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Arnold Clayton Henderson

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*Arnold Clayton Henderson*

### Having Fun with the Moralities: Henryson's *Fables* and Late-Medieval Fable Innovation

Fable and moral; entertainment and teaching. That dichotomous structure is so traditional for animal fables that when we look at so entertaining a fabulist as Robert Henryson we too easily assume that he put his creativity into the fable part, and that the moralizations are there because they are expected to be there. We might call them traditional, or pedantic, or even boring.

Not so. When you follow animal fables through the whole earlier Middle Ages (well beyond the one collection by Walter of England to whom Henryson is sometimes contrasted), you find that Henryson's moralizations are just as freshly treated as his plots. For him entertainment and instruction unite, with innovation and surprise for the reader within the moralizations as much as in the narratives they follow.

Henryson's moralizations are not simply longer than earlier ones, they often differ strikingly in what they say. His specific meanings are often not to be found in any of the known sources and analogues. Even more importantly, his whole style of moralizations is not actually what is supposed to be tacked at the end of the typical medieval Aesop/Romulus animal fable. Henryson (along with a few other late-medieval fabulists) breaks a thousand-year decorum in which only certain kinds of things could go into an Aesopic fable collection.

For the makers of medieval fable collections, the genre was regularly seen as a classical—hence secular—genre, created originally by pagans such as Aesop and Romulus. In imitating them, medieval Christian writers created short moralizations couched in terms those authors could have used: universal, secular, and certainly non-Christian. Henryson's moralizations, in contrast, are often otherworldly, even specifically Christian. In the moralizations, Henryson

has broken with the pretense of producing classical (pagan) fables—despite his having introduced Aesop himself as a character and the originator of fables. In this new style of moralization, Henryson and his few predecessors can now refer to figures of contemporary medieval society and religious concepts. He commonly uses a preacher-like point-for-point interpretation of even the details of the plot. This adaptation of Christian Scriptural exegesis to fable is a method no pagan Aesop ever followed. Thus in both social content and interpretive method, the world of Henryson's moralizations is too contemporary ever to be mistaken for the work of a classical fable compiler.

Yet most medieval writers of fable collections down to Henryson's time could be mistaken for classical writers, and they appear to have wanted it that way. They systematically left out of their collections specific allusions to Christianity and its social world. It is as if such insertions into "Aesop's" fables would, for these fabulists, have violated the decorum of a formal fable collection. Thus Henryson's reworking of moralizations in his own collection shows how little he ought to be lumped with ordinary writers of fable collections such as Walter of England, with their deliberately checklist-like moralizations and restricted range of reference. Even contrasting him to them can be misleading if it gives the impression that Henryson is Walter writ large. Instead, Henryson is going about his business in a different way, violating an old decorum.

Henryson is not quite alone in his original traits, though, in his development of moralizations, satire, description, and dialogue. Indeed, more should be made of his links in spirit to certain predecessors than source-tracing alone would justify. The spirit was abroad, a spirit of vividness and innovation. We can trace a small group of these innovative fabulists. They are not necessarily all connected directly, though they share enough new plots not found in earlier collections as to suggest real links of some sort beyond a coincidence of approach. Beginning in the late twelfth century, predecessors including Marie de France, Odo of Cheriton, the *Roman de Renart* (not moralized, but with fable-resembling stories that fabulists picked up), and a few others hint at Henryson's vivid dialogue and freedom with new moralizations, particularly those with social applications in place of the classical world's more generalized moral applications. Such new moralizations in one writer, it should be noted, are not necessarily the same new moralizations in another. These writers are not usually copying each other's inventions but inventing within a generally similar approach. What they share is less a direct borrowing than a spirit of originality, a desire to shake up the old fable conventions and perhaps surprise the reader or listener.

This paper explores the originality in Henryson's fable moralizations as set against the background of not only the traditional Aesop/Romulus fable but the less well known tradition of innovative fable reworkings and of fable-like narratives. It shows him to write, not in the spirit of the schoolroom's Walter of England and so many more collections crowding Léopold Hervieux's vol-

umes of Latin fables,<sup>1</sup> but in the spirit of certain livelier late-medieval fabulists such as Odo of Cheriton and the authors of the French-language *Roman de Renart* and *Isopets*. For them, writing that final moralization after the narrative text can be a witty game, a chance to display creativity and to surprise your audience. If such writers represent a tradition, it is a tradition of playing games with tradition.

To sense Henryson's individuality it is important to realize how very original he is in the precise spot that at first glance might seem most traditional, the moralization. That requires a review of what went before, with an eye to the freedom in moralizing that was already available and to the small number of distinctive fabulists who led the way in using that freedom.

In reviewing the genre of the Aesopic fable collection, we can see it as a pagan genre lingering in a Christian world. Medieval authors setting out to write fable collections seem to have felt bound by a decorum set long ago. Almost all fable collections running under the names of their supposed pagan authors—Aesop or Romulus—are restricted by their actual medieval Christian authors to generalized vocabulary that a pagan author, too, could use. To do otherwise would be to violate the decorum of a genre that Christian authors typically knew, not by our terms “animal fable” or “beast fable,” but as an *Aesopus* or *Romulus* (if in Latin) or *Isopet* (if in French). With the pagan aura felt to be basic to the genre, animal fable collections were respected by a millennium of writers as something classical and pre-Christian, or at least religiously neutral. In it, you might refer to Jove as a classical name for a generalized deity, but not to Christ and the Christian God, devil, priest, or afterlife.

Their moralizations deal with general human types: “the strong” and “the weak,” not specific social types like “friars” or religious concepts like “soul.” To maintain the aura of ancient wisdom while still giving moral lessons useful to new readers, Aesop's medieval imitators pursued a style of moralization marked by these three norms (which Henryson violated): generalized reasoning, avoidance of specifically contemporary social satire, and avoidance of specifically Christian religious concepts.

Like their classical models in the works of actual ancient authors—Phaedrus, Avianus, or Babrius—medieval fabulists moralize the actions of the main animals, not the incidental details. In most fables, Henryson does go for the details. He assigns meanings to what theater people would call the set and the stage properties—the woods where an action takes place, the chickens a farmer gives the fox, or the moon's reflection in a well. Where traditional fable speaks of the timeless “weak,” “strong,” “wicked,” or “foolish” of society,

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<sup>1</sup>Léopold Hervieux, *Les Fabulistes latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 5 vols. (Paris, 1899). This compendium includes Walter of England and Odo of Cheriton and his followers as well as the several families of Latin fable collections. Henceforth Hervieux.

