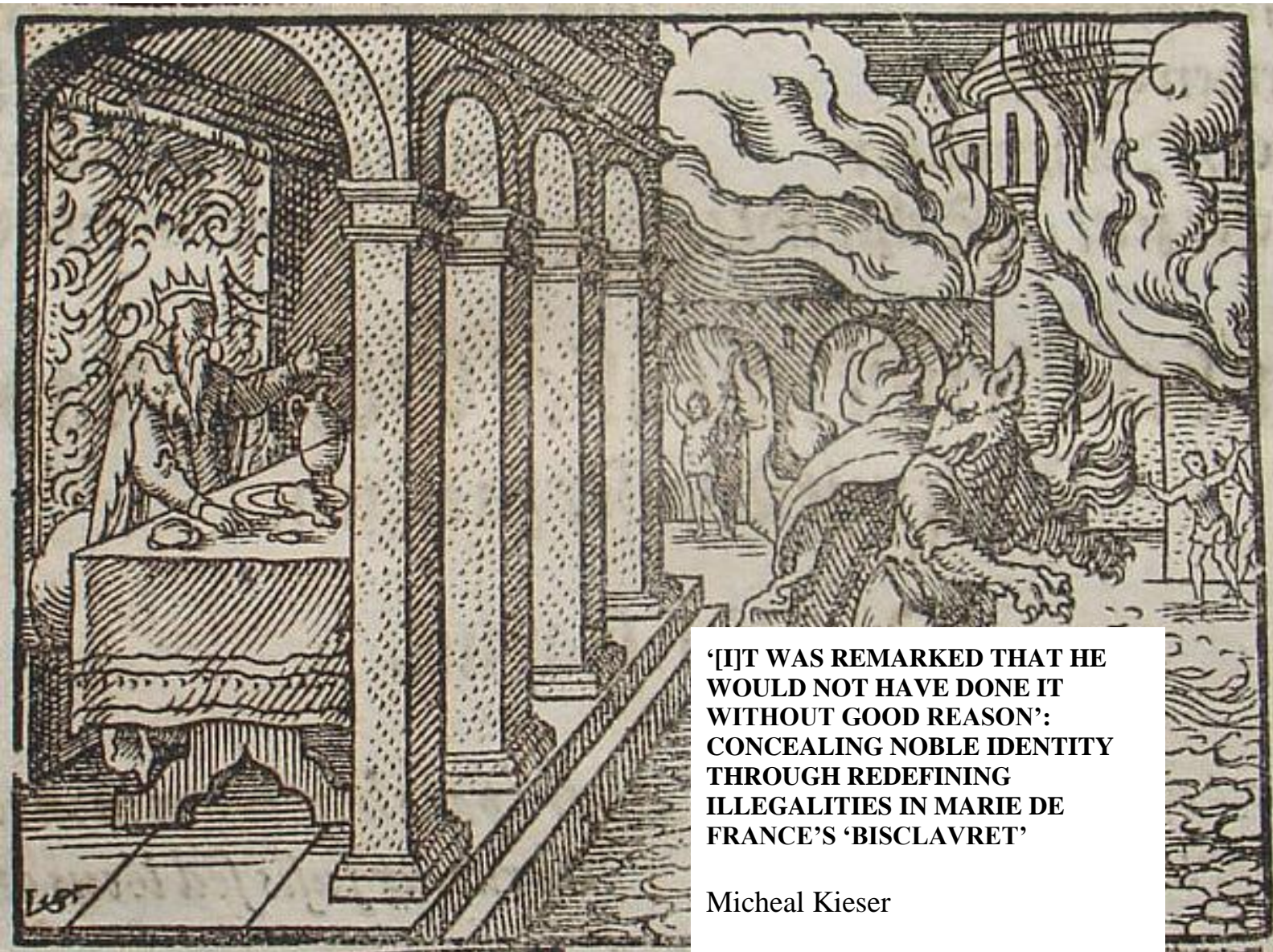


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**‘[I]T WAS REMARKED THAT HE  
WOULD NOT HAVE DONE IT  
WITHOUT GOOD REASON’:  
CONCEALING NOBLE IDENTITY  
THROUGH REDEFINING  
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FRANCE’S ‘BISCLAVRET’**

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Image: King Lycaon changed into a wolf by Zeus. Engraving by Virgil  
Solis for Ovid's Metamorphoses Book I, 209-243. Fol. 5r, image 8

# **‘[I]T WAS REMARKED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT GOOD REASON’: CONCEALING NOBLE IDENTITY THROUGH TRANSLATING ILLEGALITIES IN MARIE DE FRANCE’S ‘BISCLAVRET’**

*Micheal Kieser*

## **Abstract**

In ‘Bisclavret’, a noble’s wife and king each employ classical Christian reading strategies to determine if the base, monstrous nature of a werewolf or the virtuous, reasoning nature of an ideal nobleman is dominant when an enraged baron bites off his wife’s nose and savagely attacks her lover.<sup>1</sup> Since the werewolf lacks the ability to use speech, they resort to classical Christian reading strategies that required acknowledgment that ‘below the language one is reading and deciphering, there r[uns] the sovereignty of an original Text’ when knowledge gleaned from literal words on a text’s pages threatened dogma.<sup>2</sup> Differences in their focuses upon the body or the soul (the original Text), based at times upon the threat the lycanthropy posed, resulted in drastically different readings of Bisclavret’s actions. These differences, their corresponding adjustments in reading strategies and their implications highlight the feudal elite’s appropriation of hermeneutic strategies to elide illegalities. By doing so, the court marginalises individuals who threaten to expose the arbitrariness of feudal juridical power and constructed nature of supposedly natural definitions of noble identity.

