to this learning of his. There is nothing

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[18]Sidney Painter, French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Medieval France (Baltimore, 1940), explains that by the late thirteenth century the money economy enabled princes and lords to escape the control of their vassals. They could hire armies for wages. Though the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) upset this process, when the war ended, centralization of military control began anew.

Malcolm Vale, War and Chivalry (Athens, Georgia, 1981), identifies the creation of the French standing army (1445-48) as the point where the military ceased to be a class and became a profession. Vale further asserts that the change in military tactics, from knights and heavy horse to pike and musket infantry, brought the importance to rest on the unit rather than the individual. This added to the lessening of noble importance in warfare and of the traditional feudal military organization.

[19]Mousnier, Institutions, vol. 1: 190-198.

more annoying to those of experience than a young man who thinks he knows everything.[20] Education and competence are essential to the noble occupations but conceit would be detrimental to image and the acceptance of others.

As previously discussed, the royal court played a central role in the elite society of seventeenth-century France, and much of Chetardye's instruction is aimed at preparing his readers for presentation and service at court. Education is necessary for war but also for the successful courtier. Chetardye writes of the quality of *esprit* as wit cultivated through study. Educated wit contributes to social skills and it has been established how important these skills are. Versatility is the key to good conversation. There is a word of caution here though, as Chetardye warns his readers to follow the ideal of the universal man who studies everything but does not concentrate solely on one discipline.

> Un Homme du monde doit estre universel, & s'il ne sçait les choses à fond, au moins en doit-il sçavoir assez pour en pouvoir dire son avis, sans choquer le bon sens; & pour écouter avec plaisir ceux qui en parlent.[21]

This ideal is also expressed in the maxims of La Rochefoucauld. "Men too involved in details usually become unable to deal with great matters."[22] Study would aid the man of the world to perform well in social or professional situations but someone who studied

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[20]Chetardye, Section II.: 28-48. Quotation: 33 (...with a person of wit.).

[21]Ibid., Section I: 29 (A man of the world must be universal, and if he does not know something thoroughly, at least he must know enough about it to give his opinion on it, without shocking good sense; and for listening with pleasure to those who speak about it.).

[22]Le duc de La Rochefoucauld, The Maxims, transl. Constantine FitzGibbon (London, 1974): 41.

one thing exhaustively would be a bore. Though perhaps a master in his discipline, a man like this would also lack the broad perspective which is necessary to judge important matters dispassionately and arrive at a clear understanding. He would not be considered able or knowledgeable in diverse issues. Versatility and proper wit were desired in a dinner guest and in polite conversation as well as in important matters of politics and war.

Though proper, cultivated wit was valued, there were possible dangers inherent in the use of witticisms. Sometimes wit could go too far and escalate into ridicule. Chetardye identifies raillery as a popular form of diversion but one that is dangerous unless it is good natured and not harmful to anyone. Slander can too easily come from raillery and our author labels it as the most dangerous and common of all vices. Chetardye notes two types of *plaisanteries*: the first is surprising and delightful to everyone; the second is tasteless, ambiguous, and reflects poorly on the author. It is necessary for the young man to avoid the latter and to use propriety to judge the difference.[23] This was another benefit of a liberal education. Familiarity with, and understanding of, propriety were dependent upon versatility.

Chetardye feels that ridicule is the fruit of corrupt wit and that those who rely upon it instead of "les talens qu'ils ont receu du Ciel," are fundamentally flawed. As such the *honnête homme* does not take what these individuals say seriously. Chetardye counsels his readers not to take offense at the small things. These should be ignored and the man who relies upon ridicule is to be pitied. "C'est dans les bagatelles où l'ame se

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[23]Chetardye, Section I: 32-37.

manifeste davantage."[24] When Chetardye refers to the danger of these types of negative raillery, he is obviously referring to the dangers of possible retaliation, another time-honored noble tradition, the duel.

Though Chetardye never refers to it directly, references to the duel are seen throughout his work. Perhaps the most obvious is his reference to unforgivable slights. These are truly offensive things such as physical blows and accusations of lying, treason and cowardice. While insignificant jests should be met with control and dismissal, these serious matters require different action.

> Pour ceux-là, je n'ay rien à vous dire. Je présupose qu'un Homme qui a reçeu quelqu'une de ces injures, n'est pas maistre de son ressentiment; & j'ay sujet de croire, que puis que Dieu a la bonté de pardonner les premiers mouvements, ceux qui exercent les Loix ne seront pas plus difficiles.[25]

Though he artfully avoids the word 'duel' here, there can be no doubt that Chetardye is writing about exactly that. Because of royal law prohibiting the duel, and because of the strong resistance of the nobility to giving up this traditional form of justice to the crown, Chetardye must be careful here. To openly advocate the use of the duel to arbitrarily solve problems would be sedition, but to deny it completely would be an insult to noble tradition. Chetardye wisely leaves this up to God and the King as special circumstance

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[24]Ibid., Section II: 2-7. Quotations: 2 (...the talents that they have received from heaven.) and 6 (It is in the little things that the soul shows itself more.).

[25]Ibid., Section I: 44 (For these, I have nothing to tell you. I would presume that a man who has received one of these injuries is not the master of his resentment; and I have reason to believe, that since God has the goodness to pardon the first impulses, those who exercise the law would not be more difficult.).

could very well elicit special exemption.[26]

A nobleman's honor, as has been noted, was the essence of his nobility, of his privileged status. This notion was traditionally tied to his identity as a warrior or a knight. The inherent characteristics of a nobleman, then, were "bravery, courage, truthfulness and absolute loyalty to his pledged word regardless of the consequences." Because this ideal was so important to the French nobleman, any insult or doubt relating to his complete possession of these qualities was an offense that had to be met with a challenge.[27] Cellini recounts many incidents involving duels in his Autobiography and he makes no apology for those in which he was involved. In one instance, he cautions a man who insults him that he is "not the kind of man to put up with abuse."[28] Cellini's accuser understands exactly what is meant by this warning. This "kind of man" is one who will defend his honor through combat.

Castiglione also mentions the necessity of skill at arms because of the noble duty to face combat in the duel.

> But when a man perceivith that hee is entered so far that hee can not draw back without burthen [to his honor], hee must both in such things as hee hath to doe before the combate, and also in the combate, be utterly resolved with him selfe, and alwaies shew a readinesse and a stomacke. And not as some doe, passe the

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[26]Louis XIV was the only French king who never issued a pardon for dueling. However, there are many incidents, throughout French history, of nobles who were given royal pardons by other sovereigns.

[27]François Billacois, The Duel: Its Rise and Fall in Early Modern France (New Haven, 1990), Keen, Neuschel, and Mousnier, Institutions. Quotation, Mousnier, vol. 1: 139.

[28]Cellini: 125.

matter in arguing and points.[29]

Castiglione does not seem to regard duelling as wrong. Bravery, or a "stomacke", and the honor of a nobleman were indivisible. Not only was dueling not a sin for the courtier, it would seem to have been a sin for a nobleman not to defend his honor through combat.

The tradition of the duel was indivisible from the European noble concept of honor and no decree by Louis XIV could wipe it from their consciousness. This fundamental aspect of nobility is not even denied by Chetardye, a self-proclaimed man of the crown. However, a "point of honor" was not often necessary and Chetardye cautions his readers to stay away from those who are quarrelsome and who would invite this sort of conflict. The author concedes that from time to time a situation does occur when one must fight, but these times are rare. Only a fool goes looking for a fight. Once again, the use of propriety is necessary for the young man. Chetardye cannot stress enough the necessity to perfect this skill because it is often necessary to judge a situation and apply appropriate behavior.[30]

Fighting contributes to the disorder of the spirit, according to Chetardye. This type of base action can only be tolerated in lesser men. "La plus juste querelle est embarassante & fâcheuse." If a man is unlucky enough to be drawn into a fight, Chetardye insists that he must be sure that he is on the side of virtue and he must also remember that a man without honor will not fight with honor. However, the author

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[29]Castiglione: 40.

[30]Chetardye, Section I: 45-47.

believes that it is always best to avoid a quarrel and to especially avoid making it a point of honor. Chetardye assures his readers that he does not condone cowardice though. He is determined that valor is an essential quality for "un Homme qui porte une Epée à son costé." Chetardye asserts that there is a fine line between strength and weakness and a man who is prone to solve problems with a fight is weak indeed.[31]

Because Chetardye is a man of the crown, he must discourage dueling as per royal law. However, as we have seen, the duel was an important part of the noble identity. There were times when honor could only be satisfied through combat. Chetardye assures his readers that he does not condone cowardice because he has to make this assurance. His opposition to the duel is a dangerous one. Though he may seem to simply be echoing the King's decree, he is also denying noble tradition. Chetardye walks the line carefully here and seems to succeed as he leaves the matter up to God. The careful way in which he treats this matter does serve to illuminate, in part, the controversy over the duel though. Louis XIV may have been the only French king who never granted a pardon for the offense of dueling and the duel may have declined greatly during his reign, but Saint-Simon assures us that, though very few and very secret, there were instances of the duel in the Sun King's France.[32]

Chetardye believes that the successful gentleman cultivates a flexible *esprit* and employs that to see beyond advice, circumstances and passions, to the heart of the

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[31]Ibid., Section II: 135-146. Quotations: 21 (The most just fight is embarrassing and unfortunate.) and 144 (...a man who carries a sword at his side.).

[32]Mousnier, Institutions, vol. I: 145

matter.[33] This is a way to reinforce honor, to be the one who can make the proper judgement despite distraction and passion. Such a man would avoid a duel if at all possible. In order to do this, to be this man, one must reinforce the *esprit* against weakness.