Henryson adds specific social satire of his own day, naming friars, plowmen, tenant farmers, and other specific and contemporary social types.

Where traditional fable stays religiously neutral and could pass as the worldly wisdom of pagans, Henryson adds to nearly every fable some touch of religious and otherworldly concepts—the soul or the afterlife, God or devil. Probably no other non-preaching fabulist down to Henryson's time matches him for density of religious concepts (particularly in the Bannatyne manuscript, before editorial deletions of what came to seem old-fashioned religion). While we might take it as typically medieval to find Henryson employing such religious concepts, it was just what most medieval fabulists were careful not to do. The more we find Henryson sounding like a typical medieval preacher or exegete, the more untypical, witty, original, and surprising he is being as a fabulist. This unusual otherworldliness and elaborate exegetical moralization are indeed medieval in genres other than fable collections, and common enough in bestiaries and in sermons. Yet fable collections were not bestiaries or sermons.

Bestiary, like fable, was about animals, yet bestiary and fable collection were apparently felt to be distinct genres, with few writers of one genre picking up materials from the other until late in the medieval period. Christian themes and exegetical methods belong in a bestiary and were there from its origin as an allegorizing commentary on the beasts of the Bible by the generic natural philosopher "Physiologus." When Henryson enlarges his fable moralizations with Christian themes and exegetical methods, he is not following traditional fable but echoing sermon or bestiary.

If you skim through the moralizations attached to the hundreds of animal fables in such a compendium as that of Hervieux you see how fable writers (with the exceptions we will see) have strictly kept the classical fable genre a thing of this world, not the next. Whatever such medieval writers knew or thought they knew of beasts from the bestiaries, encyclopedias, hunting manuals, sermons, or life itself, they kept that information and those ways of reasoning out of their versions of Aesop's or Romulus's fables.

Though schoolmaster Henryson presumably knew and apparently echoes the schoolroom's common fable collection, a Latin one by Walter of England (Gualterus Anglicus),<sup>2</sup> he does not actually quote it much once he leaves the prologue and gets started on the fables themselves, nearly half of which do not even exist in Walter. I would argue that Henryson uses the schoolroom sort of fable collection less as a source than as an implicit foil, a somewhat ordinary old thing his audience would know and against which he can set his shining—and surprising—gems.

If we look for the source of this surprise that Henryson flashes at the fable reader of his day, it is only partly in his often unusual (non-Aesopic) plots.

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<sup>2</sup>Hervieux prints versions of Walter in his *Fabulistes latins*, II, 316-82 and 383-91.

Much of the surprise comes in the moralizations, where both the religious/social content and the witty, detail-rich style of reasoning come less from the world of fable than from the worlds of sermon and bestiary.

Where Henryson's moralizing resembles in form the exegetical and often otherworldly moralization of erudite preachers and bestiaries, we may better understand his wit by asking what wit consisted of then in the world of the avowedly erudite. Detecting wit and humor—and Henryson is a witty man—depends on a knowledge of norms and of the way authors may play with norms, with expectations. Reversal of expectation strikes many as the very essence of humor, and medieval audiences could occasionally strike a playful vein of exegesis in the normally serious genres of sermon and bestiary. What we now call entertainment value was by no means barred.

Preaching has always had an aspect of entertainment, or at least attention-getting. Some medieval preachers are recorded as having charged in through the audience on horseback waving the cross or a skull, preaching in verse, or generally behaving as if their calling were not so far from that of the entertainers—entertainers in God's cause. These are people who really believed what Henryson says in his prologue, that one may entertain in order to teach, and that teaching may entertain.

Thus some preachers developed the amazing *Nemo* sermon, where the joke was to take the numerous passages of Scripture where it is said that no one (*nemo*) could do certain things and string them together as a pseudo-narrative of all the wonderful things that the acclaimed hero *Nemo* could indeed do.<sup>3</sup> Thus, too, a thirteenth-century French preacher could make tongue-in-cheek sermons by drawing a surprising allegorical meaning, not from a Scriptural text, but from what he admits are merely popular love songs—transforming, for example, an ill-married wife (*la dame mal mariée*) into the soul wed to sin instead of to its true lover, Christ.<sup>4</sup> Surely such inventive sermons must have been talked about and remembered.

When we find Henryson inventing an unheard-of allegory—chickens as good works—and we wonder if this be invention or some lost traditional meaning, then we might consult our preacher of the secular songs. In his case, at least, the allegory was an admitted invention, a knowing reversal of the plain meaning the reader knew already. The reversal was a surprising witticism, though one that used established methods of reasoning and that touched serious truths. In such sermons, the exegetical method is not without humor.

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<sup>3</sup>Gerald Robert Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1933), II, 63f. Henceforth Owst.

<sup>4</sup>A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La Chaire française au moyen âge spécialement au XIIIe siècle*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Paris, 1886), p. 198. The preacher likens his act of reinterpreting a secular song to teach a religious message to robbing the Egyptians to enrich the Hebrews.

Something like an exegetical form of humor and inventiveness can be found in at least one bestiary, as well as in sermons. Richart de Fornival's *Bestiaires d'amours* tells traditional bestiary stories, but in a new context where he manages to abandon every traditional allegorization of the bestiary animals.<sup>5</sup> Richart's two characters, a clerk and a young lady wooed by the clerk, interpret each beast for opposite meanings, neither of them traditional ones. The clerk, proud of his erudition, moralizes each beast into a lesson that the lady should give in and take him for a lover. But the lady, while apologizing for her lack of scholastic training, is in fact the more clever of the two and consistently outwits him, turning each beast into a devastating new lesson that "proves" she should shun her would-be lover. Thus Richart manages to reverse and reverse again our expectations of this "bestiary" where every meaning is new and surprising, yet reasoned out by something very like the standard method of true bestiaries. Like Henryson, Richart and his characters have used known methods to come up with new and wittily surprising meanings that are discovered or found afresh.

