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E. Bruce Hayes, *Rabelais's Radical Farce: Late Medieval Comic Theater and its Function in Rabelais*. Surrey, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Press, 2010. Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2007. viii + 188 pp. Notes, bibliography, and index. \$99.95 U.S. (cl.). ISBN 978-0-7546-6518-2.

Review by Jody Enders, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Medieval French farce, a predominantly fifteenth-century literary genre, was performed well into the sixteenth century. Comprising hundreds of extant plays, it was not only a literary “genre:” it was a performance medium. In *Rabelais's Radical Farce*, E. Bruce Hayes has an intuition that the vibrant, popular, and important tradition of medieval farce might shed new light on the *oeuvre* of Rabelais. This is a worthy insight that might well have promised to attract and intrigue any number of audiences beyond the *seizièmistes* and specialists of Rabelais for whom the book is clearly destined. For decades, for instance, many medievalists have suspected that Rabelais's bawdy, sixteenth-century *oeuvre* might better come to life were the performance of popular culture to be brought to bear upon his prolific writings. Consider, for example, the infamous Rabelaisian list as a performance piece; consider a dramatic reading, complete with pantomime and an actual *rondeau*, of the impressive number of implements that a young Gargantua literally sticks up his ass to clean it (*Gargantua*, chap. 13).^[1] However, Hayes largely ignores the crucial performance dimensions of farce, missing out on the potential audiences of medievalists, theater historians, performance theorists, historians of print culture, literary theorists of comedy, and even classicists. Instead, he makes the curious decision to tear asunder the two principal subjects that he had so wisely sought to bring together: medieval farce and Rabelais. Although the prospect of a still vital orality in Rabelais would have been exciting to investigate, it does not appear to inform *Rabelais's Radical Farce*.

The conceptual and analytical difficulties are evident in the bipartite structure of the book. Part one, “The World of Farce” is comprised of two chapters: “The Ethics and Ethos of Farce” (devoted to the legal context of medieval farce, although Hayes is unaware of significant scholarship on that very subject ^[2]); and “‘*Tant de langaige*’: The Languages of Farce.” Part two, “Rabelais's Radical Farce” also features two chapters: “Humanist Satirical Farce in *Pantagruel and Gargantua*,” and “Unresolved Farce and ‘tragicque farce’: *Tiers* and *Quart Livres*.” Part one is designed to familiarize specialists of Rabelais with essential elements of the extensive farcical corpus which, notably and most unjustly, has received comparatively scant critical attention. Throughout part one, Hayes is a careful and astute reader of primary texts even though he keeps at arm's length the very subject of the book—Rabelais—to such an extent that Renaissance specialists will likely wonder just why they are being familiarized with plot line after farcical plot line. Meanwhile, medievalists interested in the legacy of farce will learn very little about its Rabelaisian echoes.

The mirror-image of that approach then recurs in part two, “Rabelais's Radical Farce,” which leaves the interested medievalist far behind as it steers Renaissance specialists to the more familiar ground of their favorite Rabelaisian tales. Here, the two chapters of part one, which had been designed to infuse Rabelais with new theatrical life, are virtually forgotten as a more standard literary analysis ensues. Almost as if by osmosis, these tales presumably take on new

richness thanks to the relatively isolated—and highly conservative—treatment of farce from part one. The result will likely frustrate specialists of the medieval theater who might otherwise have been drawn to the *mise en page* and potential performance qualities of farcical life in Rabelais's *oeuvre*. Specialists of Rabelais, in turn, are unlikely to be inspired about how farce actually works in that author's work.

In that sense, *Rabelais's Radical Farce* is a well-intentioned, old-fashioned monograph that fails nonetheless to reach its full promise. In many respects, this is a book that is difficult to review. Hayes has familiarized himself with a wealth of primary sources for farce; and he has an excellent command of Middle French (which is no small feat). He is a competent reader of farce, and he is able to provide a large number of well-written and clear plot summaries. Certainly, *seizièmistes* will profit immensely from Hayes's careful identification of so many farcical intertexts in the Rabelaisian *oeuvre*. So, in that regard, *Rabelais's Radical Farce* comprises a very good point of departure for those eager to pursue comparative analysis. The book, however, revolves around an overarching premise that is flawed from the start and which leads to a large number of tautologies and problematic assumptions, such that the very farcical genre upon which Hayes draws to illuminate Rabelais pales by comparison.

