

FLORILEGIUM 14, 1995–96

## THE POWER OF FEMININE ANGER IN MARIE DE FRANCE'S “YONEC” AND “GUIGEMAR”

Jennifer Willging

Feminine anger is a frequent and intriguing element in Marie de France's *Lais*. While some of this anger is of a stereotypical nature, such as that of the rebuffed queen in “Lanval” (“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned”), in other cases it is the more justifiable anger of the *malmariée*, as presented by Marie from a unique, that is, feminine, perspective. As the unhappy lady in “Yonec” rants passionately about her husband:

Quant il dit estre baptiziez,  
Si fu al flum d'enfern plungiez:  
Dur sunt li nerf, dures les veines,  
Que de vif sanc sunt tutes pleines.

[When he was supposed to be baptized,  
He was plunged into the river of hell:  
His nerves are hard, his veins are hard,  
All filled with living blood.] (vv. 87–90)<sup>1</sup>

The lady's lamentation in “Guigemar” is equally vitriolic, but aimed interestingly (as I shall develop later) not at her husband but rather at the old priest who guards her: “Ceo doins[e] Deus que mal feu l'arde!” [“May God grant that he burn in hell!”] (v. 348), she cries. The potency of the outbursts of Marie's characters and her apparent approval of them is surprising when

set against the background of twelfth-century life, in which, Penny Gold maintains, "the hierarchical vision was a mental habit deeply ingrained in medieval minds" (151). This vision, according to Gold, which is both gender and class related, is what assured medieval women's (and men's) general acceptance of an oppressive social structure. Marie's representation of these two women's anger as justifiable seems doubly surprising when we consider her position as a writer for the court, dedicating her *Lais* as she did to a *nobles reis* (prologue, v. 43). Nonetheless, she was apparently unafraid to suggest that the hierarchical vision was not so deeply ingrained that it could suppress the *malmariée's* (her version, at least) expression of the loneliness, frustration, boredom, and, above all, injustice she felt as a function of her inferior place in that hierarchy.

But perhaps even more surprising than Marie's *malmariées'* expression of their dissatisfaction is their remedy for it; that is, their adultery. Marie is openly approving of the adulterous affairs of her *malmariées*, women abused and oppressed by the odious men they are forced to marry, and therefore apparently skeptical of the religious and cultural precepts of her day concerning sexuality and marriage.<sup>2</sup> Jaques De Caluwé concludes that in the *Lais* the more reference there is to God, the greater the immorality (114; qtd. by Brumlik 14). Marie frequently juxtaposes human love (often illicit) with divine love, and in doing so, I will argue, not only authors but also authorizes conduct that deviates from and is critical of Church and state sanctioned morality.

The figure of the *malmariée* is, of course, not original to Marie, but is found in the same period both in more popular works such as the *fabliaux* and in courtly lyric and romances such as those of Chrétien de Troyes, as Dafydd Evans points out in "Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes, and the *malmariée*." In *Cligés*, Chrétien presents as his *malmariée* the character of Fenice, who has been married against her will to an older man, the uncle of the man whom she really loves. Fenice's reaction to her dilemma and her remedy for it, however, differ radically from those of Marie's *malmariées*. In an uncompromising rejection of adultery (on moral grounds, she likes to assert; fear of scandal, however, seems to fuel her prudery as well), Fenice refuses to consummate her love affair with the handsome nephew and condemns the conduct of Iseut, that is, the queen's willingness to sleep with two men at the same time to fulfil her illicit desire, as deceitful and trampish. In an even more uncompromising move, Fenice avoids consummating her marriage to the uncle through her own brand of deceit and with the aid of an anti-love potion (a rare device within such a story line), on the grounds, she

reasons, that since she is in love with another man, she could never grant her husband her body in good conscience (nor in any eagerness, it would seem): “Qui a le cuer, cil a le cors” [“He who has the heart, has the body”] (v. 3123). Her “solution” to her predicament, therefore, in contrast to that of Marie’s *malmariées*, is a stubborn and ascetic state of virginity.

