The Crossdresser and the *Juventus* : Category Crisis in *Silence*

Robert S. Sturges

Arthuriana, Volume 12, Number 1, Spring 2002, pp. 37-49 (Article)

Published by Scriptorium Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/art.2002.0071*

The Crossdresser and the *Juventus*: Category Crisis in *Silence*

ROBERT S. STURGES

Problematics of class and gender intersect in the crossdressing heroines of medieval romance. Silence can be read as an alternate version of the high medieval disinherited younger son, the *juvenis*, supporting Marjorie Garber's claim that the crossdresser often represents displaced anxieties about categories other than gender.(RSS)

In her book *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, Marjorie Garber suggests that the figure of the crossdresser, who appears in art, literature, and indeed life at significant historical moments, often signifies more than just a concern with the transgression of gender roles. According to Garber, the crossdresser appears at moments of category crisis *of all sorts* in the history of any given culture, not only when gender categories are being questioned. The transvestite figure represents, for Garber, the displacement of anxieties about other categories as well, and about how a culture organizes and perceives them.

The crossdresser overtly displays our anxieties about our most basic cultural category, gender, and therefore becomes, for Garber, the archetypal sign of the transgression of all categories. This figure therefore appears in cultural artifacts such as literary texts whenever any category is, for whatever reason, called into question. The crossdresser is thus the displaced sign of this crisis in some other category, for instance, class or race.

> [O]ne of the most consistent and effective functions of the transvestite in culture is to indicate the place of what I call 'category crisis,' disrupting and calling attention to cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances...cross–dressing [is] an index, precisely, of many different kinds of 'category crisis'—for the notion of the 'category crisis,' I will contend, is not the exception but rather the ground of culture itself. (Garber 16)

The crossdresser, as a figure of all category crisis, thus reveals the instability of culture itself.

Garber surveys a number of such crises from the Renaissance to the present: the interrogations of racial definitions in modern American popular culture

(247–303) and in nineteenth-century Western literary encounters with the Middle East (304–52), for example, both produce representations of crossdressing associated with racial otherness. Although Garber does not address the Middle Ages, in the French-speaking culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we may observe a sudden proliferation of representations of crossdressing in romance texts. This proliferation continues (though with significant differences) into the fourteenth century with such figures as Yde in *Yde et Olive* and Blanchandine in *Tristan de Nanteuil.*

The fictional figures I discuss here, however, stand closer to the beginning of this proliferation. They are anatomical women who dress and behave as men, taking on the roles of knight and military leader: Camille in the twelfth-century *Roman d'Enéas*, and in the thirteenth century, Avenable in *Lestoire de Merlin* and especially the title character of the *Roman de Silence.* Unlike Yde and Blanchandine (and Nicolete, who cross-dresses briefly in *Aucassin et Nicolete*), none of these characters is involved in a love story, and the obstacles they have to overcome are therefore not related specifically to their sexuality (though Silence's sexuality does come into play indirectly). If we accept Garber's powerful argument that such a proliferation, especially when it touches on sexual *relations* only tangentially, is likely to signal a category crisis not only in gender definition but also elsewhere in the culture, where might we look for the origins of such a crisis in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries?

Georges Duby's analysis of changes in the European economic structure in this period suggests one possible answer. He contends that the impact of the system of primogeniture, by which younger sons of the nobility were disinherited so that property could be passed on intact to the eldest, was widely felt by the twelfth and especially the thirteenth centuries (Duby, *Chivalrous* 117). Maurice Keen finds the principle of primogeniture gradually making headway in the eleventh and twelfth centuries until it is firmly established at all levels of the nobility by the end of the twelfth (Keen, *History* 105).

Primogeniture, in Duby's analysis, created a crisis for the nobility in the category of class. Indeed, it created an entirely new class category of noble but penniless younger sons, a category Duby calls the *juventus* or 'youth': 'When deprived of any hope of certain inheritance, younger brothers had often no other prospect than adventure' (Duby, *Chivalrous* 118). These younger sons were forced to seek their fortunes outside of their homes, at foreign courts, as wandering knights or as crusaders, the threat of their unconfined violence posing a danger to medieval society:

> Always on the lookout for adventure from which 'honour' and 'reward' could be gained and aiming, if possible, 'to come back rich,' they were mobile and ready for action with their emotions at a pitch of warlike frenzy....And how many 'youths' must there have been among the bands of armed pilgrims and crusaders? Dedicated to violence, 'youth' was the instrument of aggression and tumult in knightly society... (Duby, *Chivalrous* 115)

