

*STAGING THE ROMAN DE RENART: MEDIEVAL THEATER
AND THE DIFFUSION OF POLITICAL CONCERNS
INTO POPULAR CULTURE*

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To what degree can the texts and records of medieval theater be used to understand the diffusion of political beliefs and views into popular culture in the Middle Ages? Such a task is difficult because the notion of popular culture is itself "an elusive quarry."¹ What is it possible, many ask, to know of such culture when so much of the written evidence that has survived bears the indelible imprint of a learned elite? Although we often know how individuals with access to writing responded to events, ideas, traditions, and opportunities, we seldom find, in written records, evidence that can show how political ideas from elite or learned spheres began to circulate in popular culture.

Let us begin with the term popular itself. For some, it means a traditional culture that is tied to an oral and regional peasant folklore and rooted in archaic images, beliefs, and rituals.² We will take popular here, however, to mean a common culture that is "widely disseminated and widely accessed" by everyone, regardless of estate, education, or sex.³ Common culture can be understood as one that everyone knows, such as our popular music, which can be produced or used by someone from any social level. Such common culture may be contrasted not only with that of a learned elite but also with traditional culture which may not circulate beyond a particular area or may be restricted to those who have been designated, initiated, or instructed.

In medieval Europe, this opposition between common, learned, and traditional culture reflects the development—within nations of mobile aristocratic courts, self-enclosed ecclesiastics, and rural peasants—of a *place* for common culture, the streets of medieval cities where social classes and cultural perspectives mingle freely in "the cacophony of the medieval city"⁴ and where medieval drama flowers before our eyes. The records of theater in urban settings lay this common culture open

to view when they give us both texts and the certainty that these were known to a sizable audience. Accounts of public performances during urban festivities provide evidence for reception by a broad spectrum of social classes. Yet knowing what was seen or heard by members of an audience is not the same as knowing what they understood. In certain circumstances, however, drama can take us towards such understanding when popular spectacles display political themes and when such performances can be related to other records expressing the political attitudes of persons in the general population outside clerical and learned circles.⁵

Studies of royal entries show that theatrical performances during urban celebrations in medieval France often expressed specific moral or political meanings such as advice to the monarch, demonstration of civic strength, or confirmation of royal legitimacy and clerical or municipal privileges.⁶ They were sponsored by members of the royal administration, clergy, municipal officials, bourgeois, religious brotherhoods, and crafts in order to express such meanings deliberately to royal and official spectators. But since they were staged in the streets, they were also seen by a mixed, general public as well. If we know what a particular spectacle staged during a royal urban celebration probably meant to its sponsors and participants, we can then ask if and how such a theatrical performance conveyed some of those meanings to at least some members of this mixed audience (whether deliberately or no), thus popularizing ideological views by disseminating them amidst a general population.

Renart the trickster fox is a character well suited to represent questions of common popular culture, for he too eludes the grasp of those who would hold him to account. Costumed now as a feudal baron, now as a hungry beast of the wild, disguised as a priest, a physician, or a minstrel, crowned as king or reviled as a criminal, Renart slips easily across class barriers. He can take us deep within medieval political culture too, for a moral or political message was often tucked into his bag of tricks in satirical versions of the fox tales. Although Renart seems to lurk at the margins of the social world, it can be shown that behind the animal disguise he often speaks for someone at the center—a bourgeois, a bureaucrat, or a cleric.⁷ The trail of the clever fox leads us to theater (and to political matters) when Renart makes a surprising appearance on stage, as a character in street tableaux produced for a royal and urban celebration held in Paris during the octave of Pentecost in 1313 to honor

the knightng of the three sons of King Philip the Fair and the taking of crusade vows by kings, nobles, and bourgeois.

The Parisian Pentecost feast of 1313 was one of the most immense and costly of the great urban popular celebrations of the Middle Ages and the first for which we have extensive records. An anonymous contemporary metrical chronicle contains a remarkable account some 429 lines long of this feast.⁸ This metrical chronicle is known only in Paris BN MS. Fr. 146 (dated 1317),⁹ which also contains love lyrics,¹⁰ topical political poems by Geffroi de Paris,¹¹ and an expanded version of the *Roman de Fauvel*,¹² an allegorical satire about the evil horse Fauvel (animal analogue to Renart), richly illustrated with paintings and musical insertions.¹³ The metrical chronicler of Fr. 146 describes the sumptuous festivities of the nobles in 1313 at length. But he also devotes almost 40% of these lines to telling of the splendid revelry and decorations the Parisians provided for the royal celebration: street decorations, a pontoon bridge, a children's tournament, comic wild men and bean kings, animal displays, flags, instrumental music, structures such as castles and towers, wax candle illuminations, dancing, feasting, and a fountain where wine flowed without stopping for three days.¹⁴ Most remarkable are the fifty-three verses where the chronicler describes the lavish *faërie* [entertainments; lit. enchantments, 4953], the tableaux vivants sponsored by wealthy bourgeois and the crafts of the weavers and beltmakers (4953-5005).

This passage (see appendix) is indeed an extraordinary document, which has not heretofore been studied as it deserves. It is not only the earliest record of street theater in medieval Paris, predating by half a century the next known reference; it is also the first known witness to craft sponsorship of Parisian theater. It contains, moreover, the earliest description of theatrical staging in Paris: the chronicle tells us that scenes of Heaven and Hell were mounted on large sets with curtains, crowds of singers, and stage effects of song, smoke, noise, and movement.¹⁵ Most exceptional, however, are the half-dozen Renart scenes listed among the tableaux. This is indeed a precious record, for it is the only surviving account of theatrical staging of the Renart stories during the Middle Ages.¹⁶ Although in the narrative *Roman de Renart* the sly fox himself often dons costumes, assumes accents, and plays roles, no other reports of plays about Renart are known anywhere in Europe during the medieval period.

Renart is not a guest often welcomed at royal feasts. When, in the stories of the medieval French *Roman de Renart*, King Noble the Lion assembles his court of barons, the malicious fox is most frequently summoned to be tried for his crimes and misdemeanors. Renart shows up, however, in the best of company in 1313, for the spectators in the streets at the great Parisian Pentecost feast saw two types of scenes—a dozen religious tableaux and at least half a dozen starring the fox or another character from the animal stories: Renart as a physician and singing an Epistle, Hersent the she-wolf spinning, the whole life of Renart who ate chickens and hens, Renart as bishop, pope, and archbishop, and finally Renart on his bier. These scenes are provocatively intermingled with the religious tableaux in the chronicle account where Renart costumed as a doctor sits cheek by jowl with the Virgin and Christ Child, then sings an Epistle beside Caiaphas, who is dressed as a bishop, while Hersent spins next to Adam and Eve.

La vit on Dieu sa mere rire,
Renart fisicien et mire

...

Herode et Caÿphas en mitre,
Et Renart chanter une espitre
La fu veü et evangile
Crois et floz, et Hersent qui file
Et d'autre part Adam et Eve

...

Corroier aussi contrefirent
—Qui leur entente en ce bien mirent—
La vie de Renart sanz faille
Qui menjoit et poucins et paille.
Mestre Renart i fu evesque
Veü et pape et arcevesque;
Renart i fu en toute guise,
Si com sa vie le devise:
En biere, en crois et en cencier.
(4955-56, 4987-91, 4997-5005)

[There God was seen laughing with his mother, Renart as a physician and doctor . . . Herod and Caiaphas in a

miter, and Renart was seen there singing an Epistle and the Gospel, crosses and feather plumes, and Hersent spinning and elsewhere Adam and Eve . . . The beltmakers also staged (they did well in this undertaking) the whole life of Renart who devoured chickens and hens. Master Renart was seen there as bishop, pope and archbishop; Renart was there in every disguise, just as his life tells us, on a bier with cross and censor].¹⁷

How and why did the bourgeois and crafts of Paris stage such a curious theme so prominently among their festive *faërie*?

