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The Current State of Research on Late-Medieval Drama: 2004–2005: Survey, Bibliography, and Reviews

Edelgard E. DuBruck

This article is a regular feature of "Fifteenth-Century Studies." Our intent is to catalogue, survey, and assess scholarship on the staging and textual configuration of dramatic presentations in the late Middle Ages. Like all such dated material, this assessment remains incomplete. We shall therefore include 2005 again in the next listing. Our readers are encouraged to bring new items to our attention, including their own work. Monographs and collections selected for detailed review will appear in the third section of this article and will be marked by an asterisk in the pages below.

Noticeably, the books, collections, and articles devoted to the medieval drama of more than one or two European countries have increased. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskén edited *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, in which contributors discussed festal or penitential processions for Palm Sunday, Corpus Christi, and for the Entries of Princes. Venues were in England, France, Italy, Poland, and Belgium. In *New Approaches to European Theater of the Middle Ages: An Ontology*, Barbara I. Gusick, Edelgard E. DuBruck, and contributors from both sides of the Atlantic proved that dramatic texts were staged in a variety of European regions, including Yugoslavia. The plays' cultural and performative aspects were discussed with care in this informative volume, which strategically highlights the societal/theatrical roles of the oppressed (the disabled, Jews, and peasants).

Farce and Farcical Elements, edited by Wim Hüskén and Konrad Schoell,* showcased exclusively English, French, and German comic theater. *European Medieval Drama*, volumes 5 and 6, touched many subjects, not only relevant to England and France (vol. 5), but also to Livonia, Spain, and Germany (6). The editors (Jelle Koopmans and Bart Ramakers) brought such topics as theology (Gréban — Dominguez), stage arrangements in a miracle play (Walsh), how to arrange *playing* God's presence (Croatia — Pulišelić), the influence of iconography (Touber and Hurlbut), fortune and gambling (Hindley), and abstract figures (Schoell). In volume 6, processions were treated again: parades (Pettitt), *painful* processions (Paris — Carlson), iconography (Gréban — Clark and Sheingorn), and the scenarios of Hanseatic merchants (Mänd); Valladolid's Entry of Ferdinand the Catholic was investigated by Ronald E. Surtz.

Dunbar H. Ogden devoted an impressive volume to the European liturgical drama, from the tenth century to c.1600: *The Staging of Drama in the Me-*

dieval Church. The plays were sung by priests and monks, sometimes together with nuns. There are about 1,200 manuscripts, mostly with rubrics, and the author reproduced the ground plans of some cathedrals. William Tydeman edited a vast compendium of 720 pages, offering a wide selection of sources on *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550*,* especially in the late Middle Ages (his volume followed the methodology of Meredith and Tailby's *Staging of Religious Drama*). Rainer Warning's *Funktion und Struktur: Die Ambivalenzen des geistlichen Spiels* (1974) is now available in English (Stanford University Press, 2001), translated by Steven Rendall. The book showcased the development of religious drama in Europe, the relationship of liturgical to vernacular plays, and considered Christ's death a justification for healing the rift between God and sinful humanity. Finally, Stephen Wright provided an annotated checklist of plays and performances of *The Destruction of Jerusalem* (c.1350–1620).

For the English scene, Sarah Beckwith investigated the significance of God in the York cycle, and viewed the Corpus Christi plays through a Lollard lens; critics mentioned an over-abundance of theoretical applications in her work. English festive culture was showcased by Lawrence M. Clopper, who described his *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period** as "revisionist," in that he sincerely doubted that every church ale and parish game should be counted as theater, as the *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* (c.1380–1425) seemed to imply. In addition, Clopper conceded that none of the English cycles were perfect, and that we have few play texts. Hans-Jürgen Diller investigated laughter on the stage and in the audience, especially in secular drama; he also examined the work of the Wakefield Master, *Mankind*, and the York cycle.

An aristocratic resistance to drama was noticed by Robert Epstein in the Lydgate *Mummings at Herford*, reflecting monarchical ideology and a certain parody of aristocratic concerns and anxieties. Sophie Oosterwijk examined the Chester Mystery cycle (early sixteenth century), where she considers the *Massacre of the Innocents* as linked to the Dances of Death. While original sources of the cycle do not survive, iconographic evidence seems to point to the continental Dances; her "proof" is predicated upon conditionals, such modals as "would" and "could" are frequently used. East Anglian drama in the late Middle Ages was one of Victor Scherb's fields of research; he assembled a "grammar of devotion," including sermons, church architecture, stained glass, and books of hours. According to methods of staging, he distinguished three types of plays (small-scale, portable, and large-scale), but, emphasizing cultural memory, he neglected all non-devotional aspects of the stage. Miracles of restoration occurred in Breton and Cornish saint plays, he concluded in a more recent article: these actions concerned the blind, the

deaf, the crippled, and the lepers — and created holy sites. Chester N. Scoville examined *Saints and the Audience in Middle English Biblical Drama*.*