In Henryson, a sense of discovering meaning is signaled to the reader by the very verbs he uses to transform a narrative element into an element of the moralitas. Through those verbs we sense that he is discovering, not simply recording as traditional, the similarity of fox to devil (*Feind*) or hen to good works. This is because his verbs, his word choices, rarely say that A is B, but that A is likened to B, or even that A may be likened to B, as if this were only one option among many. It is author's choice here. This vocabulary of discovery colors moralizations that themselves may or may not be new. Henryson uses such phrases that signal choice and flexibility for old morals he reuses, for new morals he invents, or for points where he leaves the moralization up to us. Thus even when making a conventional point he may implicitly remind us that he could have chosen differently.

Choice-implying terms occur, for example, in "The Cock and the Fox," even though calling the singing cock proud is hardly an unexpected choice: "To our purpose this cok weill may we call / Nyse proud men."<sup>6</sup> Nor is it unexpected to call the fox of this fable a flatterer, yet Henryson's phrase still suggests a process of giving meaning rather than a process of repeating a meaning from authority: "This fenzeit foxe may weill be figurate / To flatteraris" (ll. 600-601).

The vocabulary of discovery is especially appropriate when, as in "The Trial of the Fox," where a wolf is kicked by a mare, Henryson is breaking new

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<sup>5</sup>Richart de Fornival, *Li bestiaires d'amours di maistre Richart de Fornival e li response du bestiaire*, ed. Cesare Segre (Milan, 1957).

<sup>6</sup>*The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford and New York, 1981), ll. 590-91. Further citations will be to this edition and will appear in the text.

ground by assigning meaning to elements that other fabulists had treated differently or left unmoralized. The vocabulary lets his freedom of choice show: "This volf I likkin to sensualitie" (*l.* 1118); "Hir hufe I likkin to the thoct of deid" (*l.* 1125). In "The Fox, the Wolf, and the Cadger," where the fox steals herring from a cart, we see: "The foxe vnto the warld may likkinnit be" (*l.* 2205), "The hering I likkin vnto the gold sa reid" (*l.* 2213), and "Quhairfoir...haif mynd / Of the nekhering, interpreit in this kynd" (*ll.* 2229-30).

Even for points where Henryson himself gives us no moralization at all, he may use the vocabulary of discovery to suggest that he is leaving the interpretation up to us. In "The Sheep and the Dog" we find the subsidiary characters of fox and kite, who are among the sheep's enemies in the law court, not so much moralized as pointed out for possible moralization: "Of this fals tod,... / And of this gled, quhat thay micht signify, / Of thair nature, as now I speik no moir" (*ll.* 1279-81).

Alongside this choice-implying language we do, admittedly, have also the more flatly specific verbs of identity, "is" and "are." In those passages where Henryson does say flat out that A is B, he commonly softens the assertion by some choice-implying phrase in the line before or after. Thus he tempers verbs of identity, when he does use them, with nearby verbs of interpretation. In "The Paddock and the Mouse," where the two creatures are bound together, Henryson develops his uncommon body/soul interpretation through a mixture of "is" and "may":

...rycht more I sall the tell  
Quhair by thir beistis may be figurate:  
The paddok, vsand in the flude to duell,  
Is mannis bodie... (*ll.* 2934-7)

and "This lytill mous... The saull of man betakin may in deid" (*ll.* 2948-9). For one "is" we have two "may." A moment later he ceases his own interpretations and jokes about the even greater interpretive extravagances of the friars: "Say thow, I left the laif vnto the freiris, / To mak a sample or similitude" (*ll.* 2971-2).

In all these instances, Henryson's use of choice-implying verbs keeps us mindful of the mental process by which we assign meanings to "feinzeit fabils" (*l.* 1). He also keeps us mindful of ourselves as part of a real audience being asked to use these fables and their discovered meanings. He addresses us directly as "Freindis" (*l.* 365), "gude folke" (*l.* 789), or "My brother" (*l.* 2910). Such words of direct address may suggest either readers or an in-person audience listening to the poet read. In any case, Henryson's vocabulary of audience keeps us conscious that there is an audience present and that we are part of it.

Henryson's prologue has already suggested what that audience is to do with fables—use them for one or both of the two functions of fable set down in



the Prologue, instruction and entertainment—"to repreif the of thi misleuing, / O man" (*ll.* 6-7) or to provide "ane merie sport" (*l.* 20). Henryson would seem to keep us aware that writers of fables and readers of fables are all supposed to turn fables to their own purposes, as John Lydgate puts it in a passage Henryson very likely read: "Isopus... Fonde out fables, þat men myght hem apply / To sondry matyrs, yche man for hys party."<sup>7</sup> Whether a particular meaning in a Henryson moralization be drawn from a known source or invented on the spot, he presents it as a puzzle freshly solved, a jest newly told, a mental process in which we participate and from which we profit.

Henryson supplies a religious sanction for this process of seeking the "Sad sentence" that lies "vnder ane fabill figurall" (*ll.* 1099-1100). He asks the reader to do, in effect, "As daylie dois the doctouris of deuyne" (*l.* 1101). But where are we readers to find the rules for this serious game? One from among such doctors of divinity has left us something of a handbook for how to draw significances from things. For Augustine in his *De Doctrina Christiana*, interpreting the things mentioned in the Bible is an active reasoning process based on similarities. A single item could change its significance from one passage to another, depending on what similarities you chose to stress:

Since things are similar to other things in a great many ways, we must not think it to be prescribed that what a thing signifies by similitude in one place must always be signified by that thing.<sup>8</sup>

Henryson might find in the Augustine-based practices of preachers a sanction for such flexibility as giving one thing two significances. Thus a wood or forest is explained as the world and its prosperity in Henryson's "The Lion and the Mouse," but as a related yet narrower concept, wicked riches, in "The Fox, the Wolf, and the Husbandman," where the woods to be allegorized merely surround the well and its lunar reflection.

So, too, for Henryson as for Augustine, diverse objects for the various fable narratives may lead to the same significances. In "The Trial of the Fox," the lion who rules the parliament of beasts is the world; in "The Lion and the Mouse," the forest is the world. In "The Paddock and the Mouse," the water through which toad and mouse swim is the world. In "The Fox, the Wolf, and the Cadger," the fox who steals herrings from the cart is the world. For Henryson, as for Augustine, there is no single answer to the question: what image or figure represents the single concept, "the world"?

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<sup>7</sup>*The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, Part II, Secular Poems, *Isopes Fabules*, EETS, o.s. 192 (London, 1934), pp. 566-7. *ll.* 9-12. Henceforth Lydgate.

<sup>8</sup>Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York, 1958), p. 99. Henceforth Augustine.