**Key Words:** Marie de France, Bisclavret, illegality, disfigurement, translation, identity, nobility, gender, court ritual

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In ‘Bisclavret’, the eponymous man / noble / werewolf ‘successfully takes revenge’ for his wife’s ‘betrayal’ and apparent infidelity by ‘[tearing] the nose right off her face.’<sup>3</sup> His action permanently disfigures her, and some of her future descendants are born without noses. After the savage attack, the lai’s feudal court justifies the beast’s actions in terms of high medieval French revenge culture when an advisor implies the wife’s guilt by stating ‘he has some grudge against her.’<sup>4</sup> As such, scholars are often quick to identify Bisclavret’s ‘rage [as] not that of the werewolf [but] the understandably human and feudal desire for vengeance, the appropriate punishment [for the] wife’s betrayal.’<sup>5</sup> Select twelfth and thirteenth century French romance genre conventions, which are interspersed in Marie’s lais, appear to support this understanding.<sup>6</sup> High medieval Old French romances typically reaffirmed conservative aristocratic court values and ‘traditional gender roles’ through representing main female characters as monstrous, seductive and deceitful.<sup>7</sup> Chretien de Troyes, Marie’s contemporary, for one, demonstrates this in the romance *The Knight of the Cart* where the protagonist Lancelot attempts to maintain virtue while contending with a hostess who will only admit him into her home if he has unchaste sex with her.<sup>8</sup> Of course, there are representations that seemingly defy this trope, but even the most progressive gendered depictions in romances often introduce evil or lustful wives who challenge protagonists’ abilities to demonstrate chivalric virtue or positive representations of love. In the thirteenth century romance *Silence*, for instance, the understanding of gender is overtly portrayed, in part, as an artificial problem of rhetoric and grammar when the female protagonist is reintroduced into society as a woman after being re-clothed with her name changed from ‘Silentius’ to ‘Silentia.’<sup>9</sup> Prior to this reintroduction, she transcends typical gendered roles and tropes while successfully performing as a man; however, a personified Nature proclaims Silentia as her ‘masterpiece’ and thus she is exceptional rather than representing women generally.<sup>10</sup> Later, the romance

reaffirms gendered conventions when a chancellor indicates the following regarding the evil intent of the lusty queen: 'A wise man's reason can achieve little / against a woman who wants to deceive [...]. A woman is always quick / to think of something clever in such circumstances. / She is much quicker at finding ways to harm a man / than at thinking up something beneficial.'<sup>11</sup>

In more than one instance in 'Bisclavret,' the narrator adopts language invoking the familiar trope of wife as an antagonist.<sup>12</sup> Despite this, I contend that the lai's structure and juxtaposition of the wife and king's differing translations of the werewolf's body, both of which are dependent upon the same classical reading strategies, challenge the legitimacy of the court's feudal justice. The king and his advisors' reading of Bisclavret's form and his actions preserves monarchical influence and noble identity while using the act of translation to eliminate, conceal, or marginalise a threat to royal juridical power. Finally, the lai temporarily inverts gender and class roles revealing weaknesses within supposedly natural hierarchical social categories and male-dominated discourses of knowledge.

### Translating Tradition

In the lai's opening, the narrator draws attention to inherited storytelling traditions by pointing to received knowledge of known 'ferocious' werewolf qualities.<sup>13</sup> The introduction's 'zoological portrait' has been identified as a departure point from established definitions of the creatures' monstrous nature as some critics contend that the narrator will 'never again speak of werewolves' while pointing out that there is 'no murderous werewolf in the lai.'<sup>14</sup> What little is understood of the author confounds marginalising this important element of the text; Marie's writings reveal that she was well versed in ancient rhetorical techniques, increasingly a subject of study in the late twelfth century.<sup>15</sup> In the 'General Prologue,' for instance, the narrator tells the reader that 'it was customary for the ancients, in the books which they wrote (Priscian testifies to this), to express themselves very obscurely so that those in later generations, who had to learn them, could provide a gloss for the text and put the finishing touches to their meaning.'<sup>16</sup> The passage is more than a boastful display of privileged knowledge; it reveals an understanding of a hermeneutic approach that often required the reader to look below the surface of the text, a point I will return to later. It also demonstrates a familiarity with the aforementioned schools of rhetoric which Marie's contemporaries often employed in analyses of ideas.

The lai structurally employs a forensic rhetorical debate to help an audience determine if Bisclavret's violence is either an administration of justice or a simple, vicious animalist attack. Forensic rhetoric, like other forms of ancient rhetoric and dialectic, was concerned with garnering a greater understanding of ideas that were generally accepted as true but not universally.<sup>17</sup> However, its primary purpose was to determine through debate the just or unjust nature of a past action.<sup>18</sup> The difficulty, though, in determining the just or unjust nature of the bisclavret's actions is not the availability of evidence. Elements of ethos, pathos and logos are combined when the lai discusses the details of the attack, provides witnesses, gives allusions to revenge culture, and even provides definitions of virtue and vice through the opening definitions of werewolf and noble. Rather, and as I will explain in more detail later, the difficulty relates to the immediate implications of any finding. If the court determines he has acted justly, it must reconcile the act of reason with the wolf's commonly understood passion-driven nature; however, if the court finds he has acted unjustly, the bonds of loyalty within the feudal system are hardly enough to contain an erratic creature that has been identified by the king and court as noble. Furthermore, mistakenly identifying the wolf as a noble upsets the social hierarchy, an interest all men have regarding 'maintenance of the social order.'<sup>19</sup>

Although the lai's primary concern relates to the possibility of the dual nature of the noble (not the common man), the narrator initially establishes the werewolf and noble separately with language that would not cause a reader to doubt the heterogeneity of these definitions.<sup>20</sup> When the narrator explores the definition of werewolves, she does allude to different signifiers used across cultures when stating that the lai's title in Breton is Bisclavret 'while the Normans call it Garwaf.'<sup>21</sup> Yet, rather than provide two separate definitions or contexts, she provides a solitary account. As such, it is tempting to understand the opening definition as static across cultures, languages, and geographic boundaries with the word in each language naturally corresponding to an idea that it is tied to. The lai also spatially separates ideas of nobility and monstrous werewolves; lines 1-14 are exclusively focused upon lycanthropes. Before introduction of the baron, the narrator states that werewolves are ferocious, 'devour men, cause great damage, and dwell in forests.'<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, they are akin to madmen.<sup>23</sup>

After discussing the werewolf, the narrator focuses upon the aforementioned exemplum of noble identity.<sup>24</sup> Once again, the definition does not overtly introduce doubt. She states that the baron was 'a good and handsome knight', and was 'one of his lord's closest advisers and was well loved by all his neighbours.'<sup>25</sup> Given this enumeration and the fact that he was 'greatly praised,' 'loved by all,' and his social role is lauded, it is clear that he is accepted, at least initially, as an embodiment of the definition of noble virtue.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, the nature of a werewolf's mutability challenges the understanding of nobility for any reader who believes that it is 'impossible for the same thing to be and not to be' opposite things at the same time.<sup>27</sup> While the lai's opening suggests that ordinary men can change into werewolves, the excessive description of noble identity makes it difficult to argue that an individual can remain noble and be a werewolf possessed by madness at once, a point many critics have indicated that the lai does. Certainly, subjects can at different points carry contrary qualities. Aristotle indicates that 'it seems a most distinctive mark of substance that what is numerically one and the same is able to receive contraries.'<sup>28</sup> However, it is essential that while something is 'capable of admitting contrary qualities' that it '*retain[s] its identity*' and the contrary qualities are not present at the same time.<sup>29</sup> In other words, a human can be rational at times and ruled by passions at others; however, observers will still recognise them as human based upon essential qualities found in a definition of being human.<sup>30</sup> However, the quality of being noble introduced in the exemplum, predicated upon virtue and fealty, precludes the possibility of being overcome by passions.<sup>31</sup> A common man can change into a wolf; however, to argue that a noble can, while retaining his or her virtues that identify him or her as noble, is to find contrary qualities present in the same thing at the same time.