While Sandra Billington's *Midsummer: A Cultural Sub-Text from Chrétien de Troyes to Jean Michel* (2000)* is just partially devoted to theater, we insert its review in the present survey article. Nevertheless, French late-medieval theater has been the subject of many other studies. Jean-Pierre Bordier, whose collections are already well known, edited *L'Économie du dialogue dans l'ancien théâtre européen** (1999), in which only French plays were treated, by Rousse, Faivre, Koopmans, Gros, Hüe, de Reyff, Runnalls, D. Smith, Borgnet, Dumont, Le Briz-Orgeur, and Bordier — constituting a true typology of staged dialogues. Unfortunately, the contents of the plays discussed will not be known by many of our readers; we have tried to remedy this situation in our review (below). Bordier also penned "Théophanie négative, amour des images," where he grappled with problems of thought and figures (God) to be represented on stage. Gérard Gros, like Vicki Hamblin,* edited *Le Mystère du Siège d'Orléans*, but also translated the play; while Mario Longtin brought out *Le Mystère de Sainte Barbe*. Sharon Mueller-Loewald examined four feminine characters in some French passion plays: the blacksmith's wife (Hedroit); Veronica; the silk-merchant (who sold a shroud to Joseph of Arimathea); and Judas's mother (who became his wife, unbeknownst to her). Only Hedroit was deemed vicious.

The edition and translation of *Le Jour du Jugement* (fourteenth century) by Jean-Pierre Perrot and J.-J. Nonot were weak linguistically: transcriptions of *mout* were translated as *mont* (=mountain), and the editors did not distinguish *ce* from *se*. While the iconographic features were emphasized and seen as an indication of staging, the apocalyptic tradition of northern France was visible in a demonic parody of Christ's Nativity and Passion — with an anti-semitic bias against Muslims and Jews. The manuscript had been dated 1340–50 by Emmerson and Hult. Darwin Smith translated *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* (*Le Miroir d'Orgueil*). Jody Enders wrote a fascinating account of *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends*,* in which a theater's make-believe occasionally caused real death to actors as well as to certain members of the audience. Enders reminded us that many gory stories in today's media may just be urban legends; and that some method-actors became actually insane, when imitating a story character's madness (see also Denis Diderot's *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, 1830 — note of the reviewer).

On the Spanish scene, research on *Celestina* continued vigorously. Raúl Álvarez gave a report of a conference celebrating the five-hundred-year anniversary (2002) of Fernándo de Rojas's work, la *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*. Held at Indiana University in Bloomington, the meeting touched the subjects of changing *Celestina* over to Valencia in 2003; the first imprints of *Celestina* (1497–1514); the transition from a *comedia* to a *tragicomedia*; Melibea's

suicide; and the work's imagery. James Burke wrote on vision, gaze, and the function of the senses in *Celestina*, a work of perception and recognition, where the fall into sin and death occurred by way of the senses, and where the final monologue of Melibea's father was a failed "vocal memorial." The great scholar Pedro M. Cátedra viewed passion poetry in Spain, within a *cancionero*, citing the influence of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* on sermons and other religious texts. He mentioned Diego de San Pedro (*Pasión trobada*) and Alonso del Campo (*Auto de la Pasión*). On the other hand, an article by Francesc Massip and Lenke Kovács investigated the *Danse macabre* in Aragon and Catalonia (where a *Dance* was staged in 1412). For Italy, Brigitte Marschall examined the flagellations as phenomenon of and passion ritual against the Black Death, where scourging provided moments of purification. Flagellations were anti-clerical: imitating Christ's passion, the flagellants were able to absolve people's sins during the processions, prayers, and songs.

German research on late-medieval drama was rich in evidence during the period surveyed. Maiké Claussnitzer, Hartmut Freytag, and Susanne Warda examined "Das Redentiner — ein Lübecker Osterspiel" in a lengthy article which proved that the Redentin play was based on the 1463 Lübeck *Dance of Death*. The study cited older research on the Dances and did not even mention Irmgard Jaeger's excellent edition of the Lübeck *Dance* (1989 — see my review in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 18 [1991]). Hellmut Thomke edited *Deutsche Spiele und Dramen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (1996), plays still inferior to the Latin drama of these centuries. The verses are rhymed couplets. The contents showed a Catholic play by Ferdinand II of Tyrolia, several Nürnberg carnival pieces, and dramas by Pamphilus Gengenbach, Niklaus Manuel, Sixt Birck, Paul Rebhuhn, Hans Sachs, and Jacob Ayrer.