Even if, as Evans maintains, Chrétien does in the end express somewhat of an “enlightened male viewpoint” (170) on the subject of the *malmariée* (Fenice wins out in the end, as her troubles are allayed by her old husband generously dying in order to make room for his nephew), Marie’s representation is much more radical in that the solutions she offers are counter-conventional, subversive to, rather than supportive of, standard morality. While Chrétien’s interest presumably lies in the maintenance of patriarchal authority and the legitimacy of heirs, Marie’s lies without a doubt in the restoration of her *malmariées*’ happiness and well being. Marie’s role for the *malmariée* in resolving her own dilemma is active (self-fulfilling) rather than passive (self-denying), her action positive (accepting illicit love) rather than negative (rejecting marital consummation). In this way Marie’s representation of the *malmariée* stands apart from those of her male contemporaries and descendants (even the most “enlightened”).

I will focus for the most part on the two *malmariées* in the *Lais* of “Yonec” and “Guigemar,” referring more often to passages in “Yonec” where the *malmariée* holds a more central place in the story. Both have been married off by their families against their wills to old, rich (and unattractive, one can surmise) men, presumably for the financial and social benefits with which such marriages would provide these families (see Flori 195–97). Laments the lady in “Yonec”:

Malëit seient mi parent  
E li autre communalment  
Ki a cest gelus me donerent  
E a sun cors me marierent!

[A curse on my parents  
And all the others  
Who gave me to this jealous man  
And married me to his body!] (vv. 81–84)

She makes it clear that she has entered into this marriage against her will, and that it is strictly a union of bodies, not of minds or hearts. The motive of the husband, the instigator of the match, in marrying the lady is depicted as shallow and carnal, for it is *pur sa beauté* that the old man “loved” and

married her, even though, as Marie points out, she is also *sage et curteise* (v. 22). Both she and the lady in "Guigemar" have been locked up in towers because of their husbands' irrational jealousy, which has filled them with the fear of being cuckolded and incited them to tyrannize their wives.

Both women as well have guards who act as eunuch figures, an old castrated priest in "Guigemar" and the widowed sister of the husband in "Yonec." The sister presumably is meant to serve as a sort of companion to the lady, but she turns out to be not much of an accomplice in the lady's capers, as it is she who reveals the presence of the lover, a magical bird that turns into a handsome knight, to the husband. The priest and the widow are also analogous in that they are both sexually powerless, the priest concretely so in that he "Les plus bas membres out perduz" ["has lost his nether members"] (v. 257), and the woman figuratively so in that she is both a widow and old, epithets which evoke the idea of sexual dormancy and frustration. Both figures could be seen as likely interested in thwarting any opportunities the young, beautiful ladies might have to fulfill their own desires. It is interesting to note that through these two characters, along with the old husbands (the husband in "Yonec" is assigned the adjectives "viel," "antis," and "Mut . . . trepassez en eage" all in the space of five lines [vv. 12-17]). Marie presents old age as a foil to youthful happiness, as a noxious agent that saps the youth and beauty from those who, like the ladies, are too long exposed to it. And so Marie sets up from the very beginning plots that will concern themselves with rebellion against the austerity and prudishness of old age and the conventions and oppressive religion that its leagues advocate.

It is important here, however, to point out the distinction that Marie makes between human codes of morality or religion (which these two undesirables represent) and what she presents as a more authentic spirituality, with which many of her *Lais* (in particular "Yonec" and "Eliduc") are saturated. She confines her critique to the former and offers the latter as a more deeply meaningful and fulfilling alternative. When the lady in "Yonec" laments her doleful situation, that of being locked up alone in her tower, she lists as her first grievance the fact that her husband will not allow her to go to church (v. 75). In making her wish for a handsome and brave knight to come and be her *ami*, despite the fact that she is a married woman, it is to God himself that she prays: "Deu, ki de tut ad poësté, / Il en face ma volenté!" ["God, who has power over everything, / Grant me my wish!"] (vv. 103-04). She apparently sees no conflict between her wish for a lover and her relationship with God. She throws in the stipulation, however, that this knight be so

“Beaus e curteis, [pruz] e vaillanz, / Si que blamees n'en esteient” [“Handsome and courtly, brave and valiant, / That they [the ladies who fall in love with such knights] could not be blamed”] (vv. 98–99). And if he is *invisible* (“Ne nul fors eles nes veeient” [“No one would see them except their ladies”] v. 100), all the better, as then the world would not be able to see, and so condemn, her transgression.