Since something cannot simultaneously both be and not be, 'Bisclavret's' opening lines question the king's court, as well as the baron's wife's, interpretation of the noble / werewolf's actions. One or both of the received definitions alone are inadequate. In doing so, a contemporary reader would necessarily explore the cultural assumptions relating to the dominance of the higher (man / noble / reason) nature and the lower (animal / base / Bisclavret) nature. As such the nature of the Bisclavret, nobility, and perhaps even a categorical definition itself, whether one focuses upon the surface or looks beyond it, is thus placed as a problem of hermeneutics and reading in the tradition of *translatio*. Paula Clifford identifies the twelfth century practice of *translatio*, as a 'creative retelling,' [and a] weaving together of 'familiar symbols and allusions from disparate sources,' to create something new out of something old.<sup>32</sup> As stated before, the structure of the lai's opening appears to reinforce the motivated nature of the sign, the natural relationship between the word and the object represented, across and within the respective cultures. However, Marie's allusion to glossing, also discussed earlier in reference to the 'General Prologue,' infers ideas like the opening definition have been created through translation rather than a simple restatement. In other words, Marie's techniques highlight the arbitrariness of signs which are affirmed, developed,



or rejected based upon dialectic and cultural mediation. Marie's use of this technique means that new meaning is developed through examination of the old definitions. As such, the understanding of what is under analysis, in this case the definition, is subject to change.

As I will discuss shortly, while Marie uses the practice of *translatio* to uncover new meaning, her characters employ classical reading strategies to understand what the main character's transformation means in terms of received knowledge. In the classical Christian traditions from which *translatio* derived, gleaning new meanings from old traditional narratives to understand the contemporary world was also an ethical imperative as hidden discourses of knowledge within a text awaited revelation that could be used, amongst other things, to help bring an individual closer to God.<sup>33</sup> Like *translatio*, exegesis was an act of translation from which a scholar would attempt to uncover hidden truths embedded within a work's body. Saint Augustine of Hippo, late antiquity Roman theologian, equates pagan text interpretation to a literary 'cleansing' or 'conversion' that separates the 'morally acceptable and technically useful' parts of a work from the dangerous ones.<sup>34</sup> As such, he indicates readers should apply the exegetical techniques used to uncover hidden meaning in Christian writings to secular texts to avoid falling into error. It is important to reiterate that Marie overtly states that this same hermeneutical approach was used by 'ancients,' not just Christian theologians' who wrote 'obscurely' to allow others to gloss the texts while also inferring that their contemporaries were familiar with and used the same hermeneutic strategies.<sup>35</sup> These practices also had moral implications that applied to contemporaries as Marie states that anyone 'wishing to guard against vice' was required to 'study intently and undertake a demanding task, whereby one [could] ward off and rid oneself of great suffering.'<sup>36</sup>

The problem in this system, as with identifying the nature of Bisclavret, is knowing when to apply literal or figurative reading techniques to the text or body. This also begs the question whether the reading modes are mutually exclusive. In other words, if we search for hidden meaning, do we ignore the text's surface or body? Augustine indicated that at times the body of a text could prove deceitful when read literally, but it was not always the case that to 'stop at the signifier' resulted in a misreading.<sup>37</sup> In *On Christian Teaching*, Augustine acknowledges that classical texts created complex semiotic systems requiring considerable intellectual energy to render them intelligible. At times, a text's page seemed to address issues that aligned with Christian thought. However, understanding through these methods was at other times confounded by rules of faith and problems of contradiction when the surface meaning seemed antithetical to Christian doctrine. To remedy this, Augustine warned against always pursuing 'a figurative [...] expression as if it were literal' or always accepting 'a literal one as if it were figurative' through adhering to the following general maxim: 'anything in divine discourse that cannot be related either to good morals or to the true faith should be taken as figurative.'<sup>38</sup> Pagan texts could clarify or help a Christian understand religion, but the hermeneutical approach infers an at least partially closed system in which meaning is always already derived before an encounter with a text. The exegete's job seemed to be to simply rediscover what could support, but not challenge outright, existing Christian dogma by finding the most useful formula whether upon the surface of a page or buried in textual obscurity. The approach, then, was graduated starting with the lowest level of analytics. Theologians would find meaning to reaffirm existing discourses of knowledge when the surface presented a threat to matters that were identified as unchallengeable, or create new ones only when it was not antithetical to existing beliefs. To be clear, I am not suggesting that the lai is contending with primarily theological concerns. The question of the savage or reasonable man does admittedly have implications regarding Bisclavret's mortal soul; however, my focus is upon how Marie uses the technique of *translatio* in her narrative to create new meaning and how some characters in the lai use classical traditions of reading a text (or body) to reaffirm understanding of contemporary class and gender roles.

Given this look into classical reading practices and their implications, the question becomes: Is there any knowledge that society views as unshakeable and worth defending that is always already present in 'Bisclavret', and if so, what is it? I will spend the remainder of this essay answering these questions and how noble identity and the king's control over juridical power is challenged and even subverted in the process.