An excellent article by Martin W. Walsh appeared on the spice merchant scene in German Easter plays. The merchant's assistant here had a close relationship to the audience, and in an Innsbruck play these scenes were 40% of the verse total! Cobie Kuné viewed the *Prager Abendmahlspiel* in its single manuscript, of Silesian origin; Christ's meal at Simon the Leper's house was showcased there, the washing of the feet, and an appeal to go to Gethsemane. The unknown author followed details of the *Meditationes*, but showed some originality. Kuné did not mention Dohi's book on the last supper (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2000 — reviewed in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 30 [2005]), but she gave helpful detail on a staging. Finally, Gabrijela Mecky Zaragoza compared two Judith figures, one in Marko Marulić's *Juditha* (1501), and the other in Sixt Birck's *Iudith* (1534). The Dalmatian woman was a *Virgo incomparabilis*, while the Swiss was a misogynist *Virago* (Zwingli "made" her a manly Murderess).

Our survey reveals the manifold forms of European late-medieval drama researched, but it is just literally “the tip of the iceberg.” We hope you will enjoy the following bibliography.

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Reviews

Billington, Sandra. *Midsummer: A Cultural Sub-Text from Chrétien de Troyes to Jean Michel*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000. Pp. xiii; 249. 13 ill.

In her introduction Billington explains her choice of midsummer as focus of this work on medieval French and Flemish literature. If carnival was the time for merrymaking and for mocking authorities, midsummer (especially the festival of St. John the Baptist on June 24) opened a period of diversions and disputes in villages and towns, a seasonal license fired by alcohol. Solstitial games involved belief in Fortune and change — which may mean a lower position on the Wheel — mutability Christianized by Boethius. Again, the authority of powerful personalities might be questioned; another connection with solstice was pride, doomed to fall. B. showed in her work that cultural, political, literary, and theatrical activities drew their energies from midsummer.

"Power Games at Midsummer" (chapter two) starts with the ceremony of rolling a wheel downhill on the eve of St. John's Day, a custom still alive in some European villages. Soon, one of humankind's oldest implements became the *Wheel of Fortune* (see Howard Patch); any midsummer crisis might turn into a fall; rose windows in cathedrals were designed as solar wheels

(21). Hilltop games served to mock lords temporarily; Louis XI attracted midsummer abuse; and at Laon in 1587, the election of midsummer lords had a rebellious purpose. Furthermore, Fortune's circular movement was applied to the four seasons of a person's life. Sometimes, fools were chosen to voice a town's opposition to the municipality (Troyes, 1611); and Martin Luther regarded himself as fool in Christ (1 Cor 4: 10) and attacked the Pope on the eve of St. John the Baptist's Day in 1520 (37). Midsummer events, especially rebellions, had a "curious fascination for chroniclers" (39); and some uprisings and celebrations were so noisy that "one could not hear God's thunder" (41), a line which B. traced to Chrétien (but which could be just a popular saying — the reviewer). Midsummer mockery might also contain much boasting, but personal ambition was considered satanic and was doomed from the outset; therefore, those in power often behaved humbly on St. John's Day. Legal activities frequently took place on (or close to) this feast day — a time connected to power and to issues of life and death.

Chapter three continues on Chrétien de Troyes and compares *Erec and Enide* to *Lancelot*, summer versus midsummer. According to B., the transition from May to June may include dangerous moments, for example, when Queen Guenevere changes her mind about her lover Lancelot, in burlesque fashion. Critics' opinions vary about the *Lancelot* romance which most of them find curious, strange, and unreasonable. The seasons have never been challenged before to explain this absurdity, but (in spite of B.) one must observe that life itself is absurd at times. Erec and Enide, an ideal couple, meet soon after Easter; following Pentecost, the arrogant Kay challenges Erec who after a tournament *sinks* to self-glorification. Erec tests Enide's obedience and becomes tyrannical (71), as she is forbidden to speak to him; subsequent to Erec's selfless battle (to rescue Cabroc) and his death-like coma, he returns Enide's love (which crosses social boundaries) and marries her.

The *Lancelot* romance is bewildering and has caused a lot of arguing among critics (as mentioned above); the protagonist seems "stuck" in midsummer behavior and is utterly humiliated consequently. His illicit liaison with Guenevere is denounced by everyone: the people, the king, and Chrétien (surely). This story shows that Ovid's and André the Chaplain's amatory advice (if followed) may assume catastrophic proportions; summer heat produces foolishness and comedy; but if we analyze Chrétien's intention in this romance, we might point out that even today, adultery is everywhere — simply because human beings have passions and are imperfect. B. returns to her opinion that *Lancelot* is a midsummer burlesque and that the protagonist is vulnerable ("a further cause of humour," 79). The lovers' decline in fortune is suggestive of St. John's *decollatio*, B. concludes (82).

