

## Author



# Cannibalistic Werewolves of Sixteenth-Century France

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*History, Music*

Bailey Betancourt fell in love with studying monsters at an academic level during her second year at UC Irvine. She took a class with Professor McLoughlin on the topic and was intrigued by the potential to read the bodies of monsters through multi-faceted perspectives. In pursuing her project, Bailey particularly enjoyed the opportunity to explore other scholars' works in depth and examine the lineage of theories that have developed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first-centuries. In addition to this work, Bailey wrote a research paper under the Music and Culture Honors Program and a thesis on the monstrous body of Francis the First. She has also played bass in the UCI Symphony Orchestra.

## Key Terms

- ◆ Absolutism
- ◆ Catherine de Medici
- ◆ French Wars of Religion
- ◆ Jean Bodin
- ◆ King Henri III of France
- ◆ Monsters
- ◆ Political Allegory
- ◆ Werewolves
- ◆ Witchcraft

## Abstract

According to monster theory, monsters signify the fears and norms of the societies that create them. For instance, peoples of the ancient Mediterranean and medieval Europe portrayed werewolves less maliciously than did Early Modern Europeans because these earlier cultures used werewolves to explore the relationship between the individual's morality and outer appearance. Early Modern writers depicted werewolves as heartless cannibals who preyed upon unattended children, sometimes even undressing them before consuming their flesh. My paper explores how the Early Modern European werewolf functioned in political discourse. In particular, it addresses how discussions of werewolf violence reflect the political chaos caused by religious warfare and crises of succession. In order to do this, my paper examines the treatment and views of accused werewolves in Jean Bodin's *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers* in dialogue with other historiographical treatments of the political use of accusations of cannibalism and witchcraft. Bodin was a legal theorist who drew upon biblical, legal, literary, and folk accounts of werewolf malevolence. Specifically, he portrayed the cannibalism enacted by werewolves as an attack on the social wellbeing of the common people. Werewolves thus become a means of discussing the political anxieties of Bodin.

## Faculty Mentor



This paper reflects a true spirit of inquiry because the author followed up on a topic mentioned in a lower division survey course to write an original thesis. What pleases me most about this paper is the extent to which it represents the author's intellectual determination and independence. If the goal of a university education is that students will learn to follow their dreams, improve their skills, and teach themselves what they want to know most, this paper speaks to the author's success. It is a product of her determination to follow her own interests, to seek help in learning how to research, to read widely and carefully, to master research skills, and to write and rewrite, all the while motivated by genuine curiosity and a commitment to answer the questions that she found to be most important. It was an extraordinary privilege to advise such a project.

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## Introduction

Until recently, the study of monsters in historical narratives has largely been neglected in scholarly analysis. Reacting against late-eighteenth century positivism, early monster scholars recognized monsters as an important component in constructing an accurate narrative of the social and political perspectives present during a given cultural moment (Coleman 140; Richardson 1). In particular, the genesis of monster studies began with J.R.R. Tolkien's essay "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics" (Acker 702). Tolkien's essay was groundbreaking because it disrupted previous analytical traditions of studying heroes for the purpose of distilling their moral characteristics and shifted the focus of scholarly inquiry to monsters by emphasizing that monsters play an equally essential role in narrative development (Acker 702). The constant reappearance of monsters in significant cultural stories suggests that these imagined creatures serve specific functions for collective identities. For instance, throughout Western Mediterranean and European history, philosophical and political commentators have constructed images of monsters in order to justify specific actions of the state or the religious beliefs of their particular demographics. More generally, as leading historians Bettina Bildhauser and Robert Mills have argued, depictions of monsters represent shared cultural fears and anxieties informed by political and social events (Bildhauser and Mills 4). As much as they are informed by current events, however, depictions of monsters also draw upon inherited thoughts and images that have metamorphosed in response to current societal concerns (Cohen 20).