Like Richart with his amorous bestiary, the preacher with his transformed secular songs, or Augustine with Scripture itself, Henryson is not bound to a received iconographic fixity, but is free to display wit through variety and surprise. What matter if the result is unexpected or inconsistent? Did not Augustine allow for inconsistency and even direct conflict of meaning?:

When, from a single passage in the Scripture not one but two or more meanings are elicited, even if what he who wrote the passage intended remains hidden, there is no danger if any of the meanings may be seen to be congruous with the truth taught in other passages of the Holy Scriptures (Augustine, p. 101).

This advice seems to have been followed in practice by medieval preachers: Owst points out that when different preachers happen to take up the same Scriptural texts, they often chose differing exegetical interpretations (Owst, II, 62). What preachers can do with Scripture, surely a secular writer can do with a secular tale of beasts. Philippa M. Bright, in pursuing the concept of *figura* in Henryson and the theologians, notes the variety of their definitions and interpretive methods. She shows Henryson flexibly shifting among three methods, sometimes making a beast a straight metaphor for humans (the ancient fable method, which I see Henryson using in a newly specific way), sometimes picking out details for one-to-one correspondences with concepts (what I call point-for-point moralizing, common among preachers but not fabulists), and sometimes combining these methods.<sup>9</sup>

Though Henryson does not so systematically turn old meanings topsy-turvy as does Richart in his *Bestiaires d'amours*, he glories in several fables to find new meanings where there were formerly none. Sometimes he takes up fable elements that previous fabulists had left without moralizations: the incidental woods or chickens of the plot. Sometimes he does it by supplying moralizations for stories that had circulated without stated moralizations: the fox stories of the *Roman de Renart*. The joy he takes in spinning out a tale is matched by his joy in moralizing it. As Douglas Gray has said, "[Henryson's] 'joie de conter' is certainly matched by a 'joie de moraliser'."<sup>10</sup>

The fables that Henryson found in earlier fable collections have, of course, moralizations already attached, though he scarcely limits himself to copying what he found. "The Fox, the Wolf, and the Husbandman" comes from an exempla collection rather than a fable collection, but similarly reached Henryson in a form with something of a moralization already present. This is a two-motif story in which first a ploughman curses his oxen so that the wolf tries to claim them, and then the fox uses the moon's reflection to trick the wolf into

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<sup>9</sup>"Medieval Concepts of the *figure* and Henryson's Figurative Technique in *The Fables*," *SSL*, 25 (1990), esp. pp. 150-153.

<sup>10</sup>Douglas Gray, *Robert Henryson* (Leiden, 1979), p. 119.

getting stuck in a well. While the motifs are found separately, the combined form seems to have reached Henryson from Petrus Alfonsi's early twelfth-century *Disciplina Clericalis* (probably in its French version),<sup>11</sup> a collection of exempla that we might today call a moralized short-story collection without thinking of it as Aesopic. The story, then, has already been used for a moral point. But Henryson is not content to moralize plot alone. He moralizes also the specific stage properties of the story: the husbandman as the godly man, the fox's bribe of hens as good works proceeding from faith, the surrounding wood as wicked riches, and the reflected lunar "cheese" as covetousness.

No moralizations at all came to Henryson from nonmoralized sources like the *Roman de Renart* (which I feel Henryson used directly from French texts, echoing details from the French that were not to be found in Caxton's roughly contemporaneous English derivative). To fit these nonmoralized stories to a fable collection, Henryson would need to invent some moralization. That much of the old decorum was essential to him.

One Renardian story Henryson uses is that of the fox who robs a fishcart by pretending to be road-kill in "The Fox, the Wolf, and the Cadger." When the cadger driving the cart tosses Renart's supposed corpse up onto it to skin later for its valuable fur, the fox steals herring to his heart's content. Any fabulist who took that plot would have to add something of a moral.

We could easily anticipate a fable-like lesson to beware dishonest people feigning harmlessness (as the fox feigned death)—that is, a moralization that parallels the broad pattern of action. When Henryson adds the missing moral, however, he moralizes specific elements, not just the broad action, explaining the cadger as death, the herring as gold. Thus where the typical fable collection says only that as these beasts act, so humans act, Henryson's fables allegorize details through a method reminiscent of Scriptural exegesis and the use of exempla in sermons to point specific morals.

Insofar as Henryson's moralizations are sermon-like, they recall in particular the early thirteenth-century English preacher Odo of Cheriton, who wrote not only sermons in which fables appeared, but a large separate collection of fables (not all featuring beasts, however, though many do). This influential collection, echoing as far as Spain in *El Libro de los Gatos*, makes Odo

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<sup>11</sup>The story of the well with the moon's reflection is apparently from a Jewish or Jewish-Arabic milieu, since it was known in one form or another to early rabbis. It was introduced to European Christian literature (in the two-motif form very like Henryson's with the reflection motif following the motif of cursing one's oxen) by the Jewish convert to Christianity, Petrus Alfonsi (or Alphonsi). Petrus' work exists in Latin, English, and French versions. The French is apparently the closest to Henryson's with a reflected full moon where the others have a half-moon (Henryson's *l.* 3642). Such use of a French source would seem compatible with Henryson's other ties to the French-language *Isopets* and *Renart*. The French exists as *Chastoiement d'un père à son fils*, ed. Edward D. Montgomery, Jr., in *University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures*, 101 (1971), 140-46.

one of the most important and original medieval fabulists, with particular inventiveness in his moralizations. Henryson's resemblance to him two centuries later lies particularly in three broad traits of the moralizations that are just those traits that mark the late-medieval break with the traditional pagan-like Aesopic writing: 1) a method of moralization that resembles exegesis in its point-for-point interpretations; 2) a conceptual content of moralization that favors religious themes; and 3) a satiric application to specific contemporary social figures. Odo and Henryson also share some plots, including material apparently drawn from or at least resembling the *Roman de Renart*, Odo being one of the first fabulists to draw on it and to use its character names for the beasts.

As a preacher using fables first as exempla in sermons and then also in a fable collection as such, Odo is a bridge figure, allowing sermon methods to cross into fable collections. In the sermons, his exegetical method, religious concepts, and satiric applications to contemporary figures (monks, canons, etc.) suited the decorum of his genre, since this genre was sermon, not fable collection. There was no need to sound pagan. It was then natural enough to leave these new features in place when the fable exempla were pulled out to make a fable collection.