The "Midsummer Romances after Chrétien" (chapter four) are derivative and somewhat less interesting. B. discusses *Fergus*, *Li Chevaliers as deus espees*,

the *Didot Perceval*, and *Perlesvaus*. *Fergus*, by the Picard Guillaume le Clerc, is dated between 1230 and 1250, and contains an abundance of midsummer elements. The Scotsman Fergus defeats a Black Knight; he encounters his future wife Galiene, who is very active (compared to Erec's Enide) and takes the sexual initiative. Finally, Fergus becomes (only) King of Tweeddale. Also from northern France, *Mériadeuc* or *Li Chevaliers as deus espees* was probably written at the same time as *Fergus*. The anonymous author introduces the apparent death of Gawain, who in turn has to regain fame and identity when he fights King Brien — but this duel is just play-acting, a comic note. (We never find out from B. about the meaning of the two swords: Gawain's own weapon and that of Lady Lore of Cardigan — the reviewer.)

The *Didot Perceval* (by Pseudo-Robert de Boron) was written at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The tale contains three episodes: Merlin's establishment of Arthur as rightful king; Perceval's quest to perfect himself and become Lord of the Grail; and the *Mort Artu*. Here, in midsummer, the materialism of the Church is attacked; and Arthur's fate is told with irony; he is pompous and will be punished for his pride: while he becomes King of Rome, Mordred at home has usurped Arthur's throne. *Perlesvaus* (anonymous) is a religious quest in support of the last crusades; presumably written after 1200, the text is Flemish, a symbolical New Testament, using St. John's Day as a pivotal element. The midsummer plot helps B. to negotiate the text's complexities (106).

"Civic Power in Louvain and Metz" (chapter five) introduces the reader to urban settings, where class differences exist and bourgeois are often protagonists of stories. *Galeran de Bretagne* by Jean Renaut features an aristocratic midsummer celebration in Metz, where the bourgeoisie is sometimes an ally of aristocrats in their confrontations with the Church. At Louvain, the magistrates (*echevins*) are changed by election on every June 24, and in Arras a satire of the *echevins* (civic lords, who are seemingly elected forever or who usurped their positions) is well noticeable in Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de la Feuillée* (1276–77), a play with a kind of midsummer night's dream. Meanwhile, the Church had its own financial troubles and internal disputes; perhaps in order to counter midsummer madness and secularism, the Pope created the feast of Corpus Christi, sometimes falling on St. John's Day. In *Galeran*, a religious woman is faulted.

In fact, "Jean Renaut's *Galeran de Bretagne*" (chapter six), written between 1205–1208 or 1216–20 (according to Jean Dufournet), showcases an urban environment (Metz), includes a bourgeois world, ideas on women's education, and *Galeran*'s psychological complexity. Several significant events take place on St. John's Day, and midsummer characteristics are arrogance, self-exaltation, sudden changes of mind, and the workings of Fortuna for some personages. Madame Gente, an aristocrat married to a burgher, shows envy

and pride; of her twins she keeps only one (*Flourie*), because of the general belief that twins must result from two men (adultery). The other child is called *Fresne* (after the ash tree under which she was found) and is raised in an abbey, whose aristocratic abbess, *Ermine*, adopts her. *Fresne* meets *Galeran*, a prince (also under *Ermine*'s care), and the two fall in love — when abruptly a messenger arrives (on St. John's Day) with the news that *Galeran*'s parents have died. The youngster rises on the social scale (he will renew his father's vassalage to the King of England), while *Fresne* remains an abandoned child, as the abbess is quick to point out. Meanwhile, the loving couple celebrates its engagement, in spite of *Ermine*'s objections against *Fresne*. *Galeran* has to prove his worth but stays absent too long (like *Yvain*); he meets *Fresne*'s twin sister *Flourie* and almost marries her — but *Fresne* reappears in Rouen, where she is believed to be an aristocrat because of her sensible life (needle work; going to church, etc.). *Galeran* recognizes and marries her, while *Flourie* returns to the convent. The previous setting in Metz (whose wealth and bourgeois mentality seem to be matters of the past for Renaut) is the author's in-joke, strengthening Billington's opinion that this romance shows political elements. B. might have mentioned *Galeran*'s sources: the *lai Fresne* by Marie de France and the romances *Floire et Blancheflor*, as well as *Escoufle* by Jean Renart (this time, *not* Renaut; Renart was a poet from Normandy).

