The Commerce Of Time: The Influence Of Thirteenth Century Commercial Society On The Conception And Expression Of Time In Parisian Poet Rutebeuf's Corpus

Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the ways in which the newly emerging commercial society impacted the conception and expression of time in thirteenth century Parisian poet Rutebeuf's corpus. It does so by examining how Rutebeuf's narrator employs commercial metonymies, metaphors, and mindsets to manipulate the expression of time for his own benefit. Rather than be a product of his time, time becomes a product of the narrator. The use of figural manifestations of commerce to manipulate time appears to be unique to Rutebeuf and testifies to the influence of the urban environment on his work. The narrator's manipulation of time would not have been possible if it were not for the new ways of conceptualizing time brought about by the thirteenth century commercial revolution. Rather than fixed and rigid, time with the (re)development of the commercial network became fluid and mutable, allowing the narrator to reshape his past, present, and future.

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Introduction

The thirteenth-century Parisian poet Rutebeuf opens his poem "De l'estat du monde" (On the State of the World) by situating it in time. Rather than the conventional spring topos, however, he employs a curious mix of metaphors, joining together the conventional and the contemporary in his critique of the changing times.[1]

Por ce que li mondes se change
Plus sovent que denier a Change,
Rimer vueil du monde divers.
Toz fu estez, or est yvers;
Bons fu, or est d'autre maniere,
[Because the times are changing
More often than a coin at the Exchange,
I want to write about the changing world.
Before it was summer, now it is winter;

[1] According to William T. H. Jackson, "Almost all poems have time-indicators other than tense and some have a very definite significance in literary tradition. The most important is by far the spring landscape topos. Its use in Latin lyric, and particularly in love lyric, is to set a time and place which is ideal for the flowering of emotion and love and is often accompanied by a description of rituals appropriate to spring, especially the image of girls dancing and singing in chorus." William T. H. Jackson, Introduction, *The Interpretation of Medieval Lyric Poetry*, ed. William T. H. Jackson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 17.

The world was good, but now it is different, ll. 1-5][2]

In order to express the changing times the narrator first employs the metaphor of a coin being exchanged. The image of the coin is succeeded in the following lines by references to nature. Although the conventional topos of spring is replaced by winter, an approach often used by poets to parody the springtime situation, the evocation of the seasons is conventional in contrast to the metaphor of the coin.[3] The way that time is referred to in the opening of poem is a mix of both conventional and contemporary methods. This curious blend makes this passage stand out in the opening of the poem. Why did Rutebeuf choose to place together such incongruent temporal references at the beginning of his poem? What effect does this inconsistency have on the reader? What can this incongruity tell us about the way time was perceived and expressed in thirteenth century Paris?

The example of the mixed temporal references at the beginning of "De l'estat du monde" is not the only case of varied expressions of time in thirteenth century poetry. Michel Zink observes that mixed references to time also occurs in Rutebeuf's "Li mariages Rutebeuf," which employs liturgical, calendar, and seasonal references in its opening lines.[4] Zink argues that the temporal references in the poem are purposefully incongruent since rather than deriving from an established tradition,

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[2] All citations from Rutebeuf's works come from Zink's 2001 edition. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. Rutebeuf, *Oeuvres Complètes de Rutebeuf,* ed., trans., intro., Michel Zink, Le Livre de Poche, coll. "Lettres Gothiques," (Paris: Librairie générale française, 2001).

[3] William T. H. Jackson, *The Interpretation of Medieval Lyric Poetry*, 17.

[4] Michel Zink and Monique Briand-Walker, "Time and Representation of the Self in Thirteenth-Century French Poetry," *Poetics Today* 5.3, *Medieval and Renaissance Representation: New Reflections* (1984): 611-627 at 617; Michel Zink, *La Subjectivité littéraire autour du siècle de saint Louis* (Paris: PUF, 1985), 112; In his analysis, Zink also employs *Le Besant de Dieu, Dit des Droits,* and the *Roman de Rou* among others.

as was the case with the medieval romance or *chanson de geste*, the literary subject in the thirteenth century was determined by his or her exterior, contemporary world, which had no history or precedent.[5] Zink's analysis of Rutebeuf's poetry centers on the question of how time (specifically the present) affects the manner in which the literary subject is conceived within a given poem. I propose taking a different approach to the subject of time in Rutebeuf's poetry by asking the questions of how contemporary events affect the conception of time and how, in turn, the narrator employs this new understanding of time for his own benefit. In other words, instead of examining how the literary subject is a product of his or her time, I will investigate how time becomes a product of the literary subject. As a product of the literary subject, time becomes just one of the many means by which the narrator communicates his intended message to his audience. It is from this conception of time that the title of this dissertation, "The Commerce of Time" is derived, since the term "commerce," stemming from the Latin "commercium," evokes the concepts of "relation," "exchange," and "communication."

Writing between 1248 and 1277, Rutebeuf lived during and experienced some of the most monumental shifts to society in the medieval period.[6] The

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[5] Michel Zink and Monique Briand-Walker, "Time and Representation of the Self," 627.

[6] Faral and Bastin hypothesize the etymological origins of Rutebeuf's name, stating that in the Middle Ages, some Latin names ending in "–bodus" became "–beuf" in French, providing the examples of *Magnibodus (Mainbeuf), Marbodus (Marbeuf), Tudebodus (Tubeuf),* etc. There was confusion between –beuf deriving from –bodus and –beuf deriving from *bos*, the Latin for cow, bull, or ox. Faral and Bastin recognize a potential problem with this theory, stating that the –bodus/-beuf name originated in western France, whereas Rutebeuf came from the East (Champagne). They do not, however, discount the possibility of migration. The two also note that it was rare for a poet from the Middle Ages to only refer to himself by his surname. Faral and Bastin later argue that, Rutebeuf was a nickname, more than likely given to him by his schoolmates. See: Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin,

thirteenth century saw the rise of the great European universities, the mendicant orders, and the expanse of urbanization and commerce. Each of these changes not only affected people's day-to-day existence, it also forced them to develop new ways of conceptualizing their world. The rediscovery and retranslation of the works of Aristotle, for example, obliged university scholars to negotiate between patristic worldviews and Aristotelian philosophy. The permanent settlement of the mendicant orders in the city raised new questions about the roles of such institutions within society and the validity of their mendicancy. Finally, the migration of the population from rural areas to the city as well as the vast expanse and development of commerce saw the direct confrontation of Christian ideals with the economic reality. The changes that people were facing in their new environment resulted in a general feeling of anxiety as conventional ways of perceiving and experiencing the world were challenged.

Among the changes to people's experience of their world was their conception of time. The question of if and how changes occurring in thirteenth century society influenced the conception of time needs to be addressed since, to my knowledge, only one study has attempted to answer this question. Rather than provide answers, however, Jacques Le Goff's "Au Moyen Âge: temps de l'Église et temps du marchand," asks medieval scholars to continue working on the questions posed in his study. Le Goff argues that during the period of commercialization that occured in the thirteenth century "merchant time" began to infringe on "Church

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Oeuvres Complètes, I, 33-4. Additional interpretations of Rutebeuf's name will be discussed in Chapter 4.

time." “Church time” had been the dominant way to measure time prior to commercialization and was based on the idea that time belongs to no one other than God, since time began with God and is dominated by Him.[7] “Church time” was also linear and unchanging.[8] Rather than static, time, with the (re)development of the commercial network, became mutable, predictable, and used to one's advantage.[9] Although “Church time” still held an important role, increased commercial activity gave those who lived during the thirteenth century new ways of conceiving time.

Naturally, these two competing conceptions of time resulted in a *crise de conscience* (crisis of conscience) as people juggled between two different ways of understanding not only time but also their existence. Rather than patterns set by nature and by God, people began to behave according to patterns set by themselves.[10] The *crise de conscience* that occurred as a result of the infringement of “merchant time” on “Church time” could help to explain the variation in the way that time is expressed in the beginning of Rutebeuf’s poem, where the coin imposes its presence on the topos of nature, and the reference to winter instead of spring signals a change in the way that time is expressed. In order to address this question, however, more work needs to be done.

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[7] Jacques Le Goff, "Au Moyen Age : temps de l'Église et temps du marchand," *Annales ESC* 3 (1960) : 417-33 at 418.

[8] ibid., 421.

[9] ibid., 417. In addition to commerce, the rediscovery of Aristotle had an impact on the way that time was perceived in the thirteenth century. Aristotle saw time as an objective measure of movement. For Aristotle, time is a mark of change or of the experience of change. Because Aristotle saw time as the experience of change, time perception becomes rooted in the idea of self-awareness. See: A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 114; Charles M. Sherover, *The Human Experience of Time* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1975), 21.

[10] A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* 149.

As Le Goff reveals at the end of his article, "this study has no other purpose than to stimulate a more intensive study of a history which raises numerous problems."[11] Le Goff calls for an exhaustive investigation that will have "the intention of showing in a particular historical society the interaction between objective structures and mental frameworks, between collective adventures and individual destinies, and of the various times within Time."[12] Rutebeuf's poems, being deeply rooted in the events of thirteenth century Paris, are an appropriate vehicle to address Le Goff's call for more scholarship on the expression of time, since contemporary events do impact the way that time is expressed in Rutebeuf's works.

Gerhard Dohrn-Van Rossum also makes a special case for the need for more scholarship regarding the relationship between time and the newly emerging commercial society, declaring, "independent of the history of 'measured time' we still need to ask whether, and how, the temporal aspects of commercial activity and commercial rationality came to consciousness in the late medieval ages and whether it is not likely, therefore, that in the group of those most affected by this, 'time' becomes a topic of special interest."[13] Dohrn-Van Rossum's statement is based on our knowledge of the time tracking devices used during the Middle Ages.[14] We also know that the Church and the laity used these devices. What is missing, however, is a study on how commercialized culture had an impact on the way in which people

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[11] Jacques Le Goff, "Temps de l'Église et temps du marchand," 432.
[12] ibid., 428.
[13] Gerhard Dohrn-Van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 230.
[14] The monks, for example, employed astrology, the length of songs, sundials, candles, and water clocks to measure the passage of time. ibid., 54.

perceived and expressed time. By examining the ways in which commercial society influenced the conception and expression of time in Rutebeuf's works, this study fills a current gap in the study of time in the Middle Ages.

In addition to addressing the relationship between commerce and time, this dissertation also contributes to medieval scholarship by employing the works of Rutebeuf as a principal means of analysis. Although there was a renewed interest in Rutebeuf's works in the early 2000's, more than likely due to the 2001 publication of Zink's *Lettres Gothiques* edition, Rutebeuf studies have remained relatively stagnant for the past ten years. Moreover, studies on Rutebeuf's works have tended to originate from Europe rather than North America. There is perhaps a need for expanded perspectives in order to bring new approaches and insights to the interpretation of Rutebeuf. Unlike contemporary French studies, where differences between American (U.S.) and French cultures could impact a given study's reception or results, the medieval culture is a shared culture, in some ways equally foreign to North Americans and Europeans alike.[15] A North American perspective will, therefore, add to rather than detract from existing European scholarship on Rutebeuf.

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[15] This is the case even though the Middle Ages has a greater presence in Europe due to architectural remnants. In a talk given to the French Embassy in Chicago on April 2, 2015 Michel Zink discusses the stigma that exists in contemporary times against the Middle Ages, and argues that we are different yet the same as those who lived during medieval times. Zink's talk illustrates that those living in contemporary France do not necessarily feel a greater connection to the Middle Ages, despite the greater presence of this period within society. See: Michel Zink, "Welcome to the Middle Ages," *Cultural Services of the French Embassy,* April 2, 2015, http://livestream.com/frenchembassy/welcome-to-the-middle-ages.

Rutebeuf and his Corpus

Despite the attribution of 56 different poems in a variety of vernacular genres, including *dits*, *fabliaux*, miracles, saints lives, and theater, not much is known about Rutebeuf. Some critics have speculated that he came from the Champagne region of France, as some of his works are directly tied to this region.[16] Rutebeuf scholars Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, however, remain skeptical of this theory, stating that the only certainty regarding Rutebeuf is that he spent a large part of his career in Paris.[17] Although the concept of authorship poses problems for the study of medieval literature, we know the name "Rutebeuf" because the poet names himself over fifteen times within his corpus.[18] In addition, in Paris BnF 837 (Manuscript A), Rutebeuf's texts are clearly marked by the incipit "Ci commencent li dit Rustebeuf' (fol. 283), which illustrates that the scribe considered "Rutebeuf" to be the author of a given body of texts.[19] This incipit was less necessary in Rutebeuf's other principal manuscripts (Paris BnF 1593 and Paris BnF 1635) since Rutebeuf's poems were originally copied down in a separate document before being bound with other texts.[20]

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[16] cf. "Le dit de l'Herberie" and "La complainte dou roi de Navarre." According to Zink, "La vie de sainte Elysabel" and the "Diz de Puille" were comissioned by dignitaries from the Champaign region. See: Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 8.

[17] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes de Rutebeuf,* I (Paris: Éditions A. and J. Picard, 1959), 35.

[18] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 7.

[19] See: Wagih Azzam, "Un recueil dans le recueil. Rutebeuf dans le manuscrit BnF f.fr. 837," *Mouvances et jointures. Du Manuscrit au texte médiéval,* ed. Milena Mikhaîlova (Orleans, Fr: Paradigme, 2005): 193-201.

[20] Manuscript B is slightly more problematic than Manuscript C since many lines of the manuscript have been scraped away. Although Rutebeuf's texts are currently found in three separate groupings within the current manuscript (B), Faral and Bastin believe that the first two sections may have at

Rutebeuf's works are grouped together to form more or less complete collections in three manuscripts (Paris BnF 837, Paris BnF 1593, Paris BnF 1635). The remaining nine manuscripts contain only a singular work or a small number of Rutebeuf's works. Manuscript A (Paris BnF 837) is significant for Rutebeuf studies since it is the only manuscript to include Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile" and "De l'estat du monde" in their entirety (Manuscript C contains 2 passages from "Theophile"). In addition to Rutebeuf's texts, Manuscript A contains a well-known collection of vernacular writings contemporary to Rutebeuf.[21] The manuscript was composed by one hand and is dated to the end of the thirteenth century.[22] Manuscript B is similar to Manuscript A, since it contains a collection of *contes*, *dits*, *lais*, and *fabliaux*. Rather than being copied by the same hand, however, this manuscript was pieced together from various fragments. Manuscript C begins with collection of Rutebeuf's poems and concludes with an incomplete copy of the *Roman d'Alexandre.* Rutebeuf's corpus was copied independently from the *Roman d'Alexandre* and the two were joined together at a later date.

Zink's 2001 *Lettres Gothiques* edition, which is based on Manuscript C, will be the principal edition used in this study. This edition was selected since it is the most recent, complete edition of Rutebeuf's works. Before Zink, the best edition of Rutebeuf's corpus was Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin's 1959-1960 two-volume

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one time existed together in an earlier manuscript before being separated and inserted into two different sections in the current manuscript. Due to the scraping, however, their hypothesis cannot be confirmed. Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* I, 15.

[21] This manuscript has been referenced and studied by many scholars due to the breadth and variety of the texts included within it. In 1932, the manuscript was published as a facsimile by Hennri Omont under the title *Fabliaux, dits et contes en vers français du XIIIe siècle.*

[22] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* I, 12.

edition. Almost forty years of Rutebeuf scholarship is, therefore, included in Zink's edition that is absent from Faral and Bastin. Zink's edition is also based on Manuscript C, which includes the largest number of Rutebeuf's works in a single volume. Of Rutebeuf's fifty-six known works, fifty are present in Manuscript C. Manuscript A, however, will be used when examining "De l'estat du monde" and "Le miracle de Theophile." Even though Zink will be the principal edition used, this dissertation will also draw from Faral and Bastin's edition where needed to either support or to provide additional background information about a text or texts that Zink did not wish to replicate.

The Study of Time in the Middle Ages

Scholarship from the last half century has evolved in its understanding of medieval attitudes towards time. Early publications, including that of Gaston Paris, portrayed people in the Middle Ages as having no sense of chronology and opposed to the concept of change.[23] Later, Marc Bloch in his *La Société féodale* saw medieval people's inability to accurately measure time as being "un des symptômes, entre beaucoup d'autres, d'une vaste indifférence du temps" (One of the symptoms, among many others, of a vast indifference to time).[24] Although some scholars in the mid-century, such as Phillipe Ménard in his article "Le temps et la durée dans les romans de Chrétien de Troyes," attempted to change this way of thinking, traces of

[23] Gaston Paris, *La Littérature française au moyen âge (XI-XIV siècle),* ed. Paul Meyer (Paris: Hachette, 1905), 31.
[24] Marc Bloch, *La société féodale,* II, coll. "L'évolution de l'humanité" (Paris: Albin Michel, 1940), 119.

the medieval person's indifference to time persisted into the 1980's.[25] One of the most influential studies on the measure of time is Jacques Le Goff's 1960 article, "Au Moyen Age: temps de l'Église et temps du marchand."[26] Since the date of its publication, it is difficult to find a study on time in the Middle Ages that does not reference this article. In addition to Le Goff's article, the mid century saw a proliferation in the study of not only time but also of its representation in medieval French literature. Apart from a few studies, which focus primarily on time measure, time studies have mostly examined the use of verb tenses and temporal clauses within literary texts.[27] The next major period in the study of time in the Middle Ages was from the mid 1980's to the early 1990's. These decades saw the publication of Gurevich's *Categories of Medieval Culture*, Zink's *La subjectivité littéraire autour du siècle de Saint Louis*, and papers presented at two different conferences on time, *Le Temps et la durée dans la littérature au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* and *Le Temps, sa mesure et sa perception au Moyen Âge*.[28] Zink's book focuses on the development

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[25] Phillipe Ménard, "Le temps et la durée dans les romans de Chrétien de Troyes," *Le Moyen Age* (1967): 375-401.

[26] Jacques Le Goff, "Au Moyen Age : temps de l'Église et temps du marchand," *Annales. Économies, Sociétés,, Civilisations* 3 (1960): 417-33.

[27] See: Paul Imbs, "La journée dans *La Queste del Saint Graal* et *La Mort le roi Artu*," *Mélanges de philologie romane et de littérature médiévale offerts à Ernest Hoepffner par ses élèves et ses amis*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949): 279-93; Paul Imbs, *Les propositions temporelles en ancien français* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1956); Tatiana Fotich, *The narrative tenses in Chrétien de Troyes, a study in syntax and stylistics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1950). Additional studies that are less literature focused include, Wiliam Rothwell, "The Hours of the Day in Medieval French," *French Studies* 13.3 (1959): 240-51; Philippe Wolfe, "Le temps et sa mesure au Moyen Age," *Annales ESC* 17.6 (1962): 1141-5.

[28] A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Michel Zink, *La Subjectivité littéraire autour du siècle de saint Louis* (Paris : PUF, 1985); *Le temps et la durée dans la littérature au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: Actes du colloque organisé par le centre de Recherche sur la Littérature du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance de l'Université de Reims* (novembre 1984), publiés sous la direction d'Yvonne Bellenger (Paris: A.G. Nizet, 1986); *Le temps, sa mesure et*

of literary subjectivity (*subjectivité littéraire*) within French medieval texts during the thirteenth century. Whereas *Le Temps et la durée dans la littérature au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance* is a collection of papers that treat time in French literature, *Le Temps, sa mesure et sa perception au Moyen Age,* like *Le Temps et la durée,* focuses on scientific or legal texts. In addition to these publications, studies that examined the measure of time were published, including Dohrn-Van Rossum's *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders*, which studied time measure and time consciousness from the classical period to the late Middle Ages.[29] More recently, J. A. Burrow and Ian P. Wei have edited a volume entitled *Medieval Futures: Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages,* which seeks to examine the medieval conception of the future beyond the end of the world, the Antichrist, and the Last Judgment.[30]

The way that scholars have viewed the conception of time in the Middle Ages has changed over the course of the twentieth century, with the mid century marking a shift where the argument that there was an indifference to time was challenged. Whereas earlier scholars, including Gaston Paris and Marc Bloch viewed people in the Middle Ages as indifferent to time, later scholars argued that time did play a role in their lives. The lack of reference to time in medieval texts has been attributed to a lack of precision in the system(s) of measuring time rather than an indifference to time itself. As William Rothwell argues in "Hours of the Day in Medieval French,"

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sa perception au Moyen Âge : Actes du colloque d'Orléans (12-13 avril, 1991), publiés sous la direction de Bernard Ribémont (Caen, FR : Paradigme, 1992).

[29] Gerhard Dohrn-Van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[30] *Medieval Futures : Medieval Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages,* ed. J.A. Burrow and Ian P. Wei (Woodbridge, UK : Boydell Press, 2000).

"The medieval shopkeeper was just as keen as his modern counterpart to do as much business as law would allow; the work-man and apprentice were not a wit less anxious to know when to begin and stop work. . . these men and many more could not be indifferent to time and its reckoning."[31] Although the study of time in the Middle Ages has evolved over the past century, it is not yet complete. One area that has still not yet been adequately examined is how the newly emerging commercial society impacted the conception and expression of time. By examining the way in which the narrator expresses time in Rutebeuf's corpus, this study seeks to answer this question.

Rutebeuf Studies

Claude Fauchet made the earliest reference to Rutebeuf in his 1581 text on old French poets ("Des anciens poètes françois"), where he noted the large variety of genres composed by Rutebeuf.[32] Despite recognition of the poet's name and his works it would take almost three hundred years for a complete volume of Rutebeuf's poems to be published and made available to the public.[33] Achille Jubinal's 1839 edition was followed fifty years later by Léon Clédat's 1891 edition, which focused on the historical conditions of Rutebeuf's poetic production as well as Clédat's own analysis of the poems. Clédat's edition does not include the full body of

[31] William Rothwell, "The Hours of the Day in Medieval French," 247.

[32] Claude Fauchet, *Les oeuvres de feu M. Claude Fauchet president en la cour des monnayes* (Paris : Hequeville, 1581), 578.

[33] Jubinal's edition is very basic and includes only minimal anaylsis in the form of footnotes. Achille Jubinal, *Ouevres Complètes de Rutebeuf trouvère du XIII^e siècle* (Paris: Édouard Pannier, 1839).

Rutebeuf's poems in their entirety.[34] Germaine Lafeuille published the next major edition in 1966, which begins by introducing Rutebeuf and his period and follows with a selection of lightly modernized poems.[35] The most well-known and highly cited edition is Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin's 1959-1960 two-volume critical edition.[36] This edition was followed in 1979 by Jean Dufournet's modern French translation edition and later in 2001 by Zink's above-mentioned *Lettres Gothiques* critical edition, which, as noted above, sparked a renewed interest in Rutebeuf studies.[37] In addition to these more comprehensive studies, several smaller studies that focused on a given topic or theme in Rutebeuf's works were published.[38] In general, the themes examined in Rutebeuf's works have remained varied and there does not appear to be any relationship between a given theme and chronology. Popular themes studied in Rutebeuf's works include redemption,[39] his critique of the mendicant orders,[40] the autobiographical nature of his poems,[41] and his satire,[42]

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[34] Clédat also translated the poems into modern French. See: Léon Clédat, *Rutebeuf* (Paris: Hachette, 1891).

[35] Germaine Lafeuille, *Rutebeuf,* Écrivains d'hier et d'aujourd'hui 24 (Paris: Pierre Seghers, 1966).

[36] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes de Rutebeuf*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions A. and J. Picard, 1959 and 1960).

[37] Jean Dufournet, *Rutebeuf. Poésies traduites en français moderne* (Paris: Champion, 1977); Rutebeuf, *Oeuvres Complètes de Rutebeuf,* ed., trans., intro., Michel Zink, Le Livre de Poche, coll. "Lettres Gothiques," (Paris: Librairie générale française, 2001).

[38] Harry Lucas, *Les poésies personnelles de Rutebeuf* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1974); Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Onze poèmes concernant la Croisade* (Paris: Geuthner, 1946); Jean Dufournet, *Poèmes de l'infortune et autres poèmes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).

[39] Richard Spenser, "Sin and Retribution, and the Hope of Salvation, in Rutebeuf's Lyrical Works," *Rewards and Punishments,* ed. Peter V. Davies and Angus J. Kennedy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987): 149-164; Robert Henry, "Repentance and Conversion in the Works of Rutebeuf" (PhD diss., Cornell University. 2008). Also see: Chapter three on "Le miracle de Theophile" where repentance has previously been studied as a primary theme.

[40] Alain Corbellari "Le mythe du savoir." *La voix des clercs: littérature et savoir universitaire autour des dits du XIIIe siècle* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2005): 233-55; Omer Jodogne, "L'anticlericalisme de Rutebeuf," *Lettres Romanes* 23 (1969): 219-44; Jean Dufournet, "Rutebeuf et

among several others. Nancy Regalado has taken a unique approach to the study of Rutebeuf by arguing that his poems are by no means autobiographical but instead based on literary convention.[43] As this overview of Rutebeuf scholarship has shown, despite the variety of themes examined in Rutebeuf's works, there is a lack of studies that address Rutebeuf's particular propensity to employ time imagery. In fact, there are only two studies that have previously treated this subject in one way or another. The first, Zink's *Subjectivité littéraire,* argues that the content of Rutebeuf's poems, as well as the poems' subject, are drawn from the present.[44] His study, however, is limited to Rutebeuf's *dits.* Miha Pintaric has also examined time by ultimately arguing that time in Rutebeuf's corpus is oriented towards death and any attempts made by Rutebeuf to control time are illusionary.[45] The study of the expression of time, and in particular the influence of commercial society on the conception and expression of time, is currently lacking in Rutebeuf scholarship and, therefore, needs to be addressed.

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les moines mendiants," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 85.2 (1984): 152-68; Jean-Pierre Bordier, "L'Antéchrist au Quartier Latin selon Rutebeuf," *Milieux universitaires et mentalité urbaine au Moyen Âge. Colloque du Département d'études médiévales de Paris–Sorbonne et de l'Université de Bonn* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne et de l'Université de Bonn, 1987): 9-21.

[41] Grace Frank, ed. and intro., *Rutebeuf: Le miracle de Theophile: Miracle du XIII^e siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librarie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1949); L.G. Pesce,"Le portrait de Rutebeuf: sa personnalité morale." *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 28 (1958): 55-118; Jean Dufournet and François de la Breteque, "L'univers poétique et morale de Rutebeuf," *Revue des langues romanes* 88 (1984): 39-78; Jean Frappier, "Rutebeuf: poète du jeu, du guigon et de la misère," *Du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance. Études d'histoire et de critique littéraire* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1976): 123-32.

[42] Arié Serper, *La manière satirique de Rutebeuf: le ton et le style* (Naples: Liguori, 1972); Léon Clédat, *La poésie lyrique et satirique en France au Moyen Age* (Paris: Oudin et Compagnie, 1893); Charles H. Post, "The Paradox of humor and satire in the poems of Rutebeuf," *The French Review* 25.5 (1952): 364-8.

[43] Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf: A Study in Noncourtly Poetic Modes of the Thirteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970).

[44] Michel Zink, *La Subjectivité littéraire*, 124-5.

[45] Miha Pintaric, "Rutebeuf entre le temps de l'Église et le temps du marchand," *Acta Neophologica* 27 (1994): 17-22 at 22.

Approach

The study of the impact of commercial society on the conception and expression of time in Rutebeuf's works will be conducted in two ways. First, I will take into account the socio-historical context of the poems' production in order to consider potential motivations behind their composition. Second, I will employ works contemporary to those of Rutebeuf and/or texts theorized to have influenced Rutebeuf's own texts as a means of determining the degree to which Rutebeuf is forwarding a unique interpretation or if he is simply following convention.

The use of literary texts as a principal means of analysis is problematic due to the rhetorical nature of literature. When a poet references time or commerce, for example, these references could be submerged in other contexts. Aaron Gurevich discusses this difficulty, arguing that time and space in artistic and literary channels arise from ideological and artistic problems facing writers, poets, and painters at a given moment. Hence they do not always faithfully represent the ways of seeing the world or the history of the society producing the works.[46] Joel Kaye, on the other hand, sees the benefit of using literary works, arguing that they are valuable since they have the ability to bring into focus perceptions that remain fragmentary in less sophisticated or unified sources.[47] In regards to commerce, he adds that literary works are a useful tool for assessing the attitudes and perceptions of those removed

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[46] A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, 35.

[47] Joel Kaye,"Monetary and Market Consciousness in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Europe," *Ancient and Medieval Economic Ideas and Concepts of Social Justice,* ed. Todd S. Lowry, and Barry Gordon (New York: Brill, 1998), 372.

from the actual exercise of commerce.[48] Rutebeuf, who was more than likely a *clerc* (due to his knowledge of Latin), represents a portion of the population removed from the actual exercise of commerce. His poems, therefore, provide a good resource for examining the way that commercial culture influenced the conception of time by those not who were witnesses, but not directly involved in commercial trade. This population is significant since it represents a majority of the population during the period in which Rutebeuf wrote. Rutebeuf's poems provide a unique glance at one of Europe's greatest and most influential cities in a period when its traditional structures were in flux and new structures and ways of life began to emerge.

Chapter Descriptions

Chapter one, entitled "The Materiality of Time: Commerce and the Decline of Society" will examine the curious use of coins, cloth, and clothing in Rutebeuf's "society in decline" poems ("Des plaies dou monde," "De l'estat du monde," and "La descorde des Jacobins et de l'Universitei"). It will do so by investigating the relationship between these commodities and the dominant industry of the thirteenth century as well as the narrator's own motivation behind choosing these materials as a channel for his critique of the "decline of the times." Chapter two, "Middle Time: Rejecting the Past and Securing the Future in Rutebeuf's *Poèmes de l'infortune*" ("Li diz de la Griesche d'yver," "La Griesche d'estei," and "Li diz des ribaux de greive"), examines the gradual appearance of a self-critical poetic voice in

[48] ibid.

Rutebeuf's poems of misfortune. This voice is achieved by the narrator who reconfigures himself temporally and spatially within the poems in order to become a figure of repentance. Chapter three, "Conflicting Times: The Opposition between Feudal and Commercial Values in 'Le miracle de Theophile,'" criticizes contemporary, commercial attitudes by configuring the play's protagonist, Theophile, as a victim of avarice. Theophile's error is corrected at the end of the play when he becomes aware of his need for community and the assistance of others. It is this awareness that leads him to embrace the feudal ideal. Chapter four, "Merchant Time: Negotiating the Present and the Future in Rutebeuf's "Post-Conversion" Poems," examines how the newly emerging commercial mindset of the thirteenth century established a new relationship between the Christian, time, and God. Rather conflictual, the commercial is used in conjunction with the spiritual in order to secure the poet's spiritual and financial futures. The commercial mindset of the thirteenth century, becomes integrated into the eternal tale of salvation in these poems ("La vie de sainte Marie l'Egypcienne," "La vie de sainte Elyzabel, fille au Roi de Hongrie," and "Li miracles que Nostre Dame fist dou Soucretain et d'une Dame"). By examining the intersection of commerce and time in Rutebeuf's poems, this dissertation will explore the ways in which commerce allows for not only a new expression of time, but also one that the narrator manipulates for his own benefit.

Chapter 1: The Materiality Of Time: Commerce And The Decline Of Society

Rutebeuf's earliest poems portray an urban society in decline. The narrator of the poems adopts the role of a moralist who criticizes the urban environment and those who inhabit it. Church officials are portrayed as being ruled by the vice of hypocrisy and all members of society are guilty of avarice. Interestingly, when criticizing his contemporaries, Rutebeuf often employs coins, cloth, and clothing to express the manner in which society has regressed. In this chapter, I have adopted the term "materiality of time" to signify Rutebeuf's use of commodities and coins to represent society's progressive decline. In the first two poems, "Des plaies dou monde" ("The Wounds of the World," c. 1252) and "De l'estat du monde" ("The State of the World," c. 1252), these materials are used to represent society's lack of morals and disregard for those who are not wealthy. The latter "La descorde des Jacobins et de l'Universitei" (The disagreement between the Jacobins and the University, c. 1254-5) employs cloth and clothing to symbolize the hypocrisy of the clergy, the narrator warning his audience that outer garments do not always reflect the inner motives of those who wear them. Although the relationship between coins and commerce may be apparent, the connection between cloth, clothing, and commerce is, perhaps, not as transparent. Due to the prominence of cloth and clothing within Rutebeuf's early poems, it is worth investigating the role they serve and why the

narrator chose these particular objects as the channel for his critique.

Cloth Trade and Coinage

It is not coincidental that cloth and clothing were used by the narrator as a vehicle for his critique since cloth manufacture and trade was the dominant industry in Northern France during the period when Rutebeuf wrote. This trade was a major contributor to the growth of the city of Paris, which at Rutebeuf's time would have had a population of approximately 200,000 inhabitants.[49] Sarah-Grace Heller observes that cloth trade was the key factor leading to urban growth, increased long-distance commerce, and a new economic system.[50] Peter Spufford describes the vast expanse of this trade when he explains that cloth was the largest industry in the thirteenth century. High quality linens, woolens, leathers, and silks arrived in Paris from Italy, Ireland, Russia, Byzantium, and even China.[51] The geographic extent of the cloth industry testifies not only to its geographical expanse but also the large quantity of materials that were being traded. By critiquing the cloth and clothing worn, bought, and traded by the members of society, the narrator was also critiquing the growing influence of commerce. Cloth and clothing, therefore, serve metonymically for commerce within these poems. Although Rutebeuf's early poetry has generally been interpreted as a representation of the

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[49] Monique Bourin-Derruau, *Temps d'équilibres temps de ruptures XIII^e siècle,* Nouvelle histoire de la France médiévale 4 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990), 131-3.

[50] Sarah-Grace Heller, *Fashion in Medieval France* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 57.

[51] Peter Spufford, "Le rôle de la monnaie dans la révolution commerciale du XIII^e," *Études d'histoire monétaire,* ed. John Day (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1984): 355-96, at 372.

poet's moralistic nature, none have examined the function of cloth, clothing, and coins to represent decline within these texts.[52]

The kind of trade described by Spufford would have been impossible without large quantities of cash as well as a market for luxury goods.[53] Spufford estimates that 800 tons of silver was circulating as coined money in Europe by 1319, which was a twenty-fourfold increase since the mid-twelfth century. By the end of Queen Elizabeth I's reign, nearly three centuries later, only 500 tons of silver circulated as coined money.[54] As Spufford testifies, the total amount of coins circulated in the early years of the fourteenth century was staggering when compared to both earlier and later periods. It is not difficult to imagine the large impact that increases in the number of coins would have had on the urban population, fueling moralists of the time to criticize avarice, as more people had the ability to manifest signs of wealth as well as the desire to be wealthy.[55]

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[52] See: Jean Dufournet and François de la Breteque, "L'univers poétique et morale de Rutebeuf," *Revue des langues romanes* 88 (1984): 39-78; L.G. Pesce, "Le portrait de Rutebeuf. Sa personnalité morale," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 28 (1958): 55-118.

[53] The two, in fact, influenced each other's development. According to Georges Duby and Robert Mandrou, the demand for luxury goods accounted for the growth of commerce. Both list furniture, candles, meat, and spices among the luxury goods in demand during the thirteenth century. The most important luxury good, however, was clothing. The large quantity of luxurious clothing purchased during the period compelled Philip the Bold to limit the number of garments one could purchase in a year based on his or her social rank. Georges Duby and Robert Mandrou, *Histoire de la civilisation française,* I*: Moyen Age – XVI*^{e} *siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1968), 176-7.

[54] Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 12. The decrease in the amount of coins that were circulated between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries was due to the plagues as well as adverse weather conditions that led to a sharp decrease in the agricultural supply in the fourteenth century.

[55] Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed: The Sin of Avarice in Early Medieval Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 126.

The Rise of Avarice

The relationship between commerce and avarice has been studied by Richard Newhauser, Lester Little, and Morton Bloomfield. Little argues that pride, which had been the principal vice for several centuries, was replaced by avarice in the period between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. He attributes this replacement to a structural shift in society that brought about a commercial economy, an urban culture, and the widespread use of money.[56] Newhauser observes the same shift, claiming that in the eleventh century, avarice became increasingly prominent due to the development of urban and commercial centers.[57] In the period prior to the commercial revolution, Bloomfield argues, pride was the dominant vice since the amount of coins in circulation was relatively small. Wealth was, therefore, more difficult to measure.[58] As the amount of coins in circulation increased in the thirteenth century, so did manifestations of wealth. In turn, more people desired to be wealthy, leading to increased references to avarice.[59] In Rutebeuf's time avarice was considered to be a principal vice, as testified by the numerous references to avarice in Rutebeuf's works. Understanding the significance of avarice is important for understanding the role of cloth, clothing, and coins in Rutebeuf's early poems. It is not so much these materials themselves but the way that they are misused, or more specifically, misappropriated by society that is the

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[56] Lester Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *The American Historical Review* 79.1 (1971): 16-49, at 16.
[57] Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed*, 126.
[58] Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State College Press, 1952), 75.
[59] ibid.

source of Rutebeuf's critique. As this chapter will show, the material ambitions of the urban population are contrasted with the material needs of the narrator, who does not receive the funds he desires. This contrast affects the way that time is expressed since rather than a time of prosperity, the narrator describes society as being in a period of decline.