Younger sons were artificially kept in this state of unsettled youth because they were discouraged from marriage ('for fear of lateral branches of the family multiplying to such an extent that they would overwhelm the main branch' [Duby, *Chivalrous* 118]). Duby suggests that this *juventus* class constituted the audience for courtly romance (Duby, *Chivalrous* 120).[1]

The social disruptions and anxieties produced by the creation of this noble but poor class are, I contend, reflected in the proliferation of female, cross-dressing knights found in twelfth– and thirteenth–century romances. In particular, the class issues raised by the romances I discuss here, and by *Silence* in particular, suggest that their crossdressing knights may indeed be a displaced response to this category crisis in the *class* structure of high medieval France. In *Silence* especially, issues of class and of gender are so closely intertwined that this displacement lies very close to the surface.

I may seem to erase the figure of the woman, and indeed of the female crossdresser, in these romances by reading her as an anxious displacement of a crisis in *masculine* social identity. That is not my intention. Many critics have already addressed the issues of gender and sexuality raised by *Silence*, and continue to do so. I propose to add another social dimension to discussions of these texts, especially the very rich *Silence*, and not to dismiss the discussions already underway.

The female knight appears in French romance with the beginning of the genre itself, in the mid-twelfth century, when the effects of primogeniture were becoming more and more visible in the culture of the French nobility. The *Roman d'Enéas* (1155–60) has long been considered the earliest extant romance, and it not only includes, but greatly expands, the role of the female warrior Camilla (Camille in *Enéas*) familiar from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Camille is not a crossdresser in the same sense as the other characters mentioned above: she does not take on a male persona when she wears armor. Nevertheless, Camille does appear in armor normally reserved for men:

> Apoiee fu sor sa lance;
> a son col avoit son escu;
> o bocle d'or d'ivoire fu,
> et la guige an estoit d'orfrois.
> Ses haubers ert blans come nois

et ses hiaumes luisanz et clers,
de fin or ert toz par carters. (*Enéas* 6922–8)

[She was leaning on her lance; she had her shield around her neck; it was of ivory with a gold boss, and the grip was embroidered with gold. Her hauberk was as white as snow and her helmet was shining and bright, all quartered with fine gold.][2]

While, as Lorraine Kochanske Stock (1995) points out, this description is immediately feminized with a reference to Camille's long, blonde hair, it remains also a portrait of the armed warrior, who is normatively male.

More interesting for our purposes than this brief description of Camille's crossdressing, however, is her rejection of female gender roles and insistence on transgressing gender lines behaviorally:

Camille ot nom la damoisselle,
a mervoille par estoit bele
et molt estoit de grant poeir;
ne fu feme de son savoir.
Molt ert sage, proz et cortoise
et molt demenot grant richoise;
a mervoille tenoit bien terre;
el fu toz tens norrie an guerre
et molt ama chevalerie
et maintint la tote sa vie.
Onc d'ovre a feme ne ot cure,
ne de filer ne de costure;
mialz prisoit armes a porter,
a tornoier et a joster,
ferir d'espee et de lance:
nu fu feme de sa vaillance. (*Enéas* 3961–76)

[Camille was the name of the maiden, who was marvelously beautiful and of very great strength; there was no other woman of her understanding. She was very wise, valiant, and courteous, and possessed great riches; she governed her land marvelously well; she had always been nourished on warfare and greatly loved chivalry and upheld it her whole life. She never had any interest in women's work, neither in spinning nor in sewing; she valued bearing arms, attending tournaments, and jousting more highly and using the sword and lance: there was no other woman of her courage.]

Camille is associated with such qualities usually considered masculine as courage, wisdom, physical strength, and leadership, and the strangeness of these gender transgressions is emphasized with the repetition of the term 'a mervoille' and the comment that there was no other woman like her. She

also specifically rejects 'women's work' such as spinning and sewing. Both in dress and in behavior, then, Camille is presented as crossing gender boundaries, specifically in her pursuit of chivalry—especially because she cannot be identified as fully masculine, as her extraordinary beauty underscores. The crossdressing female knight who transgresses gender categories thus appears at precisely the moment of the knightly class's cultural crisis—in class rather than gender—identified by Duby and Keen.

