

English

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Eliduc and Guigemar: A Comparative Analysis Each of the two lais including, Eliduc and Guigemar, are from the The Lais of Marie de France. Love is a common theme in both the stories although the nature varies in the two stories. Despite their commonalities, Eliduc and Guigemar offer distinct storylines to the audiences. Eliduc is more about love and separation whereas Guigemar is more about falling in love after a period of avoiding love. Hence love is a common theme in both stories although the stories differ in their temporal order and characterization, with the characters seeking or losing love in the course of the Lay. Therefore, while love is a common theme, the two lais differ in terms of characterization and the plot. Eliduc revolves around an unusual love triangle involving Eliduc, his wife Guideluec, and his newly-found love Guilliadun. Although Eliduc is already married, he falls in love with a maiden from Totenois. However Eliduc's wife provides no barrier to union of Eliduc and his lover, Guilliadun. His wife leaves the marriage and voluntarily goes on to become an abbess to serve God. However despite the love between Eliduc and his new love, the two do not last together for too long as both of them “ turn to God” (Marie de France trans. Eugene Mason, 20). Therefore the love does not last long and hence is of a fleeting permanence in Eliduc. In Guigemar, on the other hand, Guigemar goes on to love a woman after a long period of leading a loveless life. After striking a white hind with an arrow, Guigemar experiences a turning point in his life as he allows himself to love a woman and be loved. Hence Guigemar's climax ends with a note of love and union as opposed to separation in Eliduc.

The characterization is also different in Eliduc and Guigemar. Guigemar as a

character is a love-repelling character shown to have transformed after his experiences as he strikes a white hind with his bow. Also, Guigemar's lover is characterized as a faithful lady who refuses to go with the prince because of her ties with Guigemar. On the contrary, Eliduc's characters, especially Eliduc's wife is more suppressive and ready to give up her marriage to serve God as an abbess. Hence religion has played an important role in the characterization of Eliduc.

The plot also differs significantly in both lais. Eliduc and Guigemar follow different storylines with Eliduc focusing more on religious theme and returning towards religiosity and God. In the Lay, Eliduc and both his former and current wife part to serve God in the Church. In Guigemar however the union of Guigemar and his lover takes on a more important position as Guigemar is characterized as a man who does not love any women. Hence the story proceeds to bring Guigemar and his lover closer together. Hence, permanence of love is more defining in Guigemar as it is in Eliduc. While Guigemar ends with a union, Eliduc ends with separation.

In conclusion, love is a recurring theme however the characterization and plot differ in both of the lais.