Avarice in *"Des plaies dou monde"*

Rutebeuf's poem, "Des plaies dou monde," centers on avarice. In order to represent this vice's hold on society, the narrator employs the principal commodities of the thirteenth century, namely clothing and cloth. He divides the poem into three different "wounds" that afflict contemporary society. The first among the "wounds" are the deteriorating times, which Rutebeuf illustrates by describing the lack of consideration one has for one's neighbor. No one, the narrator laments, cares for anyone anymore unless he or she can personally profit from the situation (ll. 7-12). Interestingly, the lack of empathy among the members of society is illustrated metaphorically by a lack of thread, an essential material in cloth fabrication. The second "wound" represents the avarice of the clergy. In "Des plaies dou monde," the clergy are criticized for their propensity to hoard money as well as their failure to sufficiently donate to the poor, actions that go against their obligation to act charitably towards those in need.[60] Although this was a relatively common critique against the clergy, Rutebeuf expands upon the usual criticism by

[60] Greed was represented as both sinful acquisition and immoral retention throughout the Middle Ages. The terms *avaritia, cupiditas,* and *philargyra* were considered to be synonyms. See: Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed,* 125. Rutebeuf, for example, decribes the allegorical figure of Avarice as a hoarding figure in "La voie d'Umilitei."

adding an anecdote that recounts how the clerics hope to absolve their sins through charitable gifts of poor quality shoes (ll. 70-4). The third "wound" targets the knightly class, which the narrator describes as no longer being loyal or valiant by using a metaphor of used cloth. These "wounds," inflicted by the avaricious behaviors of the population, have resulted in society's decline.

The First "Wound:" The Lack of Charity in Society

"Des plaies dou monde" begins by critiquing the mores of contemporary society, which Rutebeuf represents as deteriorating. Within the initial lines of the poem, the narrator employs the motif of the weaver running out of thread in order to express the lack of empathy among the members of society.

> Rimeir me covient de cest monde
> Qui de touz biens ce wide et monde.
> Por ce que de tot bien se wide,
> Diex soloit tistre et or deswide.
> Par tans li iert faillie traimme.
> Saveiz por quoi nuns ne s'entreaimme?
> [I must write about this world
> Which rids and cleanses itself of all good.
> Because it rids itself of all good,
> God used to weave, but now unravels.
> Soon He will run out of thread.
> Do you know why no one cares for anyone else anymore? ll. 1-6]

The repetition of the word "wide" winds itself throughout the section like the weaver's thread, linking the opening lines together. The textile effect of the repetition makes the insertion of the word "traimme" in the final position of line five more impactful, since it breaks up the previous line's symmetry. The reference to the lack of thread serves to introduce a new theme: the lack of empathy among members of society. Rutebeuf's questioning of the morals of his contemporaries, therefore, coincides with a break in the in the unity of the poem.[61] The lack of thread also symbolizes God's lack of control over the events occurring in he world. If God is no longer in control, then who or what is? The narrator quickly provides his audience with the answer: avarice. For the narrator, avarice, and in particular the effects of the accumulation of wealth, affects every strata of society, since both the laity and the clergy are targets of his critique.

If coins and manifestations of wealth were abundant, it is easy to understand why those who were unable to procure these items would critique those who failed to distribute their surpluses. The propensity of the population to hoard rather than to share its wealth it is the next action criticized in Rutebeuf's description of the first "wound."

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[61] The motif of running out of thread is not unique to "Des plaies Dou Monde." It is also used in three of Rutebeuf's later poems "Li diz de la Griesche d'yver," "Li dist en riant: 'Ci faut traime / Par lecherie'" (In order to deceive / His 'friend' he says 'you need thread,' ll. 89-90); "La Griesche d'estei," "Qui que teisse, chacuns deswide" (Everyone unwinds, what he has woven, l. 59); "Li mariages Rutebuef" "Or puis filer, qu'il me faut traime:" (Now I must spin / because I need thread:, l. 9). In the first two poems listed, the motif is used to describe the poor man's lack of possessions and the pressure he feels to procure more. In the latter poem, the narrator becomes the weaver and the motif refers to his need to not give up even if his future appears insufficient. In each case, the narrator draws attention to the effect that contemporary actions have on future events.

N'est mais nuns qui reveste nu,

Ansois est partout la costume

Qu'au dezouz est, chacuns le plume [62]

[No one clothes the naked anymore,

Now it is the custom everywhere

When someone is down, everyone strips him bare, ll. 26-8]

Instead of a lack of thread, a lack of clothing is used to illustrate the demise of society. The two, in fact, recall one another, as ragged clothing often unravels. In the passage the narrator criticizes the refusal of those with excess wealth to act charitably towards those in need. The double negative in line 28 between “ne” and “nuns” reinforces the lack of morals held by the members of society. One would rather let a poor man go naked, the narrator exclaims, than to share his or her wealth. Although it was once custom to clothe the naked man, in contemporary times one is more likely to take from him than to give. The assonance [y] between "nu" (naked, l. 26), "costume" (custom, l. 27), and "plume" (strip, l.28), reinforces this new trajectory. In addition to clothing, this passage can also be interpreted in a commercial sense. "Revestir" (l. 26) for example, can mean both to clothe and to invest in someone. The basic need of covering oneself as protection from the elements is replaced in this second interpretation by the need for financial support.

[62] "Plumer" can mean both to pluck (as in to defeather a bird) or to rob. An English equivalent is “to fleece.” *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. “plumer.”

The "Dit d'Avarice"

The anonymous thirteenth century "Dit d'Avarice" begins in a manner that is strikingly similar to that of "Des plaies dou monde."[63] To my knowledge, no other scholar has studied the relationship between the two.[64] In each poem, the narrator shares his obligation to speak about the world, which is deteriorating.

> Je ne sai dou monde que dire:
>
> Hui est mauvais et demain pire.
>
> Tous iours va il en enpirant,
>
> Et cil qui sont dou monde sire
>
> Si ont fait dou roiaume empire,
>
> Et li iuge sont li tirant.
>
> [I don't know what to say about the world:
>
> it is bad one day and worse the next.
>
> Every day it goes on deteriorating,
>
> and those who are the masters of the world
>
> have got the kingdom into a proper state,

[63] The "Dit d'Avarice" is found in two manuscripts (Paris, Arsenal 3142, A and Paris, BNF 12467, B), both of which date to the late thirteenth century.[63] Rather than target each strata of society, the "Dit d'Avarice" critiques the more general figure of the miser. It, like Rutebeuf's poem, opens by lamenting the deterioration of the world before passing onto the criticism that no one cares about poverty. The miser, like the clergy in Rutebeuf's second "wound," doesn't care for anything except but amassing wealth, yet will lose control over how it is spent when death arrives (ll. 31-42). The similarity between Rutebeuf's "Des plaies dou monde" and the "Dit d'Avarice" extends up to the last three stanzas of the "Dit d'Avarice," which are more similar to Rutebeuf's "De l'estat du monde." The similarity between the poems suggests that the two poets could have influenced one another, and warrants that the poems be examined together.

[64] Faral and Bastin have noted a similarity between two lines in the "Dit d'Avarice" and "De l'estat du monde," which initially drew my attention to the anonymous poem. These lines will be examined in my analysis of "De l'estat du monde."

and the judges are executioners. ll. 1-6][65]

Despite their similarity, one important distinction remains between the two poems. Whereas Rutebeuf's poem uses the image of thread unraveling to describe the deterioration of the world, the "Dit d'Avarice" targets the rulers and judges, playing off the rhyme "sire" (l. 4) and "empire" (l. 5). The reason for the deterioration of the world is strikingly different since there is no association made in the "Dit d'Avarice" between commodities and decline. The use of commodities to represent decline appears to be unique to Rutebeuf. This theory is further evinced by the more common use of commodities by medieval poets to "embellish" or "add value" to their work. A notable example is that of early thirteenth century Jean de Renart who describes his "Roman de la Rose" as "brodez par lieus de biaus vers" ("embroidered in some places by beautiful verses," l.14).[66] In addition to embellishing a text, Baudouin de Condé's "Li Contes dou mantiel" (The Story of the Mantle) figures a mantle that does not become faded, old, or unstitched in time (K'iestre ne puet descouloures, / Ne lais ne viés ne descousus ll. 100-1).[67] Rather than to critique contemporary times, Baudouin's mantle serves as an ideal towards which the nobility should strive.

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[65] Text comes from Katharina Brett's in "The Thirteenth-century French *Dit d'avarice*," 138-42. Translation by Katharina Brett.

[66] Jean de Renart, *Le Roman de la Rose ou Guillaume de Dole,* ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1962), 1.

[67] See: Sarah-Grace Heller, "When the Knight Undresses, His Clothing Speaks: Vestimentary Allegories in the Works of Baudouin de Condé (c.1240-1280)," *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies: Essays in Honor of E. Jane Burns,* ed. Laine Doggett and Daniel E. O'Sullivan (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), 104. Baudouin de Condé, "Li Contes dou mantiel," *Dits et contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son fils Jean, d'après les manuscrits de Bruxelles, Turin, Rome, Paris, et Vienne et accompagnés de variantes et de notes explicatives par Aug. Scheler*, I (Bruxelles: Devaux, 1866), 79-93.

The absence of a relationship between commodities and decline in the "Dit d'Avarice continues in the next stanza where the anonymous poet bemoans society's disregard for the poor.

Nus n'a cure de povreté:
Povre sont arriere bouté
Et li riche sont trop sage.
Li povre si sont sot clamé
Et li riche sont amé:
Ci a dolor et grant outrage.
[Nobody cares about poverty:
poor men are pushed to the background
and the rich are [considered] exceedingly wise.
The poor, indeed, are called fools
and the rich are well liked:
in this there is pain and great injustice. ll. 7-18]

Within this stanza, the narrator of the "Dit d'Avarice" regrets that society prefers the rich to the poor, the latter pushed into the background. Unlike Rutebeuf's poem, however, the anonymous poem does not make metaphorical use of clothing or coins in its critique. Within the opening lines of the poems, there are two instances where Rutebeuf's poem references materials used in commercial trade and the "Dit d'Avarice" does not. Rutebeuf, therefore, establishes a relationship between commerce, avarice, and decline that is absent from the "Dit d'Avarice."

The Second "Wound:" The Avarice of the Clergy

The second "wound" describes the clerics, who the narrator condemns for their desire to do nothing else but amass wealth. The cleric's intense desire for wealth influences the way that they are judged by their peers, since those who are the richest are considered to be the best. The narrator plays with the notion of value in this section by employing the economic rather than the Christian sense of the word. A person's worth is measured by the amount of coin he or she has accumulated rather than his or her good deeds.

> Plus est bons clers qui plus est riches,
> Et qui plus at, s'est li plus chiches,
> Car il at fait a son avoir
> Homage, se vos fais savoir.
> [The best cleric is the richest,
> And whoever possesses the most is the stingiest,
> Because he paid homage
> I warn you, to his wealth. ll. 39-40]

The "best" clerics, the narrator declares, are the richest, yet he warns his audience that these chosen few are also the stingiest. The clerics would, therefore, not be the best source if one were looking for a handout. Defining greatness in relation to quantified income was one of the practices of the new monetized society.[68] As Jacques Le Goff explains, the dichotomy that existed in the early to mid Middle Ages

[68] Joel Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17.

between powerful and weak was replaced in the thirteenth century by a dialectic, and axis opposing rich and poor.[69] The function that one held within society, therefore, became less important than the amount of money that he or she possessed. Instead of determining one's worth based on good deeds, this passage illustrates how the quantity of coins that one amassed determined one's worth in commercialized society.[70]

The narrator reinforces his position that society's values are distorted through his use of the term "hommage" (l. 42). The narrator draws attention to this word in the passage through enjambment. Rather than refer to a bond of service and protection between a lord and his vassals, the term is used to describe the relationship between the cleric and his coins. In this instance, the cleric's relationship with his coins replaces the relationship established between the cleric and God. Although it was the cleric's duty to serve as God's vassal, the narrator maintains that his allegiance shifted from God to coins in commercialized society.

Later in the passage, the narrator insists on the misfortune of the avaricious cleric by describing how his wealth is quickly dispersed and spent by others after their death, playing repeatedly on the term "mort/mors" (death/bite, ll. 53-6). The rhyme between the words for death and bite in this section has two possible interpretations. The first interpretation alludes to the story of Adam and Eve. According to the book of Genesis, Adam's bite into the apple brought death into the

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[69] Jacques Le Goff, *Money and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012), 2.

[70] In contrast with the commercial concept of value, generosity (*largesce*) was praised in the earlier gift economy. See: Judith Kellogg, *Medieval Artistry and Exchange : Economic Institutions, Society, and Literary Form in Old French Narrative,* American University Studies II.123 (New York : Peter Lang, 1989).

world.[71] Adam's fall from grace and later expulsion from the Garden of Eden was linked to avarice in the medieval imagination since the Garden of Eden was seen as the Christian expression of the Golden Age.[72] Through his play on the terms "death" and "bite," the narrator establishes a relationship between Adam's actions and the clerics' avarice, which led and will lead to the fall of humanity and the world. The second interpretation of the rhyme between "mort/mors" (death/bite, ll. 53-6) is semantic rather than symbolic. In addition to its modern definition of "bite," "mors" in the Middle Ages also meant "moeurs" or mores.[73] The actions of the clerics, therefore, not only lead to the decline of the world but also to the death Christian "customs" or "morals." It is not only society that the cleric is destroying, but also the very foundations of Christianity itself.

According to the narrator, the cleric collects and hoards money until the day of his death. When death bites, however, all that he has amassed is dispersed to others. Although once a slave to his own wealth, the cleric becomes a slave to the goods of others, which instead of being saved, are quickly spent (ll. 53-80). The lifespan of the cleric as well as his reputation, each of which are measured by the coins collected, define his place within society. When death arrives, the cleric no

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[71] "And he commanded of him saying: Of every tree of paradise thou shall eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat. For it what day soever thou shall eat of it, thou shalt die the death." 2 Gn. 16-17 (Douay-Rheims); Karl Siegfried Guthke discusses the relationship between "death" and "bite" in the fifteenth century *Le Mors de la pomme,* Karl Siegfried Guthke, *The Gender of Death: A Cultural History in Art and Literature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 41.

[72] The demise of the Golden Age was though to have been caused by avarice. See: Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed.*

[73] *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "mors."

longer has control over his fortune. All that he has gathered over his lifetime will be distributed to others and spent. Although once considered a “great” man, once he dies and his money is gone, there remains no legacy.

In addition to no longer having a place in the world the avaricious cleric, upon death, does not have a place in Heaven either. If any hope of salvation existed for him, the narrator shows that his hope is forlorn.

> Et il en donent, c'est le mains:
> S'en donent por ce qu'on le sache
> .XX. paires de solers de vache
> Qui ne coustent que .XX. souz.
> Or est cil sauvez et assoux!
> [And when he gives, it’s the minimum:
> He gave, so that everyone knows
> Twenty pairs of cowhide shoes
> Which only cost 20 sous.
> Now he is absolved and saved! ll. 70-4]

This passage describes the manner in which the cleric hopes for salvation. Through a small charitable act, he hopes to attain heaven. Yet, as the narrator states, the meager worth of his donation of twenty pairs of shoes does not rectify the fact that he has spent his life placing his personal aspirations before helping others. The shoes in this section are given a monetary value of twenty sous. It is not just the shoes themselves, but the low monetary value of the shoes that is emphasized in

these lines. The narrator's knowledge of the cost of the shoes is an example of the new commercial mentality, where objects were not merely exchanged but given a specific value. The use of cheap shoes to illustrate the uncharitable nature of the clerics continues the theme of thread, cloth, and clothing, or a lack thereof, to represent society's decline.

Rutebeuf's anecdote of the shoes is unique in regards to the typical "decline of the world" poem of the thirteenth century. Whereas other poems, including the "Dit d'Avarice" reference the avaricious individual's inability to take his fortune with him after death, Rutebeuf expands upon this theme by introducing the example how the cleric attempts to redeem his misdeeds with the gift of cheap shoes.[74] In his poems, Rutebeuf establishes a relationship between commerce, avarice, and decline that is absent from the poems of his contemporaries.

The Third "Wound:" The Decreased "Value" of the Knights

When speaking of the third "wound," which afflicts the knightly class, the narrator repeats his metaphor of clothing. He does so here by employing the opposing figures of cloth and rags.

> Mais tout aussi com draperie
> Vaut miex que ne fait fraperie,
> Valurent miex cil qui ja furent
> De seux qu'or sont, et il si durent,

[74] See: Jean Batany, "La Charpente médiévale du discours social," *Europe* 61 (1983): 120-9 at 124; "Le dit de l'Avarice," in Katharina Brett, "The thirteenth-century French *Dit d'Avarice*," 138-142; Guiot de Provins, *Les Oeuvres de Guiot de Provins, Poète lyrique et satirique,* ed. John Orr (Manchester: Imprémierie de l'Université, 1915), 583.

Car ciz siecles est si changiez

Que une leux blans a toz mangiez

Les chevaliers loiaux et preux.

Por ce n'est mais ciz siecles preuz.

[But also just as new woolens

Are worth more than used,

The knights of the past are worth more

Than the knights of today,

The times have so changed

A white wolf [75] has eaten

All of the loyal and valiant knights.

This is why our age is no longer worthy. ll. 113-20]

Just as with the previous examples, the emphasis in this section is not put on the materials themselves ("draperie," cloth vs. "fraperie," rags) but instead on value, which should be interpreted as the monetary value of the cloth. The knights of today are likened to used cloth, which is less valuable than new. The comparison between knights and cloth appears to be unique to Rutebeuf, as other moralists describe knights as being either aggressive or lazy, but not as used cloth.[76] By using the term

[75] The reference to the wolf within this passage reinforces the theme of decline since, as Jean Claude Schmitt observes, wolves were often a sign of a negative future occurrence. Nancy Regalado comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that "wolves often symbolize rapacity" and interprets the wolf in Rutebeuf's poem to be a "symbol of devouring avarice." Jean Claude Schmitt, "Appropriating the Future," *Medieval Futures: Attitudes Towards the Future in the Middle Ages,* ed. John Burrow and Ian P. Wei (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2000): 3-17 at 9; Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf*, 23.

[76] Jean Batany, "La Charpente médiévale du discours social," 124.

"fraperie" to describe the knights, Rutebeuf's critique against the knights is not as harsh as that of his contemporaries, as used cloth still held some value.[77] One motivation behind Rutebeuf's subdued critique could be that the knights were Rutebeuf's principal patrons in the period when the poem was composed. The reference to old cloth could, therefore, serve as a means of inciting Rutebeuf's patrons to give more generously. By comparing the contemporary knights to old cloth or "fraperie," the narrator condemns their stinginess. Rather than be frugal, the narrator persuades the knights of his day need to act more like the knights of the past, who gave generous gifts, perhaps even new cloth, to their subordinates.

Throughout Rutebeuf's "Des plaies dou monde," the narrator references thread, cloth, and clothing, or more specifically a lack of these materials, in order to illustrate the decline of the world and its morals. References to the materials used in cloth production and trade, which represented the dominant industry in the thirteenth century, establishes a relationship between commerce, avarice, and decline. Instead of fulfilling the needs of the members of society these materials do nothing more than emphasize the fact that some kind of lack exists, since they unravel, are no longer distributed, or are of little value.

Rutebeuf's emphasis on a "lack" within the poem could stem from his own personal situation. According to Zink, "Des plaies du monde" and the latter "De l'estat du monde" were more than likely composed when Rutebeuf was a student at

[77] Although used cloth may have been less valuable then new, it was an active commerce of its own as clothing had a significant resale value. See: Sarah-Grace Heller, *Fashion in Medieval France*, 164-171.

the University of Paris.[78] As the young Rutebeuf moved from Champagne to the city to pursue his studies, the avaricious nature of the urban population would have likely had an impact on him. Large concentrations of people in a limited area meant that everyone was vying for the same opportunities to make a profit, the young Rutebeuf included. This theory is corroborated in the poem when Rutebeuf laments the plight of the student, complaining that although the student travels to foreign lands to study and improve himself morally, he does not receive the support that he needs. No one remembers him, and if they send money it's not enough.[79] If he were a student as Zink suggests, Rutebeuf would have been personally afflicted by the stinginess of those who failed to share their possessions with someone who was, at least according to the narrator, attempting to better himself. [80]

Although Rutebeuf's lament over the student's unfortunate situation may, at first, appear to be in support of the student population, it can also be read as ironic. Especially if one takes into account an additional passage in the poem, where the narrator describes the student as being impervious to avarice, "Fors escolier, autre clergié / Sont tuit d'avarisce *vergié*" (Except for the student, all of the other clergy /

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[78] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 70, 80.

[79] "Tout plainnement droit escolier / Ont plus de poinne que colier. / Quant il sont en estrange terre / Por pris et por honeur conquerre / Et por honoreir cors et ame, / Si ne sovient home ne fame. / S'om leur envoie, c'est trop pou." (Clearly the righetous student / Suffers more than the porter. / When he is abroad / To attain merit and esteem / And for the honor of his body and soul, / No one thinks to help him. / If one sends money, it is too little, ll. 89-95).

[80] Ian P. Wei explains the high cost of university education in the thirteenth century, which more than likely increased in the period when it is estimated that Rutebeuf wrote his poem (c. 1252). Due to the high cost of education, many students relied on outside sources, including family members (who were more than likely from lesser noble families or wealthy urban classes), nobles, high-ranking churchmen, prominent townsmen, and rich academics to fund their academic careers. See: Ian P. Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c. 1100-1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 118-19.

Are *embellished* by avarice ll. 37-8). The narrator's insistence on the student's moral superiority in the poem calls into question its authenticity. Rather than in support of the student, this passage, then, would become part of the narrator's societal critique. This reading is certainly valid in the context of the thirteenth century, where *jongleurs* often criticized those who competed with them for the same handouts. In his description of avarice, it is important to note that the narrator does not state that the avaricious clergy harbor their avarice, but instead are "embellished" by it. The depiction of avarice as an embellishment strengthens the relationship established in the poem between commodities and decline, the narrator once against critiquing those who are ungenerous with their wealth.

The Medieval "État du Monde"

Rather than a lack of thread, cloth, or clothing, "De l'estat du monde" represents a progression or change for the worse. The disparity between the "haves" and the "have-nots" is particularly emphasized within the poem, and commodities are used as a display of inappropriate wealth. In addition, coins occupy a much larger role in "De l'estat du monde," solidifying the relationship established between commerce, avarice, and decline in the earlier poem. The range of social classes critiqued by the narrator in "De l'estat du monde," is also vastly expanded. Monks, mendicant orders, canons, clerics, bailiffs, provosts, mayors, merchants, workers, knights, and the members of the court are all blamed for charity's

disappearance.[81] The structure of the poem falls under the more general medieval genre of d'"États du monde," of which the oldest extant French exemplar is the *Livre des manières* (c. 1170) by the Breton prelate Étienne de Fougères. In the classic "État du Monde," the author groups the moral exhortations of the members of society according to class distinctions.[82] Étienne's text, for example, targets six different social classes: kings, the clergy, knights, peasants, the bourgeois, and women. According to Anthony Lodge, the purpose of Étienne's "État du Monde" was to provide his audience with a summary of Church doctrine, which he bases on the social and political problems of the twelfth century.[83] The clergy, for example, are targeted in the text for being capable of interpreting scripture condemning gluttony, adultery, and greed, yet they succumb to these vices themselves.[84] He also reminds them that if they happen to amass wealth, they must distribute it to the needy. [85] Later in the text the bourgeois are told to avoid fraud and usury at all costs and are warned that penalty for those who transgress are serious. [86] Moreover, they are reminded of their obligations towards the church, namely to pay tithe.[87] These examples explain how Étienne's "État du Monde" was structured. Not only does it condemn society for its misdeeds, but more importantly, it reminds its members how they should behave as Christians.

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[81] The addition of bailiffs, provosts, and mayors are unique to Rutebeuf's "De l'estat du monde" and attest to the urban influence on his poem.
[82] Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf*, 20.
[83] Étienne de Fougères, *Le Livre des Manières,* ed. Anthony Lodge (Geneva: Droz, 1979), 27.
[84] ibid., 24.
[85] ibid.
[86] ibid., 26.
[87] ibid.

In a later fourteenth-century example of the "État du Monde," Jean de Condé follows Étienne's example.[88] After a brief introduction, where the narrator criticizes society's blindness towards proper behavior and reason (ll. 1-26), Condé's text advises clerics, bishops, knights, royalty, servants, merchants, minstrels, laborers, husbands, and women how they are supposed to act as Christians. In a manner similar to the *Livre des manières,* the purpose of Condé's "État du Monde" is to remind society how it is supposed to act rather than to condemn their actions outright.

Rutebeuf's "De l'estat du monde"

Rutebeuf's "État du Monde" is much more critical than those of his predecessor and successor. Instead of informing the members of society about how they are supposed to act, Rutebeuf condemns their present actions. Rutebeuf's poem is also more noticeably urban than the other poems. Within his poem, the urban figures of the provost, bailiff, and mayor are criticized for their misdeeds. The urban environment, therefore, influences the content of the poem. It is not surprising then that images of coins, cloth, and clothing, which also represent the urban environment, continue to be used throughout the poem in order to represent society's decline, building on the relationship previously established in the "Plaies dou monde."

[88] Jean de Condé, "Le Dis des Estats dou Monde," *Dits et contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son fils Jean, d'après les manuscrits de Bruxelles, Turin, Rome, Paris, et Vienne et accompagnés de variantes et de notes explicatives par Aug. Scheler*, II (Brussels: Devaux, 1866), 371-80.

The "Denier's" Dominance

Rutebeuf's "De l'estat du monde" continues this theme of the "materiality of time" as presented in its predecessor. Rather than to describe the changing times through the image of thread and/or cloth, however, the narrator uses the metaphor of the coin itself.

Por ce que li mondes se change
Plus sovent que denier a Change,
Rimer vueil du monde divers.
Toz fu estez, or est yvers;
Bons fu or est d'autre maniere,
Quar nule gent n'est més maniere
De l'autrui porfit porchacier,
De son preu n'i cuide chacier.
[Because the times are changing
More often than a coin at the Exchange,
I want to write about this changing world.
Before, it was summer, now it is winter;
The world was good, but now it is different,
Because no one does anything but
Chase after the property of another,
Never thinking of pursuing valor. ll. 1-8]

In this passage, the narrator uses the image of the coin being traded in order to represent the changing times. The choice of the "denier" as opposed to a larger currency reflects the rapidity of the change, since due to the "denier's" small monetary value, it would have been exchanged frequently. The repetition of the word "change" in the final position of the first two lines suggests that a rapid transformation is taking place. Moreover, the sound /ʃã/ from the word "change" (l. 1) as well as the latter "porchacier" ("chase," l. 7) and "chacier" ("pursue," l. 8) reinforces the idea that the members of society chase after riches rather than more honorable pursuits. Through these poetic effects, the narrator emphasizes the role of commerce in the transformation of society. If the times are changing for the worse as quickly as the "denier" is exchanged, it is partly a result of "denier" itself.

Later in the poem, the narrator suggests that the "denier" supersedes justice, reinforcing the relationship established earlier between commerce and decline.

> Ce qui ert avant va arriere,
> Quar, quant dant Deniers vient en place,
> Droiture faut, droiture esface.
> [That which was before goes behind,
> For when sir Denier arrives,
> Justice disappears, justice fades. ll. 86-8]

This passage reinforces the role that money plays in the deterioration of values, since the arrival of the "denier" marks the moment when justice disappears. Joel Kaye explains the relationship between justice and money when he argues that

money was seen in the Middle Ages as a "disturbing and distorting element, an over turner of the social order an instrument of chaos." He continues by explaining that the delicate balance of justice or *iustitia* was thought to suffer the most from money's corrupting effect.[89] Money caused justice to disappear, leading to society's demise.

In addition to reiterating the idea that society is in decline, this passage also emphasizes that society is the opposite of what it used to be in the past. The lines " Toz fu estez, or est yvers" (It was summer now it is winter, l. 4), "Bons fu or est d'autre maniere" (The world was good but now it is different, l. 5), and "Ce qui ert avant va arriere" (What was before goes behind, l. 86), which are clearly opposed, reinforce the gravity of the change. That which had been important or valuable to society in the past, has been replaced by avarice in contemporary times.

The centrality of the coin in Rutebeuf's "De l'estat du monde," as testified by the previous passages, is unique to him. Condé's "Dis des Etats dou Monde," for example, cites the source of society's demise as the members of society themselves. The text opens by claiming that it is due to a lack of sense or judgment among members of society that society is in decline, playing on the rhyme between "entendement" (l. 1) and "reprendement" (l. 2) ("Par defaute d'entendement / Voit on mout de reprendement").[90] An exception would be William of Normandy's thirteenth century *Le Besant de Dieu*. which references the *besant*, a gold coin minted in Constantinople between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, in its

[89] Joel Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century,* 39.
[90] Jean de Condé, "Le Dis des Estats dou Monde," 371.

second line.[91] In this text, however, the coin is a gift from God and therefore an asset that the narrator hopes will increase in value. The coin is, therefore, not chastised in the same manner as the "denier" in Rutebeuf's text. By opening his poem with the image of the coin, Rutebeuf reinforces the role of commerce in society's decline, a relationship that is unique to his poetry.

Money is not only a central theme in the poem, it dictates how the poem is structured. The poem itself is divided into two categories, each of which reflects different ways of handling money. The first half of the poem describes those who take and the second half those who sell. Among those who take are the members of the clergy and government officials. Not only did these figures dominate the urban landscape, their avaricious behavior was contradictory to the positions they held within the community. Rather than promote justice and act charitably towards those in need, these individuals were individualistic and sought personal profit in their daily transactions.

Critique of the "Cloth:" Monks and Canons

The monks are the first social class addressed by the narrator in the poem. According to the narrator, the monks who know best the "worldly arts" are considered to be the best ("Cil qui plus set de l'art du siecle, / C'est le meillor selonc lor reigle." / Whoever best knows the worldly arts, / Is the best according to their rule, ll. 29-30). The "worldly arts" that the narrator is referring to in the above lines

[91] Guillaume de Normandie, *Le Besant de Dieu,* ed. Pierre Ruelle (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1973).

is the accumulation of wealth, since the monks are also described in the poem as servants to Cupidity ("Qui toz sont sers a Covoitise," l. 20). Even though monks were supposed to remove themselves from temporal affairs and devote their lives to God, the orders were not exempt from financial dealings. Although traditional monasticism called for a vow of personal poverty, monastic houses in the Middle Ages held great wealth in common.[92] In fact, monasteries were the principal landowners of the period. [93] Reaction against the extravagance of the monasteries began as early as the eleventh century.[94] As a result, new monastic orders, including the Cistercians, were created. These new orders sought to undo the extravagance of the large, older orders and adhere to a much stricter observance of the monastic Benedictine Rule.[95] In "De l'estat du monde," the narrator continues this tradition by critiquing of the opulence of the monastic orders.

The monks, according to the narrator, live in beautiful residences. Occupied with temporal matters, they no longer preach about Jesus, his mother, or the saints (ll. 18-28). The monks, therefore, no longer carry out their obligations towards the population and the Church. The monk's misguided ways are expressed in the poem using commercial terms, "Toz jors vuelent sanz doner prendre / Toz jors achatent sanz riens viendre" (Everyday they want to take without giving / Everyday they buy without selling, ll. 21-2). The repetition of the phrase "Toz jors" at the beginning of

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[92] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars: Antifraternalism in Medieval France and England* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014), 9.
[93] ibid.
[94] ibid.
[95] ibid.

these lines emphasizes the redundancy of the monks' avariciousness. A similar line is also found in the anonymous "Dit d'Avarice," but in the anonymous text the line order is reversed ("Chacuns achate sans riens vendre, / Et chacuns veut sans donner prendre:" / Everyone buys with out selling anything, / And everyone wants to take without giving: ll. 70-1).[96] Whereas in the "Dit d'Avarice" the emphasis is on buying and selling, in Rutebeuf's text the order is arranged so that taking without giving is stressed. This type of avarice is more in line with the variety for which the monks were critiqued. Rather than redistribute excesses in wealth or goods to the poor, the monks chose to keep the surpluses for themselves. The failure of the monks to redistribute excesses in their holdings went against medieval Christian doctrine, which stated that a person should not own more property than was necessary for his or her needs or position.[97]

"De l'estat du monde" also places a greater emphasis on time than the earlier "Dit d'Avarice." By replacing the phrase "each one" (“Chacuns,” ll. 70-1) with "everyday" (“Toz jors,” ll. 21-2). The emphasis on the temporal stresses the frequency of the action rather than the number of participants. In addition, it re-emphasizes the idea of a progression, which, according to the narrator, is not headed in the right direction.

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[96] Translation by Katharina Brett

[97] According to Augustine, “He who has more than he needs has what does not belong to him.” See: A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* 241. Aquinas echoes Augustine’s concern, arguing that if one seeks more than what is sufficient to sustain life, one is easily entrapped by avarice. See: Odd Langholm, *Economics in the Medieval Schools: Wealth, Exchange, Value, Money and Usury according to the Paris Theological Tradition 1200-1350* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 208.

The critique of the canons is similar to that of the monks. They are described as better dressed, better fed, and wealthier than the rest of the population. Unlike the monks, the canons were permitted to have personal possessions and even collected a prebend, a financial benefice granted by the Church, to ensure their subsistence.[98] The canons came to be a well-rewarded elite within clerical society, since in addition to receiving a prebend they also collected handouts.[99] The narrator critiques the opulence of the canons in the following lines,

> Més il verront le cuer partir
> Au povre, de male aventure,
> De grant fain et de grant froidure:
> Quant chascuns a chape forree
> Et de deniers la grant borsee,
> [But they will watch while the poor man's
> Heart gives out in misery,
> Suffering from hunger and cold:
> Meanwhile everyone of them has a fur lined hood
> And a big purse full of coins, ll. 56-60]

In this passage, the canon is described as being is well dressed in a fur-lined hood. He also possesses an abundant supply of cash. The poor man, on the other hand,

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[98] The eleventh century also saw the emergence of reformed (Augustinian) canons, who took on a monastic style of organization. The poem does not specify which sect canons the narrator is critiquing. See: Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard, *Capetian France 987-1328,* 2nd ed. (Harlow, UK: Pearson, 2001), 137.

[99] André Vauchez, R.B. Dobson, and Michael Lapidge, "Canon," *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* (Paris: Cerf, 2000), 228.

lacks the essentials for survival. To the thirteenth century observer, the fur-lined hood described in this passage would have been regarded as extravagant. As early as the twelfth century, critiques of clerical clothing were framed in terms of excesses (*superfluitates*).[100] Fur was considered to be one of these excesses and was contested in monastic and clerical dress.[101] The opulence of the fur-lined hood is augmented by the image of the large purse filled with coins. The canon is not just well dressed he is overly dressed, adorned in fur and rich in currency. A contrast is therefore established in this section between the poor man who is suffering and the canon who has more than he needs. Whereas the poor man lacks the necessary materials to survive, the canon possesses clothing and coins in excess.

The repetition of the word "grant" (great/large) throughout the passage emphasizes the inequality between the canon and the poor man. Whereas the poor man has "grant" hunger and "grant" cold, the canon possesses a "grant" or large purse. It is interesting to note that even though the poor man lacks, the adverb "grant" is used twice in his description and only once in the description of the canon. When read in terms of greatness or of moral superiority, the poor man is, therefore greater than the canon. This position is not unique to Rutebeuf. Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090-1135), for example, believed that excess clothing was spiritually dangerous, stating, "exterior excess is an indication of interior emptiness; soft garments reveal a

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[100] Maureen C. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe c. 800-1200* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 222.

[101] "One of the points of controversy between the venerable Cluniac monastic congregation and the new Cistercian order was whether wearing fur was allowed by the rule of Saint Benedict." ibid.

softness of the soul."[102] The narrator of "De l'estat du monde" echoes Clairvaux's position. Although the canon is better off financially than the poor man, he is poor in spirit.

City Officials: Provosts and Bailiffs

Later in the poem, the laity are also criticized by the narrator for their propensity to take rather than to give. In particular, the narrator targets the provosts and bailiffs. These two positions served financial, administrative and judiciary roles within medieval society. According to Zink, the population often regarded those who held these positions as rapacious.[103] Rutebeuf makes a similar characterization of the provosts and bailiffs in his poem, by critiquing their abuse of power. When collecting rents, for example, they are sure to take some for themselves.[104] Adopting the voice of the provost, the narrator of "De l'estat du monde" proclaims, "Trop avrions mauvés marchié / Se perdons en nostre marchié" (We have conducted our business poorly / If we fail to profit in our commerce, ll. 105-6). The use of direct discourse when describing the actions of the provost has the effect of bringing his words to life. Even though direct discourse is normally used in narration to convey an objective or neutral stance, the purported words of the provost are anything but. The provost describes his actions as being neither just nor reasonable, for he takes whatever he able (ll. 102-4). Rather than collect for the

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[102] Maureen C. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy*, 223.

[103] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* footnote 2, 86-7.

[104] In regards to the bailiffs, the narrator proclaims the following: "De cele voie (de droiture) n'ont il cure, / Ainçois penssent a porchacier / L'espolit au seignor et traitier / Le lor profit de l'autre part: / Ainsi droiture se depart." (They haven't a care for that path (of justice), / Rather they think of securing / Their lord's revenues and taking / Their earnings from the remainder: / Thus justice departs. ll. 116-20).

benefit of the community, the narrator describes the provost as a merchant who abuses his power for personal gain.

The repetition of the term "marchié" in lines 105-6 stresses to the audience that the provosts do not properly perform their duties. Rather than act as public servants, these individuals act as merchants who are concerned about making money above all else. If the provosts do not come out ahead, they have not properly performed their task. Furthermore, by describing the provosts as merchants, the narrator strengthens the relationship he establishes between commerce and decline. By acting as merchants rather than public servants, the provosts contribute to society's demise.[105]

Merchants: Deceit and Usury

After discussing those who take, the narrator moves on to those who sell. Just as their predecessors, the sellers also benefit by taking advantage of others. The merchants are the first class targeted by the narrator for their immoral methods of selling.