When the bird-knight flies in and gives his economical avowal of his love for the lady (this economy is standard in the *Lais*) and demands hers in return, she asks him, with seemingly odd timing, if he believes in God. He replies smoothly:

“Dame,” dit il, “vus dites bien.  
 Ne vodreie pur nule rien  
 Que de mei i ait acheisun,  
 Mescreauncè u suspesçun.  
 Jeo crei mut bien al Creatur  
 Que nus geta de la tristur,  
 U Adam nus mist, nostre pere,  
 Par le mors de la pumme amere.

[“Lady,” he said, “you speak wisely.  
 I would not want for anything  
 That there be accusation because of me,  
 Or mistrust or suspicion.  
 I believe strongly in the Creator,  
 Who delivered us from the grief  
 Into which Adam, our father, placed us  
 Through the bite of the bitter apple.] (vv. 145–52)<sup>3</sup>

The knight assures the lady of his love for God, which calms her and wins her over, again economically. His striking *beauté*, to which Marie refers four times, does not seem to impede the rapidity of the lady’s decision-making much either. In the lady’s appreciation of the knight’s physique, Marie perhaps allows her to play the role of the objectifying husband who loves her “pur sa beauté.” But only briefly, for in the end it is the knight’s catechism-like recitation of his belief in God, and his oath that despite his rather sinister arrival he comes from the side of the divine rather than the diabolical, that convince the lady he is capable of loving her in a spiritual as well as a sexual manner. It is this profession of faith, given before both the literal and figurative “communion” of the lovers (assuming the lady’s body, the knight takes the host, immediately after which the couple consummate their *coup de foudre*) that will distinguish their union from common adulterous affairs and make it truly “blameless.”

But, interestingly, the lady's distinction and subsequent justification of her adultery, the elaboration of which takes over one hundred lines, finds no sanction in twelfth-century theology. John Baldwin gives us the theological context of Marie's stories by reminding us that in 1200 church doors throughout France were closed by papal interdict for nine months while King Philip dawdled in ending an adulterous affair (798).<sup>4</sup> Aside from the political power-play that this debate to some extent represents, it also serves to demonstrate the seriousness with which the Church took adultery, for with interdict the Pope claimed to hold in peril the fate of hundreds of thousands of souls.

Placing us squarely in this seemingly despotic theological atmosphere, Baldwin goes on to summarize and compare five discourses in sexual desire from five very different cross-sections of society, beginning at the top of the severity scale with a group of sober theologians in the Augustinian tradition, and finishing at the bottom with an irreverent writer of *fabliaux*. Focussing first on the theologians, Baldwin gives their formulation of the four principal causes or rationale for marriage: 1) for the sake of offspring, 2) rendering the marital debt between spouses, 3) avoiding fornication, and 4) fulfilling one's desires (803). The last two, it is well to remark, are sins, for wedding expressly and exclusively in order either to avoid extramarital or to enjoy intra-marital sexual relations does not pass marriage muster. Nowhere mentioned here is love; love is a justification neither for marriage nor for sexual intercourse, which, having just barely justification within marriage, has no excuse whatsoever outside of it. According to Augustine and his twelfth-century disciples, concupiscence, whether based on love or not, "recapitulated the primal disobedience and became the primordial venereal disease. Just as the first parents refused to obey God, so their genitals began to disobey rational and volitional commands" (801). The theologians regarded sexual intercourse as fundamentally sinful and so theoretically never truly blameless.