It is important to acknowledge that authors write the books that they want to write and not necessarily those that reviewers want to read. So as to allow the author to speak in his own voice, here is how Hayes himself describes his argument (as usual, in clear and well-written prose):

“. . . this book seeks to elucidate a specific and significant instance of the interplay between *so-called popular and humanistic* culture and literature in sixteenth-century France. Among Renaissance humanists, Rabelais distinguished himself by *joining together two distinctly different traditions*. The first was the erudite one favored by humanists such as Erasmus, incorporating knowledge of biblical and classical sources, and the second was the lewd, irreverent world of popular culture, a world in which the theater of farce thrived. . . . This contrast serves to illustrate the *hybrid nature* of Rabelais' work, a work simultaneously bawdy and erudite, boldly naturalistic and encyclopedic in scope. Rabelais's *appropriation* of farce serves as a key to comprehending the nuances and tensions between *'high' and 'low' forms of expression* embedded within the Rabelaisian discourse, as the author adopts a *seemingly simplistic theatrical form* and recasts it in a variety of ways which expand the possibilities of the genre, an intertextual process which also produces a distinctive, innovative formulation of Erasmian humanism” (p. 2; my emphasis).

It seems that Hayes has forgotten his own reliance above on scare quotes, as in “so-called” and “seemingly.” No serious theater scholar believes medieval French farce to be simplistic, especially once one respects the site-specific, ephemeral, and often political context of farcical performance. And no serious scholar subscribes to a vision of such clear-cut yet ultimately false dichotomies between religious vs. secular and high vs. low culture, especially on the late medieval stage on which both truly did thrive together and need not have waited for a sixteenth-century “appropriation” in order to form a “hybrid.”

Indeed, given that Hayes's point of departure is the world of medieval farce, it is surprising to encounter one of the few allusions to theatrical life as late as p. 134, where the false dichotomies appear anew: “whereas farce originally served as a form of interlude during religious plays, here [in Rabelais], farce *invades and takes over* the space of religious performance” (my emphasis). As any medievalist reader of the vile scatology of the buffeting scenes in Passion Plays knows, farce can scarcely “invade” a genre of which it has always been part; and there can hardly be a

persuasive discussion of the phenomenon without due consideration of the actual space of performance (for which even the key scholarly treatments go unmentioned).^[3]

Hayes assumes from the outset a non-satirical, static, farcical genre that is inappropriately divorced from a performance culture in which anything and everything could and did change: the gesture or the intonation might make, break, or transform a speech, a scene, or an entire play. If *farceurs* were known to have been arrested for their satirical transgressions, that is presumably because they *did* speak truth to power; and the powers that be were often offended.^[4] This difficulty, in turn, is related to that of the conception of the all-important first chapter: for want of a better term, it is irresponsible to purport to identify a legal ethics of farce without taking heed of the close relationship between law and drama.

Moreover, Hayes proceeds tautologically in the exploration and development of his argument by presenting an archaic definition of medieval farce that fails to take into account both the nature of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century performance and the oft-studied relationship between performance and print.^[5] After all, medieval French farce was one of the first literary genres to benefit from widespread publication in that new medium known as “the book.” Nevertheless, Hayes argues that, despite the exceptional popularity of farce, the genre was nonetheless so rhetorically limited that it virtually never attained the heights (or, for that matter, the depths) of true satire and social commentary. Since Hayes adheres to a simple, thematic assessment of farce (as populated by beloved, exaggerated, and relentlessly violent yet, for Hayes, ultimately jolly characters whose authors are committed only to the status quo), it is no wonder that only Rabelais could “radicalize” so pabulum an art form.