> Je vous di bien veraiement,
> Il font maint mauvais serement
> Et si jurent que lor denrees
> Sont et bones et esmerees
> Tel foiz c'est mençonge pure;

[105] The merchant trade was generally looked down upon in the Middle Ages. A. J. Gurevich writes "throughout the Middle Ages a violent prejudice persisted against people who were engaged not in productive work but in commercial dealings, especially if usury was involved." A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, 91.

[I tell you truthfully,

They make many false promises

They swear that their merchandise

Is good and pure

Sometimes it is a pure lie; ll.125-9]

In this passage, the narrator condemns the merchants for their tendency to lie about the quality of their products. He chooses the term "denrees" (l. 127) to describe the merchant's goods, which emphasizes the poor quality of the products that the merchant is trying to sell. In Old French, "denrees" referred to the quantity of merchandise that one could purchase for a denier.[106] As penny coinage, the denier was of little value. With a denier one could, therefore, only purchase a small quantity of goods. The mention of the denier in this later passage of the poem calls to mind its two earlier references, where it was used to describe a progression for the worse (l. 2, l. 87). By referring to the denier in this section of the poem, the narrator reminds his audience that the merchant's actions are not only immoral but that they also lead society towards its decline.

The quality of products sold on the market was a major concern of the population in the thirteenth century. In addition to Rutebeuf's poem, the concern for quality products is attested in Jean de Condé's "Li Dis des Estas dou Monde." In the four lines he devotes to the subject of the merchants, he reminds merchants to sell their merchandise "sans fauseté et sans boisdie" (without falsity and without fraud,

106 *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "denree."

l. 180).[107] Étienne Boileau's *Livre des métiers* also testifies to the importance of purity in the merchant's goods by stating that commerce was heavily monitored and regalemented in order to protect the public.[108] One example given in the text is that of the saddle maker ("sellier"), who was not permitted to add ornamentation to his saddles prior to purchase in order to prevent him from adding paint or metal to a poor quality saddle and pass it off as a high-quality item.[109] Sarah-Grace Heller provides another example, also taken from the *Livre des métiers,* when she notes, "the merciers prohibited the covering of used materials (cloth, hoops, hats) with new silk, pelts, or silver."[110] Preventing the sale of old materials as new was of particular concern for those who regulated trade.

In addition to poor quality products, the means of profiting from the sale of merchandise was also controversial. The most highly condemned merchant practice was usury, where the seller profited by charging his buyer interest.

> Si vendent a terme, et usure
> Vient tantost et termoierie
> Qui sont de privee mesnie;
> Lors est li termes achatez
> Et plus cher venduz li chatez.
> [They sell on credit, and usury

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[107] Jean de Condé, "Le Dis des Estats dou Monde," 377.
[108] Étienne Boileau, *Les Métiers et Corporations de la Ville de Paris: XIIIe Siècle le Livre des Métiers*, ed. René de Lespinasse et François Bonnardot (Paris : Imprimerie Nationale, 1879), cxxxi
[109] ibid., cxxxv.
[110] Sarah-Grace Heller, *Fashion in Medieval France*, 170. See: Étienne Boileau, *Le Livre des métiers,* 159, 114.

Quickly follows and forward sales

Which are of the same family;

When the period is over they buy

And sell higher than the purchase price. ll. 130-4]

In this passage, the narrator criticizes the usurious practices of the merchant. He warns his audience of the propensity to engage in usurious transactions by cautioning that when one engages in credit sales, usury will follow. Over time, the merchant can't help but to become involved in increasingly immoral practices, reinforcing the idea of a progression towards decline.

The passage references several different types of business transactions (credit, usury, forward sales) that use time as a means of profiting. Conducting business in this manner was problematic since time, the moralists argued, belonged to God.[111] The merchant like the clergy in the earlier examples, uses something that is not rightfully his in order to profit. In addition to profiting from the passage of time, usury was a means of making money without putting forward any effort. Rather than work, the usurer would simply wait until a future time to profit from his initial investment. The Church fathers chastised this behavior since it was seen as a form of idleness.[112] Thomas of Chobham shows how usury was condemned as a form of idleness when he proclaims, "The usurer wants to make a profit without

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[111] The theory that usury involved the sale of time, which belonged to God, was first advanced in the thirteenth century by William of Auxerre in his *Summa aurea.* Innocent IV later adopted this position. See: Jean Delumeau, *Le Péché et la peur: La culpabilisation en Occident XIII^e – XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), 247-8.

[112] The passage from II Thess. 3:10, "If any man will not work, neither let him eat," was commonly cited in the Middle Ages.

doing any work, even while he is sleeping, which goes against the precepts of the Lord, who said, 'By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat' (Gen. 3:19)."[113] Furthermore, usury went against the words of Christ, who in the Gospel according to Luke said, "lend, hoping for nothing thereby."[114] The immoral behavior of the usurer affected not only the present but also his future. According to Étienne's *Livre des manières,* it was believed that the usurer's offspring would inherit his or her sins (ll. 219-43).[115]

Knights and the Court

Knights are also mentioned in the poem, but the narrator only briefly mentions their inability to live up to the likes of literary heroes such as Roland, Olivier, and Alexander (ll. 147-52). As in the earlier poem, the motivation behind the lack of criticism towards the knights could be that Rutebeuf viewed them as his principal patrons. Of more concern, it seems, is the nature of those at court. The minstrels are the first figures described. According to the narrator, the minstrels are lost since each has lost his "Donet" (ll. 157-8). In this section, the term "Donet" has a double meaning. In addition to referring to the minstrel's benefactors (playing off the Latin verb "donare" or "to give"), it also refers to the major grammatical text used in schools of the period (the *Donatus*). Not only are the minstrels at a loss since they are no longer able to earn a living, but the quality of their poetry is brought into

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[113] Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages,* trans. Patricia Ranum (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 42; Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum,* ed. F. Broomfield, *analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 25 (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1968), 505.
[114] 6 Lk. 35 (Douay-Rheims). Additional Biblical passages against usury included 22 Exod. 24, 25 Lev. 35-7, 23 Deut. 20-1.
[115] Étienne de Fougères, *Le Livre des Manières*.

question with the narrator's reference to the *Donatus.* The narrator, therefore, seems to imply that the minstrels are lazy poets who have bad grammar. Unlike himself, these poets are fakes who attempt to peddle poor quality poetry. They are no different than the fraudulent merchants.[116]

The members of the court and the bishops are no better than the minstrels.[117] They, like the former, never turn away those who are willing to make a contribution on their behalf (ll. 59-64). The word "doneors" in line 64, which is used to reference the court's benefactors, is reminiscent of the earlier "Donet" (l. 58). The similarity between the two words calls into question the motivations of the members of court and the bishops. They, like the minstrels, are frauds who only care about their own benefit. Rather than distribute their wealth, they prefer to collect and keep it for themselves.

Rutebeuf's "Des plaies dou monde" and "De l'estat du monde" present society as changing for the worse. The Christian values of charity and justice have been replaced with avarice and an individual's value is measured by the size of his or her purse rather than his or her good deeds. In "Des plaies dou monde" and "De l'estat du monde," coin, cloth, and clothing are used to represent society's lack of morals and its progressive decline. The use of these materials to represent decline is unique

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[116] A similar stanza is found in the "Dit d'Avarice:" "Chascns a son donnet perdu:/Li menestrel sont esperdu / Car nus ne lor veut riens donner. / De don ont esté soustenu; / Maintenant sont souz pié tenu: / Or voisent aillors sermonner." (Everyone has lost his Donatus: / the minstrels are scattered / for nobody is prepared to give them anything. / they used to be supported by gifts; / now they are trampled underfoot: / let them go now and preach elsewhere ll. 73-8). Translation by Katharina Brett.

[117] Baudouin de Condé takes a similar stance against "unworthy" courtly followers in his poems, urging the powerful to ignore self-serving slanderers and to, instead, listen to worthy men of good conduct. See: Sarah-Grace Heller, "When the Knight Undresses," 97.

to Rutebeuf. Whereas other "decline of the world" texts, including the "Dit d'Avarice" and Condé's "Estats dou Monde," use more generalized descriptions of society's misdeeds, Rutebeuf's poems go one step further by showing how the exchange and misuse of these materials actively contribute to the downfall of society. By using these materials within his critique, the narrator is also critiquing the growing influence of commerce and its role in society's demise, since rather than working for the benefit of the community, the members of society are avaricious and only act in their own financial interests.

Part of Rutebeuf's motivation for composing poems against avarice stems from his concern for his own livelihood. By criticizing the avaricious behavior of members of society, he is also exhorting his potential patrons to give freely of their wealth. Rutebeuf's hesitance to critique the knights as harshly as other poets contemporary to him corroborates this reading, since it illustrates his reluctance to criticize potential sources of income. Unlike the rest of society, knights are never directly criticized for avaricious behavior. Instead they are cited as being no longer as loyal or valiant as idealized fictional figures (Roland, Alexander, etc.), or, as in the previous poem, new cloth.

"La descorde des Jacobins et de l'Universitei"

If the first two poems employ coins, cloth, and clothing to represent the changing times, the next poem studied employs these materials to represent false signs of sanctity. "La descorde des Jacobins et de l'Universitei" was composed during the University Quarrel, which pitted the secular masters of the University of Paris

against the increasingly influential Dominican and Franciscan orders. Rutebeuf's position regarding the conflict seems to be clearly in favor of the secular masters. Although in his earliest work (Li diz des Cordeliers), he spoke favorably of the mendicants, he later adopted a position against the orders and the expanse of their influence, echoing the criticisms of his contemporaries.

The University Quarrel

In order to better comprehend the University Quarrel of the thirteenth century, one must first understand the role of the mendicants in society as well as the perception of their orders by the secular masters and the moralists of the period. Unlike the monks, the mendicants were prohibited from owning both communal and personal possessions. They earned their living by asking for and receiving handouts from the population. The term "mendicant" deriving from the Latin *mendicare,* or to beg.[118] The mendicants were expected to live by begging, even if they were physically able to work. The refusal of the mendicants to work, although they were physically able, would later become a major critique of their orders by both those inside and outside the Church.[119]

Although many different mendicant orders existed during the thirteenth century, the Franciscans and the Dominicans were the two dominant orders. Saint Francis of Assisi founded the Franciscan order. Later, Dominic of Caleruga formed the Dominican order. Both the Franciscans and the Dominicans were later criticized for their failure to live up to the ideals set forth by their founders. Unable to

[118] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars*, 4.
[119] ibid.

maintain their vows of complete poverty, the two eventually became involved in the monetary economy. In addition, rather than remove themselves from temporal affairs, their attempts to secure positions of authority within the University upon their move to Paris led to further criticisms by those who believed they were transgressing the boundaries of their roles. It is this later criticism that will be the focus of the analysis to follow.

The University quarrel can best be described as a dispute between the secular masters of the University of Paris and the mendicant orders. Upon their settlement in Paris in the early part of the thirteenth century, the mendicants began establishing schools of higher learning. The Dominicans established their school in the years 1217-19 and the Franciscans in the year 1220.[120] The mendicant schools attracted many students due to the fact that they were not bound to the same practices as the University. The mendicants, for example, did not have to worry about advancement or debts about after receiving their degrees, which permitted them to devote their lives to study and teaching.[121] Competition between the mendicant schools and the University of Paris led to the secular masters critiquing the role of the mendicants within higher education. Tensions between the two parties increased as the mendicants began to procure seats within the University of Paris itself.

Although the hostility between the secular masters of the University of Paris and the mendicants began as early as 1229, tensions rose to new heights in 1253. It

[120] ibid., 32.
[121] ibid., 37.

was in this year that members of the Parisian watch beat and arrested four secular students and their servants, killing one and gravely injuring the others.[122] In protest, the University called for a cessation of all university activity for a month. Despite the call for a strike, the mendicants continued to hold regular classes, undermining the effect of the strike. The mendicants refused to participate in the strike since they felt unconnected to the events that led to it. None of their students were involved in the student-city conflict.[123] When the University required that all masters take an oath of solidarity, the mendicants refused and were expelled. The Franciscans eventually agreed to take the oath, but the Dominicans showed no interest in following the statues of the University and appealed to their allies, the king and the pope.[124] In August 1253, Innocent IV asked both parties to send delegates to Rome to resolve the conflict.[125] The secular masters sent William of Saint-Amour to champion their cause. William not only criticized the mendicants for their actions within the university setting but also their right to hear confession, the legitimacy of their principle of voluntary begging, and their place within the Church.[126] William's text *Tractus de periculis novissimorum temporum* (*On the Dangers of the Last/Recent Times*), argued that the rise of the mendicants signified the end of days by drawing parallels between current events and New Testament eschatology. As Tim Rayborn observes, it was because of William's arguments the conflict between the secular

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[122] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes de Rutebeuf,* I, 69.
[123] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars*, 43.
[124] ibid.
[125] ibid., 44.
[126] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 13.

masters and the mendicants went from a mundane power struggle to an all-out war between the forces of good and evil, set against the background of the coming apocalypse.[127] Rather than mere reform, William radically sought total elimination of the mendicant orders.[128] William's treatise represents just one of the ways that he lead the attack against the mendicants. He and his followers took their message outside of the University walls and onto the streets to condemn the actions of the mendicants but also their powerful supporters, including Pope Alexander IV and King Louis IX. William's actions eventually led to his exile in 1256. [129] Although the conflict between the secular masters and the mendicants was never officially resolved, three years later tensions between the two eventually tempered.

In "La descorde des Jacobins et de l'Universitei," the Dominicans are specifically targeted for their ingratitude towards the University's hospitality. According to the text, the Dominicans are not only ungrateful but they are also hypocrites since they preach about peace and love for one's neighbor yet readily engage in a dispute with the University (ll. 25-32). Faral and Bastin believe that the poem is a direct echo of a manifest published February 4th 1254 by the masters of the University of Paris, since it evokes the same events and criticizes the

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[127] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars*, 44.

[128] ibid.

[129] G. Geltner argues in his introduction to *De periculis* that "William's true audacity lies less in a ham-fisted anti-fraternalism than in the targeting of several powerful accomplices to the mendicants' success: prelates, laymen, popes and kings. In other words if *De periculis* marks the beginning of the end for William's successful academic career, it was due only partially to his obsession with the friars; William's fall from grace, instead, owed much to the charges he launched against a world that fostered religious mendicancy and, by extension, against what he believed to be his contemporaries' apathy toward the ominous legal and political changes that enabled the mendicants to proliferate." Guillaume de Saint-Amour, *De periculis novissimorum temporum,* ed., trans., intro. Guy Geltner, *Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations* 8 (Louvain and Paris: Peeters Publishers, 2008), 2.

comportment of the mendicants in the same manner.[130] Rutebeuf's text, therefore, echoes the criticisms of the secular masters against the mendicants.

The Dominican's "Chape"

Clothing plays a central role within the poem, since it is used to illustrate the hypocrisy of the Dominicans. Just as in the earlier poems, the narrator establishes a relationship between textiles and decline. After noting how the Dominicans were humble and pure at their inception (ll. 16-20), the narrator makes the following remark:

> Mais Orguelz, qui toz biens esmonde,
> I at tant mis iniquitei
> Que par lor grant chape reonde
> Ont versei l'Universitei.
> [But Pride, which strips away goodness,
> Has filled them with so much iniquity
> That with their big *chapes*
> They have overturned the University. ll. 21-4]

As this passage suggests, the Dominican's desire for power becomes their principal vice. The narrator illustrates this point through the image of the large, academic "*chape*," which was the garment worn by the secular masters in the thirteenth century. Rather than their conventional habits, which symbolized the Dominican's poverty and humility, the academic regalia granted the Dominicans authority in a

[130] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* I, 238.

realm where Rutebeuf believed they did not belong. This idea is clearly expressed in an earlier line when the narrator describes the Dominicans as teaching by force ("Ou il welent a force lire," l. 16) The adjective "grand" (big), which qualifies the noun "*chape*" within this passage testifies to the Dominican's prideful behavior. The Dominicans were, in fact, so presumptuous in wearing the "*chape*" that the narrator describes them as destroying the very structure of the University with their academic gowns.

In addition to academic regala, the "*chape*" was also an outer garment worn for protection outside the monastery. By criticizing the "*chape*" wearing Dominicans, the narrator is also critiquing the presence of the Dominicans outside of the cloisters and in society. Although the very premise of their orders was to be present in the world rather than to remain hidden behind monastery walls, their critics denounced the mendicants' presence since they believed that the mendicants entered into society for their own personal gain rather than for the good of the public.

The structure of the rhyme in this section also aids in establishing a contrast between the past and present values and behaviors of the mendicants. In order to fully appreciate this contrast, it is necessary to study the rhyme developed throughout the stanza in its entirety. The first half of the stanza is provided below:

Quant Jacobin vindrent el monde,
S'entrerent chiez Humilitei.
Lors estoient et net et monde
Et s'amoient devinitei.

[When the Jacobins came into the world,

They entered with Humility.

They were honest and pure

And loved theology. ll. 17-20]

In the full stanza, the words "monde" (l. 17), "monde" (l. 19), "esmonde" (l. 21), and "reonde" (l. 23) rhyme. Not only is the rhyme between these words rich, but the idea of purity, expressed by "monde" (l. 17) and "monde" (l. 18), differs from the image of the academic gown stripping away goodness as expressed by the rhyme between "esmonde" (l. 21) and "reonde" (l. 23). In a similar fashion, the rhyme between "Humilitei" (l. 18) and "devinitei" (l. 20), which links humility with theology, is contrasted with the latter "iniquitei" (l. 22), and "Universitei" (l. 24), which reinforces the relationship between the Dominican's presence at the University and the immoral or wicked intensions. In addition to the words themselves, the crossed rhyme scheme (ABAB) strengthens the link established between the past and present thoughts and actions of the mendicants.[131] Though once honest and pure, the present-day mendicants are arrogant and filled with iniquity.

The Dominican's Habit

Even when the Dominicans dress in their traditional habits instead of the academic "*chape*," the narrator continues to question their intent. Echoing the

[131] This scheme is found in three additional Ruetebeuf poems: "La Disputaison du Croisé et du Décroisé," "De Monseigneur Anseau de L'Isle," and "De Brichemar." "La Disputasion du Croisé et du Décroisé" is a debate and "De Brichemar" describes a hypocrite. Both of these poems corraborate the interpretation of the rhyme presented above. "De Monseigneur Anseau de L'Isle," however, presents an anomoly since it was a eulogy for Ancel III de Lille.

proverb “l’abis ne fait pas le relegieus” (the habit doesn’t make the monk),[132] the narrator warns that appearances are not as they seem. He does so by employing the images of a habit wearing wolf and fox.

Jacobin sunt venu el monde
Vestu de robe blanche et noire.
Toute bonteiz en eulz habunde,
Ce porra quiconques wet croire.
Se par l'abit sunt net et monde,
Vos saveiz bien, ce est la voire,
S'uns leux avoit chape reonde,
Si resambleroit il prouvoire.
[The Jacobins entered into this world
Wearing white and black robes.
They abound with every goodness,
Or so anyone who cares to may believe.
By the habit they are pure,
But you know, its the truth,
That if a wolf were to wear a black *chape*,
He would resemble a priest. ll. 41-8]

Within this passage the narrator discusses the power of clothing to leave an impression on society. For those who lived during the Middle Ages, clothing was

[132] Joseph Morawski, *Proverbes français antérieurs au XV^e siècle* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1925), 39.

related to inner status or morals.[133] A visual shorthand, the monk's attire had long been associated with virtue.[134] The term "abit" or habit used in the poem reinforces this relationship since the Old French term not only referred to the mendicant's clothing but also to a person's mindset or temperament.[135] The simplicity of the garment was, therefore, meant to reflect the internal simplicity of the person who wore it. The narrator cautions, however, that anyone who believes that the Dominicans are still good should take heed, for if a wolf were to wear a habit, he too would resemble a priest.

The wolf in sheep's clothing was a classic metaphor used to describe false appearances.[136] The metaphor stemmed from Matthew 7:15 when he warns "beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."[137] Rather than sheep's wool, the deceptive mendicant in Rutebeuf's poem is wearing a habit, strengthening the relationship established in Rutebeuf's poetry between clothing and decline. In addition to false appearances, wolves were also seen as greedy creatures, as testified by a twelfth century Latin Bestiary. According to the text, wolves received their name on account of their bites, since they will kill anyone who passed by "with a fury of greediness."[138] The text continues by claiming that we call prostitutes wolves (*lupor*) because they devastate

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[133] Maureen C. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy*, 222.
[134] ibid., 242.
[135] *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "abit."
[136] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars*, 86.
[137] 7 Matt. 15 (Douay-Rheims)
[138] *The Book of Beasts: A Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century,* ed. and trans. T.H. White (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), 56.

the possessions of their lovers.[139] Wolves are, therefore, not only cunning but also greedy and are always prepared to take from others for their own benefit.

In addition to the wolf, Rutebeuf also borrows from the popular literary tradition of Renart the fox when describing the mendicant's deception.

> Se lor huevre ne se concorde
> A l'abit qu'ameir Dieu devise,
> Au recordeir aura descorde
> Devant Dieu au jor dou Juÿse.
> Car ce Renart seint une corde
> Et veste une coutele grise,
> N'en est pas sa vie mains orde:
> La roze est sus l'apine asize.
> [If their actions do not conform
> To the habit that expresses love for God,
> Remember there will be discord
> Before God on Judgment Day.
> For if a Renart the fox were to wear a friar's rope belt
> And put on a grey habit,
> His life would be less filthy:
> The rose grows among the thorn. ll. 49-56]

[139] ibid.

Within this passage Renart is used to represent the contrast between outward appearance and inner morals. Renart was the main character in a series of allegorical tales beginning from the twelfth century, which usually involve him deceiving other anthropomorphic animals for his own benefit. So popular were these stories that the word *renart* in French has come to replace the term *goupil* (from the Latin *vulpecula*).[140] The Renart tales often targeted the monks, criticizing them for being "false" ("fax," I, l. 1014), insane ("forsenez," VII, l. 163) or devilish ("maufez," VII, l. 164), among others.[141] These tales, therefore, contribute to the tradition of antifrateral jargon present in medieval literature.

In addition to the Renart tales, the fox had a long history of being regarded as both deceitful and dangerous in the Christian tradition. In the Book of Judges and the Song of Songs, foxes destroy vineyards, grain supplies, and olive groves.[142] Commenter Pope Gregory the Great (6th century) describes them as cunning and devilish. [143] St Ambrose (4th century) compares foxes to heretics and Isidore of Seville (7th century) wrote that foxes pretended to be dead in order to lure in their prey.[144] Medieval bestiaries echoed many of the Biblical criticisms of the fox. In a twelfth century bestiary, for example. the fox is noted as being "a fraudulent and ingenious animal" who plays dead when he is hungry so that he may gobble up birds

[140] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars*, 97.
[141] *Le Roman de Renart,* ed. Jean Dufournet and Andrée Méline, 2 vol. (Paris: Flammarion, 1985).
[142] Tim Rayborn, *Against the Friars*, 96.
[143] ibid.
[144] ibid.

who come to sit on his corpse. The devil, the text warns, has the same nature.[145] Even more significant is the claim that the word "vulpis" comes from "volupis" or a someone who winds wool, "for he is a creature with circuitous pug marks who never runs straight but goes on his way with tortuous windings."[146] The winding words and actions of the fox therefore mimic the winding of the thread, the two representative of deceit. As these examples show, the fox's perceived cunning and trickery makes him an ideal figure to critique the hypocrisy of the mendicants, whose simple dress contradicts their inner duplicity.

The contradiction established between the mendicant and his habit, which is expressed in this passage by the habit wearing fox, is also expressed by the poem's rhyme. Not only is a contrast established by the poem's overall rhyme scheme (ABAB) but also the words that compose the rhyme. In this particular passage, for example, an association is made between "concorde" (concord, l. 49), "descorde" (discord, l. 51), "corde" (cord, l. 53), and "orde" (filth, l. 55) through the *annominatio*.[147] The mendicant and his habit, both of which ("concord") are supposed to be simple and pure, are not ("discord") since the thoughts and actions of the mendicant are not representative of his dress. In addition, the passage

[145] *The Book of Beasts*, 53-4.

[146] ibid., 53.

[147] The *annominatio* is a poetic ornament used widely by Rutebeuf as well as his predecessor Gautier de Coincy. The figure contains characteristics of both the paromomase as well as the polypolt.

suggests that one of the symbols of the monk's humility and poverty, his cord ("corde"), masks his inherent impurity ("ordre").[148]

The mendicant's supposed simplicity is also called into question in the latter "C'est d'ypocrisie," where the narrator's repeated use of the adjective "simple" casts doubt upon his authenticity.

> Grans robes ont de simple lainne
>
> Et si sunt de simple covainne;
>
> Simplement chacuns se demainne,
>
> Couleur ont simple et pale et vaine,
>
> Simple viaire,
>
> [They have ample robes of simple wool
>
> And they are simple mannered;
>
> Each one behaves with simplicity,
>
> Their complexions are simple, pale and weak,
>
> Simple in appearance, ll. 51-2][149]

Within the first line of this passage, the narrator warns that all may not be as it first appears. Though simple, the mendicant's robes are also described as ample, alluding

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[148] In "Rutebeuf et les moines mendiants," Jean Dufournet explains that the Franciscan's cord served as their arm of virtue, a symbol of the Trinity, and as a symbol of humility and poverty. Jean Dufournet, "Rutebeuf et les moines mendiants," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 85.2 (1984): 152-68 at 155.

[149] In addition to their simple dress, the pale complexion of the mendicants links their presence with the fourth Horseman of the apocalypse. Richard K. Emmerson observes that during the twelfth century, exegetes and historians interpreted the Four Horsemen as symbolizing various sequential phases in Church history. The pale and deathlike fourth Horseman was associated with the present hypocrisy of the Church. See: Richard K. Emmerson, "The Apocalypse in Medieval Culture," *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages,* ed. Richard E. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 306.

to clerical excess. In addition, the repetition of the term "simple" five times within the first five lines of the poem alerts the audience that there is more behind the simple appearance of the mendicants than what initially may seem. According to Susan Stakel on her study of duality and deceit in the *Roman de la Rose,* the adjective "simple" is normally the antithesis of hypocrisy in Old French.[150] The reoccurrence of this term throughout the passage compels the audience to question whether to interpret the term at face value or its counterpart. The mendicants are not only simple, they are excessively simple, and therefore too good to be true.

The Role of Clothing in the Critique of the Dominicans

Throughout the poem, clothing is used in order to illustrate the hypocrisy of the mendicants. Though initially centering on their improper role within the University, through the image of the Dominicans in their large academic "*chape*," the latter half of the poem centers on the idea that outward appearance does not reflect inner integrity. The narrator illustrates this theme through the portrait of the wolf and the fox in the mendicant's habit. As in the earlier "decline of the world" poems, clothing has a central role within "La descorde des Jacobins et de l'Universitei." In a similar text composed in the fourteenth century by Jean de Condé, the Jacobins are criticized for their propensity to deceive by their words, yet not by their clothing.[151] Similarly, in William of Saint-Amour's influential *Periculis novissimorum temporum*, the mendicant's deception is primarily accomplished through their words, even if he

[150] Susan Stakel, *False Roses : Structures of Duality and Deceit in Jean de Meun's* Roman de la Rose (Saratoga, CA : Anma Libri, 1991), 54

[151] Jean de Condé, "De L'Ipocresie des Jacobins," *Dits et contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son fils Jean, d'après les manuscrits de Bruxelles, Turin, Rome, Paris, et Vienne et accompagnés de variantes et de notes explicatives par Aug. Scheler*, III (Bruxelles: Devaux, 1866), 181-8.

does at one point refer to them as a wolf in sheep's clothing.[152] Although the relationship between clothing and deception will later be reprised by Faus Semblant in de Meun's *Roman de la Rose,* Rutebeuf's appears to be one of the first to insist on clothing as a sign of demise.[153] Rather than a misuse of words, Rutebeuf's poem, therefore, suggests that society is in decline because of a misuse of materials. Instead employing clothing as a sign of inner sanctity, Rutebeuf illustrate how the mendicants misuse their dress. The mendicant's misuse of dress is problematic for the narrator since the two competed for the same donations.[154] By represeting themselves as holy and pure, the mendicants had a clear advantage over the *jongleur*.

All three of Rutebeuf's early poems studied in this chapter contain the theme of the changing times. Society in this period was, in fact, in the process of changing due to the predominance of commerce and displays of wealth. Rather than a time of prosperity, Rutebeuf describes society as headed towards its demise. Society's demise is depicted in the poems through the images of clothing, cloth, and coin, commodities that represented the dominant industry in Rutebeuf's era. These commodities serve metomically for commerce in these poems. It is not commerce itself, however, but the misappropriation of the new wealth brought about by commerce that is the source of the narrator's critique in the poems. Rather than give

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[152] Guillaume de Saint-Amour, *De periculis novissimorum temporum,* 72-7, 112-39.

[153] Susan Stakel studies the relationship established in *Le Roman de la Rose* between clothing and deception. According to Stakel the motivation behind wearing clothes is not for modesty or warmth but for deception. See: Susan Stakel, *False Roses*, 52-54

[154] See: Jean Dufournet, "Rutebeuf et les moines mendiants," 153.

of their wealth, those who are more fortunate are described are described in terms of hoarding, excess, and deceit. The material ambitions of society, therefore, are contrasted with the material needs of the narrator, who uses his critique of the times to incite potential patrons to give more generously.

Chapter 2: Middle Time: Rejecting The Past And Securing The Future In Rutebeuf's *Poèmes De L'infortune*

In the middle of his career, Rutebeuf composed a series of poems which Faral and Bastin have later classified as his poems of misfortune (*poèmes de l'infortune)*.[155] Rather than the members of society, the narrator becomes the subject of the poems, adopting the personal pronoun "je." The personal nature of the poetry has led several Rutebeuf scholars to read the poems as autobiographical pieces.[156] Others have regarded the poems as merely formulaic, void of any personal voice beyond that of a *jongleur* attempting to make a profit.[157] Still others have read them as statements about language and poetic production.[158] The multiplicity of interpretations attests to the difficulty of reading and interpreting these poems. I choose to take a different approach to Rutebeuf's poems of misfortune by reading them as initial attempts made by the narrator at self-examination and introspection. Although this approach is generally accepted for Rutebeuf's later personal poems,

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[155] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* I, 517.

[156] See: L.G. Pesce, "Le Portrait de Rutebeuf;" Jean Frappier, "Rutebeuf: poète du jeu, du guigon et de la misère."

[157] See: Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* I, 519; Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf.*

[158] See: Andrew Cowell, *At Play in the Tavern: Signs, Coins, and Bodies in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Roger Dragonetti, "Rutebeuf: Les poèmes de la 'griesche,'" *Présent à Henri Maldiney,* hommage pour le 60e anniversaire, ed. Jean Bazaine (Lausanne: Éditions l'Age d'homme, 1973): 77-110.

my approach is unique in that it argues that a self-critical poetic voice existed much earlier in Rutebeuf's career than previously believed.

Time plays an essential role in the poems since the narrator's process of self-examination and introspection is accomplished through the distance he establishes between his past and his present. The self-examining and introspective narrative voice that develops in the poems arises from the narrator's need for confession and repentance. As will be shown in the analysis to follow, the narrator is a sinner and therefore must both separate himself from and reflect on his past in order to repent. The narrator's initial configuration in winter serves as the catalyst for his desire for repentance, since this season reminds him of the transience of life and the need to secure his future. As each poem progresses, beginning with "Li diz de la Griesche d'yver" (The dit of the winter Griesche) (c. 1260) and continuing on to "La Griesche d'estei" (The summer Griesche) (c. 1260), the narrator becomes more and more successful in his attempt at separation. It is not until the final "Li diz des ribaux de greive" (The dit of the vagrants of the *grève*) (c.1260), however, that his full disengagement from his sinful past is finally achieved.

The Meaning(s) of "Griesche"

Rutebeuf scholars have contested the meaning of the term "*griesche*." All agree, however, that the term refers in part to the game of dice.[159] According to Jean-Michel Mehl, "*griesche*" referred to a certain type of dicing game, more than

[159]Roger Dragonetti, "Rutebeuf: Les poèmes de la 'griesche,'" 83; Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* I, 520.

likely introduced in Europe after the Fourth Crusade.[160] For Mehl, it is possible that this game was particularly favorable for cheating, citing the example of Fauvel, who was presented in the *Roman de Fauvel* (c. 1310) as the master of cheaters as well as "le maître de la griesche" (ll.4890-1). Michel Zink expands the definition of "*griesche*" to include the game of dice as well as the bad luck that accompanies it.[161] He also introduces the theory that the term "*griesche*" could reference the pie-grièche, a bird with a reputation for being a thief.[162] Paul Guiraud suggests that the term comes from the gallo-roman grevica from grevis for gravis or "difficult to endure, painful." It also referred to Greeks, who were depicted in medieval literature as being deceptive.[163] Although varied, each of the above definitions has a negative connotation, since the term "*griesche*" frequently refers to cheating and deception. It is essential for the narrator of the "*griesche*" poems to distance himself from his past, characterized by the "*griesche*," so that he is able to stand as a figure of truth. Without this separation, his attempts at repentance would be futile.

In his article "Rutebeuf: Les poèmes de la 'griesche'" Roger Dragonetti explains that the use of the term "*griesche*" in the title of both Rutebeuf's poems indicates a similarity of theme, whereas the opposition between winter and summer indicates a difference that needs to de defined.[164] As this chapter will show, the

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[160] Jean-Michel Mehl, "Tricheurs et tricheries dans la France médiévale: l'exemple du jeu de dés," *Réflexions Historiques* 8.2 (1981): 3-25, at 12.
[161] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 194.
[162] ibid., 195.
[163] *Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française,* dir. Alain Rey, 4th ed. (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2010), s.v. "pie-grièche."
[164] Roger Dragonetti, "Rutebeuf: Les poèmes de la 'griesche,'" 83.

opposition between winter and summer, which indicates a progression, is crucial to the narrator's future. As the narrator progresses from the winter "*griesche*" to the summer "*griesche,*" he separates his contemporary self from his former, "hivernal" self defined by gaming and sin. I have selected the term "hivernal" to describe the narrator's past since in each poem the narrator situates his past in the winter season. The separation of the narrator from his past is essential. It is through the narrator's distancing of himself from the world of deception and vice, that he is able to become a self-examining and introspective being.

"La Griesche d'yver" and the Narrator's "Hivernal" Condition

The first poem to be examined within this chapter, "Li diz de la Griesche d'yver," begins by describing the physical effects that the season of winter has on the narrator and ends by explaining that it is due to his gambling habit that he has found himself in such a miserable condition. The poem opens with a description of winter, where the barren trees represent the impoverished state of the narrator.

Contre le tenz qu'aubres deffuelle,
Qu'il ne remaint en branche fuelle
Qui n'aut a terre,
Por povretei qui moi aterre,
Qui de tout part me muet guerre,
Contre l'yver
Dont mout me sont changié li ver,
Mon dit commence trop diver

De povre estoire.

[At the time when the trees lose their leaves,

On the branch there does not remain a leaf

That does not fall to the ground,

Poverty grounds me,

And attacks me from all sides,

In winter,

Which has greatly changed my verse,

My dit begins differently

A poor story. ll.1-9]

Within this opening section, the narrator describes the effect that the winter season has on himself and his poetry. Winter, as the narrator states, is a season of loss. The image of the tree losing its leaves is echoed by the poverty of the poet, who, like the leaf, becomes grounded. Winter not only affects the material state of the poet, but also his poem, which like the poet becomes "poor" ("De povre estoire." / A poor story. l. 9). The rhyme in this section of the poem is structured through the figure of *annominatio.* The most straightforward interpretation of the *annominatio*, which is comprised of the rhyme between the words "terre" (l. 3), "aterre" (l. 4), "guerre" (l. 5), "l'yver" (l. 6) "li ver" (l. 7) and "diver" (l. 8), is an exaggeration of the narrator's lowly position in the winter season. He, like the leaves, has been brought down by the season, which wages war on him and has changed his condition as well as his verse.

The use of *annominatio* to reinforce the narrator's lowly condition corresponds with the way that *annominatio* has typically been interpreted as a poetic device throughout history.[165] Rather than complex or refined, *annominatio* was generally regarded as a low style and overly simplistic. In *La Rhétorique à Herennius*, which inspired many *arts poétiques* from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, for example, the *annominatio* is defined in the following manner, "Adnominatio est cum ad idem uerbum et nomen acceditur cum mutatione uocum aut litterarum, ut ad res dissimiles simila uerba adcommodentur" (There is *annominatio* when next to a word or a name, one places another that is similar either by sound or by letters so that similar words express dissimilar things).[166] The text later warns that the *annominatio* should be used infrequently for it could damage the credibility and seriousness of the discourse, "quomodo igitur, si crebo his generibus utemur, puerili uidebimur elocutione delectari" (therefore if we use these figures too frequently, we will appear to delight in childish elocutions).[167] Though a common poetic figure in the Middle Ages, the *annominatio* was often

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[165] Scholars including Nancy Regalado and Xavier Leroux have contested the interpretation that the *annominatio* is an unsophisticated poetic figure. Instead, they argue that it is rich with meaning. Although the *annominatio* is a play on words, Regalado insists that the figure is never meaningless and often represents the theme of a poem. Leroux supports this position, arguing, "les mots ne visent pas seulement à charmer le lecteur, mais à lui révéler le sens profond du discours" (the purpose of words is not only to charm the reader, but to reveal to him or her the deeper meaning of the discourse). The *annominatio* was a figure particularly favored by Rutebeuf, who uses it in genre of poem he wrote. In addition to being a favorite of Rutebeuf, this figure was also widely used by Rutebeuf's contemporaries, including Baudoin de Condé and Gauthier de Coincy. See: Xavier Leroux, "De l'annomination à la nomination: instauration du cadre énonciatif dans l'oeuvre de Rutebeuf," *Revue des langues romanes* 111.1 (2007): 51-76 at 51; Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf*, 206.

