Gender Transgressions
Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature

Edited by
Karen J. Taylor
GENDER TRANSGRESSIONS
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Includes bibliographical references.


Cover photograph shows a section of Notre Dame Cathedral.
Photograph taken by Meg Green is from Karen Taylor's private collection.
For Philip
Husband, Colleague, Friend.
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This collection, comprising nine critical essays from prominent and emerging medievalists, seeks to explore the different ways in which French authors of the Middle Ages transgress normative social and cultural codes in their literary works.

There is a common perception, which has perhaps arisen from some literary criticism of the 60s and 70s, that the Middle Ages was a period of conservatism in the area of gender roles and in the expression of cultural and sexual mores. In the analysis of gender roles in medieval literature, a polarized viewpoint is repeatedly imposed upon texts that may more accurately be viewed as possessing multiple shades and subtleties of meaning—much more in line with what we know about the ability of the medieval imagination to grasp multiple meanings from a single symbol, word, or act.

The essays in this collection explore different facets of this multi-layering of transgressive meaning, suggesting that medieval society was at least as diverse and complex as our own. Jones, in her study of *Richars li biaus*, sets forth the motif of the Grateful Dead, "a malleable tale of indebtedness and redemption," linking it to the development of male identity through the oedipal quest and to culturally conditioned myths of female sexuality. Friedrich embarks upon a linguistically based examination of the *Roman de la Rose* in the context of a set of homoerotic codes or emblems. Busby and Szkilnik treat the literary and grammatical manifestations of cross-dressing and document its use as a comic device...
and as a sartorial reflection of deeper conflicts of identity and sexuality, while Clark's piece takes this problematic further, suggesting an essential progression from the heroine's cross-dressing to the homosexual activity of her subsequent same-sex marriage in two manuscript versions of the story of *Yde et Olive*.

Carl debunks the myth of feminine passivity with her analysis of the Amazonian female in the *Roman de Troie*, while McCaffrey elucidates the androgynous nature of the “twinning” of lovers, heterosexual couples that are so closely linked onomastically (Floire et Blancheflor, Ami et Amile) that their individual sexualities become blurred and virtually irrelevant.

The two final papers challenge traditional criticism of two very well-known Old French texts. Each views the common narrative device of triangulation from a new perspective. Cottille-Foley’s piece argues that in the *lais* of Marie de France triangles composed of two women and one man form not a basis for sexual jealousy or competition but rather a structure of feminine empowerment. Taylor’s essay explores the reversal of commonly perceived gender stereotypes in two romances by Chrétien de Troyes. By analyzing characters who are aligned with reverse-gender stereotypes, she delineates the complexities of the love relationships within these texts.

This book aims to contribute to Old French and Gender Studies in its accessible, detailed analyses of texts both familiar and arcane. The provocative subject matter makes the studies original, eminently readable and often, in Keith Busby’s words, “downright hilarious.”
I would like to thank my colleagues and students in the Languages and Literature and Women's Studies departments at Drury College, especially Jo Van Arkel, Resa Willis, Patricia McEachern, Grace Welch, and Heather Hignite for their friendship, patience, indulgence, and encouragement while I was working on this book. My appreciation goes to computer guru Charles Ess and typist extraordinaire Marline Ritter who both helped me out of many a word-processing fix, and also to librarians Bill Garvin and Phyllis Holzenberg for their research expertise.

My gratitude goes also to my husband, Philip Krummrich, who cheerfully provided me with many hours of invaluable assistance in the reading and editing of these essays, and to Chris Kleinhenz and Phyllis Korper at Garland for their encouragement and support.

Lastly, I would like to thank each one of the scholars and writers who contributed to this volume. Truly, this is their book.
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The late thirteenth-century romance *Richars li biaus*, composed by the otherwise unknown mestre Requis, is most often described as a fusion of at least two distinct folk narratives.¹ A “family romance” predicated on a foundling’s search for his lost origins, the text incorporates into its conclusion the motif of the Grateful Dead, a malleable tale of indebtedness and redemption that appears in a variety of medieval genres.² Modern readings of the text tend to focus primarily on structural integrity: while some deem the relationship between popular motifs to be contrived and arbitrary, others defend the romance’s compositional unity.³ Whether foregrounding the text as family saga or as avatar of the Grateful Dead tale, however, the brief studies devoted to this romance have privileged the trajectory of the eponymous hero.

Most notably, Thérèse Bouche’s perceptive essay on the quest as Oedipal journey explores the text’s solid mythical substructure.⁴ Echoes of the Theban schema are not limited to the foundling motif: while searching for his parents, the young knight Richart narrowly misses marrying his mother and, subsequently, killing his father. His final exploits allow this more fortunate Oedipus to eclipse his father’s chivalric reputation and to replace his mother with the beautiful Princess Rose.
Having developed from "enfant trouvé" into "enfant prouvé," Richart thus succeeds in establishing a mature male identity.

This reading, while essential to the understanding of the romance, does not sufficiently account for the presence of the Grateful Dead tale as an agent of closure. In fact, Richart's process of self-realization is significantly inflected by the insertion of the folk narrative, which is recast in the context of the thirteenth-century struggle between mercantile and courtly value systems. Because of his extraordinary generosity and spendthrift ways, Richart finds himself destitute just at the moment he was hoping to win the hand of Rose in a tournament. It is at this juncture that he discovers an exposed corpse in the home of a rich bourgeois. Upon learning that it is the body of a knight who died owing the householder three thousand pounds, Richart spends his last borrowed coins for proper burial. He soon encounters a mysterious White Knight who provides him with the necessary accoutrements for the tournament. When Richart triumphs, the White Knight refuses repayment and reveals himself to be none other than the spirit of the Grateful Dead knight. Subsequently, Richart marries the princess and completes his quest. The ransomed corpse thus serves to valorize courtly expenditure and largesse, rewarding the dead knight with final repose and the living knight with the hand of his beloved.

While Bouché omits this episode from her analysis altogether, Danielle Régnier-Bohler construes the Grateful Dead as a particular manifestation of the Double, in this case, of the hero and of his father (53-58). These figurative possibilities are indeed common to most medieval versions of the tale. However, to read the romance exclusively in light of the development of male identity is to obscure the romance's concomitant obsession with culturally conditioned myths of female sexuality. In fact, Richars li biaus is unique in that it adapts the Grateful Dead motif to a thematics of virginity and transgression, linking the folkloric figure with a female double. Far from being an arbitrary epilogue, the Grateful Dead sequence is a vital component in the economy of indebtedness, largesse, and redemption pertaining to the hero's origins as well as those of the romance itself.

This process is inaugurated in a two-part prologue, which situates the work in terms of both material value and spiritual patronage. Playfully
refusing to acknowledge the worth of previous narratives, both romance and epic, the narrator flaunts the value of his own text in monetary terms:

Ains li contes de Lancelot,
d'Erech ne de Bielliennort,
de Maden ne de Piercheval,
d'Ieuwain, de Keu le senescal
ne de Cliget ne de Clipois
ne valurent pas un liegeois,
ne li rois Mars ne dans Tristans,
que ceste ne vaille .X. tans.
Pour nient oriez de Charlemainne,
qui en Espagne ot mainte painne,
ne de Rollant ne d'Oliver [. . .]
Tout chil que je vous ai conté
n'ont de valour ne de bonté
vaillant. II. nois enviers chesui
dont vous m'orrés conter anci. (vv. 7-17, 29-32)

(The tales of Lancelot, Erec, Bielliennort, Maden, Perceval, Yvain, the senechal Kay, Cligès, Clipois, King Mark, and Lord Tristan were never worth a liegeois in comparison with the present tale, which is worth ten times as much. In vain would you hear tell of Charlemagne, who had so many hardships in Spain, or of Roland or Oliver [. . .] All those I've mentioned to you have no merit or value worth two nois compared to the one whose tale you will hear me tell today.)