> Un Homme libéral n'a pas besoin d'estre en garde contre l'avarice; un Homme sobre contre l'intempérance; un Homme froid contre la colere; un Homme ferme contre la peur, ainsi du reste; il n'a qu'a se laisser conduire à son temperament.[34]

In essence, Chetardye is encouraging his reader to be guided by his conscience but that conscience must be virtuous. This would help the young man to avoid many mishaps and is complimentary to the ideal of *honnêteté*. It is not proper to let passion turn to vice so the obvious solution is a passion for virtue and self-restraint. This is not to say that wisdom is incompatible "avec un certaine liberté d'esprit." or with certain pleasures.[35] The young man must simply obtain the correct balance which will allow him to judge a situation correctly and act appropriately.

From this point Chetardye suggests that his readers not be too critical of others because that will only bring scrutiny on themselves. Though an important part of a man's education is observation of the mistakes, as well as the victories, of others, criticism of an acquaintance's shortcomings may be seen as an insult which can lead to a

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[33]In this instance, Chetardye uses *esprit*, but it seems to mean the spirit or the mind. Whatever element rules a man's judgement and action.

[34]Chetardye, Section I: 73 (A generous man does not need to be on guard against greed; a sober man against intemperance; a cool man against anger; a strong man against fear, in this way the rest; he does but let himself be driven by his temperament.).

[35]Ibid., Section II: 23 (...with a certain freedom of spirit.).

dispute of honor. As Chetardye points out earlier in his work, men learn arms for war and the defense of honor and many are quick to respond to insult with a challenge. This is to be avoided. "On n'en fait guére en s'érigeant en Censeur public. Il faut tout voir, en profiter, & rien dire." No one appreciates self-righteous commentary and it is better for the young man to stay in the background and learn from what he sees rather than to risk offending another man's honor. However, silence is detrimental when praise is due. For Chetardye, appropriate and generous praise is one of the most important aspects of polite society. "Il y a de la supériorité à loüer; parce que, comme dit Plutarque, celuy qui donne est présumé plus riche que celuy qui reçoit."[36] A man who was stingy with praise would be considered envious by others and this was not a reputation that would benefit the young man. In this case, propriety directly affects image and, as Chetardye insists, image is essential for the *honnête homme*.[37]

Honor and image were necessary concerns for the young man because of the various reasons which have been explored. He needed to present himself to society in such a way that he would gain acceptance by the elite ranks of the nobility. The aspect of Christianity is not extraneous to this necessity however, and Chetardye explains this fact with strong words. In order to be an *honnête homme*, a good subject to the crown, a

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[36]Ibid.: 76-78. Quotations: 76-77 (We do not make things better by setting ourselves up as a public critic. We must observe everything, learn from what we observe, and say nothing.) and 78 (There is superiority in praise; because, as Plutarch said, he who gives is presumed richer than he who receives.).

[37]For an interesting view of praise as currency in seventeenth-century France, see Bernard Bray, "La Louange, Exigence de Civilité et Pratique Epistolaire au XVIIe Siècle", Dix-Septième Siècle (France) 1990, 42 (2): 135-153.

good husband, father, son, master and friend, one must be a Christian. For Chetardye, only a Christian can have the qualities of justice and fidelity in his heart. An atheist, by contrast, has a hardened heart and loves only himself. Sentiments contrary to Christianity are shameful, especially for men of quality. The author insists that these people have an obligation to God and their blood that is scorned by disbelief. Here Chetardye reveals his place in the French, seventeenth-century racial debate. He believes that there is a general rule that those who are born to privilege will have a nature that reflects their quality, and those born to a lower stature will have a base nature. Though there are exceptions produced "par un caprice de la nature," these should be regarded only as such.[38]

Chetardye's ideal nobleman is, therefore, a Christian who seeks to always strengthen his sense of morality and justice. He cultivates the properties of "le bon coeur" and applies them to his life in every way. He hates vice, loves virtue, and has educated himself to recognize both in his fellows. The *honnête homme* is just and he praises virtue as he sees it. He surrounds himself with friends who display appropriate morality and avoids those who do not. This man is destined to command armies and hold positions of authority in the world. He is well educated in a variety of disciplines and is at home in polite society. His honor is pristine and his knowledge of propriety unequaled. This ideal is what all young noblemen should strive toward.

The "corruption of the age" which works contrary to this ideal is defined by the vices which have conquered some nobles. Drunkenness, dishonesty and atheism all

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[38]Chetardye, Section II: 90-92. Quotation: 92 (...by a freak of nature...).

result in a man without honor. Chetardye warns his readers against these elements constantly. The nobleman must continually be on his guard against men who embrace vice and he must constantly reinforce his *esprit* against these base influences and tendencies. Chetardye has given his readers the plain knowledge necessary to build their own character after the fashion of the model he has constructed. It appears that Chetardye believes that if young men strive to meet this ideal, they will be an asset to their country and their race. Chetardye attempts to serve France by setting a virtuous example of nobility. It is not sufficient to impress the right people, be recognized, and achieve success. The ideal man's virtue is his success and he, by his work and example, is a contribution to the strength, justice and glory of France.

CHAPTER III
L'HONNÊTE HOMME À LA COUR

Chetardye's instructions identify only two proper occupations for the nobleman: soldier in the Royal Army or courtier in the Royal Court. As previously noted, the young man is encouraged to acquire skill at arms and in mathematics, geometry and military strategy, in order to augment his abilities in matters of war. Beyond these skills, the young man must also hone the finer points of his character. He must build a reputation for valor, honesty, reliability and honor, because these are essential to placement and success in the army. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Chetardye feels that war is the most honorable milieu for the nobleman; however, he cannot deny the importance of the court for the nobility "puis que c'est là que les graces se distribuent."[1] Du Refuge also notes the importance of the court. "I do not deny but a courtier's life will be far more difficult to an honest man than to another, but withal I must affirm that the advantage of glory and content of mind that will arise from it will recompense the trouble of it."[2] The occupation of the courtier required precise instruction in the social graces as well as a certain strength of morality in order to resist

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[1]Chetardye, Section I: 83-84 (...since it is there that favors are distributed.).

[2]Du Refuge as quoted in Aresty: 98.

the corruption that Chetardye notes and that Du Refuge alludes to here. Chetardye attempts to construct this moral basis for his readers. The questions addressed in this chapter regard Chetardye's instructions for the *honnête homme* at court. How does the author believe that nobles should conduct themselves at the royal court? What are the problems that a courtier must face and how do these problems contribute to the "corruption of the age?" And once again, how does Chetardye attempt to achieve his expressed purpose, service to France, through these instructions for the noble courtier?

The court was a necessary destination for seventeenth-century French nobles who wished to preserve a position of prominence, and to advance socially and politically. Louis XIV especially, required that the elite nobility live at his court and attend the exhausting rituals that he organized around himself. Despite the implicit idea of leisure for elite society, this was a demanding role and the courtiers of the Sun King's court faced many obstacles and trials before they could achieve even tentative success. "Mais il faut regarder comme une mer orageuse, pleine de bancs & d'écüeils, sur laquelle il est aisé de faire naufrage, à moins qu'on ne scache s'y conduire."[3] This is an interesting analogy and undeniably accurate as well. Louis' court was full of bored nobles whose main purpose was to pay homage to the King and find their way into his favor. Rank and social prestige were important, so competition was fierce and sabotage was often used as a diversion and a means to success.

Once he has identified the court as a dangerous arena, Chetardye goes on to

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[3]Ibid.: 84 (But one must regard [the court] as a stormy sea, full of sandbars and reefs, on which it is easy to wreck, and easier still if one does not know how to navigate.).

instruct the reader how to be successful in court, how to navigate and avoid the pitfalls. The first rule is to be aware. The author points out that it is not enough to simply know what is going on, the successful courtier must also understand when to be outgoing and when to be wary. He must understand the ebb and flow of social tension and propriety because unawareness leads to loss of fortune. While careful observation is important, the courtier must also be unobtrusive in his observations. Chetardye warns that people do not like to have their secrets known and an overtly observant young man could be seen as a spy and have the doors of opportunity shut in his face. The young man must be sure not to be identified as a spy but he must also be wary of spies himself. Spies are plentiful at the court because many courtiers search for a way to advance themselves through the misfortunes of others.[4] As Chetardye emphasizes for the gentleman, and as is noted in Chapter II, propriety is essential, but nowhere is ignorance of social motives and appropriate control more dangerous than at the royal court.

Though he admits that it is necessary, Chetardye feels that the court can be a source of dangerous vice that can be corrupting for the young man. A young man could quickly find himself overwhelmed with the decadent tendencies that are present in the lifestyle of the elite and the author counsels his readers to be careful and to stay away from self-indulgent vice. "C'est un abus encore de croire, que le vice régne plus à la Cour qu'ailleurs; quelque corruption qui ait pû s'y glisser, il s'y conserve toûjours une

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[4]Ibid.: 54, 86-87 and 103-104.

certaine honnesteté, qui masque le vice."[5] The mask of *honnêteté* is an interesting idea; obviously the young courtier had to apply clarity of judgement in order to see the vice that was present in the court. He had to rely upon his own morality, his own cultivated virtue. Though Chetardye admits that it is not easy to strike the correct balance between work and play, this balance is necessary. Pleasures that are innocent will cease to be so when they become an obstacle to success. "Défiez-vous sur tout de celle qui vous domine, & les regardez toutes comme des Bestes farouches qui dévorent tost ou tard ceux qui les gardent." Passion run amok will lead to ultimate disaster and the young man must keep his passions under control, especially at court.[6]

Chetardye's reference to corruption among courtiers must be an example of that which he seeks to combat through this work. We have seen the degree of importance that he attributes to the nobility and his idealization of them as a race of virtue. The petty competition and decadence that reigned at the Sun King's court is obviously contrary to the very foundations of Chetardye's beliefs. His ideal nobleman does not succumb to vice. The facade of *honnêteté* which masks the vice at the court needs to be identified. Dishonesty, betrayal, intrigue and decadence were infecting the French court underneath an appearance of civility. It seems that Chetardye wishes to replace this corruption with the ideals of Christian morality as present in his instructions. He is

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[5]Ibid., Section III: 74-75 (It is wrong to believe that vice reigns more at the court than elsewhere; whatever corruption that has been able to creep into [the court], it always keeps up a certain decency, which masks the vice.).