Henryson's use of point-for-point allegories, religious themes, and social applications, while innovative when we compare him to most fabulists down to his time, is not so out of place when compared to the Odo tradition. This survived through Odo's own manuscripts, through his direct followers Nicole Bozon and John of Sheppey,<sup>12</sup> and, one might speculate, the various preachers who used his collection as it seems to have been intended, as a source for exempla in their own sermons. Such later preachers might still be mining Odo directly or indirectly down to Henryson's time, and certainly intricate allegories are said to have become a special vogue of British preaching in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup> Thus Henryson's intricate and satirical style for fable moralization is not out of keeping with Odo's precedent and the later contemporary fashion in the sermons that Henryson would be likely to hear.

Odo, or a follower expanding Odo's collection (Hervieux, IV, 365f), shares with Henryson the fable-like action of the wolf kicked by an ass (mare in Henryson) when trying to read what is written on its hoof: the ass/mare has claimed to have on her hoof a document exempting her from appearing at a parliament. The shared reference to a parliament is a rather specific resem-

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<sup>12</sup>Nicole Bozon's French and Latin versions are in *Les Contes moralisés de Nicole Bozon*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith and Paul Meyer, Société des Anciens Textes Français (Paris, 1889), and in Hervieux vol. 4, where Odo and John of Sheppey are also found.

<sup>13</sup>Joseph Albert Mosher, *The Exemplum in the Early Religious and Didactic Literature of England* (New York, 1911), pp. 81f, and Gerald Robert Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 304, 311f.

blance not found in other fable versions of the kick, which are told with various animals but without linking the kick to the parliament. Instead these other versions have the wolf or other carnivore read a name or price supposedly written on one or another herbivore's hoof, or act like a physician in examining a hoof that the herbivore claims to be sore or with a spine in it.

When it comes to the moralitas, both Odo and Henryson moralize the parliament—kick fable by digging into the details in a point-for-point exegetical manner, though they find somewhat different meanings. Henryson chooses to interpret the lion who calls all to the parliament as the world, the mare as men of religion or good men who resist the call of the world, the wolf as sensuality, and the fox as temptations—a set of moralizations both more detailed and more religious in content than in ordinary animal fables. These details add up to a general theme of reason or goodness resisting the call of worldliness. But Odo (or someone adding to his collection in his style, as seems to have been often done) had also singled out these characters for allegorizing, though with a different assignment of the roles. For Odo, the lion is moralized as rational intelligence that calls all to come, the wolf as strength, the fox as prudence or cleverness, and the ass as the flesh that seeks delights and disobeys the call of reason. The allegorizing method and general theme are similar, but the nature of the call and hence the whole pattern is reversed, so that the ass/mare's resisting the call is admirable in Henryson (where the call is that of the world), and blameworthy in Odo (where it is the call of rational intelligence). If Henryson knew Odo's version, then he deliberately reversed the moral significance of the call and thought the whole interpretation through on this fresh basis. Both treatments are elaborately detailed, though the prize for ornate moralizing here goes to Henryson, who goes beyond interpreting characters to interpreting even a part of one character: the mare's hoof as the thought of death (*l.* 1125). The mode of thinking is the same, the specific results are not.

Did Henryson read Odo? The latter's fable collection as well as his sermons survived in manuscript, but it would be hard to prove that Henryson read them. One coincidence at least between Odo and Henryson is their both pointing of certain moralizations toward life's end or the devil who awaits sinners. Odo seems the first to have interpreted as the devil certain characters in three fables that Henryson later told. Odo's devil becomes in Henryson either again the devil or else death, but with the same sense of coming to end life and perhaps snatch souls. First (in the order of Henryson's fables) is the interrupting cat as Diabolus in Odo's version of the fable of town mouse and country mouse (Hervieux, IV, 190f). Here Henryson Fable 2 implies death by saying the cat comes for us. Next Odo finds that "Vulpecula significat Diabolum" in the well fable (Hervieux, IV, 192f). Here Henryson's Fable 10 has fox again as devil. Last, Odo makes the kite the devil in his fable of frog and mouse (Hervieux, IV, 195). In this case Henryson's Fable 13 has the kite as death, where most tellings of this fable simply turn on lessons of deceit.

Still harder would it be to prove Henryson knew Odo at second hand through that last resource of all source tracers: lost oral versions, in this case presumably sermons by the preachers of Henryson's own day, drawing on their still-famous predecessor. Perhaps it is best to say only that Odo stands at the head of a tradition of witty exegetical fable interpretation and social applications, while Henryson two centuries later takes up the game again, with perhaps a lighter touch.

Another, more nearly contemporary, companion for Henryson in this detail-rich enlargement of received fables might be the monk and fabulist, John Lydgate.<sup>14</sup> The bookish Lydgate was perhaps a natural person to bring to fable moralizations the learned elaborateness of sermons. With Lydgate, I sense no sparkle of Henryson's wit, and few if any things that Henryson might have borrowed directly, yet these two late fabulists share at least one element of their styles. They stand together in loading new materials into fables—into moralization and fable narrative alike, with learned, plot-interrupting asides more in the manner of a Chaucer or a Jean de Meun than a Walter of England.

Henryson's fable of "The Cock and the Jasp" elaborates a list of the properties of the gem that the cock finds—as does Lydgate, who recognizes that the literal gem is really not appropriate to the cock, who cannot eat it. As George Clark so memorably pointed out, "a real cock who carried a precious stone into a jeweler's shop or kept it about his person would more likely be stuffed with sage than sagacity."<sup>15</sup> Lydgate's drawing out the rationale for the cock's choice was perhaps a hint for Henryson's weighting of the narrative with emotional terms that draw our initial sympathy toward the dinnerless cock. Yet Henryson switches the moralization and condemns the cock, giving an opposite emotional weighting. Such reversals are a Henryson specialty.

Henryson, in his version of the fable of the cock and gem (jasp), has things both ways. In the moralitas he, like most tellers of the fable, condemns the cock's foolishness in passing up the gem (wisdom), but in the narrative he had seemingly prepared us for a move in the opposite direction, deepening understanding for the hungry cock who needs grain, not gems. In the narrative he pours in language to trigger our sympathies for the cock, yet in the moralitas he still condemns cock-like humans who do not know what is really good for them. When we first identify with the cock we set ourselves up to be targets for the moralization.