The value of Richart’s story is guaranteed by the exemplary nature of the hero, whose moral stature surpasses even that of Charlemagne. Richart’s excellence is attributed to his noble birth, his military valor, and particularly to his chivalric generosity: “larghes fu, plains de hardement / despendoit le sien larghement” (vv. 43-44; He was generous, full of bravery, and he distributed his possessions generously). Thus the prologue introduces an ideological tension that will continue to manifest itself throughout the romance: while narratives are presented as commodities with relative commercial value, the hero himself embodies a nostalgic ideal of the early feudal gift economy: “la réaction héroïque face au matérialisme triomphant, à la puissance de l’argent. . . .”
In order to ensure the excellence of the tale and its composition, however, the narrator turns from the material to the spiritual, invoking the Virgin Mary:

une invocation ferai,
pour ce que mieus enditerai.
J'apiel cheli qui, fille et mere,
enfanta son fil et son pere [ . . . ]
"Dame, je t'appielle a cheste oevre
que tu cheste oevre si aoevre
qu'il i ait bon entendement
et vingne a bon definement."
(vv. 47-50, 65-68)

(I will make an invocation so that I might compose better. I call upon her who, daughter and mother, gave birth to her son and her father. [ . . . ] Lady, I call upon you to collaborate in this work so that it might have good intent and come to a good conclusion.)

Like Marie de Champagne in Chrétien’s Charrette, the patroness of mestre Requis plays an active role in the production and projected reception of the romance. It is she who guarantees bon entendement, a rather slippery term that might designate the text’s moral intent as well as the audience’s appreciation of that meaning. In addition, the Virgin ensures proper closure. From the outset, then, the story of Richart possesses both exchange value and a transcendent spiritual context consecrated by holy virginity.

As a means of recounting the hero’s origins, the romance proper likewise opens with the portrayal of a virgin. When the Queen of Frisia dies in childbirth, the King names the infant girl Clarisse after her mother as a way of paying homage to the beauty of both females. This beauty is expressed first in terms of the King’s indebtedness (“A sa biaute rendi sa dette” v. 128; [Holden glosses this as “he paid homage to his daughter’s beauty by giving her the name of the most beautiful person he had ever known, that is, her mother”]), and later in terms of Nature’s bounty (“trop large i ot esté Nature,” [v. 368; Nature was quite generous in this respect]). The double of her mother, Clarisse enters the world in dual
economic terms: the recipient of Nature's largesse, she also serves to redeem her father's debt to beauty.

At the age of fifteen, Clarisse is a paragon of maidenly perfection. Her very typical portrait dwells on the whiteness of her teeth, neck, hands, fingernails, and breasts (vv. 139-77). Fearing that she might be ravished in the manner of Helen of Troy, her father encloses her in a walled garden and encourages her to enjoy its "diviers fruis" (v. 236) while he undertakes a voyage to the other side of his realm. The protective locus soon proves to be vulnerable, however, when Clarisse falls ill and consumes an overdose of medicinal wine. Overtaken by a drunken slumber, she becomes the target of Louis le Preux, whose athletic prowess prevails over the high walls. Scrambling up an apple tree, Louis drops into the garden and rapes Clarisse as she sleeps. After enjoying the forbidden fruit, Louis fears reprisal and vanishes. Nine months later, when Clarisse gives birth to a son, her enraged father orders the child to be put to death. His tender-hearted servants, however, choose instead to abandon the child in the woods, where he is later found by a count, who names him Richart and raises him as his own son.

The hero is conceived, then, in a transgressive context. This depiction of sexual violence, however, has received little critical attention beyond expressions of shock and distaste. Bouché calls the episode a "double crime," referring to the father's rape and the grandfather's attempted murder (148). While both crimes certainly demand ultimate reparation in the narrative, this particular instance of doubling has effectively functioned to divert the scholarly gaze from the rape itself. In fact, recent feminist scholarship suggests that male-authored depictions of rape typically invite such diversions. In a recent collection of essays on Rape and Representation, Lynn Higgins and Brenda Silver propose instead to demystify "an insidious cultural myth" through a process of "defiguration," which they define as "the critical act of reading the violence and sexuality back into texts where it has been deflected, either by the text itself or by the critics; where it has been turned into a metaphor or a symbol or represented rhetorically as titillation, persuasion, ravishment, seduction, or desire" (4). Similarly, in her pioneering study Ravishing Maidens, Kathryn Gravdal explores the more or less systematic "naturalization" of rape in medieval French literature and law. Although
depicted as morally and ethically wrong, sexual violence is regularly absorbed into the romance narrative and reconfigured as seduction or even courtly love; rape is often represented as "an aesthetic marker of and testimony to physical beauty" (44).

Although Gravdal generally limits her study of romance to the works of Chrétien de Troyes, similar strategies appear in the works of his successors. The rape narrative in *Richars li biaus*, however, represents a certain departure from the paradigm. It is true that the crime is initially presented in conventional courtly terms, as Louis le Preux is struck by the dazzling beauty of the sleeping Clarisse:

Quant chilz le voit lievve sa main,  
si se sainna, car onques mais  
ne vit ne ne verra jamais,  
ce dist, si bielle creature [. . .]  
Che qu’il remire la puchielle,  
le fiert au cuer d’unne estinchielle  
qui tout le cors dedens li art,  
Amours l’a si feru d’un dart. (vv. 364-67; 371-74)

(When he saw her, he raised his hand and made the sign of the cross, for, he said, never had he seen nor ever would he see such a beautiful creature [. . .]. Looking at the maiden, he was struck in the heart by a spark that enflamed his entire body; Love had struck him with an arrow.)

Love’s arrow, however, does not inspire conventional courtly suffering but rather blatant physical aggression:

Et dist, “Chiertez, trop le desir,  
a li vorrai par tans gesir,  
s’elle dort ensi longement.”  
Met soi avant coietement,  
en la bouche .iii. fois le baise,  
car bien en ot et lieu et aise.  
Quant il voit qu’elle ne se muet,  
plus priés se traist de li que puet.  
Qu’en feroie long siermonnage?
Il li toli sen puchelage;
et s'est la cose si enpainte
que demora de li enchainte. (vv. 375-86)

(And he said, "Truly, I desire her greatly; I will want to lie with her soon if she sleeps like this for a long while." He advanced quietly and kissed her three times on the mouth, for well had he the opportunity and leisure to do so. When he saw that she did not move, he moved as close to her as he could. Why should I make a long speech of it? He took her virginity from her, and the thrust penetrated so completely that she was impregnated by him.)