Camille, however, does not raise the issue of class categories directly. For the association of crossdressing with the crossing of class boundaries in the thirteenth century, we must turn to *Aucassin et Nicolete*, whose heroine briefly, like Silence herself, transgresses both her gender and her class when she disguises herself as a *jongleur*. By the early thirteenth century, then, the figures of Camille and of Nicolete taken together present the essential components that these female crossdressers share with the new category of the *juventus*: they cross class boundaries (in *Aucassin et Nicolete*), and they assume a chivalric identity (in *Enéas*).

In the thirteenth century, these elements come together twice in a single figure, first in the episode of Avenable/Grisandole in *Lestoire de Merlin*. Besides the woman Avenable who disguises herself as the male knight Grisandole, it also includes *twelve* young men dressed as girls so as to satisfy the empress's lust unbeknownst to the emperor (*Merlin*, 282). The connection between female crossdressing and the problem of inheritance is drawn directly in the story of Avenable:

> En cel tens auint cune pucele uint a la cort lempereor & fu fille a vn prince ki ot a non mathem si fu dus dalemaigne. Et cele pucele uint a court a guise descuier. & celui mathem auoit frole deshirete & cachiet de sa terre. & cele sen vint moult entreprise com cele qui ne sauoit ou ses peres ne sa mere estoient deuenu. (*Merlin* 282)
>
> [At that time it so happened that a maiden came to the emperor's court and she was the daughter of a prince who was named Mathem, who was the duke of Germany. And this maiden came to court disguised as a squire. And Frollo had stolen Mathem's birthright and had driven him from his land. And she came very distressed, as one who did not know what had become of either her father or her mother.]

Avenable's father has been 'deshirete,' literally disinherited, by Frollo, and his daughter essentially orphaned. Like the *juventus* under primogeniture, she is disinherited, penniless and wandering in search of the protection of a court. Like Camille, she excels at chivalric pastimes and rejects a female gender identity in favor of knighthood:

> Et ele estoit grande & droite & menbrue si se demena en toutes les manieres comme escuiers se demaine sane uilonie. Ne ainques ne fu rauisee por feme. si remest auoec lempereor & fu de moult grant proece & se penoit de seruir lempereor sor tous hommes. si le serui si a deuise kil le fist cheualier... (*Merlin* 282)
>
> [And she was tall and straight and muscular and behaved in all her ways like a squire, without uncouthness. Nor was she ever recognized as a woman. She remained with the emperor and was of very great prowess and strove to serve the emperor better than all the men. She served him so well that he made her a knight...]

Significantly, no reason is given for Avenable's crossdressing: the text associates it with her disinheritance without explaining the association, and thus suggests that for some unspecified reason disinheritance and transvestism are related. Precisely because it seems so unmotivated, the implication supports Garber's contention that the crossdresser necessarily becomes the sign of crisis in *all* categories—in this case, class. The crossdresser here appears more as a manifestation of these cultural anxieties than as a necessity of the plot.

As we might expect, then, the class issue is resolved simultaneously with the gender issue: when Merlin (literally) exposes both Grisandole and the twelve crossdressing youths, property is also restored to its rightful owner.

> Dist li homs saluages vous prenderes auenable & saues qui fille ele est. Ele fu fille al duc mathem de soane ki li dus frolles a desirete de sa terre si en est fuis il & sa feme & .i. sien fil ki est trop loiaus ualles & sont en prouenche en vne riche uille ki a a non monpellier. si les enuoies querre & lor rendes or yretages kil ont a tort perdu. (*Merlin* 291)
>
> [Said the wild man, 'you shall marry Avenable, and do you know whose daughter she is? She is the daughter of Duke Mathem of Soane, whom the duke Frollo has disinherited of his land, and he has fled, he and his wife and a son of his, who is a very loyal young man, and they are in Provence, in a rich city that is named Montpellier. Send for them and return their heritage, which they lost wrongfully.']

Economic and gender transgressions are resolved by Merlin at one stroke, the plot's *deus ex machina* (rather than logic) providing the necessary connection between the two. Merlin is now the mechanism by which the two forms of category crisis are linked.