By paying careful attention to the images of monsters, historians and other scholars are able to reconstruct some of the particular concerns or social threats experienced by the society or social sub-group constructing such images. More significantly, monsters may inform the culture, which has cultivated them as allegorical interpretations (Cohen 4). For example, in interpreting historical depictions of malicious monsters, scholars have identified a tradition of using the relationship between victim and monster to comment on social and political crises. Calling attention to the contrast between the fear or disgust invoked by monsters and the innocence and purity of their victims has allowed historical authors to assert their own concerns for their society (Delogu 128). For instance, in Early Modern Europe, theologians read the bodies and actions of monsters as symbolic expressions of political and religious chaos (Park and Datson 22). Particularly, French Early Modern Era monsters embody new concerns emphasizing the political and religious instability of the French nation. For all of these

reasons, monsters must be read in dialogue with their particular cultural, political, and social context, which provides them with specific meaning. Such contextualized readings of the monsters that appear in historical documents ultimately aid in the construction of an insightful analysis of the events occurring at the time of the publication of the documents in question.

One such case, which invites the application of this monster theory in relation to a historical monster, is provided by accounts of werewolves and other diabolically inspired cannibals that were written in sixteenth-century France. Jean Bodin, a French jurist and political theorist, wrote one such account of werewolves as part of his larger study of the activities of witches in Early Modern France. Prior to his publication of witchcraft studies, Bodin served as a delegate to the Estates General in 1576 and became aware of the witchcraft epidemic spreading across France through the studies of numerous court cases and accounts by other sixteenth-century jurists (Pearl 10). Bodin understood his position as a crusader against the demonic forces plaguing France and a protector of the monarchy's integrity. I argue that Bodin's treatise, *De la Demonmanie des Sorciers* (*On the Demon-Mania of Witches*), subtly incorporates his political theories concerning the monarchy into his interpretation of available contemporary accounts and studies of witches and werewolves. This treatise also suggests the prosecution of witches and werewolves as a method of reestablishing the power of the monarchy (Earenfight 18).

The publication of treatises like *De la Demonmanie* is notable because such treatises express the anxieties of Early Modern jurists concerning the welfare of the state in the language of imagined witches (Pearl 9). For example, Bodin employs prevalent political theories to explain the phenomenon of witchcraft while simultaneously explicating the cases he discussed in a manner that addresses current political events. In particular, Bodin understood the plague of witchcraft as a result of the lack of royal stability. He understood witches as co-conspirators with the Devil, who acted with the intention of causing harm to the rightly-ordered political and religious systems preordained by God. Subsequently, their war against God translated into attacks against the crown. However, Bodin implied that this supernatural warfare allowed the king to reassert his power by decisively defeating accused witches, whose deaths were celebrated as a demonstration of the king's power (Clark 665).

Bodin believed that witches challenged God and the king by using supernatural power to attack the safety and well-being of the peasantry. These attacks included but were not

limited to, crop destruction through hailstorms, the spread incurable sicknesses, incidences of demonic possession, and the casting of spells (Scott 135).<sup>1</sup> One aspect of the witch's supernatural arsenal included metamorphosing into different creatures in order to inflict harm on peasants. In this manner, the werewolf served as one alternative identity for the witch. Ultimately, Bodin viewed the witch and werewolf as interchangeable cannibalizing forms whose actions were oriented to pleasing the Devil (Scott 173).

This paper examines how critics of the French monarchy utilized political language and the imagery of werewolves. By using Jean Bodin as a case study of Early Modern political examinations of the phenomena of witches and werewolves, we can understand one method in which demonic creatures are used in political theory. I argue that his examination of the Lyons werewolf functions as a political critique of the royal family, specifically criticizing the regency of Queen Catherine de Medici and the reigns of her three sons, Francis II, Charles IX and Henri III. The particular discussion of werewolves in *De la Demonmanie* evoke Bodin's theories of a rightly-ordered government by the attention it pays to the events and characters involved in the werewolf's demonic attack on children. Hence, Bodin's werewolf serves a meaningful purpose in political theory and when read in dialogue with the social context, he provides insight into the political crises of Early Modern France.

### Jean Bodin and the Werewolf of Dôle

Prior to his first publication of *De la Demonmanie des Sorciers* in 1580, Bodin served as a leading commentator on witchcraft in the Parlement of Paris from 1562–1584 (Pearl 9–10). As he transformed his repertoire of examined court cases into a demonological treatise, Bodin took a specific interest in the methods employed by witches in their demonic attacks against the people of France, specifically dedicating a chapter to the discussion of werewolves. He opens this chapter with an account of a werewolf who consumes the flesh of children in the rural regions of Dôle. I argue that Bodin's presentation of this case, which he admits is selective, reflects a deep-seated concern about the instability of the French monarchy. In particular, Bodin's werewolf account expresses his concerns regarding the instability of the crown and the subsequent threat such instability presents to the religious and political integrity of France.