[6]Ibid.: 70-76. Quotation: 75-76 (Above all challenge those [passions] that dominate you, and think of them as ferocious beasts that sooner or later will devour those who guard them.).

educating a new group of nobles who will not tolerate these infestations of evil.

Because the competition for favors is so great and because it is for favors that the nobleman must go to court, Chetardye warns his readers not to take initial failure too hard. It must be regarded as a learning experience. This is the courtier's opportunity to learn the rules and operation of the system and to display graciousness. Chetardye is basically educating his readers as to the unfairness of court life. He explains that things do not always go as one wishes them to and often merit is not adequately rewarded. However, impatience and vexation are the most harmful things in the world. Chetardye teaches that it is important to master the negative and always exude an air of grace. Bad temper in a man just proves that he does not have what it takes and will ensure failure in this elite world. Grace and agreeable manners are the only thing that one can fall back on.[7] Because court life was so demanding and so often disappointing, this bit of advice would have been useful. The courtier had to harden himself against disappointment while projecting the proper image which would improve his chances of advancement.

Chetardye warns his readers to keep a tight rein on their anger, to keep their hearts and minds always steady and tranquil. Frequent outbursts of anger are detrimental to a man's image. Self-restraint and virtue, however, should always be sought after.

> Tachez de vous perfectionner tous les jours. Ce n'est pas asssez pour un galant Homme de n'avoir point de defauts considerables. Il faut que de jour en jour il

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[7]Ibid., Section I: 87-92.

acquiere quelque vertu nouvelle.[8]

There were simply more courtiers than favors and competition was murderous because Louis XIV kept his elite hungry and, thus, eager to please. It would have surely been a dismal occupation, this noble lifestyle, but it was often necessary for success and success meant conforming to the rules of propriety which governed.[9] Chetardye acknowledges that the courtier must always work at concealing his unhappiness and maintaining the status quo. "La vie d'un Courtisan doit estre une continuelle etude de souplesse d'esprit."[10] Constant control and self-restraint were the rule. One slip could spell destruction of image and social standing, and forever remove any chance of success within the royal court.

So while keeping tight control on feelings and actions, the courtier also had to

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[8]Ibid., Section II: 96-101. Quotation, 100-101 (Try to perfect yourself everyday. It is not enough for a gallant man to not have any major flaws. He must acquire new virtues everyday.).

[9]Many historians have written about the lives of Louis XIV's courtiers, perhaps because under the rule of the Sun King, the French court reached the height of its precedence. For a first hand account of the infighting and disappointment at the French court in this period, see Saint-Simon.

Phillipe Erlanger, The Age of Court and Kings: Manners and Morals 1558-1715 (New York, 1970), Joseph Klaits, Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV (Princeton, 1976), Lewis, Wolf, Howarth and Mukerji all present interesting anecdotes from the lives of these elites, and overviews of the exhausting ritual and fierce competition that was the breeding ground for vicious intrigue and moral decadence.

Court Society, by Norbert Elias, is an excellent sociological study of general court life which points to the courtier's identity as a social control. Because a courtier's identity was central to his or her honor and prestige, which were defined by the court itself, Elias argues that acceptance by the elite was not only essential to success within the court but also to a noble's sense of self.

[10]Chetardye, Section I: 92 (The life of a courtesan must be a continual study of suppleness of spirit.).

keep a sharp lookout for anything that could benefit him. "Se proposer toûjours un but qui nous mene à quelque chose qui puisse agumenter notre fortune, ou notre gloire." Chetardye does not advocate success at the expense of another. This type of ruthless competition does not fit into his noble ideal. The need for self-preservation is clear and Chetardye's courtier had to be sure not to fall victim to vicious intrigue and also to resist the temptation to use it himself. Christian morality is the overriding element and the young noble should strive to be kind and fair to others, not to get ahead at any cost. Nonetheless, it is also necessary to look out for oneself.[11]

One effective method of self preservation at the royal court was to establish the support of a patron. An appropriate patron was an elite noble who held a fair amount of social status and influence, who would help the young man to successfully navigate the court and provide the proper introductions and invitations into the elite circles of the court nobility. Chetardye encourages his readers to apply themselves to their work with ferocity as this will make them stand out in the eyes of possible patrons. A patron would only take on a client who could help his own career and standing. An impressive, hardworking young man would have the potential to do just that. So the solution for the young noble was to keep out of trouble and to impress important figures with grace and studiousness and hopefully these efforts would pay off with recognition. And recognition, by the King or other powerful members of the court elite, was the key to success.

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[11]Ibid.: 93-97 (Intend always towards a goal that will lead to something that may augment our fortune or our glory.).

An elaborate system of fealty and patronage among the nobility was the cornerstone of elite privilege and power in France, from the Renaissance to the personal rule of Louis XIV, and a noble's social status relied upon his connections. While a powerful *maître*, a family head or a friend, would assert his influence to ensure that his *fidèle* would have every advantage needed to obtain rank and wealth, the more numerous a lord's clients, the greater his prestige and military force. The strength of these networks of fealty relationships is evident in the accounts of the "noble" Fronde (1649-1653) insofar as these rebellions were fought by disgruntled powerful nobles and their *fidèles*, whose loyalty to their *maître* overrode that to the state.

In the following excerpt from his memoirs, it is clear that Louis XIV harbored resentment towards his subjects for their actions during the Fronde.

> But one must remember the circumstances: terrible disorders throughout the kingdom both before and after my majority; a foreign war in which these domestic troubles had caused France to lose a thousand advantages, a prince of my blood and of great reputation leading the enemy; the state swarming with conspiracies; the *parlements* still in possession and enjoyment of usurped authority; at my court, very little disinterested loyalty so that those of my subjects who appeared to be the most submissive were so burdensome and as dangerous for me as the most rebellious.[12]

During his personal rule, Louis commandeered the clientage system and set himself up as the *grand maître* of France. He removed the ability for great nobles to reward their *fidèles* and became the sole source for political posts, sinecures and pensions, the "favors" that Chetardye refers to. Though the elite could no longer gain these career advancing favors from anyone but the King, it was possible to attach oneself to someone

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[12]Louis XIV, Memoires for the Instruction of the Dauphin, transl. Paul Sonnino (New York, 1970): 23.

with prestige within the court and thereby gain recognition.[13]

Chetardye writes that there is always reason to hope for success because while there is no lack of courtiers to occupy the available positions there are not enough who deserve these positions. When he mentions the lack of deserving courtiers, it is possible that Chetardye is aiming his criticism at the *noblesse de robe.* This would not seem unusual because there is tension between the sword and robe nobles, but in the next stroke, our author is warning his readers to stay on the good side of the King's ministers. He notes that while ministers may be a popular subject of ridicule, this could be seen as a direct attack on the choice of the sovereign. Our author also points out that certain ministers may have considerable influence and it could not hurt to have their support. However, Chetardye notes that matters of honor and precedence play a role in these situations.

> Il faut donc essayer à les mettre dans vos intérests, san s'abaisser toutefois à des complaisances serviles. Ce sont de ces choses qu'ils n'éxigent pas des Personnes d'une certaine qualité. Il suffit d'honorer leur mérite & la dignité de leurs emplois.[14]

Perhaps Chetardye is referring to the ennobled here and general discretion would demand that they are treated with respect. However, one must not forget about rank and

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[13]For arguments regarding the clientage system and the changes that it underwent in the seventeenth century, see J. Russell Major, "The Crown and Aristocracy in Renaissance France," The American Historical Review, vol. ixix, no. 3 (April, 1964) and Kettering, Patrons Brokers and Clients.

[14]Chetardye, Section I: 94-101. Quotation: 100-101 (One must therefore try to place them in your interests, without lowering yourself however to servile complacency. These are the things that they do not demand of people of a certain quality. It is enough to honor their merit and the dignity of their office.).

the racial element of precedence. It would not do to act with too much deference around a member of the *noblesse de robe*. After all, the *annoblis* were socially inferior to the *noblesse d'épée*.

The animosity between the traditional nobility and the recently ennobled, the *noblesse de robe*, is nicely captured in Saint-Simon's disdainful remark about the "règne de vile bourgeoisie." The *noblesse d'épée* resented the fact that their traditional political and military power were appropriated by Louis XIV's new clientage system, and the natural targets for their anger were the *fidèles* that were loyal to their *maître*, the King. The *fidèles* were, of course, the *noblesse de robe* and among their numerous crimes against French tradition, they were efficient and talented men and they were not born to ancient noble families. With every traditional road to power blocked, the *noblesse d'épée* scrambled to find a justification for their social precedence. This justification was identified as inherited nobility passed on through noble bloodlines and the only arena in which they could really exercise their precedence, was in the company of the King.[15]

Thus the royal court was not only the sole route to the King's favors, it was also the sole area where the traditional nobility could find justification for their social rank and privilege. Even military officers were now drawn from a mixture of backgrounds. The traditional nobility became dependent on the court because it was the only place

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[15]See Introduction, footnote #4. Also, Franklin Ford, Robe and Sword: the Regrouping of the French Aristocracy After Louis XIV (New York, 1965), in his study of the years following the reign of the Sun King, finds that the *noblesse d'épée* remained relatively ineffective as far as the governing of France was concerned, and it was the high *noblesse de robe* who continued as the key political players.

where they could preserve their distance from the rest of society and exercise their social power.[16] This is why the regard of society is so important for Chetardye's instructions. Noble birth and money gave a man the opportunity to belong to this elite society but it was those who already belonged that were the determining factor. Without the acceptance of these elites, presentation to, and recognition by, the King were impossible.[17] So courtiers played the game, spent their money and tried to fit in.