Silence provides a more artful connection between them. Indeed, the prologue and opening episodes of this romance are concerned primarily not with gender, but with economics. The prologue is largely a discourse on the economic and class status of *jongleurs* (already associated with crossdressing

in *Aucassin et Nicolete*), especially the status of the author/narrator, 'Heldris de Cornuälle' himself:

> Uns clers poroit lonc tans aprendre
> Por rime trover et por viers,
> Tant par est cis siecles diviers
> Qu'ançois poroit rime trover
> Qui peüst en cest mont trover
> Blos solement un sol princhier
> U il peüst sol tant pinchier
> Dont il eüst salve sa paine,
> Ne le traval d'une sesmaine. (*Silence*, ed. Roche-Mahdi, 14–22)
>
> [A clerk could spend a long time learning to make rhymes and verses, but these days things are so bad that it would be much easier for him to make rhymes than to find in this world one single nobleman from whom he could squeeze even such a small amount that it wouldn't be worth the effort, not even enough for one week's labor.]

Here the status of the poet is portrayed as dependent on the whims of a lord, who may choose to reward him for services rendered. The *jongleur*, though lower on the social scale, is in the same position as Duby's *juventus*. The youth's dependence on his lord, described by historians of chivalry, is reflected in the poet's position as portrayed by Heldris. Keen points out that

> [t]he insecurity of the lesser knighthood greatly sharpened their appreciation of the rewards that the great could offer. Hence their eager appreciation of *largesse*, and their delight in seeing it lavishly and publicly dispensed....Complementarily, the skinflint lords and those who...have promoted low-born men, unnourished in the true traditions of service, are the butts of the *chansons* and the early romances (Keen, *Chivalry* 29).

The prologue to *Silence* takes up precisely these issues, but with regard to *jongleurs* rather than knights.

> Honor lor est si esloignie
> Que il n'en ont une pugnie.
> Doner, joster et tornoier,
> Mances porter et dosnoier
> Ont torné en fiens entasser;
> Car qui violt avoit amasser,
> Quant il n'en ist honors ne biens? (*Silence* 42–8)
>
> [Honor is so far from them that they haven't even a handful of it. Distributing wealth, jousting and tourneying, wearing favors and courting ladies have turned to the accumulation of manure; for who

wants to amass riches when what comes from it is neither honor nor good?]

The context and imagery here are courtly and refer to the life of knights maintained by a lord, though the ostensible referent is the concerns of the lower-status *jongleur*. Despite the presence of young knights in *Silence* (for instance, at the court of Ebain), the text never directly discusses the class crisis of this dependent nobility; the ambiguous status of that group is, nevertheless, present in discussions of class and economic status like that pertaining to *jongleurs*.

The plight of the *jongleur* is relevant to the issue of crossdressing in this text because Silence herself becomes a *jongleur*. Like Nicolete, Silence crossdresses both in gender and in class terms:

D'une herbe qu'ens el bos a prise
Desconoist sa face et deguise.
Ki bien l'esgarde viers le chiere
Bien sanble de povre riviere. (*Silence* 2910–3)

[With an herb he had picked in the woods he altered and disguised his face. Whoever looked him closely in the face would think he was of low status.]

Silence's continuing gender transgression is signalled in the use of masculine pronouns throughout this episode, and her class transgression is signified by the darkening of her skin. Here the crossdresser stands in for the *jongleur* as *jongleurs* stands in for the *juventus* in the prologue. Indeed, Silence's experiences as a *jongleur*, like those recounted by 'Heldris' in the prologue, parallel the real-life experiences of a dependent *juvenis* in a lord's service: for her and her companions, the economic motive is primary. Her companions, in fact, lament the king's generosity to Silence in precisely the terms Keen describes as typical of the *juventus*'s disdain for lords who promote the less qualified:

Et cil en ont angoisse et honte,
Moult plus que ne vos di el conte.
Li diols lor est es cuers colés
Que lor mestiers est refolés
Tolt par l'afaire d'un gloton,
Ki pas ne valoit un boton. (*Silence* 3243–8)

[And (the *jongleurs*) felt anguish and shame, much more than the story recounts. Grief overwhelmed their hearts because their craft was rejected all because of some riffraff who wasn't worth a button.]