Bodin's account of the werewolf of Dôle identifies the monster as Gilles Garnier and says the following about Garnier's crimes:

...we have a trial conducted at the Parlement of Dôle, and the writ issued on January 18, 1573, against Gilles Garnier from Lyons...The aforesaid Garnier on Saint Michael's day, while in the form of a werewolf, seized a young girl of ten or twelve years old near the Serre woods, in a vineyard in the wine region of Chastenoy, a quarter of a league from Dôle. There he killed her with his paw-like hands and his teeth, and ate the flesh of her thighs and arms, and took some to his wife. And in the same form a month later, he seized another girl, and killed her. He intended to eat her had he not been prevented by three people as he confessed. And fifteen days afterwards he strangled a young child of ten years old in the vineyard of Gredisans, and ate the flesh of his thighs, legs, and abdomen. And later in the form of a man and not a wolf, he killed another boy of twelve or thirteen years old in the woods of the village of Pérouse, with the intention of eating him had he not been prevented, as he confessed without force or constraint. He was condemned to be burned alive, and the sentence was carried out (Scott 122).

This quote provides an account of a predatory werewolf attacking and feasting on numerous children in the French countryside. The description emphasizes the remote environment in which these children are found, noting that Garnier's attacks occurred in vineyards and the outskirts of woods. By recalling these particular locations in his account, Bodin uses the children's connection to a peasant-commoner identity rather than evoking any other identity associated with the nobility or townspeople. Historically, peasant children would have started learning practical skills based on their social and gender identities at a young age. Young girls participated in household chores such as cooking, sewing, and spinning at the age of four or five (Wiesner-Hanks 288). More importantly, in relation to Bodin's description, peasant culture required that children aid in the agricultural tasks of cultivating land and harvesting crops (Wiesner-Hanks 288). In this sense, the treatise's description of the children and the activities they involved themselves in before the attack recalls the daily lives of the peasantry suggesting that Bodin's children may be interpreted as a representation of the peasantry as a whole. This construction relies on the understanding that the children function as an

1. All citations refer to Randy Scott's translation of Bodin's *Demonmanie* and all translations are Scott's unless indicated otherwise.

embodiment of all of the citizens of France, and particularly the peasants.

These victimized children serve to highlight the identity of the victims of witchcraft, which is targeted towards the peasants who are unable to defend themselves. Furthermore, the represented victimized peasantry as portrayed by Bodin serves as an allegorical body for France. According to Daisy Delogu, an expert in medieval and Early Modern French literature, political allegories functioned on two different but inter-related levels. Delogu explains:

one writes allegorically by hiding or disguising one's true meaning, whether to confine knowledge to select publics, or to protect writers from the consequences of subversive or dangerous discourses. One can also read allegorically, by seeking meanings other than those which are readily apparent in an effort to supplement— or supplant—a base text...they frequently combine both of these practices into a narrative mode that I will call “auto-exegetical” (Delogu 20).

According to Delogu, political allegories assume a technique open to Bodin in regards to discussing werewolves as political criticism. Even as Bodin copies preexisting court cases, as he does in the instance of Garnier, the prevalent mode of writing and reading these targeted cases encourages both Bodin and his audience to seek other meanings from the text.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the bodies of those mentioned in the Garnier case function as symbolic representations with reference to Bodin's arguments and opinions concerning the French social and political systems.

Specifically, the victimized children's bodies symbolize the physical harm inflicted on the citizens of France and the internal strife suffered by the kingdom. In emphasizing the innocence, helplessness and defenseless nature of the children, and subsequently the peasantry, Bodin heightens the barbarity of the monstrous act of cannibalism (Delogu 24–25). Bodin's exploration of the werewolf's barbarity was multifaceted, touching on cruelty, violence, and indifference, addressing widespread concerns such as human agency in monstrous bodies and the safety of France from monstrous beings such as Garnier.