The descriptions in the metrical chronicle of Fr. 146 suggest that neither the religious nor the Renart scenes were fully realized dramas with narrative action and dialogue. Rather they were tableaux where costumed actors used props, gestures, and sound to carry out single actions that recall well-known stories. Vocal elements seem to have been simple: there are songs in the Heaven scene (4961-63), shrieks and groans in the Hell (4965-72); Jesus and the Apostles say the Pater Noster (4981-82), and Renart sings a Bible lesson. Staged within the celebration, religious scenes served to remind spectators of fundamentals of their common Christian belief: tableaux represented the Christ Child laughing on his mother's lap and eating apples, the visit of the Magi, Heaven, Hell, the Last Judgment, the Resurrection, Christ and the Apostles, the slaughter of the Innocents, the beheading of John the Baptist, Herod and Caiaphas, Adam and Eve, Pilate washing his hands. Taken together, these scenes add up to a repertory of a mystery of the Passion (although the chronicler does not list them in chronological order), making this the earliest known record of theatrical representation of the Passion in Paris.

The chronicler says the tableaux show Renart's trickery "Si com sa vie le devise" [just as it is told in his life, 5004], that is, they recall tales that seem as familiar to his readers as the scenes from the Bible among which they are interspersed. For the modern reader, however, who may not know the stories, two types of sources can fill out these allusions: the surviving branches or episodic narratives of the *Roman de Renart* and contemporary iconography of the trickster fox.

Varty's studies have shown that in whatever medium they are represented (narrative, miniatures, sculptures, wall paintings), the Renart stories often form episodic ensembles or anthologies as they do in the

tableaux of the *faërie*.¹⁸ The story of Renart the physician figures in the earliest Latin versions of the tales¹⁹ and is retold several times in the *Roman de Renart*.²⁰ In this episode, Renart heals King Noble the Lion, who has fallen sick, in exchange for forgiveness for his crimes against the king's messengers. The fox's cure? Renart administers remedies concocted literally of the king's other courtiers: he takes the skin of Ysengrin the wolf and the main tendon of the antlers of Brichemer the stag as well as a belt cut from the skin of his side; he tries in vain to get the fur of Tybert the cat as well. This episode is crucial to the narrative thrust of the *Roman de Renart*, for King Noble is forever indebted to Renart for healing him and the fox often escapes punishment by recalling his good deed.

Such stories and contemporary Renart iconography, which was especially popular in English manuscripts of the first half of the fourteenth century,²¹ show in two ways what the spectators of 1313 might have seen in the tableaux. First, miniatures indicate which moments in a familiar story were deemed highlights worthy of illustration (and hence, perhaps, theatrical representation). Second, where such miniatures attribute human gestures and attitudes to animals (as they often do), they suggest how actors masked or costumed as animals might have moved in the scenes. Thus in the tableau of "Renart as a physician," an actor masked as a fox might have draped a wolf's skin around another figuring King Noble as does Renart in one scene of an extended series representing that tale in the famous margin paintings of the Smithfield Decretals, amply described by Varty.²² (Fig. 1) Miniatures from several manuscripts contemporary to Fr. 146 might well "illustrate" a second tableau from the 1313 celebration: "Renart on a bier with cross and censer." This line alludes to an episode in Branch XVII which tells of the funeral procession ordered by King Noble for the fox who was believed to have expired after he recklessly wagered his private parts in a chess game with his archenemy the wolf . . . and lost!²³ This procession was a favorite of medieval artists who delighted in the parade of animals.²⁴ In the Smithfield Decretals a miniature represents a procession where Chantecler the Cock carries the censer, Coward the rabbit carries a burning candle, and weeping nuns bear the body of the supposedly defunct fox drawn in procession by geese or ducks.²⁵ In another image of the procession in the margins of a *Roman d'Alexandre* dated 1344, there is an amusing cortege of animals: an ape, two lions, and a cat carry holy water, cross, and candles before a bier borne by a horse and a fox; the wily



Figure 1. Renart drapes the wolf's skin around King Noble (London, British Library, Royal MS. 10 E. iv, fol. 57r. Reproduced by permission of the British Library).

fox escapes from under the cloth draped over his coffin with a cock gripped in his jaws.²⁶ (Fig. 2).

The chronicler's references to "Renart who devoured chickens and hens" and "Renart singing an Epistle" allude to motifs common to both Renart stories and margin drawings²⁷ such as a lively illustration from the celebrated Queen Mary's Psalter from the first quarter of the fourteenth century.²⁸ (Fig. 3) In contrast, the 1313 scene representing "Master Renart . . . as bishop, pope, and archbishop" does not correspond to any known story.²⁹ It does, however, recall images familiar from medieval anti-clerical and political satire as well as animal grotesques or *babewyns* from margin illustrations, where Renart often appears costumed in a bishop's miter and crozier or monk's cowl preaching to birds, as in another miniature from the Queen Mary's Psalter.³⁰ (Fig. 4) Such images of the fox catechizing appetizing poultry appear to parody popular contemporary images of Saint Francis' sermon to the birds.³¹ (Fig. 5)

The Renart scenes of 1313 are not, however, static images ornamenting learned books but lively shows staged for immense crowds circulating in the city streets. The metrical chronicle and the expanded *Fauvel* compiled with it in Fr. 146 offer valuable hints about how these tableaux might have been staged. The scenes could all have been mounted on scaffolds surmounted by curtained pavilions such as those the chronicler reports for the Heaven and Hell scenes of 1313. In French

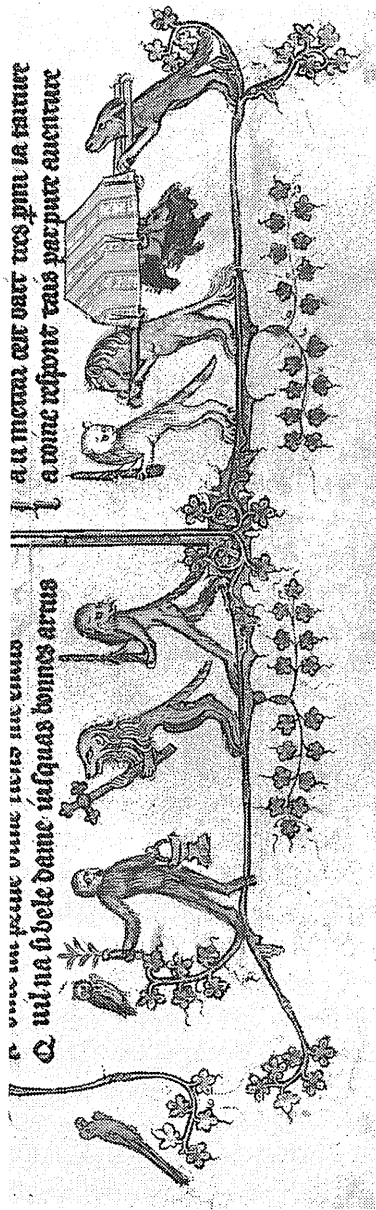


Figure 2. Funeral procession of Renart (Oxford, MS. Bodley 264, fol. 79v. Reproduced by permission of The Bodleian Library, Oxford).



Figure 3. Renart devours birds (London, British Library, Royal MS. 2 B.VII, fol. 100. Reproduced by permission of the British Library).

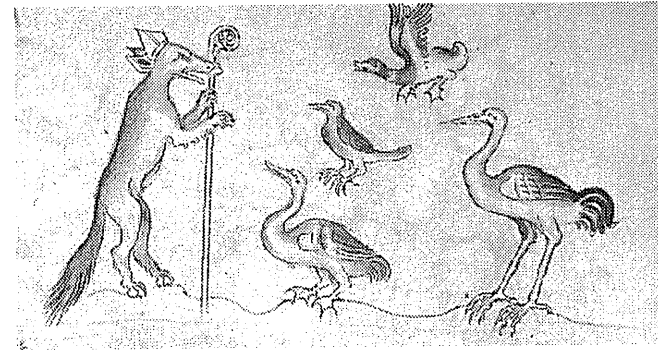


Figure 4. Renart dressed as a bishop preaches to birds (London, British Library, Royal MS. 2. B. VII, fol. 157^r. Reproduced by permission of the British Library).