The connection among gender, class, and economics is drawn more directly in the opening movement of the romance's plot, before Silence's birth. Here again, class and economic concerns are the focus, and indeed drive the entire plot. Gender is clearly identified with class in Ebain's decree that female children may not inherit:

> '...Quel duel por .ii. orphenes pucieles!
> Que mes barons en ai perdus
> J'en sui certes moult esperdus:
> Mais, par le foi que doi Saint Pere,
> Ja feme n'iert mais iretere
> Ens el roiame s'Engletiere,
> Por tant com j'aie a tenir tiere.
> Et c'en iert ore la venjance
> De ceste nostre mesestance.' (*Silence* 310–8)
> Mais cil qu'i n'a mais une fille
> Et a baillier grant teneüre,
> Cuidiés qu'il n'ait al cuer rancure? (*Silence* 325–7)
>
> ['Such grief because of two orphaned maidens! I'm certainly very desperate about having lost my barons because of it: but, by the faith I owe St. Peter, no woman shall ever again inherit in the realm of England, so long as I hold this land. And that will be vengeance for this unhappiness.' (...) But don't you think that those who held great lands and had only a daughter felt rancor in their hearts?]

Women literally become second-class citizens at this point in the text, disinherited like younger sons under primogeniture. Sharon Kinoshita points out that this redefinition of women's class status has been indirectly brought about by the problem of primogeniture: the husbands of the twin orphan girls killed each other over the question of which twin was the elder and thus entitled to inherit (*Silence* 281–305; Kinoshita,'Heldris,' 399–400). In reality women's inheritances were unaffected by primogeniture in this period: 'while male inheritance was governed by primogeniture, female inheritance was, by custom, partible' (Kinoshita, 'Heldris,' 400).[3] Women, and Silence in particular, are thus placed for the purposes of the literary text in a position held in reality not by women but by younger sons.

Like the *juventus* in high medieval culture and the *jongleurs* in the poem's prologue, women in this romance's main plot are reduced to dependent status. Because gender and class categories now intersect directly, cross-dressing in *Silence* makes logical sense as a response to disinheritance as it does not in *Lestoire de Merlin*. As Silence's father says,

'...Car se nos avons une fille
N'avra al montant d'une tille
De quanque nos sos ciel avons,
Se nos l'afaire ne menons
Si cointement par coverture
Que on n'en sace l'aventure.
Faisons le com un fil norir,
De priés garder et bien covrir,
Si le porons del nostre engier.
Nus nel pora ja calengier.' (*Silence* 1751–9; cf. 2037–59)

['...Because if we have a girl she won't get a scrap of all we possess under heaven, unless we conduct matters so cleverly and secretly that no one knows the result. Let's raise her as a boy, guard and disguise her, and thus we can make her our heir. No one will be able to challenge it.']

The class issue resurfaces to drive the plot in *Silence* each time Silence has to decide whether she should be gendered male or female. She recognizes quite clearly that women have been constituted as a subservient *class,* and it is on the basis of that consideration that she regularly chooses to remain crossdressed. Indeed, in the first debate between 'Nature' and 'Noreture,' it is neither of those forces, but Reason [Raisons] who convinces Silence that it is logical to remain gendered masculine because of men's higher social status: '"Ne voel perdre ma grant honor,/ Ne la voel cangier a menor"' (*Silence* 2652–3; cf. 2637–44, 4166–73, 6442–70) ['I don't want to lose my great position, I don't want to change it for a lesser']. From this perspective it might seem odd when, shortly after this speech, Silence deliberately decides to lower her class position by becoming a *jongleur.* But the text makes it clear that in doing so, she is merely hedging her bets in case she does not make a good knight. As she says to herself: 'Se lens iés en chevalerie / Si te valra la joglerie.'(*Silence* 2863–64)['If you are slow at chivalry, minstrelsy will be worth your while'].

Apparently Silence sees life as a lower-class, crossdressing poet who works for a living as worthier than life as a noblewoman. In fact, however, the two socioeconomic positions of woman and *jongleur* are, in this text, quite similar: just as women have been disinherited, so *jongleurs* have been forbidden to ply their trade in England (*Silence* 3115–26). In both cases, as woman and as poet, then, the crossdresser in the romance parallels the *juvenis* in reality: all three have seen their economic security destroyed.

Silence, in any case, does not need to remain a *jongleur,* but lives an idealized version of the life of a *juvenis* at the courts of both Ebain and the

king of France. The latter, in fact, proves to be an ideal lord in the terms described by Duby and Keen: he is generous to the exiled Silence, and in fact makes her a knight:

> Or est Silences bien de cort:
> Le roi est por qu'il i demort,
> Qu'il est moult frans et honorables,
> Cortois et pros et amiables. (*Silence*, 5119–22)
> A .xvii. ans et a demi
> Tolt droit a une Pentecoste,
> Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui il coste,
> L'adoba li rois a Paris,
> Et por s'amor bien jusque a dis. (*Silence* 5133–7)
>
> [Now Silence is truly of the court: the king wished him to remain there, because he was so noble and honorable, courteous and valiant and lovable. (...) At seventeen and a half years old, right at Pentecost, for good or for ill, the king dubbed him in Paris, and, for his love, ten others.]