By drawing attention to the barbarity of Garnier's cannibalistic acts, Bodin questioned the werewolf's humanity. More significantly, his presentation of Garnier's case emphasizes the physical threat that werewolves pose to the tranquility of peasant life, which is necessary for agricultural productivity, a point that is further discussed below. Bodin's implied allegorical reading of this werewolf attack employs a technique similar to that noted by Early Modern historian Antoine de Baecque, in his studies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. De Baecque claims that representations of allegorical bodies in political treatises rely on culturally accepted symbols in order to construct a collective identity (de Baecque 115). As de Baecque argues, during periods of religious, social and political crises, internal strife solidifies identity constructions as such strife encourages the dominant demographic group to emphasize the values of its culture (116). Those who fail to conform to the group's values and belief systems are targeted by the dominant group and ostracized as a minority or contrasting “other” (122). In creating a contrasting “other,” the dominant group is able to inspire unity and enforce behavior norms by evoking an imagined opposing force to their social, political, and religious institutions. This imagined threat to the integrity of the dominant group provides the dominant group an outlet for projecting their anxieties.

De Baecque's observations regarding the function of allegorical bodies in Early Modern polemic explains the political work such bodies performed in a historical period that succeeded Bodin's by more than one hundred years. However, as he argues, the political use of allegorical bodies is not limited to the practices of one particular era. In fact, Delogu has traced the political importance of allegorical representations of France to the rule of the mad king Charles VI (r. 1380–1422) (Delogu 3). Delogu explains how Early Modern authors relied upon personified images of France in order to unify French civilians in response to political crises (Delogu 21). For instance, they presented France as a noble woman, who was mistreated and needed protection (Delogu 29). Authors relied upon the widespread cultural imperative to protect innocent noble women to warn against the dangers of political disunity.

Charlotte Wells engages with the Early Modern allegorical constructions of the French nation that elaborated upon those identified by Delogu, asserting that such constructions functioned to “postulate an emotional bond between the citizen and his or her homeland and a duty of service to country based upon that tie” (Wells 443). The agreement among these three scholars, who study different bodies of primary sources generated in different time periods,

2. In a sentence omitted from Scott's translation, Bodin asserts that his presentation of Garnier's case will be abbreviated because a full account of the case is otherwise available: “*nous avons un procès fait au Parlement de Dôle, et l'arret donné le XVIII contre Gilles Garnier Lyonnais, qu'il n'est besoin de mettre icy au long, puis qu'il est imprimé à Orleans par Eloy Gibier, et à Paris chez Pierre des Hayes, et à Sens. Mais je mettray les points principaux: don't il a esté accusé et conveincü*” (Bodin 27).

suggests Bodin's discussion of the werewolf relied upon well-established traditions. Particularly, the emotional connection between French civilians and France likely informed the imagery Bodin used to portray the victimized children who symbolize France. In contrast to France is the "other" who is embodied by Garnier in his werewolf form. By creating this relationship between symbolic bodies of children and werewolf, Bodin is able to incorporate his concerns for the kingdom, particularly emphasizing the violence inflicted on the body of France by werewolves.

If de Baecque's, Delogu's, and Well's arguments contextualize the Garnier case, the natural symbolic association of children with innocence and purity would have served to inspire outrage about Garnier's violence (Dudash 828). The threat political chaos posed to these innocent symbols of the French citizenry is embodied by Garnier whose presence as a cannibalistic monster serves as a stark contrast to the children's implied innocence. In this sense, the literal relationship between children and monster is enriched by the potential allegorical readings of both bodies (Nolan 95). Bodin specifically emphasizes the prevalent cultural significance of depictions of peasant children in order to heighten the reader's judgement of the great injustice committed by Garnier. The contrasting imagery between the children and werewolf is dependent on the understanding of children, and the child-victims of the case, as inherently innocent, good and helpless. Thus, the account of the attack on the children emphasizes the evil enacted by the werewolf, functioning as a means to illustrate the malicious character of the monster and the political strife the monster represents.

The anxieties embodied by Garnier are not limited to the physical harm that he inflicts on the children, and by way of allegory, on the entire French community. Garnier also evokes a theoretical crisis regarding the extent to which humanity is found within monstrous beings. His physical characterization as wolf-like not only turns him into a menacing monster who preys on the innocent flesh of children but also signifies a crisis in distinguishing man from beast. In this sense, Bodin participates in a longstanding debate regarding the meaning of metamorphoses from human to beast with respect to theological understandings of human nature (Bynum 23). The monstrous hybrid, which blurs the lines between human and beast, had been a pressing topic in religious and political debates since the beginning of Christianity. Reports of the ability of some humans to change into beasts challenged the religious argument that humans were created in the image of God to such an extent that the human soul could not animate a monstrous form. Yet, numerous accounts of monsters were prevalent

in medieval theological discussions, from St. Augustine to Gerald of Wales and beyond. The prevalent investigation of monsters in classical, medieval, and Early Modern literature suggests that monsters remained an uncomfortable topic that eluded closure (Bynum 95). Instead, monster-human hybrids continued to provoke inquiry in religious, scientific and political thought that informed later theorists such as Bodin.