Figure 5. Saint Francis' sermon to the birds (Eton, MS. 996, fol. 22. Reproduced by permission of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College).

stagings these were often sizable stationary structures:³² the Heaven of 1313 was large enough to accommodate some ninety singers representing souls "dedenz" [inside, 4961-63]; the Hell set was apparently intended to last for an extended period, for when a storm blew down its curtains on Wednesday of the feast, they were quickly set up again (4973-76). The chronicler also mentions "chastiax et tours" [castles and towers, 5017] among other entertainments sponsored by the bourgeois.³³ Such sets are typical of French theater throughout the Middle Ages; they are a notable decorative feature of the tableaux staged for celebratory urban processions such as royal entries from the late fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. However, performers may well have ventured off

such sets into the crowds: the metrical chronicle tells us that devils in the Hell scene "... tuit sailloient adjacent / Por les ames a elz atrere" [came out side by side to lure souls to them, 4967-69]; perhaps Renart too chased his "chickens and hens" out among the spectators.

Illustrations and reports elsewhere in Fr. 146 and other contemporary manuscripts show familiarity with other performance practices that could have been used in 1313. Actors in the Renart scenes may well have worn animal masks like those portrayed in the miniatures illustrating the famous charivari in the *Roman de Fauvel* of Fr. 146. (Fig. 6) These show costumes said to be worn by Parisians marching in a noisy nocturnal parade; the *Fauvel* says they put on bestial masks and other disguises, feigned rowdy drunkenness, bawled out raucous songs, and banged on pots and bells to protest the marriage of Fauvel to Vainglory.³⁴ Similar masks portraying more recognizable animals are worn by mummers and

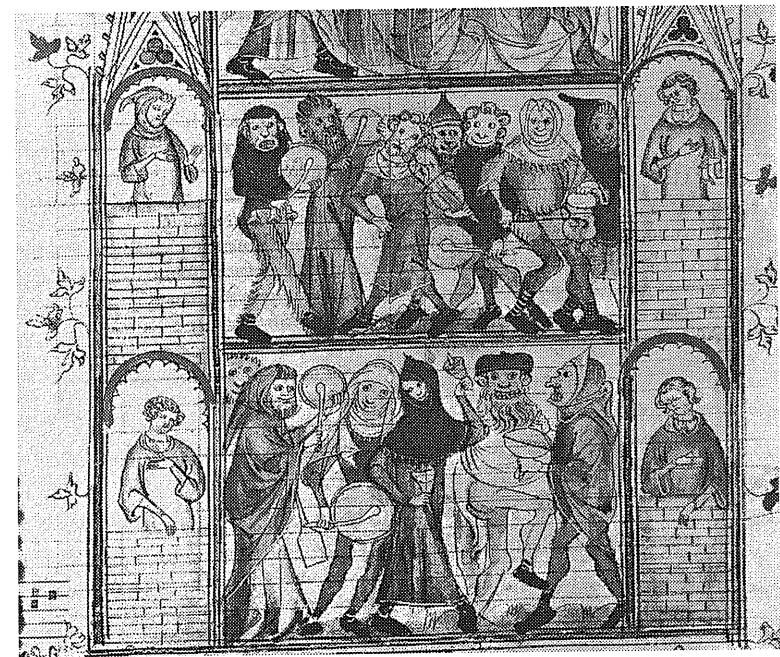


Figure 6. *Fauvel* charivari: Masked figures (Paris, BN MS. Fr. 146, fol. 34r. Phot. Bibl. Nat. Paris).

dancers in miniatures from the same *Roman d'Alexandre* where Renart's procession is found.³⁵ (Fig. 7) Another engaging miniature from a late thirteenth-century Picard manuscript of Robert de Boron's *Histoire du graal* shows a masker peeking out from a costume representing a tall stag.³⁶ (Fig. 8)

Did any of the Renart tableaux move on wagons or on foot or horseback in some type of mobile processional staging? Ensembles of actors forming tableaux may well have accompanied the great parade of Parisians on Thursday, the fifth day of the celebration, which the chronicler says marched and rode fifty thousand strong from the Ile Notre-Dame (now Ile Saint-Louis) to the royal palace on the Ile-de-la-Cité and then on beyond the city walls to Saint-Germain-des-Prés where Edward II of England was lodged (5066-92).³⁷ Although the author of the metrical chronicle does not speak of processional staging, two other chronicles do say that maskers playing scenes moved along with the parade of Parisians. The *Grandes Chroniques de France* speak only generally of *jeux* accompanying the procession:

Tous les bourgeois et mestiers de la ville de Paris firent très belle feste, et vindrent, les uns en paremens riches et de noble euvre fais, les autres en robes neuves, à pié et à cheval, chascun mestier par soy ordené, au dessusdit isle Nostre-Dame, à trompes, tabours, buisines, timbres et nacaires, à grant joie et grant noise demenant et de très biaux jouant.

[All the bourgeois and crafts of the city of Paris made a beautiful celebration and came, some in sumptuous and richly made finery, others in new garments, on foot and on horseback, each craft gathered in rank, to the aforementioned Isle of Notre Dame, with horns, drums, trumpets, tambourines, and kettle-drums, making the most joyful and festive sounds and staging beautiful scenes.]³⁸

John of Saint Victor, who used the metrical chronicle of Fr. 146 as a source for his *Memoriale historiarum*, mentions the Hell, the Paradise, and the procession of the fox, for which he provides additional details suggesting a number of performers.

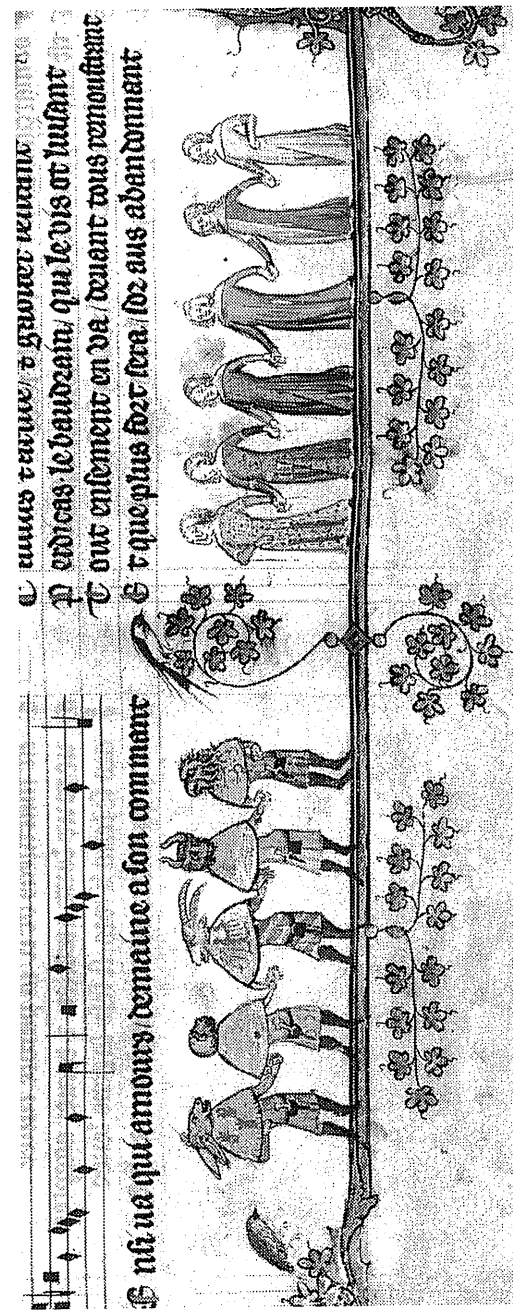


Figure 7. Male dancers wearing heraldic capes and animal masks (Oxford, MS. Bodley 264, fol. 181v. Reproduced by permission of The Bodleian Library, Oxford).