### **Subversively Fulfilling Her Duty**

To explore the seemingly antithetical concepts – noble man and savage beast – the lai strongly highlights differing interpretations of the bisclavret's body: the wife's, the king's and the baron's nominally. After establishing the aforementioned exemplum of the baron as the noble archetype, the two opening definitions uncomfortably and immediately clash when the baron tells his wife that he is not just the virtuous noble she has loved but a werewolf who goes 'about completely naked,' lives in 'the deepest part of the wood,' and feeds off of prey.<sup>39</sup> At first he is less than forthcoming, fearing that 'as a result [he] shall lose [her] love and destroy [himself].'<sup>40</sup> Much like the penetrating male reader into the female body of a text, though, the wife probes him 'repeatedly and coax[es] him so persuasively that he [tells] her his story.'<sup>41</sup> Notably, in doing so, she applies Augustinian hermeneutic principles since accepting her husband as both noble and monstrous, given his identity and the received definition of werewolf, threatens understanding of nobility and thus the distinctions between those who fight (nobles) and those who work (the common man); the two ideas, virtuous nobleman and werewolf, are and must be separate. The baron's reluctance to tell this secret, the only time he has access to language in the lai, reveals a cathexis concerning his unstable identity in a categorical system based upon social acceptance. Even before the subsequent transformation, the reader is provided indicators, which reinforce the wife's fear and the bisclavret definition as encapsulating the baron's dominant nature; similarities to the monster are evident, differing only in degree.<sup>42</sup> For instance, the wife suggests prior experience of her husband's wrath and propensity for violence when she states that 'there is nothing I fear more than your anger.'<sup>43</sup> This anger is left decontextualized leaving the reader only knowledge of emotion, or passion, where reason is void. Furthermore, the reader only knows that the baron's ire is so extent that the wife fears it above all else in the world and that weekly he 'was absent for three full days without her knowing what became of him or where he went, and no one in the household knew what happened to him.'<sup>44</sup> While the baron is a 'good and handsome knight who conducted himself nobly' the text contrarily states that frequent absences from his manor were common and loss of emotional control occurred.<sup>45</sup> As such, the wife's reading of her husband's transformation not only conforms to classical Christian hermeneutic techniques, but it demonstrates practicality given the threat of animalistic domestic violence as I will explain further later.

As previously suggested, the narrative challenges both gendered roles and conventional reading practices when the baron's anxiety reveals he only conditionally has control over his bodily transformation. The variations in translations highlight a troubling truth for the baron; in one translation, the husband states his primary fear in not telling his dreadful secret is a 'great harm [that] will come to [him], for as a result [he] shall lose [her] love and destroy [himself].'<sup>46</sup> However, in another version these lines are translated as '[h]arm will come to me if I tell you about this, because I'd lose your love and even my very self.'<sup>47</sup> While the first does suggest suicide resulting from despair as one possibility, the second carries a strong variant of this through words that connote a loss of ability to reason. Not only does his secret threaten his identity as a human with a soul, but also his noble identity. A reader would expect the baron, near the apex of society, to symbolically bestow identity upon others. As such, his identity should remain stable, and a failure to control it questions the naturalness of this masculine gendered role. He reveals to his wife that if he lost his clothes 'and were

discovered in that state, I should remain a werewolf forever. No one would be able to help me until they were returned to me.’<sup>48</sup> In essence, to regain human form requires an external societal acknowledgement with a form of investiture.

The transformation is also embroiled in a repetitious pattern. Although the alteration process is largely concealed, the limited actions represented may be the baron’s own attempt to ritualise the metamorphosis which will fulfil his lack of control over male self-definition and identity. If this is his intent and he is successful, the transformation act is changed from pure physicality to one contained and made legible by meaning gleaned in figurative translation through ritualised performance. In effect, it becomes a method to allow the baron to maintain control over his body by interpreting his own condition. At first glance, his description appears to possess the elements of ritual. Ritual characteristics include ceremonial behaviour marking transformation or change and invoking communally held values or ‘sacred forces’ framed spatially and temporally with rules that make it repeatable and predictable.<sup>49</sup> During his confession the baron admits a recurring practice of placing his clothes under a bush within a hollowed out stone near an old chapel before entering the woods as a *Bbisclavret*.<sup>50</sup> Other critics have also highlighted the ritualistic behaviour in the lai; the change of the man into wolf and his later exhibition of animalistic violence has been related to an attempt to collapse difference between the two forms of the body represented through Eucharistic ritual.<sup>51</sup> Regardless, when describing the transformation’s relationship to ritualised practices at this point, the details fail to adequately provide symbolic meaning for the change in context of human reason or maintain the noble and masculine identity separate from the bestial. If there is a secret that allows the baron to make his transformation legible in these terms it is known only to himself and fails as a signifier within any social semiotic network.

Whereas the Eucharist ritual entails acceptance and inclusion of the participant into the body and Church of Christ, the baron’s practice is hidden and concealed leaving it meaningless and inaccessible to a community, which does not participate or watch. At best, he only reveals his secrets through confession linking it to the admission of sin; Critic S. Foster Damon has suggested that the physical proximity of the bush next to the chapel suggests the practices he performs are an act of confession allowing him to cleanse himself of sin upon return to society.<sup>52</sup> It thus ritually draws him from the wilderness into the community. Certainly, the confession ritual required some privacy. Contemporary Catholic confessional norms, later codified as sacraments in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, required all Christians to take part in the ritual with their parish priest.<sup>53</sup> However, any attempt to relate the baron’s actions to a successful confession must also take into account the ‘old’ and ‘hollow’ adjectives that suggest the old chapel’s vacancy and emptiness rather than either a communal gathering or possible confession to a clergy member. While the baron’s isolation, which is reflected in the description of the physical environment, is understandable from an anachronistic Protestant viewpoint based upon an individual’s direct relationship to God, the Catholic Church’s confessional requirement was predicated upon a necessary mediator between the individual and the deity. As such, if the baron’s act is an attempt at ritualised confession, the hiddenness and complete lack of even an individual member of the community infers it has no hope of success.

The confession ritual is still important; the baron’s reluctant revelation to his wife functions as a form of confession. His fear suggests that despite his attempts to control identity through possession and safekeeping of the clothes, the wife has gained the male discursive power to define or name beasts such as originally granted to Adam. Thus, the initial understanding of the werewolf in the exemplum is challenged through a type of confessional in which the wife assumes the masculine role of parish priest in getting her husband to reveal his hidden narrative. Michel Foucault indicated that the ritual of confession

conferred power upon the listener to define through interpretation.<sup>54</sup> By assuming the clerical role, the wife inverts typical power relations within the medieval domestic space through appropriation of the social function relating to control over the creation of discourses of power. The husband's continual reluctance to divulge the details concerning his transformation are related to his loss of the ability to provide an interpretation of his own body that is taken with any degree of legitimacy.