By revealing courtly ritual as a poorly concealed pretext for male aggression, the passage demythifies the language of love. Unlike the romances analyzed by Gravdal, in which rape scenes gloss over the physical violence of the act, this sequence does make some reference to the victim's suffering. The word *enpainte*, deriving from *impingere*, evokes a brutal intrusion. Moreover, the text pointedly describes Clarisse’s physical and emotional suffering after the fact. Immediately after the incident, Clarisse is portrayed as “pesans et paourouse / et travaillie et anuiouse” (vv. 423-24; sorrow-laden and fearful and tormented and woeful). She later describes her experience in terms that suggest physical sensation, declaring that she felt (“sentī”) that the knight had lain with her (v. 2964). To a certain degree, then, this text restores the violence inherent in rape, the potential fraudulence of courtly language and behavior. Needless to say, the juxtaposition of the rape episode with the author’s prayer to the Virgin further taints the act, particularly since Louis le Preux stops to make the sign of the cross before violating the unsuspecting maiden.

While it deviates in certain respects from earlier romance tradition, the rape of Clarisse does not entirely relinquish the poetics of diversion. Paradoxically, the text demythifies courtly models while at the same time reinscribing the rape in an alternative myth of female culpability. Constructed in a clear paradigmatic relationship to the Fall, the scene depicts a seduction scenario that casts Clarisse into the lapsarian counterpart of the Virgin. Framed by a protective enclosure that suggests the wholeness of virginity, Clarisse soon proves to be permeable to fleshly
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weakness. Unlike the romance’s male characters, who consume vast quantities of wine without ill consequence (v. 1100), Clarisse cannot hold her liquor and is soon blamed for the incident. She herself declares that the rape was due to her own transgression ("fourfait" v. 498) or faltering ("cancheler" v. 2953). Bouché has noted the similarity between these declarations and those of another victim of sexual aggression later in the romance (153). In the course of their adventures, Richart and his companions rescue a young woman from some would-be ravishers who killed her lover; instead of blaming the culprits, she accuses her own “vile body” (v. 3191). As in other medieval parables of the Fall, the woman is here faulted for tempting the seducer. Indeed, rather than justifying the rapists, female beauty serves in this scenario to inculpate the victims. Even the depiction of Clarisse’s physical pain may bespeak an effort to shift blame. According to Georges Duby, medieval texts rarely make reference to physical suffering, except where women are concerned: pain signifies punishment and therefore (original) sin (Mâle 204-06).

This narrative of rape, far from being relegated to the margins of the text, resurfaces time and again in the course of the romance. After being told by the narrator, the story is recounted on three occasions by Clarisse herself and once by Louis le Preux. While Clarisse’s narratives serve primarily to explain or lament her situation, Louis’ tale is articulated in a far different context with wide-ranging consequences. During Richart’s search for his father, the two men face each other in a tournament, each unaware of his adversary’s identity. Upon losing the battle, Louis asks the victor to name his ransom. The generous Richart, who typically allows defeated knights to go scot free, does exact a certain price this time. Asserting that material goods mean nothing to him, the hero demands instead that his hostage relate the best adventure that has ever happened to him (“la millour aventure / c’onques li avint,” vv. 3696-97). Without hesitation, Louis retells the rape of Clarisse from his own point of view. His version recalls that of the narrator in that it stresses the victim’s beauty without obscuring the nature of the act; he admits “tant li fis je de damage / que li toli son puchelage” (vv. 3723-24; so much harm did I do to her that I took her virginity). Like the primary narrator, he uses the verb tolir to emphasize the expropriation of a valued commodity, i.e., the maiden’s virginity. His tale in itself acquires the status of commodity as
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well, for it releases him from his chivalric debt to Richart. Moreover, the narrative serves to reunite the family and anchor it solidly in the landed nobility: Richart immediately recognizes the story, embraces his father, and reunites him with Clarisse. The forgiving King of Frisia permits his daughter to marry Louis and makes his son-in-law count of Mangorie. Just as the romance as a whole surpasses all other texts in value, then, the rape narrative is here transformed into a superior adventure with a certain material worth.

From a contemporary feminist viewpoint, this reification of the rape narrative implicates not only the romance's narrator but also the literary critic in a male agenda of representation and aggression. Just as mestre Requis cannot resist telling the tale over and over again, scholarly discourse—while seeking in good faith to expose "insidious cultural myths"—inevitably reproduces in its own way the image of the victimized female. One standard solution to this dilemma, of course, is to "read against the grain" by searching for ways in which "the woman subverts the male discourse which seeks to define, use and master her" (Coats 212). This enterprise proves to be somewhat discouraging in the case of Richars li biaus, since, as we have seen, the victims of sexual aggression in the romance are unabashedly male constructs imbued with male cultural myths. It would even appear, as Bouché proposes, that sexual violence is redeemed in Richars by successive acts of military violence (153), thereby perpetuating the aggressive chivalric ethic that prizes virile "force." Nonetheless, a perceptible narrative undercurrent suggests that the romance simultaneously offers a redemptive agenda centered in part on the mother's response to violence and rupture.

First of all, it must be noted that the rape narrative releases Louis only from his chivalric debt to Richart; it is the ensuing marriage that relieves his obligation toward Clarisse. Gravdal discusses this phenomenon in the context of medieval ecclesiastic law, according to which the ravisher could do penance by marrying the victim if she consented (9). In romance narrative, this often translates as yet another displacement of focus: recast as a marriage plot, the rape is cleansed and absorbed into the legitimacy of conjugal relations. In Richars li biaus, however, it is significant that this solution is initiated by the woman. Although numerous foreign
dignitaries seek to marry her—by contract or by force—Clarisse steadfastly refuses to wed anyone but her unknown attacker, insisting:

c’ains i morra a grant tourment
qu’elle prenge a mari nullui,
s’elle n’a a baron chelui
qui ou vregiet jut awec lui
le jour que si fort i dormi,
car de lui demora enchainte. (vv. 1878-83)

(. . . that she would rather suffer a very painful death than take as her husband anyone but the one who lay in the garden with her the day that she slept so deeply, for she had become pregnant by him.)

For the modern reader, of course, this resolution simply indicates that Clarisse has allowed herself to be dominated even further by the patriarchal establishment. At the same time, however, her decision may be seen as a pacifist’s response to male forms of retribution: whereas her father sought to murder both rapist and child, Clarisse chooses to reintegrate the family. As Catherine Randall Coats has written;

. . . the response of the female to acts of violence may be far more significant than the abuse of power by the male. In many texts, we find that the female response is one which works to restore harmony, to equalize relations between the sexes, and to confer a coherence formerly lacking in the text. (215)

Although this alterity may not liberate women from patriarchal oppression, Coats continues, “co-optation would be the case only if in the text there were no evidence of female advance” (215). Clearly, from a medieval standpoint, Clarisse’s position advances as a result of her marriage: with the help of her son, she maintains her ability to choose her spouse. Her influence even succeeds in “taming” Louis le Preux: having raped Clarisse on his way to a tournament, Louis now gives up martial pursuits altogether for love of Clarisse (v. 4169).

In spite of what might seem to be the final redemptive act, the family romance of Richars li biaus does not end with the celebration of his
parents' marriage. Some attribute this to the author's ineptness, while others note that the hero cannot complete his trajectory until he procures his own marriage and title. This could easily be accomplished, however, without the use of the Grateful Dead motif. In fact, this passage demonstrates that the male protagonist cannot achieve closure without confronting and transcending the violence done to his mother. In addition to proving the hero's noble nature, the Grateful Dead tale serves here to problematize the figure of the violated female and to obliterate its troubling image. Read in the context of rape and redemption, the episode reveals its function as a bon definement, an unravelling of the gender-based and ideological tensions that inform the romance.