Court life was an expensive life. Keeping up with fashion alone could quickly bankrupt a noble. Chetardye writes that because expenses run so high, the nobleman must budget carefully so as not to get into trouble. Chetardye is dealing with a touchy subject as far as the nobility is concerned. Seventeenth-century nobles did not talk about money, they spent it. While Chetardye admits that economy is not the most attractive quality in a young man, this cannot be helped. Avarice is one of the seven deadly sins so our author feels that economy is somewhere between greed and complete extravagance. It would not do to be stingy but neither should one be broke.

> C'est un abus de croire que l'avarice soit le soûtiens des Maisons. La plûpart des Gens ruinez sont avares, & si on vouloit un peu entrer dans le détail, on verroit que la liberalité n'a jamais ruiné Personne.[18]

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[16]Painter: 14, emphasizes a choice on the part of the nobles. While a nobleman could certainly make a living in the military if his family connections led him that far, a "far more lucrative course" was available in the role of the courtier. The taste for luxury drove many noblemen into "the art of pleasing princes" and cemented the transformation from warrior to courtier.

[17]Elias, Court Society: 96-100.

[18]Chetardye, Section I: 106-110. Quotation: 110 (It is an abuse to believe that avarice was the support of noble houses. Most ruined men are misers, and if one would

(continued...)

For Chetardye avarice is evil, extravagance is stupid and *largesse* is the rule. *Largesse*, or generosity, was a traditional noble principle. It had much to do with image and the wealth of the noble lifestyle. At the court, nobles spent their time, and money, adding to the glory and spectacle which the King required. "Courtiers spent extravagant sums on furniture, clothes, carriages, houses, and gambling, to please and entertain him."[19] Court nobles were expected to spend money liberally. That was a part of their role in the company of the King and in the economics of the society of orders. In essence, one had to spend money in order to make money. Lucrative sinecures and pensions from the king could help to support a noble in luxury but in order to belong and be recognized, which was the obvious prerequisite, the noble had to be extravagant enough to please without ruining himself.

Extreme wealth is not the same as greed for Chetardye or for the seventeenth-century noble. In fact, greed has more to do with the way that one exercises wealth. Misers hate to part with their money: "ils aiment mieux qu'il leur coute cent pistoles dans un an, que d'en donner cinquante aujourd'huy."[20] Because a miser does not spend his money freely or understand the concept of economy, his vice will ruin him. Chetardye's principle seems rather cosmic here. If a man is generous with his wealth (but not too extravagant), he is virtuous and that virtue will contribute to his ultimate

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[18](...continued)
like to enter into details, one would see that liberality has never ruined anyone.).

[19]Saint-Simon, Age of Magnificence: 150.

[20]Chetardye, Section I: 111 (...they would rather that it cost them one hundred *pistoles* in a year, than to spend fifty today.).

success. However, if a man hoards his money like a miser, he is exercising a vice that will contribute to his ultimate ruin.

Extravagance is to be avoided according to Chetardye because it is stupid to spend more than one must. "Il faut que celuy qui donne distribue ses graces avec ordre & discernement, & qu'il regarde ce qu'il donne comme un sacrifice qu'il fait a son ambition & a sa gloire."[21] Here we have the principle of *largesse* defined. A nobleman was generous because his success depended on it. Nobles had to always try to augment their fortunes, and niceties aside, every noble wanted and needed to be rich. Ideally however, a *grand seigneur* who was generous with his wealth would contribute to his image and status through an appropriate show of *largesse* and would at the same time be fulfilling his role in the social order.

It is difficult to consider these ideas and understand how the aversion to the deadly sin of greed was so easily reconciled with the noble lifestyle. A minute portion of the French population controlled a disproportionate amount of the wealth in a country of twenty million people and greed was a deadly sin, yet the elite had no problem with the social order or the idea of the inherent superiority of their own group. It is apparent that the nobility were able to point to the miser as the epitome of avarice and that they excused themselves through the principle of *largesse*. Social affluence and privilege meant a certain financial responsibility for the French nobility. Those who occupied these elite positions believed that this social structure was necessary to the mechanics of

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[21]Ibid.: 11 (It is essential that he who gives distribute his favors with order and discernment, and that he regards that which he gives as a sacrifice that he makes for his ambition and his glory.).

society as a whole.[22] For example: "God forbad ostentation that springs from vanity and the puffed-up folly of a court intoxicated by riches but He was well pleased that the court of the King was brilliant and magnificent, to inspire respect among the peoples."[23] As well as inspiring respect among the people of France, the extravagance of the court provided employment to numerous craftsmen and artists. Chetardye does not need to reconcile this because it was, essentially, a nonissue for his intended readers.

Avarice is not the only vice that threatens the courtier but according to Chetardye, renown is a remedy for any vice. "Des le moment qu'elle entre dans un coeur, elle luy inspire un desir de perfection, qui ne peut compâtir avec le déreglement ny avec les foiblesses." However, Chetardye urges his readers to seek renown only with honor and to pursue the full realization of their strengths. Celebrity of this sort does not combat other virtues and there is nothing easier than to make a devout man out of a hero since a hero does nothing halfheartedly and does not lack courage, and these are the marks of a true Christian.[24] Here Chetardye tries to tie together his ideals with Christian virtue. For our author, vice is incompatible with fame so the man that is a hero or who seeks the recognition of the world is fundamentally tied to Christian virtues.

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[22]For interesting statistics about the wealth and economic philosophies of seventeenth-century French society see Pierre Goubert, Ancien Régime and Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen transl. Anne Carter (New York, 1970), Mousnier, Institutions, and Briggs.

[23]Bossuet as quoted in Victor L. Tapié, The Age of Grandeur: Baroque Art and Architecture, transl. A. Ross (Williamson, NY, 1960): 77.

[24]Chetardye, Section II, 61-66. Quotation, 62. (From the moment that [renown] enters the heart, it inspires a desire for perfection, that will not condone the presence of disturbances or weaknesses.)

Chetardye claims that, despite the beliefs of some, money and birth are not enough to constitute quality and honor. Wealth and noble birth are certainly necessary to the position of *grand Seigneur*, but the quality of the soul is also an important facet of nobility. "Cependant s'ils pensoient sérieusement, ils conviendroient qu'on n'est grand Seigneur qu'à proportion de ce qu'on a l'ame grande". Here we see Chetardye's emphasis on Christianity again: in order to be a success at court and a success as a nobleman in general, a great soul is required. Chetardye further writes that those who ignore this aspect of their purpose will perish by their own ignorance and become the tools of others.[25] Once again, there are supernatural forces of justice at work in the world, even at the royal court. These forces will not allow vice to prevail. They are on the side of Christian virtue.

The problem with many nobles, according to Chetardye, is that their hearts have become hardened to injustice and they can no longer feel pity. He urges his readers to remember that there are only two possible endings to life, heaven and hell.[26] The remedy, continues Chetardye, the way to build and fortify a great soul, is to combine Christian and moral virtues.

> En effet, ayez de la prudence, vous avez de la justice; ayez de la justice, vous avez de l'honneur; ayez de l'honneur, vous avez de la conscience. Voilà en racourcy les qualitez d'un honneste Homme; & qui prend le contrepié, s'apuye sur de faux principes. La plûpart des Gens s'imaginent que pour estre en estime dans le monde, il suffit d'avoir l'esprit agréable, & de faire une grosse dépense,

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[25]Chetardye, Section I: 116-117. Quotation: 116 (Nevertheless if they will think about it seriously, they will recognize that one is not a *grand Seigneur* but at the proportion that one has a great soul.).

[26]Ibid.: 119-120.

> & que l'honneur & la conscience doivent estre comptez de rien, ou du moins pour peu de chose. Cependant ces mêmes Personnes veulent qu'on croye qu'elles ont de l'honneur & de la probité, quoy qu'elles ne fassent rien qui n'y répugne.[27]

This is the "corruption of the age" that Chetardye feels is infiltrating the court and elite society in general. This lack of proper morality, this lack of traditional noble and Christian values is compromising proper service to the king. But Chetardye is not alone in his fight; God is on his side.

Chetardye advises his readers to be skeptical of theory and to base their beliefs on experience instead. This does not only mean personal experience however; someone who has experience and is trustworthy can improve on imagination. Chetardye obviously paints himself as a knowledgeable man and his instructions are meant to be the voice of experience.

> Pour conclusion, faites en sorte d'accorder en vous, Dieu & le monde; ces deux articles là comprennent tous les devoirs d'un honneste Homme, & réduisent en petit les Instructions qui sont contenues dans ce Livre.[28]

As he pointed out in the beginning of this section, God is an active participant in the world and though He may not always punish injustice in this life, we can be assured that

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[27]Ibid.: 121-123. (In effect, have prudence, you have justice; have justice, you have honor, have honor; you have conscience. There in short the qualities of an *honneste Homme*; and whoever takes the counterpoint, relies on false principles. Most men imagine that in order to be esteemed in society, it is enough to have pleasant wit, and to spend a large amount of money, and that honor and conscience count for nothing, or at least for little. Nevertheless these same people want us to believe that they have honor and integrity, when they do nothing that is not repugnant.)

[28]Ibid., Section II, 155-156. (In conclusion, establish harmony between yourself, God and society; these two articles of faith are present in all of the work of an honest man, and are summarized in the instructions contained in this book.)

his justice will be complete in the next. Finally Chetardye insists that his readers resist the evils that are present in the world and first build, then rely upon their Christian conscience. Happiness is not guaranteed for Chetardye's *honnête homme*, and "*il ne dépend pas de nous d'estre heureux; mais il dépend de nous de mériter de l'estre.*"[29] Certainly the promise of eternal paradise would be enough to compensate for the trials in the life of a courtier.

Essentially, Chetardye's ideal courtier always conducts himself with virtue. He is ambitious but he does not hurt others to gain renown. Through knowledge of propriety and the possession of a good heart, Chetardye's nobleman will successfully navigate life and the court. The "corruption of the age" stems from nobles who do not follow these guidelines. Intrigue and decadence infect the court and will try to destroy the man of true honor. Chetardye's service to France, in his instructions for young noblemen, seems to be exposure of, and action against, this corruption. The *honnête homme* will eliminate the vice that has infiltrated the royal court and transform this diseased institution into a paradigm of noble virtue. As the most renowned court in Europe, the French court will consequently be a shining example of the glory of France and of Louis XIV.

