

“Fables of the Fabliaux, in Context and Theory”

9.30am – 4.30pm, Friday 5 September 2014, 4th Floor Linkway, John Medley Building, The University of Melbourne

The fabliaux of medieval France are brief verse tales with a sometimes humorous, and often questionable use of the sexual and the scatological towards anti-clerical ends. Charles Muscatine would notably figure the genre as “the most protean” within a broader Western tradition marked by a realist “preoccupation with the animal facts of life,” “an almost total incapacity for disgust or for pretension,” and a direct engagement “with something of life’s natural shape and vitality.”

In doing so, Muscatine draws attention not only to the genre’s heritage in the beast epic, the fable, and satiric and comic poetry, but perhaps also to the ongoing compatibility of the fabliaux with a more contemporary outlook.

In what ways are the fabliaux relevant today? Under what forms can they be seen to persist, and to what ends? How does the genre persist today vis-a-vis its well-

documented heritage? This symposium invites us to examine the myriad futures of the fabliaux so as to better locate it with respect to its past, attending to the medieval genre as at once emerging from the ancient, and extended into the contemporary.

Speakers include **Professor Stephen Knight FAHA** (University of Melbourne), and **Associate Professor Alessandra Petrina** (University of Padova), **Dr Stephanie Downes** (University of Melbourne), **Dr Kathryn Smithies** (University of Melbourne) and **Elliot Patsoura** (University of Melbourne).

A light lunch (12-1pm) will be provided.

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4th Floor Linkway Meeting Room, John Medley Building, University of Melbourne

Please contact Elliot Patsoura at epatsoura@gmail.com to RSVP and for any other enquiries.



Canterbury Tales - The Miller - f. 34v detail - Robin with the Baggye - early 1400s, Chaucer.

SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION SYMPOSIUM

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Melbourne

Schedule

9.30: Introduction

10.00: Dr Kathryn Smithies - "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you": *How animals 'teach' and 'tell' in the Fabliaux*

11.00 Professor Stephen Knight FAHA - *Structure of Feeling and Chaucer's Fabliaux*

12.00-1.00: Lunch

1.00-2.00: Dr Stephanie Downes - *Vilains Mots: Minding Chaucer's French*

2.00-3.00: Associate Professor Alessandra Petrina - *Carissime donne: Boccaccio's fabliaux for a new audience*

3.00-3.30: Afternoon Tea

3.30-4.30: Elliot Patsoura - *Conscience Takes a Holiday: Remnants of the Fabliaux in Georges Bataille's L'abbé C*