

How does her book  
challenge medieval  
ideas about women



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Women were thought to be naturally “evil and inclined to vice (de Pizan)” during the medieval era. In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine de Pizan simply does not understand how she came into an understanding that women could ever possess such erroneous traits, who are at the same time far worse than they are. To her, such accusations against women are unacceptable. No man has the right to judge women of their nature and behavior.

Challenged by even the most intellectual of men in the society who mocks women of their so-called natural wickedness, Christine argues against this idea of women. The city in her book symbolizes the women whom she had to build its reputation and prove how men have falsely thought them to be. Furthermore, in order to make women to be well-represented, Christine utilized symbolisms in her book to in order to present her thoughts accordingly. In her book, where she is the main character herself, three women told her and guided her through the building of a City. This City basically represents the state of liberation for women, who were thought to be misjudged and looked down to during the medieval period. It is in this City she was to build where women will find refuge against the men who attacks their womanhood through various writings and literature, and who sees themselves to be the ones with accomplishments and greatness alone. The three allegorical women whom the author talks to in the book - Reason, Justice and Rectitude, she was able to establish the greatness of women. Through the help of these ladies, Christine was able to identify her role as a woman in the society. According to the wisest of the ladies, it is only when a person has full knowledge of the self would one be able to understand oneself and the nobility of that individual. Thus, it is the Ladies' role to help

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her see and understand a woman's worth in the society.

By understanding women's roles in the society, Christine therefore builds the City's foundation. It is only when woman clearly realized how special their tasks are in the community, then they would eventually be able to build a strong wall that would guard their city against any forms of attack. Women who assumed a great role in the military as well as in politics have proven their strength, not just in the physical aspect, but their psychological competence in order to defend their areas of responsibility. From the women who have found the Amazon to the queens who used their power and wisdom to rule over their kingdoms, it cannot be denied that women could carry on such responsibilities. Well-educated women were also enumerated in the book by Lady Reason to show how far women are able to reach the level of intellect that men thought only they can possess.

To further build the City of Ladies, Christine was then enlightened by Lady Rectitude with women's right to education and equal treatment as they people are created equal and are all children of God. Women should also be recognized of the good things that they have brought in the family as they remain faithful wives to their husbands. Women's beauty lies not on the façade but in her inner splendor.

Lady Justice was left to help Christine finish the City as she helps her realize how faithful women are to their God. It is women's spirituality that they allow themselves to be strong no matter how painful the roads they travel could be. It is important for women to stay as faithful and pure in any circumstance in order to protect their Christian beliefs.

The City of Ladies was simply an enumeration of the greatness of women that men do not see during the medieval age. The three ladies were but only <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-her-book-challenge-medieval-ideas-about-women/>

categories in which Christine identified as the various accomplishments that women contributed in the society. In order to logically present her arguments against the ideas that women are evil in nature, Christine made such divisions to represent her claims.

Works Cited:

De Pizan, Christine. *The Book of the City of Ladies*. New York: Penguin, 1999. Print.