In this, Henryson gets what I call cross-weighting: the pushing of the narrative one way, then pushing the morality another way. This is a special case of the pervading irony Denton Fox finds in Henryson, citing the *Orpheus* as sharing with fables "structural ironies that [in *Orpheus*] virtue is represented by

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<sup>14</sup>Lydgate, pp. 566-99.

<sup>15</sup>George Clark, "Henryson and Aesop: The Fable Transformed," *ELH*, 43 (1976), 8.

the would-be rapist Aristeus, while the intellectual and non-passional part of man is represented by the lover Orpheus."<sup>16</sup>

Henryson's new elaborateness of both tale and moralization gives him more material to work with than traditional Romulus-type fabulists, more elements to bear on the one hand the emotional tones natural to their roles in the narrative, but also to bear new and even conflicting tones from their roles in the moralization.

Thus those moralized chickens in "The Fox, the Wolf and the Husbandman" are incidental to the plot, but available to be used. The husbandman simply uses them to bribe the fox to get rid of the threatening wolf for him. No other fabulist, so far as I can discover, allegorized those chickens as anything at all, but in his new mode of moralization Henryson does so. Because Henryson is thinking of the fox as devil for his moralization, and the chickens help someone get rid of that devil-fox, a most unexpected chicken interpretation becomes not only possible but reasonable—the chickens become the good works by which we humans drive off the devil come to claim our souls. Emotionally, the connotations of bribes conflict with the connotations of good works. We did not expect any moralization for those chickens, much less that one, with its tension, its cognitive clash between their original moral status as bribes and their new significance as good works.

In Henryson's surprises of moralization, we have something of the topsyturviness of sermons on love songs, or, even more elaborately, Richart's *Bestiaires d'amours*. How people responded on first encountering the surprises of Richart's work may help us understand the role of surprise in Henryson's. We have seen that the surprise of Richart's brightly amusing makeover of the bestiary is that lover and lady each turn the bestiary to directly opposite love lessons, so that what one tells us the other contradicts, and neither follows the traditional meaning that normal bestiaries had trained the reader to expect. But the illustrators coming for the first time to fill in the illustration boxes on manuscripts of this surprising pseudobestiary had, like the readers, also been trained by their experience of normal bestiaries. How they reacted (as shown in the illustrations they chose to put into those boxes) lets them serve us as handy stand-ins for medieval readers generally: what did they do when faced with marked shifts in a traditional genre and with a cognitive clash between elements?

What we find is confusion, with no single medieval attitude toward such a clash. Each illustrator of the *Bestiaires d'amours*, coming to the job with a head full of traditional bestiary illustrations, had to adapt somehow to the astonishingly new text. One can imagine at least three attitudes to that clash: ignore it as one early illustrator did by simply re-using the standard bestiary

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<sup>16</sup>Robert Henryson, *The Poems*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford & New York, 1987), p. ix. This edition is derived from that of 1981, with reduced apparatus but new commentary.

scenes (MS Sainte-Geneviève 2200), recognize but remove or reduce the clash as other illustrators did by editing out the gorier of the old bestiary images and adding framing images of the clerk and lady (MS Douce 308), or welcome and relish it—as I believe Henryson does with his own cognitive clashes.

Henryson neither ignores the ironic clash he so often sets up between plot and moralization, nor does he notice it and revise it away. Instead, he enjoys it.<sup>17</sup> He heightens it. He prepares for it. He weights his narrative text one way, then snaps us back in the moralization: sympathy for the cock, then condemnation.

Even within the plot there are clashes that we moderns find intriguing. He gives his wicked beasts their share of the wise proverbs and holy sentiments—and gives us some very mixed feelings. For example, in “The Paddock and the Mouse,” Henryson’s wicked toad “preaches” (Henryson’s word) on physiognomy, making the unassailable point that an ugly face does not of itself give evidence of a wicked person. Thus already in the narrative we have two emotional responses; surely the toad is right that spiritual beauty can reside in an ugly body, but we soon learn that this particular ugly preacher of truth turns out to be in fact spiritually ugly as well, a con artist with an eye toward drowning the mouse.

Given this duality in the toad’s character, we might expect the moralization to warn us against evil hypocrites (humans who parallel the specious but evil plotting of the toad). Instead, Henryson’s toad stands not for hypocrites, but the body tied to the soul as toad was tied to mouse. In effect neither side of the toad’s character has been used for the moralization, neither the true preaching nor the wicked intent behind it, but only the bare fact of tying together. Thus where the natural material of the fable would lead to warnings against hypocrites (with Odo’s version, for instance, warning specifically against church officials who lead the people astray), no preceding version quite explains the mix of death, body, and soul that Henryson develops or the mixture of emotions he arouses. Henryson shares elements with earlier fabulists but treats them in new ways.

While Henryson copies no one very exactly, still he was drinking from the same well as other writers, from Odo and *Renart* to the *Isopets*. Something started happening in the fable world from the late twelfth century onward, and a new spirit—call it Renardian, perhaps—was somehow passed around. It shows in social or religious applications of the fables; in elaboration of plot, character, and dialogue; and in the exegesis-like way of building moralizations from details.

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<sup>17</sup>Gregory Kratzmann praises Henryson’s “delight in the sudden leap from one level of interpretation to another” and his giving “the game a serious edge” in “Henryson’s *Fables*: ‘the subtell dyte of poetry,’” *SSL*, 20 (1985), 67.



The new style was not only in the air as a sort of international style of fable writing that quite unrelated writers might adopt, but seems to have been passed more directly from one to another writer, with a string of new plot motifs. Thus, for example, among the writers with this new approach to satire and style are also the ones who echo *Renart* in its dialogue-rich style and in plots not formerly found in fable collections.