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[29]Ibid., Section I: 124-129. Quotation: 129 (*...it is not necessary for us to be happy; but it is necessary for us to deserve to be.*).

CHAPTER IV
L'HONNÊTE FEMME

Chetardye's *honnête homme* is the epitome of Christian morality and noble honor. Our author is a breed of modern noble who stresses absolute loyalty to the crown and Christian ideals, but who also directs his readers in the tenets of traditional honor. Chetardye is advocating a return to what he believes to be the fundamental ideals of the French warrior elite. It is interesting to see how Chetardye's *honnête femme* and feminine noble values are described and how they complement these ideals. What does Chetardye reveal to be the proper construction of a noblewoman? What are the social evils that threaten this ideal? And of course, how does Chetardye attempt to accomplish his goal, service to France, through these instructions for young women?

In his third and final section of instructions, *Instruction pour une jeune Princesse ou l'idée d'une honneste Femme,* Chetardye begins with the importance of piety. God is the first priority for the young woman and she must consider Him in everything she does. The second priority, which is connected to religion, is honor; however, Chetardye's idea of feminine honor is quite different from that of men. A woman's honor is expressed and preserved through chastity. Piety is especially important "a celles a qui le Ciel a bien voulu accorder des avantages personnels." The physically

attractive young woman should be grateful for her gifts of beauty and realize that they come from God. As far as chastity and honor are concerned, Chetardye warns that there are many people who will try and convince a woman to simply submit to pleasure despite the price that her reputation would pay. For this reason, a woman must not rely upon "Les simples lumieres de sa raison."[1] Chetardye implies that a woman cannot trust her own judgement when it comes to passion and vice. She must, instead, use her piety as a shield and always obey the rules of Christian morality.[2]

During the early years of Louis XIV's reign, sexual promiscuity at court was not uncommon. As Visconti so elegantly wrote:

> Nombre des femmes, mariées ou non, m'ont déclaré que ce n'était offenser ni son mari, ni son père, ni Dieu même que d'arriver à etre aimée de son prince.[3]

As his reign progressed however, especially after his marriage to Madame de Maintenon, this type of behavior was not encouraged by Louis. Despite the King's newfound fidelity, noblewomen largely continued their carnal pursuits and merely

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[1]Chetardye, Section III: 1-2 (...for those whom heaven has blessed with personal advantage.) and 2 (...the simple lights of her reason.).

[2]Malcolm Greenshields, An Economy of Violence in Early Modern France: Crime and Justice in the Haute Auvergne (Pennsylvania, 1994): 101-102. About women in general, Greenshields writes: "the boundaries of honor were actual, physical boundaries of flesh. In woman, to the minds of our early modern people there was therefore a peculiar unity of the moral and the material." A woman's body and chastity were thus the physical manifestations of her honor and this is why Chetardye places such emphasis here.

[3]As quoted in Wendy Gibson, Women in Seventeenth-Century France (New York, 1989): 205 (A number of women, married or not, have declared to me that it is not an offense to either husband, father or God, to be loved by their prince.).

feigned chastity for the sake of propriety.[4] Chetardye offers no instructions for men in matters of chastity except that they should respect a woman's honor. In any case, there were always ways for men to realize their passions with professional 'dishonorable' women.

As far as the debate over the nature of women that was raging in France during this period, is concerned, Chetardye's ideas seem to represent the more conservative side, that women were weak and prone to immoral behavior.[5] He simply states the obvious in his clear fashion. A dishonored woman is easy to identify by untimely motherhood, and Christian morality demands chastity. Our author's answer to this problem is piety. "Estre retenuë par la crainte de Dieu."[6] Perhaps an unwanted

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[4]For this and more on the behavior of women at court, see Gibson. Also see Dorothy Anne Liot Backer, Precious Women (New York, 1974), on seventeenth-century "feminist" behaviors and the influences of *précieuses* women.

[5]Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1988), identify a twofold, seemingly contradictory opinion of women which had survived from medieval times to the early modern period: that women are delicate and in need of protection, and that they are base, lustful creatures.

Carolyn Lougee, Le Paradis des Femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France (Princeton, 1976), refers to sources of these opinions in literary works of the period. She also finds that those men who supported a "defense of woman's character and celebration of feminine qualities" also supported the enlargement of the elite. Those who focused on women as weak, inferior creatures, were in favor of preserving the social order.

Katherine Anne Jensen, Writing Love: Letters, Women, and the Novel in France, 1605-1776 (Carbondale, IL, 1995), points out a reaction to the threat of the modern, independent and socially adept woman through the construction of "Epistolary Woman". Jensen argues that men created this portrait of the weak, subservient woman, to counteract the threat to male dominance.

[6]Chetardye, Section III: 5 (Be restrained by the fear of God.).

pregnancy would be regarded as a punishment from God for impropriety. This is related to Chetardye's idea of God as an active force of justice, but society would certainly not embrace an unwed mother either.[7]

Chetardye urges his readers to consider the consequences when a young woman succumbs to her passions and to those that she "a fait naître."[8] The resulting disgrace would be the responsibility of the woman, of course, because as we see from Chetardye's words, it is passion which she has caused to arise. In the seventeenth century, an experienced, unmarried woman would have been considered a temptress and a disgrace. Chetardye acknowledges the responsibility of the woman in matters of passion as she is the one who attracts this attention. There are ways to encourage or discourage amorous advances and, as it seems that the woman was the keeper of her own virtue, it follows that it was her responsibility to remain pure.[9]

Chetardye discusses beauty as a liability for the young woman insofar as it can be a threat to her chastity. He does not deny that beautiful women are more likely to be sought after by amorous suitors but, as above, the responsibility lies with the woman. Chetardye refers to the blessings of heaven and the beauty of a woman as a measure of her merit, and the possession of this merit demands a certain amount of sexual

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[7]See chapter # 2: 27.

[8]Ibid.: 5 (...has caused to be born.).

[9]Sarah Hanley, "Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France," French Historical Studies 16(1) Spring, 1989: 4-27. Quotation: 25. Hanley relates that female "sexual misdeeds were treated as public misdemeanors that dishonored families," and that these misdeeds were often used for social, political or economic advantage. A woman, therefore, had to guard her own honor carefully.

responsibility on the part of the woman. The good behavior of an ugly woman is nothing more than "une espèce de sagesse forcée." Beauty, then, must be regarded as a gift from heaven and young women are encouraged to understand that it can be taken away as easily as it was given.[10] Through this line of reasoning, an accident or disease which left a once beautiful woman scarred in some way could be regarded as divine retribution.

One of the ways a young woman could evoke such divine justice, and tempt fate, is *coquetterie.* Flirtation and vanity are not suitable for the young woman of quality. Chetardye identifies this character flaw by the features that attach to the coquette.

> Jugez-en par les mauvaises qualitées qui accompagnent les Personnes qui sont marquées à cet indigne Caractere; vous leur trouverez un Esprit gâté, un Coeur corrumpu, un Ame qui n'a ny fidelité ny tendresse, une Raison dénuée de bon sens, un Jugement de petite étenduë, une Vanité qui n'est apuyée sur rien, des Désirs qui n'ont pas un meilleur principe, une Jalousie honteuse, une Conversation pleine d'inutilitez & de bagatelles...[11]

Our author obviously has no use for the coquette and regards her as nothing more than an empty head and an empty heart. Since women are responsible for the passions that they invoke in men, there is also an implication of irresponsibility and sinfulness in flirtation. Needless to say, this disposition is not desirable in the woman of quality and Chetardye asserts that it would certainly not impress men of quality.

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[10]Ibid.: 7-8. Quotation: 7 (...a sort of forced wisdom.).

[11]Ibid.: 11-13. Quotation: 12-13 (Judge them by the base qualities accompanying persons who are marked by this character flaw; you will find in them soiled wit, a corrupt heart, a soul without fidelity or tenderness, reason devoid of good sense, unreliable judgement, pride fixed on nothing, desires without principles, conversation full of uselessness and trifles...).

Chetardye writes that *galanterie* is also something of which the young woman should be wary. This concept implies romantic flirtation and courtly love. Chetardye allows that a married woman whose reputation is intact could perhaps engage in a bit of this type of distraction but he insists that most *galanterie* has nothing to do with the heart and is nothing more than a game of wit. This is especially dangerous for an unmarried woman as she is more liable to become the topic of scandal and here again we see the importance of society's judgement.[12] Chetardye further identifies this type of courtly love as unnecessary because a young woman should aim to please only the *honnête homme* that has been earlier defined. This would only be possible through proper comportment according to custom and the rules of *bienséance* so that there "paroisse dans toutes vos Actions un air de sagesse & de modestie, qui édifie ceux qui vous approchent."[13] Chetardye's ideal man, of course, values honor, virtue and chastity. He would not be interested in games of *galanterie*. As with the *honnête homme,* the *honnête femme* must keep both God and honor first in her mind and thus be pious and chaste and resist the temptation to act inappropriately.

In the first section, when Chetardye addresses the topic of women for his male readers, he writes that most women are fickle and it is best to let one's head rule one's heart where they are concerned. The author also writes of love as "une passion qui peut faire des bons & des méchans effects." Of course, whether or not there will be a

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[12]Ibid., 100-102.