As alluded to earlier, the wife's actions are not just in keeping with hermeneutic traditions but are prudent given safety concerns. The allusions to possible domestic violence, the husband's description of his animalistic qualities as a werewolf, and the opening definitions are combined in her judgement with experience. At one point, the narrator relates that she 'heard this remarkable revelation and her face became flushed with fear. She was greatly alarmed by the story, and began to consider various means of parting from him, as she no longer wished to lie with him.'<sup>55</sup> Although Foucault warns of the danger associated with the creation or use of discourses of knowledge with juridical power to repress practices identified as 'useless energies [...] and irregular modes of behaviour,' the wife's actions in light of the aforementioned knowledge and experience must be viewed as a method to protect herself from animalistic violence.<sup>56</sup> She is afraid, but more importantly her passionate response is balanced with clear reasoning capabilities.<sup>57</sup>

As already stated, the wife accomplishes her reasoning first through the literary translation of Bisclavret's mutable form by comparing her knowledge of him before the revelation with his own description of his characteristics after change. In doing so, she realises and is horrified to discover no difference between the description of the condition her husband provides, her implied experience of his wrath, and the opening definition of a bisclavret. Recognising the danger he presents through an essence that is always monstrous, she steals his clothes knowing that he will be banished or exiled into the woods forever demonstrating her appropriation of juridical power. The narrator condemns her while indicating that the act was a betrayal.<sup>58</sup> Yet, the context of the act is important. As Emanuel J. Mickel adroitly points out, in Marie's *lais* characters commit 'crime[s]' or 'suffer misfortune' 'when love dominates reason and the will.'<sup>59</sup> Sin has often been defined as the 'inversion of the natural relationship between the soul and the body through passion.'<sup>60</sup> One of the critical questions in this work, then, is whether the representations of love are dominated by reason or passion. Based upon the narrator's comment and the wife's eventual misfortune, it is tempting to quickly judge her as just another example of an evil, conniving wife in keeping with contemporary romance tropes. However, the context the narrator provides is noteworthy in creating doubt regarding her condemnation when she relates that the wife 'sent a messenger to summon a knight who lived in the region and who had loved her for a long time [...] *she had never loved him or promised him her affection*, but now she told him what was on her mind.'<sup>61</sup> Critics commonly focus upon this as supporting the adultery theme while suggesting that the wife received what she deserved after promising the knight 'her body.'<sup>62</sup> Matilda Bruckner describes the eventual desecration of her face based upon this betrayal as 'within the limits of human justice' and possibly even an act of mercy given that portrayal of justice for adultery in folktales commonly involved a penalty of death.<sup>63</sup> I will return to the use of justice later, but here it is important, as stated before, to reflect upon the portrayal of love as driven by passion or reason. The wife's commitment to the knight is hardly one driven by simple animalistic passion; it is based upon reason in regards to self-preservation. Furthermore, while the wife's promise of 'her body' suggests adultery in one sense, laws regarding sexuality and her husband's inhuman qualities create doubt regarding how this promise relates to infidelity.<sup>64</sup>

One can hardly justify fornication between human and beast within the context of canonical sex laws. Scholar James Brundage indicates that the 'bestly' position was considered 'inappropriate for human beings.'<sup>65</sup> It was a position reserved for animals.



Furthermore the nakedness of the werewolf, conflicted with prohibitions mandating intercourse be performed with clothing on.<sup>66</sup> Notably, the narrator uses the word 'beast' on multiple occasions, the previously loving wife overtly indicating a motivation to develop her plan with the knight not as a passion, as previously stated, but as a new found lack of desire to 'lie with' the lycanthropic husband.<sup>67</sup> While analysing medieval and specifically twelfth century analysis of the Pauline letters, Margaret McGlynn and Richard Moll point out that 'in marriage, the wife's body belonged to the husband, as the husband's body belonged to the wife. Because of the conjugal debt, neither could refuse sex to the other, since this could lead the spurned partner into fornication and thus into sin.'<sup>68</sup> As such, if the husband ever desired sex with her in his transformed state, the wife would be unable to live chastely whether she accepted (causing her to have sex with an animal) or denying him in keeping with a Christian wife's duty. Of course, there is no overt indication that the wife had experienced deviant sex with her husband, but the association of the werewolf with 'madness' at some points in the lai makes him by definition unpredictable as the king's court will eventually learn and repress.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, by executing these actions, at times by proxy, the wife mocks societal structures by fulfilling the same social expectations inherent in her role relating to the gendered mind / body and masculine / feminine dichotomies. Within the medieval family, the gendered function of the wife, in part, was to demonstrate and assist her partner to affirm the notion that the physical body, the feminine, had been mastered by the reasoning masculine soul. It was the male body that was a site on which this ideological jostling was reaffirmed. There was a Christian anxiety relating to the unruly body (woman) 'which is distinct and inferior to [the soul], and dependent on it for life itself.'<sup>70</sup> A man's mastery over his own body was an ethical and social imperative. In 'Bisclavret,' the wife does not fail to take measures to help her husband master his dilemma. As I explain, and other critics have inferred, the wife notices no difference between the baron's human and beastly forms.<sup>71</sup> By stealing her husband's clothes, the wife assists him in overcoming the mutability of his form by stabilizing his body.

These factors demonstrate that if the wife 'betrayed' her husband by marrying the knight, she did it in conformance with prescribed contemporary norms, mores, established religious thought, and concern for personal safety. In doing so, she subverts social categories from which she is typically excluded, performing in her role as the baron's wife and citizen within his feudal demesne. Through combining her feminine and literal reading of her husband's anger and also as a masculine presence, a deeper reading of her husband's confession of the (fe)male werewolf's body may be read.

### **Hermeneutically Erasing Crime and Protecting Identity**

The lai juxtaposes the wife's reading of the werewolf's body against the royal court's purely figurative ones. Thus, the contrast reveals manipulation of discourse to maintain hegemonic dominance in the domestic and social spheres through means of categorisation and labelling which are simultaneously violent, oppressive and arbitrary. During the king's first encounter with Bisclavret, his initial fear mirrors that of the wife's. Whereas the wife's face 'became flushed with fear,' 'the king saw [Bisclavret] and was filled with dread.'<sup>72</sup> There is little doubt that he does not look beyond the surface level of the body while remembering the accepted tradition regarding the beast. Up to this point, the king, dogs and hunters had 'spent the whole day in pursuit of him until they were just about to capture him, tear him to pieces, and destroy him.'<sup>73</sup> Although the werewolf's physical description is not provided, its effects can be inferred: the transformed state of Bisclavret is so complete that neither animal nor human could visibly see any excess indicating he might be human and not beast.