To offer such an argument is to misunderstand not only the stunning rhetorical and performative efficacy of the farce but of Rabelais as well. Furthermore, it leads to such unfortunate tautologies as this one, which concludes part one: “Recognizing the verbal strategies of farces helps the reader to identify Rabelais’s use of farcical language and highlights the ways in which the author takes these strategies to new levels in an imaginative literary creation which draws heavily upon the world of farce” (p. 95). Hayes’s old-fashioned, teleological approach to Rabelais’s reworking of farce obscures the very relationship that he seeks to illuminate. The teleology is explicit: “By initially exploring the world of what could provisionally be referred to as traditional farce, one is able to recognize how radically transformed the genre becomes, as well as the varied forms the genre assumes in the author’s [Rabelais’s] creation” (p. 4). Tautologies and teleologies, moreover, lead occasionally to an anachronistic anticipation of Molière, almost as if Hayes were seeking a *raisonneur* interested in the *juste milieu*. Farce is a world of extremes, a fact of which Hayes is well aware in his emphasis on its *démésure*. But, as D. W. Robertson pointed out long ago in his groundbreaking *Preface to Chaucer*, there need be no *juste milieu* nor even reconciliation of dialectical opposites in medieval habits of thought.^[6]

In a word, these conceptual difficulties are largely a function of whom Hayes has and has not read. Certainly, Hayes has familiarized himself, wisely, at length, and to his credit, with some of the greats, all of whom have done much to enhance our understanding of the universe of medieval French farce: Gustave Cohen and Louis Petit de Julleville, along with Barbara Bowen, Alan Knight, Donald Maddox, and a number of European scholars such as Jelle Koopmans, Jean-Claude Aubailly, Charles Mazouer, Darwin Smith, and Bernadette Rey-Flaud (but not Henri Rey-Flaud).^[7] There are substantial lacunae, however, especially with respect to the close interrelations between farce and law, farce and Passion plays, as well as the painstaking archival recuperations of medieval performance practice in the superb work, e.g., by William Tydeman’s editorial team and by Tiffany Stern.^[8]

Since Hayes all but ignores the reams of scholarship on the theory and practice of medieval performance—which was most likely to enrich his argument and the absence of which is all the more odd in that he does indeed know the work of Jeff Persels[9]—the picture of farce that emerges from *Rabelais's Radical Farce* is necessarily incomplete. It is dominated by a counterintuitive tendency to employ theatrical terminology, such as “dramatic,” “theatrical,” and even “performance,” as mere metaphor rather than as specific allusions to real performance practice. Hayes is so concerned—especially in part two—with tipping his hat to his apparent mentor, Ned Duval, that he has forsaken historian Carol Symes’s signature study of history, dissent, and theatrical performance in medieval Arras in favor of historian Sara Beam’s *Laughing Matters* (in which Beam also neglects medieval performance practice).[10] He is unfamiliar with both Glending Olson’s and Noah D. Guynn’s work on the ethics of farce, ostensibly the very subject of his first chapter (above, note 2); and it is as if the reviewer’s five books (four at the time of publication) on law, rhetoric, violence, and legendry in medieval French theater did not exist.[11] Therefore, it is not surprising that the farcical repertoire which Hayes sees Rabelais utilizing is a staid, old-school, generalist comedy lacking in social conscience.

Rabelais's Radical Farce is thus destined to the limited role of providing the tools for an argument and conclusions yet to come. The building blocks of both chapters of part one are essentially plot summaries and, however complete and well-written those summaries might be—and they truly are—they cannot, in and of themselves, do the work of argument.[12] Instead, Hayes provides a number of taxonomies from which one might build. In chapter one, he offers a thematics of farce based on four settings: the courtroom, the home, the marketplace, and the classroom. In chapter two, four new categories are introduced based on the language characteristic of farce: confusion, seduction, provocation, and self-condemnations. These taxonomies are informative and by no means incorrect or wrongheaded. It is, rather, that they are frequently contradictory, ambiguous, and insufficient for proving Hayes’s reading of ethics, violence, and language in both farce and Rabelais.