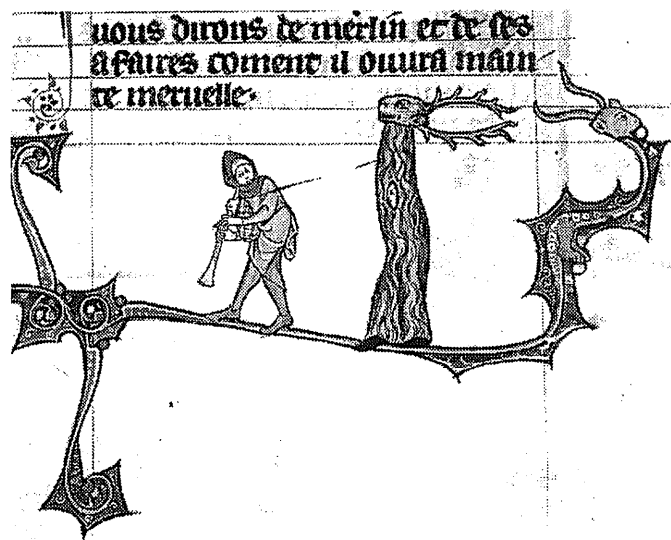


Figure 8. Mummer peeking out from stag costume (Paris, BN MS. fr. 95, fol. 261. Phot. Bibl. Nat. Paris).

Omnes artifices processionaliter incedebant, et illi de singulis artificii habebant distincta ornamenta ab aliis. Quidam cum hoc infernum effingebant, alii paradisum, alii processionem vulpis, in qua singula animalia efficiata singula officia exercebant.

[All crafts marched in procession, and members of each craft had raiment distinguishing them from the others. Some with this portrayed Hell, others Paradise, others the procession of the fox, in which the various animals that were represented played different roles.]³⁹

The Renart scenes might even have been played on float carts, French cousins to the English pageants. One miniature and the accompanying text of the charivari in the Fr. 146 *Fauvel* depict a cart filled with naked revelers who turn a noisemaker made of a cartwheel and iron bars. (Fig. 9) They are said to be escorted by Hellequin, the fairy leader of a nocturnal wild horde, who walks beside the cart in one image and rides

next to litters bearing women singing in another.⁴⁰ (Figs. 9, 10) Whether on a fixed stage, a walking or mounted parade, or a mobile cart, in 1313 Renart would surely have been carried in his funeral procession on a bier or litter like that seen in the illustration from the *Roman d'Alexandre* (Fig. 2) or like those carrying Hellequin's ladies. (Fig. 10) These documents suggest that various kinds of mobile processional staging may have already been common practice even if they were not used for the Renart scenes in 1313.

The chronicler takes his readers right into the crowded streets around the tableaux, emphasizing the context of performance. His detailed account makes it easy to imagine the shrieks when one hundred devils rush out side by side from the Hell to grab unwary spectators, to feel the blustery winds blowing down the Hell set! He speaks as an eyewitness who points out the tableaux one by one, saying repeatedly "La vit-on" [There could be *seen*], as if he were a strolling spectator jostling in the crowd: "There God was *seen* laughing with his mother"; "And Renart was to be *seen* singing an Epistle." Many features of the account in the metrical chronicle reinforce the impression of a spectacle where a variety of scenes were seen at one time in streets thronged by many good folk ("Et si virent lors mains preudommes," 4957): the lack of chronological sequence in the description of the religious tableaux, the intermixing of secular and religious themes, and the absence of reference to any processional order. The chronicler's report of these scenes seems to plunge us into the common popular culture of the medieval city, for he shows a great assembly of countless nobles (4799-800) and streets swarming with a "tres grant compaignie / Par nuit et par jour" [a great throng by night and day, 4949-50]. It is "entre joennes, viex et ferrans" [among young, old, and greybeards, 4995] that Renart makes his appearance.

Why did the Parisian bourgeois and crafts choose to stage these unusual tableaux about the fox amidst religious scenes and merry entertainments? If, as we will suggest, they might have been intended to express the political perspective of their sponsors, how could such views have been conveyed to the vast throng in the streets and thus into the common culture of medieval Paris?

The very choice of the Renart theme by the bourgeois is a likely signal of some special intention since these tableaux are unique; no other stagings of Renart are known anywhere in the Middle Ages. Moreover,



Figure 9. *Fauvel* charivari: Hellequin and noise-maker cart (Paris, BN MS. Fr. 146, fol. 34^v. Phot. Bibl. Nat. Paris).



Figure 10. *Fauvel* charivari: litters bearing Hellequin's followers (Paris, BN MS. Fr. 146, fol. 34^v. Phot. Bibl. Nat. Paris).

the fox stories had long been associated with moral and political allegory in learned and court circles. Although they were offered as popular entertainments, the *Renart* tableaux of 1313 may owe little to traditional folk culture. Despite their rustic settings, animal characters, and trickster hero, the earliest written record of stories about the fox—as we know them—appears within an elite culture. Whatever their circulation may have been in the oral tradition, they were cultivated as learned Latin allegories, as Ziolkowski shows, within court and monastic circles in the tenth to mid-twelfth centuries.⁴¹ This well-constituted learned tradition of *Renart* tales was used throughout the Middle Ages as a ready-made vehicle for moral and political commentary by clerics, nobles, and learned satirists, thanks to the prestige of their association with the classical fable, their animal characters on whom human attributes could be projected, and their amoral trickster hero, who was easily invested with the moral weight of wrongdoing. Educated satirists writing in French drew on the *Renart* tradition: Philippe de Novare, a Lombard diplomat, composes in 1229 an account of the struggles of Jean d'Ibelin against Frederick II as a rhymed *Renart* tale with a prose explication; a historical account of the efforts made by Marguerite of Flanders in 1246 to maintain control of Hainaut is retold by the chronicler as a *Renart* story which he calls an *essemble* and in which the countess figures as a goat; and Rutebeuf, a polemical Parisian poet, criticizes policies of Louis IX in his obscure allegory “*Renart le Bestourné* [*Renart Backwards*]” (1261).⁴² The metrical chronicler of Fr. 146 himself cites a prophecy that said of Pope Boniface VIII that “. . . il enterroit / Comme renart et regneroit / Comme lyon” [he would rise like a fox and rule like a lion, 2161-63]. The *Renart* stories were thus from the first an adaptable set of signs used by an educated elite to represent the polemics of the day as well as to show mankind's general propensity to vice.

However, when the *Renart* stories began to circulate in written French as branches of the *Roman de Renart* in the last quarter of the twelfth century, they were largely devoid of such satirical and political meanings.⁴³ As standard items in the minstrel repertory,⁴⁴ they were familiar to a wide general audience that embraced all classes of medieval society.⁴⁵ These written records of the learned and vernacular traditions show that *Renart* stories were widely diffused in the common culture of medieval France but that they were used quite differently by the learned elite and the general public. Elements of common culture that are

available to all are often exploited in very different ways. One man's can of Campbell's Soup is lunch while another's is a costly art object: meaning, in common culture, is fixed by use. In 1313 it is the clerical use of the stories—which freighted them with moral and political meanings—that may have been popularized by being staged in street theater.

For some in the great crowd of 1313, undoubtedly, the Renart scenes were merely lavish spectacles to be enjoyed along with the colorful draping of the streets, the brilliant illuminations, and the fountain of wine. They meant entertainment, fun! But the wealthy bourgeois and crafts of Paris who organized and paid for the Renart tableaux may well have sought to invest these scenes with the kinds of pointed moral and political commentary the fox so often carried. Our interpretation is necessarily speculative: the metrical chronicle itself does not supply any explicit political applications for these tableaux nor does it suggest how topical allusions might have been cued; indeed, medieval satire often generalizes, avoiding specific reference.⁴⁶ But the presence and selection of these scenes does offer clues to possible political meanings as does their contextualization within the chronicle and among the other works compiled in Fr. 146.