[166] English translation is mine. Latin citation from Xavier Leroux, "De l'annomination à la nomination," 52.

[167] ibid.

regarded as secondary or simplistic by the *Arts poétiques*.[168] In *Les arts poétiques du XI^e^ et du XIII^e^ siècle*, Edmond Faral only devotes a small portion of his text to this figure "parce qu'elle n'est pas parmi les plus importants" (because it is not among the most important).[169] The use of this "simple" figure within the opening lines of the poem supports Rutebeuf's qualification of the poem as "poor." Rather than a rich and varied vocabulary, his is impoverished, reflecting the material condition of the poet.

Winter as a Season of Death

Winter is not only a season of loss, it is also the season of death. The poet's verse "vers" (l. 7) could just as easily refer to worms, which consume the body post mortem. Worms in literature became increasingly prominent in the thirteenth century English and northern French texts, where they served as signs of the transience of life. [170] Although Zink briefly mentions that "vers" could refer to worms in the poem, he does not discuss the relationship between worms and transience, instead stating, "the changing of the seasons are signaled by a change in the verses, '*l'hiver, li ver* de terre' hibernates under ground and *li ver* of the poet take their flight."[171] In addition to being found in the books of Job (21:26) and Isaiah (14:11), worms consuming the body are also referenced in *Le Besant de Dieu,* the Walloon

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[168] ibid., 53.

[169] Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII^e^ et XIII^e^ siècle: Recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du moyen âge* (Geneva-Paris: Slatkone-Champion, 1982), 89.

[170] Katharina Brett, "The Thirteenth-century French *Dit d'avarice*,"145-6.

[171] Michel Zink and Monique Briand-Walker, "Time and Representation of the Self," 615.

Poème Moral, and *Les vers de la mort* by Robert le Clerc.[172] In Rutebeuf's poem, the reference to worms could serve as a meditation on death and the transience of life. If the poet is using the word "vers" to reference worms and therefore his brief existence, his verse would in fact change. Not because of his poverty, but instead in preparation for his life to come.

The narrator's reflection on his suffering and impending death continues in the next passage, where he continues to employ images of the winter season to depict his misery.

> Diex me fait le tens si a point,
>
> Noir mouche en estei me point,
>
> En yver blanche.
>
> Ausi sui con l'ozière franche
>
> Ou com li oiziaux seur la branche:
>
> En estei chante,
>
> En yver pleure et me gaimente,
>
> Et me despoille ausi com l'ante
>
> Au premier giel.
>
> [God has arranged the seasons for me just so,
>
> In summer the black flies bite me,
>
> And in winter the white.

[172] Guillaume clerc de Normandie, *Le Besant de Dieu*; *Le Poème Moral : Traité de vie chrétienne écrit dans la région wallonne vers l'an 1200,* ed. Alphonse Bayot (Liège : H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1929); Robert le Clerc d'Arras, *Les Vers de la Mort,* ed. Annette Brasseur and Robert Berger (Geneva : Droz, 2009); Katharina Brett, "The Thirteenth-century French *Dit d'avarice*," 148-150.

I am like the wild willow

Or like a bird on a branch:

In summer I sing,

In winter I cry and lament,

And am stripped bare like the tree

At the first frost. ll. 31-9]

In this passage, the narrator states that with each season, he endures a new form of torment. God, who controls the passing of each season, appears to punish the narrator. The narrator, therefore, assumes the role of the hopeless victim. The victimization of the narrator is accentuated by the fact that the change in the seasons only brings about a brief change in the narrator's state. In the summer he is attacked by black flies and the winter by "white," which could be a playful metaphor for snowflakes.[173] In addition to flies, the narrator uses an additional nature metaphor to describe his condition. He sings joyfully like the bird in the summer but in winter he suffers from the cold and becomes bare like the tree when it loses its leaves. Due to its references to singing and being unprepared, this passage appears to allude to the widely circulated fable "Le Criquet demanda au Fourmi de son blé et il li refusa" (The Cricket asks the Ant for his wheat and he refuses). Both poems configure a character who chooses to sing and be joyful all summer long rather than to prepare for the upcoming winter. By referencing this well-known didactic tale within his own poem, the narrator reminds his audience that his story should also

[173] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* note to line 33, 199.

serve as a cautionary tale to prepare him or herself for the next "season," whether it be winter or death itself.

The dual themes of poverty and death are also expressed through the rhyme established in this passage between the verbs for to sing "chante" (l. 36) and to lament "gaimente" (l. 37). The narrator's lament could, of course, stem from his poverty and his miserable condition, which, like the Cricket, he has come to regret. Yet "gaimenter" could also refer to the mourning that occurs at the moment of a loved one's death.[174] In this second interpretation, the verb would serve as an additional reminder of the transience of life and the need for the narrator to correct his ways to avoid eternal suffering. In addition to snowflakes, the reference to the "white fly" could also refer to fly larvae that appear on a deceased person's body. Until the seventeenth century, the term *mouche* not only referred to flies, but also to many types of insects, both winged and unwinged.[175] Through his reference to the flies, the narrator is, therefore, not only remorseful of his current condition but also mindful of his impending death.

Nudity: Suffering and Truth

The misery of the narrator is augmented by his nudity, since his nudity makes him more vulnerable to attacks launched by God and by nature.

Et froit au cul quant byze vente:

Li vens me vient, li vens m'esvente

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[174] *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "gaimenter, guaimenter."

[175] *Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française,* dir. Alain Rey, 4th ed. (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2010), s.v. "mouche."

Et trop souvent

Plusors foïes sent le vent.

[And cold on my ass when the North wind bites:

The wind come to me, the wind cools me

And too often

I repeatedly feel the wind ll. 13-6]

In this passage, the narrator expresses the constant offense that he faces from the wind, which reinforces not only his feeling of misery but also his vulnerability. The constant offense is expressed through the rhyme between the words "vente" (l. 13), "vens" (l. 14), "esvente" (l. 14), "souvent" (l. 15), "vent" (l. 16), which continues throughout the passage. The repetition of the sound [vã] adds to the authenticity of the poem as the audience is able to experience the biting wind with the narrator. The rhyme is reinforced by the terms "souvent" (often, l. 15) and "plusors foïes" (repeatedly, l. 16) which emphasizes the repetitive nature of the assault. The choice of the profanity “cul” (ass, l. 16), rather than a less profane term, adds to the image of the biting wind. The shock induced by the word echoing the shock of the blistery wind. Due to his inability to cover himself, the wind’s bite is easily felt by the narrator.

The narrator’s inability to properly clothe himself does more than simply illustrate his poverty. In a period where clothing was fraught with significance it also signified the narrator's inability to better himself by changing his social position. As Danielle Regnier-Bohler explains, masculine nudity presents itself in

terms of exile in relation to the world of laws, authority, and order. Often, it signifies the destruction of a former state.[176] Nudity, therefore, symbolizes unrest and instability. Those without clothes are outcasts from society, since their lack of a cultural signifier prevents their social status from being known.

In addition to having a negative connotation, nudity also symbolized truth. No longer cloaked in symbolism, the narrator is able to candidly articulate his plight to both his audience as well as to God. In the latter case, nudity becomes a penitent act, which, as will be explained in further detail below, became increasingly interiorized during the thirteenth century through the rite of confession. In his own definition of confession, the late twelfth century theologian Peter the Chanter introduces an analogy that is certainly valid within the context of the poem. For Peter, "confession is the act by which 'we confess to priests by mouth our sins nakedly (*nude*), openly (*aperte*), and stripped of skin (*excoriate*) with all their circumstances."[177] In addition, he states, "sin should not be garbed in robes but revealed to the confessor as it was done."[178] In this context, the narrator's nudity positions him as a figure of truth. The narrator, stripped of deceptive coverings, presents himself as someone who is prepared to repent.

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[176] Danielle Régnier-Bohler "Le corps mis à nu: Perception et valeur symbolique de la nudité dans les recits du moyen âge," *Europe* 653 (1983): 51-62 at 53.

[177] See: John Baldwin, "From the Ordeal to Confession: In Search of Lay Religion in Early Thirteenth Century France," *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis, York Studies in Medieval Theology, II (Rochester, New York: York Medieval Press in Association with the Boydell Press, 1998): 101-209 at 202; Chanter, *Summa* II, 279, 306,420.

[178] Citation from : John Baldwin, "From the Ordeal to Confession: In Search of Lay Religion in Early Thirteenth Century France," 202.

Gambling and the Game of Dice

As the poem changes setting from nature (where the narrator compares himself to a tree and a bird) to society, the reason for his impoverished condition is made manifest. He is naked and poor due to his gambling habit, and in particular the game of dice. The game of dice was the most popular game in the Middle Ages, and was played by every stratum of the population.[179] It was also the most condemned. Despite its popularity, the game was neither expressly celebrated nor praised, except for in the poetry of the Goliards or certain parodical texts, including the parodical mass (*Officium lusorum*).[180] In order to inhibit its play, many civil and ecclesiastical laws were passed against the fabrication and the playing of dice, including Louis IX's 1254 ordinance. According to Rhiannon Purdie, common reasons for censure were the crippling losses, endemic cheating, violence, and crime that accompanied the game.[181] Engaging in the game of dice was therefore considered wrong on many levels. Not only was it illegal but it also left the player morally and financially bankrupt.

In the later part of the poem, the narrator discusses the effect that the game of dice has on him. Just as winter rid the trees of their leaves, the dice took away the narrator's garments.

Or voi ge bien tot va, tot vient,

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[179] Jean-Michel Mehl, "Tricheurs et tricheries," 5.

[180] ibid., 6.

[181] Rhiannon Purdie, "Dice Games and the Blasphemy of Prediction," *Medieval Futures: Attitudes Towards the Future in the Middle Ages,* ed. J.A. Burrow and Ian P. Wei (Woodridge, UK: Boyell Press, 2000): 167-84 at 167.

Tout venir, tout aleir convient,

Fors que bienfait.

Li dei que li decier ont fait

M'ont de ma robe tot desfait.

[Now I see that everything comes and goes,

It is fitting for all to come, all to go,

Except good deeds.

The dice that the dice-maker made

Have stripped me of my cloak, ll. 49-53]

Due to his inability to quit gambling the narrator is currently without proper clothes, exposed, and therefore vulnerable.[182] Not only is he deprived, but he is also caught in a cycle of loss. This cycle is expressed by the reappearance of terms for coming and going, whereby everything the narrator possesses is later taken away. The key word in the passage is "bienfait" (l. 51). This word separates the arrival of prosperity, which is linked to the earlier terms through the rhyme between "vient" (l. 49), "convient" (l. 50), and "bien" (l. 51), and the eventual stripping away of all benefices, expressed through the repetition of "fait" (l. 51 and l. 52) and finally "desfait" (l. 53). In addition to having structural significance, "bienfait" has multiple meanings. It could, for example, refer to finances by invoking profits or tips. The

[182] Clothes were often used in the Middle Ages as a means of settling gambling debts. He who lost at the game, therefore, ended up without proper covering. cf. *Jeu de Saint Nicolas, Courtois d'Arras*

word also has a moral sense, signifying good deeds.[183] The ambiguity of the term is representative of the ambiguous position of the narrator who, as will be shown below, is caught somewhere between being a moralist and a sinner.

In addition to material goods, the narrator's insistence on transience within this passage could serve as an additional reminder of the brevity of life and the certainty that death will soon arrive. The verb "desfaire" in Old French not only had the sense of "undoing," which in the context of the passage I have translated as "stripping," but also "to put an end to" or "to kill."[184] It is, therefore, linked to the concept of death. The transient nature of the gambler's good fortune, therefore, invokes the transient nature of humanity.

Gambling and Memory

Although the cycle of misery appears inescapable, the narrator makes an initial attempt to separate his current situation from that of the gambler by situating his dicing habit in the past. He accomplishes this through use of the past tense ("Li dei que li decier *ont fait* / M'*ont* de ma robe tot *desfait*" ll. 52-3). The actions of the gambler described in this section are not the contemporary actions of the narrator but are instead his past actions. By situating his gambling in the past, the narrator is able to temporarily escape from the present moment and consider the past actions that have brought him to his current state of misery. He continues to do so later in the poem by designating his gambling past as a memory.

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[183] *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "bienfait, bien fait."
[184] ibid., s.v. "desfaire."

Li enviauz que je savoie

M'ont avoié quanque j'avoie

Et fors voiié,

Et fors de voie desvoiié.

Foux enviaus ai envoiié

Or m'en souvient.

[The bets that I used to know how to make

Took everything I had

And misled me,

And sent me off the path.

I made foolish bets,

Now I remember. ll. 43-8]

In this passage the narrator confesses that because of gambling all of his gains were eventually lost. Not only did gambling cause the narrator to become poor, but it also led him away from the path. The path, we can assume, leads to God. The narrator's loss, therefore, occurs on both the material as well as the spiritual levels. Instead of being a contemporary problem, however, the narrator situates his gambling losses in the past through the use of the imperfect. He does not currently place bets, but did so in the past. The narrator's use of the verb "to remember" ("Or m'en souvient," l. 48) also situates his gambling in the past by designating it as a memory. Memory, according to Augustine (c. 354-430), sinks into the *interior man,* or into the Christian dialectic between inside and the outside from which will come the

examination of conscience and introspection.[185] Through a similar interplay between inside/outside of the tavern and past/present, the narrator of "Li diz de la Griesche d'yver" examines his own *interior man* where he finds himself subjugated by the power of the tavern, and moreover the dice. By resorting to his memory, the narrator engages in an act of introspection by which he is able to examine his past faults.

Confession

In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a transformation took place concerning the relationship between Christians and repentance. The "shame culture" of judgment by outsiders began to become replaced by a "guilt culture" of intention and interiority.[186] John Baldwin charts this progression by examining different manifestations of penitence in vernacular romances composed both prior to and after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.[187] The Fourth Lateran Council required annual confession and attempted curtail trial by ordeal.[188] The primary difference between the ordeal and confession was that the ordeal touched the body

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[185] Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory,* trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 71.

[186] Andrew Cowell, *At Play in the Tavern*, 211; Although confession became increasingly popular during the thirteenth century, public penance still occured. See: Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners : Public Penance in Thirteenth Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[187] The idea of mandatory confession was prepared for in advance of the Fourth Lateran Council by the major schools of the first half of the twelfth century (Laon, Abelard, Victorines), which advanced the notion of personal responsibility in sin. See: Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 214.

[188] John Baldwin, "From the Ordeal to Confession: In Search of Lay Religion in Early Thirteenth Century France," *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis, *York Studies in Medieval Theology*, II (Rochester, New York: York Medieval Press in Association with the Boydell Press, 1998): 191-209, at 197.

whereas confession touched the soul.[189] Late twelfth and thirteenth century theologians agreed that contrition of the heart, or interior penance, was essential for the absolution of sins, thereby stressing the importance of confession.[190] Confession demanded a regular examination of the Christian's inner self or conscience, creating a whole new frontier of introspection that would slowly transform ways of thinking and behaving.[191] Confession also led to a change in the Christian's relationship with God. Rather than public, it became personal and interior.[192] By reflecting on his own sinful past, the narrator is able to take the first step towards repentance.

In addition to the example cited above, the narrator expresses the negative effects that the game of dice had on him at two additional moments in the poem. In both instances, the narrator employs the past tense to situate these events within the temporal past. They too are memories. In the first example, the narrator blames the dice for the loss of his cloak ("Li dei que li decier *ont fait* / M'*ont* de ma robe tot desfait" / The dice that the dice maker made/ Stripped me of my cloak, ll. 52-3). The repetition of the sound [dɛ] from the words "dei" (l. 52), "decier" (l. 52), "desfait' (l. 53) emphasize the role of the dice in the narrator's misfortune, since [dɛ] refers to dice. In addition, the progression from "made" to "made miserable" as conveyed in the rhyme between "fait" (l. 52) and "desfait" (l. 53) maintains the dice's role in the narrator's demise. Although the narrator is not any better off financially or

[189] John Baldwin, "From the Ordeal to Confession," 198.

[190] ibid., 202.

[191] Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life*, 12.

[192] According to the treatise *On True and False Penitence* (*De vera et falso poenitentia*), which was later cited by Gratian and Peter Lombard, "secret sins require secret penance, public sins require public penance." See: Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 214-5.

materially, by separating his current state from his immoral past, the he positions himself as being morally superior in the present.

Gambling and Cheating

In addition to the dice, the gamblers have also affected the narrator's current condition ("Li traÿteur de pute estrace / m'ont mis sens robe." / The dirty deceivers / Left me without a cloak, ll. 62-3). In these lines, the narrator designates the gamblers as cheaters. Played in dark interiors, the poor light of the taverns provided ample opportunities for cheating.[193] Cheating was accomplished by various means but the most common appears to be altering the dice themselves. In his article on tricks and tricksters in the game of dice, Jean Michel Mehl has outlined several means by which cheating was accomplished. I have summarized his findings below. According to Mehl, one way of altering dice was through the addition of weights.[194] Lead would be added to the dice in order to favor one side. In le *Livre des Métiers* Étienne Boileau forbid the production of these dice, which he termed "dez ploumez."[195] In addition to weighing down the dice, one could also lighten them, resulting in "dez vuidez."[196] "Dez mespoins" were the most common type of fraudulent dice. They would be misnumbered, resulting in the same number appearing on multiple sides of the dice.[197] The multiple ways that dice could be altered occupies a passage in the anonymous thirteenth century trade poem, le *Dit*

[193] Rhiannon Purdie, "Dice Games and the Blasphemy of Prediction," 173.
[194] Jean-Michel Mehl, "Tricheurs et tricheries," 13.
[195] ibid.
[196] ibid., 14.
[197] ibid.

d'un mercier (The merchant's dit), "J'ai dez du plus, j'ai dez du moins, / De Paris, de Chartres, et de Rains" (I have dice with more I have dice with less / From Paris, Chartres, and from Rheims, ll. 125-6).[198] In addition to the composition of the dice, the way that the dice were thrown could also affected the outcome. One of the most commonly cited means was to "asseoir les dez," or to prevent the dice from rolling.[199] Charles d'Orléans (c. 1394-1465) figuratively references this technique in one of his ballads,

> J'asserray les dez sans faillir
> Par quoy puisse, sans plus languir,
> Gagnier le jeu entierement
> [Without fail I plant the dice
> By which I am easily able,
> To win the entire game ll. 27-9].[200]

The multiple literary allusions to cheating testifies to the prominence of this activity. The reference to the dice players who deprive the narrator of a cloak illustrates the trickery and, therefore, moral depravity of the game. The narrator must, therefore, separate himself from the gamblers in order to establish himself within the poem as a representative of truth. Devoid of covering, the narrator is prepared to fully

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[198] "Le dit du mercier," *Proverbes et Dictons populaires avec les* Dits du mercier *et* Des marchands, *et* Les Crieries de Paris *aux XIII^e^ et XIV^e^ siècles publiés d'après les manuscrits de la bibliothèque du roi* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1831), 154.

[199] Jean-Michel Mehl, "Tricheurs et tricheries," 15.

[200] Charles d'Orléans, *Poésies,* ed. Pierre Champion, I (Paris : Honoré Champion, 1956), Ballade XLVI, 69; Cited in Jean-Michel Mehl, "Tricheurs et tricheries," 16. My translation.

expose the faults of his past. Unlike the gambler, he does not hide in the dark corners of the tavern but instead is prepared to reveal his past for all to see.

The Narrator's Attempts at Separation

In the latter part of the poem, the distance between the narrator in his past becomes more explicit as the subject of the poem shifts away from the narrator to a group of anonymous gamblers, whose actions the narrator condemns. The passage is cited below in its entirety in order to show the contrast between the actions of the narrator and those of the gambler.

Foux est qu'a lor consoil abite:
De sa dete pas ne s'aquite,
Ansois s'encombre;
De jor en jor acroit le nombre.
En estei ne quiert il pas l'ombre
Ne froid chambre,
Que nu li sunt souvent li membre,
Dou duel son voisin ne li membre
Mais lou sien pleure.
Griesche li at corru sere,
Desnuei l'at en petit d'eure,
Et nuns l'ainme.
[Whoever listens (to the dice) is a fool:
He will never get out of debt,

But only goes in deeper;

From day to day the sum grows.

In summer he does not seek the shade

Or a cool room,

For his limbs are often bare,

He doesn't worry his neighbor's suffering

But cries for his own.

The Grièche has attacked him,

It has stripped him bare in no time at all,

And no one loves him. ll. 76-87]

According to the narrator, the misery felt by the gambler is all consuming. He is never able to escape from debt, borrowing more and more until he is burdened. Unlike the narrator, he does not experience the elements, for he does not seek to protect himself from the summer heat. He forgets about the suffering of others, since all he can do is focus on his own suffering. The narrator's insistence on the gambler's suffering, and therefore his complete disregard for the suffering of others, illustrates how the gambler's poverty causes him to turn away from the Christian value of charity and instead to focus on himself. Even though he miserable, the gambler's poverty does not compel him to see the error of his ways. It, therefore, does not have the same redeeming quality as the narrator's poverty, which forces him to remember and reflect on his past mistakes.

The repetition of the word "membre" (l. 82 and l. 83) within this section is significant, since it recalls the narrator's process of remembering his past. By repeating this term, the narrator insists that the deeds of the gambler described in the passage are part of his memory and are no longer associated with his contemporary self. The narrator also insists on the temporal separation between himself and the gamblers he describes. He is no longer involved in gambling, yet he relives and regrets his past actions through those of his contemporaries.

The distance that the narrator creates between himself and the gamblers in the poem also occurs between nature and the tavern. The narrator is poor but his poverty and misfortune are tied to nature. As mentioned earlier, God controls the seasons, each one bringing the narrator a new source of torment. Since God is the source of the narrator's misfortune, the narrator cannot do anything to alter his condition. The narrator, therefore, presents himself as a hopeless victim of God's punishment. In this context, it is difficult not to detect the similarity between the narrator and Job.[201] In addition to being a victim of God's punishment, Job had and still has an important function in the Office of the Dead.[202] As its name implies, this office was said for the repose of a deceased soul. The lessons derived from Job's scripture in the Office of the Dead oscillate from repentance to protest and back to repentance, eliciting a movement from grief to resignation and repentance and

[201] Rutebeuf establishes a relationship between Job and himself in "La complainte Rutebeuf," "Diex m'a fait compaignon a Job" (God made me Job's companion, l. 20).
[202] Lawrence L. Besserman, *The Legend of Job in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 57.

finally to hope.[203] By associating himself with the figure of Job, the narrator presents himself as conscious of his own mortality as well as the hope of future salvation as he, too, evolves from a figure of grief to one of repentance as the poem progresses.

At this point in the poem, the narrator separates himself from the gamblers on three different levels. He first does so by positioning the gamblers as well as his own gambling habit within the past (through memory) rather than in the present. Next, he presents them as the source of their own misfortune whereas he is a victim of God's punishment. His suffering, therefore, acts as a sort of penitence since it is inflicted by God. The gamblers also suffer but their suffering is self-inflicted since it is caused by their ever-increasing debt. Third, he is found within nature and they are located in the tavern.

Rather than redemption, the gambler is caught in a cycle of sin, which is inescapable. The narrator describes the inability of the gambler to escape from the cycle of sin in the passage below, where he is advised by his "friend" ("Cil qui devant cousin le claime" / He who he used to call his cousin, l. 89) to seek out additional funds by engaging in usurious and deceitful transactions. Rather than to seek aid, the gambler is advised to fall further and further in debt.

Foi que tu doiz sainte Marie,
Car vai or en la draperie
Dou drap acroire.
Se li drapiers ne t'en wet croire,

[203] ibid.,63.

Si t'en revai droit à la foire

Et vai au Change.

Se tu jures saint Michiel l'ange

Qu'il n'at sor toi ne lin ne lange

Ou ait argent,

Hon te verrat moult biau sergent,

Bien t'aparsoveront la gent:

Creüz seras.

Quant d'ilecques te partiras,

Argent ou faille emporteras.

[By the faith you owe to Saint Mary,

Go to the cloth merchant

And purchase cloth on credit.

If the drapers do not have confidence in you,

Go to straight to the fair

And go to the Exchange.

And swear by the archangel Michael

That neither your under or outer garments

Hides any money,

They will consider you a fine young man,

You will not go without notice:

You will be believed.

When you depart,

You will be carrying money or cloth ll. 91-104].

The advice to purchase cloth on credit described in this passage is intended to help the gambler find relief from his poverty and to once again clothe himself. The problem with this approach is that the gambler only receives temporary reprieve from his poverty. He may be clothed, but he now owes either the draper or the banker interest. Although on the outside he may appear to be better off, he remains morally and financially bankrupt.

The word "creüz" (l. 102) within this passage testifies to the ambiguous status of the gambler. According to Dufournet, "creüz" could mean that the gambler's word would be taken as a guarantee "tu seras cru sur parole" as well as that one would lend him credit "on te fera crédit."[204] In addition, the word could have the sense of depth (*profondeur*) in Old French.[205] The analogy established between this second meaning and the depths of hell is difficult to ignore. The use of the future tense ("seras," l. 102) immediately following this word illustrates that the narrator is aware of what is to come. The gambler will be believed, but by engaging in usury to better his situation, he will also find himself in hell.[206] The polysemy of the term "faille" (l. 104) corroborates this reading, for it could refer to either a piece

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[204] Jean Dufournet, *Rutebeuf poèmes de l'infortune et poèmes de la croisade,* trad. Jean Dufournet, intro. Robert Sabatier (Paris: Librairie Honore Champion, 1979), 52.

[205] *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de toutes ses dialectes du IXe siècle au XVe siècle,* by Frédéric Godefroy (Paris: F. Viewig, 1881), s.v. "creus."

[206] Dicing was also considered to be a form of usury in the Middle Ages, See: Andrew Cowell, *At Play in the Tavern,* 127.

of cloth or an error.[207] This passage, therefore, reinforces the idea that the gambler will receive his material needs, but at a cost to his spiritual future.

The Narrator's Uncertain Success

In the previously cited passages, the narrator attempts to separate himself from the gamblers by making them, rather than himself, the subject of the poems. By doing so, the narrator is able to critique their actions while abstaining from directly implicating himself. Even though the narrator attempts separation, in the end it is ambiguous whether or not he succeeds. In the final lines of the poem, the narrator (or so it seems) proclaims "Or ai ma paie!" (Now I am repayed! l. 105). By using the pronoun "ma," it appears as though the narrator restores himself as the subject of the poem. Yet, the placement of this line at the end of the above passage, where the gambler is advised to resort to usury, makes the "ma" in this line ambiguous, particularly since the pronoun "tu" (you) is used throughout the section. It is therefore difficult to determine if the "tu" is the narrator or an anonymous gambler. The ambiguity of the statement illustrates the uncertain success of the narrator's attempt to separate himself from those he critiques.

If "Or ai ma paie" (l. 105) is read as a proclamation by the narrator, it means that the narrator is conscious of the consequences of his past actions. This consciousness is significant, since this is the first time that such awareness is expressed by the subject of the poem. In Rutebeuf's earlier poems, the narrator serves as an all-knowing being who condemns the acts of others and warns of their

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[207] *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de toutes ses dialectes du IXe siècle au XVe siècle,* by Frédéric Godefroy (Paris: F. Viewig, 1881), s.v. "faille."

future demise.[208] In this poem, the subject comes to this realization himself. If we read the narrator as a moralist attempting to separate himself from the gamblers, the dichotomies of past/present and tavern/nature have a new significance. At a time when subjectivity, inner contrition, and confession were becoming increasingly important in Christian theology for the remission of sins, the narrator who positions himself on the outside looking back and in represent an individual who is actively confronting his past. The narrator takes this initial step by being on the outside and in nature where he is more vulnerable to punishments by God, rather than on the inside where he is protected yet vulnerable to vice and the "*griesche*."

Rather than just a poem about poetic language or a personal poem that centers on the narrator's misery, the "Griesche d'yver" presents its audience with a first look at an individual's attempt to face his past sins and therefore to secure his future salvation. The narrator's present state of suffering, which is expressed through his nudity and his vulnerability serves as a means to remedy his past mistakes. In nature, the narrator is reminded of death and the misery of his life to come if he does not amend his ways. The narrator is, therefore, presented as being in the early stages of self-reflection and repentance. In order to succeed, however, he must take the steps to fully disassociate himself from his gambling past. He attempts to do so by situating his gambling in the past and by criticizing the actions of the gamblers. In the end it unclear as to whether or not he has succeeded. In the next poem, "La Griesche d'estei," the narrator enters this next stage of separation.

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[208] See: analysis of "Des plaies dou monde," "De l'estat du monde," and "La descorde des Jacobins de l'Universitie" in Chapter 1.

He does so by not only separating himself from the gamblers but also his own, “hivernal” past as expressed in "Griesche d'yver" as well as the beginning of "La Griesche d'estei."

"La Griesche d'estei" and the Critically Reflexive Narrator

"La Griesche d'estei" carries on the themes of gambling, poverty, and nudity in the earlier "Griesche d'yver." In addition to a similarity of theme, "La Griesche d'estei" also has a similar objective, for within it the narrator attempts to separate his contemporary self from his past. The theme of separation becomes central in the poem, as the narrator not only separates himself from the actions of the gamblers but also his “hivernal” self. The separation of the narrator from his past is necessary in order for the narrator to critique his prior actions as well as enter into the next phase of self-examination and repentance. He does so by not only examining and judging the actions of others, but also his own actions.

Despite the similarity of theme, the “Griesche d’estei” begins differently than the "Griesche d'yver." Rather than present himself as a suffering victim, the narrator presents himself as a critically reflexive subject. The poem begins with the narrator reflecting on his past, which he describes as being foolish.

> En recordant ma grant folie
> Qui n’est ne gent ne jolie,
> Ainz est vilainne
> Et vilains cil qui la demainne,
> Me plaing .VII. jors en la semaine

Et par raison.

[Remembering my foolishness

Which is neither noble nor charming,

And is therefore corrupt

He who dedicates himself to it is pervert,

I regret it seven days a week

And with reason. ll. 1-6]

In the opening lines of the poem the narrator accomplishes two tasks. First, he examines his past, and second, he deems it to be foolish. The fact that the narrator both examines and negatively identifies his past in the opening lines of the poem is significant since it demonstrates that the theme of self-examination and introspection is much stronger in this poem than in the earlier "Griesche d'yver." Of importance in the opening lines of the poem is not that the narrator has acted foolishly, but the fact that he *finds* error in his prior actions. By doing so, the narrator presents himself as being better informed and morally superior to his former self, since he not only examines his past actions, but he also judges them as foolish.

The narrator of the present is not only reflexive, but is actively engaged in the act of recollection and introspection, which is expressed by the gerund “recordant” (remembering, l. 1). In addition to actively remembering his past, the narrator expresses his remorse for his past foolishness. He laments seven days a week and with reason (“Me plaing .VII. jors en la semaine / Et par raison”/ I regret it seven

days a week / And with reason, ll. 1-6). By reflecting on his past and judging it as foolish, the present narrator of the "Griesche d'estei" portrays himself as being morally superior to his past. In his study of repentance in the Middle Ages, Jean-Charles Payen explains this phenomenon when he states that the regular examination of one's conscious led to the development of interior analysis and, in turn, the refinement of one's moral sense.[209] Not only does the narrator sincerely regret his past actions, but by remembering them and designating them as foolish, he expresses his desire to behave in a way that is more righteous. The moral refinement of the narrator, as expressed in the opening of the poem, is essential for securing his salvation.

The narrator's recognition of his prior faults continues in the next few lines, where he not only describes the consequences of his actions, but more importantly, reiterates that they were foolish.

Si esbahiz ne fut mais hom,
Qu'en yver toute la saison
Ai si ouvrei
Et en ouvrant moi aouvrei
Qu'en ouvrant n'ai riens recouvrei
Dont je me cuevre.
Ci at fol ovrier et fol euvre
Qui par ouvrier riens ne recuevre:.

[209] Jean-Charles Payen, *Le Motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale: des origines à 1230* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967), 76.

[No one has ever been so troubled,

All winter long

I worked

And I worked in such a way

That while working I didn't collect anything

To cover myself.

Foolish worker and foolish work

Whoever by working is unable to collect: ll. 7-14]

In this section of the poem, the narrator explains why he describes his past as foolish. Even though he worked all winter long, he did not collect enough to cover himself. "Cuevre" (l. 13) in this passage could refer to both physically covering (*se vêtir*) as well as a guarantee (*se garantir*).[210] It therefore concerns the narrator's inability to safeguard his present as well as his future. The inefficiency of the narrator's work is reflected in the rhyme, where the words for work and working ("ouvrei," l. 9, "aouvrei," l. 10, "euvre," l. 13) are doubly linked to the fact that the narrator was unable to collect ("(ne)riens recouvrei," l. 11, "riens ne recuevre," l. 14). The narrator's inefficiency in the past is therefore contrasted with his efficiency in the present, since he is *actively* reflecting on and remorseful of his past. His current work is reasonable since it advantageous whereas his past work was foolish since it was not beneficial.

[210] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* note 2, 270.

The Narrator's "Foolish" Trade

The type of work that the narrator performed in the past is ambiguous since the verb "ouvrer" could refer to gambling but also to writing. Zink has argued that the narrator's "work" refers to gambling, particularly since in a later passage the "*griesche*" refers to the gambler as a worker who is unable to collect ("a son ouvrier / Dont puis n'i at nul recouvrier," ll. 18-9).[211] In addition to gambling, however, the narrator's "work" could also refer to writing. To my knowledge, this study is the first to read the work of the narrator as the act of writing. My interpretation is based on several factors. First, the narrator in the "Griesche d'yver," describes himself as in the process of writing, referencing his pathetic *dit* ("Mon dit . . . trop diver," l. 8) as well as his poor story (". . . povre histoire," l. 9).[212] In addition, in "Li mariages Rutebuef" ("Rutebeuf's Marriage"), which was composed at approximately the same time as both *grische* poems, the narrator apologizes for not knowing how to work with his hands (or perform manual labor) and instead only knowing how to write (" Si ne sui pas ovriers de mains," l. 98).[213] This interpretation leads to the question of why the narrator would describe his writing as foolish?

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[211] See: Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 210-11, who argues that the narrator's "work" refers to gambling.

[212] "*Divers*" in Old French can refer both to something that is unusual or particular as well as to something that is perverse. I have decided to adopt Zink's interpretation/translation in my analysis ("mon dit lamentable"). Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 197, l. 8.

[213] The narrator also confesses his inability to do manual work in "Li Diz de la Mensonge" (ll. 7-11)

In the *Besant de Dieu,* Rutebeuf's predecessor William of Normandy laments his past in a manner similar to that of the narrator of "La Griesche d'estei."[214] Both are writers and both have done "foolish work" ("fole e en vaine matire," l. 82). Although never made explicit in Rutebeuf's poem, William shares the reason why he believes his work was foolish. It satisfied worldly rather than spiritual needs and desires.

> Guillames, uns clers qui fu normanz,
> Qui versefia en romanz,
> Fables e contes soleit dire.
> En fole e en vaine matire
> Pecha sovent: Deus li pardont!
> Mult ama les deliz del mond
> Et mult servi ses enemis
> Qui le guerreient tut dis.
> [Guillaume, a Norman clerc,
> Who wrote in the vernacular
> Composed stories and fables.
> Treating such foolish and vain subjects,
> He sinned repeatedly, God forgive him!
> Loving earthly pleasures,
> He served his enemies,

[214] Guillaume de Normandie, *Le Besant de Dieu,* ed. Pierre Ruelle (Bruxellles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1973).

Who waged war on him daily. ll. 79-86][215]

Rather than write righteous or moralistic pieces, William confesses that he has dedicated his life to composing mere fiction. Not only did he receive little benefit from doing so, being constantly accosted by his enemies, but he also sinned against God. William's sin derives from his engagement in an activity that had no spiritual benefit. The only gains he received were worldly. In a manner similar to Rutebeuf, William describes his work as foolish and vain since the subjects he treated were disgraceful. He, therefore, did not benefit God or himself spiritually. William must continue to write, however, in order to support his family.[216] To rectify his situation, William resolves to compose poems that will not only critique the sinful actions of society but that will also serve God.[217] In this way, he will continue to support his family via the only way he knows how as well as to rectify his past sins.

In both the *Besant de Dieu* and the "Griesche d'estei," the narrators lament their past foolish work which has left them without the proper "reward." Although the "reward" of Rutebeuf's poem may initially read as being financial, it can also be interpreted as spiritual, particularly when one considers the key verb found in the opening of "Griesche d'estei," "recouvrer." In addition to the definitions of "to recover" and "to collect," the verb can also mean "to reestablish" or "to restore."[218] In the *Besant de Dieu*, the narrator regrets his past and therefore resolves to

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[215] My translation.

[216] "E pensa qu'il aveit enfanz / E sa moiller a governer / En ne lor aveit que doner / S'om ne li conout por ses diz," ll. 96-9.

[217] "Pensa Guillame qu'il fereit / Vers consonanz ou l'en porreit / Prendre essample e bone matire / Del monde haïr e despire / E de Nostre Seignor servir," ll. 153-7.