However, the king's identification of Bisclavret changes after the werewolf approaches and kisses his foot and leg. Since he knows that this is a 'ferocious beast' known to 'devour men' his response to physical contact serves as a defence mechanism to repress the

knowledge of the creature's rage which simultaneously displays some knowledge of courtly ritual. Hanning and Ferante's translation is suggestive as the king exclaims: 'This beast is rational – he has a mind.'<sup>74</sup> At this point, the king stops reading at the literal or surface level of the beast's body and attempts to translate the wolf's actions as a type of language through codes of courtly conduct. The deferential fealty act becomes an unquestionable signifier that transcends any received werewolf definition predicated upon madness and ignores that nakedness signifies the opposite of nobility – savagery. His reading of fealty thus turns the possibility of a potential fatal encounter with a monster into one which reaffirms his mastery over the effeminised body of a beast and nature alike. Accordingly, after interpreting the action as homage, his declaration indicates the creature's human-like nature and potential for salvation.

After sparing Bisclavret, the king places him within his feudal hierarchy. Yet, given the nature of medieval hunts, the acceptance of an animal into the hierarchy at this point is striking. Throughout the medieval period, the noble hunt was a highly ritualised practice, and direct contact or communication with animals was viewed as abasing and even undermining of the 'mimesis of noble superiority' for which events were designed.<sup>75</sup> The occasions were often used to replicate social hierarchy through the highly structured performance in which each individual had a role identifying categories of 'social difference' which were confirmed by conformance to the ritualised aspects of the event.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, events replicated the enemy's destruction in battle while representing male domination over nature.<sup>77</sup> In short, the performance symbolically validated feudal structures and loyalty. Therefore, while the king demonstrates mercy, it comes at a price. In order to 'see through' the werewolf's body, the king interrupts the ritualised hunt and symbolically threatens social and gender binaries relating to man / nature, mind / body and masculinity / femininity. Furthermore, failure to complete the ritual of the hunt leaves the aristocratic members without finishing their symbolic acts related to their vassal obligations to the king.

The king's acceptance of Bisclavret ultimately becomes a bane as the werewolf is placed within the lord / vassal and man / beast hierarchal categories and subsequently challenges or even subverts them. Peggy McCracken notes that the lai reaffirms human and animal difference through 'the wolf's submission.'<sup>78</sup> However, the control over the animal nature appears tenuous at best. During the animal violence incidents, the werewolf's actions and the advisor's interpretations subsume the king's juridical power. Scholars note an advisory figure called the grand seneschal increasingly challenged the French judicial structure in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. According to F. Carl Riedel, the seneschal was the highest ranking royal court officer who over time had assumed a type of 'vice-king' status while exercising monarchical powers in his absence. Furthermore, this official simultaneously held positions as army general-in-chief and intendant-general. The seneschal obtained such sway that his position became hereditary. Only at the close of the twelfth century was the 'excessive authority' of this figure suppressed as it threatened the royal legitimacy and integrity.<sup>79</sup> In addition to this threat, blood feuds continually challenged royal authority as nobles invoked their revenge right for certain crimes. Treason, a primary blood feud cause, was contemporarily defined in several ways but notably to attack using the element of surprise or secrecy.<sup>80</sup>

In each portrayal of violence from Bisclavret, these problems concerning juridical power and legitimacy foreground the interpretation of acts against the human body. During the first violent incident against the wife's lover, Bisclavret identifies the knight and immediately 'sped towards him, sinking his teeth into him and [dragged] him down.'<sup>81</sup> Notably, the attack is dire and perhaps leaves only time for unconscious reaction by the king rather than serious reflection to save the man being physically assaulted. It reaffirms Bisclavret's animalistic nature when the narrator notes that 'the king called him and threatened him with a stick,' an

action connoting an abusive relationship between a dog and a human.<sup>82</sup> This is an interesting strategy that seems to indicate a degree of artificiality regarding the king's previous hermeneutic response to the wolf's actions. The ruler had identified the faculty of reason and humanness in the werewolf and took him into his household, but here he treats him as a domesticated animal. Regardless, the approach is a complete failure. Bisclavret neither conforms to the animal and man, nor the lord and vassal hierarchical systems, as after the initial attack he ignores the king's demands and attempts to bite the knight twice more.<sup>83</sup> Unable to control the beast, the king's barons assume control of the court by translating the attack as an act of revenge. However, in doing so, the barons decidedly indicate that Bisclavret acts not just as a creature with reason but as a fellow noble exercising his right to enact revenge for treason. Furthermore, when the werewolf conducted the initial attack, the narrator decidedly frames his actions in terms of treason when she states that the knight 'did not realise and would never have suspected that Bisclavret was so close by.'<sup>84</sup> The translation of the werewolf's animal violence into a class-based right for revenge, while juxtaposed against an utterly weak royal response, create a mockery of the justice system relating to revenge and royal juridical authority.

The final violent incident also highlights the king's failure to control vassals' appropriation of his juridical power, maintain God's grant of the power of definition of Adam, and preserve the dominance of human mind over the animalistic and base body. In her excellent reading of the attack, Dunton-Downer notes that it is 'a moment of troubling chaos and general violence until an interpreter (the wise man, in this case, rather than the court in general) explains how to take the action as a motivated sign rather than an outburst of animal ferocity.'<sup>85</sup> However, indicating that this was a momentary loss of control does not account for the repetition of the failure of the court to stop the beast from the first account of violence. Certainly the attack is preceded by the narrator's description of his 'dash towards her like a madman,' but prior to this we are told 'no one could restrain him.'<sup>86</sup> The description suggests that multiple attempts were likely made and failed, much like the repetition of the king's order to the bisclavret to desist earlier. In portraying the action in this manner, it moves the violence from the heat of the moment to sustained madness. Notably, the narrator indicates the incident is an act of revenge and by doing so the reader is provided another example of the inability to control revenge or the blood feud as an alternative to royal juridical authority. It must be noted, though, that the actions have a more dire implication than the horrific assumption of power and use of male reading practices to hide the violence and instability of feudal justice. The genetic transmission of the wife's loss of her nose perpetuates violence in that the individual affected is never fully vindicated nor is the perpetrator ever fully satisfied through the blood feud. It implies an unending generational challenge as the transmission most certainly lies outside the king's power, much like the bisclavret's violence.

Finally, it is important to note that the wife's extraction of a confession is provided a counterpart through the royal court's use of torture. John Bowers correctly interprets this as a critical view of torture methods to target those who threatened 'the interests of the ruling elite.'<sup>87</sup> It not only accomplishes this, but it also provides another instance of the absence of the control over juridical authority. Although the reader does not know who the 'wise man' is, it is yet another example of the king's inability to read the textual body to produce meaning requiring an outside agent to intervene. However, in going along with the plan, the king consents to an action that will displace this loss of authority onto the female body. Notably the bisclavret returns to his human and noble form only when the wife's face is disfigured, permanently reminding the public of her shame and the royal court's judgment of her. As such, the power to define the body is used to restore the hegemonic imbalance at court through marking the surface of the feminine form.