How do these infusions of new materials finally filter into Henryson's collection and its non-Aesopic materials? The question cannot now be answered in full. About half his fables derive from typical Aesopic ones, that is ones in the ordinary Romulus lineage descended from Phaedrus. For these it is easy enough to imagine Henryson taking the known plot from any one of a number of available versions or from his combined memory of several, and then transforming it. But these ordinary collections would not provide the plots for the other roughly half of his collection, where names like Odo, Marie, *Renart*, the *Isopets*, and even Berechiah tend to come up in the analogue lists, accompanied by some related collections such as the Latin complex that Hervieux catalogues as the *Fabulae extravagantes*. Henryson's least Romulus-like plots are these:

*Table 3:* fox and cock, singing with eyes shut, as in *Renart* branch II and also Marie, Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale*, and others. The ancestor may be old fables of a partridge that the fox tries to trick into shutting its eyes and sleeping, but in the fox-and-cock form it is a medieval invention.<sup>18</sup>

*Table 4:* confession, kid baptized as salmon. Something like it appears in Marie, *Isopets*, the appendix added to Walter, and others, making Henryson part of a group, yet narrative detail differs. For Henryson's kid, confessor-figure, and the pseudo-rite of baptism, most others have a sheep or ram simply renamed so as to be eaten. Oddly, the closest to Henryson may be the one fabulist he presumably could not read, the twelfth-century Hebrew-language fabulist Berechiah. Berechiah has the kid, and though he of course has no Christian religious elements he does have a king substitute for Henryson's confessor as an authority figure imposing abstention from meat.

*Table 5:* kick motif linked to parliament as in the additions to Odo. Other versions of a kick fable lack the call to parliament and have the

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<sup>18</sup>E. P. Dargan traced versions of cock and fox, concluding "The fable proper seems in its entirety a special medieval growth.... It has not been discovered in Greek antiquity or in classical Latinity," in "Cock and Fox, A Critical Study of the History and Sources of the Medieval Fable," *Modern Philology*, IV (1906), 39.

wolf or other carnivore bend over the hoof for some other reason, reading something written or removing a spine (*Renart* branch XIX and fable versions that include Walter, the *Fabulae extravagantes*, the *Isopets*, and ultimately Babrius).

*Fable 9:* fox and cart as in *Renart* branches XIV and III and Berechiah.

*Fable 10:* husbandman, well, and cheese motifs combined as in Petrus Alfonsi, with more distant parallels in *Renart* branch IV, Berechiah, and others—especially Odo, who like Henryson moralizes the fox as the devil/fiend.

*Fable 11:* wolf and wether in dog's skin as in the nontypical fable sources Baldo or the *Fabulae extravagantes* (both of which have a ram) plus Caxton with the wether again.<sup>19</sup>

Thus Henryson's sources for non-Romulus plots are apparently eclectic but still within a particular lineage of innovative fabulists. It is striking how many of the new fable plots occur also in *Renart*, but equally striking that they do not occur in the Romulus tradition itself until imported to it by someone among the innovative, mostly British or French, group of fabulists: Berechiah, Marie, Odo, Odo's followers, *Isopets*, related collections, or some lost predecessor. The motifs themselves making up these new fables are well known to the folklorists, whose motif-index numbers trace them around the world to such places as Jewish folktale or the wisdom literature of India.<sup>20</sup> But where did Henryson or the others get them?

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<sup>19</sup>Baldo's twelfth-century *Novus Aesopus* has a ram, not wether, in Hervieux, V, 368-70, or in Edélestand Du Ménil, *Poésies inédites du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1854) pp. 251f, and so does the Ulm *Extravagantes* version in Hervieux, II, 296f. For the *Roman de Renart* I cite the branch numbers of the Ernest Martin edition (Strasbourg, 1882).

<sup>20</sup>Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington, 1955-8). Two works of Ben Edwin Perry focus more directly on fables, at least when in Latin or Greek. Perry's *Babrius and Phaedrus* (Cambridge, MA, 1951) appends summaries of new fables not in Babrius or Phaedrus (but found in some late-medieval manuscripts collected in Hervieux's *Fabulistes latins*, or in other sources). Perry's index conveniently gives many *Motif-Index* numbers and also his own numbering of new fables in *Aesopica* (Urbana, 1952). For the Henryson fables that I note as outside the usual Romulus tradition, compare *Aesopica* 562a (cock and fox); 655 (kid or sheep as salmon); 638 (kick, exemption from call to parliament—found in the additions to Odo), 699 (kick, thorn in hoof), and 693 (kick, name on hoof); 593 (well, moon reflection); and 705 (wolf and wether/sheep/ram in dog's skin). Fox and cart has no *Aesopica* number but is motif K371.1 "trickster tosses fish from wagon," which Henryson

What are the relations among the few fabulists who begin using these fable plots from the late twelfth century on? Henryson copies no one very exactly, and even if we could pin down his immediate sources, the question would remain, where did they get the plots? Perhaps all we can do is recognize an innovating group that shares certain new narratives as well as a new approach to moralizations. These innovative fabulists form a loose family of their own whose fables are best compared to each other's work, not to the schoolroom standard of the day. Henryson's collection is not simply a witty Scottish branch of the common Romulus-Aesop tradition but part of an innovative tradition that had already branched off.

Not every writer in the innovative, plot-sharing group has all the new plots or traits of moralization, but each shows a willingness to innovate at least here and there in the course of collections that may elsewhere be traditional Romulus. Marie de France displays her relationship to the group through introducing contemporary social figures in some of her moralizations as well as through having some of the new plots.<sup>21</sup> Odo is more consistently an innovator, with religious themes, developed point-for-point interpretations, and numerous contemporary social figures satirized. Similar traits are found in one measure or another in the later members of the group: Odo's followers Nicole Bozon and John of Sheppey; the *Isopets* with their bright style that recalls *Renart*; isolated manuscripts with the new plots like those Hervieux included in his compendium as "wandering fables" (*fabulae extravagantes*), Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina Clericalis*, with its Jewish antecedents (he was Moses Sephardi before converting), and the most puzzling member of the group, Berechiah.

Though writing in Hebrew, Berechiah ben Natronai has to be counted among the group in both his selection of new plots and his rich social satire. It is true that the other fabulists presumably could not have read, let alone borrowed from, his Hebrew "Fox Stories" (*Mishle Shualim*, the Talmudic term for animal fables). Nonetheless, Berechiah shares certain of these new plots and much of the spirit, championing the poor at least as strongly as Henryson and the others but writing earlier, before Renardian names come into fable.<sup>22</sup> Does

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shares with *Renart*, Berechiah—and folktales as far afield as southern Africa. For well-fable analogues see my "Medieval Beasts and Modern Cages: The Making of Meaning in Fables and Bestiaries," *PMLA*, 97 (1982), 47f.

<sup>21</sup>See *Die Fabeln der Marie de France*, ed. Karl Warnke (Halle, 1898).