This ancient motif, which surfaces in both Eastern and Western folk traditions, appears to be based on shared beliefs about the sacred duty of burial and a certain solidarity between the dead and the living (Gerould 162; Régnier-Bohler 56). We have seen that in such French chivalric texts as Richars li biaus, the narrative typically serves to justify extravagant expenditure and allow the hero to secure the hand of his beloved. On the figurative level, the parallels between the male hero and the Grateful Dead are evident: like the deceased knight whose debts he discharges, the spendthrift Richart temporarily runs the risk of material ruin and eternal debt. His largesse generates that of the ghostly benefactor, whose protective role on the battlefield has been interpreted in its turn as a paternal image (Régnier-Bohler 61). While the father figure may inform other versions of the tale, however, it is rather the mother who functions as protector in Richars li biaus: in the absence of the father, she arms her son (albeit reluctantly) when the latter must do battle with the sultan of Carsidone (vv. 2579-92); later, when Louis le Preux is at a loss for funds and ideas, she assists Richart in procuring arms for his final tournament (vv. 4265-4323). Indeed, numerous affinities link the Grateful Dead figure not only with the male protagonist, but with his mother, or more specifically, the virgin Clarisse before the fall.

Parallels between the rape narrative and that of the Grateful Dead include the positioning and attire of the body. When Louis le Preux first fixes his gaze upon Clarisse, the maiden lies asleep, her face tenuously protected by a sydone (v. 361). Derived from the Greek sindôn, this Old French word designates a silken cloth of Eastern origin, most often used
to shroud a corpse. In a number of texts, including Robert de Boron’s *Estoire du Graal*, it refers to the cloth used by Joseph of Arimathea to shroud the body of Christ. This primary meaning retains its suggestive force in *Richars li biaus*, where a *sydone* drapes both the sleeping Clarisse and subsequently her infant, abandoned in a *fosse* (a pit resembling a grave) and resurrected by Count Richart (vv. 578-84); the rich fabric protects the child from the elements and bears witness to his noble birth. Like Clarisse and the foundling, the corpse of the spendthrift knight presents itself to the beholder as a solitary, vulnerable figure; his body is wrapped in an elegant *cendal* (v. 4347), whose fabric attests to the social stature and expensive tastes of the insolvent nobleman. The *cendal* too is a silken cloth, often used as a synonym of *sydone* and bearing the same etymological roots; *cendal* generally designates, however, the apparel of a living being. This lexical choice highlights the exposed corpse’s ambiguous status, its lingering indebtedness to the world of the living. Indeed, the figures of Clarisse, the infant Richart, and the spendthrift knight all appear poised between two states of being; draped in protective fabric, all three remain nonetheless vulnerable to outside aggression.

These episodes occurring at opposite ends of the romance are further linked by a passage toward the middle of the text, i.e., the attempted rape episode. When Richart and his companions rescue the lady from her abductors, she is left to mourn the dead knight who has perished (as she says) because of her beauty. The lady tearfully refuses to have her lover buried; she would prefer to place the body in her bed so that she might kiss him four times daily (vv. 3200-04). Happily, Richart intervenes here, insisting that the corpse undergo proper rituals of burial and contributing himself a generous offering for the repose of the departed soul (vv. 3205-11). He then proposes that the lady marry his faithful companion Aubri, who will protect her castle well (v. 3217). Once again, the maiden and the corpse are represented in similar fashion as fragile beings in need of protection, one from sexual and military violence, the other from physical decay. In both cases, the absence of a proper protective enclosure connotes what Régnier-Bohler has described as a “gaping hole in the social body” (55).

The similarities between indebted but victimized corpses and supposedly culpable female victims of aggression are not coincidental. I
would argue, rather, that the identification betrays a certain measure of male anxiety prompted by the very presence of rape in the narrative. Tanya Modleski has observed a similar phenomenon in Hitchcock films, which also privilege rape as a narrative strategy. Exploring the "dialectic of identification and dread in the male spectator's response to femininity," Modleski argues that

... the dream mechanism of displacement enables the male subject simultaneously to experience and deny an identification with passive, victimized female characters. By acknowledging the importance of denial in the male spectator's response, we can take into account a crucial fact ... that the male finds it necessary to repress certain feminine aspects of himself, and to project these exclusively onto the woman, who does the suffering for both of them. (13)

Significantly, our romance's response to this anxiety is not merely further violence but extraordinary demonstrations of largesse that aim at eliminating vulnerability. Richart's act of mediation in the attempted rape episode is but a prelude to the extraordinary largesse he demonstrates in the Grateful Dead episode. Upon learning of the deceased knight's predicament, Richart selflessly abandons his own chivalric and amorous projects to release the corpse from debt. The gesture allows him access to otherworldly intervention in the form of the White Knight, whose portrait is not without ties to that of the fair-skinned maiden Clarisse. The maiden's teeth are "blans con ivoire" (v. 155; white as ivory), her neck, hands, and nails are white, and her chest is "blanche con noif" (v. 165; white as snow). Similarly, the mysterious knight arrives on a white horse, with white armor: "plus blanche est d'unne noif negie / tout avoit blanc, escu et lanche" (vv. 5329-30; whiter than fallen snow, everything was white, shield and lance).

Holden has pointed out the curiously dual nature of the Grateful Knight as he appears in Richars li biaus: at once ethereal and down-to-earth, the character appears alternately as a celestial helper and a faithful squire who succeeds in obtaining for his lord's table the best fish available in town (Introduction 11). It is precisely because he is able to participate in both worlds that the Grateful Dead can both facilitate the hero's chivalric success and provide a certain spiritual entendement.
Cleansed of his material debt, he embodies the moral whiteness of the once-inviolate mother and even of the romance’s saintly benefactress. As both recipient and provider of a seemingly infinite largesse, the Grateful Dead offers a marvelous alternative to the materialist ethic lurking in the text’s narrative and diegetic economy.

Clearly, this time-honored folk tale does not constitute a hastily appended adventure aimed at the audience’s sole amusement. Rather, the Grateful Dead motif informs the plotting of the romance from the outset. By recalling and rectifying the initial transgression, the episode restores symbolic purity to Richart’s origins and brings material and moral balance to the community. Embedded in courtly and Christian myths of sexuality and guilt, the Grateful Dead raises the spectre of bodily and monetary vulnerability only to dissolve them in a (male) utopian image of perpetual virginity and inexhaustible largesse.

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Tobler, Adolf, and Erhardt Lommatzsch. *Altkanzosisches Wörterbuch*. Berlin: Wiedmann; Wiesbaden: Steinen, 1925-.


NOTES

1. For analyses of narrative composition, see Holden’s Introduction to the critical edition (7) as well as the articles by Bouché, Lachet, and Micha cited in the bibliography.

2. On the Grateful Dead motif, see Aarne and Thompson, Benary, Gerould, and Régnier-Bohler. The combination of foundling and Grateful Dead motifs is also evident in the *chanson de geste Lion de Bourges*. For the modern audience, of course, the Grateful Dead designates not a folk tale but the famed rock group led by Jerry Garcia. I cannot, therefore, resist paying tribute to Garcia, who died as I was finishing this essay.

3. Holden and Micha find fault with the romance’s composition, while Bouché and Lachet argue for narrative coherence.

4. See especially p. 150.

5. All quotations are taken from Holden’s edition; translations are mine. Holden notes that the characters Bielliennort, Maden, and Clipois are difficult to identify with any precision, although *Clipois* may be “une déformation de Gleigois” (193).