But one can easily question, and Baldwin does, the practical authority that the theologians held over the activities of the lay people, for at the same time that they are busy splitting hairs over whether sexual intercourse *within* a marriage is a mortal or just a venial sin, the characters in the *fabliaux* (and apparently the king himself) are guiltlessly and abundantly engaging in, and consummating, non-marital love affairs. In no way was Marie alone in her portrayal of unsanctioned love, although the writers of the *fabliaux* were much more brash and detail-oriented in their depiction of concupiscence, marital and otherwise. Baldwin demonstrates, as does Steven Nichols, that

the twelfth century was not an Augustinian monologue and that while the Church was very present in the lives of lay people, its prescriptions on love and sex were not necessarily heeded, as demonstrated particularly through the *fabliaux* and in courtly romance.

Yet while Marie is not alone in her representation of illicit love, she is nevertheless exceptional in that she presents many of her stories as moral directives, contrary to the designs (or lack thereof) of the writers of the *fabliaux* in their happy disregard for Church-sanctioned morality (Baldwin 806). In the prologue to her *Lais*, Marie says that such work as hers is an aid in the avoidance of vice, for the writer as well as the reader:

Ki de vice se volt defendre  
 Estudier deit e entendre  
 E grevos' ovre comencier:  
 Par [ceo] se puet plus esloignier  
 E de grant dolur delivrer.

[He who wants to defend himself from vice  
 Must study and understand  
 And begin a weighty work:  
 Through this he can better distance himself from vice  
 And deliver himself from great sorrow.] (vv. 23-27)

She puts conventional morality into juxtaposition with the "morality" demonstrated in her *Lais*, and tries to reveal, particularly through the *malmariées*, the debilitating injustice of the former and the healing justice of the latter. In both stories, the ladies are married against their wills to husbands who represent the antithesis of the worthy knight-lover, "beaus e curteis, pruz e vaillanz." These marriages are not based in love but rather upon the need to produce heirs and to make profitable mergers of territories (interestingly the first two and only sinless causes of marriage according to the theologians). There can be no mistaking where Marie's sentiments lie and which side she wishes her readers to take. Her depiction of adultery in her *Lais* is not in the interest of irreverence, as it is for the writers of the *fabliaux*, not in doing away with morality itself; rather, it is in the interest of correcting that morality and making it more harmonious with human nature, desires and emotions. Marie offers a new morality that nourishes rather than represses human nature, making it less a state to be reviled and repressed, as theologians see it, than one to be embraced and nurtured.

It should be noted, however, that the approval of adultery that Marie demonstrates in these two *Lais* does not necessarily extend to the others. In "Bisclavret," the unfaithful wife has her nose bitten off by her offended

werewolf-husband.<sup>5</sup> And in "Equitan" she is boiled alive (along with her lover, it is well to remember) for her transgression. The difference between the infidelities of these ladies and those of the *malmariées* lies in that those of the former are not incited by any mistreatment on the part of the husbands, but rather by the treachery of the wives themselves (although the husband in "Bisclavret" does neglect to tell her before she takes her vows that he is a werewolf). Adultery is only permitted to those (such as the *malmariées*) who have suffered injustice and to those (such as the bird-knight) whose characters demonstrate them worthy of love on such a high order as to transcend such conventions as the marriage ceremony. Jeanne Lods concludes that in Marie de France, "la seule morale de l'amour est l'harmonie des couples; les amours valent ce que valent les êtres qui les éprouvent" (xxiv). Morality, Marie demonstrates, is not fixed but depends on the situations and on the individual; the same act that is justifiable for the ladies in "Guigemar" and "Yonec" is not so for the wives in "Bisclavret" and "Equitan." In this way, Marie introduces in her *Lais* a notion of relativity and individuality that is rather uncharacteristic of her time and that calls into question some of its rigid universals.

In her essay on "Yonec," Denise Despres links Marie's writings with the blossoming in the late twelfth century of feminine mysticism and its notions of individual and highly personal spirituality. She sees the lady's interlude with the bird-knight as a "spiritual search for wholeness" (28) analogous to the mystics' often sexually depicted union with the divinity. She likens the appearance of the knight to a mystic vision that only transpires when its recipient is so spiritually bereft that she is open and receptive to even the fantastic (the bird-knight tells the lady "Mes ne poeie a vus venir / Ne fors de mun païs eissir, / Si vus ne me eüssez requis" ["But I could not have come to you / Nor left my country, / If you had not requested me"]) vv. 131-33). Despres argues that, as with the mystics, although nothing changes materially for the lady, she is nevertheless spiritually transformed by her love for the knight. She learns, through this love, in the ascetic tradition of the mystics, to embrace her suffering at the hand of her husband and to use it as a means to her spiritual growth (36). Her beauty is restored, and she is able to live in happiness even after the death of her lover.