[218] *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "recuevrer."

reestablish or restore his relationship with God by composing poems in His honor. By doing so, when he is asked to recount the story of his own life on Judgment Day, he will have something beneficial to say (l. 149-52). In the "Griesche d'estei," the narrator claims that through his work nothing was restored. It was therefore foolish (l. 11, l. 14). When read with respect to the *Besant de Dieu*, these lines can be interpreted as the narrator's failure to produce work that was spiritually beneficial, since through his work he was unable to "reestablish" or "restore" his place with God.[219] Although no longer a gambler, the narrator is no better off since both spiritually and financially he is unable to come out ahead.

The Morally and Intellectually Superior Narrator

Instead of confessing that his current work is foolish, however, the narrator situates his foolishness in the past. This distinction is made in the poem by the narrator's use of the past tense ("Ai si ouvrei," l. 9). By situating his foolish self and foolish work in the past, the narrator positions himself currently as being different. Moreover, because he critiques himself and his past as being foolish, one can assume he is a fool no more. Like William in the *Besant de Dieu,* the narrator of "La Griesche d'estei" distances himself from his foolish past in order to reestablish his relationship with God. By doing so, he takes the next step towards securing his salvation.

[219] Although I use the *Besant de Dieu* as a point of reference in my analysis, this trope also draws from the parable of the prodigal son and *Courtois d'Arras.* In these examples, the sinner is redeemed though physical labor, not writing.

Not only does the narrator separate himself from his foolish past as described in the beginning of "La Griesche d'estei" but also the way he is portrayed in "La Griesche d'yver." As noted above, the narrator of the "Griesche d'yver" is both poor and naked. He suffers because of the winter weather, which ceaselessly attacks him. The narrator of the present in the "Griesche d'estei" also suffers, but instead of physical pain, his is psychological since it is the memory of the past that causes him anguish. The type of suffering that the narrator endures (physical vs. psychological) is another level of separation established between the narrator and his past in the "*griesche*" poems.

In the "Griesche d'estei" the narrator not only separates himself from his foolish past, but also from the gamblers. The description of the actions and misdeeds of the gamblers takes up a larger portion of this poem (66 lines) than the last (29 lines). More space is, therefore, dedicated to analyzing and critiquing the actions of the gamblers in the latter poem. Moreover, whereas the narrator continues to partially portray himself as a victim of the "*griesche*" in the "Griesche d'yver" (albeit through his memory), the narrator of the "Griesche d'estei" makes a greater effort to completely separate himself from the game of dice.

Even though at one point in the poem the narrator admits that he experienced the suffering of the gamblers (ll. 46-9), the rest of the poem he distances himself by showing himself to be better informed and therefore superior to the latter. One example of the distance the narrator creates between the gamblers and himself is found in the following passage.

Qui qu'ait l'argent, Dieux at la noize.

Aillors couvient lor pencers voise,

Car .II. tournois,

Trois parisis, .V. viannois

Ne pueent faire .I. borjois

D'un nu despris.

Je ne di pas que je despris,

Ainz di qu'autres conseus est pris

De cel argent.

[He who has money, curses God.

And needs another occupation,

Because two *turnois,*

Three *parisis*, five *viennois*

Cannot make a *bourgeois*

Out of a naked and despised man.

I am not saying that I despise,

But that I have another use

For this money. ll. 64-72]

In this passage, the narrator reminds those who have been fortunate enough to benefit from gambling that their position does not change. Even though they are well off financially, they are still poor, miserable, and dumb. Michel Zink comments that *nu despris* can refer to both a "naked and despised man" (homme nu et

méprisé) as well as a "man deprived of intelligence" (homme dénué d'intelligence).[220] In addition, this phrase can refer to one who is poor in spirit (nu d'esprit).[221] Through the polysemy of the term, the narrator plays on the relationship between gambling and sin. Though he may have cash in abundance, the gambler will never change his social status nor become redeemed. The narrator also proves himself to be morally superior to the gamblers in this passage since, as he states, he has another use for money than gambling ("Ainz di qu'autres conseus est pris / De cel argent," ll. 71-2). Rather than situate the actions of the gamblers in his own past or memory, as he did in the earlier poem, the narrator portrays himself as an exterior, informed observer who not only observes the gambler's actions but who also criticizes them.

The narrator reinforces his moral and intellectual authority over the gamblers later in the poem. He does so by describing the gamblers as spending and drinking in a way that would make it appear as though they have never ending resources (ll. 78-84). The moment of reckoning occurs for the gamblers at day break, when they must leave the tavern. Outside they find themselves to be poor and nude once again (ll. 89-92). Interestingly, the narrator describes their prior illusion as a *chanson de geste* ("Lors remaignent chansons de geste," l. 88). This literary reference calls to mind the similarity between the *Besant de Dieu* and the "Griesche d'estei," where William's narrator vows to dedicate himself to composing moralizing and dogmatic texts instead of less virtuous genres. If the gamblers' actions are

[220] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes*, note to line 69, 209.
[221] Roger Dragonetti, "Rutebeuf: Les poèmes de la 'griesche,'" 100.

likened to the *chanson de geste*, the narrator's separation from their actions suggests that he, too, vows to write about more noble subjects. By doing so he, like William, will assure his place in heaven. Moreover, the reference to the *chanson de geste* contrasts the fictional reality of the gamblers with the authenticity of the narrator.[222] If what the gamblers think and say is nothing but fiction the fact that the narrator recognizes it as such places his words in the sphere of intelligible reality. He may have once been a fool like the gamblers but is now an intelligent, exterior observer who is able critique the foolish actions of others.

The fiction established by the reference to the *chanson de geste* continues until the end of the poem, when the narrator states that it is once again spring. As referenced earlier, by separating his present self from his past, "hivernal" self the narrator makes a distinction between his enlightened self and his former, foolish self. The gambler, however, does not experience a similar change of state from one season to the next.

> Et avris entre,
>
> Et il n'ont riens defors le ventre.
>
> Lors sunt il vite et prunte et entre,
>
> Eiz vos la joie!
>
> N'i a si nu qui ne s'esjoie,

[222] In the anonymous satire "De quoi vienent li traïtor et li mauvès," the narrator assimilates the *chanson de geste* with other "fictitious" texts, "Or escoutez, et cler et lai, / Ne vos dirai ne son ne lai, / Ne chancon de geste ne fable, / Mais chose tote veritable" (Listen, clergy and lay, / I will not recite a song or a lai,/ Nor a *chanson de geste* or fable / But the truth" ll. 1-4), Camille Rivan, *Histoire Littéraire de la France,* des Religieux Bénedictins de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur et des Membres de l'Institut Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, XXIII (Paris: Firmin Didot and Treuttel and Wurtz, 1856), 285; Ms. de Saint Gall, 1830, fol. 34.

Plus sunt seigneur que raz en moie

Tout cel estei.

Trop ont en grant froidure estei;

Or lor at Dieux un tenz prestei

Or il fait chaut,

Et d'autre choze ne lor chaut:

Tuit apris sunt d'aleir deschauz.

[Then April arrives,

And they have nothing over their bellies.

Then they are alive, prompt, and alert,

You have never seen such joy!

There isn't a single one who isn't joyful,

They are more lordly than rats in a pile of wheat

All summer long.

They had been cold so long;

Now God has given them a time

When it is warm,

And they don't need anything else;

They have learned to go barefoot. ll. 105-16]

In this passage, the arrival of spring brings great joy to the gamblers, since it will soon be warm outside. The warmth is especially welcome since their winter diversions have left them without anything to wear. Even though the change of

seasons is celebrated, the narrator is quick to point out that the condition of the gamblers does not change. Regardless of the season, they are always without shoes.

Although the passage from winter to spring is marked temporally by the passage from the past tense to the present, the gambler's position does not alter. The rhyme between “estei” (were, l. 112) and “prestei” (present, l. 113) illustrates the impossibility of change since the way they were is the same as the way they are. Not only does the position of the gamblers not change but they also remain the subject of the poem to the end. Unlike the "Griesche d'yver" the narrator does not return to question his own role in regards to that of the gamblers. He remains an outsider. The narrator’s exterior position is expressed in line 99, where the narrator states "Dit Rutebués" (Says Rutebeuf) after describing the unethical actions of the gamblers.

> Tout ont joei, tot ont beü.
>
> Li uns at l'autre deceü,
>
> Dit Rutebués
>
> [They all gambled, they all drank.
>
> They deceived one another,
>
> Says Rutebeuf, ll. 97-8]

In this passage, the narrator not only names himself but he also designates himself as the narrator of the gambler’s story through the verb “dit” (says, l.98). By doing so, the narrator separates himself from the gamblers by telling *their* story rather than

his own. Whereas the gamblers are stuck in the cycle of misery, the narrator's condition changes. Though once a fool, the narrator is a fool no more.

Within Rutebeuf's "La Griesche d'estei" several forms of separation are at play. Not only does the narrator separate himself from the gamblers, but the present narrator also distances himself from his past, foolish self. Unlike the end of "La Griesche d'yver" it is no longer ambiguous as to whether or not the narrator has completely separated himself from the deeds and actions of the gamblers. He is the teller of their tale as well as the informed critic of their actions. Through his separation from both the gamblers as well as his own, foolish past, the narrator positions himself as morally and intellectually superior to the latter. He has made mistakes, but is now in the position to recognize them as such and resolve to do better. He is not only remorseful but he has also become repentant.

The Narrator's Final Separation: "Li diz des ribaux de greive"

The separation between the narrator and the gamblers does not become complete, however, until Rutebeuf's next poem "Li diz des ribaux de greive." Assumed to have been composed in the same period as Rutebeuf's "*griesche*" poems, "Li diz des ribaux de greive" repeats the themes presented in the earlier two. In it the "*ribaut*," an injurious term which could refer to someone who was immoral, a vagabond, a thief, or simply mean spirited, is left without proper clothes or shoes and is therefore victim to attacks launched by the cold as well as by flies.[223] The ambiguity of who may be represented by the term "*ribaut*" expands the narrator's

[223] *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française du IXe siècle au XVe siècle,* s.v. "ribaut."

earlier critique. It is no longer just the gamblers who are criticized but anyone who lives immorally.

I have added "Li diz des ribaux de greive" to the end of my analysis of the "*griesche*" poems since I believe that this poem serves as the final point of separation between the narrator and his gambling past. The similarity of themes between all three of the poems presents an analogy that is difficult to ignore and that deserves to be examined. Due to the brevity of the poem, I have included it in its entirety below.

Ribaut, or estes vos a point:
Li aubre despoillent lor branches
Et vos n'aviez de robe point,
Si en auriez froit a vos hanches.
Queil vos fussent or li porpoint
Et li seurquot forrei a manches!
Vos aleiz en etei si joint,
Et en yver aleiz si cranche!
Vostre soleir n'ont mestier d'oint:
Vos faites de vos talons planches.
Les noires mouches vos ont point,
Or vos repoinderont les blanches.
[Ribauts, you are in such a state:
As the trees rid themselves of their leaves

Likewise you have no robe,

So your haunches will be cold.

You need doublets

And fur lined surcoats with sleeves!

In the summer you moved about so easily,

In the winter you move about with a limp!

Your heels don't need polish:

Your feet serve as your soles.

The black flies bit you,

Now its the turn of the white. ll. 1-12]

In this poem, the narrator is no longer the subject, but instead takes on the role of the informed observer. Just as the trees lose their leaves, the narrator observes that the "*ribauts*" lose their clothing when winter arrives. In addition to the loss of clothing, the narrator also observes the actions of the "*ribauts*." In summer they move about normally, but in winter their once normal gait becomes a limp. If the information provided thus far would lead one to believe that the "*ribauts*" manage better in the summer than in the winter, the narrator is quick to correct this misjudgment. He ends the poem by recalling the verse about the black and white flies from the "Griesche d'yver."

In her analysis of the poem, Nancy Regalado states that "the absence of moralizing generalization and expressions of lament, and the substitution of the directly challenging 'vos' for the poetic 'I,' give this perfect vignette an entirely

different quality than the mournful 'Griesche d'yver.'"[224] For Regalado the poem is exceptional since "there is no explanation given for the *ribaut's* poverty and no commentary of hope or despair. Rutebeuf only describes their state: the *ribauts* have no future or past, but only an eternal present which changes with the seasons."[225] Jean Dufournet makes a similar observation in his analysis of the poem.[226] For Dufournet, the closed world of poverty is mimicked by the formal enclosure of the poem, which is stylistically devoid and concise. It pits the poor "*ribauts*" against the cold, yet never mentions how or why they arrived at there present state. The formal enclosure of the poem confines the "*ribauts*" in the circle of the eternal present, from which they cannot escape.[227] Both Regalado and Dufournet observe that the "*ribauts*" in "Li diz des ribaux de greive" are trapped or enclosed in an eternal present. No justification is given for how they arrived in their current state or if they have any hope for their future. Furthermore, both have remarked that the character of the narrator or the poetic "I" is largely absent from the poem. The only characters are the "*ribauts*" and the elements that attack them with each passing season.

My reading of the poem is consistent with that of Regalado and Dufournet. I do not wish to challenge their interpretation but instead to use it to support my observations in the earlier "Griesche d'yver" and "Griesche d'estei." It is important to note that although Regalado and Dufournet note the absence of the narrator in the

[224]Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf*, 308-9.
[225] ibid., 309.
[226] Jean Dufournet, *Rutebeuf poèmes de l'infortune*, 34.
[227] ibid.

later poem, they make no note of his gradual withdrawal in the earlier poems. If the "Griesche d'estei" serves as a second step in the separation between the narrator and his gambling past, "Li diz des ribaux de greive" is most certainly the last. Not only is the narrator absent from the poem but he is completely outside the verbal enclosure within which he has sentenced the "*ribauts*" to an eternal present of unrelenting misery. The interior/exterior dichotomy is therefore still present within this last poem. Instead of a physical closure (for example the tavern) the "*ribauts*" are confined to a poetic enclosure, as Dufournet has observed. Although not physically present within the poem, the narrator stands on the outside, observing and reporting the actions of the "*ribauts*" to his audience. Being entrapped in a poetic enclosure, the "*ribauts*" are unable to see past their current state. The narrator, however, by drawing from his past, is able to convey the future consequences of the "*ribaut's*" actions. As in the earlier "Griesche d'yver," the "*ribauts*" forthcoming misery is expressed through the reference to "white flies." As noted in the analysis of the "Griesche d'yver," in addition to "snowflakes," "white flies" could also refer to fly larvae, the transition from black flies to white symbolizing the suffering in life and then in death. The semantic field of decay, nudity, and disability found within the passage corroborates this reading. If interpreted as death, the poetic enclosure itself is representative of hell, which will trap the sinful "*ribauts*" for eternity. By positioning himself on the outside of his poetic enclosure, the narrator frees himself from a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rather than remain trapped in the present and therefore doomed to a perpetual state of

misery, the narrator has successfully escaped. He is able to recognize his past faults and see into the future, thereby securing his salvation.

This chapter has examined the gradual separation of the narrator from his immoral past in Rutebeuf's poems of misfortune (*poèmes de l'infortune*). As shown in the analysis above, the narrator progresses from suffering physically to suffering psychologically on account of his past. He laments his current state, but also expresses the regret that he feels for his past actions, which he qualifies as foolish. By reflecting on and regretting his past, the narrator portrays himself as a self-reflexive, introspective, and therefore repentant individual. The narrator's repentance is key to securing his future salvation, which until this point had been as uncertain as the gambler's fate.

Chapter 3: Conflicting Times: The Opposition Between Feudal And Commercial Values In "Le Miracle De Theophile"

The commercial revolution of thirteenth century Paris created monumental shifts in the framework of society. As a result, several ideological conflicts emerged, including that between the emerging bourgeois class and what might be called the more traditional, feudal society.[228] As Regalado has observed, the commercial revolution created a sense of moral anxiety, as there was a lack of concepts available to express human relationships based on monetary exchange rather than the spiritual values of an earlier feudal age, which itself was dominated by Christian morality.[229] Whereas the latter was founded on the ideal of mutual cooperation and cohesiveness, the former concerned itself with individualism and personal gain. This chapter will study the conflict that occurred between the commercial and the feudal

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[228] The use of the word "feudalism" is highly contested in medieval studies. In *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted,* Susan Reynolds problematizes the use this term, arguing that feudalism was not a central and defining institution of medieval society as earlier scholars, including, François-Louis Ganshof and Marc Bloch, have argued, p. 3. I do not wish to argue for or against feudalism as a real, tangible institution since I regard feudalism, and more specifically feudal values, to be idealized mental constructs. My interpretation of feudalism is based on that of Georges Duby, who, in his article "La Féodalité? Une mentalité médiévale," argued that feudalism as an ideological construct based on certain moral precepts, the practice of certain virtues, and the ideas of companionship and dependence, p. 766. See: Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Georges Duby, "La Féodalité? Une mentalité médiévale," *Annales ESC* 13.4 (1958): 765-71.

[229] Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf*, 15; A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, 239.

value systems through its representation in Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile."[230] Although traditionally regarded by Rutebeuf scholars as a religious poem, the story of a pious man's fall to the devil's temptation and his eventual salvation at the hands of the Virgin, it is worth reading "Le miracle de Theophile" as a call for a return to the idealized past of the feudal age. Michel Zink, Stephane Gompertz, Denis Lalande, and Mosche Lazar, for example, have studied "Le miracle de Theophile," from the point of view of Theophile's redemption.[231] Grace Frank has considered it to be an autobiographical piece.[232] Alain Corbellari takes a different approach by arguing that "Le miracle de Theophile" was written as an allegory against the rise of scholasticism.[233] This chapter will show how the play encourages traditional, feudal values and condemns contemporary, commercial attitudes to argue that Theophile should not only be regarded as a victim, or later, hero in the pursuit of a perfect piety, but instead as a member of a now corrupt world, who, thanks to the Virgin Mary, can be reinstated into the structure of an idealized past, one that still valued community and held Christian values in high esteem.

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[230] Although Manuscript C is unique in that it only contains two extracts from "Le miracle de Theophile," Manuscript A will be the main manuscript examined in this study, since it is the only manuscript to contain "Le miracle de Theophile" in its entirety.

[231] See: Michel Zink, "De la repentance Rutebeuf à la repentance Theophile," *Littératures* 15 (1986): 19-24; Stephane Gompertz, "Du dialogue perdu au dialogue retrouvé: Salvation et détour dans *Le miracle de Theophile,* de Rutebeuf," *Romania* 100 (1979): 519-28; Denis Lalande, "De la 'charte' de Theophile à la lettre commune de Satan: *Le miracle de Theophile* de Rutebeuf," *Romania* 108 (1987): 548-58; Mosche Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters: The Pre-Faustian Theme of Despair and Revolt," *Modern Language Notes* 87.6 (1972): 31-50; Emanuel J. Mickle Jr, "Free Will and Antithesis in the *Miracle de Theophile*," *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* 99 (1983): 304-316.

[232] Grace Frank, *Medieval French Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954),108. Regalado takes the opposite position believing that Rutebeuf's writing is in no way autobiographical, but that it, instead, follows thirteenth century conventions. See: Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf.*

[233] Alain Corbellari, *La voix des clercs*.

Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile" recounts the story of a cleric, Theophile, who, after being removed from his position by the newly appointed Bishop, seeks out Salatin, the devil's servant, as a means to regain his position and his wealth. Salatin arranges a meeting between Theophile and the devil, during which the devil asks Theophile for his allegiance by becoming his vassal. After seven years as the devil's servant, Theophile becomes conscious of his error, and fearing for his soul, prays to the Virgin Mary to redeem him. The Virgin agrees to help and, after retrieving the charter that bound Theophile to the devil, returns it to Theophile on the condition that he ask the priest to read the charter aloud to the congregation so that they, as he, do not make the same mistake.

The Theophile Legend

Although modern audiences associate "Le miracle de Theophile" with Rutebeuf, Theophile's legend was rooted in the classical and medieval literary and artistic traditions well before Rutebeuf composed his theatrical version.[234] The story of Theophile, or Theophilus, began as a sixth century Greek narrative composed by Eutychianus, who claimed to be a member of Theophilus' household.[235] This version was later adapted into Latin by Paul the Deacon (Paul Diacre) in the ninth century. Paul's text later became the inspiration for a series of texts that would span the next five centuries, including Gautier de Coincy's *Comment Theophilus vint à péntince*.[236]

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[234] Modern interest in the play stems from Gustave Cohen's 1933 production at the Sorbonne as well as Frank's 1925 edition of the play.

[235] Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 32.

[236] Gauthier De Coinci, *Le miracle de Theophile: ou comment Theophile vint à la pénitence,* ed., trans., and intro. Anette Garnier (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998).

Theophile's legend also became a popular *exemplum* used in sermons honoring the Virgin Mary and was incorporated into the liturgy in the eleventh century.[237] According to Faral and Bastin, Rutebeuf's version was directly inspired by two sources. The first, an abridged version of Paul the Deacon's text, composed in Latin by Fulbert de Chartres, and the second, Gautier de Coincy's vernacular adaptation, which served as the principal inspiration for Rutebeuf's own text.[238] The story of Theophile was also well known outside of literature. It was sculpted on the façades of cathedrals, painted on sanctuary walls, and depicted in stain glass windows.[239] The vast expanse of the legend attests to its relevance for Rutebeuf's contemporaries. Any variations between Rutebeuf's account and other versions of the legend would have been apparent. As I will illustrate in this chapter, Rutebeuf's adaptations to the legend have a profound effect on its overall message. The morality of Rutebeuf's text goes beyond Marian pardon, conversion, and redemption to include a critique of man's misconduct in contemporary, commercial society and his eventual return to the idealized past of the feudal age.

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[237] Grace Frank, *Medieval French Drama*, 106.

[238] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* II, 168; For Gautier de Coincy as being the main inspiration for Rutebeuf, See: Joselyn Reed, "*Le miracle de Theophile* de Rutebeuf," *Bulletin des jeunes romanistes* XI-XII (1965): 34-55 at 38; Frank, *Medieval French Plays*, 109. As noted by Faral and Bastin in their introduction to "Le miracle de Theophile," the part of the play inspired by Fulbert de Chartres is the scene where Mary takes the charter from the devil. This scene is absent from de Coincy's version (note 168). Also see: Joselyn Reed.

[239] Ernest Faligan, "Des formes iconographiques de la légende de Theophile," *Revue des traditions populaires* 5.1 (1890): 1-14. The most well known example can be found on the North portal of Notre Dame de Paris. The only other sculted form is at the cathedral of Lyon. Stained glass depictions can be found at the cathedral of Auxerre, the cathedral of Laon, the cathedral of Mans, the cathedral of Beauvais, the cathedral of Troyes, as well as the church of Saint-Julien-du-Saut in Yvonne. Most all were created during the thirteenth century.

The Tension between the Commercial and the Feudal

The tension between the commercial and the feudal in "Le miracle de Theophile" manifests itself in several ways. One example of this tension is the almost equal presence of feudal and commercial terms within the play.[240] This equivalence stands in contrast with Rutebeuf's earlier poems that critique commercial society's vices, studied in Chapter one, since the earlier poems favor commercial terms over feudal terms. Michel-Marie Dufeil studies the number of feudal, religious, and commercial words in Rutebeuf's corpus in order to determine if Rutebeuf could be considered a "modern" poet, based on the number of commercial terms in his poems. In Dufeil's calculation, of the 1,027 total words in "De l'estat du monde," for example, 8 belong to the feudal lexicon and 123 to the commercial.[241] The same pattern holds true for "Des plaies dou monde," where 11 words are feudal and 87 are commercial.[242] The predominance of commercial terms in these poems suggests a relation between commerce and the decline of society. In "Le miracle de Theophile," the proportion of feudal and commercial terms is much more equivalent. Out of a total of 4,200 words, 111 are feudal and 101 are commercial.[243] The equal proportion of feudal and commercial terms in the poem signals a tension between the two modes of expression that needs to be examined.

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[240] Michel-Marie Dufeil, "Rutebeuf pris au mot: L'univers du marché en son vocabulaire," *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévalistes de l'enseignement supérieur public,* 19e congres, Reims (1988): 219-35.

[241] Michel-Marie Dufeil, "Rutebeuf pris au mot," 224.

[242] ibid.

[243] Due to the fact that "Le miracle de Theophile" is a religious play, the religious terms dominate at 225 words. ibid.

13th Century Miracle Plays

Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile" is not the only theatrical piece of the thirteenth century to express the tension between feudal and commercial mindsets, since this tension was common to miracle plays. Miracle plays were a genre of medieval theater that broke free from the earlier liturgical tradition. They were dramatizations of miraculous events performed by the Virgin Mary in response to requests from a believer in difficulty, or episodes from the life of a saint during which similar miraculous events occurred.[244] Miracle plays were prominent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries more than likely due to the spread of the cult of the Virgin Mary as well as the increase in the number of *confréries* and trade guilds, which were largely responsible for the performance of these plays. An additional attraction of miracle plays was that they were based in the real, secular world.[245] The audience could, therefore, relate to the settings and the characters.

Confréries and trade guilds not only were responsible for the production of the plays but also, as I argue, their content. As noted above, a tension between the feudal and commercial mindsets was a common characteristic of the miracle play. Although the plays sometimes ended with a reconciliation between the two, as is the case of the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* described below, the feudal always took precedence over the commercial. Not surprisingly, the feudal values of mutual cooperation and loyalty were the same values held by the *confréries* and trade guilds, which sought to

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[244] David Flory, *Marian Representations in the Miracle Tales of Thirteenth Century Spain and France* (Washington D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), xiii.
[245] Graham A. Runnalls, "Miracle Plays," *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia,* ed. William W. Kiebler, Grover A. Zinn, et. al., (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 1179-80.

form communities based on solidarity and mutual aid.[246] The prevalence of these organizations at the apex of the medieval commercial revolution testifies the importance of building and maintaining communities of like-minded people in an era marked by individualism and the desire for personal gain. By composing a play that substantiates the importance of community, as does "Le miracle de Theophile," Rutebeuf and his fellow playwrights reinforce the ideals of these organizations.

In addition to "Le miracle de Theophile," the only other known miracle plays originated from the city of Arras. Like thirteenth century Paris, thirteenth century Arras was a center of commerce and trade.[247] As such, the role of money within society was a principal concern. This concern is reflected in the theatrical literature of thirteenth century Arras. Each of the most well-known works from the region (The *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, *Jeu de la feuillée*, and *Courtois d'Arras*) centers on the question of money and the accompanying vice of avarice.[248] Although in the *Jeu de la feuillée*, evil, violence, madness, and despair triumph in the end, the other works offer a solution to the commercial world typified by the tavern.[249] Through hard labor, Courtois, whose character is based on the parable of prodigal son, is able to

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[246] Catherine Vincent, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France : XIII^e^-XV^e^* (Paris : Éditions Albin Michel, 1994); According to Lester Little, "Conviviality and fraternity, overlaid with some form of religious identity, appeared to have motivated the early formation of the guilds." See: *Religious Poverty and Profit Economy* (London: Paul Elek, 1978), 25.

[247] See: Marie Ungureanu, *La Bourgeoisie naissante: Société et littérature bourgeoises d'Arras aux XII^e^ et XIII^e^ siècles,* intro. Lucien Febvre (Arras: Commission des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais, 1955).

[248] ibid., 241.

[249] Adam le Bossu, *Le jeu de la feuillée,* trad. Claude Buridant and Jean Trotin (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1983).

free himself from the tavern and once again return home.[250] In the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, the fact that the Saracens end up richer than they were at the beginning of the play, yet still believe in the "true," Christian God, illustrates to the audience that one could be wealthy and a good Christian.[251] In this last example, the play legitimizes wealth by associating it with feudal values, thereby illustrating the continued importance of the latter within the commercial context. As will be shown in the chapter to follow, Rutebeuf's play varies from that of Bodel since it does not seek to legitimize the commercial mentality but instead to refute it.[252]

The Fragility of the Standing Feudal Order

The opening scene of the Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile" presents a curious mix of feudal and commercial references. These references serve to introduce the conflict that will ensue between the two mentalities for the remainder of the play. The play opens with Theophile discussing how he has been mistreated and abandoned by those who are supposed to be his superiors. The Bishop has deprived him of his position and God no longer hears his prayers. By acting in such a manner, Theophile's superiors behave in a way that is contrary to that outlined in the feudal agreement, wherein the lord owed to his vassal protection and

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[250] *Courtois d'Arras* is a subtle variation on the parable of the prodigal son, 15 Lk. 11-32. *Courtois d'Arras: l'enfant prodigue,* ed. and trans. Jean Dufournet (Paris: Flammarion, 1995).

[251] Jean Dufournet, *Le Théâtre arrageois au XIII^e siècle,* coll. Medievalia 69 (Orléans: Éditions Paradigme, 2008), 5.

[252] In her chapter on medieval French theater, Helen Solterer explains how theater often had a social function. It permitted townspeople to externalize and debate the problems besetting them, including, religious hypocrisy, economic fraud, and emotional deception. Helen Solterer, "Theatre and theatricality," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature,* Ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 185.

maintenance.[253] Within the opening scene, the expression of Theophile's superiors' failure to properly perform their role is accompanied by the suggestion that they have also lost their power or have become weak. When referencing how the Bishop has deprived him of his position, for example, Theophile employs a chess metaphor: "Bien m'a dit li evesque 'Eschac!' / Et m'a rendu maté en l'angle" (The Bishop said to me 'Check!' / And cornered and checkmated me, ll. 6-7).[254] The reference to the checkmate in this passage serves two functions. First, it references the withdrawal of Theophile from his position by the Bishop. Second, it evokes a weakness on the part of the superior (king), who in the game of chess is threatened by his adversary when a "check" is called. The idea of vulnerability is repeated when Theophile discusses the role of God in his life. Rather than a powerful figure, God is described as absent and not caring about the events that occur on earth.[255] Angered by God's lack of concern, Theophile threatens to wage war against him.

Se or pooie a lui tancier,

Et combatrë et escremir,

La char li feroie fremir.

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[253] François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism,* trans. Philip Grierson, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Roe, 1961), 94.

[254] The word "eschac" referred to the interjection of one of the two players of chess, warning his adversary that his king was threatened. The term was borrowed from the Persian term *šāh mat* or "the king is dead." The final "c" is perhaps due to hybridization with the Old French term *eschec* or "loot/booty," issued from the French-Germanic dialect (*francique*) word *skak.* This definition corresponds to the goal of the game, which is to seize all of the pieces of one's adversary until the final capture of the king. The Old French term for the game of chess and loot/booty are therefore the same. See: *Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française,* dir. Alain Rey, 4th ed. (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2010), s.v. "échec."

[255] "Diex? Oïl! qu'en a il a fere? / En autre lieu l'escovient trere, / Ou il me fet l'oreille sorde, / Qu'il n'a cure de ma falorde." (God, Yes! Why would he care? / He is occupied elsewhere, / He doesn't want to hear me, / He hasn't a care for my stories ll. 13-6). My translation is based on Faral and Bastin's notes and translation into modern French for this passage.

[If I could quarrel with him,

And combat and fight,

I would make his flesh tremble. ll. 30-2]

This passage contains a series of verbs that evoke physical violence. Theophile claims that if he could only reach God and fight him, he would make his flesh tremble. Within this passage, God's power is diminished in two ways. First, Theophile humanizes Him by embodying Him in the flesh. Theophile no longer describes him a powerful spirit but a man. Second, the threatening of His person with physical violence demonstrates the possibility of defeat. If God were attainable, he would suffer at the hand of his servant.[256]

The opening of the play, therefore, presents two examples of the fragility of the standing feudal order through its illustration of the weakness of Rutebeuf's superiors,' namely the Bishop and God. With his superiors weakened, Theophile can now set his sights on his new "lord," money. Rather than rely on the support of his superiors, Theophile hopes to regain his position through a return of his wealth. Feudal concerns are, therefore, replaced by commercial concerns since it is not the care or protection of his superiors that Theophile is after, but instead money. As the play progresses, Theophile's independence becomes increasingly manifest as he continues to either abstain from or disrupt communal relationships in order to act in his own self-interest.

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[256] The threat of physical violence goes against the feudal agreement. In a letter addressed to Duke William V of Aquitaine in 1020, Bishop Fulbert of Chartres provides a definition of the obligations created by the contract of vassalage. The first obligation listed is that the vassal must cause no injury to the body of his lord (Incolume, videlicet ne sit domino in damnum de corpore suo); cited in François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism*, 83.

Theophile's Avarice

In the play, Theophile is concerned with money because he is poor, yet the reason for his poverty appears to be due to himself rather than an outside source. According to Theophile, his poverty stems from the fact that he has either given away or spent all of his money ("*Tout* ai doné et despendu / Et *tout* ai aus povres tendu," / I gave and spent everything / And handed it all to the poor, ll. 3-4).[257] The repetition of the word "tout" (everything) calls into question the sincerity of Theophile's claim to be charitable. The logic of Theophile's claim is flawed, for if he spent *all* of his money he would have nothing left to give. In addition to questioning Theophile's honesty, the passage also illustrates Theophile's role in his miserable state of affairs. If *all* of his money was either spent and/or given away on his own accord, it is his own fault that he is now poor. This observation is significant in the context of the story for it shows that Theophile is not a victim of poverty at the hands of another, but instead the source of his own misery. It is through Theophile's own mistreatment of money that he has found himself in an impoverished state.

Rather than blame himself, however, Theophile chooses to blame God for his current situation. Even though, as shown above, Theophile is the victim of his own negligence, he treats himself as the victim of God's punishment. God, Theophile claims, no longer hears his prayers (ll. 14-5). No longer caring for God or His threats, Theophile claims that he would be willing to do anything to regain his wealth ("N'est riens c'on por avoir ne face: / Ne pris riens Dieu ne sa manace. / One would do

[257] My emphasis

anything for money: / I havent a care for God nor his threats, ll. 19-20). For Theophile, money becomes the new God, since he is so desperate to become wealthy that he is willing to forgo his old alliances. It is significant that Theophile chooses the verb "pris" (l. 20) to express his renunciation of God, since this verb stems from the Latin *pretiare* (to appreciate or value) as well as *premium* (price). It, therefore, holds a commercial significance.[258] God in this case is no longer of any "value" to Theophile, since He has done nothing to return Theophile to his position. By using "pris" (l. 20) in his threat against God, Theophile reiterates his obsession with money.

Theophile's avarice presents a new motif to the legend. In both Paul the Deacon and Gautier's versions, for example, it was Theophile's pride that led him away from God, since he was more concerned with his honor than his wealth.[259] In Rutebeuf's version, avarice lay at the base of Theophile's renouncement of God. Rather than being concerned with a return to his position, or a victim of pride, Theophile laments the loss of his wealth.[260] The fact that Rutebeuf's version begins *in medias res* places particular emphasis on this change, since rather than provide the audience with an introduction to his more virtuous past, as in earlier versions,

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[258] *Le Dictionnaire de l'ancien français,* dir. Algirdas Julien Greimas, Les Grands dictionnaires Larousse, s.v. "prisier, proisier."

[259] Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 50.

[260] See: Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf,* 17; Stephane Gompertz, "Du Dialogue perdu au dialogue retrouvé," 522; Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 50. The turn from pride to avarice continues in subsequent versions of the Theophile legend. "By the time of the fourteenth and fifteenth century middle-low German plays, Theophilus's preoccupation is almost totally financial," Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 50.

the play begins by exhibiting Theophile's avarice.[261] By replacing his service to God for the pursuit of riches, Theophile abandons the values of feudal society for those of the commercialized society.

The change in the hierarchy of vices from pride to avarice was one of the consequences of the socioeconomic crisis that took part in the thirteenth century. As Nancy Regalado observes, "in treatises on moral corruption, Avarice often replaced Pride as the root of the tree by which vices sprang."[262] Lester Little and Richard Newhauser who, as noted in chapter one, have both studied the influence of the commercial revolution in the reestablishment of avarice as a principal vice corroborate Regalado's remark.[263] Pride was an aristocratic vice, often portrayed as a knight falling off of his stumbling horse. This image was based on the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, an allegorical poem describing moral conflicts that was popular throughout the Middle Ages.[264] Pride typically involved the abuse of secular

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[261] In Gautier's version of the legend, Theophile is described as "Si bons hom ert si parfais / Que moult estoit de grant renon" (He was such a good and perfect man / That he had a great reputation ll. 22-3), "Tant estoit douz et tant humainz / Qu'il ne pooit tenir as mainz / Tot ne donast a povre gent. / N'estoit pas sers a son argent" (He was so gentle and kind / That he could not possess anything / Without giving it all to the poor / He was not a servant to his money ll. 25-8), "Et tant estoit de sainte vie / Ne fesist nule vilenie" (He was so saintly / He never did anything vile ll. 35-6), "Tant ert de grant religïon / Et plainz de grant humelité" (He was of such great piety / Full of such great humility ll. 40-1)

[262] Nancy Regalado, *Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf*, 16; The first to state 'Avarice is the root of all evil' was the 11th century Peter Damian, See: Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and Profit Economy*, 36.

[263] Lester Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice;" Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed*. Also see: Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, 74.