Garnier embodies this ongoing crisis when he is described as having "paw-like" hands, signifying that some resemblance of his human hands was maintained in his beast-like form (Scott 122). This resemblance suggests Bodin suspected that werewolves retained human consciousness and agency in their acts. His inability to divorce himself from all human elements in his mutated form represents the compromise between human and animal characteristics in Garnier's body and suggests a permeability between animal and human forms. This reading proposes that Garnier's body illustrates the discomfort that hybrid provoked in early Christian, medieval, and Early Modern thinkers.

Just as crucial to Bodin's argument is the fact that Garnier's semi-metamorphosis can be understood as reflection of his "true self." In making this suggestion, Bodin draws upon a narrative tradition depicting outer monstrosity as a reflection of an individual's inner nature that informed the Greek classics. One example often cited by medieval and Early Modern authorities derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Sconduto 123). In Ovid's early classic, King Lycaon tries to feed human flesh to Zeus in order to prove that the god is mortal (Sconduto 124). King Lycaon's plan fails and Zeus punishes him by turning him into a wolf-like creature. Zeus recounts the following about King Lycaon's transformation into a wolf:

My thunderbolt struck the king's house to ruins,  
And he, wild master, ran like beast to field crying his  
terror which cannot utter words, but howls in fear,  
his foaming lips and jaws. Quick with the thought  
of blood. His cloak turned into bristling hair, his  
arms were forelegs of a wolf, yet he resembled  
himself, what he had been—the violent grey hair,  
face, eyes, the ceaseless, restless stare of drunken  
tyranny and hopeless hate (Sconduto 125).<sup>3</sup>

As a werewolf, King Lycaon does not assume full-animal form. Rather, he retains some of his human characteristics. Instead, as Zeus himself reports, Lycaon's monstrous form is a physical representation of the bestiality and cruelty that

3. This account is a translation from Sconduto.

he harbors in his personality. Similarly, Garnier also fails to transform fully into a werewolf and retains some of his human features. As with King Lycaon, Garnier's werewolf form functions as a physical representation of the evil within his character. In particular, Bodin utilizes Garnier's beast-like form in order to illustrate the inner monstrosity of his identity as a witch. Just as his metamorphosis physically represents the inherent evil within his character, Garnier's metamorphosis also signifies the barbarous evil that informs the practice of witchcraft (Clark 790); namely, the witch's submission to Satan.

Later in his treatise, Bodin explicitly addresses this issue of the irreparably compromised humanity of witches and werewolves, arguing that witches and werewolves willingly submitted themselves to Satan and purposefully denounced God through their participation in demonic attacks (Scott 112). In Book two, chapter four, the relationship between Devil and witch is cemented through the witch's rejection of God, and in some instances, the Devil brands the witch with a mark, making the bond permanent (Scott 113). For Bodin, a witch or werewolf's inner nature is corrupted by their affinity for Satan. As active, free agents, werewolves and witches willingly submit themselves to Satan without coercion. In fact, Bodin pairs his definition of the witch to the word "knowingly," specifically stating:

First I used the word "knowingly" (*sciement*), since it is true that error cannot involve any consent, as the law states, so that a sick person who in good faith uses diabolical formula given to him by a witch whom he thought was an upright man, is not a witch for he has just cause for ignorance. But this is not so if the witch declares it to him, or invokes evil spirits in his presence, as they sometimes do (Scott 45).

Since the actions of witches and werewolves are based upon their own agency, Bodin supports their execution.

Bodin also describes Garnier's attacks on the bodies of children and the deliberate consumption of their flesh as part of his wider discussion of the threats witches pose to the French crown and kingdom. In an effort to purposefully fight against God, werewolves consciously cause harm to the peasantry as a means of destroying the foundations of God's preordained order, which for Bodin is represented by the authority of the French king. These attacks diminish the authority of the king as the murders of children publicly announce the king's failure to protect his citizens. Hence, Garnier's corrupted humanity is a threat to France

as he represents the danger posed by witchcraft to both the church and crown, a danger all the more pressing because it was contagious.

