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The History of Reynard the Fox: How Medieval Literature Reflects Culture

Part of the journal section "Forum: Falling into Medievalism"

Anne Lair, "*The History of Reynard the Fox: How Medieval Literature Reflects Culture*"

Teaching about the Middle Ages in French culture or literature courses is always an enlightening experience to me because of the richness of symbols, events, and starting points occurring during this time period. Very often, when thinking about the Middle Ages, Christianity, chivalry, and nobility come to mind, all values still of high importance in contemporary Western societies. However, medieval culture presents itself with an array of other behaviors and values, some of which may today be considered as offensive and even sometimes "alienating": primitive, barbaric, or even animalistic forms of behavior.

At first contact, students often poorly appreciate the Middle Ages; this can be explained by several factors: 1) their image of the Middle Ages is limited to what they know about the 11th through the 13th century; 2) within this limited concept, the Middle Ages are represented by a few common places, a jumble of simplistic and often colorful notions of cathedrals, castles, chivalry, the plague, and the Dark Ages; and 3) finally the period has little relevance since it "happened so long ago". Actually, very often, graduate students in French studies try to skip French medieval literature, discouraged as they are at the prospect of deciphering texts written in Old French. Once beyond these hurdles, students are often surprised at their own eagerness to "discover" this very rich period, especially when they realize how much of it has actually contributed to the centuries that followed.

As a French culture specialist and expert on the symbolism of food, I have taught a course on famine and abundance, focusing mostly on the Middle Ages and medieval literature. This course illustrates the preoccupations of the peasant and lower classes with subsistence and survival. *The History of Reynard the Fox*, a narrative which developed between 1171 and 1250, is certainly a major work addressing these issues. It is a compilation of fairy tales or "branches" written by over twenty writers, whose styles, personalities, talents, and preoccupations were certainly different. *The History of Reynard the Fox* became extremely popular during the 13th century, captivating monks who were fascinated by the adventures of the main character, Reynard, a very charismatic and clever fox who draws pleasure mainly from cheating and playing tricks on others and thus is always in trouble (*Medieval Bestiary: the History of Reynard the Fox, Le Roman de Renart* 5).

This text offers more than a satire of daily life in the Middle Ages, and gives a very accurate picture of the animals' instinctive behavior (*Le Roman de Renart* 29). As a parody it mocks and ridicules epic and chivalric literature, illustrates politics and the daily life of the time, as well as the all pervasive obsession with food among common people. Yet food in medieval literary texts relates also to any sort of intake, be it nutritional, sexual or spiritual, and its necessity for survival and reproduction. While these needs fulfill basic human instincts, they would often be depicted as vulgar in post medieval times.

Covering the topic of food I draw from many disciplines, such as the arts, anthropology and sociology; although the latter two are comparatively recent areas of research, they supply valid data about the past and allow us to better understand the intricacy of medieval life. In this paper, I shall try to demonstrate how a literary text such as *The History of Reynard the Fox* should also be read as a text that provides information about medieval culture in general.

After a short survey on eating habits from the Gallo-Roman era up to the Middle Ages, I shall give a brief explanation of life in “archaic” societies, thus using the notion of potlatch developed by Marcel Mauss in *The Gift: the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. I will then use Pierre Bourdieu’s work, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, whose chapters three and seven primarily focus on food and its relevance on economic and social status. Both works will help understand *The History of Reynard the Fox* as a rich cultural text and point out how much the post medieval French culinary “experience” draws from habits formed during the Middle Ages.

Food is an absolute necessity to survive and has often been one of the causes for invasions. Whereas the Gallo-Romans have become synonymous with civilization and successful farming, their main diet was one of cereals, legumes,¹ leafy vegetables, and fruits, the Barbarians mostly survived on hunting, gathering, and fishing, relying on natural resources from the forest such as berries, mushrooms, game, and venison. Their beverage was mostly beer (the main reason why they grew cereal) and milk from animals. During the 5th century, Barbarians started migrating towards Gaul not only in search of new territories, but mostly because they were starving. The Roman diet was more diverse, balanced, and came in time to be adopted by the Barbarians. To meat, beer, milk, and butter were now added bread, wine and oil. However, wide areas of land were still uncultivated at that time and natural resources widely available.

During the High Middle Ages, direct consumption was born.² Land surrounding castles or villages began to be cultivated and the ecological system changed as forests were destroyed to make room for settlements. For the peasants, access to natural resources became more and more limited.