While I support Despres's reading of "Yonec" in its recognition of the spiritual healing and growth represented within, I would nevertheless argue that in no way does Marie ignore the physical in her resolution; she transforms not just the lady's emotional state but her material state as well. Marie is much too practical, as Joan Brumlik also argues (7), her fantasy

too bound up in reality, to disregard her *malmariées'* physical and material troubles. As a woman in the twelfth century, Marie must have been aware of the consequences of such a transgression in her social milieu.<sup>6</sup>

Marie's *Lais* contain enough reality to convince the reader of the potential gravity of the discovery of moral transgression, and Marie's characters are never so far removed from their realities as to make them careless (Brumlik 8). In "Yonec" Marie spares the lady from the repercussions of her adultery by making the husband lose his memory of what his sister had told him about the bird-knight. The husband, also apparently forgetting his prior jealousy, no longer keeps the lady locked up in her tower but rather lets her free, we assume, to see her family and friends, thus allowing her to dispel the oppressive loneliness she had felt in the tower. Also the lady's affair with the fairy-tale knight results in her very real pregnancy and the birth of her son Yonec. He serves as a concrete reminder to her of her love for his father and as a this-worldly comfort to her. Finally, Marie includes in her plot the most human and this-worldly of all reactions to injustice, revenge. In the end, Yonec avenges his step-father's cruelty and the murder of his father by killing him. Similarly, in "Guigemar" the lady's escape from the tower to Guigemar's land represents even more of a physical escape from oppression. Marie unlocks the door of the lady's chamber to allow her to escape to the magic boat, which transports her to her lover's land and to a happier existence.

I would argue, then, that Marie's is not a "turn-the-other-cheek" morality, a passive acceptance of injustice, unlike that commonly prescribed for oppressed women of her day. When a real-life *malmariée*, Ermengarde, duchess of Brittany, sought the help of Robert of Abrisel in having her unhappy marriage dissolved, even this *procurator mulierum* counseled her to resign herself to her lot, to be a good wife and mother, and, above all, to pray (Smith 183). In Marie's *Lais*, transgressors of *her* morality (and not necessarily of conventional morality) are punished for their acts of injustice, often with the result that the victims of the evil deeds are able to live more freely and happily. In "Yonec," this formula is somewhat altered in that the lady spontaneously dies when her victimizer, her husband, is killed by her son. Yet I would maintain that Marie is nevertheless faithful to the doctrine of compensation for the victim, for in this euthanasia Marie seems to be preserving the lady from the ascetic widowhood and old age represented by the husband's sister, instead delivering her immediately to a reunion with the knight in the other world.

While "Guigemar," with the reunion of the two lovers, ends on a more traditionally happy note than "Yonec," interestingly enough, as Brumlik points out, no mention of marriage is ever made (8). We might assume that marriage is out of the question considering the marital status of the lady; but when we consider Marie's record of abuse of other moral conventions, such a move as formally uniting the two despite the husband does not seem implausible. Marie also might have killed off the pesky husband, as she does in "Milun," so as to allow the lovers to marry legitimately. But she exercises neither of these authorial rights, even though we are led to believe that Guigemar and the lady will remain together. I would propose, then, that in this case Marie rejects marriage as unnecessary meddling in a happiness that needs no institutional intervention, no doctoring from the author or from society. As Brumlik points out, Marie's objective in her *Lais* is not always to re-integrate her alienated characters back into society, as demonstrated in particular by the final flight of the two lovers in "Lanval" (8). But in "Guigemar" she does not furnish the hero and his lady with an escape to Avalon; it seems rather that they will stay together in the "real" (if fictional) world (as will, we must assume, the lady's husband). And so with this "this-worldly" ending in particular, Marie proposes her brand of morality not simply as something to be realized in the next world but as workable in this one.