Witches, as Bodin argued, posed a threat to the physical wellbeing of the commonwealth by purposefully causing widespread sickness in communities and casting spells with specialized powders that killed livestock and crops.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these dangerous beings were constantly multiplying through the moral contamination of those closet to them. As Bodin explains:

For to do what is most pleasing to the Devil, and have peace with him, when one has given oneself to him, means attracting many subjects. And usually the wife attracts her husband, the mother leads her daughter, and sometimes the whole family carries on for many centuries as it has been proven by countless trials (Scott 114).

This quote illustrates Bodin's desire to contain the witchcraft epidemic. While the lack of central authority implied by the King's inability to protect the peasant children of France from werewolves jeopardizes the prosperity of the commonwealth, the greater consequence for Bodin was France's spiritual deterioration as Satan conquered the French citizens by turning them into witches. Evident in this image is Bodin's belief in an ongoing religious war between God and Satan, in which Bodin supported God's side of the struggle by calling for the extermination of witches.

Implied in the symbolic readings of Garnier is Bodin's intention of reasserting the power of God through the revitalization of the monarchy and the end of religiously inspired warfare. Identifying as a *politique*, Bodin believed that the prevalent religious violence between French Catholics and Protestants was destroying France and that the only way to peace was in reasserting a strong monarchy (Scott 10).<sup>5</sup> A contextualized reading of Garnier's case suggests that Bodin understood the Wars of Religion and the actions of witches and werewolves as presenting concurrent and related threats to the integrity of France. Garnier is one of many case studies included in Bodin's discourse that examines the represented embodiment of the destructive power of the political and social chaos and the urgency needed from the

4. The issues of witchcraft are discussed fully in Books Two and Three of *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*. Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, Randy A. Scott (trans.), (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2001).

5. For more on the importance of the *politiques*, refer to Charlotte C. Wells, "The Language of Citizenship in the French Religious Wars," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30/2 (Summer 1999): 441-456.

royal family in asserting its power against these demonic creatures.

In particular, Garnier's constant destructive attacks on innocent children challenges the monarchy's claims to moral and religious purity. This connection between the failure of royal authority and Garnier's child victims becomes evident when his relationship with the children is subjected to a multi-faceted reading acknowledging that the children represent France as a Catholic religious state and, as already discussed, the peasantry. This reading of the Garnier case remains consistent with all previous readings of him, in which he is seen as an ultimate danger to the well-being of France. The emphasis Bodin places on the children and what they represent nuances his treatise's purpose. The suggestion that the government can be the victim of the monstrosity of witchcraft suggests the religious health of the kingdom and the political health of the monarchy are in need of God's assistance. Ultimately, justice is served as Garnier is condemned and burned, but his attack is telling in that Bodin's presentation of him underpins Bodin's anxiety about witchcraft as a powerful force that attacked the foundation of France and the church. Moreover, as acts of physical violence, the murder and consumption of children corrupts the imagined innocence and peace that had been attributed to rural areas in French political theory (Dudash 792). Bodin's construction of this imagined peace is indifferent to the aristocratic warfare of the medieval and Early Modern periods, and the skirmishes of the Religious Wars in France in which the French peasantry and civilians were the victims of this violence.

Prior to Bodin's publication of *De la Demonmanie*, France had undergone an era of political turmoil. After the sudden and tragic death of King Henri II (1547–1559), the French government witnessed a rapid succession of heirs to the throne and the controversial regency of Queen Catherine de Medici. From 1559 until 1589, the French monarchy was exchanged between the three heirs of King Henri II: Francis II (r.1559–1560), Charles IX (r.1560–1574) and Henri III (r.1574–1589). The monarchy's deterioration began with King Francis II who was advised and manipulated by his radical Catholic in-laws, the Guises (Crawford 653). However, the religious turmoil reached a crucial peak in 1574, with the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre (Smither 27). Under the regency of Catherine de Medici, negotiations between French Catholics and Protestants were underway (Crawford 658). But when the leader of the Protestants was assassinated, Catholic citizens followed the crown's example by massacring their Protestant neighbors. The crown's

inability to prevent this religious outburst of violence and its potential role in its incitement drew much criticism.