Markets, villages, and towns were founded in increasing numbers. These crossroads of civilization boasted luxurious goods such as spices as well as fresh local produce. The agrarian of economic system was slowly replacing the sylvan-pastoral one and land was re-landscaped, and the three-field system of crop rotation was born.³ This helped diversify agricultural production and thus brought some stability and balance to daily consumption. However, the new economic system did not prevent famine; there was little or no notion of stocking reserves, provisions that could have prevented starvation in times of need.

In case of famine, peasants used monasteries as a place of refuge. Seeing as their mission to care for and to protect the needy, the monasteries themselves also depended on what they grew: vegetables, cereals for bread, vines for wine, and cows and goats for dairy products. Reynard, the narrative voice, is very accurate in his description of the abundance of food he encounters at the monastery’s farm. There is a profusion of milk, cheeses, eggs, numerous ewes, cows, oxen as well as their offspring, and the poultry-yard contains hens, roosters and other birds (*The History of Reynard the Fox* verses 1150-60). The sheer quantity of food matters, as we will later see with Bourdieu, not only when it comes to production but also when it comes to personal consumption. However, periods of abundance were not the rule and, if

Reynard, who represents peasant life and peasant attitudes toward food, seems to know where to obtain sustenance, he also often goes hungry and has to roam around to find something to eat (verses 2235-53).

Even during periods of abundance, people did not store food. They would instead consume a lot, thinking only about the present, ignoring the future. Of course, preserving food was yet difficult.⁴ These periods of abundance were synonymous with wealth and joy, mainly because of their ephemeral nature. The memories of deprivation were never far, the desire for food always strong and the hope that tomorrow would once again bring abundance was enduring. Such a mentality is characteristic of “archaic” societies. Since the peasants often experienced food deprivation, they tended to overindulge whenever something could be consumed.

When one thinks about “archaic”, expressions such as “primitive” and “ancient” come to mind. For instance, the Middle Ages seem archaic to 21 st century men and women, especially because of the perceived discrepancy in life style. We can link certain customs in the Middle Ages to behaviors described by the late French anthropologist Marcel Mauss in his book *Essai sur le Don [The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies]* W.W. Norton 1990]. There he studies the exchange of gifts in primitive societies from ancient Rome to present-day Melanesia and North American Indian tribes. He sees the gift as a social phenomenon, involving legal, economical, moral, and religious dimensions, and the exchange of gifts as more telling about the dynamics between individuals and groups than about the objects “gifted”.

For North American Northwestern tribes, the term “potlatch” or “potlach” has several meanings: 1) a system for the exchange of gifts, 2) to feed, to consume, and 3) a place of being satiated. Mauss notes that reciprocating a gift not only means returning the gift but also adding to it, so that it is used as a means of competition or rivalry, a way of asserting one’s superiority over another tribe or one’s own family.⁵ To four Indian tribes of Alaska and British Columbia (the Tlingits, Haïdas, Tsimshians and Kwakiutls) honor and credit matter greatly. To be respected and honored, these tribes must always give, receive, and return a gift to other tribes, thus constantly (feeling like) owing something.

This behavior shows parallels to forms of behavior found in the Middle Ages. Then, meals and beverages had to reflect the rank of the host, meaning that you had to take great care in your choices. The host would also show his wealth and power in other domains than food in order to impress his guests with his model behavior. Very often, mountains of presents were given; the wealthy lords wanted to overcome each other by lavishing gifts on musicians, peasants or pilgrims (*Histoire de l'alimentation* 313).

For the four Indian tribes of Alaska and British Columbia refusing or lacking to return a gift within a specific timeframe would be seen as a lack of respect and would cast doubt on the wealth of the family or tribe concerned. Caught in this logic you do not have other choices but to constantly give, receive, and reciprocate. These wealthy tribes live on fishing and hunting from the end of spring to the end of fall. They spend winter indoors and live a very rich social life, inviting each other for any number of occasions, for example, weddings or, more significantly, the sharing of a catch.⁶