Marie's refusal in "Yonec" and "Guigemar" to accept separate moralities for reality and fantasy, this world and the next, indicates also a refusal to accept the separation of mind and body that twelfth-century theology espoused. This mind/body separation served as a basis for another most important distinction, that between man and woman (Bloch 23-24). Mind, the superior of the two elements, equalled other-worldly, spiritual, rational, man; while body equalled this-worldly, carnal, irrational, woman. But Marie constantly confounds the real and the fantastic, the body and the imagination (the mind), both in her *Lais* and within the souls of her characters. The lady in "Yonec" is human and yet able to use the power of her imagination to summon the bird-knight; the bird-knight is divine yet human enough to impregnate the lady. The lady in "Guigemar" is fantastic yet human enough to be integrated into courtly life; Guigemar is human yet finds solutions to his troubles in the fantastic. Many of Marie's characters, whether male or female, contain both worldly and other-worldly elements, and it is exactly this internal duality in each that allows the union of each couple and the fulfillment of the love within it. Marie thus merges human, sexual love with divine, spiritual love, and, in doing so, renders the body/mind dichotomy

inoperative. In representing human love as a form of or precursor to divine love, Marie refutes the theologians' precept that that which is corporeal, sensual, concupiscent (i.e., woman) is inherently evil.

In opposition to the somewhat radical flavor that I am ascribing to Marie's writings, Charles Brucker, in the introduction to his edition of Marie's *Fables*, argues that Marie is essentially conservative in her social and political outlook and so conceives of a justice "dont la première fonction est de restaurer l'harmonie du corps social par le compromis et la conciliation, et non pas d'assigner les responsabilités et de châtier les coupables" (xxvi). But it is well to note that in half of Marie's *Lais*, the villainous or the foolish get their just desserts for their misdeeds, by way of either humiliation or death. And even in the *Fables* her frequent condemnation of the rulers or the rich who misuse their power<sup>7</sup> attests to her antipathy toward the accepted social order. If Marie is conservative, her "conservatism" lies in her desire to recover from society a basic justice that transcends that artificial (if necessary) construct, whether that justice be in favor of the unappreciated *seigneur*, the falsely-accused *vilein* (peasant), the browbeaten husband, or the tyrannized wife. Marie sees fools and tyrants in all social classes and among both sexes. Her *Lais* do not offer a standard morality, a set rule for behaviour, for her treatment of a particular transgression is too varied for us to arrive at a single "moral of the story." Marie has no formula for her morality—hers is what Lods calls a *morale indécise* (xxvi). She sides with him (or more often with her) who has been done wrong according to an organic justice that depends on the natural rather than on the institutional.

But in the end, as Lods notes, there seems to be more psychology than morality in Marie's *Lais* (xxvi). Her *malmariées* react to assaults upon their emotional well-being, using both their minds (their imaginations) and their bodies to free themselves. Through her portraits of the *malmariée*, Marie states her case for the profundity of women's emotional and spiritual capacities, capacities that had always been denied or reduced to predictable categories. In religious matters, her women demonstrate surprising independence of mind, in that by looking inward (rather than exclusively outward toward society) they design a "morality" that is conducive rather than destructive to their natures and their happiness and that is consequently often at odds with the morality of their societies. These ladies' anger is portrayed as a natural, human reaction to injustice and not the predictable ranting of the universal woman described in theological and other discourses of the time.<sup>8</sup> They are three—rather than two-dimensional, neither angels nor devils, virgins (God knows) nor whores. Marie's *malmariées* cannot be

submitted to that process of appraisal that Howard Bloch says has "reduced women to the status of a category . . . [and] whose function was . . . the division of women from history by the annihilation of the identity of the individual" (196-97). But ultimately it is for men as well as for women, for all individuals, that Marie renders personal feelings such as loneliness, alienation, frustration, and injustice significant and so legitimizes discontent and action taken to allay these feelings. In a highly authoritarian and de-personalized society, Marie proposes that personal happiness and well-being matter. She unlocks the doors to the ebony towers and lets the *malmariées*, both the literal and the figurative, escape and run down to the sea.