The crossdresser and the *juvenis* merge at this point: Silence here does not serve as a displacement for the disinherited noble younger son; instead, as she directly takes his place. Later, she serves the French king as an ideal *juvenis* would, and even has an arming scene (*Silence* 5337–68) that, as Stock demonstrates, confirms her status as masculine-gendered knight, unlike Camille (Stock 1995 69–75).

If the French king serves as an idealized lord from the point of view of the *juventus*, Ebain is the opposite, described as the kind of lord to be disdained—in cultural history by the *juvenis*, in the text by his stand-in, the crossdresser. Not only does Ebain initially send Silence away because of Queen Eufeme's trumped-up rape charge, he subsequently, for the same reason, rewards Silence's excellent service in battle with an apparently impossible task, one designed precisely to render Silence's service as *juvenis* unacceptable at any court: the capture of Merlin, a task reserved not for a knight or *juvenis* but for a woman. When Silence objects, Ebain threatens that if he does not, 'il n'est hom qui vos retiegne / Tant com sos ciel ma tiere dure.' (5850–51)[...'there is no man will retain you, so long as my kingdom endures under heaven'].

Silence's dilemma again brings the real-life plight of the *juvenis* into conjunction with that of the literary crossdresser. She can successfully perform the task, and reveal herself a woman; or she can refuse, risking the loss of the protection not only of Ebain, but of all lords. Once again the *juventus*'s plight rises to the surface in a curiously unmotivated fashion. Silence has already established that she does not need to remain a knight, having

deliberately chosen the profession of *jongleur* to fall back on. The dilemma is a dilemma—and Silence's decision to capture Merlin makes sense—only if we accept Silence as simultaneously crossdresser and *juvenis*. Failure in capturing Merlin ensures failure as *juvenis*; success in capturing Merlin ensures failure as crossdresser.

Silence herself recognizes that the capture of Merlin means revealing her 'natural' female gender but, significantly, her primary concern is for her inheritance and social status, not for her gender identity: 'C'or ai jo tel coze bastie / Dont g'iere tols desiretez. / Cho est la fine veritez!' (6446–8) [For now have I managed things so that I will be completely disinherited. That's the true result!']

Silence's problem, then, even as a crossdresser, is the problem of the disinherited *juvenis* rather than a problem of gender identity *per se*.

As in the story of Grisandole, the unmasking of the crossdresser and the restoration of her inheritance are simultaneous. In a telling exchange, Ebain is convinced to repeal the law against female inheritance at the moment Silence is unmasked (*Silence* 6633–46). Silence is, ironically, revealed as a woman with nothing to hide, and the reward for her loyal service is the re-–institution of female inheritance. The language of 'amor' or love is ambiguous here; it can be applied to the heterosexual relationship now to be established between Ebain and Silence, but it is also the language of feudal relations between a king and the loyal vassal he is rewarding. The language of stable gender relations is thus also the language of restored class and economic relations: the gender disruption of crossdressing is resolved in the same words that resolve the economic disruption of disinheritance. If the crossdresser has served as a displacement for the real-life class crisis caused by the disinheritance of the *juventus*, the resolution of the economic issue means that the crossdresser has served her purpose.

The close relationship proposed in *Silence* and other romances between crossdressing and the issues of inheritance that created the high medieval social crisis described by Duby thus suggests that Garber's argument may be applicable to the Middle Ages as well. Here indeed we find the same use of the transvestite 'as an index, precisely, of many different kinds of "category crisis"' (Garber 16). The cross–dresser in these romances displaces—very slightly—the category crisis in class structure that resulted in the new category of the *juventus*. That this crisis was less easily resolved in life than in literature is suggested by the persistence of the figure of the crossdresser into late medieval texts in such characters as Yde and Blanchandine.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Robert S. Sturges is Professor of English at the University of New Orleans. He has published *Medieval Interpretation* (1991) and, most recently, *Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory: Bodies of Discourse* (2000), as well as many essays on medieval literature and critical theory.

NOTES

1 For another consideration of this group and its literary interests, see Morris, 43–44.
2 All English translations are my own.
3 See also Kinoshita's discussion of comparable cases, 407 n.12.

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