These people act in a perpetual euphoric state and spend everything they have accumulated over the year without counting, organizing one celebration after another, consuming or even destroying all their wealth and goods, keeping absolutely nothing for themselves. For instance, they have been known to

burn their canoes and their blankets during these gatherings up to the point of having nothing left to keep them warm in the winter season and eventually risking to die of cold. By spending and destroying everything they own they demonstrate to themselves and other tribes their wealth. The notion of prestige is linked to such wealth as well as to the exactitude with which one returns a gift. Returning the gift the person spends what he has accumulated without saving anything, up to the point of getting rid of all his possessions, thus earning the respect of others. The individuals who want to become chief or keep their authority must possess a huge fortune and spend it on others, without any reserve. The more one spends, the more one is respected, and one's superiority can be demonstrated and maintained by continually outspending and "outgifting" the respective other.⁷

The potlatch itself, so typical a phenomenon, is none other than a system of exchange of gifts. It simply means to redistribute everything received from a first potlatch, keeping nothing for oneself, which in turn makes sure that the sharing and inviting cannot come to an end (*The Gift* 35). By accepting a gift, one is committing oneself to the challenge of returning any favors or goods with interest in a never ending escalation. It is also important to accept a present very enthusiastically to mark your appreciation of it as well as that of the person who gifted it. Lacking to do so would be deemed impolite and understood as a lack of respect. Therefore, when being part of a dinner celebration, one is committed to gulping down large quantities of food in order "to do honor", in a somewhat grotesque way, to the host (41).

A similar concept exists during the Middle Ages, period during which abundance and famine alternated: for any gathering, the host must serve more food than expected and the guests need to overindulge in order "to do honor". The idea of hiding and keeping something for later is inconceivable; everything has to be consumed.

Let us now view Pierre Bourdieu's observations on lower social classes concerning food consumption.

In his *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard UP, 1984), the famous French sociologist studies segments of the French population in order to define the tastes people develop in the areas of food, decorating, clothing, and the arts.⁸ According to Bourdieu, taste can be defined socially and will vary according to social class. In terms of food, he notices that: 1) eating habits vary based on gender inside the same social class; 2) the more money a social group makes, the less money is spent on food (in terms of percentage of income),⁹ thus enabling wealthier people to consume lighter and more refined products and to have slimmer bodies; 3) there is a distinction between "luxurious tastes" (the tastes of the bourgeoisie) and "tastes of necessity," (the working classes' consumption); and 4) culinary preparations, creation, invention, and etiquette are more important than goods and products themselves in order to distinguish social classes.

Bourdieu stresses that lower classes having limited cultural capital as well as low economic capital select their food according to necessity and economic constraints. Moreover, they are condemned to consuming certain kinds of foods.¹⁰ Lower class in food will be governed by economic consideration and the degree to which foods are "filling"; therefore lower classes consume predominantly cheap, heavy, fatty, "elastic food" such as soup, pork, bacon, beans, pasta or potatoes, products rich in calories, which enable them to do manual labor.

It is important to stress that during the Middle Ages, many of the above ingredients were a luxury. Indeed, meat, especially pork, could only be afforded by wealthy people and would be cooked and presented at banquets in various ways as it still is today. Pigs were the only animals that were used, cooked, and consumed in their entirety, even ears and tail, and their lard was used to cook vegetables. Their meat could even be preserved over a long period of time in salt. Peasants, though often unable to afford it, were very fond of eating meat. Although a parody, *The History of Reynard the Fox* illustrates accurately what people consumed at the time. Reynard the Fox and his “friends” are mostly after meat, and capturing poultry is easy for them. Eggs and cheese are also part of Reynard’s regular diet. Meat or cheese are on the “table”, be it at breakfast, lunch or dinner. Reynard’s diet was what peasants would have wished to consume had they had the means to obtain such foods. For them, however, cereals and not meat or cheese were on the menu.

Since medieval peasants ate to survive, they do not demonstrate any apparent concern for physical beauty. Then, it was probably important not to look too thin, since a thin body could have been interpreted as a malnourished one. Lower social classes today tend to perpetuate and therefore do not worry much about their physical appearance. They often limit themselves to things easy to eat and feel self-conscious about eating certain fish or fruit since these products would require advanced or sophisticated table manners.¹¹