6. Lachet 116. See also Burgwinkle.

7. Holden translates lines 65-68 as follows: “Dame, je fais appel à toi afin que, par une sorte de collaboration morale, mon poème ait bonne intention (c’est-à-dire qu’il soit dirigé vers le bien) et bonne conclusion” (193-94; Lady, I appeal to you in order that, through a kind of moral collaboration, my poem might have a good intent, that is, that it may be oriented towards the good).


10. Holden, for example, describes the behavior of Louis as “franchement odieuse” and utterly distinct from the chivalric ideal as manifest in the works of Chrétien (Introduction 10). Recent scholarship, however, has recognized the integral function of rape in chivalric romance. See Gravdal as well as the article by Antoinette Saly.
11. Georges Duby clearly relates sexual aggression and courtly love, referring to the latter as a “controlled game” that sublimated the rapacious tendencies of young knights. See *Le Chevalier, la femme, et le prêtre* 43-45.

12. On the Fall in medieval literature, see Jager. On enclosure and virginity/chastity, see Kay and Rubin 57, and Lomperis and Stanbury 66-68.

13. Vv. 432-38, 499-500, 2957-67. In the second of these passages, the recounting is reported indirectly by the narrator.

14. See Coats’ review article on Gravdal (211-212). There is considerable debate over the relationship between literary and literal rape: for those who read the rape narrative primarily as a manifestation of patriarchal power relationships, sexual aggression in fiction risks implicating the audience and even the well-meaning critic. For a critique of this position, see Hazen and Warner.

15. On the relationship between military and sexual “force” in medieval culture, see Gravdal (3) and Duby, *Le chevalier, la femme, et le prêtre* (44-45).

16. Micha and Holden are proponents of the ineptness theory, while Lachet, Bouché, and Régnier-Bohler argue for authorial purpose.

17. On the *sydone* or *sidoine* and the *cendal*, see Michel I (198-199); II (93-94) as well as Godefroy, Tobler-Lommatzsch, and von Wartburg.
References

I I. Rape, Redemption, and the Grateful Dead: Richars li biaus


Tobler, Adolf, and Erhardt Lommatzsch. Altfranzosisches
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intentionally left blank
II II. When a Rose Is not a Rose: Homoerotic Emblems in the Roman de la Rose


Citizen Kane, dir. Orson Welles, with Joseph Cotton and Orson Wells, 1941.


---, and Teresa Mary Keane. See Dictionnaire du moyen fran"ais.


Harley, Marta Powell. "Narcissus, Herrnaphroditus, and Attis: Ovidian Lovers at the fontaine d'Amors in


Joret, Charles. La Rose dans l'antiquite et au moyen age. Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1892.


NOTES 1. Quotations from the Roman de la Rose are from the edition by Poirion and are cited by line number only. Translations (unless otherwise identified) are mine. 2. Virtually all criticism sees the Rose as Lady and conflates the texts of example, Arden "Introduction" (xix); Heffernan 180; Jung 300; Louis 28; Poirion, 1984 7. 3. Indirect associations of the Rose with Eve are
often made by interpreting
the vergier of Deduit as (at least a kind of) Garden of
Eden (see Fleming,
"Garden" and Roman, especially chapter 2, and Sichi 164).
For the Rose as Virgin
Mary, see Gorce 29 and the article by Larmat. 4. See also
note 3, above. 5. Jean de Meun, 10531-10534; the article
by Accarie; Poirion, "Guillaume,"
6. 6. The journalist briefly mentions the possibility that
a favorite racehorse. 7. See notes 2 and 3 above. The
possibility of a hidden meaning, on the other
hand, is often cited (see note 5 above). Nevertheless,
Uitti remarks the "phallic,
masculine sort of rose" (40), as does Harley the phallic
image of the rosebud
("enclose") referring to the "enclosed Rose" but clearly
wants "him" (Bel Acuel)
to "come out": "qu'il isse." 9. My emphasis here is on
identifying the Rose rather than triangulating the
relationships between the Lover, the Rose, and Bel Acuel,
as Eve Sedgwick’s
work, Between Men, allows. I 0. Menocal, Arabic and
Shards; see also the article by Schibanoff. II. See Seward
and Joret for general symbolism. I also note here Western
masculine associations of the rose. For instance, the
Middle English Dictionary
lists "Rose" as an epithet for various kings, a duke, and
Christ; Seward discusses
the association of the rose with Adonis (8), its
association with Eros (13), and
Dionysus (14), and its use since the twelfth or thirteenth
century on the arms of
the (male) heads of the house of Lancaster (n.56); similar
information is found in

Brewer (952). 12. For the rose as an Arabic masculine
symbol, see Hazen (956) and Jobes

(1348); for the rosette see Jobes (1349); for the Rose of
Sharon, Jobes (1348,

1349); and the rose thorn, Jobes (1349). 13. Brewer (953);
Bartlett (274); OED (104). 14. Brewer (526, 564); see
Seward for the identification of Isis with

Aphrodite (10-11). 15. See note 14 above. 16. He shoots
the Lover with arrows, after "hunting" him. 17. For the
sexual meaning of jolie, see Bee (236) and the Old French
dictionaries. 18. See Sevely, especially Chapter I and
appendices; also Laqueur, chapters

1-3. 19. For these and other etymologies see Godefroy,
Tobler-Lommatzsch, and

von Wartburg. 20. See note 19, above, and also;
Greverand; Cellard and Rey; also bouteille

in the Larousse Dictionnaire du moyenfrançois. 21. For
Spanish etymologies see Diccionario de la lengua española;
for latin

(caput "head/glans", cucullus "hood") see Adams, 72-73.
22. Compare English slang for the penis: "club", "stick",
"pole" etc.; see also

Boswell's discussion on the medieval use of wood as
sexually significant (253,

provides a brief summary of other languages in which
"tail" can

also signify penis. The same is true for Spanish cola and
rabo "tail." For this and

other Spanish slang terms see Cela. 25. For English slang,
see Chapman, Richter, and Spears. 26. For French slang,
see especially Greverand. 27. See the anthology edited by
Wilhelm, for example, pages 13, 32, 43, 51,
59 etc. 28. O'Brien comments on the probable homosexual reputation of Alexander,
suggesting an intriguing question: could the mention of Alexander be an equivalent of citing Ganymede, a suppos ed synonym for "gay" in the Middle Ages? (Boswell, Chapter 9, especially 245). 29. Huot (292297) and Camille (148) discuss manuscript illustrations of phallic trees accompanying the text of the meeting of the Lover and Bel A cuell. 30. Boswell, Chapter 10, especially 290293; and Brundage, especially

472474. 31. See Bee (234) and Old French dictionaries, especially Greimas. 32. See Old French dictionaries for the variety of meanings. 33. See the Old French dictionaries for these forms. 34. Tello (135136); von W artburg's FEW has almost twenty pages of culus derivatives. 35. For discussions on word play, see Kendrick's book and Johnson, Chapter 5. 36. See Delvauf for rosette, and English slang dictionaries in note 25, above. 37. See Guiraud. 38. See note 27, above. 39. See Spanish and Portuguese slang dictionaries. 40. Manuscript variations also have "touched." 41. Boswell, 185, 234235, 292n. 67. 42. Poor first apples at 2836, Honte a at 2836 (and a narrow at 966), and Malebouche at 2835. This page intentionally left blank.
III III. "Plus acesmez qu'une popine":
Male Cross-Dressing in Medieval French Narrative


Schmolke-Hasselmann 166-69. 11. Schmolke-Hasselmann. 12. BN fr. 99, Chantilly, and St. Petersburg mss. 13. And then Dinadan cried out and said: 'Ha! Fair Queen, did you ever see
a knight dressed up like a lady and who came in such a manner before knights and ladies and damsels? For until today I was Dinadan, but now you can clearly see I am a lady .... " The queen said: "You will be nobly married, for thus the High Prince desires it." And then she ordered water to be given him. Then Galehaut and his company came. Dinadan cried: "Bring my portion of the meat before the wolf devours it all." 14. Ed. Raynaud de Lage 1974. 15. Ed. Foerster and Trost 1891. 16. Rychner vol 2, 12-35; van den Boogaard and Noomen 59-89. 17. van den Boogaard and Noomen 3-149. This page intentionally left blank
IV IV. The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance

Baumgartner, E. "De Lucrece a Heloise, Remarques sur deux exemples du Roman de la Rose de Jean de Meun." Romania, 95, 1974, 433-442.