From the repertory of Renart images and tales, the sponsors selected scenes that could take on a political or satirical sense: in at least half of the tableaux, the fox is engaged with a king, costumed as a priest or prelate, or participating in a religious ceremony. Spectators familiar with the usual political applications of Renart might easily have read references in the 1313 tableaux to contemporary personages. Might not an image of Renart as a doctor skinning the wolf to heal King Noble have alluded to concern for the well-being of King Philip the Fair, whose powerful (and red-headed) minister Enguerran de Marigny—at the apogee of his power in 1313—was soon to be condemned and hanged for fleecing the royal treasury? Could not the chickens devoured by Renart in another tableau have been understood as *galli*, i.e. the French, menaced by the hypocritical clergy and evil royal counselors so often denounced in contemporary satires such as the *Roman de Fauvel* or the political poems of Geffroi de Paris? Indeed, the best evidence for such political meanings is found in these very works, which are compiled in the selfsame manuscript as the metrical chronicle that describes the Renart tableaux. Again and again in the topical Latin motets inserted into the expanded *Roman de Fauvel* of Fr. 146. concerns with royal counselors and

issues of good government are associated with images of the fox, the lion, and the chickens. Thus, in two voices of the three-part motet that is the climax of the Fr. 146 *Fauvel*, “In nova fert-Gallus garrit-N” [In new shapes-The cock sobs-N], we find strange animal images that allude to danger threatening the kingdom of France:

[Mot] russus vivit in vulpem mutatus,
cauda cuius, lumine privatus
leo, vulpe imperante, paret,
oves suggit pullis saciatus,
heu! suggere non cessat et aret
ad nupcias canibus non caret.
ve pullis mox, ve ceco leoni! (9-15)

[Tr] O gallorum garritus doloris!
cum leonis cecitas obscura
fraudi paret vulpis proditoris! (18-20)

[Mot] [The wicked dragon] lives, changed into a red-haired fox. The blind lion obeys the tail of the fox, who reigns. Gorged with chickens he sucks the sheep. Alas! he does not stop sucking; he thirsts—the dog does not abstain from the wedding banquet. Woe to the chickens! woe to the blind lion!

[Tr] O pitiful cries of the cocks, since the lion—totally blind—submits to the fraud of the treacherous fox.⁴⁷

In Geffroi de Paris' “Un Songe” [A dream], a poem of political advice also compiled with the metrical chronicle in Fr. 146, the poet advises the king to rule not like a ravenous wolf but like a watchful cock who knows what is done in his court.⁴⁸ Such metaphorical allusions and animal imagery are typical of contemporary political satire; their similarity and their proximity to the description of the Renart scenes in the chronicle cue topical meanings in the manuscript and point to likely political meanings in the tableaux of 1313 as well.

Festive celebration in the Middle Ages often provided an occasion for staging a discourse of good counsel to the king. What is notable in the

1313 *feste* (and emphasized in the metrical chronicle) is the importance given to the Parisians as a political body—in their *faërie* as well as in their great municipal parade that dramatically defined and displayed their identity as a distinct political community. The unexpected appearance of the Renart scenes with their satirical potential suggest that the bourgeois and crafts of Paris seized the opportunity to stage their political voice in order to demonstrate to those in power their interest in public issues and their value as loyal supporters of the king, “de celz de Paris la vaillance” [the worth of the Parisians, 5092]. In turn, the chronicler may have described the street tableaux in such unusual detail because they complemented his own program of admonition. The costly *faërie* sponsored by bourgeois and crafts to honor the royal celebration illustrate the lesson in good government that informs the chronicle and which is conceived through the image of the body politic whose members faithfully support the head. This image—which, as James notes, expresses an ideal of “social wholeness and social differentiation”⁴⁹—is reiterated at every level of the Fr. 146 compilation: in the historical chronicle, in the political views addressed to the king in Geffroi de Paris’s ornately rhetorical poems, and in the topical satire and musical additions of the expanded *Roman de Fauvel*.

While the Renart scenes of 1313 may thus have demonstrated the political interests of wealthy bourgeois and masters of the Parisian crafts, how might these tableaux have helped diffuse political concerns more generally into the common culture? Theatrical representation greatly amplifies the circumstances of popular reception. When Renart narratives were read aloud or recited, they probably reached only a limited-size audience at any one time. Public staging of these tableaux in 1313 was a mass medium—a technique, if not a technology—that made them available to be seen on one occasion by large numbers of people of every estate. If such a public performance were charged with political notions and these were cued sufficiently to alert uninitiated spectators, it would have been a powerful means of popularization of ideas. It would have reminded the audience of familiar stories in order to use them to introduce political notions, making them available to the common culture with all the striking effects of spectacle. It could have launched issues into vigorous circulation by presenting them at one time to people gathered in a crowd. If we conceive that theatrical representations of 1313 displayed political meanings to the general public, we can imagine

some of the ideas that might have been made available to spectators. The Renart tableaux could have aroused popular interest in the actions of the government or awakened public opinion about the responsibilities of rulers, evil counselors, and abuses of power in Church and State. The Renart tableaux may thus have contributed to popularization of political consciousness, as described by Burke, which spread clerical and elitist concerns about affairs of state into common popular culture.

Such popularization of political concerns into the common urban culture would reflect what Carlo Ginzburg (citing Bakhtin) calls the reciprocal relation of dominant and subordinate classes.⁵⁰ The Parisian sponsors of the Renart scenes of 1313 drew materials for their tableaux from a repertory of stories widely known at every social level. They may well have imitated clerical satire by using these scenes to express political concerns similar to those of clerics and officials in the royal administration. In so doing, they could have extended the sphere of political opinion outside the royal Palais into the city through the medium of street theater.

Such appropriation of a clerical perspective, however, does not necessarily constitute what Muchembled (following Robert Mandrou) calls “acculturation”: the process where elements of a preexisting popular culture of a traditional and regional nature are repressed by instruments of centralizing authority that reflect the political, social, and religious ideology of a dominant and powerful elite.⁵¹ The tableaux of 1313 may indeed have been “a discourse of mediation between elite and mass.”⁵² But far from destroying local culture, the scenes of 1313 could have infused specific political meanings into traditions already available to all. The composition, context, and circulation of these scenes, moreover, is significantly different from that of the popular imagery and peddlers’ literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which are central to Muchembled’s analysis of the diffusion of “mass” culture. In contrast with these later products of print which were manufactured in cities but which circulated everywhere—in isolated rural communities as well as in urban centers—medieval theater was a medium that was used where it was produced. Although small villages did occasionally undertake play productions in France,⁵³ performances occurred mostly in towns and cities. Producers and spectators of medieval French theater remained close to urban centers of power: its sponsors are wealthy

bourgeois, members of municipal crafts, or well-educated youths in the societies of clerks of the Parlement de Paris and the Parisian Châtelet.

The history of regulation and censorship of medieval theater tells us that the power of performances that could be used to manipulate popular political opinion was eventually seen as a force to be reckoned with. The famous order of the Provost of Paris in 1395, which forbade minstrels to mention pope, king, and the lords of France concerning the Great Schism, is one of the earliest records of governmental censorship of theatrical entertainments in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which came to reflect not only criticism of individuals and institutions but also opportunities for riotous behavior and resistance to official authority.⁵⁴

Did the tableaux of 1313 stir up popular opinion? We have no direct evidence, but the metrical chronicle of Fr. 146 offers a tantalizing clue. Both the image of Renart and the political issues the fox may have expressed in the 1313 tableaux reappear together in the chronicler's report of popular reactions to the trial and execution of Marigny in 1315.⁵⁵ He details the alarming accusations brought against Marigny by the great lords of the land (6863-954), but he also depicts popular demonstrations against the disgraced minister. A mob of Parisians followed Marigny as he was being taken from his prison in the Temple to judgment at Vincennes: shouting, they denounced Marigny's "trickery" in stealing the wealth of the kingdom; jeering, they called him "Renart."