For members of the lower classes, specific conditions must apply for the preparation of dinner, which needs to be warm and not cold like the lunch, heavy and not light, large and not small. Some ingredients such as meat, (beef, pork or chicken are mostly consumed), and potatoes are a must for Sunday dinners (*The Sociology of the Meal* 53-4) [Edinburgh UP, 1995]. Certain ingredients are excluded from the lower class’s diet because they relate to femininity, and do not fill up. They are considered as high brow, hence unnecessary and downright ridiculous. Fish is the perfect example since its meat is too refined and one needs to have the *savoir-faire* to remove the bones. The lower classes restrain themselves from eating fish, even if its consumption may be less costly than eating other meats.¹² Green vegetables are too expensive, some are too dainty, therefore too refined and not filling enough. Some desserts, especially those requiring a lot of preparation and *savoir-faire* remain too luxurious a food item to be consumed on a daily basis and are, thus, reserved for celebrations.¹³

Members of the working classes characterize themselves by their capacity to eat and drink large amounts, by their relatively unrestricted use of language, and their laid-back attitude at the table. These three elements tie together.¹⁴ Abundance is extremely valued by the lower classes; they prefer large portions, served with a ladle, instead of food “measured” as in the case of a roast whose slices can be counted. We are talking about the way *agourmand*, a passionate or excessive eater, would devour food.¹⁵

For Reynard, like for the members of the lower classes, quantity matters, and it is often difficult to stop eating for him after one serving. For instance in one single day, Reynard the fox eats five hens, and his foe, Isengrin the wolf, devours three hams. While occupying the fortress of Maupertuis, Reynard claims to have enough food for the next seven years (verse 1720). Among the food items he mentions are hens, eggs, meats, and cheeses.

Although Bourdieu refers to the working classes, the same notion of abundance is already mentioned in ceremonies during the Middle Ages. Starting during Antiquity, the exchange of gifts and goods and the

respect due to others were extremely important to show one's rank, education and wealth. These modalities were known and used by everyone, which explains why during the Middle Ages the simple formula was used: "They met *ad convivium et munera*." People of the time period knew this ceremonious meal was synonymous with the sealing of a pact. Eating and drinking together as well as accepting gifts meant that participants accepted certain conditions and obligations (*Histoire de l'alimentation* 308).

As Bourdieu notes, gastronomy is not part of the lower classes' experience. Eating is first of all a necessity and only in some circumstances a pleasure. It is necessary to eat a lot in order to work and survive, which explains why abundance is so appreciated. Any forms of restraint or aesthetics are excluded since they are considered superfluous.

As previously mentioned, *The History of Reynard the Fox* reflects well how peasants lived during the Middle Ages. The basic instincts of human nature are all depicted and well illustrated by the fox who, through verbiage and flattery, seizes any opportunity to consume nutritional food and indulge in sexual pleasures. We shall now see how the latter is but another form of this need for sustenance I have been concentrating on up to this point.

Sexual intercourse shall be seen as an act of pleasure but also as one driven by the same physical imperatives as hunger. Contraception had existed for a long time,¹⁶ but carries a stigma and is forbidden in Europe during the Middle Ages as the Catholic Church maintained that the natural purpose of intercourse is procreation. Nonetheless, even if men and women would not always have intercourse in order to procreate, they very naturally would follow their instinct and would be intimate either because they felt the need, which depicts in this case a natural and animalistic behavior, or because they wanted pleasure. Consequently, families were larger,¹⁷ especially among the less educated classes.¹⁸

In *The History of Reynard The Fox* sexual acts seem to take place either instead of a meal or after a meal¹⁹ thus "penetrating" the circle of food: pleasures of the palate and pleasures of the body, both necessary, seem to be interchangeable or to complete each other.²⁰ Reynard behaves the same way to gain sexual access to females as he does to gain access to food, seizing any opportunity to have intercourse, without respecting his partner or even worrying if she is willing or not, as in the case of the queen, who may be considered a trophy for him. The females' lot was often to be submissive. On the other hand, Hersant, Isengrin's mate, may be seen as Reynard's mistress. He visits her on several occasions just to have sex and she never turns him down. Hersant has strong sexual desires, and therefore enjoys intercourse with both Isengrin and also Reynard. Both do not feel concerned about having sexual relations with another species. While in heat, she yearns to mate and is very frustrated and insulted when Isengrin cannot fulfill his male duties. Indeed a nun removed Isengrin's genitalia because of inappropriate behavior. This results in Hersant leaving him. The drive to procreate is strong, not to be ignored and well represented in the number of young ones these animals have. Reynard himself is depicted as a typical selfish male, only worried about his own needs and never having second thoughts about betraying his wife. As a male, he is free to do whatever he wants. On the other hand, his spouse may not take another partner even in the event of his death, and he becomes jealous when he finds her with another male. Hermeline, the loyal mate, thinking Reynard is dead, replaces him, thus showing that her need for food (to feed her brood) and for sex (reproduction) are not to be separated.