For example, in chapter one, Hayes articulates a clear enough argument: “The primary objective of this chapter is to uncover the system of justice underlying the seemingly gratuitous acts of violence and punishments that abound in farce, while examining the ethical and moral implications that can be inferred from which behaviors are punished in the plays.” In the genre of farce, he continues, there is, “in fact, a *rather consistent ethical system* underlying the attacks and reprisals that constitute the core element of farce . . .” (p. 25; my emphasis). A “rather consistent” ethical system is rather like being “a little bit pregnant.” Hayes then goes on to conclude as follows: “Through an examination of the punishable offenses in farce, coupled with an exploration of the explicitly didactic moments in the plays, it becomes clear that behind the exuberant chaos of the genre, there is in fact an ethical and moral framework that governs the plays” (p. 29). And that framework, for Hayes, is a “traditional and reactionary ethics:” an ethics that reinforces the status quo to such a degree that, notwithstanding the very tensions and ambiguities he nonetheless acknowledges, makes late-medieval radicalization impossible.

These unstable generalities are inadequate for the task at hand, as when Hayes oscillates between saying that women are not punished, then that they are, and then that their punishments are not necessarily misogynistic. “Wives can be devious and cunning, sexually insatiable, domineering,” he observes, “and they are *almost never punished*” (p. 30; his emphasis). Shortly thereafter, he ponders why the wife in the *Farce du Cuvier* is “an appropriate target for farcical punishment” (p. 41). There is no discussion of the fact that wives, adulterous or otherwise, are frequently beaten and battered in the farcical repertoire and that, furthermore, medieval French farce boasts the preposterous tendency to cast its female victims as the aggressors. [13] The problem lies in the thematic nature of Hayes’s analysis, such that the complex interrelations of medieval law, drama, and the theatrics of punishment elude him. His

own recurring theme that runs through all four chapters is that what is being punished in the farce is *démésure* (a term borrowed from the work of Jean-Claude Aubailly).

At times, this leads Hayes to individual readings that are, as the French say, *tirées par les cheveux*. For example, the over-the-top, funny, pun-driven *Farce nouvelle tresbonne et fort joyeuse de Mahuet qui donne ses oeufs au pris du marché* is a play in which a mother instructs her silly bumpkin of a son that he is to sell their eggs *au prix du marché*. Instead of understanding “at market prices,” Mahuet understands “to [a man whose name is] Mark Etpreisis [or something of the sort].” [14] As if doing a straight moralistic reading of an episode of the *Simpsons*, Hayes forces this classic linguistic comedy into his taxonomies, such that “the naïve protagonist Mahuet is “punished for his credulity” (p. 46). More problematic is that Hayes’s approach fails to offer a sufficient explanation of the very real violence of medieval French farce, which he ultimately finds to be not much trouble at all.

In his insistence that farce simply reinforces the social order, Hayes relies heavily on farcical exaggeration or *démésure*, and no one would reasonably dispute that farces were indeed *démésurées*. But it is patently false, as can readily be gleaned even from extant stage directions, that “farce is almost always violent, but the violence is kept in check” (p. 49). Identifying as a virtually unique exception *Le savetier, le sergent et la laitière*, he notes that “Aggression and hostility are certainly condoned and even encouraged in the plays, but there are limits imposed upon this behavior. All of the plays contain some degree of tension between violence and humor, between raw brutality and good natured laughter. . . . [T]he ethos of the genre . . . is far more generous and amiable than what occurs in this play” (p. 49). Whence the difficulty of viewing a literary *medium* like comedy only as an antecedent to the *writings* of Rabelais. Anyone who has pondered, even for a moment, how to stage the vicious beatings that go on at excruciating length, e.g., in *Goguelu* or in the *Farce nouvelle tresbonne et fort joyeuse d’une Femme à qui son Voisin baille ung clistoire*, knows that there is very little of a generous or amiable nature going on here, even when everybody sings a song together at the end (which, in the former play, involves putting up the female character essentially as a whore for sale). [15] Just because the characters seem to suggest that all’s well that ends well does not mean that the audience forgets the violence, nor that a rhetorically inclined author *means for the audience to forget* the quotidian medieval realities of violence. The farce’s habitual depiction of the sexual aggression regularly endured by chambermaids, for instance, does not necessarily reinforce the social order during performances that would likely have seemed all too realistic to the abused individuals watching and who might have taken away a different message altogether.