Furthermore, Catherine de Medici fell under suspicion of destabilizing the monarchy due to her foreign identity (Wells 370). As Natalie Tomas has noted, detractors identified foreign queens "as [personified] evil foreigners... Catherine was characterized as the 'Wicked Queen,' a 'dangerous foreigner, evil woman...political manipulator [and] a monstrous mother'—who was deemed responsible for the St. Bartholomew Day massacre of 1572" (Tomas 72). Subsequently, Catherine's regency was criticized by some as having contributed to the political chaos surrounding the reign of her sons, underpinning the larger religious chaos between French civilians. Such evaluations of Catherine's regency ignored her advocacy for peace between the religious factions, in which she used her position of power to promote tolerance towards Protestant communities (Chang and Kong 16). This social and political backdrop illuminates much of Bodin's text in regards to why he emphasized specific anxieties concerning the promotion of the king (Clark 788). Evidence internal to Bodin's text, however, suggests that his account of Garnier's attacks upon peasant children most closely resonated with his criticism of the reign of King Henri III.

Bodin's concern for the political deterioration of the French monarchy as presented in his treatise is expressed through the stated and implied relationships the werewolf has with the children and their parents, who serve as allegorical representatives of the French crown. The parents of the victimized children remain absent in all accounts. The absence of the parents at the time of each attack resonates with the political negligence ascribed to the monarchy by its critics. In each scenario, the children are unaccompanied by older adults and parents. As a consequence of the absence of adults, the children become susceptible targets for Garnier who uses this vulnerability to kill and consume his victims. This interpretation of the absent parents' significance to Bodin's discussion of the werewolf violence reflects his political theory as outlined in *The Six Books of the Commonwealth*.

Bodin's earlier work, *Les Six Livres de la République* (*The Six Books of the Commonwealth*) serves as a philosophical backdrop contextualizing his presentation of the Garnier case. Particular attention is drawn to his description of the symbolic relationship between an individual family unit and the monarchy. Bodin defines the family unit as:

the right ordering of a group of persons owing obedience to a head of a household, and of those interests which are his proper concern. The second term of our definition of the commonwealth refers to the family because it is not only the true source and origin of the commonwealth, but also its principal constituent... Thus, the well-ordered family is a true image of the commonwealth, and domestic comparable with sovereign authority. It follows that the household is the model of the right order in the commonwealth...The rightly ordered government of a father over his children lies first in the proper exercise of that power which God gives to a father over his natural children...and second in the obedience, love and reverence that children owe their father. But of all these there is none that has a natural right to command save only the father, who is the image of the Almighty God, the Father of all things...In any rightly ordered commonwealth, that power of life and death over their children, which belongs to them under the law of God and of nature, should be restored to the parents (Scott 6–8).

As this passage suggests, for Bodin, family members become a means for understanding and analyzing the proper expectations for the French king and civilians in the greater political setting. The king, whose role is represented as the “head of the household,” holds complete power over France. Since they are inferior to the king in the way that children are inferior to their fathers, citizens are expected to submit themselves to the monarch in fulfillment of an “obligation to obey.” Bodin’s clear emphasis on the fatherly role of the king suggests that we may read the king as the absent parent in the Garnier case, while the children symbolize the French civilians. It is the responsibility of the parents, but more specifically the father, to guard the children from the harm of potential dangers, as realized in Garnier’s werewolf form, while it is the children’s role to submit themselves to the father’s rule. This relationship constructs the natural order as mentioned in *The Six Books*. However, Bodin’s emphasis of the king’s duties as a protective parent serve as a contrast to the negligence of the rule of King Henri III. According to Wells, by 1588 criticism of the monarchy targeted the failures of King Henri III who relied upon “*mignons*” for advising and companionship (Wells 370). According to Wells, *mignons* were the trusted advisors of King Henri III’s counsel who manipulated the king for their own personal gain (369). These men who served King Henri III as *mignons* were described in polemical pamphlets as predators of France, who feasted on the monetary sub-

stance of the kingdom, and as a result, denied the French people political stability that derives from financial security (Wells 370). Given the political negligence of King Henri III, Bodin’s text may be read as a criticism of the inner political decoration under the reign of Henri III. In particular, Garnier’s attacks on the children and the parents’ inability to protect them from the threat of the werewolf, symbolizes the king’s lack of protection for French citizens. Bodin’s criticism of the monarchy relies upon the nuclear family structure to define France’s political chaos, particularly that of the Religious Wars and the lack of central power wielded by the king.