## Concluding Notes

Logan Whalen correctly points out that 'Bisclavret' opens and closes with references to memory, and as such it is fitting to conclude this article with a reflection upon what specifically, aside from the lai itself, the narrator expects 'to be remembered for ever more'.<sup>88</sup> By discussing the virtues of *translatio* in her writings, the author suggests that she expects someday someone, like herself, will gloss her own text in a creative weaving together of sources to create new knowledge. Through the lai's rhetorical structure, the narrator does demonstrate the mutability rather than stability of ideas and definitions; however, rather than interpreting the given evidence in an effort to avoid sin, the king's court demonstrates the use of classical reading strategies to protect its own interests. If the ending is a statement that Bisclavret is not a beast but a noble, the decision to remember him as the category Bisclavret rather than Noble forever more is weakly supported given the connotation and contemporary belief in the motivated nature in language. Rather, the enduring legacy of the lai seems to be a continuing reminder of the arbitrary nature of justice administered by the baron's subsuming of royal juridical power and the elision of his crime by the feudal elites' appropriation of classical reading practices: generations of noseless women who are 'fully recognizable' and monstrous based solely by their appearance and born lacking the power over their self-definition. Ironically, whereas the royal court does not judge the baron upon the surface in beastly form, in regards to the wife's descendants, the mark of shame is represented as unmistakable.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The views presented in this article are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the United States Department of Defense, the United States Army, or the United States Military Academy at West Point.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, 'The Prose of the World,' in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. by Michel Foucault, (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), pp. 17-43, (p. 41).

<sup>3</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' in *The Lais of Marie de France*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. by Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), pp. 68-72 (lines 103-134) and Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 219-260. Unless stated otherwise, all references to the text in this article allude to this translation.

<sup>4</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 219-260.

<sup>5</sup> Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner indicates that the connotation of the word 'bisclavret,' meaning werewolf, is not consistent in the lai; Marie de France uses the word with or without the definite article to distinguish between the common noun and the main character's proper name. In this article, the capitalized version of 'Bisclavret' will refer to the specific werewolf and the uncapitalised version will be used interchangeably with werewolves as it is in Burgess and Busby's translation. Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'Of Men and Beasts in *Bisclavret*, in *Romanic Review*, 81:3 (May 1991), pp. 251-269, (p. 262).

<sup>6</sup> John Fox, 'Twelfth Century Romance', in *A Literary History of France: The Middle Ages*, ed. by P.E. Charvet, (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1974), pp. 134-179 (p. 168).

<sup>7</sup> Roberta L. Krueger, 'Female voices in convents, courts and households: the French Middle Ages' in *A History of Women's Writing in France*, ed. by Sonya Stephens, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 10-40 (p. 22).

<sup>8</sup> Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, trans. by Ruth Harwood Cline, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), lines 940-945.

<sup>9</sup> n.a., *Silence*, ed. and trans. by Sarah Roche-Mahdi, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007), lines 6664-6668.

<sup>10</sup> n.a., *Silence*, ll. 1805-1827.

<sup>11</sup> n.a., *Silence*, ll. 5005-5016.

<sup>12</sup> Multiple translation's use language that strongly condemns the wife and lover. For instances of this across translations, see Marie de France, 'Bisclavret', ll. 185-218 and Marie de France, 'Bisclavret' in *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. by Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante, (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978), pp. 92-100, (lines 215-218).

<sup>13</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll.1-14.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Creamer, 'Woman-Hating in Marie de France's 'Bisclavret' in *Romanic Review*, 93:3 (May 2002), pp. 259-74, (p. 261).

<sup>15</sup> Logan E. Whalen, *Marie de France & the Poetics of Memory*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Priscian was a classical rhetorician. Marie de France, *Prologue* in *The Lais of Marie de France*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. by Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), p.41.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, Ed. Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book I, 1356b27-9.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle states the purpose of forensic rhetoric is 'establishing the justice or injustice of some action.' While many topics may be discussed in this type of debate, all points are 'subsidiary and relative' to the goal of establishing the virtue of an action or individual. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, Ed. Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book I, 1358b25-30.

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, 1365b22-26.

<sup>20</sup> As the 'counterpart of dialectic,' Aristotle indicates similar preconceived ideas regarding the subjects of analysis in the art of rhetoric. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, Ed. Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book I, 1351a1. Like rhetoric, people increase their knowledge through dialectic when they reason from opinions that are generally accepted. In other words, dialectic depends upon use of evidence that is not true and primary or almost beyond question but open enough to facilitate debate upon competing ideas. The best evidence on both sides of a problem is needed to obtain the clearest understanding of a subject as possible. See Aristotle, *Topics*, trans. by W.A. Pickard-Cambridge, Ed. Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1.1.100a25-100b29.

<sup>21</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 1-14. Note that the lack of change in meaning from one language to the next is in keeping with ideas regarding the motivated nature of language. The Western belief in motivated language would continue to be authoritative well into the nineteenth century. See Michel Foucault, 'The Prose of the World, in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 17-45. These are not simply titles, either. Both the lai's and its main character's name are proper forms of the existing common noun for werewolf and 'may or may not be used as [the] character's type.' Though, elsewhere Bruckner argues that the language of the lai distinguishes the individual from the general category. Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'Strategies of Naming in Marie de France's Lais: At the Crossroads of Gender and Genre', in *Neophilologus*, 75.1 (January 1995), pp. 31-40 (p. 33).

<sup>22</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 1-14.

<sup>23</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 1-14.

<sup>24</sup> I am not the first to suggest the opening provides an exemplum of noble identity. Please see Creamer's 'Woman-Hating in Marie de France's 'Bisclavret'.'

<sup>25</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 15-35.

<sup>26</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 15-35.

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. by W.D. Ross, ed. by Jonathon Barnes, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book 4 (4) 1006b18-21.

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, trans. by E.M. Edghill, ed. by Richard McKeon, (New York, Random House, 1941), 5.15-20.

<sup>29</sup> My emphasis. Aristotle, *Categories*, 5.17-19.