Northwestern University

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All such references to Marie's work are from Ewert. The English translations are mine, but I have used the Hanning and Ferrante translation as a reference.

<sup>2</sup> In Marie's *Lais*, justice generally prevails with punishment duly accorded to the wicked and compensation or revenge to the good. In the two *Lais* already mentioned, as well as in "Laustic," "Chevrefoil," and "Milun," the moral of the story turns in favour of the married lady who loves another man, indicating that Marie's definitions of "good" and "wicked" are not necessarily dictated by conventional morality.

<sup>3</sup> Here it is interesting to note that if we were not already quite sure that the writer of these *lais* was a woman, this acquittal of Eve at the expense of her husband might serve to convince us!

<sup>4</sup> The issue of the king's infidelities is obviously more complicated than suggested here, but only the above points serve the present argument.

<sup>5</sup> According to Shulamith Shahar, under Frederick II of Sicily (1194-1250), the penalty for adultery for a woman (and not a man) was having her nose cut off (18).

<sup>6</sup> Shahar argues that, although most likely no one was cutting off noses in France around 1200, punishment for a woman was nevertheless often more severe than for her male partner, as the legitimacy of inheritance had to be safeguarded (107).

<sup>7</sup> See fables 2, 4, and 6 (54, 66, 70).

<sup>8</sup> Marie illustrates this conception of "woman" as a two-dimensional entity by giving Guigemar trouble in recognizing the love of his life when she appears in Meriaduc's court. Can't be her, he shrugs, "Femmes se ressemblent asez" ["Women all look quite alike"] (v. 779). Intelligence never does appear on Marie's list of knightly virtues.

#### WORKS CITED

- Baldwin, John W. "Five Discourses on Desire: Sexuality and Gender in Northern France around 1200." *Speculum* 66 (1991): 797-819.
- Bloch, R. Howard. *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991.

- Brucker, Charles, ed. *Les fables*. By Marie de France. Louvain: Peeters, 1991.
- Brumlik, Joan. "Thematic Irony in Marie de France's 'Guigemar'." *French Forum* 13 (1988): 5-16.
- Caluwé, Jacques De. "L'élément chrétien dans les *Lais* de Marie de France." *Mélanges de littérature du moyen âge au XXe siècle offerts à Jeanne Lods*. Collection de l'École Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles 10 Paris: 1978.
- Chrétien de Troyes. *Cligés*. Ed. A. Micha. Paris, 1957.
- Despres, Denise L. "Redeeming the Flesh: Spiritual Transformation in Marie de France's 'Yonec.'" *Studia Mystica* 10.3 (1987): 26-39.
- Evans, Dafydd. "Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes and the *Malmariées*." *Chrétien de Troyes and the Troubadours*. Ed. Peter S. Noble and Linda M. Paterson. Cambridge: St. Catherine's College, 1984. 159-71.
- Flori, Jean. "Seigneurie, noblesse et chevalerie dans les *Lais* de Marie de France." *Romania* 108 (1987): 183-206.
- Gold, Penny Schine. *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985.
- Hanning, Robert and Joan Ferrante, trans. *The Lais of Marie de France*. Durham: Labyrinth, 1982.
- Lods, Jeanne, ed. *Les lais de Marie de France*. Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1959.
- Marie de France. *Lais*. Ed. Alfred Ewert. Oxford: Blackwell, 1960.
- Nichols, Steven G. "An Intellectual Anthropology of Marriage in the Middle Ages." *The New Medievalism*. Ed. Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991. 70-98.
- Shahar, Shulamith. *The Fourth Estate: A history of women in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Chaya Galai. New York: Methuen, 1983.
- Smith, Jacqueline. "Robert of Abrissel: *Procurator Mulierum*." *Medieval Women*. Ed. Derek Baker. Oxford: Blackwell, 1978. 175-84. Vol. 1 of *Studies in Church History*. 8 vols. 1978-91.