Pouchelle, Marie-Christine. "L'hybride." Nouvelle Revue


NOTES I. I am very thankful to E. Jane Burns for her numerous comments and suggestions which helped me reshape this paper. My thanks also to John Tolan for his careful reading and to Douglas Kelly for his suggestions. 2. They do occasionally! See Silence's confusion and the numerous debates between Nature and Norreture in the Roman de Silence. 3. A fascinating exception is the story of Agriano in the Roman de Berinus.

See Perret and Marchello-Nizia. For a discussion of homosexuality, see Boswell. 4. Part of the cycle Les Sept Sages de Rome, this romance was written around 1270, according to its editor, Joseph Palermo. 5. Trone's transvestism is narrated on pages 59-61. 6. There is no modern edition of this fifteenth-century prose romance. The text survives in three incunables from the 1489 edition published in Lyon by the Maillard. Pacolet's transvestism is found in chapter XXXI. 7. On deceitful behavior that women are forced to adopt (often because of men), see Baumgartner. 8. For the medieval misogynist
tradition, see Bloch. 9. The nun first appears on page 222. See also note 10. 10. In Silence, the following is a list of the lines referring to the nun: 6248

(une none), 6249 (cele), 6250 (fait ele), 6256 (Ia nonain), 6418 (Ia nonain velee),

6438 (li none), 6475 (Ia nonain), 6493 (Ia none), 6511-13 (Et li none en sera

honie/Qu'ele n'est pas par tolt onie/As aultres nonains par lemont), 6528 (Ia

none), 6531-2,6538, 6550 (eles, i.e., Silence and the nun), 6571 (Ia nonain), 6655

(I fu Ia none done deffaite). II. The French possessive adjective maintains the ambiguity that has to be

resolved in English. 12. Douglas Kelly pointed out to me that Achilles does cross-dress and yet

remains a hero. This is actually the main storyline of what is left of Statius'

Achilleis. This text was well known in the Middle Ages since it is preserved in 85

manuscripts. See Stace, Achilleide Achilleidos (my thanks to Francine Mora for

providing information on this text). However the texts dealing with male

cross-dressing (with the possible exception of Floris et Lyriope) do not follow

Achilles' model. Is it precisely because the Achilleis episode was embarrassing,

even demeaning for the great hero who, forced by his mother Thetis to take up

this disguise, ends up using it to deceive and seduce the woman he loves? 13. Perret, 329. 14. The Roman de Silence has justly attracted much scholarly attention lately.

See, in particular, Gaunt and Kreuger, especially chapter 4 "Women Readers and
the Politics of Gender in Le Roman de Silence.” 15. This long episode is narrated in vol. 2, pp. 334-491. 16. Perret 335; le vallet ki ert meschine, v. 3784, for instance. See also vv.

3763, 3785, 3871. 17. This example brings me to modify somewhat Perret’s assertion that what is in question is always feminine homosexuality (329). 18. See also Floris et Lyriope, a thirteenth-century romance by Robert de Blois, in which a young man, Floris, exchanges his clothes with his twin sister in order to come near Lyriope, his sister’s girl friend. Lyriope is not aware of the substitution but finds herself strongly attracted towards her companion. The writer alternatively uses he or she when referring to Floris. See Kreuger 170-176. Concerning the ambiguous way Heldis puts an end to Silence’s cross dressing, see Kreuger, especially 1246. 20. In some texts, the problem is solved by an actual change of sex. This happens to Yde/Ydee (in the Chanson d’Yde et Olive, part of the Huon de Bordeaux Cycle, end of the XIIIth century, beginning of the XIVth) and to Blanchandine (in TristandreNanteuil, mid XIVth century). See Perret 3301. On the high status transvestites can achieve, see also the story of Pope Joan, which first appears precisely around 12401250. According to the definitive version of
the legend (end of 13th c.) a young girl disguised as a man came to Rome somewhere

she distinguished herself so brilliantly and lived a life so edifying that she was

elected pope. However that pious life was maybe only a façade: Pope Joan revealed her true nature by giving birth to a child when riding in a procession. See also d’Onofrio. 21. This huge Roman cens has been partially edited. Malaquins and Cuier d’Acier’s stories are narrated in vol. 2 (1991). 22. Contrary to what Petr ret says (329), during the time the woman is in disguise, she can have quite an active sexual life. By contrast, men in disguise, like Pacolet, Trone, and Licorus, might remain chaste and deliberately so, for all their feigned attempts to seduce. 23. The text, however, one instance when the text uses she again, but I cannot account for it other than in invoke grammatical agreement which is a weak explanation! Here is the passage: A tantil (Bethides) se bout a en la for est ave c q

Malaquins escuier, dont il estoit tengrants sous sioulle pourroit mestre, qu’il jusques a ce qu’il avroit este ala court, car
ilneluivouloitpointmener. Etpou
rlemetteennauconunsecretlieus'es
toitilparty
deschevaliers (339). 24. Seemy art
Sheisthoughttobedead. 26. This e
psode, like the one with the young k
ight Malaquin, brings meto
correct the idea expressed by Perre
(t (334) that the text never tries to h
ide the real
gender identity of the character. 2
7. } asoitcequetutefacesnommerC
uerd'Acier, toutesfois lesersjequit
suisNerones..."p. 346. 28. See Leu
pin, especially chap. III, on the "s
candal of sodomy" (62). 29. Another
twist makes this revelation even mo
redizzying. In the song,
Nestor becomes the shepherd and Cue
rd'Acier the sheep: Cypouezavoir g
rant
merveille, /Carlebergierquiers
onoeille /Etl'oelielesliesleurt derr
ier... (vv.
6813; You can marvel for the shepher
dislooking for his sheep and the she
epis
following him). The reader must rem
ember the strange outfit the youngs
hepherd'sgressions
was wearing when Nestor first methi
m, an outfit that made him look like a
animal. Cuerd'Acier always wears a
sheepskin that she will take off onl
y before
performing her song. 30. This contrasts with the duality still suggested by the description of Cuer d'Acier crying before the fairy Queen until her face is streaked with white and black (tavelle edeblancetdenoirp. 363). Although the text says that at this moment the queen knows that Cuer d'Acier is a woman, it is also when she tells the young woman: "Beausire, jenesraysevous esteshommeoufemme, mais ditesmoicequ'ilenest, car je vous voyd'autrecoleur que naturene vous donnee, dont jesuisensouperon." ("Fair sir, I donot know whether you are a man or a woman, but tell me which you are, for I see that your color is different from the one Nature gave you, which makes me suspicious." It is quite interesting that the fairy Queen does spite her quasi certainty still needs a clear confession from Nerones, as though the text were constantly going back and forth between language and visual experience, never trusting the one or the other. 31. What has sometimes been called "Marte's romance" is narrated on pp. 1661-88. 32. It might rightly be argued that what is at stake in Iseut's ca
Seisnotto