Menè au boys de Vicianne
—Vousist ou non, com prestre au cenne—
Fu il, après lui mainte gent
Qui touz l'aloient agrent.
Touz celz qui après lui venoient
Que plus que mains le maudioient
Et disoient: "Avant, Renart,
Honte te doint saint Lienart!
Ton barat et ta tricherie
A touz nous a tolu la vie.
L'avoir du rëaume as emblé." (6981-91)

[Led to the forest of Vincennes was he—willy-nilly, like a priest to a synod—pursued by many folk who all reviled

him. One and all, those who followed him berated him saying: "Begone, Renart, may Saint Leonard bring you to shame! Your ruses and your trickery have killed us all. You have stolen the wealth of the kingdom."]

The chronicler has perhaps embellished his description to show the falling away of support for Marigny at every level. It is significant, however, that he wished to represent popular opinion so vividly in his report and that such opinion be expressed through an allusion to the character so prominent in his account of the Parisian celebration. Fervor over political issues may well have been awakened in the general public by the glittering public ceremonies of 1313 that displayed the apparatus of power while participation of all in the municipal parade aroused a self-conscious awareness of the Parisians as a political body. Performance of the Renart scenes in 1313 may thus have contributed to the diffusion of political concerns into popular culture by bringing them to the attention of all the Parisians and by supplying images that could express them.

If political issues were staged in the mode of clerical satire in the Parisian tableaux of 1313, they do not, however, seem to signal either an attitude of popular resistance to royal authority or a carnivalesque reversal of the social order. Instead these entertainments, ordered and paid for by the crafts and wealthy bourgeois of Paris, ensured that their interests would be considered in revelry. Moreover, while performance may well have displayed and legitimized their urban voice in the ongoing political discourse about governmental matters and the responsibilities of kingship, it surely affirmed their participation in the great *feste* that joined all—city dwellers, clerics, nobles, and king—in the transcendent bond of rejoicing that is the essence of festive celebration.

Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that the merry Renart scenes were intended to celebrate the most solemn chivalric rituals and that they shared the stage with tableaux representing fundamental religious beliefs of the spectators. Some provocatively parodic images such as those of Renart costumed as a bishop and Hersent spinning seem deliberately conceived as a playful counterpart to the grave religious tableaux and official ceremonies of the 1313 feast. The order of the Fr. 146 chronicle account heightens this effect by juxtaposing the fox and the Christ Child and by setting the lascivious she-wolf spinning next to Eve, who often carries a spindle in religious iconography. If the Renart tableaux of 1313 carried a freight of political commentary, they were also

what Knight calls "comic analogues,"⁵⁶ which mirrored the religious scenes and the official acts of royal celebration in a spirit of festive play. However, the mode of topsy-turviness was not dominant, as in carnival; instead it was subordinate to the glorious celebration of royal power and legitimate authority which it served as a joyful complement. In 1313, the margins were joined to the center: the scene of the fox's preaching added laughter to the solemn sermons of the knighting and crusade vow ceremonies just as the colorful animal cortege of Renart's funeral echoed the splendid processions of the feast. Festive theater within celebration thus draws prince and people together—for a brief time, at least—in a common political culture we may well call popular.

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APPENDIX

THE *FAERIE* OF THE PARISIAN PENTECOST FEAST OF 1313
IN THE METRICAL CHRONICLE OF BN MS. Fr. 146
(Diverrès, pp. 185-86, used by permission of the
Presses Universitaires de l'Université de Strasbourg.)

Et d'autre mainte faërie Est il bien droit que je vous die La vit on Dieu sa mere rire, Renart fisicien et mire.	4955
Et si virent lors mains pseudommes Nostre Seingnor mengier de pommes, Et Nostre Dame, sanz esloingne, Ovec les trois roys de Couloingne, Et les anges en paradis Bien encor quatre vints et dis, Et les ames dedenz chanter. Et si vous puis bien creanter Qu'enfer i fu noir et puant: Les ames getant et ruant, Dyables i ot plus de cent, Qui tuit sailloient adjacent Por les ames a elz atrere, A cui faisoient maint contraire.	4960
La les creüt on tormenter Et les veoit on dementer. Le mescredi un vent venta, Qui les cortines adenta Et derompi, mes redreciees	4970 4975

Furent tost et apareillees. Nostre Seingnor au jugement I fu, et le Suscitement. La fu le tornai des enfanz, Dont chascun n'ot plus de dis anz.	4980
La vit on Dieu et ses apostres Qui disoient leurs patenostres, Et la les Innocens occire. Et saint Jehan metre a martire Veoir pot on et decoler, Feu, or, argent aussi voler, Herode et Caÿphas en mitre. Et Renart chanter une espitre La feu veü et evangile, Crois et floz, et Hersent qui file, Et d'autre part Adam et Eve, Et Pilate qui ses mains leve, Roys a feve, et homes sauvages Qui menoient granz rigola[ge]s Entre joennes, viex et ferranz; Tout ce firent les tisseranz. Corroier aussi contrefirent —Qui leur entente en ce bien mirent— La vie de Renart sanz faille, Qui menjoit et poucins et paille. Mestre Renart i fu evesque Veü et pape et arcevesque; Renart i fu en toute guise, Si com sa vie le devise: En biere, en crois et en cencier.	4985 4990 4995
[And it is right that I tell you about all the other entertainments. There God was seen laughing with his mother, Renart as a physician and doctor, And then many good folk saw Our Lord eating apples, And Our Lady stayed right there with the three kings of Cologne and angels in paradise some four score and ten strong, and souls therein singing. And I can swear to you that there was a dark, stinking Hell: into which were throwing and casting souls	4955 4960 4965

more than one hundred devils
 who all came out side by side
 to lure towards them souls
 which they treated very harshly. 4970
 There you would have thought they were being tormented
 and you could see them lamenting.
 On Wednesday such a wind blew
 that it tore down the curtains
 and ripped them, but they were soon 4975
 rehung and set up again.
 Our Lord in judgment
 was there, and the Resurrection,
 There was the children's tournament
 where none were more than ten years old. 4980
 There could be seen God and his Apostles
 saying their Pater Noster,
 and there the slaughter of the Innocents
 and the martyrdom of Saint John
 could be seen and his beheading, 4985
 fire, gold, silver flying up,
 Herod and Caiaphas in a miter
 and Renart was to be seen
 singing an Epistle and the Gospel,
 crosses and feather plumes, and Hersent spinning 4990
 and elsewhere Adam and Eve,
 and Pilate washing his hands,
 bean kings, and wild men
 who carried on in great merriment
 among young, old and greybeards; 4995
 All this was done by the weavers.
 The beltmakers also staged
 (they did well in this undertaking)
 the whole life of Renart,
 who devoured chickens and hens. 5000
 Master Renart could be seen as a bishop
 and as pope and archbishop;
 Renart was there in every disguise,
 just as it is told in his life,
 on a bier, with cross and censor.] 5005

NOTES

1. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978), p. 64. This article was presented at the 27th International Congress on Medieval

Studies, Western Michigan U., 1992. It is part of a book on the Parisian Pentecost Feast of 1313 I have undertaken with Elizabeth A. R. Brown initially for an NEH-sponsored conference in 1991 at U. of Minnesota ("La Grant Feste: Philip the Fair's Celebration of the Knighting of His Sons in Paris at Pentecost of 1313," *City and Spectacle in the Middle Ages*, eds. Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson, *Medieval Studies at Minnesota* 6, [Minneapolis, 1994], 56-86). I have benefited greatly from consultation with Kathleen Ashley, Michel Beaujour, Bradley Berke, David Bevington, Charles Briggs, Lawrence Clopper, Samuel Kinser, Alan Knight, Shanny Peer, Donald Perret, Mariana Regalado, Lucy Sandler, Seth Lerer, Kenneth Varty, Joan Williamson, and Pierre Zoberman. I am grateful to Martin Kauffmann of the Bodleian Library, Oxford for manuscript assistance and for research support by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. In this volume, see Kathleen Ashley, "Contemporary Theories of Popular Culture and Medieval Performance."