Given the numerous conceptual issues of part one, a limited analysis of farce inevitably leads to a limited analysis, throughout part two, of Rabelais’s use of it (notwithstanding the fact that Hayes, once again, provides a series of interesting close readings of exemplary moments of Rabelais). Hayes has shown quite well that Rabelais was influenced by farce. However, whereas Rabelais was surely an innovator, Hayes is not.

In chapter three, Hayes proposes a series of mini-readings, vignettes from Rabelais, the gist of which is essentially demonstrative, as if to say: *Voilà*. He here provides a sampling of the farcical themes and plot lines similar to those identified in part one. These individual, disconnected readings—spanning multiple mini-sections, some of which are a scant 2.5 to 4 pages long—are interesting and engaging, to be sure, as we meet anew some of the characters introduced in part one. But the analysis amounts to little more than comparative plot summaries based on silly school boys, lawyers and scholastics, a Panurge as a new Pathelin, religion and reform, and a return visit to the taxonomies introduced earlier.

The main argument that we find reiterated frequently in part two is the very argument that failed to convince in part one: “While traditional farces are essentially conservative in nature, with their emphasis on punishing those who disturb the status quo, Rabelais’s farces are frequently modeled in such a way that they satirize and attack societal norms” (p. 100). Granted, distinguishing between—and offering proper definitions of—farce, satire, and (while we’re at it), irony is one of the thorniest problems of literary theory and criticism for any period. But to deny the role of the comic, medieval theater in that history and theory is misleading. It is unreasonable to deny, as Hayes does, that farce possessed any social conscience until *enfin Rabelais vint*.

In chapter four, Hayes seeks to reintegrate farce into the *Tiers and Quart Livres*, where it is more a subtext than a theme or a performance practice. Here, he strays quite far even from his own previous analysis, going so far as to venture “an important glimpse into the mind of the author” (p. 149) and into how Rabelais felt about various events in his real life. Hayes takes on Rabelais’s notorious misogyny and curious quests; but the very invocation of the chapter title’s *farce tragique* amply suggests that the numerous admixtures and hybridizations that Hayes insists on attributing to Rabelais already existed in the Middle Ages. Otherwise, he confines himself to repeating his thesis (again), as we come full circle to what he had presupposed from the outset, namely, that only Rabelais could radicalize farce:

“No longer are deception and dissimulation simply used for personal gain or revenge but rather they fit into the larger context of a work whose purpose is much more radical and far-reaching. . . . Rabelais’s syncretic work appropriates farcical conventions, radically transforming them in the process and conflating them with evangelical humanist elements to produce a new form of farce, as well as a new form of humanist satire” (pp. 157-58).

One can only wonder why such a conservative and limited genre would have attracted Rabelais in the first place. If one persists in seeing farce as simplistic then, not surprisingly, farce fails to attain any rhetorical efficacy and for Hayes, only Rabelais can render it complex. Hayes then pens a brief conclusion that further recapitulates his main idea, amplified with an odd reference or two to the cinematic comedy of Francis Weber, in which we are enjoined to take farce seriously.

In the end, a number of key questions remain unanswered: Why should we continue to read Rabelais, farce, and the two together? Hayes has introduced us to a farce of the page rather than of the stage. As any good theater historian could have told him, the text is but part of the story.

NOTES

[1] See, e.g., the edition of Rabelais’s *Oeuvres complètes* by Guy Demerson (Paris: Seuil, 1973), pp. 77-80. Although Hayes does not discuss this example, such a *torchecul* makes its way into such a fifteenth-century French farce as the *Goguelu*. The *Farce du Goguelu* appears as #45 in Gustave Cohen ed., *Recueil de Farces françaises inédites du XVe siècle* (Cambridge, Mass: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1949): 357-67. See also my translation of this play as “*Blind Man’s Buff*,” in *The Farce of the Fart and Other Ribaldries: Twelve Medieval French Plays in Modern English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 159-93.