show the depth of women's guile. Nonetheless Issei's skillful manipulation of language is in a sense a precedent. At the end of a chain of numerous similar examples, and in a context somewhat misogynistic (after all the lady in love with the heroine is cheating on her knight), Marte's twisting of the truth clearly illustrates the female ability to outdo even the guile of other women. Men can also manipulate language in a similar way. See the oath Lancelot takes just before fighting Meleagant in Le Chevalier a la Charrette, vv. 49713; Lancelot wears that Keu has not slept with the queen. He can rightly do it since he spent the night with her. Yet Lancelot is only hiding part of the truth. 33. On the superiority of sight over any other senses, see Geoffrey of Vinsauf's Poetria Nova (Certioraurei Arbiter est oculus, 2723), as quoted in Leupin 33. See also Leupin 155. 34. It is a dangerous one, however, that cantum against the person who uses it: singing in front of her own lover, Marte will neither recognize nor be
recognized by Ysale. 35. For examples of male manipulation see Kreuger, chap. 3.36. For this romance, see Kreuger 143153. 37. See, for example Orimonde, who, scorned at first by Marc, Ysale’s son,

tried to have him killed and thus put sin jeopardy the truce just signed between

Saracens and Christians (255, 25960); Pirailius’ wife, whom betray her husband

and sleeps with Marc, thus showing that femmes ne se garder (439; a woman will not be safely guarded if she does not want to be);

Orphee who will enchant Marc and bring Trone to declare: femmes pour avoir

Leur entente sevant trop de malic he et de tours trouver (448; women know where
to find too many malicious tricks to get what they want).

38. See for example: Merveilleuse nature est de femme, que elle ne vise point

que a sa plaisanche; point ne considere ne commenchement, ne moyen, ne fin, ne

bien commun, ne singulier, ne s’elle est amée ne se elle aime, mesque se volente

soit faitte (451; How strange is woman’s nature, for women only aim at their

pleasure; they do not take into consideration the

beginning, nor the means, nor the

end, nor the common interest, nor the personal one, nor whether they are loved

nor whether they love, as long as their will is granted.)

39. The heroine, Josianne, is in search of her husband
Beufves. She is accompanied on her travels by Beufves' infant son and by an old knight who has rescued her earlier. The three arrive in a city where Beufves, having married the queen, is now enjoying a comfortable position. It is not clear when Josianne decides to dress as a man. It seems that for most of her traveling she has not been disguised, since she was not by herself. By the time she suspects that the king of the city is her husband, she dresses as a man first not to be recognized (but nobody knows her in this city and her husband has somewhat forgotten her), then to attract Beufves' attention: on the market place, pretending to be a minstrel, she sings her story when Beufves passes by. Not only does the writer always use feminine forms to refer to her, but she is actually singing with her baby in her arms; not a very masculine presentation! Beufves then calls the minstrel to court where he still does not recognize his wife in the dark fellow (nettle juice again) who is talking to him. Josianne, now convinced that Beufves still remembers her, changes back her clothes and reveals her identity to everybody, including her landlord, who apparently did not know that she was a woman, although she had gone in disguise after having established residence in his house. This slip
underlines my assertion that cross-dressing in this text is no more than a commodity. Also note that the landlord realizes that the beautiful lady into whom Josianne has turned, and the poor wretched man are one and the same when hearing her voice. Either she had a baritone voice or these medieval characters definitely never trust their ears! 40. Abandoned by her husband because she has not given him a child, she must carry out three tasks to win him back: conceive a child with him and obtain from him his precious diamond and his white horse, all of these without his knowledge. Dressed as a man, she will become her husband's squire and accomplish through some tricks these seemingly impossible tasks, thus recovering her former position. 41. By the end of the fifteenth century and in the sixteenth century, female transvestism was strongly condemned by reforming preachers, linked to sodomy and interpreted as a sign that the coming of Antichrist was near. See Rossiaud, p. 149 and p. 113 on earlier reactions to female transvestism.
V V. A Heroine's Sexual Itinerary: 
Incest, Transvestism, and Same-Sex 
Marriage in Yde et Olive


----. "Incest and Death as Indices of the Female Hero in Romance," Romance Languages Annuals (1992): 159-65.

NOTES

1. Bibl. naz. III.II.14, MS fr. XXXVI. The text is edited in Esclarmonde,


3. For the Miracle de la fille d'un roy, number 37 in the collection, see vol 7: 2-117. 3. MotifT411.1 in vol 5.

4. For an excellent discussion of incest in medieval French law and literature

5. All translations from the Old French texts are...
my own. I have routinely

eliminated the shifting between past and present tense
verbs which characterizes

the originals. 6. The Miracle de la fille du roi de
Hongrie is number 29 in the collection

(Miracles 5: 1-87). For a list of the borrowings, see
Jeanroy 39, 237n2. 7. For the dating of the plays, see
Runnalls. 8. For a more extended discussion on this topic,
see Clark and Sponsler. 9. Leslie Dunton-Downer, "The
Horror of Culture," paper presented at

"Cultural Frictions: Medieval Cultural Studies in
Post-Modem Contexts,"

Georgetown University, Oct. 27, 1995;
http://www.georgetown.edu/

labyrinth/conf/cs95/papers/dunton.html. 10. See Mitrauer
304-07; Gravdal 200-81. II. See also Walecka "Incest and
Death" 159-65. 12. I would like to thank Mark Jordan for
his generosity in sharing with me

a chapter of his book before publication. 13. A earlier
version of this essay was delivered at the 31st
International

Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo in May 1996. I
am grateful to the

organizers of the session on "Incest and Other
Transgressions in Medieval Texts,"

Anna Walecka Roberts and Linda Rouillard, for inviting me
to participate in their

session, as I am to those who came to the session and
offered comments and

suggestions. Finally, I thank the editor of this volume,
Karen Taylor, for her

insightful and helpful critical reading of this essay.
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VI VI. "Tu cuides que nos seions taus / Come autres femes comunaus": The Sexually Confident Woman in the Roman de Troie


---. "It Takes All Kinds: Sexuality and Gender Differences in Hildegard of Bingen's Book of Compound Medicine." Traditio 40 (1984), 149-74.


NOTES I. An earlier version of which was read at the meeting of the Mid-America

Medieval Association at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, on

February 26, 1994. I wish to express my deep thanks to my friends and colleagues

Deborah Ellis and Douglas Kelley, for their suggestions regarding the essay as a whole and the translations from old French, respectively.

2. Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Le Roman de Troie, ed. Leopold Constans. All quotations from the Troie are from this edition. The translations are mine. 3. Jeffrey Cohen, Internet posting which was part of an electronic discussion group on medieval masculinities moderated by Interscripta (December I, 1993). 4. That is, on the "isle qui bien est les," v. 23312. 5. The manuscripts C, Jy, and M have as a variant of line 22151, "Mout par samoi il et Achilles," while manuscript Je has "Mout par sement il et Achilles (He and Achilles loved each other very much), my emphasis. 6. Nancy Caciola, Internet posting which was part of an electronic discussion group on medieval masculinities moderated by Interscripta (November II, 1993).