Chapter seven ("Bourgeois Satire") showcases Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de la Feuillée* and "Midsummer Features in *Sotties* and *Farces*." That the *Jeu* is a summer play is obvious by the setting (a bower of leaves), but the date was June 4 rather than 24. Other midsummer features are an abundance of slander against the Arras magistrate and élite, ridicule of neighbors, criticism of Adam's wife, father, and Adam's own foolishness (self-criticism). The mad fool (*li dervez*) fits right into this satirical play, but he is wiser than many other figures (see my "The 'Marvelous' Madman of the *Jeu de la Feuillée*," *Neophilologus* 58 [1974], 180–86 — not mentioned by B.). The corruption of the Church is made visible in a monk who drinks and gambles away his relic (bone of St. Acaire, patron saint of fools), a source of income. B. then considers the *Basoche* theater of *sotties* and some farces, whose themes "might be inserted along with those of carnival" (151). Both types of plays served to mock individuals and society in general: dramatized slander, with some references to St. John. It goes without saying that these pieces were created much later than the *Jeu* (1450–1550), but their place in B.'s monograph is obviously justifiable.

"Midsummer Satires of Pride" (chapter eight) strikes a moral note, describing *Pride*'s downfall as comic humiliation ranging toward total destruction: during the Middle Ages, *superbia* was held to be the most dangerous capital sin (replaced later by *luxuria*). B. discusses Chrétien's *Perceval* (c.1182),

where the young protagonist meets arrogance at an early point (believing that the haughty knights in the forest are angels — paradoxically so). Later, Perceval himself shows arrogant negligence at the death of his mother but is reformed after his defeat of Orgueilleus de la Lande. In thirteenth-c. didactic satires, writers used Arthurian characters who are haughty and boastful. Jehan de la Mote's *Voie d'enfer et de paradis* (1340) has Pride's castle at the entrance to Hell, and here summer itself becomes a metaphor for Pride, and for Antichrist in Huon de Méry's *Le Tournoi de l'Antéchrist* (c.1234), with a crescendo to deceit in *Renart le Nouvel* (c.1288), and even Lucifer in person.

Chapter nine, "Religious Theatre," goes perhaps too far in applying midsummer categories to Gréban's and Michel's *Mystères de la Passion* (1452 and 1486). Fortune's Wheel was a commonplace borrowed from the ancients — but, as B. asserts, "solstitial principles are not always used overtly, but they are in the sub-text" (183). Well, this reviewer feels that even as sub-texts the midsummer categories are often vague in B.'s work, and the mere mentioning of the word *fortune* (once a synonym of *sort*=fate) does not recall June 24 and St. John automatically. We encounter here phrases like "midsummer characters and themes *might* be inserted" (in the *sottie Les Menus Propos*, 151 — my italics); or [*Perceval* by Chrétien] "*can be given* a midsummer perspective," 162; or: "Bras-de-Fer [from Huon de Méry's *Tournoi de l'Antéchrist*] *appears to be* an Anti-John the Baptist" (170). Published works centered on a fairly narrow theme tend to constitute monolithic straightjackets once in a while — a calamity which B. has not always tried to avoid.

The main portion of Billington's text is followed by five appendices, a select bibliography (which lacks some important titles, such as two more books on the *Jeu de la Feuillée* by Jean Dufournet), and a four-page index (double columns). Her valuable book is marred, however, by defects which a conscientious editor would have resolved. On the other hand, we are grateful for excellent translations which make this work available to readers not familiar with citations in French. Some of B.'s sources are quite outdated (except for evidence from chroniclers and archives); punctuation is often a problem, and so is spelling: page 22, *La Panthère d'Amour*; page 24, placed; Dufournet spelled correctly on page 115 (text), incorrectly in note 1; page 144, note 5: Castellani; page 166, Orgeur: correct in note 12, incorrect in the text. Disturbing are many double parentheses (e.g., p. 26, n. 27): brackets should have been used; even more bothersome is the author's frequent use of *this* as pronoun, to which the references are not clear (almost on every page). Sloppy syntax occurs on pages 38, 63, 65, 75, 100 (here perhaps in printing), 128. Proofreading might have eliminated these flaws.

In spite of the technical shortcomings, Billington's monograph shows a great amount of background reading and adds significantly to our impres-

sions of and knowledge about the Middle Ages in France, its literature (theater), and culture. The book can even be recommended to undergraduates.

Bordier, Jean-Pierre, ed. *L'Économie du dialogue dans l'ancien théâtre européen*. Paris: Champion, 1999. Pp. 228.

This collection is the result of a 1995 Colloquium held in Tours at the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance. French medieval theater in the vernacular started in the twelfth century, first in songs and later in spoken rhymes, and, as yet, its dialogues have not been examined by theater historians and literary critics.

Michel Rousse ("Le Dialogue dans le développement du théâtre") does not think that dialogues grew from monologues and into theater, in spite of the opinions of Jean-Claude Aubailly and most other specialists of late-medieval theater. According to Rousse, jongleurs (acting) "predated the story," and we should assume that a form of theater (dialogues of the jongleurs and the audiences) predated the monologues. This reasoning presents a novel point of view which needs more proof.