2. See, among many others, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helen Iswolsky (Bloomington, 1984), Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, *Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture* 14 (Cambridge UK, 1988), and Robert Muchembled, *Culture populaire et culture des élites dans la France moderne (XVe-XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1978).
3. Lawrence W. Levine, "AHR Forum: The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and its Audiences," *American Historical Review* 97 (1992), 1369-99, quotation at 1373; in her discussion of Levine, Natalie Zemon Davis raises historical questions of hierarchical associations, evaluation of sources, and evidence of recurrent tensions ("Toward Mixtures and Margins," *ibid.*, 1409-16).
4. Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 130.
5. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), p. 119. I thank Seth Lerer for sending me his paper touching on municipal self-legitimization through drama in the northern English towns ("The Chaucerian Critique of Medieval Theatricality"); see also Mervyn James, "Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town," in *Society, Politics and Culture* (Cambridge, England, 1986), pp. 16-47.
6. See Gustave Cohen, *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du moyen âge*, Nouvelle édition (Paris, 1951), pp. 196-205; Bernard Guenée and Françoise Lehoux, *Les Entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515*, Sources d'histoire médiévale publiées par l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes 5 (Paris, 1968), p. 26; Elie Konigson, *L'Espace théâtral médiéval* (Paris,

- 1975), pp. 55-59; Alan E. Knight, *Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama* (Manchester UK, 1983), pp. 117-40; Lawrence M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance* (Genève, 1986); Samuel Kinser, *Managing Majesty: Royal Entries and the Political Imagination in Renaissance France (1450-1550)* (in preparation).
7. Nancy Freeman Regalado, "Masques réels dans le monde de l'imaginaire. Le rite et l'écrit dans le charivari du *Roman de Fauvel*, MS. B.N. fr. 146," *Masques et déguisements au moyen âge*, ed. Marie-Louise Ollier (Montréal and Paris), pp. 111-26.
 8. Armel Diverrès, ed., *La Chronique métrique attribuée à Geffroy de Paris*, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg (Paris, 1956), pp. 179-87, ll. 4649-5098.
 9. Edward H. Roesner, ed., *Le Roman de Fauvel in the Edition of Mesire Chaillou de Pesstain. A Reproduction in Facsimile of . . . Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds Français 146*, with an Introduction by Edward H. Roesner, François Avril, and Nancy Freeman Regalado (New York, 1990).
 10. Nigel E. Wilkins, ed., *The Works of Jehan de Lescurel*, Corpus mensurabilis musicae (American Institute of Musicology, 1966).
 11. Walter H. Storer and Charles A. Rochedieu, eds., *Six Historical Poems of Geffroi de Paris Written in 1314-1318*, U. North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures (Chapel Hill, 1950).
 12. Arthur Långfors, ed., *Le Roman de Fauvel par Gervais du Bus*, Société des Anciens Textes Français (Paris, 1914-19);
 13. Lyric insertions edited by Emilie Dahnk, *L'hérésie de Fauvel* (Leipzig, 1935).
 14. See Brown and Regalado, "La Grant Feste," Table 3.1, pp. 60-61.
 15. Diverrès, ll. 4961-76. The extant records of dramatic productions in Paris from 1313 to the end of the century are summarized in Brown and Regalado, "La Grant Feste," pp. 67 and 69.
 16. Jan M. Ziolkowski asks if the dialogic Latin beast poems were staged by performers wearing masks (*Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750-1150* [Philadelphia, 1993], pp. 147-52).
 17. Translations from French throughout are mine.
 18. Kenneth Varty, "The Death and Resurrection of Reynard in Mediaeval Literature and Art," *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 10 (1966), 70-93 and Plates I-VI; Varty, "The Pursuit of Reynard in Mediaeval English Literature and Art," *ibid.*, 8 (1964), 62-81 and Plates I-XII; Varty, "Reynard the Fox and the Smithfield Decretals," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 26 (1963), 347-54 and Plates 37-38; Varty and E. Clive Rouse, "Medieval Paintings of Reynard the Fox in Gloucester Cathedral and some other related examples," *The Archeological Journal*, 133 (1976), 104-17. I am indebted to Kenneth Varty for sharing his work with me. See also Nancy Freeman Regalado, "Tristan and Renart, Two Tricksters," *The Comic Spirit of the Middle Ages, L'Esprit Créateur* (Spring 1976), 30-38. In the *Fauvel* compiled in Fr. 146, the whole history of Renart is said to be painted on the wall of the beast's throne room (Långfors ed., p. 53: ll. 1357-58).
 19. Ziolkowski, pp. 61-66, 176-97, 224-25, and 295-97.
 20. First told in the late twelfth-century Br. X, ll. 1153-1698, the story is recalled in Br. VI, ll. 142-49; XI, ll. 850-68, 3341-70; XVII, ll. 400-04; XXIII, ll. 245-49, 613-16; a sequel is added in Br. XXIII, ll. 1547-55, 1601-1687 (Ernest Martin, ed., *Le Roman de Renart* [Strasbourg, Vol. I 1882, Vol. II 1885]; see Micheline Combarieu du Grès and Jean Subrenat, *Le Roman de Renart: Index des thèmes et des personnages, Senefiances* 22 [Aix-en-Provence, 1987]), 141-42).
 21. Varty, "Reynard," 351, 353.
 22. London, British Library, MS. Royal 10.E.IV, fols. 53v-57r; see Varty, "Reynard," and Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285-1385*. 1 Vol. in 2 Parts, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles* 5 (London, 1986), Part I: figs. nos. 255-258; Part 2: no. 101, pp. 111-12.
 23. Martin, ed., Br. II, ll. 275-1092.
 24. See Varty, "Death," and John Flinn, "Iconographie du *Roman de Renart*," *Aspects of the Medieval Animal Epic*, eds. E. Rombauts and A. Welkenhuysen (Louvain, 1975), pp. 257-64.
 25. London, British Library, Royal MS. 10 E. iv, fol. 49^r (reproduced in Varty, "Death," plate no. 1c and Lillian M. C. Randall, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* [Berkeley, 1966], fig. no. 191).
 26. Oxford, MS. Bodley 264, fol. 79^r illustrated by Jehan de Grise of Bruges; see M. R. James, *The Romance of Alexander* (Oxford, 1933) and Sandler, Part I: p. 51.
 27. See Combarieu. Varty, "Pursuit," describes in detail medieval representations of Renart stealing fowl. See also Randall, pp. 100-03 and figs. nos. 189-203.