[13]Ibid., 16. (...appears in all your actions an air of wisdom and modesty, which uplifts those who are near you.)

positive result to love, hinges largely on the quality of the girl. At this point the young man is reminded of the story of Antony and Cleopatra. Antony, according to Chetardye, abandoned his honor for Cleopatra and suffered as a result. The author believes that there are men who put more stock in the words of their lady love than in all the educated counsel in the world. For this reason it is extra important that a woman be of a certain merit and honor and that her first priority be to support the same in her man.[14]

The word *galanterie* describes an ideal romantic love relationship that was embraced by the culture of the *salons* (1600-1661). This ideal love could only exist outside of marriage and was based on a spiritual connection, not on physical passion. The woman was virtuous and beyond the reach of her lover who made his passions known through his praise and devotion to his mistress.[15] This ideal was adopted by polite society as well as written into many popular novels of this period. A good example of this type of novel is La Princesse de Clèves (1678) by Madame de Lafayette. Though set in the French court of Henri II, this story is clearly meant to be a representation of the early court of Louis XIV, with which the author was acquainted.[16] The romantic ideal is colored by guilt in this book as the heroine cannot reconcile her true love with her obligation to marriage. Lafayette's heroine is chaste, however, and this is portrayed as unusual among the courtiers. There are also instances of acceptable

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[14]Chetardye, Section I: 66-68 and 105-106. Quotation: 66 (...a passion that can have good and mad effects.).

[15]Jensen: 2-4, and Janet Raitt, Madame de Lafayette and *La Princesse de Clèves*(Toronto, 1971): 29-30.

[16]Raitt: 24.

dishonesty as the characters fabricate elaborate stories to conceal guilt and protect reputation. Considering Chetardye's position on the importance of honesty and chastity, it is not surprising that he holds a negative view of ideals such as these. Everything that he stresses for his young readers is contrary to these *précieuse* priorities.[17]

One of the main diversions pursued in the *salons* was the "critical discussion of literature". Many women of this culture, like Madame de Lafayette, began to write and publish novels as well. Stories of courtly love and romantic chivalry, drawn from the heroic tales of the middle ages, were very popular and included the idea that marriage was not a love-centered bond but an often unfortunately necessary contract.[18] True love was a spiritual connection "which would inevitably be sullied by the gross intimacy of marriage".[19] Chetardye feels that books of philosophy and romance should not be read by the young lady because "les premieres sont capable de vous embarassez l'esprit; les autres de corrompre l'innocence de votre coeur."[20] Innocence is the ideal for the young noblewoman. She should neither clutter up her mind with philosophy, nor become worldly in the ways of love or confused by the distortions that were written about love. The *précieuse* pastime of reading would have been a corrupting influence on the young

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[17]The term *précieuse* was coined in the 1650s as a pejorative to ridicule one group of Parisian women, but by 1661 it was used to refer to all women who frequented the *salons*.

For a discussion of the *précieuse* and their literature and etiquette, see Backer.

[18]Howarth: 2.

[19]Jensen: 5.

[20]Chetardye, Section III: 21 (...the first are capable of burdening your mind; the others of corrupting the innocence of your heart.).

woman that Chetardye imagines.

Elaborate and pretty ways to refer to mundane things was a popular fad in *salon* culture. This fad was ridiculed by the playwright Molière (1622-1673) in Les précieuses ridicules which was first performed in Paris in 1659. From the heroines' insistence that a mirror be called the "conseiller des graces", to their eventual humiliation when they accept two pompous valets as the finest of gentlemen, the *précieuses* are mocked for their ridiculous behavior and warped sense of propriety. However, Molière's portrait of the two gentlemen who originally march in and announce their intentions of marriage, certainly defends the *précieuse* complaint about the business transaction that was marriage.[21] Chetardye briefly mentions that writing and speech should be plain and that fancy, pretty language is definitely out of fashion. A long, drawn out, flowery speech or letter is "la torture".[22] This, along with all *précieuse* affectations, is strongly discouraged by Chetardye.

Insofar as chivalry is concerned, Chetardye warns young men to be extremely cautious around the fragile defenses of a woman's honor. Perhaps because men were quick to defend a woman's honor with their bodies, Chetardye urges them to think before they act because their very action could be detrimental to a woman's honor.

> Nous ne sommes plus au temps de l'ancienne Chevalerie, où l'on jugeoit favorablement des choses. Le siecle où nous vivons est un peu moins charitable, & on auroit peine à s'empêcher se croire qu'un Homme qui tireoit l'Epée pour

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[21]Molière, Les précieuses ridicules (Paris, 1973).

[22]Chetardye, Section I: 129-136.

une Dame, n'y fût obligé par quelque recoinnoissance.[23]

Chetardye's cynicism that defense could be regarded as admission seems odd but apparently if a woman's honor was intact, her virtue would be obvious to those around. It still seems out of character that Chetardye would discourage her defense however, unless he is assuming that most women who were challenged, were indeed guilty. Chivalry and defense of a woman's honor were chief elements of a popular romantic fantasy in the early modern period and perhaps that is part of the reason for Chetardye's suspicion here. Our author prides himself on being surely grounded in reality. This tradition was glorified in romantic novels of the period however, and was based on historic accounts of chivalry. In 1415, John, Duke of Bourbon, made his knights swear:

> Each and every one of us shall undertake to do everything possible to maintain the honour of all ladies and women of good birth; and if we find ourselves in company where evil or wicked things are said of ladies, then shall we be held to maintain the honour of womanhood, as we would our own, and to do this with our bodies if need be.[24]

Chetardye is more practical however, and notions of chivalrous action seem a bit wasteful if they are acted upon without proper consideration. Chetardye is not opposed to the nature of honor as it appears; he simply calls on prudence. A sensitive, dangerous and illegal matter such as a duel must not be entered into lightly, or at all if there is a reasonable alternative. The hot-headed nobleman would not be worthy of Chetardye's

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[23]Chetardye, Section I: 50 (We are no longer living in the time of ancient chivalry, when one judged such things favorably. The age in which we live is a bit less charitable, and one has trouble keeping oneself from believing that a man who draws his sword for a woman is not forced to do so by some sort of admission.).

[24]As quoted in Anderson and Zinsser: 315.

consideration.

Chetardye warns that games of courtly love and flirtation can also be detrimental to a young woman because they tend to play on her vanity. This vice was also heightened by the culture of the *salons* and the literature that focused on praise and flattery. For example, in Mérite des dames (1660), Saint-Gabriel identifies women as the "civilizing influence" in society and writes that "la femme excelle pardessus l'homme en beauté, en bonté, en vertu & en merite."[25] Beyond the philosophy about the apparent moral superiority of women, Saint-Gabriel lists two hundred of the "most illustrious women in France" in the following manner:

> Madame de Lafayette. La nonpareille. C'est un ouvrage ou la nature a fait tous ses efforts.
> Madame de Maintenon. L'agreable. Le miroir des graces.
> Madame de Sevigny. La sublime. Une Ange en terre, la gloire du monde.[26]

Chetardye warns against vanity in the young woman and is opposed to excessive flattery and self-absorbtion.

> Defiez-vous sur tout de l'amour propre, & donnez-vous bien de garde de tomber dans la foiblesse d'une infinité de Filles & de Femmes, qui son Assez enyvrées d'elles-mêmes, pour croire qu'on ne sçauroit les regarder sans prendre de l'amour.[27]

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[25]Saint-Gabriel, Merite des dames (Paris, 1660): 201 (...the woman excels above the man in beauty, in kindness, in virtue and in merit.).

[26]Ibid. (The unparalleled. She is a work of art where nature used all her efforts. The pleasant. The mirror of grace. The sublime. An angel on earth, the glory of the world.).

[27]Chetardye, Section III: 67-68 (Above all avoid self-love, and be very careful not to fall into the weakness of an infinity of girls and women, who are so intoxicated with themselves, as to believe that no one can look at them without falling in love.).

Perhaps this "infinity" of women have been exposed to the corrupting influence of *salon* culture and have been reading the wrong sorts of books.

Innocence, consistency and mildness are the ideal qualities of the *honnête femme* and Chetardye feels that it is not the most important thing for a woman to have a lively wit. The author identifies wit as belonging to one of two groups, the wise and serious, and the cheerful and gay. Of course the time for gaiety passes quickly so it is best to be wise. Chetardye mentions that better than any book is the conversation of a woman who is above reproach. A young woman should find a suitable role model and learn appropriate wisdom from her. The wise, tutored woman is more likely to avoid folly and "les Précipeces de la Cour." The court could be a dangerous place for a young innocent and it was probably best to avoid this area of decadence all together. At this point, Chetardye's exception comes into play. He must admit that there are some women who are "capable of greater things" and thus better suited to these types of activities and games of wit, including *galanterie*.[28] It would not do for him to offend the more prestigious courtiers who pursue this lifestyle. The ordinary girl however, must pursue a more suitable lifestyle.

La Bruyère professes that "most Women have no Principles; they are led by their Passions" and they are malicious to one another, but he identifies the exceptional woman as well. "A beautiful Woman who has the Qualities of an accomplished Man, is, of all Conversations in the World, the most delicious. In her is to be found all the Merit

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[28]Ibid.: 22-28. Quotation: 24 (...the pitfalls of the court.).

of both Sexes."[29] La Bruyère identifies female merit as beauty, and any other that she shows in conversation, she has borrowed from man. Intelligence and wit are to men as beauty is to women and the woman who displays all of these traits is truly the exception, and under Chetardye's rules, could not be denied exposure to literature and the lifestyle of the courtier.

Chetardye allows that love is an important part of the young woman's life but she must employ wisdom and caution to ensure that it is proper. There is no way to take too many precautions against the breed of passion that is found at the court. "Il est aussi difficile d'arrester le cours, qu'il est aisé de s'opposer à sa naissance." At this point Chetardye seems to think that obligation to one's parents should be mentioned.[30] Perhaps a girl's family should decide upon the appropriate direction for her love. This is undoubtedly true as love must only combine with marriage for the young Christian woman and the innocent ideal that Chetardye imagines would have no idea how to pick a good husband. Her family would have the responsibility to ensure a proper marriage.

These ideals of innocence and domesticity were also encouraged by Madame de Maintenon and Fénélon in their construction of a school for noble ladies, La Maison royale de Saint Louis à Saint-Cyr (est. 1686). Saint-Cyr seems to have been aimed at a reform of the social norms and values of the nobility. Duty and domesticity were stressed; therefore, the feminine freedom to be found in polite society was discouraged

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[29]La Bruyère: 61 and 46.