Intimacy for females seems to have different meanings. Whereas the queen sees intimacy as a way to (re)connect with her husband, the king sees it as a way to be forgiven by his wife. In this example, the union of the bodies appears more as an act of love and care than as an act of selfish and animalistic behavior. We just saw how the role of sexual intercourse varies with social classes; the lower the social class, the more simple and animalistic the behavior becomes. Like nutrition, intimacy is a natural and necessary act.

Let us now consider how the Middle Ages have impacted the following centuries in the areas discussed above.

The types of cooking we know today, have derived from both the cooking practiced by medieval peasants,²¹ and the elaborated cooking developed during the “gastronomical” revolutions of the late 17th century and early 19th century. We cannot forget that peasant cooking has become the foundation of “family” cooking,²² available and used by a large segment of society. It is based on local seasonal produce and directly related to the cycle of nature. In order to be tasty, these products require simple preparation and cooking that have been carefully transmitted from generation to generation and are thus embedded in a long standing tradition. What we periodically (re)discover on our plates or in cookbooks is rarely innovative in the strict sense. For instance, preparations mixing sweet and sour, meat and fruits, or meat and seafood, were quite common during the Middle Ages only to be put aside during the 18th and 19th centuries. On the other hand, the elaborated cuisine we eat in some restaurants is constantly in need of reinventing itself, exactly the way it happened during the gastronomical revolutions. These cyclical dynamics pull chefs back to the root of their cooking, in our case to the Middle Ages. In order to do so, a chef must draw from his/her knowledge of the time, for (s)he has to be able to create and fix popular dishes from simple produce. Within the last ten years, some of the most renowned gourmet chefs in France have put aside many elaborate preparations and their overpowering sauces in favor of simple ingredients and their subtle flavors. As a testimony, their recent cookbooks include pictures of nature and simple produce (*produits du terroir*), and modes of production, thereby bringing an old tradition back to life.²³ However, as soon as tastes will have moved away from the gastronomical revolutions, their more complex demands will come back in force, but there goes the spiral.

In conclusion, this paper tried to illustrate how the medieval *History of Reynard the Fox* text has a lot to offer not only in terms of reading medieval culture but also contemporary culture. Like the medieval peasants represented in *Reynard*, members of the lower classes in contemporary societies share with their predecessors many attitudes concerning food and sexuality. Similar to periods of abundance during the Middle Ages, postmedieval lower classes consume large amounts of filling foods, especially meat, bread and starch, with little sense of restraint.²⁴ Thus, my observations on *Reynard* underline Mauss’s theory of the potlatch and Bourdieu’s observation on social distinction of taste. Moreover my investigation reveals that medieval food and cooking should not be neglected. The cultural heritage of the Middle Ages is still strongly influential in our contemporary practices and traditions. In fact, we tend to return to such practices and traditions because of our regained desire for simple and natural flavors and healthy and unpolluted ingredients. This image of the Middle Ages, which can be found in various recent cookbooks, may of course be just as limited as the seminal images of the Middle Ages my students bring to my classes.

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¹ Starchy vegetables like white beans.

² Sustenance directly from one's own plot.

³ The more farmlands were left in fallow, the more production increased, up to 16%. The repercussions were tremendous, the number of inhabitants augmented by 50% and led to a larger and physically stronger population more apt to build and develop cities.

⁴ Nicolas François Appert invented the process of food canning in 1809.

⁵ Material and moral life, and exchange, function within it in a form that is both disinterested and obligatory. Moreover, this obligation is expressed in a mythical and imaginary way or, one might say, symbolic and collective. It assumes an aspect that centers on the interest attached to the things exchanged. These are never completely detached from those carrying out the exchange. The mutual ties and alliance that they establish are comparatively indissoluble. In reality this symbol of social life – the permanence of influence over the things exchanged – serves merely to reflect somewhat directly the manner in which the subgroups in these segmented societies, archaic in type and constantly enmeshed with one another, feel that they are everything to one another. (*The Gift* 33)

⁶ There is not one, single, special moment, even apart from the winter solemnities and gatherings, when one is not obliged to invite one's friends, to share with them the windfall gains of the hunt or food gathering, which come from the gods and the totems. There is not one single moment when you are not obliged to redistribute everything from a potlatch in which you have been the beneficiary; or other, whether preformed by chiefs, vassals, or relatives: all this under pain of violating etiquette – at least for nobles – and of losing rank. (*The Gift* 39)