Bernard Faivre states in "Les Rythmes de la farce ou les gestes et les mots," that dialogues cannot be studied independently from non-verbal aspects, especially not in a farce. In *Mahuet qui donne ses oeufs au prix du marché* the accessories should be considered (a pot of cream and eggs), then the gestures betraying Mahuet's clumsiness, and the literal acting out of metaphoric expressions. The body language of a *farceur* often replaces a character's spoken words, for example in erotic parades (Aubailly), but we know little about the actual gestures, such as a priest's sprinkling a dead body with holy water, or the hand and body movements in *La Farce des Coquins* (three students begin to quarrel and run away, instead of paying the innkeeper's bill). To reduce a farce to its text is to minimize its real contents; there are disguisements right in front of an audience, and sometimes spatial arrangements allow speaking from different landings of a staircase (each landing carrying a meaning). Late comprehension occurs when a character is a prisoner of his own logic (*Le Gentilhomme et Naudet*). Beyond the text, we may observe the dosage of acceleration and slowing down of a dialogue, a procedure which influences the rhythm of a farce.

Jelle Koopmans observes, in "Le Dialogue du corps," that some morality plays exist for reading only, and others are intended for the stage. He examines three texts, moralized farces, which stage the human body: *La Moralité joyeuse à quatre personnages*, i.e., stomach, legs, heart, and head; *La Guerre et débat* of tongue, members, and stomach, and *La Farce nouvelle* of mankind's five senses, having seven actors: a human, mouth, hands, eyes, feet, ears, and derriere. These "plays" offer revolts of the body's members, but staging the "dialogues" is impossible, since the actors have narrative monologues only.

Gérard Gros's "Le Texte narratif au seuil de la dramatisation: l'exemple de l'*Advocacie Nostre-Dame* (au manuscrit de Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 525)" assumes that the text of this mystery play can be read silently or presented to an audience, who will admire the eloquence of the Virgin. Here, the dialogues in their denseness stimulate and accomplish the action, as the Dijon version emphasizes its dramatic potentialities. In this mystery (composed by a Norman clerk and jurist c.1320) the Virgin becomes an advocate for humankind at the Last Judgment, in a theological trial. The anonymous author guides the piece, creates rubrics and annotations, and mentions the names of the interlocutors of dialogues. The personages are: Our Lady, Satan, Our Lord, Humankind, and the author.

Dennis Hüe explains, in "De la *Disputatio* à l'*Effusio*," that at the time of the late-medieval glorification of the Virgin Mary, a fiery dispute took place about her immaculate conception. Her cult was especially fervent in Normandy, and some dramas staged the arguments, such as the *Passion en rimes franchoises* (beginning of the sixteenth century), and a *Triomphe des Normands* was penned during the late 1400s, where Rouen theater triumphed over the "heretics" in an anti-conceptionist *disputatio*. The role of forensic dialogues on the stage has been established years ago by Jody Enders (1992); Hüe's article does not discuss other theatrical features.

Simone de Reyff examines "Quelques aspects du dialogue dans le *Mystère de l'Institution de l'ordre des frères prescheurs*," a work edited by Jean Trepperel (c.1504–12). The play consists of 4,198 verses, treats an historical event, and is a morality having allegorical and historical persons. The mystery reminds us of the *Advocacie Nostre-Dame*, because the Virgin addresses Christ, who is upset about irreverent humankind, and she suggests that St. Dominic should found an order of preaching monks; Dominic receives from the Pope the authority to do so. The Parisian monk Regnault, who (independently) also wishes to establish this order, meets Dominic in Rome, where the two become friends. Regnault falls sick and is healed by the Virgin; thus, a morality, a saint play, and a mystery interpenetrate here, and we have double heroes. During the ceremony of establishment, a theater "en abyme," Dominic is a simple spectator; he is an element of order, whereas Regnault's scenes are very complex: the part with two "doctors" called in to heal Regnault is a farce, for example. Interestingly, de Reyff adds a typology of dialogues: dialogues closely associated with the drama's progression; ornamental, i.e., non-essential dialogues; and prayers. (De Reyff et al. edited the *mystère* in 1997.)

In "Monologues, dialogues et versification dans le *Mystère de Judith et Holofernés*," Graham A. Runnalls defines dialogues as exchanges of replies between two or more personages, without narrative text in between. He establishes a typology of dialogues as well, according to three degrees of

interaction between interlocutors: reactions of the personages to the previous statements (replies); acceptance or repetition of the other person's reply; dialogues where the speaker pays no attention to the other person(s). Monologues are dialogues where all interlocutors are silent, except for the speaker; sermons and prayers are apparent monologues. Runnalls furthermore distinguishes six additional kinds of dialogues, adding sample passages from this *mystère*: a true monologue; false monologue; dialogue with repetition by the others; dialogue *sonate* (rondeau); dialogue with stichomythia; and true (natural) dialogue. When discussing mnemonic rhymes (where the rhyme of the first line of a reply is identical with that in the last line of the preceding speaker), R. explains that such rhymes allow the fast and correct linking of replies. In his passages on versification he forgot to mention the impact of the Grands Rhétoriciens.