[30]Ibid.: 31-34. Quotation: 31 (It is as difficult to stop the course of passion, as it is to oppose its birth.).

because of its corrupting influence on the family.[31] As Fénélon wrote: "This great number of women who go freely everywhere at court is a monstrous abuse, to which the nation has become accustomed."[32] Chetardye's emphasis is also on marriage and family. His *honnête femme* is a virtuous wife and mother.

Chetardye emphasizes the importance of marriage and family to men as well. He writes that the worst end for passion unchecked is a bad marriage and that this type of 'love' is the downfall of the young romantic. Chetardye believes that marriage is the most important decision in a young man's life and that romantic love is impractical. The right woman is chaste, hardworking, should complement her husband and make his happiness and success her first priority. Adversity in marriage could be extremely troubling because it would become a strain on the family's social status which was so important to survival in the elite world. A woman's importance to the success of her man was noteworthy. Because she was generally in charge of running the household, she determined her husband's image as shown through the hospitality of his house.[33] The ideal marriage partners would work together for the success of their family. Apart from social affluence, Chetardye also pays lip service to personal contentment as "la vie est longue sur tout pour des Personnes qui sont ensemble nuit & jour."[34] So a woman

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[31]Lougee: 188-190.

[32]Fénelon as quoted in Lougee: 178.

[33]Anderson and Zinsser: 287-291.

[34]Chetardye, Section II: 76-86. Quotation: 85 (...life is long, especially for those who are together night and day.).

must defer to her husband in all things while combating his faults with gentleness and by virtue of her own merit.

Jealousy ties into matters of vanity and love, and is another "stumbling block" that women must take care to avoid. Jealousy leads to hatred and malicious gossip "qui sont les plus indignes sentimens qui puissent entrer dans une Ame raisonable." Chetardye goes on to explain that a woman who cannot stand to hear of another's beauty or talent will only surround herself with sycophants and in the end, know nothing about herself or the world. This is reminiscent of Chetardye's advice to men about praise, that he who gives is considered richer than he who receives. Women should speak well of others or at least not speak ill of anyone. "Ne croyez-pas non-plus, que la Bonté & l'Esprit soient incompatibles; c'est une erreur que la Malice du Siècle a inventée."[35] The "malice of the age" replaces corruption but Chetardye's focus is constant. There is something in the way that people treat one another in elite society, something about wit and ridicule that disturbs him and that he is trying to combat through these instructions.

Continuing with the topic of jealousy, Chetardye next addresses the infidelity of the husband. In this situation a woman should do nothing but try to retain her dignity. "Faites au moins qu'en perdant son coeur, vous ne perdiez pas son estime."[36] The wife is allowed to complain to her husband, according to Chetardye's rules, but she must be sure not to become sour. She must bear her burden alone and never allow a bad word to

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[35]Ibid., Section III: 37-42 (...which are the most shameful feelings that can enter into a sensible soul.) and 43 (Do not believe either, that kindness and wit are incompatible; this is an error that the malice of the age has invented.).

[36]Ibid.: 48 (At least be sure that in losing his heart, you do not lose his respect.).

be said about her husband. If she looks for pity, she will only run the risk of losing friends or being encouraged to cheat as well.

> Naturellement les Femmes ne s'aiment point; leur mauvaise Politique fait qu'elles sont presque toûjours les unes contre les autres; & ce que je viens de vous dire, vous fait voir le danger qu'il y a de s'abandonner à la pitié des Hommes.[37]

Of course the wife has no recourse so she is best to keep silent and avoid ridicule. However, if a woman is in need of a confidante for this, or any other private matter, Chetardye insists that it be a woman who is "d'un age si avancé, & d'une probité si connue, que vous le puissiez voir en toute sureté de sa bienséance."[38] Even after suffering the infidelity of her husband, the *honnête femme*'s first priority is her husband's, and her own, honor. Her confidant must be completely trustworthy and of course it could never be a man because that kind of closeness can only lead to impropriety.

Chetardye always maintains that a woman's greatest virtue is chastity but he does caution the *honnête homme* to avoid jealousy as well. The ideal of 'courtly love' in the seventeenth century was ideally only possible outside of marriage, and though sexual intimacy was not a requirement, it seems that infidelity was common. As far as flirtation is concerned, Chetardye asserts that for a man to get upset over his wife's actions, if they are innocent, is a mark of inferior temperament. If the wife's actions are

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[37]Ibid.: 59-60 (Women [who complain] do not like each other at all; their terrible policies make it so that they are almost always against each other; and as I am going to tell you, you must see the danger in abandoning yourself to the pity of men.).

[38]Ibid.: 63-64 (...of an age so advanced, and of an integrity so known, that you can be certain of her propriety.).

not innocent, however, the same rule applies for there is nothing so ridiculous as the cuckolded husband. He must keep quiet and try to retain his dignity. Chetardye ties off his discussion with a neat bit of wisdom. "Le Mariage comprend plus de devoirs qu'on ne pense. Il est mal-aisé de s'en bien acquiter, qu'on ne soit honneste Homme, & qu'on ne joigne à cette qualité celle de bon Chrestien."[39] The priority here seems to be on saving face and protecting image and though Chetardye condemns many aspects of elite culture, this discussion does testify to the relative social freedom of seventeenth-century elite women. In Chetardye's elite world the husband should ideally be in charge, but although submission was the ideal, it seems that a woman was her own master on many levels.

Chetardye essentially believes that women should avoid the court. He does not feel that the normal amusements that are followed there contribute to feminine virtue. Gambling was another popular diversion at the court of Louis XIV and Chetardye speaks of "le gros jeu" as something to be avoided. "Depuis qu'elle s'est mis le gros Jeu dans la teste, il faut qu'elle renonce à la regularité & à la bienséance, qu'elle pervertisse l'ordre de sa Maison." The stakes were very high at the royal court gambling parties and a woman could suffer great losses and amass huge debt. Chetardye obviously feels that women should be warned about this and listen to their husbands or fathers about money matters. The danger that a woman could financially damage her family was a serious

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[39]Ibid., Section II: 87. Quotation, 88-89 (Marriage is more work than one would think. It is difficult to carry it out well when one is not an honest man, and when one does not add to this quality those of the good Christian.).

For information on infidelity among the elites of seventeenth-century France see Gibson, Lewis, Wolf and H. Daniel Rops.

consideration. Chetardye's ideal woman places her family's needs before herself. Our author also feels that gambling is connected to avarice, one of the deadly sins. This vice is dangerous, writes Chetardye, because it conflicts with the virtues of "la genérosité, la bonté, la justice, la reconnoissance."[40]

Possession of these virtues is crucial to the woman of quality. She should always focus her life and deeds on the good of others, especially of her family, and generosity, kindness, justice and gratitude contribute to this focus. It is contemptible for a woman to act solely in her own interest or in the interest of vice, but especially so for the woman of quality. "Songez plûtost à embellir vostre Ame, en l'ornant de jour en jour de quelque Vertu nouvelle."[41] Generosity is highlighted as a virtue but Chetardye must add a cautionary note. Even kings, writes Chetardye, can damage their fortunes by being too free with funds and this is not without example. The matter of striking this balance is a delicate procedure and "c'est une science de Grand Seigneur."[42] Chetardye believes that financial management must be left up to the lord of the household. The woman must defer to her husband in these, and in all matters.

Chetardye realizes that many will read his instructions and not even attempt to

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[40]Chetardye, Section III: 90 (From the moment that she lets gambling into her head, she must renounce regularity and propriety, she perverts the order of her household.) and 93 (...generosity, kindness, justice, gratitude.).

[41]Ibid.: 99 (Dream instead of the beautification of your soul, decorate it every day with some new virtue.).

[42]Ibid.: 95 (...it is a skill of the great lord.). Remember that extravagance as far as purchases and personal luxury can be explained as generosity in the seventeenth-century mind. The elites kept clothiers and artisans in business with their purchases and contracts.

understand the reason for them. However, he implores the young woman to employ careful reflection on his maxims and thus judge their merit.

> Les Personnes qui ne refléchissent point, ressemblent à ces Voyageurs desordonnez, qui aprés avoir fait quatre ou cinq cens lieües, reviennent aussi peu instruit des Lieux par où ils ont passé, que ceux qui ny furent jamais.

Chetardye thus recommends at least fifteen minutes a day for quiet reflection and prayer. This would be the opportunity that every young woman needs to examine her conduct and experiences, reconcile herself to her station, and assure that she is acting correctly and that her goals are worthy.[43] Chetardye is confident that women will understand the need for his model of correct comportment as it corresponds to ideals of honor and Christian morality if they take the time to examine themselves.

The author does not wish to create the impression that innocent pleasures are forbidden; he does advise the young woman to spend time in the pursuit of joy.

> Les characteres empruntez ne réüssissent point; puis que vous estes jeune, faites le Personnage qu'on doit faire quand on est jeune; aimez la joye & les plaisirs, trouvez-vous aux Festes & aux Spectacles; pourvû que vous ne vous y abandonniez pas avec excés, on ne sçauroit blâmer vôtre conduite.[44]

It is not good for a young woman to be too serious or too relaxed. As with many of Chetardye's instructions the ideal is a balance between extremes. Reflection and moderation are the keys to proper comportment and the young woman should always

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[43]Ibid.: 109-111. Quotation: 109-110 (People who never reflect on anything, resemble disorderly travelers, who after four or five hundred leagues, know as little about the places they have passed, as someone who has never been there.)

[44]Ibid.: 112-113 (Passionless characters never succeed at all; since you are young, build a personality that is necessary to youth; love joy and pleasure, find yourself at parties and spectacles; so long as you do not abandon yourself to excess, no one can fault your conduct.).

remember the most important goal of life, salvation. He does not want his readers to dwell on the matter of death; however, as Chetardye wrote in his instructions for young men, there are only two possible destinations: heaven and hell. The young woman would do well to fear the possibility of eternal damnation.[45] According to Chetardye, this is the most important reason to give his instructions careful consideration. He is providing a map to the path of salvation.