[264] There are sixteen extant manuscripts dating from the ninth century to the end of the thirteenth,

[264] Priscilla Baumann, "avarice," *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography : Themes Depicted in Works of Art,* ed. Helene E. Roberts (Chicago : Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 91. See: Judith Kellogg, *Medieval Artistry and Exchange*, 35 ; Lester Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice," 32.

power, rebellion against God, and exaggerated individualism.[265] According to Bloomfield, pride went against the disciplined and corporate society that the Middle Ages held as an ideal.[266] Avarice was also regarded as being an abuse of power, due, in part, to the influence of Augustine and Gregory the Great. According to Augustine, "the devil had been made to fall by avarice and everyone knows that this avarice consisted not in a love of money but also in a love of power."[267] Augustine also believed that avarice expressed the general notion of wanting too much or desiring something in excess.[268] In addition to being an abuse of power, avarice was also regarded as an individualistic vice. It was often depicted as a crouching, clutching, solidary figure surrounded by moneybags.[269] One of the most common depictions of avarice portrays a miser surrounded by demons with a thick purse hanging from his neck.[270] Even though pride and avarice shared similar traits, there was one major difference between the two. Money was not a factor in the characterization of pride, since pride, as noted in Chapter one, was dominant in an era of relatively little monetary exchange. Bloomfield describes this phenomenon when he states,

> We may perhaps say that Gregory and the early Middle Ages did not emphasize avarice as the chief of the Sins because society then

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[265] Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins,* 75. Lester Little contests this reading, stating, "it is so vague as to virtually have no meaning. The statement as a whole leaves unclear who was imposing upon whom this ideal of a disciplined order and who was warning that the worst conceivable vice was pride as expressed in rebellion." Little interprets warnings against the sin of pride as devices against the arbitrary abuse of power. Lester Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice," 32-4.

[266] Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins,* 75.

[267] ibid.

[268] ibid.

[269] ibid., 37.

[270] Priscilla Baumann, "avarice," *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography,* 91.

> possessed little absolute wealth and what there was consisted largely of land. The merchants and bourgeoisie were not important factors in society until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Avarice does not need much to manifest itself, yet greater wealth must make for greater opportunities for avarice. And wealth in the form of money is more measurable than wealth in the form of land.[271]

As Bloomfield explains, avarice was not a dominant vice in the period previous to the twelfth century because wealth was more difficult to measure during this period. As money increasingly began to be circulated in larger quantities, the potential to manifest signs of wealth also increased. As a result, money began to become associated with power.[272]

The association between money and power is revealed in "Le miracle de Theophile" since Theophile's loss of power is linked to his loss of wealth. Theophile believes that he is no longer honorable not because of the loss of his position but because of the loss of his wealth. By changing Theophile's primary vice from pride to avarice, Theophile becomes a representative of commercial society's principal vice. This characterization continues to become developed in the play during Theophile's exchanges with Salatin and the devil where he places greater importance on money than building and maintaining relationships.

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[271] Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, 75; Gregory is pope Gregory the Great (d. 604)
[272] Jacques Le Goff. *Money and the Middle Ages*, 2; Judith Kellogg, *Medieval Artistry and Exchange*, 36.

Theophile and Salatin

The first exchange occurs between Theophile and Salatin, the unmistakable "other." In the legend, Salatin acts as the intermediary between Theophile and the devil.[273] Specifically, he adopts the role of the devil's servant, bringing Theophile to his master. Traditionally, Salatin has been referred to as both a Jew and a magician.[274] In Rutebeuf's version, however, the origins of Salatin are much less clear. He conjures the devil by use of a spell, and therefore engages in magic, but scholars have long disputed his ethnicity, referring to him both as a Jew and a Saracen.[275] Faral and Bastin have adopted the later position, arguing that the name Salatin not only sounds like a Saracen name, but that in the play Theophile expresses his fear of ending up in Hell with Cahu, a Saracen divinity.[276] The characterization of Salatin as a Saracen/Jew may at first seem odd, but was in fact quite common during the Middle Ages. Beginning in the eleventh century, Jews and Saracens were often described as sharing similar characteristics since both were regarded as enemies of Christianity.[277] Both were also portrayed as having

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[273] For a relationship between the two, see: Josh Trachenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (Skokie, IL: Varda Books, 2001)*;* Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and Profit Economy*, 53.

[274] The exception to this is Gautier's version, where "Salatin" is a Jew but not a magician. See: Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 37.

[275] Gilbert Dahan, "Salatin, du *Miracle de Theophile* de Rutebeuf," *Le Moyen Âge* 83 (1977): 445-468 at 446. For Salatin's depiction as a Jew, see: Gustave Cohen, *Études d'histoire du théâtre en France au Moyen-Age et à la Renaissance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956). For his more general depiction as an infidel, see: Grace Frank, *Medieval French Drama.* For his depiction as a Saracen, see: Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* II.

[276] Edomnd Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* II, 175.

[277] The characterization of the Jew and the Saracen as the "other" did not begin until the 11th century. It was fully developed in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. Michael Frassetto, "The Image of the Saracen as Heretic in the Sermons of Ademar of Chabannes," *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other,* ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York:

relationships with the devil.[278] What matters in the characterization of Salatin, or lack thereof, is the fact that he is designated as the "other." In other words, by being a non-Christian, he represents a being or way of life that is contrary to the Christian value system.

Even though Theophile is a man of the Church whereas Salatin is in allegiance with the devil, the two are likened to one another in the play. Instead of speaking the truth, each only states what he believes the other wants to hear. The deceptive nature of Theophile and Salatin's discourse is representative of commercial society since each hopes to gain materially from their exchange.[279] This attitude towards language is opposed to that of feudal society, whose very structure

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St. Martin's Press, 1999), 83-96 at 86; Josh Trachenberg, *The Devil and the Jews.* The association between the two became so great that Jews were often attacked and brutally mascaraed by Crusaders. According to one Crusader before the 1066 massacre of Jews in Rouen, "We want to attack the enemies of God in the east after traveling great distances, while before our eyes are the Jews, of all races God's greatest enemy. . . this would be doing our work backwards." The citation comes from Guibert of Nogent's autobiography; Cited in: Norman Golb, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy: A Social and Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998),117. In addition to the Saracen/Jewish hybrid in "Le miracle de Theophile," Bodel also associates the two in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas.* According to Jean Dufournet in *Le Théatre arrageois,* "Le monde juif apparaît à travers les noms d'*Oliferne*-qui designe la ville d'Alep dans les chansons de geste, mais rappelle tout autant Holoferne décapité par Judith-et *li Kenelieu,* les Chananéens aussi bien que les gens de Kanina en Épire" (The Jewish world appears through the names of *Oloferne*- which refers to the city of Alep in the *chansons de geste* but also call to mind Holofernes, decapitated by Judith- and *li Kenelieu,* the Canaanites as well as the people from Kanina in Epirus), 44.

[278] Jo Ann Hoeppner and Moran Cruz, "Popular Attitudes Towards Islam in Medieval Europe," *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other,* ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 55-81 at 57; Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 20, Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 83-4.

[279] Although Salatin's material benefit from the exchange may not at first be apparent, when talking to the devil, he refers to Theophile as a "gaaing," which by Rutebeuf's time had adopted the sense of "gain" or "profit." See: "gaaing," Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres complètes de Rutebeuf,* II, 326.

was based on the oath of fidelity between man and man.[280] In the play Salatin greets Theophile in the following manner,

> Qu'est-ce? qu'avez-vous, Theophile?
>
> Por le grant Dé, quel mautalent
>
> Vous a fet estre si dolent ?
>
> [What is it? What's wrong Theophile?
>
> By all mighty God what sorrow
>
> Has made you so miserable? ll. 44-6]

As the citation shows, Salatin greets Theophile by evoking God. This greeting is at odds with his character since he is the devil's servant and described in the stage directions as someone "qui parloit au deable quant il voloit" (Speaks to the devil when he wants, 536).[281] This citation illustrates Salatin's deceitfulness, since within it he references both God and His power. Salatin approaches Theophile in this manner, because he believes that this type of greeting will appeal to Theophile, being that Theophile is a man of the Church. By making such a statement, however, Salatin hides his true intention, which is to profit from Theophile's misery and make him a servant of the devil.

Theophile, too, is dishonest in his appeal to Salatin. He tells Salatin that he is lamenting the loss of his honor, but Salatin is able to see through his lies, exclaiming,

> Biaus sire, vous dites que sages;

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[280] Eugene Vance, *Reading the "Song of Roland"* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 33.
[281] The presence of stage directions in Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile" is sparse, making it difficult to determine exactly how the play was performed.

Quar qui a apris la richece,

Molt i a dolor et destrece

Quant l'en chiet en autrier dangier

Por son boivre et por son mengier:

Trop i covient gros mos oïr!

[Dear lord, what you say is wise ;

For he who has become accustomed to wealth,

Has much pain and distress

When he must rely on another

For his drink and his food:

It is right that you curse! ll. 62-7]

Salatin's response to Theophile's lament over his alleged loss of his honor shows that Salatin is aware of the real reason for Theophile's distress. Rather than his honor, it is the loss of his wealth that Theophile bemoans. Theophile's artifice continues in the scene when he asks Salatin if he knows of a way that he may regain what he has lost. By doing so, Theophile feigns ignorance of Salatin's association with the devil. This act, however, is easily exposed within Theophile and Salatin's exchange. When first meeting Salatin, for example, Theophile refers to him as "Salatin, biau tres douz amis" (Salatin, my dear friend l. 69). The fact that Theophile refers to Salatin as his "amis" implies an intimacy with the latter.[282] It is, therefore,

[282] The Old French "ami" stems from the Latin *amicum.* It referred to either a loyal friend (*ami fidèle*), a lover (*amant*), or someone who had similar affiliations (*apparenté*). *Le Dictionnaire de l'ancien français,* ed. Algirdas Julien Greimas, Les Grands dictionnaires Larousse, s.v. "Ami, amie."

highly likely that Theophile was aware of Salatin's association with the devil before seeking his aid.

In Rutebeuf's play, Theophile approaches Salatin for aid on his own accord since the play makes no reference to him being tempted or influenced by devils. Rutebeuf's play, therefore, differs from earlier versions of the legend that insist on the devil's influence in Theophile's demise. In Paul the Deacon's version, for example, a "callidus hostis" (cunning enemy, l. 2.11) implants envy and a desire for power into Theophile ("inmittens illi vicedominatus zelum et ambitionis emulationem, ll. 2.14-5), which leads him to the Jew's home.[283] In a similar manner, in Gautier's version the narrator insists that on several occasions devils "tricked" or "seduced" ("souspris," l. 187, l. 207) Theophile into approaching the devil's liege, as illustrated in the passage below.

> Li decevans qui seit maint tor
> Jor et nuit tant tornoie entor
> Et tant l'assut et tant le tente
> Et tant durement le tormente
> Et tant l'esprent d'ardeur et d'ire
> Ne seit que faire ne que dire.
> [The deceivers (devils) who know many tricks
> Encircle him day and night

[283] Paul the Deacon, "Miraculum S. Marie De Theophilo penitente," *Theophilus: Mittelniederdeutches Drama in drei Fassungen Herausgegeben,* ed. Robert Petsch (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1908): 1-10. Translations are mine.

Ceaselessly abuse and ceaselessly tempt him

Ceaselessly torment him harshly

Ceaselessly inflame him with fire and anger

He does not know what to do or what to say. ll. 127-31]

The repetition of the word "*tant*" throughout this passage emphasizes the continuous nature of the devils' attack. Their endless torment fills Theophile with so much anger and rage that he no longer knows how to act. The devils' persecution, which leaves Theophile senseless, preconditions his abandonment of God. No such torment by an outside source is present in Rutebeuf's play. Instead, it is Theophile's own internal suffering at the loss of his wealth that drives him to renounce God. Theophile's renunciation of God stems from an internal, personal battle instead of a battle waged against outside forces. Rather than have a positive effect, Theophile's independent and egotistical spirit leads him to form new relationships that, although modeled on the feudal rite, do not seek mutual cooperation and loyalty. Instead, they seek personal gain. This egocentrism defines not only the rapport between Theophile and Salatin but also the relationship between Salatin and the devil, which attests to its iniquity.

Salatin and the Devil

Salatin and the devil's relationship in "Le miracle de Theophile" illustrates how the feudal ideal based on loyalty and mutual cooperation becomes problematized and ultimately dismantled in the commercial environment. As noted above, Salatin is the devil's servant in the legend, acting as an intermediary between

Theophile and his master. Even though Salatin is supposed to be the devil's servant, and therefore his inferior, Salatin repeatedly talks down to and criticizes his lord. His relationship to the devil is, therefore, similar to the relationship established between Theophile and God at the beginning of the play. Salatin's disrespect for the devil represents an overturning of the feudal order, where the vassal was supposed to obey, serve, and respect his superior. In Rutebeuf's version, instead of "vous" or the formal "you," for example, Salatin refers to the devil by using the informal "tu." He also openly expresses his frustration at the devil's lack of response to his commands, repeatedly asking "Os tu, Sathanz?" (Are you listening Satan? l. 147), "Ne m'os tu pas?" (Don't you hear me?" l. 154), "Je te ferai plus que le pas / Venir, je cuit!" (It's my will to make you scamper! ll.155-6). Salatin finally resolves to conjure the devil by use of a spell, toward which the devil responds by expressing his own irritation at being forcefully summoned, exclaiming "Molt me travailles!" (How you torment me! l. 171). From their exchange, it is clear that Salatin and the devil are at odds with one another. Neither addresses the other with respect, and even though they are working towards the common goal of seizing Christian souls, each is only concerned with the personal sacrifice he must endure to attain it.

The relationship between Salatin and the devil in Rutebeuf's text is contrary to that presented in earlier versions of the legend. In Paul the Deacon's version, their relationship is based on respect and compliance. The Jew refers to the devil as "my patron" ("patronum meum," l. 2.31) and "my lord" ("domine mi," l. 2.41). In Gauthier's text, a similar relationship is established between the two, the Jew

referring to the Devil as both "king" ("roy," l. 257) and "Lord" ("Seignor," l. 257, l. 320, l. 472), and addressing the devil by using the formal you ("vous," l. 357). These examples show how the relationship between Salatin and the devil is based on the feudal ideal in earlier versions of the legend. In his later version, Rutebeuf reconstructs their rapport in order to represent the independent and egocentric spirit of commercialized society.

Representations of the Devil

In addition to being a figure respected by his inferiors, the devil in the early versions of the Theophile legend is also described as a menacing and powerful lord. Paul the Deacon's version, for example, provides the following description of the devil: "Illo (Theophilus) autem spondente, subito ostendit ei albos chalamydatos cum multitudine candelabrorum clamentes, et in medio principem sedentem; erat enim diabolus et ministri eius" (And after he promised this, there immediately appeared before him white-caped figures, chanting, with a multitude of candelabras, and in the middle the sitting Prince. For this was the Devil and his ministers, ll. 2.35-7). The devil in Paul the Deacon's text is described as being seated in the amongst a crowd of figures wearing white, the devil's color according to oriental tradition.[284] The figures carry candles or torches, the multitude of flames potentially evoking the fires of hell. Paul the Deacon's description of the devil and his entourage occurs just after Theophile promises the Jew that regardless of what he sees and hears, he will not make the sign of the cross ("Quodcunque uideris aut audieris, ne terrearis nec

[284] Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 41.

signum crucis tibi facias," ll. 2.34-5). The appearance of the devil immediately after Theophile's vow exhibits the supernatural power of the devil and his liege. In addition, it adds an element of uncanniness to the narrative.

Gautier's text echoes that of Paul the Deacon, yet expands on the earlier example by formulating an even more frightening description of the devil and his entourage. The Jew leads Theophile to a giant diabolic feast ("la haute feste," l. 316) populated with over one hundred thousand cacophonous demons ("D'anemis voit plus de cent mile," l. 325; "Ne sont pas mu, coi ne taisant, / Ainz font tel tumulte et tel bruit," ll. 328-9). As in Paul the Deacon's text, the demons are dressed in white and carrying candles ("Chandelabres et cierges portent / Et blans mantiaus ont affublés," ll. 332-3). Gautier also qualifies his devil as being both large ("grant," l. 338) and fearsome ("espoentable," l. 338). If these descriptions are not enough to strike fear in the audience, the narrator continues by claiming that the devil's appearance is such that it has the ability to make the earth shake ("Qu'a son sanblant fait sanbler / Terre doie faire tranbler," ll. 339-40). Gautier's text, therefore, expands on Paul the Deacon's narrative by not only showcasing the devil's power but also by configuring him as a figure to be feared.

This depiction of the devil stands in stark contrast with his representation in Rutebeuf's text, where he is characterized as a weak and irritable being who prefers to be left alone. Not only does Rutebeuf's devil politely request that Salatin act more courteously towards him in the future ("Or soiez vers moi plus cortois," l. 200), he also enumerates the ways that Christian good deeds cause him daily torment and

grief. Charity, love, humility, penitence, and fasting for example, give him a stomachache ("grant duel en la pance," l. 269) and if someone visits the sick, his heart becomes so dead and weak that he no longer feels it ("point n'en sente," l. 278). Even though the stage directions state that Theophile "a trop grant paor" (is very fearful, 550) when he goes to meet with the devil, the devil is not described physically nor is there any indication that he is accompanied by white clad, torch bearing demons. The only information obtained in regards to the devil are his words, which don't make him appear very menacing at all. In fact, Rutebeuf seems to depict the devil as an almost a comical figure.[285] He is in no way the fearsome and powerful *seigneur* described in Paul the Deacon and Gautier's text. His weakness contrasts with Salatin's dominance, the latter not only conjuring the devil but also belittling him. As will be discussed later, it is also unclear as to whether the devil had any role in the return of Theophile to his position, which enhances his depiction as a less than powerful figure. The characterization of the devil as a weak, irritable, and even comical being and demonstrates his instability as Theophile's new lord. The fact that Theophile would pledge feudal allegiance to such an entity reinforces the idea that Theophile is not concerned with establishing a feudal bond, but instead a fast and easy way of regaining his lost wealth.

[285] In the thirteenth century there was a general tendency to depict the devil as being ridiculous or comical, particularly since his theological significance decreased in this period. See: Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*, 161.

The Rite of Vassalage

Theophile's concern for money over relationships is also expressed in the play during his performance of the rite of vassalage.[286] The traditional rite of vassalage was composed of three parts: the act of homage, the oath of fidelity, and the exchange of some kind of object or act.[287] During the act of homage, the vassal would first declare his willingness to become the vassal or *homme* of his lord (the *volo*), stating something similar to "Sire, je devien vostre hom" (Lord, I will be your vassal).[288] Following the *volo,* the vassal and his lord would take part in the *immixtio manuum* (combining of the hands), where the vassal, generally kneeling, would present his clasped hands to his lord who would then clasp his hands over the hands of his vassal.[289] The act of homage was followed by an oath of fealty. The oath was taken standing with the vassal placing his hand on Scripture or relics.[290] The last element of the rite of vassalage was the exchange of an object or an act. In France this act was most commonly a kiss, but could also be any material object from clothing to a contract.[291]

In the exchange between Theophile and the devil, the devil asks Theophile to take part in the ritual gesture of vassalage by joining his hands together:

Or joing

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[286] According to Ganshof, vassalage represents the personal element in feudalism. See: François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism,* 69.
[287] Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age : Temps, travail et culture en Occident* (Paris : Gallimard, 1977), 352.
[288] François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism,* 7; Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age*, 352.
[289] François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism*, 73; Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age,* 354.
[290] François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism,* 75.
[291] François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism,* 78. Le Goff has found evidence of the exchange of 99 different items. See: Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age,* 359.

Tes mains, et si devien mes hon.

Je t'aiderai outre reson.

[Now join

Your hands and become my vassal.

I will help you beyond reason. ll. 239-241]

Although the devil's statement concerns feudal loyalty, Theophile is interested in nothing more than regaining his wealth, which is manifested when he replies to the devil,

Vez ci que je vous faz hommage,

Més que je raie mon domage,

Biaus sire, dés or en avant.

[See, I am paying you homage,

But on the condition that I receive my compensation,

Dear lord, either now or before. ll. 242-4]

From this citation it is made apparent that even though Theophile performs the rite of vassalage by joining together his hands, his words do not correspond with his actions. Instead, he places a stipulation on his vow to become the devil's vassal by stating that first he must receive compensation before he is ready to commit. The disconnect between Theophile's words and actions calls into question the authenticity of his gesture. In particular since both the *volo* and the *immixitio manuum* were equally important in the act of homage, from which came the medieval expression *homme de bouche et de mains* (vassal of mouth and of

hands).[292] Whereas the devil is looking for personal servitude, Theophile wants only to be compensated. He is, therefore, more concerned with managing his own affairs than upholding his end of the feudal agreement.

Theophile's relationship with the devil illustrates the historical reality of commercial society, since in this society, money was not only important, it also acted as a substitute for personal relationships. According to Lester Little, "Money was not only the convenient tool most characteristic of the new commercial society, but a substitute for some of the personal relationships basic to the feudal society."[293] Whereas the relationships and activities of feudal society found sanction in the sacred vows and oaths that bound men together, there were no sanctions for how manage relationships based on monetary exchange.[294] By being more concerned with money than upholding his end of the sacred oath, Theophile's avaricious motivations become manifest.

Theophile's rite of vassalage towards the devil in Rutebeuf's play differs from earlier versions of the legend, which serves to call attention to Theophile's indifference towards the traditional feudal model. In Paul the Deacon's text the Jew serves as the intermediary between the devil and Theophile. Rather than speak directly to Theophile, the devil speaks to the Jew, which illustrates his inapproachability and power. The devil tells the Jew that if Theophile wishes to be his servant and considered among his army, Theophile will, in return, have

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[292] Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age*, 358.
[293] Lester Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice," 30.
[294] ibid.

domination over all, even the Bishop ("Sed si meus famulus esse cupit et inter nostros milites reputari, ego illi subuenio ita, ut plus quam prius facere possit et inperare omnibus, etiam episcopo," l. 1.42-l. 3.3). Theophile responds by stating that he is willing to do as the devil wishes, as long as he helps him, and then pleads with the devil and kisses his feet (". . . faciam, tantum subueniat mihi. Et cepit osculari pedes illius principis et rogare eum," ll. 3.5-6).

A similar exchange takes place between Theophile and the devil in Gautier's version. The devil, first, asks Theophile to deny God and the Virgin and in return the devil will bestow great honor upon him ("S'il renoie sanz demorance / . . . / Dieu et sa mere, sainz et saintes / Encor li donrai honors maintes," ll. 375-8).[295] In response, Theophile throws himself at the devil's feet and humbly kisses them ("As piez li chiet inselement, / Se li baise mout humblement," ll. 409-10). These examples illustrate how the rite of homage differs in Rutebeuf's play from the earlier versions. In the earlier versions, for example, Theophile kisses the devil's feet, an anomaly. In his study on the history of the kiss, Krisstoffer Nyrop notes that although the medieval vassal could pay homage with either a kiss on the hand or the foot, kissing the hand was much more common. In contrast, kissing the feet was an oriental tradition and much more prominent in ancient times.[296] By kissing the devil's feet, Theophile's act of homage in Paul the Deacon and Gautier's texts becomes subversive, reflecting the immoral nature of the exchange. In contrast, Rutebeuf's

[295] In Old French "honor" could refer to esteem, material benefits, and/or power. See: Olivier Bertrand and Silvère Menegaldo, *Vocabulaire d'ancien français,* 2nd ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), s.v. "honor."

[296] Krisstoffer Nyrop, *The Kiss and its History,* trans. William Fredrick Harvey (London: Sands & Co., 1901), 124-5.

version uses a more classic example of the rite of homage, opposing the legend's tradition. By doing so, Theophile's independent, commercial motivations are better contrasted against the devil's desire for a more traditional feudal exchange.

The Pact

One similarity between all three texts is the exchange of a written contract to secure the commitment between Theophile and the devil. In fact, the Theophile legend initiated the theme of the pact with the devil, which would remain "tolerably common" through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[297] In his study on the devil in the Middle Ages, Jeffrey Burton Russell discusses the significance of the pact, claiming that in a period where the Church fathers argued that all evildoers were limbs of Satan, the pact signified explicit homage to the devil.[298] The pact also held significance in medieval society outside of literary texts where it was used as a means of negotiation between rival powers.[299] The use of a pact to solidify the agreement between the devil and a Christian sustains this notion.

Even though the pact is present in the three versions of the legend examined in this chapter, its means of composition differed. In Paul the Deacon's narrative, Theophile's renunciation of God and Mary is composed in a chirograph ("chirographum," l. 3.10), whereas in Gautier's version it is called both a charter

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[297] Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages,* 82.

[298] ibid., 81.

[299] François-Louis Ganshof, *Feudalism,* 80; Alain Boureau, *Satan and the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West,* trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 72. In "Le pacte avec le diable dans la littérature médiévale," H. Van Nuffel shows how the idea of the pact fit into both the tradition of Christian baptism and that of feudal homage. H. Van Nuffel, "Le pacte avec le diable dans la littérature médiévale," *Anciens pays et assemblées d'états* 39 (1966): 27-43.

"chartre" (l. 392) and a letter "lettres" (l. 425). Gautier's influence on Rutebeuf is evinced by the dual naming of the contract, which he refers to first as a letter ("lettres" l. 250, l. 253, l. 640) and later a charter ("charte" l. 570, l. 577, l. 585).[300] In addition to naming the documents, each text describes the circumstances of the pact's composition and exchange. Paul the Deacon's text presents what is perhaps the most peculiar description of the establishment of the pact. According to Paul, the devil enters into Theophile ("introiuit in illum uicedomnum Satans," l. 3.9). Theophile, next, denies Christ and the Virgin, as the devil has earlier requested, and later composes a chirograph, which he seals with wax and marks with his ring ("inposita cera signauit anulo proprio," ll. 3.10-1). Finally the two disappear together, the two joyful at Theophile's perdition ("abscesserunt utrique cum nimio perditionis sue gaudio," ll. 3.11-2). The devil's influence on Theophile is unmistakable in Paul the Deacon's text as the two become one to compose the document as well as rejoice in its outcome.

In Gautier's version, the devil first commands that Theophile renounce God and the Virgin and then asks Theophile to compose a charter, since countless Christians have tricked him in the past ("Que bone chartre encor m'en doigne / Maint crestïen m'ont deceü, ll. 392-3). Theophile, next, gives the charter to the devil, sealed with wax and marked with his ring. Finally, the devil takes the charter with him to hell, celebrating his victory over the once pious man (ll. 424-32). Gautier's version differs slightly from that of Paul the Deacon by stressing the consequences

[300] In line 640 it is referred to as a "lettre commune."

of charter or pact, which damns Theophile even more than before ("Por plus dampner dampneement," l. 416). In addition, instead of becoming one, Theophile and the devil remain separate, providing Theophile with increased autonomy.

Rutebeuf's version mirrors that of Gautier. The devil first asks Theophile for a charter because he has been duped in the past ("Quar maintes genz m'en ont sorpris," l. 252). Without any indication of a temporal delay, however, Theophile immediately hands over charter ("Vez le ci: je les ai escrites," l. 255), calling into question whether or not he composed the charter prior to he and the devil's meeting.[301] The fact that we later learn that he composed the charter with his own blood ("De son sanc les escrist, autre enque n'i fist metre," l. 653), suggests that Theophile more than likely composed the charter previous to his meeting with the devil as there is no indication of Theophile puncturing his skin in order to obtain his ink.[302] In Rutebeuf's text, Theophile's pact with the devil was completely free from the devil's influence, which was not the case in the earlier versions.

In addition, the devil in Paul the Deacon and Gautier's texts tells Theophile how he is supposed to act *before* the charter is composed. The charter, therefore, serves as a written declaration by Theophile to behave according to the devil's wishes. In Rutebeuf's play, however, the devil tells Theophile how he is to act *after* receiving Theophile's charter. It is, therefore, unclear as to what is included in Theophile's pact with the devil. The ambiguity of Theophile's commitment to the

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[301] See: Denis Lalande, "De la 'charte' de Theophile à la lettre commune de Satan," 549.

[302] Rutebeuf's "Theophile" is the first instance of a pact with the devil being composed with blood. See: Edmon Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* II, 170.

devil substantiates the argument that Theophile is not concerned with establishing a feudal pact. Instead, Rutebeuf's Theophile drafts his contract on his own terms without any influence from or concern for the devil or the devil's wishes.

Theophile's Comrades

Theophile's indifference towards the feudal ideal is also communicated in his relationship with his comrades: Pinceguerre, Pierre, and Thomas. In his study on the Theophile legend, Lazar reads the scene between Theophile and his comrades as having two purposes. First, it provides relief from the intensity of the principal episodes of the play, and second, it adds some local color for the amusement of the audience as each character portrays a contemporary diocesan figure.[303] Rather than solely for comic relief, I argue the addition of this scene serves to reinforce the conflict between the feudal ideal and the commercial mindset present throughout the play. It is important to note that the scene between Theophile and his comrades is absent from Paul the Deacon and Gautier's versions. By adding this scene to his play, Rutebeuf not only increases the dramatic of effect of his text, but he also illustrates commerce's effect on interpersonal relations. Rather than act courteously towards his comrades, Theophile acts harshly towards those who care about him the most. He threatens his former comrades, denies their good faith in him, accuses them of conspiring against him, and reminds them that in his position he is able to make their lives miserable (ll. 296-383).

[303] Moshe Lazar, "Theophilus: Servant of Two Masters," 41.

Theophile's behavior contrasts with those of his comrades, who support and speak well of him. Pinceguerre, for example, agrees with the Bishop when he expresses the extreme foolishness ("molt grant folie," l. 291) of his decision to remove Theophile from his position, since Theophile was the best candidate for the post. Pierre asks Theophile why Theophile is threatening him, since he continually pleaded with the Bishop to reinstate Theophile ("Theophiles, sont ce menaces? / Dés ier priai je mon seignor / Que il vous rendist vostre honor," / Theophile, is that a threat? / I have pleaded with the Bishop since yesterday / To give you back your position, ll. 353-5). Thomas does not understand why Theophile is menacing him and tells him that he must be drunk ("Il samble que vous soiez yvres," l. 372), since he loves Theophile and respects him greatly ("Je vous aim tant et tant vous pris!" l. 376). By contrasting the behavior of Theophile with that of his comrades, the irrationality and selfishness of Theophile's words become even more apparent. Theophile forsakes the established hierarchy of the church, which is based on the feudal model, by treating both those above and below him with disrespect and impudence.[304] Through doing so, he continues to disrupt the feudal ideal of community.

The Return of the Jew

When composing his play, Rutebeuf added the scene between Theophile and his comrades, but omitted a scene present in Paul the Deacon and Gautier's earlier texts. In this scene, the Jew continues to visit Theophile after he has regained his

[304] For the reference to the hierarchy of the church being based on the feudal model, see: Germaine Maillet, *La vie religieuse au temps de Saint Louis* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1954), 35.

position to remind him of his obligations to the devil. In Paul the Deacon's text, the Jew returns both secretly and frequently to Theophile ("Hebreus frequenter pergebat occulte ad uicedomnum" l. 3.24) in order to ask him if he acknowledges the benefit and quick assistance he has received from himself and the devil ("uidisti quemadmodum beneficium et celere remedium ex me et patrono meo. . . ?" ll. 3.25-6). Theophile responds by stating that he does and expresses his thanks for having met both of them ("Confiteor et omnio gracias ago concursioni nostre," ll. 3.26-7). In a similar manner, the Jew in Gautier's text often goes to Theophile secretly at night (Priveement par nuit obscure / Assez souvent aloit a lui, ll. 462-3) and asks him if he acknowledges the devil's role in returning him to his position (Enne vois tu, biaus doz amis, / Com mes sires t'a tost remis / Et rasis en ta signorie? ll. 471-3). The continuued interaction between the Jew and Theophile in the earlier texts reinforces the devil's influence on Theophile's misconduct. Unlike the earlier versions of the legend, Salatin does not return to Theophile in Rutebeuf's version to remind him of his obligations to the devil. It is, therefore, uncertain if the devil had any role in reestablishing Theophile to his position. Especially since Theophile's comrade Pierre states that he pleaded with the Bishop on Theophile's behalf (ll.353-5). In Rutebeuf's play the devil's influence on Theophile's behavior is negligible whereas in earlier versions of the legend the devil had a more significant role. Instead of the devil's influence it is instead Theophile's independence that turned him away from God and motivated him to sin.

From the beginning of Rutebeuf's "Le miracle de Theophile," Theophile has been characterized as an independent and rebellious spirit who has little concern for establishing and maintaining relationships. He readily disavows God when he is removed from his position and portrays Him as weak in order to justify his renouncement. Even though he approaches Salatin for help, the relationship he establishes with the Saracen/Jew is not genuine since he feigns his motivation for Salatin's aid. In addition, there is no indication that Theophile has any consideration for the devil, since he is more concerned with regaining his lost wealth than upholding his half of their agreement. Finally, Theophile acts harshly towards his comrades, even though they are only looking out for his best interest. The independent commercial mindset configured at the beginning of the play is overturned in the second half, as Theophile becomes aware of his need for a community and the assistance of others.

Theophile's Regret

After Theophile's interaction with his comrades, the play takes a sudden turn and launches into the first part of Theophile's repentance monologue. The rapidity of the switch from sin to repentance in the play is slightly unexpected as no motivation is provided as to why Theophile would suddenly decide to repent, the stage directions simply indicating, "Ici se repent Theophiles et vient a une chapele de Nostre Dame. . ." (Here Theophile repents and enters in a chapel dedicated to Notre Dame . . ., 566). In Paul the Deacon's version, Theophile is moved to repent by the spirit of God ("Deus. . . dedit ei conuersionem penitentie," ll. 3.29-34). Theophile

is also moved by God in Gautier's text, who returns him to his good senses ("Quant Dieux droit sens li eut rendu," l. 651). As the earlier examples indicate, God moves Theophile to repent just as the devil influences Theophile to sin. In Rutebeuf's play, however, Theophile acts alone in his decision to renounce God as well as in his decision to repent. Theophile's independence makes his decision to return to God and the Virgin's governance even more impactful.

During Theophile's repentance, he enumerates the ways he has acted independently, which he has come to regret. The first instance occurs when he confesses that the devil took the pact from him ("De moi a pris la chartre et le brief receü," l. 390). The fact that Theophile states that the devil took the pact from him, without any reference to the devil's role in its composition, reinforces the theory that Theophile acted independently from the devil in the pact's composition. Theophile's independence is reinforced later in his speech when he states, "Sathan, plus de set anz ai tenu ton sentier" (Satan for over seven years I have followed your path, l. 404). In this citation, Theophile confesses that he followed the devil's path. There is no indication that he was forced to do so, which makes it seem as though he followed the path by choice. Finally, Theophile confesses "Or sui je mal baillis et m'ame mal baillie" (I have governed myself and my soul poorly, l. 412). In this final example, Theophile's independence is the most apparent. He was not governed or influenced by the devil but instead confesses that he made his poor decisions on his own.

Rather than the devil, Theophile later confesses that it was money that led him to renounce God. Instead of a victim of the devil Theophile is therefore a victim of avarice. The role of money in his perdition is reinforced throughout his repentance speech. The most prominent example is cited below.

> He! las, com j'ai esté plains de grant nonsavoir
> Quant j'ai Dieu renoié por un peu d'avoir!
> Les richeces du monde que je voloie avoir
> M'ont geté en tel leu dont je ne me puis ravoir.
> [Alas! How I was so full of ignorance
> When I renounced God for possessions!
> The riches of the world that I wanted to possess
> They threw me into a place from which I cannot escape. ll. 400-3]

In this passage, Theophile expresses his stupidity for having renounced God for material goods. As a result of his avarice, he is damned. Even though the devil is technically Theophile's "lord," it was Theophile's desire for money that led him away from God. The devil, therefore, never had any influence on Theophile or his actions, as he did in Paul the Deacon and Gautier's versions.

When examining the role of the devil within the play, we see that he no longer takes on his role as tempter. As noted above, it is not the devil who leads Theophile away from the correct path, but instead money, which is reinforced when Theophile later exclaims "Richece, mar te vi!" (Riches, your sight has ruined me! l. 427). If the devil no longer assumes his conventional role as a tempter or seducer,

it appears that in "Le miracle de Theophile," he takes on the function of an usurer, a theory supported later in the play when Theophile exclaims, "Malement me sent engagié" (I sense that I am cruelly engaged, l.558).[305] Theophile, who becomes poor, requests a loan from the devil in order to regain what he had lost. Rather than a monetary sum or another object, Theophile engages his soul as a guarantee of their transaction.

Theophile's Repentance

In order to escape from the grips of avarice, Theophile comes to the realization that he must not only repent but that he must also renew his allegiance to God and the Virgin Mary. Theophile's repentance in "Le miracle de Theophile" is neither as long nor as detailed as in Paul the Deacon or Gautier's texts. In earlier versions of the legend, Theophile not only repents, but succumbs to forty days and nights of fasting and prayers.[306] Theophile's physical acts of repentance are, therefore, just as important as his words. In Rutebeuf's play, however, Theophile's repentance is reduced to an inner dialogue and a prayer to the Virgin.

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[305] On the banderoles of capitals in Auvergne (central France) dating from the twelfth century, specific warnings are carved, decrying the practice of usury as the work of the devil. Similar warnings are also found in Ennezat France. See: Priscilla Baumann, "avarice," *The Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography*, 91. The Jewish depiction of Salatin also corroborates this reading as Jews were the fundamental representatives of usury in the Middle Ages.

[306] Paul the Deacon's text reads: ". . .faciens quadraginta dies cum noctibus ieiunia et orationes. . ." (Forty days and nights he fasted and prayed, ll. 5.13-4). Gautier writes, "Theophilus quarante jors / En abstinences et en plors / Dedens le temple demora. / Adez gemi, adez plora / A nus genolz et a nus coutes. / Mais cele ou les douceurs sunt totes, / Quant voit qu'il a tant travillié, / Tant geüné et tant villié / Et qu'en son cuer a tant d'anui, / Vers mienuit s'apert a lui" (For forty days Theophile / In abstinence and in tears / Stayed in the temple. / He often wailed and often cried / His knees and elbows were bare. / But she who harbors all gentleness and kindess, / when she sees how much he has suffered, / And has fasted and remained wakeful/ And that his heart is contrite, / Appeared to him around midnight, ll. 921-30).