"La Question du Prologue de la *Passion*, ou le rôle des formes métriques dans la *Creacion du monde* [sic] d'Arnoul Gréban" is the title of Darwin Smith's contribution, in which he analyzes the Creation and the Fall in Gréban's work, in order to reveal their internal organizations. The rondeaux, for example, show the disorder of the pagans by cut verses (vers coupés, or coués); thus, the playwright integrates dissonances within the overall beauty of his *mystère*. Smith also gives insight into the life and career of Gréban.

Guy Borgnet examines "Les Adresses au public dans la *Passion de Francfort* de 1493: le rôle de Saint Augustin," where the actors' direct addresses to the audience interrupt theatrical illusions and the so-called *fourth wall* between the stage and the public arena. The *Frankfurt Passion* (4,408 verses) is meant for two play days and ends with the entombment of Christ. The addresses (monologues) are done by St. Augustine who asks for silence in the prologue and speaks about the meaning of the play ("Christ became human in order to deliver us from death"). He then organizes a *Jeu des* (6) *prophètes*, where each speaker is opposed by a Jew; thus, the *Passion* is to show the *truth* to the Hebrews by Augustine, proclaimer and commentator, while the Jews' passages reflect the anti-Jewish polemic of the time. According to Borgnet, the *jeu* within the *Jeu* is novel, but an *Ordo prophetarum* appeared already in the *Jeu d'Adam* (twelfth century — note of the reviewer). The significance given to Augustine here is based on two apocryphal sermons ("Contra Judaeos, Paganos et Arianos," and "De altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae dialogus"), to which must be added the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* and its vernacular texts (note of the reviewer). The pessimistic ending of this *Passion* reflects a certain era of disbelief at the end of the fifteenth century — a correct assessment by Borgnet.

Pascale Dumont ("Monologues, dialogues et mimes dans la gestion spatio-temporelle du *Jeu d'Adam* et du prologue au *Mystère de la Passion* d'Arnould Gréban") studies the techniques of the authors which show their (and the public's) attitudes toward space and time in these two religious

plays. The *Jeu d'Adam* (mid-twelfth century) presents the Creation, Original sin, Cain's crime, and a procession of prophets — all of these close to the biblical accounts. Gréban's prologue of only 1,510 verses and the 2,055 lines of the First Day produce for public view a profound metamorphosis in late-medieval staging, in which, instead of the conventional myths an imitation of reality is created. Gréban gives the essential scenes only, the speakers' monologues and dialogues revealing his mastery, especially in the Nativity and the Passion. While the *Jeu* is characterized by a sparseness of gestures (gestures are negative elements, as the body is suspect), in the *Mystère*, words, mimicry, and action belong together.

In "Les quatre requêtes de Notre Dame" Bordier highlights a moment in the Passion, where two characters in dialogue voice the basic conflict of Gréban's and Michel's dramas. Here, Our Lady tries to persuade her son to avoid his death and her pain (at seeing him die); however, this human concern (and outcry) is opposed by Christ, who acts according to Scripture and the prophets, in order to do his work of Redemption. Both Gréban and Michel have used here a famous passage of the *Passion Isabeau* (1398), edited by me in 1990. Stéphanie Le Briz-Orgeur contributes "Quand le silence fait parler de lui," speaking of Christ's silences during his trial, pauses on the stage which are interrupted by other persons and ended by the seven last words. She considers these silences as suspensions of dialogue.

The twelve articles in this volume indeed present an extended typology of dialogues, an interplay of words and gestures, be it in a farce, a morality, or a mystery play. Theological problems are unraveled, principal positions stated in debate dialogues, and a change in attitude toward the audience is noticeable during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Unfortunately, the theatricality of the plays is not always revealed, and it is evident that some contributors are still groping for a complete understanding of their subject matter. Obviously, this collection is meant for specialists in French medieval theater, for the play titles mentioned are not followed or annotated by short synopses of contents. Thus, we have an intimate authorial group dialoguing with "initiated" readers — but we have alleviated the situation to a certain extent in this account.

Clopper, Lawrence M. *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. Pp. xi; 343.

This informative study celebrates and yet limits three forms of public entertainment in late-medieval England. We concentrate on chapters four to seven, which contain the facts on drama within the fifteenth century. While the influence of liturgy is seen here as restricted, the thesis of the *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* (copied in the early fifteenth century) still pervades the chap-

ters we have read: drama is treated in the latter with some regret as having left the realm of theological purity, whereas the aspect of theatricality is fairly neglected. In spite of these facts, chapters four to seven are learned, and their reasoning conscientious and logical.