<sup>30</sup> According to Aristotle, one of the essential qualities in the definition of the human species is its capacity to reason. He states that 'the animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings.' If we accept this definition, passions and reason appear to be contraries. As such, it would seem they cannot be present for anyone at the same time. However, it is the capacity to reason, the contrary of madness, which matters here and must still be recognizable. When an individual is angry, possessed by the passions, the *capability* for reason must still exist. This allows us to reason with someone who is angry to get them to change their mind. In studies of 'Bisclavret,' analysis of the separate savage attacks upon the wife and his lover call into question whether the capacity for reason is present in those moments. Furthermore, the lai introduces a noble, not a commoner, with lycanthropy. As I will discuss, being ruled by passions precludes the noble nature just as much as the total loss of capability to reason in the moments of passion questions his human nature. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. by W.D. Ross, ed. by Jonathon Barnes, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book 1(A) 980a1 -5.

<sup>31</sup> If one applies the Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean, this could help remedy the dilemma; however, in regards to rhetorical discourse and virtue he states that 'a thing is good if it is as men wish; and they wish to have either no evil at all or at least a balance of good over evil. *This last will happen where the penalty is either imperceptible or slight.*' Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, 1363a25-28.

<sup>32</sup> Paula Clifford, 'Marie de France and the Breton Lay: the Prologue,' in *Marie De France Lais*, ed. by Roger Little, Wolfgang Van Emden and David Williams, (London: Grant and Cutler, 1982), pp. 9-15, (p.13).



<sup>33</sup> Exegesis is commonly thought of as applicable to Christian scripture alone; however, the application of these methods to hermeneutic techniques for secular texts is well documented. Derrida, for one, understands Western European's association of spirit-meaning and body-letter together when he writes: 'writing, the letter, the sensible inscription, has always been considered by Western tradition as the body and matter external to the spirit, to breath, to speech, and to the logos. And the problem of soul and body is no doubt derived from the problem of writing from which it seems – conversely – to borrow its metaphors.' This authority does not limit his statement to theological concerns but to reading practices generally. Elsewhere, Eugene Vinaver states that that contemporary French romance demonstrated 'the common intellectual origin of the interpretative nature of romance on the one hand and of the exegetic tradition on the other.' Furthermore, authors 'felt pride knowing that they were 'in the possession of a similar skill in the sphere.' See Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Spivak, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 35 and Eugene Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 17-19.

<sup>34</sup> The pagan texts Augustine writes about are primarily Greek and Roman but include any non-Christian works. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> Marie de France, 'General Prologue'.

<sup>36</sup> The classical approaches applied to Marie's contemporaries. Marie de France, 'General Prologue'.

<sup>37</sup> Dinshaw, Carolyn, 'Introduction,' in *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 3-27, (p. 21).

<sup>38</sup> St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Teaching* trans. R.P.H. Green, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 'Book Three', ch. 9-10, ll.33-34.

<sup>39</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 57-79.

<sup>40</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 36-56.

<sup>41</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 57-79.

<sup>42</sup> Peggy McCracken, 'Translation and Animals in Marie de France's *Lais*', in *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 46:3 (2009), pp. 206-18, (p. 214).

<sup>43</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 15-35.

<sup>44</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 15-35.

<sup>45</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 15-35.

<sup>46</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 36-56.

<sup>47</sup> This is the Hanning and Ferrante translation. Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 54-56.

<sup>48</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 57-79.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 104.

<sup>50</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 80-102.

<sup>51</sup> Leslie Dunton-Downer, 'Wolf-Man,' in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 2000), pp. 203-18, (p. 203).

<sup>52</sup> S. Foster Damon, 'Marie de France: Psychologist of Courtly Love' in *PMLA*, 44:4 (December 1929), pp. 968-996, (p. 977).

<sup>53</sup> Henri Leclercq, 'Fourth Lateran Council (1215)', in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910).

<sup>54</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 62.

<sup>55</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 80-102.

<sup>56</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup> Leslie Dunton-Downer, 'Wolf-Man,' p. 210.

<sup>58</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 103-34.

<sup>59</sup> Emanuel J. Mickel, *Twynne's World Authors Series: Marie de France*, p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Trans. Gayatri Spivak, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 34.

<sup>61</sup> My emphasis added. Marie de France, 'Bisclavret' ll. 103-34.

<sup>62</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 103-34.

<sup>63</sup> Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'Of Men and Beasts in 'Bisclavret'', p. 262.

<sup>64</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 103-34.

<sup>65</sup> James A. Brundage, 'Sex and Canon Law,' in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern A. Bullough and James A. Brundage, (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 33-50, (p.40).

<sup>66</sup> James A. Brundage, 'Sex and Canon Law,' p. 41.

<sup>67</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' lines 80-102.

- <sup>68</sup> Margaret McGlynn and Richard J. Moll, 'Chaste Marriage in the Middle Ages: 'It were to hire a greet merite,'" in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 103-122, (p. 109).
- <sup>69</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 1-14.
- <sup>70</sup> Saint Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods, (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), Book 14.23.
- <sup>71</sup> Peggy McCracken, 'Translation and Animals in Marie de France's *Lais*' in *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 46:3 (2009), pp. 206-18, (p. 208) and Leslie Dunton-Downer, 'Wolf-Man,' p. 210.
- <sup>72</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 80-102 and Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 135-160.
- <sup>73</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 135-160.
- <sup>74</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 157.
- <sup>75</sup> Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*, 115.
- <sup>76</sup> Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*, 109.
- <sup>77</sup> Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*, 114-115.
- <sup>78</sup> Peggy McCracken, 'Translation and Animals in Marie de France's *Lais*,' p. 218.
- <sup>79</sup> F. Carl Riedel, 'Criminal Law in Thirteenth Century France,' in *Crime and Punishment in the Old French Romances*, (New York: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 11-43, (pp. 14-15).
- <sup>80</sup> F. Carl Riedel, 'Criminal Law in Thirteenth Century France,' pp. 19-22.
- <sup>81</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 185-218.
- <sup>82</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 185-218.
- <sup>83</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 185-218.
- <sup>84</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 185-218.
- <sup>85</sup> Leslie Dunton-Downer, 'Wolf-Man,' p. 208.
- <sup>86</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 219-260.
- <sup>87</sup> John Bowers, 'Ordeals, privacy, and the *lais* of Marie de France,' p. 21.
- <sup>88</sup> Marie de France, 'Bisclavret,' ll. 315-318 and Whalen, *Marie de France & The Poetics of Memory*, 57.

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**Thumbnail image:** An illustration from *Topographia Hiberniae* depicting the story of a traveling priest who meets and communes a pair of good werewolves from the kingdom of Ossory. Royal MS 13 B VIII, ff 1r-34v. "Topographia Hiberniae" ("Topographia Hibernica")

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## Biography

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