Rutebeuf ascribes less importance to Theophile's repentance since what matters in his play is not only Theophile's repentance but also the reestablishment of Theophile into the Christian order.

This theory is confirmed by Theophile during his repentance speech, when he shares that he has managed himself poorly, particularly since he managed his affairs himself, rather than allowing himself to be governed by the Virgin.

> Ha! las, com fol bailli et com fole baillie!
>
> Or sui je mal ballis et m'ame mal baillie.
>
> S'or m'osoie baillier a la douce baillie,
>
> G'i seroie bailliez et m'ame ja baillie.
>
> [Halas! How like a foolish man and a foolish woman!
>
> I have poorly governed my soul and myself.
>
> If I dare give myself to the sweet governess,
>
> I will be governed as well as my soul. ll. 412-5]

The emphasis on "governing" and "being governed" is accentuated in this section through an *annominatio* of the verb "baillier" and the noun "baillie." By repeating this term throughout the section, Rutebeuf illustrates Theophile's newfound concern for being governed. Theophile recognizes that when acting independently he governed himself poorly. Due to his failure, he is aware of the need to be governed by the Virgin.

Following the acknowledgement of his fault, Theophile prays to the Virgin Mary to forgive him for his wrongdoing. In his famous prayer, Theophile refers to

the Virgin as his queen, calling her, "Sainte roïne bele" (Saintly and beautiful queen, l. 432), "Roïne debonaire" (Generous queen, l. 504), and "Roïne nete et pure" (Clean and pure queen, l. 519). The fact that Theophile first expresses his desire for the Virgin to govern him, and later identifies her as "queen," illustrates a change Theophile's mentality. Rather than believing that he can take care of his own matters, Theophile recognizes that the Virgin, as his queen, must govern him. In addition, Theophile expresses his desire to serve the Virgin, stating,

> Dame sainte Marie,
>
> Mon corage varie
>
> Ainsi que il te serve,
>
> [Saint Mary our Lady,
>
> My motive changes
>
> So that it will serve you, ll. 456-8].

The homage that Theophile expresses to the Virgin in his prayer is different than his homage to the devil. In his transaction with the devil, Theophile based his devotion on the hope of financial gain. With the Virgin, it is not financial gain that he is after, but instead spiritual gain. This change in mentality illustrates a return, on the part of Theophile, to the feudal value system, where mutual cooperation was still honored. Theophile's repentance speech, thus, marks an initial step towards his return to the feudal ideal. Rather than be governed by the pursuit of riches, Theophile requests that the Virgin govern him and he, in return, will serve her.

In addition to the content of the prayer, its form also serves to reestablish the relationship between Theophile and the Virgin. Theophile's prayer is composed in the style of the courtly lyric, which is noticeably absent from the rest of Rutebeuf's corpus. Theophile's decision to use courtly lyric in his prayer to the Virgin signals its importance in the text. According to Aaron Gurevich, courtly love, or service of a lady, was similar to a vassal's service of his lord. Sometimes the poet actually called his lady 'Seigneur.'[307] Theophile's use of courtly lyric is another example of his return to the feudal mentality, Rather than act independently, using courtly lyric shows Theophile's willingness to be governed and to serve.

Theophile's Return to the Feudal Value System

Theophile is not returned to the Virgin's good graces until she recognizes him as one of her own. After additional pleading by Theophile, the Virgin finally admits that she knew him before as being one of her own ("Theophiles, je t'ai seü, / Ça en arriere a moi eü," ll. 567-8). What is interesting about this scene is that the Virgin only calls Theophile by his name once (l. 567). The rest, she refers to him simply as "mon clerc" (my cleric, l. 575). The fact that the Virgin refers to Theophile as her cleric rather than call him by name attests to the fact that she has little concern for Theophile as an individual, but only that he is a cleric. Since Theophile is a cleric he is, then, one of hers, and she must offer him protection. This statement illustrates a return to the feudal or Christian value system, where a "suzerain" offers protection to those that are under him, or in this case, Her.

[307] A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* 249.

In reinstating the feudal ideal of mutual cooperation, the Virgin gives Theophile back his charter, which had bound him to the devil.[308] When doing so, however, she asks that his charter be read aloud to the congregation so that others do not end up in the same scenario as Theophile, for as the Virgin states, "Trop aime avoir qui si l'achate: / L'ame en est et honteuse et mate" (Anyone who buys wealth at such a high price loves it too much: / It is shameful and the death of the of the soul, ll. 596-7). In this statement, the Virgin condemns Theophile's usurious pact with the devil, by reminding him of the consequences he will face in the afterlife. By taking back Theophile's charter, thus dissolving his previous engagement, the Virgin allows Theophile to once again be faithful to Her, rather than the pursuit of riches.

The idea of a return to the feudal ideal in "Le miracle de Theophile" is further reinforced in the end, when Theophile's charter is read out loud. The setting of this scene is reminiscent of feudal penitence, in particular *l'amende honorable,* where the condemned must publicly recognize his or her fault, and ask forgiveness of God and society.[309] Theophile does just this. After receiving his charter from the Virgin, Theophile, upon the Virgin's request, gives it to the Bishop to read before the assembly of the Church.

Interestingly, in this scene it is no longer the charter that the Bishop reads aloud to the congregation, but instead a "lettre commune" composed by the devil. Alain Boreau interprets the change in documents as a need for a "sovereign

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[308] According to Russell, "In order to escape the consequences of a pact one may be obliged to journey to hell to retrieve it or rely on the intercession of an unjudgmental saint such as the Blessed Mother." See: Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*, 82.
[309] Jean-Charles Payen, *Le motif du* repentir, 197.

beneficiary" to guarantee the pact, arguing, ". . . the creation of individual pacts had meaning only within the global framework of contractual society out of which a sovereignty was emerging to assure control over it."[310] According to Boreau, Theophile's original charter was less legitimate than the devil's "lettre commune" since the former was composed without a sovereign's control or influence.[311] By replacing Theophile's charter with the devil's "lettre commune" Rutebeuf reaffirms the importance of the feudal ideal at the end of the play by replacing a document created by an individual with a social contract legitimized by a sovereign.

When the Bishop reads the devil's "lettre commune," God, society, and man are asked to judge Theophile's actions. Rather than judge, however, the crowd sings in praise of the salvation of Theophile's soul, by proclaiming a solidary "Te Deum laudamus." Although this song terminates the play on an uplifting note, it also serves a greater role. The song, for example begins in the following manner:

> Te deum laudamus
>
> te Dominum confitemur
>
> Te acternum Patrem
>
> omnis terra venaratur
>
> [We praise you O God,
>
> we acknowledge you to be the Lord:
>
> All the earth now worships you,

[310] Alain Boreau, *Satan and the Heretic,* 74.
[311] ibid.

the Father everlasting. ll.1-4] [312]

From the beginning lines of this hymn, there is a strong emphasis on God as lord of his people, which is continued through the remainder of the song. By singing the song together, the members of the church reaffirm their loyalty to God as their lord. Through doing so, the corrupt, commercialized world illustrated in the beginning of the play corrects itself through the unified declaration of faith, by the people, to God.

Rather than simply a story of a fallen cleric who is able to redeem his soul and enter into heaven, it is worth reading "Le miracle de Theophile" as a return to the idealized past of the feudal age. Rutebeuf's motivation for adopting such a theme stems from his desire to appeal to the primary financers and supporters of thirteenth century French theater, the *confréries* and the guilds. By composing a play that champions the community over the individual, Rutebeuf reinforces the ideals of these organizations. Theophile should no longer be regarded solely as a victim, or later, hero in the pursuit of a perfect piety, but instead as a member of a now corrupt world, who, thanks to the Virgin Mary, can be reinstated into the structure of an idealized past. What is at stake is no longer Theophile's soul, but rather, the return of mankind to a better way of life. A life where Christian values were still held in high regard, and where the ideal of mutual commitment and loyalty were esteemed.

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[312] Kate Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 139.

Chapter 4: Merchant Time: Negotiating The Present And The Future In Rutebeuf's "Post-Conversion" Poems

In the latter part of his career (c. 1262-64), there is a marked difference in the content of Rutebeuf's poems. Rather than treat profane subjects, the poems, which include "La vie de sainte Marie l'Egypcienne (The Life of Saint Mary the Egyptian), "La vie de sainte Elyzabel, fille au Roi de Hongrie" (The Life of Saint Elizabeth, Daughter of the King of Hungry)," and Li miracles que Nostre Dame fist dou Soucretain et d'une Dame" (The Miracles that Our Lady performed for a Sacristan and a Lady), adopt more spiritually focused themes.[313] Even though the religious focus of the poems may initially appear to signal a change in the poet's inspiration, the fact that each are known commissioned pieces calls into question whether the poet actually underwent a spiritual "turning" or if his "conversion" was more or less financially motivated. Considering chapter two's analysis of William of Normandy's text *Le Besant de Dieu,* however, financial motivation may not necessarily detract from the larger purpose of serving God. When composing religious pieces, the poet not only uses his abilities to support himself, his labor may also be used as a means to rectify his past sins.

[313] Zink has referred to the change in the content of Rutebeuf's poems as his period of conversion, the Old French verb *convertir* signifying to turn. See: Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 587.

Just as with Rutebeuf's earlier poems, his later religious poems establish a relationship between the commercial and the religious. The relationship that Rutebeuf establishes between these two motifs in his later religious poetry is different than the one formed in previous chapters. Rather than a conflictual relationship, the commercial is used in conjunction with the spiritual as a means of securing the poet's spiritual and financial future. In addition, the commercial is also configured metaphorically to communicate to the audience how they, too, may obtain eternal salvation as long as they put forth the effort and make the right choices. Rather than bearing a negative connotation, the commercial, therefore, becomes a practical means of securing the future for the author and his audience. Of particular importance is the idea of work, represented in the poems by the metaphor of the "good worker." As this chapter will show, by introducing the metaphor of the "good worker" into his saints' lives, Rutebeuf provides himself and his audience with a viable means of redemption. Likewise, the metaphor of the merchant in his Marian miracle impresses the importance of personal choice and effort in the journey towards atonement. Neither of these messages could be communicated, however, without the new conception of time brought about by commerce, since "merchant time" was a mutable time that could be altered.[314]

In addition to the new relationship between commerce and religion, the poems also introduce an authorial voice that is fully distinct from the text composed. This voice is no longer that of the poetic or lyric "je" or "I" who recounts his own

[314] See: Jacques Le Goff, "Temps de l'Église et temps du marchand."

personal story. Instead, this narrator's voice is that of the creator or composer of the text.[315] In addition to being separate, the authorial voice is also prominent. Each poem opens with a prologue by the narrator and his voice returns several times throughout each poem to comment on its structure. Anne Berthelot attributes the presence of the authorial voice in these poems to the theory that Rutebeuf adapted them from previously existing Latin and vernacular texts. He did not have to worry about what he was going to tell, and could instead spend his time reflecting on the activity that he practiced.[316] Going beyond Berthelot's observation, I propose that by making himself a prominent figure, the narrator becomes actively engaged in negotiating both his spiritual and financial futures in the poems. This representation of the narrator is different from Rutebeuf's earlier "*griesche*" poems, where the narrator gradually separates himself from his purported gambling past by withdrawing his presence from his poem. In the "*griesche*" poems, the narrator is just beginning to become repentant, reflecting on his past and seeking to amend his ways. Rather than repentant, the narrator of the later "post-conversion" poems is fully penitent and actively seeks recompense for his efforts and his labor.

The poems to be examined within this chapter, "La vie de sainte Marie l'Egypcienne," La vie de sainte Elyzabel," and "Li miracles que Nostre Dame fist dou Soucretain et d'une Dame," will be examined together since they share common

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[315] According to Omer Jodogne, beginning in the twelfth century, the poet begins to become aware of himself as a creative artist. See: Omer Jodogne, "La personnalité de l'écrivain d'oil du XII^{e} au XIV^{e} siècle, "*L'humanisme médiéval dans les litératures romanes du XII^{e} au XIV^{e} siècle. Colloque organisé par le Centre de phiologie et de littératures romanes de l'Université de Strasbourg, du 29 janvier au 2 février 1962,* ed. Anthime Fourrier (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1964): 87-104 at 94.

[316] Anne Berthelot, *Figures et fonction de l'écrivain au XIII^{e} siècle* (Montreal: Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 1991), 170.

characteristics. Each, for example, was a known commissioned piece adapted from previously existing Latin and vernacular texts. Furthermore, each is a poetic narrative, includes religious themes, and a strong authorial voice. The principal difference between the texts is generic: two are saint's lives and one is a Marian miracle. The similarities between the three are greater than their differences and warrant that the texts be examined together in order to study the spiritual and financial motivations of the narrator.

"La vie de sainte Marie l'Egypcienne"

In "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne," (c. 1264) Rutebeuf employs several commercial metaphors to recount the story of a sinner on her journey to sainthood. He compares Mary to a "good worker" and her sins to wealth. In order to better negotiate his position, the narrator also positions himself within the text as a "good worker," one who is deserving of spiritual and financial rewards. Since "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne" is the first text to mark Rutebeuf's "conversion" it presents an initial attempt by the narrator to position himself as being worthy of redemption in addition to sharing with his audience how they, too, can be redeemed. The strategies and themes he employs in "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne" will become more developed his later two poems.

Rutebeuf's "La vie de sainte Marie l'Egypcienne" is based on earlier versions of the legend. The earliest known version is a Greek text attributed to Sophronios, Archbishop of Jerusalem (560-638). Sophronios' version focuses on the life of the monk Zozimas rather than that of Mary, the former learning true humility from the

saint's example. Mary did not become a principal character until the end of the twelfth century, when her story became more appealing than that of Zozimas due to the significance it placed on repentance, which became increasingly important to the Christian religion after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 required annual confession.[317] Mary's prominence in later versions of the legend, therefore, corresponds with the increasing significance of repentance within society.

When composing his own work, Rutebeuf more than likely referenced two sources of the legend: a twelfth century poetic and a thirteenth century prose version.[318] It is also believed that Rutebeuf's "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne" was a commissioned work, even though no patron is specifically mentioned.[319] Faral and Bastin, for example, hypothesize that the poem could have been commissioned by the powerful draper's guild (which held Mary as a patron saint) in celebration of St. Mary the Egyptian's feast day, but this hypothesis has yet to be proven.[320]

Rutebeuf's "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne" recounts the story of Mary, a prostitute, who comes to realize of the fault of her ways on the day of the Ascension.[321] After praying to the Virgin for guidance, a voice tells Mary to go to the

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[317] Two poems dating from the end of the twelfth century are the first known sources to have made this change. William of Adgar added one poem into his collection of legends about the Virgin and the other is an anonymous text. See: Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* II.

[318] ibid., 10-13.

[319] ibid., 10-15.

[320] ibid.

[321] The day of Ascension marked the end of "the time of reconciliation" and the beginning of "the time of pilgrimage" in *The Golden Legend.* The time of pilgrimage led to the end of time and the hope of salvation. The reference to this date, therefore, has a special significance in the text, since it marks the beginning of Mary's journey of penitence and salvation. Earlier versions of the legend do not specify this date. See: Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 121.

monastery of Saint Jean near Jordan, and from there enter into the forest where she will spend the rest of her days in penitence. Mary follows the orders she has received and despite being tempted by devils for seventeen years, remains committed to her vocation. Apart from encountering the monk Zozimas, who later becomes cured of his prideful ways because of his meeting with Mary, Mary spends the rest of her life and later dies in isolation.

The "Good Worker"

In the prologue of Rutebeuf's "Marie L'Egypcienne," the authorial voice of the narrator is intermingled with the story of the saint. Not only does he introduce Mary to his audience, but he also defines what it means to be a "good worker," and by extension, what it takes to pass freely through the gates of heaven. The message that the narrator advances in his prologue is clear: even if one is a sinner, if he or she puts forth the right amount of effort, redemption is possible. I have included the opening passage in its entirety in order to better illustrate the extended metaphor that occurs throughout.

Ne puet venir trop tart a euvre[322]
Boenz ovriers qui sans laisseir euvre,
Car boenz ovriers, sachiez, regarde,
Quant il vient tart, se il se tarde.
Et lors n'i a ne plus ne mains,
Ainz met en euvre les .II. mainz,

[322] The opening line corresponds to the proverb "Bons ovriers ne peut tart venir en oevre," Joseph Morawski, *Proverbes français antérieurs au XV^e siècle,* 295.

Que il ataint toz les premiers:

C'est li droiz de toz boens ovriers.

D'une ovriere vos wel retraire

Qui en la fin de son afaire

Ovra si bien qu'il parut,

Que la joie li aparut

De paradix a porte overte

Por s'ouvraigne et por sa deserte.

[He cannot arrive too late to work

The good worker who works without rest,

For know that the good worker is sure,

When he begins late, not to work slowly.

He is careful not to dawdle

Rather he rolls up his shirtsleeves, and gets to work

So that soon he catches up with those who arrived first:

That's the duty of all good workers.

I want to talk to you about a female worker

Who at the end of her story

Worked in such a way that,

The joy of Heaven appeared to her

Its doors were opened to her

Because of her work and for her merit. ll. 1-14]

Within this passage the narrator defines what it is to be a "good worker." The "good worker" is someone who rises early, goes directly to work, begins his work right away, does not become distracted, and works hard to catch up with those who arrived before him. The narrator is very detailed about the steps one should take if one is late to work, transforming the opening of his saint's life into a short treatise on redemption. Next, the narrator introduces Mary, whom he describes as a worker ("ovriere" l.9). Not only is Mary a worker, she is a "good worker," since, because of her work and her merit, the doors of heaven have opened to her. Mary, who was a known sinner and prostitute, is described in this opening prologue as someone who worked, or put forth effort, to earn her place in heaven. Even though Mary, like the worker described in the beginning of the text, started late in her efforts towards redemption, she later worked in such a way that she "caught up" or earned her place heaven. The message of Mary's prologue suggests that even if one is late in beginning one's efforts towards redemption, there is a possibility of redemption, as long as one works hard enough. Through the metaphor of the worker, the narrator establishes the theme that one has the potential to change the course of his or her fate, and therefore the possibility of salvation, as long as he or she remains committed to behaving like the "good worker," and by extension, the saint.

Sin as Wealth

Before narrating Mary's process towards redemption, the narrator, first, describes her sinful past. Rather than avarice, Mary is a victim of "luxure" (l.47) or

lust. In keeping with Rutebeuf's fixation on the commercial, Mary's sins are described through the metaphor of wealth.[323]

Dis et set anz mena teil vie,

Mais de l'autrui n'avoit envie:

Robes, deniers ne autre avoir

Ne voloit de l'autrui avoir.

Por gaaing tenoit bordelage,

Et por proesce teil outrage.

Ses tresors estoit de mal faire.

Por plus d'amis a li atraire

Se faisoit riche et conble et plainne:

Eiz vos sa vie et son couvainne.

[Seventeen years she led such a life,

Never of others (things) had she any desire:

Clothing, money, nor anything else

She didn't want another's goods.

She considered turning tricks to be her profit,

And exuberance her acheivement,

Her treasure was to sin.

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[323] Mary is a prostitute not out of material needs but because of the pleasure she receives from sex. Mary Magdalene is depicted in the same way in several twelfth century texts. The similarities between the women sometimes caused confusion between the two. See: Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* note 3, 458-9. According to the Church Fathers, sex was not for pleasure but instead in order to procreate, a tradition passed down from the greco-roman heritage. Sex for the sole purpose of pleasure was regarded as a sin. See: Jean Delumeau, *Le Péché et la peur*, 239-40.

Attracting many lovers

Made her rich and satisfied

This was how she lived her life. ll. 53-62]

As this passage describes, even though Mary was a prostitute, or someone who sells his or her body, she had no interest in material goods. Her interest in prostitution was, therefore, only for the pleasure she received from it. Although she had no need for material goods, the narrator implies that Mary is "wealthy." Rather than material goods, Mary was rich with sin.[324] It is not surprising that Rutebeuf chose wealth to represent sin, as possessing wealth was generally regarded negatively by the Church fathers and moralists of the period. According to the Gospel of Matthew (19:24), which served as a Biblical source for the condemnation of wealth, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."[325] Wealth was criticized because it deflected man from his main *raison d'être,* which was to serve his spiritual needs rather than his bodily needs.[326] By referring to Mary's sins as wealth, the narrator reiterates to his audience how Mary sacrificed her spiritual needs for her libidal needs in the early part of her life. Later, Mary expresses her recognition of this fact, when she later says, "Onques nul jor Dieu ne servi / Ansois ai mon cors aservi" (Not even one day did I serve God / Instead I served my body, ll. 215-6).

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[324] It is employed in a similar manner later in the text, where the narrator declares that wealth does no service to the soul at the moment of one's death. ("Riche, povrë et feble et fort / Sachent, font a lor arme tort / Se richement partent dou seicle, / Que l'arme n'ainme pas teil riegle" / Rich, poor, weak and strong / All know that they harm their soul / If they leave this world wealthy, / The soul doesn't like this rule, ll. 1152-5.)

[325] A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* 214.

[326] ibid., 261.

The Economy of Redemption

Mary's body remains a principal focus of the text. Not only was it the source of her sin, but also the source of her redemption. In order to correct her past, Mary succumbs to numerous physical torments. Rather than remain in society, Mary travels to Jordan and enters a forest where she will spend the rest of her days. In the forest, Mary is afflicted by thirst and hunger (l.431) and becomes savage due to the suffering she endures ("Toute devint el bois sauvage," l. 433). The extent of Mary's suffering is so great that she changes physically, no longer resembling the beautiful woman she once was. Her skin becomes "black like the foot of a swan," her "chest is covered with moss from having been soaked with rain," and her "stomach is concave due to malnutrition" (ll. 450-62). Although Mary is also harassed by devils (ll. 491-8), it is her physical suffering that is highlighted in the text. Within the text, the narrator reiterates that physical suffering is the surest path to salvation, following Mary's example. He declares, for example, that one need not regret his or her past if one's body endures such a harsh penitence ("Ne fait a plaindre li pechiez / Puis que li cors c'est atachiez / A faire si grief penitance," ll. 483-5). Later he declares that Mary loses her body to save her soul, reinforcing the importance of physical suffering ("Qui le cors pert por garder l'arme," l. 520). By insisting on the giving of one's body for the conservation or preservation of one's soul ("garder l'arme," l. 520), the narrator establishes an economy of redemption within his poem, where something is sacrificed for the benefit of another.

In addition to Mary, the monk Zozimas also sacrifices his body for his soul. Following in Mary's footsteps, Zozimas is directed to Jordan where he enters the monastery. While there he says to the abbot that in order to increase the value of his soul, he has neglected his body ("Por l'arme de moi mieuz valoir, / Ai mis mon cors en nonchaloir," ll. 619-20). Mary and Zozimas' examples illustrate how physical suffering is not only emphasized in the text, but it is also shown to be the principal means of rectifying one's sinful past. The problem with this approach is that it the physical suffering that Zozimas, and in particular Mary, endure is nearly impossible for the average person to imitate. Maureen Gillepsie Dawson discusses the impracticability of Mary's penitence observing that the saint's conversion from "sinner" to "saved" is described several times in the text as "hard" (*endureir, dureir, dur*). She interprets the insistence on this term to mean that Mary's penitence was not only inimitable but also undesirable for medieval audiences.[327] Dawson argues that the narrator's emphasis on the difficulty of Mary's penitence is due to the desired outcome of the poem. Rather than "didactic," the poem was meant to be "catechetical." Its purpose, therefore, was to move the heart and the will of the audience (interior movement) rather than to incite imitation of the saint's actions.[328] Although Dawson's reading is most certainly valid, I would like to

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[327] Maureen Gillespie Dawson, "Hard Lessons in Rutebeuf's *Lives of Mary of Egypt* and *Elizabeth of Hungary,*" *Neophilologus* 89 (2005): 329-41 at 337.

[328] Dawson argues that the "catechetical" intent of the poems is motivated by the threat of destabilization to ecclesiastical and secular power, since both women operated largely outside of any external control. See: Maureen Gillespie Dawson, "Hard Lessons," 338. Gillespie Dawson's argument is inspired by Evelyn Birge Vitz, "The Impact of Christian Doctrine on Medieval Literature," *A New History of French Literature,* ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994): 82-8 at 84.

propose an additional interpretation, arguing that the narrator provides his audience with a viable alternative.

In his prologue, the narrator describes Mary's suffering as work through his metaphor of the "good worker," since it is through her work that she became redeemed. In addition to this figurative sense, the metaphor can also be read literally, imparting the message that through their work, the audience may be redeemed like the saint. This alternative is certainly more viable than having to experience physical torments and mutations like the saint. Perhaps even more important than the audience, however, the narrator uses the metaphor of the "good worker" to underline the redemptive quality of his own work, which he reinforces in his epilogue.

The Poet as a Laborer

The narrator's epilogue echoes the prologue in many ways since the spiritual benefice of work is emphasized. Rather than a more generalized message about the redeeming quality of good work, however, the epilogue ends by focusing on the narrator and his work.

> Or prions tuit a ceste sainte,
> Qui por Dieu soffri paine mainte,
> Qu'ele prist a celui Seigneur
> Qu'en la fin li fist teile honeur
> Qu'il nos doint joie pardurable
> Avec le Peire esperitable

Por moi, qui ai non Rutebuef

(Qui est dit de rude et de buef),

Qui ceste vie ai mis en rime,

Que iceste dame saintime

Prist Celui cui ele est amie

Que il Rutebuef n'oblist mie.

[Lets pray to this saint,

Who suffered much for God,

For she prayed that Lord

Such that, in the end, He granted her such honor

For He gives us eternal joy

With our spiritual Father

As for me, I have the name Rutebeuf

(Which is composed of "rude" and "ox"),

And I put this life into rhyme,

So that this most holy lady

Pray to him whose beloved she now is

That he not forget Rutebeuf! ll. 1296-1306]

Within this passage the narrator's authorial voice becomes increasingly prominent. It asks the audience to join him in praying to Mary, whom they ask in turn pray to

God that they all receive eternal joy.[329] Next, he names himself Rutebeuf, saying that his name is composed of the words for "rude" and "ox."[330] The narrator follows this self-naming by calling attention to his work, stating that he put Mary's life into rhyme. Rather than both he and the audience, the narrator ends the poem by focusing solely on himself, and asks Mary to pray to the Lord on his behalf.

As the poem draws to a close, its contents become more and more focused on the narrator and his work. Self-naming for the purpose of redemption was a common trope in Latin and vernacular texts. Ernst Robert Curtius, commenting on Julius Schwietering's "The Humility Formula in Middle High German Poets," writes that "if the author nevertheless gives his name he does so . . . for the forgiveness of sins through the intercession of his hearers and readers."[331] In addition, "the mention of a name without prayer or a veiling modesty formula appears very rare in Middle High German literature."[332] The observations made by Schwietering in regards to Middle High German poetry apply to Rutebeuf. The authorial voice not only names himself for the purpose of redemption, but his self-naming is accompanied by a prayer as well as a modesty formula. Rather than cite the inadequacy of himself or his work, Rutebeuf's modesty comes from his name, which

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[329] The use of the first person plural to evoke the saint was common in medieval saint's lives. According to Sophie Marnette, the use of the first person plural not only means that the narrator and his audience share the same moment of enunciation, but that they also belong to the same ideological realm. See: Sophie Marnette, *Narrateur et points de vue dans la littérature française médiévale: Une approche linguistique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998), 52.

[330] A similar line is found in "Leçon sur Hypocrisie et Humilite," ("Que hom m'apele Rutebeuf / Qui est de 'rude' et de 'beuf' / They call me Rutebeuf / Which is composed of 'rude' and 'ox,' ll. 45-6).

[331] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 515. Julius Schwietering, *Die Demutsformel mittelhochdeutscher Diecheter* (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1921).

[332] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature,* 515.

is comprised of "rude" and "beuf." The first part of his name, "rude," suggests that Rutebeuf is unsophisticated and uncultured and the latter part, "beuf," that he is bestial or less than human.[333] By using his name to imply modesty, Rutebeuf cleverly avoids expressly denouncing his work or his talent.

The name "Rutebeuf" not only serves as a modesty formula in the epilogue, it also creates an additional link between the narrator and the saint. Not only are the two "good workers" since their work is worthy of redemption, but by naming himself Rutebeuf, the narrator describes himself in a manner similar to that of the penitent saint. One of the many meanings of the adjective "rude" in Old French was someone who was uncivilized or primitive.[334] As noted above, the narrator described Mary as primitive during the period of her penitence. By using an adjective with the same meaning to describe both himself and the saint, the narrator associates himself with the latter. The same can be said for the second part of his name, "beuf." or ox.[335] The ox invokes the countryside and therefore unrefined nature of the *paysan* or *vilain*. It, therefore, has a similar meaning to "rude." Another

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[333] Zink also discusses the negative connotation of Rutebeuf's name. He does not, however, discuss the redemptive quality of the name Rutebeuf. See: Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 30. Also see: Jean Dufournet, "À la recherche de Rutebeuf. Un sobriquet ambigu. Rutebeuf et la poésie de l'eau," *Mélanges de langue et littérature françaises du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance offerts à Monsieur Charles Foulon, professeur de langue et littérature françaises du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance, par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis, I* (Rennes: Institut de français, Université de Haute-Bretagne, 1980): 105-114.

[334] The word stemmed from the Latin *rudis* or something that was raw, unrefined, or uncultivated. In Old French it could refer to someone who was harsh, unrefined, or violent. It also signified something that was hard to the touch as well as something that caused fatigue. *Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française,* dir. Alain Rey, 4th ed. (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2010), s.v. "rude."

[335] Xavier Leroux suggests that the "beuf" of Rutebeuf's name could potentially reference Saint Luke, since the saint is often represented as writing and is sometimes accompanied by either a bull or a cow. Of the evangelists, Luke was also the most attached to the Virgin and the theme of divine mercy. Xavier Leroux, "De l'annomination à la nomination," 62.

possible interpretation of "beuf" is that the term could refer to agriculture itself, since the manual labor of agriculture was a type of labor particularly favored by God.[336] It, therefore, had a redemptive quality. As Gurevich observes, the redemptive quality of manual labor is testified by depictions of laborers happily going about their tasks in cathedral windows. The fact that manual laborers were depicted in religious realms bears witness to the redemptive nature of labor, assuming, of course, that the labor served virtuous ends.[337] In addition to the example of stained glass windows, the cathedral of Laon features sixteen sculpted oxen on its towers, placed there to call to mind the labor put forth by these beasts in the cathedral's construction. It was not only the workers themselves but also their animals that fit into the redemptive image of labor in the Middle Ages. In each instance, an association is made between the narrator and the saint to make the case for his eventual salvation.

The narrator of "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne" fuses the commercial with the spiritual in order to showcase the redemptive quality of work. By doing so, he provides a viable alternative for penitence to both himself and his audience. Rather than submit to physical torments and mutations, the narrator and his audience can be like Mary simply by becoming "good workers" and performing "good work." The narrator is sure, however, to remind his audience that the purpose of their work is for spiritual rather than material benefit by employing the metaphor

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[336] A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* 262.
[337] ibid., 265.

of wealth to describe Mary's sin. It is not just work but more specifically the redemptive quality of the narrator's work that becomes the focus at the end of the poem, where the narrator expresses his worthiness by further associating himself with the saint. The strategies used by the narrator in "Marie L'Egypcienne" will continue to be developed in the next two poems studied in this chapter.

"La vie de sainte Elysabel"

Unlike "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne," "La vie de sainte Elysabel, Fille au Roi de Hongrie" (c. 1264) has a known patron. Érart of Lézinnes, the bishop of Auxerre, asked Rutebeuf to put the saint's life into rhyme for Queen Isabelle of Navarre. Isabelle was the daughter of Louis IX and the wife of Count Thibaud V of Champagne. It is assumed that Érart had the story of the life of Saint Elizabeth composed for Isabelle because Elizabeth and Isabelle's lives were very similar. Both, for example, were extremely religious, yet had to set aside their religious aspirations in order submit to the conjugal demands of their high-ranking positions. Upon the death of their respective husbands, both entered religious orders, which went against the expectations of their given ranks.

Rutebeuf's "La vie de Sainte Elysabel" is based on an earlier Latin version of the life of Saint Elizabeth from the thirteenth century. This version includes a brief history of the canonization process of the saint, a prologue, a collection of depositions made by four of her servants, and a conclusion. According to Zink, Rutebeuf also used a French prose translation as a source for his own version.[338] In

[338] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 637.

his text, Rutebeuf omits the descriptive scenes present in the original version. He also does not include the psychological motivations of the various characters, which help to explain their intentions.[339] Rutebeuf's adaptation of Saint Elizabeth's life includes an introduction, transition passages, and a conclusion that are uniquely his. The narrator's voice can be heard imparting a message unique to his time and to his audience. These interventions or intrusions by the narrator are of the most interest.

The Redemptive Quality of Work

"La vie de sainte Elysabel" repeats the theme of the redemptive quality of work. Rather than to imply his worthiness through the more general metaphor of the "good worker," however, the narrator becomes more direct. Not only does he reveal that he is a poet, he also refers to himself as a sower of words, thereby suggesting to his audience that even though writing is the only work he knows how to do (l.14), his "labor" is worthy of redemption.

Cil Sires dit, que hon aeure:
"Ne doit mangier qui ne labeure;"[340]
Mais qui bien porroit laborer
Et en laborant aoreir
Jhesu, le Pere esperitable,
La cui loange est parmenable,
Le preu feroit de cors et d'arme.

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[339] Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, *Oeuvres Complètes,* II, 65.

[340] Passage from Paul, II Thess., 3,10. This passage expresses why Christianity looked favorably upon labor, since idleness was regarded as one of the most grievous of sins. See: A. J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture,* 214.

[The Lord, whom man adores, says

He who does not work should not eat

But he who can work

And while working worship

Jesus, the spiritual Father

Whose praise is without end

The good man worships with his body and soul ll. 1-7]

In this passage, the narrator becomes more specific about the spiritual aim of work. Not only should one work in order to provide for him or herself, but while doing so he or she should also worship Jesus with body and soul. The act of worshiping is not only intellectual but also physical. The rhymes between "aeure" (l.1) and "labeure" (l.2) as well as "laborer" (l.3) and "aoreir" (l.4), reinforce this association. By creating a relationship between the verbs "to worship" and "to labor" the narrator positions his own poetic trade as a kind of manual labor. My reading differs from the one proposed by Xavier Leroux, who argues that the repetition of “laborer” in line four converts labor into prayer.[341] I argue the opposite is occurring. Prayer, or the poet's craft in this case is converted into work since the latter is more highly regarded by God. I specify manual labor since "laborer" referred to something that was painful or physical opposed to oeuvre, which emphasized the act of creation. According to Jacques Le Goff in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'occident medieval*, the French term for work "travail" did not appear until the fifteenth century and did not

[341] Xavier Leroux, “De l’annomination à la nomination,” 60.

adopt its contemporary sense until the nineteenth.[342] Instead of one term, many terms were used to express the concept of "work." These terms ranged in meaning from something that was painful ("labor") to something that was honorable ("oeuvre"), the latter emphasizing the act of creation.[343] In addition, "labor" was used to refer to those involved in agriculture whereas "oeuvre" was used to connote those involved in urban trades.[344] The relationship set up in this passage between the poet's work and manual labor is important for the period in which Rutebeuf wrote, since, as noted above, manual labor was regarded as a more spiritually rewarding than other kinds of work since it was more pleasing to God. In particular since it was the complete opposite of idleness, which was seen as a grievous fault.

The relationship between labor and redemption is also reinforced later in the passage when the narrator describes himself as a sower. Rather than seeds, the narrator sows words, which later germinate into words of praise.

Or pri la glorieuze Dame,
La Vierge pucele Marie,
Par cui toute fame est garie
Qui la wet prier et ameir,
Que je puisse en teil leu semeir
Ma parole et mon dit retraire

[342] Although the noun may not have appeared until the fifteenth century, the verb is present throughout Rutebeuf's corpus. One example occurs in *La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne,* when Zozimas says in reference to Mary "Puis qui se soit tant travilliez" (l. 1248), emphasizing the suffering that Mary had to endure.
[343] Jacques Le Goff, "travail," *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'Occident médiéval,* ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 1137.
[344] ibid.

(Car autre labor ne sai faire).

[Here is my prayer to the glorious Lady

The Virgin Maiden Mary

By whom every woman who wants

To praise and love her is healed

That I can sow on good ground

My word and harvest my poem

(Because I do not know how to do any other kind of work). ll. 8-14]

The reference to the sower comes from the "Parable of the Sower," in which seeds sown upon good ground are said to flourish and are likened to the word of God.[345] The narrator's claim that he would like to sow his seed "en teil leu" (in such a place, l. 12) emphasizes the high quality of his words and his desire to have them prosper, for according to the Gospel account, seeds sown on good ground multiply by the hundreds.[346]

The relationship between the poet and the sower is not unique to "Elysabel" but was instead established by Rutebeuf in his earlier "Voie d'Humilité (Paradis)" ("Humility's Path") where the spiritual reward of the aforementioned labor is more firmly established.

Le preudons, quant voit le jor nei.

[345] 13 Mt. 1-8, 4 Mk. 1-8, 8 Lk. 4-8.

[346] cf. Chrétien de Troyes *Le Conte du Graal,* which opens in a similar manner (ll. 1-10).

Reva areir en son journei.[347]

Aprés areir, son jounei samme:

Qui lors sameroit si que s'amme

Messonnast semance divine,

[The good man, when he sees the light of day.

Returns to labor in his furrow.