## Conclusion

Bodin’s characterization of the state as a political family suggests that his emphasis of the grotesque relationship between the children and the werewolf in *De la Demonmanie* served to promote strong government action against transgressors of religious and political peace. In order to restore peace, werewolves like Garnier, who commit violence against children, must be eliminated through particular methods of persecution that restore the justice of the father-king. By evoking the political implications of the Garnier case, Bodin implies that the restoration of peace can only be achieved through the enforcement of the father, the king, in ensuring the safety of the children, or peasants. As Bodin indicates, the function of the *Demonmanie de Sorciers* is not to simply recount the horrors of witches but to persuade the king to take action against witches. This is made evident in Bodin’s closing chapter of Book Four, “On the Punishment that Witches Merit.” In this chapter, he justifies witch purges by citing the benefits of properly disposing of witches. In particular, he emphasizes the fact that by punishing witches, the king fulfills his duties as protector of France and acts in accordance to the will of God. He concludes:

But those people greatly delude themselves who think that the penalties are only established to punish the crime. I maintain that it is the least benefit which accrues to the state. For the greatest and the chief one is to appease the anger of God, especially if the crime is directly against the majesty of God, as this one is. The second benefit of the punishment is to obtain the blessing of God on the whole country...The third benefit one receives from punishment of the wicked, is to strike fear and terror into others; as it is described in the law of God (Scott 203).



In regards to his theories of absolutism and the parent-king relationship, this excerpt emphasizes the need for a strong parent figure that had been absent in France during his lifetime. As a result of the king's lack of political control, the widespread religious warfare in France, and Bodin's forced retirement from Parliament under King Henri III, he found the symbolic relationship between the parent-king imagery appropriate for his discussion of the turmoil in France.

Dependent on the divinely appointed responsibilities of his citizens, the French king was expected to uphold standards regarding the security of the nation, proving himself as a competent and good ruler. Stuart Clark's *Thinking with Demons* traces a historical-political logic of the theory of absolute power. In this theory, the king of France is placed as the ultimate ruler whose power derives from the grace of God (Clark 661). The king's image is a reflection of God and His grace so long as he fulfills his duties of leadership and dedication in protecting France (Clark 780). This justification for the king's absolute power had propelled the French monarchy for generations and continued to play an important part during Bodin's era, under the rule of Henri II's heirs (Roberts 8). More specifically in this reading of the king, Bodin directly claims that the king embodies "the image of Almighty God, the Father of all things." His direct connection of the king's role as protector of France to that of God's responsibility as almighty ruler of the Christian world serves as a point of criticism for the confusion characterizing the late Valois monarchy.

Ultimately, the king's power over France was understood as the proper ordering of the government, which created a parallel with God's absolute rule over the ordering of the universe. However, accounts of the demonic infiltration and harm caused to the peasantry challenged the king's claims to power. The execution of Garnier serves as a model in reestablishing the order of the king and God, thereby fighting against the threat of inherent evil embodied by the werewolf and reinforcing the king's right to rule. Furthermore, the allegorical representation of the parents is emphasized in the condemnation of Garnier. When Garnier is finally prevented from killing children, it is because adults take initiative in capturing the werewolf. Hence, the political reading of the conclusion of the case illustrates that through the king's power, demonic creatures can be defeated and the assaults on the peasantry stopped.

In conclusion, Bodin's interest in discussing the werewolves in France reflected much more than his engagement with contemporary traditions and beliefs regarding the relationships between humans and the demonic. Although he

does not question the validity of accounts of cannibalistic werewolves attacking children, he received these accounts as relevant to the religious and political discussions occurring during the Early Modern era. For this reason, the factual evidence of werewolves was not the focus of the treatise. Instead, their relationship to Satan and witchcraft provided a concrete concern for the stability of the monarchy in regards to political and religious integrity. Werewolves reflect one analysis of the concern about the government's integrity, specifically with respect to the socio-political structures of *The Six Books*. The shared ideas across texts suggest that Bodin's discussion of werewolves and their identities as witches was contingent upon his beliefs about absolute power, fidelity to the religious order, and the stability of the crown. As Stuart Clark notes in his book *Thinking of Demons*, Early Modern discussions of witchcraft functioned dialectically, drawing upon extreme contrasts between "the other" or the witch and the proper civilian (Clark 1). We see that Bodin uses language to construct a drastic difference between the victims and Garnier in order to describe moral, political, and religious monstrosities that are not elements of a proper society.

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