[2] Although he rightly cites Howard Graham Harvey’s signature study, *The Theatre of the Basoche* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941), he is unfamiliar with Enders on the legal origins of medieval drama itself as detailed in *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama*, *Rhetoric and Society*, 1 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992); as well as the

terrific work on this very topic by Noah D. Guynn, "A Justice to Come: The Role of Ethics in *La Farce de Maître Pierre Pathelin*," *Theatre Survey* 47, number 1 (2006): 13-31; and Glending Olson, "Plays as Play: A Medieval Ethical Theory of Performance and the Intellectual Context of the *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*," *Viator* 26 (1995): 195-221.

[3] See Enders, *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence* (1999; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002): e.g., 170-85. Absent from Hayes's barely ten-page bibliography are such crucial studies—to name but two—as Elie Konigson's *L'Espace théâtral médiéval* (Paris: CNRS, 1975); and Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, eds., *The Medieval Practices of Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[4] A host of primary sources documenting troubles with politics, censorship, arrests, and the like were compiled by Lynette Muir, who edited the French materials for William Tydeman, gen. ed., *The Medieval European Stage, 500-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See especially pp. 329-36.

[5] To give but a few major examples, none of which appear in Hayes's bibliography: see W. B. Worthen, *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); even more curiously, Julie Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and the much earlier but definitive study of the movement of living medieval performance to manuscript or printed page by Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[6] D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 17-32.

[7] In addition to three works by Gustave Cohen and two by Petit de Julleville, he references Bowen, *Les Caractéristiques essentielles de la farce française et leur survivance dans les années 1550-1620*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 53 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964); Knight, *Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1983); Maddox, *The Semiotics of Deceit: The Pathelin Era* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1984); Koopmans, *Le Théâtre des exclus au Moyen Âge: hérétiques, sorcières et marginaux* (Paris: Imago, 1997); Aubailly, *Le Théâtre médiéval profane et comique* (Paris: Larousse, 1975); Mazouer, *Le Théâtre français du moyen-âge* (Paris: SEDES, 1998); Smith, *Maître Pierre Pathelin: Le Miroir d'Orgueil* (Saint-Benoît-du-Sault: Tarabuste, 2002); and Bernadette Rey-Flaud, *La Farce, ou la machine à rire: Théorie d'un genre dramatique* (Geneva: Droz, 1984); but not Henri Rey-Flaud's *Le Cercle magique: Essai sur le théâtre en rond à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973) or his *Pour une dramaturgie du moyen-âge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980).

[8] In addition to the Tydeman anthology (above, note 4), see also Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[9] From Persels's work, see, e.g., "The Sorbonnic Trots: Staging the Intestinal Distress of the Roman Catholic Church in French Reform Theater," *Renaissance Society Quarterly* 56.4 (2003): 1089-1111; along with the excellent collection that he edited with Russell Ganim, *Fecal Matters in Early Modern Literature and Art: Studies in Scatology* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004).

[10] Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), as compared, e.g., to Beam, *Laughing Matters: Farce and the Making of Absolutism in France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007).

[11] In addition to the three books cited above, see Enders, *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends* (2002; rpt. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and *Murder by Accident: Theater, Medievalism, and Critical Intentions* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[12] Note that readers of French already have available to them excellent plot summaries of the entire repertoire of French farce, as in Bernard Faivre, *Répertoire des farces françaises: Des origines à Tabarin* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1993); and Petit de Julleville, *Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au Moyen-Age* (Paris: L. Cerf, 1886).

[13] Similar inconsistencies dog his treatment of how punishment is meted out to men who marry younger women at p. 32 *et passim*.

[14] This plays appears as #39 in Cohen, *Recueil*, 303-08.

[15] This play appears as #28 in Cohen, *Recueil*, 219–26. See also my translation of that farce as *Playing Doctor, or, Taking the Plunge in Farce of the Fart*, pp. 194–218.

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Rabelais's Radical Farce : Late Medieval Comic Theater and Its Function in Rabelais. In the first extended investigation of the importance of dramatic farce in Rabelais studies, Bruce Hayes makes an important contribution to the understanding of the theater of farce and its literary possibilities. By tracing the development of farce in late medieval and Renaissance comedic theater i Full description. Saved in