<sup>22</sup>Berechiah's fables have been translated by Moses Hadas, *Fables of a Jewish Aesop. Translated from the Fox Fables of Berechiah ha-Nakdan* (New York and London, 1967). While the introduction by W. T. H. Jackson takes the fox of Berechiah's title *Mishle Shualim* (Fox Fables) as an allusion to the *Roman de Renart* and hence evidence for a late enough date that *Renart* was already widely known and could be alluded to, "Fox Fables" does not, in fact, refer to *Renart*. *Mishle Shualim* was already established centuries earlier as the regular Tal-

some of the flow of new plots and perhaps even of the new social-satiric spirit rise from some Jewish source that became available to Christians around the late twelfth century and that then influenced Marie and the small number of Latin collections related either to her or her sources? If so, Henryson is the ultimate beneficiary.

Such a Jewish link in fable transmission is plausible enough in principle. As the *Motif-Index* can tell us, Jewish-Arabic culture seems to have had for centuries animal stories not yet tapped by Christian fabulists—one being the well-and-moon's-reflection fable that the rabbi Rashi knew, that the convert Petrus Alfonsi sent on its way to Henryson, and that also somehow got into the *Roman de Renart*.

Perhaps the great early scholar of fables Joseph Jacobs was onto something when he speculated about a possible Jewish transmission for much of the new material—some Jewish translator of fables from Hebrew or Arabic in the late twelfth century who influenced Marie, Berechiah, related Latin collections, *Renart*, and Odo. Could such a work be the lost English source Marie claimed to have used? Could such an intermediary explain similarities between Marie's expanded collection and Berechiah's even longer one, with some 35 of his 100-plus fables not paralleled in Marie, Avianus, or Romulus and hence either invented (unlikely), or from an unknown source?

Unfortunately for figuring out the sequence of events, Berechiah's place and date have been at least as hard to pin down as Marie's. Jacobs, finding an English record of what might or might not be the same man, placed Berechiah tentatively in England about Marie's time or before—handy if he is to influence her with a now-lost English translation of Hebrew or Arabic fables. Others, however, place Berechiah instead in the Lunel region of southern France, writing the fables as a late work, perhaps around 1160-70, and probably knowing no Arabic—this according to Hermann Gollancz.<sup>23</sup> If Gollancz is right, Jacobs' earlier thought that Berechiah himself might once have lived in England and worked up Marie's lost English source remains speculation, but the rest of Jacobs' argument still seems worth exploring, that someone drew materials from Hebrew or Arabic sources to enrich the French, Latin, and ultimately Scottish traditions of animal fable and beast epic. For scholars of Arabic tales, the place to start looking for fable ancestors might be Paris' Bibliothèque Nationale and the Arabic manuscripts that Jacobs cited based on their

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music term for animal fables and so is no evidence on dating. For this see *Sanhedrin* 38b, 39a in *The Babylonian Talmud, Translated into English* (London, 1935-48), IV, 246, and note.

<sup>23</sup>Hermann Gollancz, "Introduction," in *The Ethical Treatises of Berachya Son of Rabbi Natronai Ha-Nakdan* (London, 1902), esp. pp. xxvii, xxxv-xxxix. For Jacobs' placing of Berechiah near the source of the new fable materials, see his *Fables of Aesop*, 2 vols. (London, 1889), esp. I, 157, 175-8, and Appendix.

description, though he could not himself read the texts. I wait to hear the results.

But whatever discoveries may be to come from unpublished fables in Hebrew, Arabic, or other sources, or from the exempla of sermon collections subsequent to Odo, my sense is that Henryson will remain the most inventive, vivid, and deliberately surprising among these fabulists. He is the one who not only comes up frequently with inventive new moralizations (as they also sometimes do), but who most fully develops this surprise-seeking into a style, even weighting the narrative one way and the moralization the other to make the clash all the more striking.

Nominally writing in the old pagan, classical genre, Henryson breaks the secular decorum that so many generations of "Romulus" manuscripts had so carefully preserved in everything purporting to be a fable collection. He develops lessons that bear on contemporary (and hence non-classical) social conditions like the plight of tenant farmers. He embraces and enlivens both this world and the next as he introduces spiritual and otherworldly lessons foreign to classical thinking. He elaborates both narrative and moralization, heightening each and enjoying the occasional cognitive clash and surprise that he delivers to the reader.

Thus this writer who seems at first glance to be intensely of this world, developing in the narratives the fictional being of his bestial characters and developing in the moralitas a specific social satire based on observation of the contemporary world, also turns out to have his eye on otherworldly spiritual matters. Neither the secular nor the religious elements fit what most people in Henryson's audience would have expected from the originally pagan fable tradition—and yet Henryson develops both.

If we wished to dichotomize and call a writer either worldly or spiritual, Henryson would have to be both. His vivid style in the narrative turns the bare-bones plots of fable into the dialogue-rich drama of *Renart* (and *Isopet*) type—or of Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale." But if this trait makes Henryson worldly in the sense of bringing a vividly observed world to life, his style in the moralitas emphasizes the spiritual or religious half of the dichotomy, drawing out an unusual density of specifically religious and otherworldly lessons through a point-for-point method very like the exegesis found in sermon style.

Thus Henryson is a unifier of disparate realms. His fables could be said to enliven and democratize preacherly learning and exegesis by bundling them together with real-life social satire and heightened entertainment value. His wit transforms narrative and moralitas alike.

Such entertaining playfulness is far from inconsistent with his high seriousness. In fact, if evil is, as the medieval world tended to hold, essentially foolishness (for who but a fool would pursue evil if the cost was his soul), then wit is a proper scourge of this foolish evil. Henryson is, in this sense, quite consistent in playing with our expectations, weighting his text so as to make us

sympathize—and begin to identify—with characters we will soon have to condemn. It is not narrative alone or moralization alone that Henryson develops, but the play of the two together, now reinforcing, now jostling against one another, surprising us while yet consistently exposing wickedness to laughter.

Henryson's example teaches that a truly innovative creator may not easily be confined within the usual categories or dichotomies, focusing on this world or on the next, on the entertainment value of fable or the educative value. Instead the creative person, as the psychologist Abraham Maslow has suggested in his studies of creative people, transcends dichotomies.<sup>24</sup> The dichotomy of fable plot versus fable moralization seems to be one that Henryson has transcended, enlivening plot with new dialogue, enlivening moralization with new methods, and pouring creativity into every element of fable.

*Highland Park, NJ*

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<sup>24</sup>Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Princeton, 1968), pp. 139f.