“Drama and the City” features biblical and moral plays enacted in the streets and appealing to the affective piety of citizens; while in northern towns large-scale productions took place, London favored processions and formal speech. In East Anglia especially, the laity participated much in religious life and drama as an appropriate form of festive expression (rather than “*ludi inhonesti*”), whereas aristocrats and monastics were involved less.

In “Texts and Performances” in the northern cities and East Anglia, Clopper studies production techniques for the texts of the Chester, Wakefield, York, and N-Town cycles, either on ambulatory or fixed stages; York, Coventry, and Chester featured pageant wagons supported by guilds. According to Clopper’s “revisionist” remarks, all texts are problematical: York was not fully registered, and guilds did not consult with one another; the Coventry plays were incomplete, since the records demonstrate only eight pageants, while other sources list ten. Missing at Coventry were references to OT plays and other subjects; the Towneley manuscript contains a cycle designated for Wakefield, but some episodes are absent. The Chester plays are unique, since we have five manuscript copies and some individual plays; the majority of all these texts was pre-Reformation. Printing dramatic scripts began rather late: the industry of imprint was centered in London, where there was little dramatic activity; nevertheless, unprinted texts had the longest performance history.

“The Matter of These Plays” establishes that there was hardly any clerical presence in civic biblical drama; Corpus Christi and other feast day processions were managed by craft guilds, and even Old and New Testament plays were free of ecclesiastical control. Furthermore, laymen now wrote plays for laymen and laywomen in the vernacular, texts characterized by anxious literalism (rather than philosophy or theology). None of the scripts enacted the sacraments, and the Chester cycle did not promote a political or religious agenda.

In chapter seven, C. focuses on three East Anglian texts (*Mary Magdalene*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, and *Wisdom*) to show the variety of dramas available in this region. Thus, an extraordinary, popular, and provincial tradition of theater becomes apparent to the reader of C.’s work, stages which intermingle history, allegory, and romance. In summary, this monograph gives a detailed picture of English pre-modern theater and other performed entertainments, a compendium worthwhile to read and consult perhaps for its theoretical (rather than practical) aspects.

Enders, Jody. *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pp. xxx; 324. 9 ill.

The author's prologue explains that many "true" stories presented in today's media and magazines are just urban legends. To peruse medieval theatrical legends means encountering a "mixture of love and lust, desire and repression, fear and delight, pain and pleasure, war and peace, madness and sanity, community and isolation, integration and segregation, kindness and violence, history and fiction" (xxx). The introduction speaks of an "eyewitness report," such as passion aroused in a female spectator of the *Play of St. Catherine of Siena* for the girl playing Catherine (Metz, 1468). Some actors purportedly went mad when playing madness; and many thespian anecdotes invite us "to suspend simultaneously both our disbelief and our belief" (12).

Chapter one, "Lusting after Saints," turns again to the fate of the actress at Metz, who was soon lost for the stage by marrying, thus becoming a failed saint. On the other hand, chapter two ("Queer Attractions") introduces us to a young effeminate lad, Lyonard (a German barber's apprentice), who played St. Barbara in Metz, 1485. A widow promptly coveted the handsome youngster and wanted to adopt him as her heir (a same-sex love?); at the same time, however, Lyonard pleased a man of the cloth (Master Jehan Chardelly) so much that the latter planned to "protect" the youngster, prepare him for the priesthood, and enjoy Lyonard's intimate favors along the way — another twist in the phenomenology of drama. To top the story, Lyonard's chronicler, Philippe de Vigneulles, looked just like Lyonard (was mistaken in public for L.) and favored him as well: homoerotic confusion.

"Of Madness and Method Acting" (ch. three) features a story by Lucian of Samosata, according to which an actor imitating the madness of Ajax actually went insane and almost lost his life. Theater frequently just hovers between illusion and reality; indeed, actors are often positively possessed by their roles even before they appear onstage and are hence close to method-acting (condemned by Constantin Stanislavski). The method-actor Ajax (probably by a prior mental imbalance) "made non-method-actors of his audience" (49). Quite a few actors were "dying to play," literally.

In chapter four, "Two Priests and the Hand of God," a priest impersonating Christ and coming close to death on the cross is showcased, still hoping to be rescued in the last minute (Metz, 1437). In medieval Brussels, condemned criminals were pardoned for playing Jesus in passion plays; thus, the distinction between realism and reality was effaced by theater as well as urban legends. Is it possible to mix theater and theology by placing a priest on stage, or by "incarnating the incarnation?" (59). Yet, by saving the "dying" cleric or Judas at the last minute, an onlooker is, in fact, altering the NT story. "Dying to Play" (ch. five) discusses that in 1380, a man died by a special effect gone wrong when he was caught in the crossfire of canons: such