VII VII. Sexual Identity in Floire et Blancheflor and Ami et Amile


NOTES

I. I am grateful to Loyola College in Maryland for generous grant support which assisted in the research and writing of this essay. The essay develops ideas presented in talks at the Medieval Literature and Culture Seminar at Harvard and at the International Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo. 2. Although it is not essential to the argument of this essay and although their functions often overlap, I would like to distinguish between "identity tokens" (concrete objects) and "identity markers" (categorical attributes). 3. W. C. Calin notes that Floire et Blancheflor "is the first [romance] in which hero and heroine both have flower names" and that the flower (e.g., in their names) "refers to the male as well as the female" ("Flower Imagery" 106). But it seems clear that Floire’s name is one of several ways in which the romance likens
him to Blancheflor by feminizing him. 4. Roberta Kreuger describes the doubling in the "transmission" of the story from a clerk to two beautiful sisters, from the sisters to the narrator, and from the narrator to the audience (66-7). 5. Another prominent example is, of course, Aucassin et Nicolette, in which national and religious differences function in much the same way: Nicolette rejects her pagan family and culture to rejoin Aucassin. On the historical basis for Moorish raids on French Christian pilgrims, see Taylor (26). 6. Leclanche, Jean-Luc, ed. Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor. CFMA. Paris: Sands (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966) 279-309. 8. The fact that to Licoris Floris seems like Blancheflor's twin sister ("sa suer jumele") rather than Blancheflor seeming like Floris' twin brother falls in with the romance's strategy of rendering the two lovers similar by feminizing Floris. His naming initiates this strategy but the most striking example of it is the Emir's inability to determine Floris' sex when he is in bed with Blancheflor, until the sheets are pulled down, which is discussed later in my text. 9. The Chamberlain describes the two lying in a close embrace "bouce et face a face ... et brace a brace" ("mouth to mouth and face to face ...
embrace within embrace" II. 2599-2600). The implication that he has seen a pair of lesbian lovers, suggested by the nature of their embrace and reinforced by the "double" rhymes, seems to me a witty variation on the
topic of Floire's and Blancheflor's physical similarity. Geraldine Barnes discusses some of the comic aspects of the romance. 10. The doubling motif of the romance is echoed in a minor way by the fact that the chamberlains of both King Felis and the Emir share the same name (Leclanche 139). 11. Not every courtly romance casts its characters in conventionally gendered roles, of course: during much of Aucassin et Nicolette, for example, the gender roles are reversed, not only for the lovers but for the strange king and queen of Torrelore as well. 12. E.g., Jessie Crosland describes the romance as "the story of two children" (85); A. B. Taylor refers to the characters' "idealized childlike love" (233). 13. Dembowski, Peter F., ed. Ami et Amite: Chanson de geste. CFMA. Paris: (albeit in Amile's stead) when he is already married; in the later Middle English version, he is punished for undertaking the trial by combat. 15. Marianne Schapiro mentions a "further pairing" in this incident when the two sons paraphrase Job in their submission to their father's intention (140). She compares Ami's and Amile's relationship as a whole to myths of divine twinship. 16. I believe that a careful examination of these variations would support my argument. Variations from one version to the next are often alternate representations of the same pattern. For example, in Ami et Amite, Ami is assisted by two servants when he is exiled from his home because of his leprosy. In the
Middle English version, he is served by his nephew, Amoraunt. Both choices extend the pattern of doubling, the Old French by the number of servants and the Middle English by the nephew's name. On the variants of the story, see MacEdward Leach and Marianne Schapiro (Schapiro, 131 n. 1).

17. My reading attributes more initiative to Belissant than Sarah Kay's, in which she is rendered passive once male institutions intrude (134-5). Kay fails to distinguish between male authority in general and the particular pre-oedipal qualities of the bond between Ami and Amile (139).

18. Emmanuel Mickel weighs the legal evidence for Ami's precise guilt. The irony of this development follows the paradoxical logic of the device. The irony of this development follows the paradoxical logic of the device: Ami (who was warned before hand of the consequences of his substitution for Amile in the combat) incurs the penalty of difference for his most dramatic enactment of similarity. Because he exchanges place with Amile, he is punished by being differentiated from him. This page intentionally left blank.
VIII VIII. The Structuring of Feminine Empowerment: Gender and Triangular Relationships in Marie de France


----. "Le Modele courtois." Klapisch-Zuber 261-76.


Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. "Ceremonies of the
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----. "Les Pouvoirs de Ia superieure au moyen age." Les 
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McClelland, Denise. Le Vocabulaire des Lais de Marie de 

Nykrog, Per. Les Fabliau.x: Etude d'histoire litteraire et 

Olsen, Michel. Les Transformations du triangle erotique. 

Opitz, Claudia. "Contraintes et libertes." Klapisch-Zuber 
277335.

Piramus, Denis. La Vie de Seint Edmund le Rei. Ed. Hilding 


Nykrog's analysis in Les Fabliaux: Etude d'histoire littéraire et de stylistique


'Les 'Jeunes' dans Ia societe aristocratique dans Ia France du nord-ouest au XIle siecle." 29. See Duby, Le Chevalier, Ia femme et le pretre, 224. 30. For a description of the positive aspects of the wild in Marie de France,

see Sankovitch, "Marie de France: The Myth of the Wild." 31. I have altered the original translation by Hanning and Ferrante so as to

reflect the linguistic progression at work in this passage. By turning the French

active clause into a passive one (a characteristic difference between the two

languages), the original translation minimizes the abbess'
34. The Elementary Structures of Kinship, 115.
35. Duby, "Les 'Jeunes' dans la société aristocratique dans la France du
nord-ouest au XIe siècle." 36. See, for instance, Duby, Le Chevalier, la femme et le prêtre. 37. "Les Pouvoirs de
la supérieure au Moyen Âge," 175. 38. La Vie de Seint Edmund le Rei, line 48. Translated in Bruckner, Shaping
Romance, 184.
IX IX. Desexualizing the Stereotypes:
Techniques of Gender Reversal in
Chrétien's Chevalier au lion and
Chevalier a la charreté


Brahney, Kathleen J. "When Silence Was Golden: Female Personae in the Roman de Silence." Burgess and Taylor, 5261.


Romans de Chretien de Troyes.


---. Aesthetic Distance in Chretien de Troyes. Geneva: Droz, 1968. 201


NOTES

1. See, for example, the leu d'Adam, in which Eve, although criticized for being two-dimensional, actually functions on the same level of psychological development as Adam.

2. This term refers to the peculiar composition of the work: seven-syllable

Translations mine. 4. See also Brahney, 53-54, and Thorpe, 17-22, for fuller plot summaries. 5. Nitze provides
complex background information on Gauvain’s character from the sources of Celtic mythology as well as such medieval works as Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historium regum Britanniae and Wace’s Roman de Brut (219-22). 6. See especially Nitze and Frappier, 145 ff, who tend either to omit or gloss over Gauvain’s faults. 7. We may note criticisms levelled at Laudine for her supposedly fickle behaviour and inconstancy to her late husband’s memory or, on a lighter note, the ludicrous contents of Aucassin’s diatribe on feminine love. 8. Busby puts forward what I would consider to be a more reasonable opinion, suggesting that Gauvain’s swords signify an incomprehension of Laudine and Yvain’s relationship and, in a larger context, an inability to understand long-term relationships in general (70).