28. London, British Library, Royal MS. 2 B.VII, fol. 100, dated c. 1310-c. 1320. Contemporary with Fr. 146, the Queen Mary's Psalter shows strong parallels with Parisian book illumination (Sandler, Pt. 1: pp. 18-19; Pt. 2: No. 56, pp. 64-66).
29. Varty, "Reynard," 352.
30. See Camille, p. 12. Similar images are cited by Varty ("Reynard," 353 and plate no. 37d and "Pursuit," 77 and plate no. Xa).
31. Francis D. Klingender, "St. Francis and the Birds of the Apocalypse," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953), 13-23; Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 407-12, 441-44 and figs. nos. 239-42.
32. See Cohen, p. 90 and Brown and Regalado, "La Grant Feste," p. 69.
33. It is known that the armorer of Louis of Navarre constructed a castle of love for a banquet offered by Edward II at Saint-Germain-des-Prés in 1313; see Brown and Regalado, "La Grant Feste," pp. 63 and 69.
34. Fr. 146, fols. 34, 34^v, and 36^v; Långfors ed., *Fauvel*, pp. 165-67: ll. 693-767. See Roesner, Avril, Regalado, pp. 10-15 and Regalado, "Masques."
35. Oxford, Bodley 264, fol. 181^v; fol. 21^v shows three mummers in animal masks (reproduced in Randall, fig. no. 445). Although Camille calls the male dancers wearing animal masks portrayed on fol. 181^v (Fig. 7) "peasant mummers" and takes them as "an antimodel of the more courtly dance of the Lords and Ladies in the framed miniature above," (p. 120 and the full-page fig., p. 125), these maskers are elegantly clad with belts, daggers, finely varied designs on the cloth of their tunics, and heraldic devices on their capes.
36. Paris, BN MS. fr. 95, fol. 261.
37. Elizabeth A. R. Brown and Nancy Freeman Regalado, "Universitas et communitas: The Parade of the Parisians at the Pentecost Feast of 1313," in *The Semiotics of Processional Performance*, ed. Kathleen Ashley (in preparation).
38. Ed. J. Viard (Paris, 1934), VIII, 288-89.
39. *Recueil des historiens. . .*, eds. J. D. Guiniaut and J. N. de Wailly, Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres [Paris, 1869-1904], XXI, 656-57); trans. Elizabeth A. R. Brown.
40. Paris, BN MS. Fr. 146, fol. 34^v; Långfors ed., *Fauvel*, p. 165: ll. 721-32, 747-58.
- Knight cites records of mounted mysteries in entry processions early in the fifteenth century (p. 123).
41. See Fn. 19, above. Although they incorporate some motifs that occur also in folk tales, the medieval French Renart stories are not even cited in Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements*, rev. ed. (Bloomington, 1955-58). For a summary of views on the clerical vs. folk origins of the Renart materials, see Robert Bossuat, *Le Roman de Renart*, *Connaissance des Lettres* [Paris, 1967], pp. 69-89 and John Flinn, *Le Roman de Renart dans la littérature française et dans les littératures étrangères au moyen âge* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 18-34.
42. Philippe de Novare, *Mémoires 1218-1243*, ed. Charles Kohler, (Paris, 1913), pp. 29-33; Anon., *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims au treizième siècle* [ca. 1260], ed. Natalis De Wailly, Société de l'Histoire de France 179 (Paris: Renouard, 1876), pp. 204-15; Julia Bastin and Edmond Faral, eds., *Oeuvres complètes de Rutebeuf*, Fondation Singer-Polignac (Paris, 1961), I, 32-44. Philippe de Mézières represents the evils of Rome as a parade of animals led by "Dam Renart" (Joan Williamson, "Ysagrín and Hellequin's Horde in *Le Songe du vieil pelerin* [1389]," *Reinardus: Yearbook of the International Reynard Society* [1988], pp. 175-88). See generally Bossuat, Flinn, *Roman*, and Armand Strubel, *La Rose, Renart et le Graal: La littérature allégorique en France au XIIIe siècle*, Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Age 11 (Paris, 1989), pp. 229-43.
43. Kathryn Gravdal distinguishes carefully between parody and satire in the *Roman de Renart* (*Vilain and Courtois: Transgressive Parody in French Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* [Lincoln, Nebraska: 1989], pp. 81-93).
44. "Si sai Richalt, si sai Renart" [I know Richeut, I know Renart] boasts one minstrel ("Les deux bordeurs ribauds," Edmond Faral, ed., *Mimes français du XIIIe siècle* [Paris, 1910], p. 104, l. 123). Scenes of minstrelsy in the *Roman de Renart* display the professional's own art to great advantage: in Br. Ib, the fox is disguised as a Breton jongleur; in Br. XXIII, Renart, who has learned magic in Toledo, conjures up a troupe of acrobats who far outdo King Noble's own retinue of beasts, whose heavy somersaults and leaps produce farts, dung, and derisive laughter (see J. R. Scheidegger, *Le Roman de Renart ou le texte de la dérision*, Publications romanes et françaises 188 [Genève, 1989], pp. 239-51).
45. In this respect, the Renart stories are like the sermons and stories preached to parish audiences, which Gurevich calls "a truly mass literature which in one form or another reached absolutely everybody" (p. 6).
46. In his mid-thirteenth century *Beaudous* (ll. 24-28), Robert de Blois states the courteous rule: "Et qui vuet aucun chastoier / Si k'il ne se puist courruicier / communemant doit toz blasmer / ceulx qui tel sont, sanz nul nomer" [And, if

someone wants to admonish a person, but in such a way that he not take offense, let him lay blame generally on all who are like him, without naming any one person] (cited by Ch.-V. Langlois, *La Vie en France . . . d'après les moralistes du temps* [Paris: Hachette, 1925], II: 184, n. 1).

47. Fr. 146, fol. 44^r; Dahnk, pp. 214-15: p. mus. 129; my translation, based on that of Leo Schrade, *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century* (Monaco, 1956), Commentary to vol. I, p. 31. See also "Quoniam secta latronum-Tribum que non abhorruit-Merito" (Dahnk, pp. 204-06, p. mus. 120) and Roesner, Avril, Regalado, p. 20.
48. "Mes, com coc, se doit esveiller / Et savoir en sa court qu'en fait," Fr. 146, fol. 53^r, Storer and Rochedieu, eds., p. 69: ll. 366-67; see ll. 299-322 and p. 72: ll. 366-72. Contemporary with Fr. 146 is a fragment dated 1316 of an anonymous *Dit des quatre rois* [Poem on four kings] (= Philip IV, Louis X, Jean I, Philip V, who succeeded each other on the throne of France between 1314 and 1316) that offers Philip V the cautionary image of a cock whose kingdom declined because he thought too often of hens (Arthur Långfors, ed. "Le *Dit des quatre rois*: Notes sur le MS. Fr. 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale," *Romania* 44 [1915-17], 90-91).
49. P. 22.
50. *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (New York, 1988), p. xix. Davis speaks of "'cross-cultural interchange' between previously 'compartmentalized systems'" (*Society*, p. 192).
51. Such a notion of acculturation—"mere correction and standardization from above"—is vigorously questioned by Davis (*Society*, pp. 225-26); see also Ginzburg.
52. Muchembled, p. 353.
53. Georges Hérelle, *Les Théâtres ruraux en France (langue d'oïl et langue d'oc) depuis le XIVe siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1930).
54. Cited in Samuel M. Carrington, "Censorship and the Medieval Comic Theatre in France," *Rice University Studies: Studies in French Literature* 57 (1971), 22; see Davis, *Society*, pp. 97-123. and the accounts of disorder, riots, and tensions associated with Corpus Christi processions cited by Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge UK, 1991), p. 263.
55. For possible satirical allusions to Marigny in the animal allegories of the *Roman de Fauvel* of Fr. 146, see Roesner, Avril, Regalado, pp. 20-21, 50-52.
56. p. 129.

MEDIEVAL DRAMA STUDIES AND THE NEW ART HISTORY

Pamela Sheingorn

In the last few years there have been immense changes in the discipline of art history, changes that justify the term "the New Art History" and that have important implications for medieval drama studies.¹ Stephen Bann tells us that the New Art History "stakes its future on the assumption that new questions and new areas of research will continue to burgeon precisely at those points where the study of the image converges with the study of language."² Surely drama stands at such a point of convergence. Medieval drama studies, if it takes advantage of the new ways of thinking about culture, and especially about the visual aspects of culture, has the potential of moving to the center of current research.

In this paper I first describe briefly the state of art history about twenty years ago when a "crisis" was felt in the discipline; next I mention some of the changes outside of art history, changes to which art history became much more open because of its own internal crisis; then I discuss some ways in which art history itself has changed; and finally I suggest some implications for medieval drama studies.

It is obviously not appropriate to offer a history of the discipline of art history, but two points about that history are important for what follows. First, as a discipline art history had rested on remarkably unquestioned positivist assumptions and had demonstrated virtually no interest in understanding its own history or in developing theories about what it did or why. Further, from the perspective of what its practitioners actually do, art history had been virtually two disciplines, one of which, stylistic analysis and connoisseurship, concentrates on the formal properties of art while the other, iconography, studies its content. Both the lack of self-awareness and the need for new, integrative methodologies were pointed out when the crisis in the discipline was formally announced in 1982 in *Art Journal*, a publication of the College Art Association of America, a national organization equivalent to the Mod-

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