⁷ Nowhere is the individual prestige of a chief and that of his clan so closely linked to what is spent and to the meticulous repayment with interest of gifts that have been accepted, so as to transform into persons having an obligation those that have placed you yourself under a similar obligation. Consumption and destruction of goods really go beyond all bounds. In certain kinds of potlatch one must expend all that one has, keeping nothing back. It is a competition to see who is the richest and also the most madly extravagant. Everything is based upon the principles of antagonism and rivalry. (*The Gift* 37)

⁸ A first survey was made in 1963 based on 692 subjects, both men and women, in Paris, Lille, and a little town outside Paris. Another one took place between 1967 and 1968 surveying 1217 people.

⁹ J.F. Engel's law.

¹⁰ Some simply swept it (taste of necessity) aside, making practice a direct product of economic necessity (workers eat beans because they cannot afford anything else), failing to realize that necessity can only be fulfilled, most of the time, because the agents are inclined to fulfill it, because they have a taste for what they are anyway condemned to. (*Distinction* 178)

¹¹ Tastes in food also depend on the idea each class has of the body and of the effects of good on the body, that is, on its strength, health and beauty, and on the categories it uses to evaluate these effects, some of which may be important for one class and ignored by another, and which the different classes may run in very different ways. Thus, whereas the working classes are more attentive to the strength of the (male) body than its shape, and tend to go for products that are both cheap and nutritious, the professions prefer products that are tasty, health-giving, light and non-fattening. (*Distinction* 190)

¹² Fish, because of its color and size is often not considered as filling as other kinds of meat.

¹³ At a deeper level, the whole body schema, in particular the physical approach to the act of eating, governs the selection of certain foods. For example, in the working classes, fish tends to be regarded as an unsuitable food for men, not only because it is light food, insufficiently “filling”, which would only be cooked for health reasons, i.e., for invalids and children, but also because, like fruit (except bananas) it is one of the “fiddly” things which a man’s hands cannot cope with and which make him childlike (the woman, adopting a maternal role, as in all similar cases, will prepare the fish on the plate or peel the pear); but above all, it is because fish has to be eaten in a way which totally contradicts the masculine way of eating, that is, with restraint, in small mouthfuls, chewed gently, with the front of the mouth, on the tips of the teeth (because of the bones). (*Distinction* 190)

¹⁴ A *bon vivant* is not just someone who enjoys eating and drinking; he is someone capable of entering into the generous and familiar – that is, both simple and free – relationship that is encouraged and symbolized by eating and drinking together, in a conviviality, which sweeps away restraints and reticence. (*Distinction* 179)

¹⁵ Plain speaking, plain eating: the working class meal is characterized by plenty (which does not exclude restrictions and limits) and above all by freedom. “Elastic” and “abundant” dishes are brought to the table – soups or sauces, pasta or potatoes (almost always included among the vegetables) – and served with a ladle or spoon, to avoid too much measuring and counting, in contrast to everything that has to be cut and divided, such as roasts. (*Distinction* 194)

¹⁶ The condom was invented in Egypt 3,000 B.C.

¹⁷ Still at the end of the 19th century, children in lower social classes were considered as breadwinners, like in Emile Zola’s *Germinal*.

¹⁸ This phenomenon still exists nowadays especially in lower classes.

¹⁹ To celebrate Isengrin’s return, he and his family eat everything they have. Then, Hersant asks him to be intimate to fulfill the cycle of foods (verses 2625-44). For Hermeline’s wedding, once the food is devoured, everyone leaves the banquet in a hurry to go home (verses 2886-2903)

²⁰ Aphrodisiacs are used to intensify the pleasures of the palate with the sexual pleasures.

²¹ It is called in French “cuisine de terroir”.

²² Along with the gastronomical revolutions, it gave birth to *cuisine bourgeoise* during the 19th century.

²³ *Mes recettes de terroir*, by the late Bernard Loiseau, published in 2000. *La cuisine paysanne* by Marc Veyrat, published in 1999. A new collection of cookbooks was born as well, called “cuisine de terroir” for regional cuisine.

²⁴ A very good example is in Emile Zola’s *L’Assommoir*, the Lantier family spend their time eating as soon as they have some money.



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