Chetardye's ideal woman, therefore, contributes to the honor of her husband and family by virtue of her own behavior. She is pious and chaste and she avoids the vice that is present everywhere in elite society. Chetardye's *honnête femme* is the ultimate adornment for the man of honor and, as such, defers to the male authority in her life, whether it be her husband, her father, or her guardian. The author believes that this ideal is in danger because of the vice that reigns among women of quality. In his discussion of these problems, Chetardye also outlines the freedoms that many women of quality had in seventeenth-century France. A woman should resist the temptation to exercise these freedoms and to live her life outside the home because the diversions of polite society are detrimental to her honor and to the preservation of the Christian family. The popular ideals of *salon* culture and the behavior of women at court were especially dangerous and Chetardye identifies these perverted values as contributing to the "corruption of the age."

In his advice to young women, Chetardye's service to France resides in his emphasis on domestic order and the serenity of the home. A virtuous wife and mother

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[45]Ibid.: 128-129.

would contribute to the honor and happiness of her husband and her children. The French family is an integral part of the foundation of society and Chetardye is aiming at a reform of the corruptions that have taken hold of the elite and of their collective conscience. Chetardye's *honnête femme* is a tool of this reform and through her own virtue and piety, she will gently influence those around her and contribute to the strength and glory of French society.

CONCLUSION

In his Discourses, Machiavelli defined gentlemen as "those who live in idleness from the abundant revenues of their possessions, without worrying about agriculture or any other work necessary to gain a living."[1] This is the fundamental definition of gentility that formed the foundation for the lifestyle of the early modern European elite. However, nobility implied much more. A nobleman did indeed live a life of "leisure" but the key to the difference was found in his blood. The *annoblis* and the rich commoners who aspired to nobility were scorned by the "true" nobles. Saint-Simon, in particular, showed a great deal of distaste for any man who "bore a name which he could never prove was his."[2] Molière also mocked the rich bourgeois who aimed above his station in his play, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.[3] The bourgeois and the *annoblis* may have been able to afford the trappings of the nobility but in the minds of the *noblesse d'épée*, they were nothing more than commoners.

The *noblesse d'épée* claimed to have received their nobility from the swords of

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[1]Machiavelli as quoted in Burke, Culture and Society: 235.

[2]Saint-Simon, Age of Magnificence: 23.

[3]Molière, The Miser and Other Plays, transl. John Wood (Toronto, 1962).

their conquering ancestors and retained that status through years of duty to the justice and defense of France.[4] The tradition of the French sword nobility was one of conquering warriors who provided the support necessary for the king to rule. It was the noble argument that without the military and political support of their nobles, French kings did not have the necessary power to lead their kingdom and to defend it from foreign threat. French nobles therefore traditionally claimed a certain independence; many were princes in their own right and ruled over their own lands and people. Names like Condé, Montmorency and Longueville still evoked the memory of this power and ideas about rebellion. Try as he might, Louis XIV could not erase these memories from the minds of his nobles. The grand tradition that Chetardye espouses, therefore, falls short in one important area. Service to an absolute monarch was not a part of the 'true' noble tradition as the noblesse d'épée would have it. Historically they were the king's faithful allies, or a control on his power, rather than subjects, and the sword nobility's bid for control after the death of Louis XIV proves the existence of resentment toward the confines of the absolutist state.[5] The traditional nobility remained eager to regain their roles in the political order of France.

Though the racial argument for *épée* precedence is mostly based on myth, it had become a part of seventeenth-century noble identity. But the French nobility had to live the life that was available to them. Chetardye's ideal nobleman fit nicely into this new construct. He was a subject of the King. As a subject, the nobleman had to conform

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[4]See chapter #I, footnote #5.

[5]See Ford on the state of France after Louis XIV.

both politically and religiously to royal demands. Chetardye was obviously a man with strong religious convictions as he places such emphasis on the importance of faith. The Counter-Reformation push for Christian restraint and decency is championed by our author, and the French elite, though essentially Christian already, are encouraged to devote more consideration to this aspect of their lives. The Christian emphasis also supports obedience to the absolutist state as the Church played its part in affirming religiously the legitimacy and divine appointment of the King. Chetardye's construction is a dutiful Christian and French subject first though he retains enough of the noble tradition to preserve his sense of honor.

In the matter of noble honor, Chetardye is perhaps more faithful to a 'traditional' ideal. The tradition of arms is supported by the author. In fact, he identifies the army as the only true noble profession. The custom of nobles as France's defense has taken a modern turn though. Chetardye does not encourage young nobles to develop their own groups of armed *fidèles* to lend support to France. Instead, he encourages them to join the King's army and aspire to a position of command. Of course this advice is only practical in view of the terms of seventeenth-century military organization. The traditional qualities of the knight are present in Chetardye's ideal however. Bravery, loyalty, strength and honesty are all noted as important aspects of nobility; but in the matter of the duel, or defense of honor, Chetardye leans away from the commonly held beliefs once again.

While it is true that the duel faced a huge decline in France under the rule of Louis XIV, the traditional noble belief that this group had the right to exercise this form

of arbitrary justice, remained. Because Louis strictly enforced royal law against the noble duel and granted no pardons, duels were rare during his reign. However, after his death the duel experienced a resurgence among the French nobility.[6] The traditional belief in the right to this form of justice was not eradicated by royal law. While Chetardye discourages the use of the duel and seems to support the royal position in this matter, even he cannot deny its importance to noble honor.

Chetardye uses a lot of pages warning his readers about the corruption present in the royal court. He recognizes the importance of this milieu to the success of the nobleman but identifies corruption and decadence as threats to the honor of the elite. The nobility who could, flocked to Versailles because they had little choice if they wanted to retain their social status and precedence. The times had changed and the elite did what they had to do to survive. The court was corrupt however, as politically impotent and frustrated nobles embraced vice and intrigue as welcome distractions. Chetardye identifies this vice clearly as dishonesty, drunkenness, gambling and infidelity. He warns his readers to avoid these traps and encourages his own breed of Christian noble virtue and honor to grow among the disappointed courtiers. Though he admits that they are difficult to achieve, Chetardye encourages his readers to strive virtuously toward success and renown. Not only would success be a personal victory for the nobleman, it would also be a victory for virtue and a means to spread a positive influence through the elite world.

Chetardye's instructions for the noblewoman generally warn against whole-

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[6]Ibid.

hearted participation in the court or high society of France. While he hopes to use his young men to spread virtue in the social sphere, he has little faith in the strength of character possessed by women. Under such dangerous influences of vice and decadence, the weakness of a woman's person would surely lead her to ruin. Chetardye feels that it is best for the woman to concern herself with piety, chastity and obedience to the wishes of her family. The relative freedom that seventeenth-century French elite women enjoyed is admitted by the author. However, he does not feel that most women are strong enough to remain virtuous given the freedom to choose vice. The traditional role of the woman as the manager of the household and the care-giver of the family is dependent upon her virtue. Without her purity and dedication to this role, the noble family will lose the important foundation that it needs. Chetardye's noblewoman has her own duty, to encourage the growth of virtue in the private sphere.

Our author is not alone in his desire for emphasis on the domestic virtues of the nobility. As noted in chapter IV, such pious individuals as Madame de Maintenon and Fénélon dedicated much effort to the establishment of a school for young noblewomen which taught such virtues. The lifestyle of many prominent French noblewomen did not conform to these ideals however, and the freedom and romantic diversion of *salon* culture would have been attractive to many young women. By the same token, many young men would have undoubtedly been drawn to the decadence and social prestige of the life of a courtier. Chetardye has one final card to play in his instructions for both noblemen and women. Life has only two possible endings, as our author points out, heaven and hell. The *honnête homme* and *honnête femme* that Chetardye has

constructed in his book will reach the desired end. The salvation of the soul is the reward that Chetardye offers for the subscription to his ideal.

Chetardye is a valuable ambassador for the crown and the Church to the traditional nobility. He is a traditional noble, as well as a pious man of the crown, who endorses the values of the new "tame" nobility. In his ideal, Chetardye has combined the desires of the King for a controlled, servile nobility with the Catholic Reformation push for piety and self restraint. There are nonetheless elements of traditional noble honor and universal manliness to satisfy the demands of noble culture and Chetardye's plan also accounts for ambition and pride. He draws on traditional elements of honor for just that reason and tries to bridge the gap between noble and royal ideals to create the perfect nobleman.

Chetardye's purpose then, is to encourage those traits which he establishes as ideal. He wants to create a group of nobles who have all the qualities necessary to the nobility and who use their proper sense of honor to rule these traits. But above all they must be governed by their loyalty to God and to the King. The author despises the corruption that has taken control of the nobility and that works against his ideal. Dishonesty and drunkenness, *coquetterie* and *galanterie* are ruining Chetardye's ideal of nobility. Our author is a romantic who wants to preserve the proud tradition that he sees in the noble past, among the noble members of the Sun King's court.

"Laissez la médiocrité aux Personnes médiocre & tenez pour maxime qu'un

jeune Homme qui se contente de ce qu'il a, ne mérite pas ce qu'il possede."[7] Chetardye wants the nobility to strive for the greatness and glory of old within the confines of their new role. By virtue of their blood, the *noblesse d'épée* already posses the merit necessary to be great men and virtuous women. Chetardye believes that if the traditional nobility build upon their innate qualities of virtue and honor, if they dedicate themselves with the effort, discipline and ambition that he deems necessary, they can give the nobility a new success. Such a success would ensure the distinction of the nobility, and add to the magnificence of the King and all of France.

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[7]Chetardye, Section II: 102 (Leave mediocrity to mediocre people and hold as a maxim that a young man who is content with what he has, does not deserve that which he possesses.).

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