After laboring, he sows his field:

He sows so that his soul

Harvests the divine seed, ll. 9-11]

Within this passage the narrator describes the manner in which one should approach one's work. Labor alone is not enough, for one must labor in such a way that is pleasing to God. God's approval is the objective of the laborer in this passage. Specifically, one should labor so that his soul receives God's word. Here the emphasis is not on the material reward that one will receive for one's work but rather the spiritual reward. By comparing himself to the sower of God's word, the narrator positions himself as deserving of the spiritual reward that ensues. The redemptive quality of the narrator's work is reemphasized later in the poem when he describes Elizabeth as a sower, thereby associating himself with the saint.

Je di por voir, non pas devine,

Moisson de semence devine

Moissonna en iteil meniere

[347] Although translated as "field" journee specifically refers to the amount of land that one could work in a day.

Tant com meissons entra pleniere.

[I tell you in truth, I do not lie,

That she harvests the divine seed

And harvests it in such a way

That the harvest will be ample. ll. 841-4]

By comparing the saint to the sower and later harvester of the divine seed (or God's word), the narrator sets up a comparison between himself and Elizabeth. Whereas Elizabeth earns her merit through good deeds, the narrator earns his through his words, which influence others to do good deeds. The saint's life becomes economized by the narrator's hand, since he employs one set of words for two purposes. Not only do the narrator's words recount the life of the saint, but they also serve as a means of redemption.

Later in the poem the narrator reintroduces the metaphor of the "good worker." The role of this figure in the later "sainte Elyzabel" serves a different purpose than in the earlier "Marie L'Egypcienne." Rather than discuss the spiritual benefit the "good worker" receives from his own work, the narrator describes how the "good worker" can be of benefit to others.

Qui porroit troveir teil ovrier,

Moult i auroit bon recouvrier;

Et moult est bons a mestre en huevre

Bons ovriers qui sanz lasseir huevre.

[If anyone can find such a worker,

He would see a good return;

It is good to put to work

The good worker who works without tiring. ll. 935-8]

Here, the narrator stresses the benefit one will receive from employing or putting the "good worker" to work. The personal motivations of the narrator are apparent within this passage. Rather than spiritual benefit, the narrator seeks financial benefit. He does so by invoking the benefit his patron will receive from the narrator's work. The quality of the narrator's work is illustrated in the passage through the rhyme. The narrator employs the words for "work," "working," and "worker" four times within the four lines, showcasing the narrator's ability to produce much work in a short amount of time. The narrator makes a similar appeal earlier in the text when he states,

Li boens sergens qui de cuer sert

Et bien servir l'amor desert

De son seigneur par bien servir.

[The good servant who serves with all his heart

And for serving well deserves the love

Of his lord through serving him well. ll. 439-41]

Employing feudal ("sergens," l. 439; "seigneur," l.441) rather than commercial terms, the narrator appeals to his patron in these lines by suggesting that for his good service, his "lord" or patron should serve him well in return. As with the earlier

passage, the financial motivations of the narrator are difficult to ignore as the narrator seeks financial recompense for his work.

The Spiritual and Financial Motivations of the Narrator

Rather than continue to incite his patron to either employ him or to reciprocate his good service by serving him well in return, the narrator, in each instance, alters the focus of his message to center, once again, on spiritual benefice. The dual motivations of the narrator become apparent in these passages. He not only seeks financial reward but also spiritual reward for his work. Following the first passage where the narrator describes the benefit the "good worker" brings to he who employs him, the narrator next states that he wishes to introduce the "good worker" to his audience ("Cest ovrier vos wel descouvrir, / Por l'ovrier vos wel descouvrir," ll. 938-9). Not surprisingly, the worker whom the narrator describes is much like the narrator himself.

> Li boens cuers qui Dieu doute et ainme,
> Et la bouche qui le reclainme,
> Li cors qui les euvres en fait
> Et en paroles et en fait:
> Ces .III. chozes mizes encemble,
> C'est li ovriers, si con moi cemble;
> C'est cil qui Dieu sert et aore,
> C'est li labors que il labore.

[The good heart that fears and loves God,

And the mouth that calls to Him,

The body that accomplishes its work

In words and in deeds:

These three things taken together,

Are the worker, it seems to me;

It is he who loves and serves God,

This is the work that he produces. ll. 941-8]

In this passage the narrator expresses the dual nature of the "good worker's" work. He not only serves God through his deeds, but also through his words, the latter accentuated in the text due to the enjambment in lines 943-4. The reference to the mouth calling to God, found in the earlier line, reiterates the importance of words in the description of the "good worker." The "good worker" is, therefore, someone who uses words to serve God, much like the narrator himself. Within this passage the narrator also uses two different terms to refer to the worker. Initially the narrator references the "ovriers" (l.946), which refers to an artistic or literary production.[348] He later uses the term "labor" (l.948), referring, instead, to a more manual or physical kind of labor. [349] By stating, first, that the "good worker" "ouvrier" and later that he "labore," the narrator associates his creative work to the work of the laborer. By doing so he increases the redemptive value of his work.

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[348] *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "euvre, oevre."

[349] ibid., "laborer."

Employing a strategy similar to the one used in “Marie L’Egypcienne,” the narrator, next, refers to Elizabeth as a “good worker.” The manner in which he describes Elizabeth’s work is similar to the way he depicts his own work earlier in the poem. By doing so, he makes his work equivalent to that of the saint.

> Ceste dame teil oevre ouvra,
> Boens ovriers fu, bien s'aovra,
> Car senz lasseir le Roi de gloire
> Servi, ce tesmoingne l'estoire.
> [This woman worked in such a way,
> That she was a good worker, she worked well,
> Because without tiring she served the King of Glory
> As the story corroborates. ll. 949-52]

Within this passage, the narrator associates his work with the work of the saint in several ways. First, he describes her stamina. Like the “good worker” portrayed in the earlier passage, the saint works without tiring. Next, the narrator uses the term "ovriers" (l. 950) in his description of Elizabeth's work rather than "labors." Through doing so, the narrator likens the type of work that he performs (as an "ovrier" himself) to the work of the saint. By comparing his own work to that of the saint, the narrator positions himself as worthy of receiving a spiritual reward.

Correlating his own work to that of the saint is essential to expressing the redemptive quality of the narrator’s work. As in the earlier “La vie de sainte Marie L’Egypcienne,” the narrator describes Elizabeth’s penitence as difficult or *dure*

("Penitence dure endura," l. 1314). Dawson makes the same argument for "La vie de sainte Elysabel" as she did for "La vie de sainte Marie L'Egypcienne," claiming that Elizabeth's penitence was also inimitable and undesirable for medieval audiences.[350] By using the metaphor of work to describe Elizabeth's penitence, however, I argue that the narrator suggests that work can have the same redemptive value as the physical suffering endured by the saint. He, therefore, once again provides an alternative means of penitence for himself as well as his audience.

Throughout "La vie de sainte Elysabel" we see several attempts made by the narrator to position himself and his work as deserving of a spiritual reward. By initially likening his own creative work to that of the manual laborer and later to the work of the saint, the narrator communicates to his patron, his audience, and to God the value of his labor. Work is, therefore, given a redemptive value in Rutebeuf's saints' lives. One must not only work, however, but also work in the right way. The work towards redemption is not without difficulty, for one must work tirelessly in order to make up for one's past transgressions. The time and effort the "good worker" puts in is not without reward, as he will find spiritual and material benefice as a result of his labor.

The motif of the "good worker" not only provides a viable alternative to the physical suffering of the saint, it also adds a degree of human agency in the process towards salvation. No longer an insignificant bystander, the individual must make the effort to do good work throughout his lifetime so that he or she may better

[350] Maureen Gillespie Dawson, "Hard Lessons," 337.

negotiate his or her position in heaven upon the hour of his or her death. The use of commercial metaphors in Rutebeuf's saint's lives are used to express the Christian's potential to change the course of his or her destiny and, therefore, better position him or herself in the future, when his or her actions in this life will be judged by God.

Merchant Time

Part of this newfound agency derives from a new expression of time. Merchant time, as defined by Jacques Le Goff, becomes much more prominent in Rutebeuf's saint's lives. Rather than continuous, as with Church time, merchant time could be altered, split up, sped up or slowed down.[351] The individual, therefore, had the power to manipulate time to his or her benefit. In the prologue of each text, the narrator stresses that one should arrive early to work ("Marie L'Egypcienne," ll. 1-8) and that one should work without tiring ("sainte Elysabel," l. 931, l. 951). As the examples above show, the individual is able to change the course of his or her fate by the way that he or she manipulates time. By doing a large amount of work in a limited amount of time, for example, he or she is able to make up for lost time, or a time when his or her life was not dedicated to serving God. The manipulation of time by the individual is closely linked to the image of the worker in each poem. One cannot exist without the other. The metaphor or the worker within each saint's life, therefore, serves to express not only the role each individual must assume to assure his or her salvation, but also that there is a potential to change the course of one's fate, if he or she only puts in the effort.

[351] Jacques Le Goff, "Temps de l'Église et temps du marchand," 427.

"Li miracles que Nostre Dame fist dou Soucretain et d'une Dame"

The commercial metaphors employed in "Li miracles que Nostre Dame fist dou Soucretain et d'une Dame" ("The Miracle that Our Lady performed for a Sacristan and a Lady," c. 1264), differ slightly from those employed in the saint's lives. Their purpose, however, is still the same: to communicate to the audience the potential they have to alter their fate. Rather than effort, Rutebeuf's "Soucretain" centers on the theme of choice, the journey through life expressed through the metaphor of the market.

Rutebeuf's "Soucretain" follows the basic structure of the Marian miracle, a thematic genre that included tales, songs, poems, plays, and sermons, each dedicated to Mary's miraculous occurrences.[352] Although each medium presented a unique image of Mary, the Marian miracle remained at its core an appeal to grace that gave believers a spiritual refuge during periods of difficult social and religious change.[353] Its plot is not original to Rutebeuf but is instead based on an exemplum composed by Jacques de Vitry (c. 1160/70-1240).[354] Both de Vitry and Rutebeuf's texts recount the story of a Sacristan and a noble woman, who, under the influence of devils, steal money and goods from their respective households and run off together. After being caught and thrown into prison, the Sacristan and the Lady pray for the Virgin to intercede on their behalf. Not only does she help the two, she also

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[352] David Flory, *Marian Representations,* xiii.

[353] ibid.*,* xix.

[354] Cardinal Jacques de Vitry was more than likely born in Reims and later studied in Paris. Many of his sermons attacked Church corruption. David Flory, *Marian Representations*, 73-5.

puts the devils in prison in place of the couple. The Lady and the Sacristan are later returned to their respective households and forgiven of their past transgressions.

Even though the basic plots are similar, the motivation behind Mary's intervention is different in the two texts. In de Vitry's version, for example, Mary intervenes for the honor of the religion.[355] The fault committed by the Sacristan and the Lady is less significant than the tarnished reputation of the Church. The collective is, therefore, given priority over the individual in de Vitry's text. Rutebeuf's version differs from the Latin exemplum since rather than the collective, the individual is emphasized. The change in theme stems from Rutebeuf's chosen message. Rather than the collective, he imparts the message that the choices made by an individual can have a profound effect on his or her future. The metaphor of the marketplace helps to communicate this message as the individual is transformed into a merchant, who must, first, choose to go to the correct market and next, negotiate in a way that he or she will not be tricked or fall into sin.

The Redemptive Power of Poetry

Rutebeuf's "Soucretain" opens with an address to an anonymous "Beneoiz," to whom the narrator gives credit for having first told and later commissioned the poem. No scholar to this point has been able to confirm "Beneoiz's" identity. Dufeil

[355] De Vitry emphasizes Mary's concern for the honor of the religion several times in his text: "The scandal throughout the region was so great that everyone reviled religious people. The harm thus caused, through infamy and scandal, was greater than that caused by the sin itself." "Then the Blessed Virgin, irate, appeared to them and after berating them severely, said: "I can obtain remission from your sins, my Son, but what can I do about so much scandal? You made the name of religious people stink in the sight of all, so that from now on they will be discredited! This is almost irretrievable damage!" "Behold, therefore, how great would have been the infamy and scandal-the incalculable damage-inflicted by the Devil on religious persons, had not the Blessed Virgin intervened." Cited in, David Flory, *Marian Representations*, 98.

hypothesizes that the name "Beneoiz" could refer to the Benedictine order, but Zink remains skeptical, since "Beneoiz" is referred to in the singular rather than the plural in the latter half of the poem ("sires Beneoiz," l.747).[356] Leroux refuses to hypothesize on the autobiographical origins of this figure, concluding simply that "Beneoiz" refers to he who is blessed by God ("celui qui est beni de Dieu").[357] Based on the analysis provided by Zink, it seems likely that the poem was composed for an individual instead of a group, which could account for the change in motivation from Rutebeuf's previous Marian miracle ("Le miracle de Theophile"), where community was more important than the individual.

The narrator not only names his alleged patron in the opening of the poem, but through a play on "Beneoiz's" name via the annominatio, he also emphasizes the redemptive power of the poem he has composed.

Ce soit en la beneoite heure
Que Beneoiz, qui Dieu aheure,
Me fait faire beneoite oevre!
Por Beneoit .I. pou m'aeovre:
Benoiz soit qui escoutera
Ce que por Beneoit fera
Rutebuez, que Dieuz beneïsse!
Diex doint que s'uevre espeneïsse

[356] Michel Zink, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 587; Michel-Marie Dufeil, "L'oeuvre d'une vie rythmée: Chronographie de Rutebeuf," *Musique, littérature et société au Moyen* Âge, Actes du Colloque d'Amiens (24-29 mars 1980), published by Danielle Buschinger and André Crepin (Paris: Champion, 1981): 279-94 at 288.
[357] Xavier Leroux, "De l'annomination à la nomination," 62.

En teil maniere que il face

Chose dont il ait grei et grace!

[It was a blessed hour

When Benedict, who adores God,

Had me compose a blessed work!

For Benedict I put forth a little effort:

Blessed are those who listen

That which for Benedict

Rutebeuf will compose, may God bless him!

May God give him what he needs to amend his work

In such a way that he composes

Something that will grant him gratitude and grace! ll. 1-10]

As this passage illustrates, not only does the *annominatio* permit Rutebeuf to qualify his poem as blessed ("beneoite oevre," l. 3) but also those who hear it ("Benoiz soit qui escoutera," l. 4). In addition, the *annominatio* allows the narrator to ask God for His blessing and to help him amend his poem so that it will bring him gratitude and grace ("En teil maniere que il face / Chose dont il ait grei et grace!" ll. 9-10). As in his earlier saint's lives, the dual motivations of the narrator for both financial and spiritual recompense become manifest within his section. His financial motivations are indicated by his wish for his audience to be blessed and that he receive gratitude, in the form of monetary payment no doubt, for his poem from his "blessed" patron. His spiritual desires become apparent when he refers to his poem

as “blessed” and states that he hopes to receive grace for his work. These two motivations will continue to be evoked throughout the narrator’s prologue.

Following this brief introduction, the narrator states that by composing an intelligent work, he hopes to receive financial recompense. In particular since those who do good work should be justly compensated.

> Cil qui bien fait bien doit avoir,
> Et cil qui n'a sens ne savoir
> Par quoi il puisse bien ouvreir,
> Si ne doit mie recovreir
> A avoir gairison ne rente.
> [He who does good should profit
> And he who has neither the sense nor knowledge
> Permitting him to work well
> Shouldn't be able to receive
> To have gains or income, ll. 12-5]

The relationship that the narrator sets up between the ideas of intelligence, working well, and reward is supported by the rhyme between the words "avoir" (to have, l.12) and "savoir" (to know, l.13) as well as "ouvreir" (to work, l.14) and "recouvreir" (to receive, l.15). In contrast, those who do not have intelligence to do good work should not be compensated. By identifying the faults of the bad worker, the narrator suggests that he falls within the former category. The narrator, therefore, characterizes himself as an intelligent and hard working poet who

deserves just recompense. By extension, the poem becomes a platform from which the narrator not only tells a story, but also negotiates his compensation.

The Metaphor of the Market and the Theme of Choice

The narrator, who, as the above passage suggests, is intelligent and therefore deserving of a reward continues to tout his abilities in the next section of the poem. Rather than an earthly or financial reward, the narrator focuses on spiritual rewards, establishing a relationship between the two by suggesting that those who are worthy of earthly rewards should also be granted spiritual rewards. The passage has been cited in its entirety to guard the narrator's play on commercial terms.

Ciz siecles n'est mais que marchiez.
Et vos qui au marchié marchiez,
S'au marchié estes mescheant,
Vos n'estes pas bon marcheant.
Li marcheanz, la marcheande
Qui sagement ne marcheande
Pert ses pas et quanqu'ele marche.
Puis que nos sons en bone marche,
Pensons de si marcheandier
C'om ne nos puisse demandeir
Nule riens au jor dou Juïse,
Quant Diex panra de toz justise
Qui auront ensi bargignié

Qu'au marchié seront engignié.

Or gardeiz que ne vos engigne

Li Maufeiz qu'adés vos bargigne

[The world is nothing but a market,

And you who travel to the market,

And at the market are unlucky,

You are not a good merchant.

The male and female merchants

Who do not conduct their business wisely

Have traveled/bargained for nothing.

Because we are in a good place,

We believe that we have conducted our business so well

That no one can ask

Anything of us on Judgment Day

When God will judge

Those who will conduct business such a way

That they will be tricked at the market.

Watch so that you are not tricked

By the Devil who will quickly trick you, ll. 17-32].

In this passage, the narrator likens contemporary times to the marketplace. He or she who travels to the market but who does not conduct business well has wasted

his or her time. The path to the market serves as a metaphor for one's lifetime.[358] The "merchant" or individual who makes good choices will benefit, but he or she who is not wise will be tricked and fall victim to the devil. The path taken by the good merchant who conducts his or her business well leads to heaven whereas those who do business poorly follow the path towards hell. It seems as though the narrator places himself within this latter category by the change in the subject pronoun from "vous" or "you" to "nous" or "we" in line 24. Through doing so, the narrator positions himself among those who have conducted their business well, thereby reinforcing his merit.

Next, the narrator warns his audience not to conduct business with the devil, for the devil will mislead them. The relationship between conducting business and being tricked is particularly emphasized within this passage. In lines 29-32, for example, not only is there a rhyme established between the two terms ("bargigné," l. 29, "engigné," l. 30, "engigne," l. 31, "bargigne," l. 32), but the term for tricked is encompassed by the term for conducting business, insinuating that deception lies at the heart of commerce.[359] In addition, the narrator's warning about the devil's propensity to mislead is imitated by the composition of the poem itself, particularly

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[358] Rutebeuf also references the path as well as the potential to go astray in "La vie de sainte Elysabel" when he writes, "Por noiant vit qui ne s'avoie. / Qui ne wet tenir bone voie / Tost est de voie desvoiez. / Por ce vos pri que vos voiez / La vanité de ceste vie / Ou tant rancune et envie." (He who does not want not take the correct path. / Has lived for nothing / He is soon led astray, / Because of this I pray you see / The vanity of this life / Where there is so much resentment and envy ll. 125-38).

[359] The verb "bargaigner" had multiple meanings in Old French. Not only did it refer to conducting business but also to deceiving someone "cherche à tromper" or to fight someone "combattre." *Dictionnaire du français médiéval,* Takeshi Matsumura (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), s.v. "bargaignier/barginier."

in lines 24-30. Within these lines, those who believe they have conducted their business well ("Puis nos sons en bon marche, / Pensons de si marcheandeir," / Because we are in a good place, / We believe that we have conducted our business so well, ll. 24-5) fare no better than those who are misled ("Qui auront ensi bargignié / Qu'au marchié seront engignié," / Those who conduct business in such a way / That they will be tricked at the market, ll. 29-30), since both appear to be judged. In lines 26-9, for example, there is no clear separation between those who believe they will not be judged and those who will be judged when the narrator transitions between the two. Through this ambiguity the narrator seems to warn his audience that even though they believe that they have conducted their affairs well on Earth, they are not assured salvation. Only God has the power to decide who will be saved.

Even though, as noted above, the devil has the ability to mislead, he does not have complete control over the actions of those he tempts. By using the metaphor of a business transaction to describe the relationship between the "merchant" and the devil, narrator insinuates that becoming involved with the devil is, to a certain degree, a matter of choice. Particularly since the "merchant" has the ability to "garder" (l.31) or to keep from conducting business with the devil. He or she, therefore, can decide whether or to conduct business with the devil.

The devil's inability to have full control over those he targets, reiterating the theme of choice, is not only present in the prologue, but it was also was one of the tenets of thirteenth century theology. Ian P. Wei discusses the role of the devil in

thirteenth century theology by explaining how Thomas Aquinas showed the limits placed on the devil's power and the way sin could be explained without the devil's influence.[360]

> . . . the devil could 'persuade or provide what is desirable.' He could also have an interior effect on the imagination and the sense of appetite, causing 'images to appear within and passions to be felt.' But this did not mean that all sins were caused by the devil or that the devil could ever force someone to sin. . . . Even when the devil played a part, he was not the direct cause of sin; that was always the will of the person who sinned.[361]

As this passage explains, the devil had a role in providing his victims with the feelings or emotions necessary to entice them to sin, yet could not force them to sin.[362] Although the devil could tempt the faithful, his power was limited. To sin or not to sin, therefore, remained a choice on the part of the individual.

This message is reiterated in the text itself. Although the Sacristan and the Lady steal from and abandon their respective households due to the enchantment of devils, the two do not sin. The fact that the two did not sin, despite the devil's temptation, showcases a relative freedom on the part of the two characters. The narrator insists on their innocence in the text, when he proclaims,

> En la vile ont un hosteil pris.

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[360] Ian P. Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris*, 227.
[361] ibid.
[362] See: Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages,* 202.

Ancor n'ont de noiant mespris

Ne fait pechié ne autre choze

Dont Diex ne sa Mere les choze,

Ainz sunt ausi com suer et frere:

La douce Dame lor soit meire!

[In the city they took a room.

They hadn't yet done anything wrong

They had neither sinned nor anything else

For which God or his Mother could blame them,

They were like sister and brother:

Let the sweet Lady be their mother! ll. 349-54]

Even though the Sacristan and the Lady were coerced by devils into their relationship, this passage emphasizes the fact that they never sinned. A theory reiterated later in the text when one of the devils states, “C’onques nes pou faire pechier” (I could never make (them) sin, l. 734). They therefore made the choice not to engage in sexual behavior, even though the devils put these thoughts into their heads. This passage also highlights Mary's contemporary role as a sympathetic and motherly figure. Mary is not sympathetic due to the fact that the Sacristan and the Lady were victimized or that they were Christians, as in “Le miracle de Theophile,” but because they did not sin. The couple's choice to remain chaste combined with a reiteration of the Virgin's clemency brings about hope in the possibility of salvation, as long as one makes the right choices.

The Metaphor of the Path

The concept of choice is also reiterated in the beginning of the poem by the metaphor of the implied path, which suggests that the "merchant" has a choice in the direction he or she takes in his or her life.[363] He or she who does not conduct his or her business well, the narrator warns, has wasted the time it took to travel to the market. The path to the market, therefore, stands as a metaphor for the duration of one's life whose endpoint is eternal salvation or damnation. The *annominatio* between "marchié" (the market) and "marchiez" (to walk) reinforces the theme of choice by suggesting that along the journey of life one is constantly required to negotiate and make decisions. The choices that one makes positively or negatively affect one's future.

Later in the poem, the narrator compares the Lady and the Sacristan to merchants going to the market since they were charged with goods and travelled a great distance. By doing so he, once again, recalls the merchants in his prologue who have the potential to choose the wrong path,

> Chacuns met le troussel au coul:
> Or semble qu'il vont au marchié.
> Tant ont alei, tant ont marchié
> Qu'esloignié ont li fol naïs
> .XV. granz lieues le païs.
> [Each put their wares around their neck:

[363] Rutebeuf uses the path to symbolize the choices one makes in life in "La voie d'umilitei." (La voie de paradis).

It seems as though they are going to the market.

They traveled so far, they walked so far

That the simple fools traveled

Fifteen long leagues from their home. ll. 344-8]

The rhyme between the words "marchié" (l. 345) and "marchié" (l. 346) within this section serves as a reminder of the *annominatio* between these terms in the beginning of the text, the moral established between the two being the same. One must take the correct path so that he or she may conduct “good” business and by extension secure his or her future salvation. The couple in this case not only bear the burden of their sins, represented by the merchandise around their necks, but have also not chosen the correct path. The choice of the verb "esloignier" (l. 347) corroborates this theory since this verb not only indicates distance but also deviation. Moreover, the severity of the deviation is described through the narrator's explicit reference to the distance traveled (fifteen leagues) as well as the adjective "granz" (l. 348), which emphasizes the expanse of their deviation. Although the exact measurement of a league varied, fifteen leagues was approximately 40 miles. Seeing as the average person could only travel about fifteen miles a day by foot, the Sacristan and the Lady would have traveled over two days distance.[364]

The Sacristan and the Lady's deviation from the correct path is reiterated later in the text when the narrator describes where the two settled. Representative

[364] Norbert Ohler, *The Medieval Traveler,* trans. Caroline Hillier (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010), 101.

of their immoral actions, the two were found on streets that were “foreign” or situated on the outside of town (“Auz rues forainnes,” l. 443; “une mout forainne rue,” l. 456). The narrator describes the significance of these “rue forainne” when stating: “car la gent qui a ce s’atorne / En destornei leu se destorne” (Because people who behave in this manner / Settle in remote places, ll. 457-8). The immoral actions of the Sacristan and the Lady are defined spatially in these lines. They, like those who act in a way that goes against God and society, normally dwell in locations that are set apart.[365] The use of the term "rue" (l. 456) or street rather than "inn" or "dwelling," which would seem more fitting when describing the Sacristan and the Lady’s location, reiterates the fact that they not only deviated but they did so from the correct path. The emphasis on a path once again reiterates the moral outlined in the prologue of the poem where the narrator describes the merchant traveling to the market.

The Merchant in Medieval Society

The ambiguous position of “the merchants” in the prologue, as well as in the story itself, echoes his or her ambiguous position within society. Whereas the laborer or craftsman would normally had a positive connotation, the merchant’s situation was much more unclear. Early medieval Christian writers tended to look unfavorably upon merchants, often citing Christ’s expulsion of buyers and sellers from the temple as a source for their condemnation (21 Matt 12-3). Peter Lombard,

[365] According to Le Goff, Albert the Great performed an astonishing number or sermons according to which narrow, somber urban streets were equated to hell and large open squares with paradise. Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time,* 4.

for example, decreed that it was difficult for merchants to perform their duties without sin; a position maintained by the earlier Ambrose and Pope Leo I.[366] Lianna Farber observes that due to the rise in the number of merchants as a result of the commercial revolution, the Christian position towards merchants had to change to in order to prevent automatically condemning a significant portion of the Christian population to hell.[367] Rather than condemning all merchants, only those who bought and sold items without any alterations and at an increased cost were singled out for blame. In contrast, those who used either their labor or capital to improve the item in any way before selling at a higher price were not regarded as doing any harm, since they improved the product before selling it. Labor or expenditure could, therefore, change an immoral sale to an honorable one.[368]

The Narrator's Legacy

The emphasis on labor in just exchange could explain why the narrator continually refers to his own labor in his saints' lives and his Marian miracle. Throughout each poem, the narrator is sure to make his presence known as he comments on the structure of the poem and what he chose to include as well as what to leave out. The most significant testament to the narrator's labor in "Le Soucretain" is found at the end of the poem, when he states,

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[366] Lianna Farber, *An Anatomy of Trade in Medieval Writing: Value, Consent, and Community* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 14-5.

[367] According to Lianna Farber, "The picture of the wicked trader, reified as it was in foundational theological and legal texts and reinforced in popular literature, never disappears in the Middle Ages. But this picture was increasingly, and often enthusiastically, challenged by a different view of what exchange entailed." ibid., 16.

[368] Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought,* Cambridge Medieval Books (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 113.

A Rutebeuf le raconta

Et Rutebeuz en .I. conte a

Mise la chose et la rima.

Or dit il que c'en la rime a

Chozë ou il ait se bien non,

Que vos regardeiz bien son non.

[He (Beneoiz) told it to Rutebeuf

And Rutebeuf put it into

A story and rhymed it.

Now he says that if in the rhyme

There is something to take away,

That you acknowledge his name, ll. 749-53].

Within this closing passage, Rutebeuf reminds his audience and his patron of the work he did for them by putting the tale that "Beneoiz" told him into rhyme. Rather than the message or moral of story, the audience should, instead, recall Rutebeuf's name. When taken together, the audience should remember Rutebeuf for the labor he has performed, which is worthy of financial recompense. The narrator is sure not to leave out the spiritual benefice, however, by ending the poem with a prayer, his two motivations resonating together in the final lines the poem.

The increased presence of commercial metaphors in Rutebeuf's Marian miracle not only testifies to the increasing importance of commerce during the period in which Rutebeuf wrote, but the metaphors also allow for a new relationship

between God, the individual, and time. Although the end of times is not and cannot be known, by introducing commerce into the history of salvation the narrator emphasizes the role of individual effort and choice in the progression towards one's salvation. The individual is free to choose whatever path he or she decides, which leads to a market where he or she may conduct business with whomever he or she chooses. If one chooses the wrong path and does business with the wrong people, however, he or she will become greatly indebted.

The commercial mindset of the thirteenth century becomes integrated into the eternal tale of salvation in Rutebeuf's "post-conversion" poems. Although "merchant time" was not yet completely separate from "Church time" as it would become in the fourteenth century, Rutebeuf's poems take an initial step in this direction by illustrating each person's role in the outcome of his or her fate.[369] Rather than remain passive, each person must work to make up for his or her past mistakes. In addition, he or she must make the right choices by not deviating from the path that leads to redemption. The narrator employs the commercial metaphors used to instruct his audience to secure his own financial and spiritual futures. He does so by positing his poems and his labor as worthy of both recompense and redemption. The poems, therefore, become a space where the narrator actively negotiates his own fate and secures his future.

[369] See: Jacques Le Goff, "Temps de l'Église et temps du marchand"

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined how the newly emerging commercial society in the thirteenth century impacted the conception and expression of time in the Parisian poet Rutebeuf's corpus. It differs from Michel Zink's study of the expression of time in this period, in that rather than show how the literary subject is a product of his time, it investigates the inverse, or how time becomes the product of the literary subject.[370] More specifically, it illustrates how the narrator employs commercial metonymies, metaphors, and mentalities to manipulate the expression of time for his own benefit. In Rutebeuf's earliest poetry, clothing, cloth, and coins are used to represent a society progressing towards decline, since those who benefit from the expanse of commerce refuse to share their wealth with others. In the poems of misfortune, the narrator attempts to separate himself from the negative influence of commerce, represented by the "*griesche,*" which was associated with gambling and deceit, through his manipulation of temporal and spatial dichotomies. "Le miracle de Theophile" expresses time through the ideological conflict that

[370] See: Michel Zink and Monique Briand-Walker, "Time and Representation of the Self;" Michel Zink, *La Subjectivité littéraire*.

occurred in the thirteenth century between the idealized feudal past and the contemporary, commercial mentality. Finally, in Rutebeuf's "post-conversion" poems, the commercial is used as a means of manipulating time in order for the audience and the narrator to actively negotiate their future.

As the above summary illustrates, commerce's influence on the expression of time varies throughout Rutebeuf's corpus. Despite these differences, the narrator actively employs commerce's influence on time to his benefit in each poem. In his early poetry, for example, he evokes a society in decline in order to incite potential patrons to give more generously. In the "*Griesche*" poems, he separates himself from his sinful past in order to become a figure of repentance. The idealized feudal past triumphs over the contemporary, commercial mentality in "Le miracle de Theophile" in order to support the ideologies of the *confréries* and the guilds, Rutebeuf's assumed benefactors. In the "post-conversion" poems, time becomes mutable in order to allow for the narrator to secure his financial and spiritual future. In each of the above examples, the expression of time is manipulated in order to fulfill the narrator's wants and/or needs. Commerce is essential to the narrator's manipulation of time, since it allows for a conception of time represented as fluid and mutable rather than fixed and rigid. This new conception of time allows the narrator to reshape his past, present, and future.

Why we should care about time? More importantly, why care about medieval "times" in contemporary society? In his *Essay on Time,* Norbert Elias argues that time is a means of orientation and regulation within a given society. Rather than

natural, time is something that is imposed on society by society itself.[371] The way(s) in which time is conceived and understood, therefore, varies from one society to another. Differences in the way that time is apprehended would initially make it seem as though time would not be a useful tool for understanding a given society, and in particular medieval society, which appears both foreign and distant. Yet, time is perhaps one of the best ways of comprehending the Middle Ages since it represents the way in which medieval society orients, and therefore, understands its world.

Rutebeuf's understanding of his world is fluid and changing. The way that time is represented differs throughout his corpus. Instead of revealing a misunderstanding of time variances in Rutebeuf's expression of time reveal a profound comprehension of it. Rather than represent one time, Rutebeuf configures multiple time(s) in his text. Moreover, through the power of his pen, Rutebeuf is not only able to manipulate time, but also his passage within it. The new understanding of time brought about by the commercial network impacts Rutebeuf's expression of time, since rather than playing out a foretold destiny, Rutebeuf takes time into his own hands by actively composing his own fate.

Not only is time an essential element for understanding the Middle Ages, insight into medieval "times" is also helpful for comprehending contemporary society. In order to appreciate the continued importance of the Middle Ages in modern "times," however, negative stereotypes about the Middle Ages must first be

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[371] Norbert Elias, *An Essay on Time,* ed. Steven Loyal and Stephen Mennell, The Collected Works of Norbert Elias 9 (Dublin: University College of Dublin Press, 2007), 4.

overcome. In a talk entitled "Welcome to the Middle Ages," Michel Zink discusses modern disdain for the Middle Ages, citing the common phrase, "We are no longer living in the Middle Ages."[372] Despite the fact that the Middle Ages are generally regarded by modern society as barbaric and uncivilized, Zink disputes this tendency by claiming that even though we, in modern society, are very different than those living in the Middle Ages, we are also very much the same. Zink challenges the common conception that modern society is completely distinct from its medieval counterpart. In his book, *The Medieval Imprint,* John B. Morrall similarily contends that medieval society is not as different from modern society as one may initially believe. He does so by arguing that modern society faces the same problem confronted by those living in in the Middle Ages, namely the reconciliation of the "individual" with the "community."[373] Zink and Morrall, therefore, both make a case for the continued relevancy of the Middle Ages in contemporary times. Helen Solterer makes a similar claim in her book *Medieval Roles for Modern Times*, which discusses the impact of medieval theater in early twentieth century France. According to Solterer, the hugely successful 1933 production of "Le miracle de Theophile" by Gustave Cohen led to the development of a full-fledged theater company specializing in medieval plays, which was also very successful.[374] The success of the medieval plays was due, in part, to their relevance for several

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[372] Michel Zink, "Welcome to the Middle Ages," *Cultural Services of the French Embassy,* April 2, 2015, http://livestream.com/frenchembassy/welcome-to-the-middle-ages.
[373] John B. Morrall, *The Medieval Imprint : The Founding of the Western European Tradition* (Middlesex, UK : Pelican Books, 1970), 164.
[374] Helen Solterer, *Medieval Roles for Modern Times: Theater and the Battle for the French Republic* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 12-3.

ideological groups, as "the opposing visions of the Middle Ages fed the ideological conflicts polarizing France and Europe."[375] Conflicts that occurred and were mediated through theater in the Middle Ages, therefore, continued to speak to a modern society wrought with conflict. The above examples illustrate the ways in which medieval voices continue to resonate with modern audiences. Rather than write off the Middle Ages as backwards or barbaric, we should instead embrace this period and recognize its continued influence on the contemporary world. Rutebeuf's expression of time, for example, can help us, as members of modern society, to realize that rather than one time, multiple times exist. These "times" govern our lives, but we can also manipulate them to our advantage. Most importantly, through its various "times," the Middle Ages reminds us that time is not real or tangible, but instead produced by society as a way of orienting and understanding the world, as well as our presence within it.

Although this study presents an extensive examination of the influence of commerce on the conception and expression of time in Rutebeuf's corpus, it only just begins to treat this rich and complex topic. Due to space constraints, this study is limited to metaphorical or figurative manifestations of time rather than more concrete expressions (calendar, liturgical, etc.). The presence of concrete expressions of time in Rutebeuf's corpus were deliberately omitted in the interest of presenting a cohesive study. It has been observed, however, that the increased presence of commercial metaphors coincides with increases in the number of

[375] ibid., 2.

concrete temporal references in Rutebeuf's latter poems. The relationship between the two deserves further examination. Comparing Rutebeuf's expressions of time to those of his contemporaries would further enrich our understanding of the social issues of this period. Such a comparison would help to elucidate if Rutebeuf's expression of time is unique to him and if it represents a more general tendency in thirteenth century poetic expression. Although this study does provide some comparison between Rutebeuf and his contemporaries, a more comprehensive analysis would be useful for better understanding the expression of time in this period. This study charts commerce's effect on the expression of time chronologically, beginning with Rutebeuf's earlier poems and ending with his "post-conversion" poems. As an alternative approach, it would be useful to examine if there is any variance in the way that time is expressed based on the genre of the poem or poems in question. Although this study does in some ways examine Rutebeuf's poems by genre, since Rutebeuf tended to compose in the same genre in a given period, comparison with Rutebeuf's contemporaries may help to elucidate this question. Finally, this study is limited to examining the influence of the commercial revolution on the conception and expression of time. It would be useful to also examine how other changes and developments that were occurring during this period also affected the way time was perceived in order to produce a more comprehensive study of time in thirteenth century Paris.

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