

Part 3 analyzes the specific features of dramatic allegory, which developed independently from its narrative counterpart, as the visual arts moved to the forefront of the cultural scene. The discussion of the paradoxes of dramatic embodiment is particularly stimulating. While conveying a sense of authenticity to the personified moral values, the actions performed by such characters ultimately undermined their signifying power, despite the interpretative codes embedded in the accompanying gestures, music, dance, costumes, and accessories. Used interchangeably, however, such codes created confusion, leading to the downfall of dominant authorities, as illustrated by the burlesque rebellion of the lower senses in the *Farce moralisée des cinq sens de l'Homme*. What motivated the Théophiliens, a theater company originally directed by drama historian Gustave Cohen, to restage in 1943 the *Condamnation de Banquet*, a mordant satire of gluttony, for a Parisian audience suffering from the hardships of the Second World War? Part 4 provides an intriguing answer to this question based on the classical notion of *kairos* used in combination with contemporary theories of time: moralities consist of multimedial “montages” (451) that can be adapted to the changing dynamics of universal moral ideals and the contingent events they encapsulate. The conclusion focuses on the political, religious, and aesthetic factors that led to the restoration and/or reinvention of French morality plays in twentieth-century European avant-garde movements.

Nine illustrations and approximately three hundred references documenting performances of morality plays and their contexts in French-speaking territories from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries further support the compelling arguments developed in the study. In sum, Doudet’s monograph makes a significant contribution to the history, theory, and practice of theater by providing ample evidence of the capacity of allegorical drama to reinvent itself in any given period.

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Pure Filth: Ethics, Politics, and Religion in Early French Farce. Noah D. Guynn. The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. viii + 162 pp. \$69.95.

In this discerning contribution to medieval and early modern drama studies, which will interest specialists in those areas as well as theater scholars, Noah D. Guynn contests traditional interpretations of farce that deem the genre too vulgar, childish, and formulaic to merit extensive critical attention. Seeking to rescue these comedies—with their stereotypical characters, predictable plots, and seemingly gratuitous scatology—from the “trash bin of history” (224), Guynn argues that early French farces are neither intellectually vacuous bagatelles nor harmless safety valves for the underclasses’ resentments.

In his materialist, socio-aesthetic study of little-known exemplars of the genre, as well as the famous *Farce de Maître Pathelin*, the author explores the texts' social and aesthetic complexities and slippages; examines their intertextual resonances, which imbue the works with religious, political, and sociological significance; and attempts to reconstruct the myriad, and oftentimes nonhegemonic, ways that medieval and early modern audiences would have responded to the farces. Drawing upon biblical and patristic intertexts, as well as poststructuralist, anthropological, feminist, and queer theories, and a close and supple reading of the farces themselves, the author argues compellingly that the comedies at once reflected and helped shape popular religious beliefs, real-world family dynamics, and the dialectics of domination and submission in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century France.

In his introduction ("The Many Faces of Farce") Guynn adopts the guidon of La Mère Folle de Dijon, a festive theatrical society, as both the emblem of his monograph and a lens for visualizing early French farce. The guidon displays an unmasked woman with three *fols*, or bellows, on the obverse, and two twisted acrobats wearing foolscaps and lowered breeches—one holding the other upside down while farting into his companion's nose—on the reverse. By virtue of the "four winds of the heaven" (Dan. 7:2), one positioned at each corner, that swirl around the fools, the guidon reminds readers that "scatological foolishness [can] conjure eschatological truths" (5).

In chapter 1 ("The Wisdom of Farts") Guynn analyzes three sixteenth-century plays (the Norman farce *Le gentilhomme et Naudet*, Pierre Gringoire's *Le jeu du Prince des Sotz et de la Mere Sotte*, and the Rouennais morality play *Le Ministre de l'Eglise*) while drawing upon archival records and eyewitness testimonies to reconstruct both the "hidden transcripts" of, and likely real-world responses to, these productions (23). Far from confirming established values, he contends, the plays encourage "plural reading" (23) and participatory engagement by audiences, who would have recognized and reacted to the farces' oscillation between resistance and conformity in matters of religion, politics, and household governance. Chapter 2 ("A Justice to Come") focuses on justice, messianism, and eschatology in *La Farce de Maître Pathelin*, showing how the text uses discursive ambiguities, scriptural intertexts, and sacred parody to interrogate "ossified value systems" (71), while challenging spectators to imagine better forms of justice than those satirized in the play. Guynn turns again to sacred parody in chapter 3 ("Sacraments and Scatology") as he examines the theatricality of sacerdotal ritual and the dialectics of faith and doubt in Andrieu de La Vigne's *Mystère de Saint Martin*, a morality play accompanied by two irreverent farces that establish an ambivalent dialogue with the mystery play. Chapter 4 ("Making History") delves into the sexual politics of farce through the analysis of queer bodies, cross-dressing, women on top, and the ambiguity of gendered attributes in two early sixteenth-century comedies (*Serre Porte et Fin Verjus* and *Le poulier à six personnages*). The book closes with a stimulating afterword, focused on the term *proto-feminist*, that reflects on the critical biases that too often limit our understanding, and stunt our analyses, of historical texts.

Some readers, of course, will take issue with one or more of Guynn's myriad, and oftentimes provocative, hypotheses, such as his suggestion that female submission, which alternates with "women on top" in farce, can itself be a mode of resistance. But there is no denying the merits of his project: it is thoughtful and thought-provoking, well grounded in relevant intertexts and critical theory, and groundbreaking in its success at reimagining the "ludic, interactive, and unpredictable liveness of the festive stage" (26).

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The Prosthetic Tongue: Printing Technology and the Rise of the French Language.
Katie Chenoweth.

Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 350 pp. \$69.95.

This book by Katie Chenoweth offers a new understanding of the relationship between printing and language in France during the Renaissance (1500–50). This is hardly a new topic, but the author goes through several documents from the period to convincingly argue that printers, writers, and grammarians reinvented a French language endowed with the properties that made the printed text supersede the manuscript: fixity, reproducibility, mobility, and survivability. That "prosthetic tongue" would supplement the unruly native language while identifying the "book people," who were often associated with those in power.

The book contains a prologue, seven chapters, an epilogue, an appendix, endnotes, an index, and acknowledgments. The index includes the authors' names and works' titles mentioned throughout the book and endnotes. In the prologue, Chenoweth lays out the historical scope and corpus of her book, as well as the principles of Derrida's theory on language she uses as her theoretical framework.

The first two chapters introduce the trope of the artificial or prosthetic device. Chapter 1 examines Ambroise Paré's description of an actual artificial tongue, a wooden device that supplemented a man's half-cut tongue and allowed him to speak audibly. In chapter 2, "Hand of Brass: From Manuscript to Print," Chenoweth shows how the printing press replaced the human hand, "the instrument of instruments," in classical literature. The "hand of brass" came to serve as a printer's trope for the press; Paré will also later laud the artificial over the anatomical hand. Chapter 3 centers on the fable of the Gallic Hercules in *Champ fleury* by Geoffroy Tory, who calls for the "vernacular language to rise above the contingencies of its natural life to become an enduring, Herculean, more-than-human tongue" (114). For Chenoweth, the significant place Tory gave to the Gallic Hercules in his book, translating the story and engraving an illustration of it, highlights the teletechnological property he envisioned for the new, printed French.