

The Department of French & Italian Presents

Radical Immanence: Blasons, Bodies, and the Birth of Modern Subjectivities in Marguerite de Navarre's Late Verse

A Dissertation Defense by Jake Ladyga

Monday, June 1, 2020

10:00 am

Abstract: If her ambitious imitation of Boccaccio's Decameron remains her most famous work, Marguerite de Navarre's poetry stands out for its formal variety and masterful engagement not only with questions of faith and civic duty but also with femininity and embodiment. My dissertation, *Radical Immanence: Blasons, Bodies, and the Birth of Modern Subjectivities in Marguerite de Navarre's Late Verse*, explores De Navarre's use of the anatomical blason, a poetic form that either praises the beauty or mocks the loathsomeness of a selected body part. Insisting on the need to recognize the blason as a fundamental rhetorical tool in Marguerite's poetics, my thesis also considers her complex manipulation of literary forms such as allegory, emblems, and the blasons themselves in her final poems—the *Chansons spirituelles*, *Prisons*, *Navire*, and *Miroir de Jhesus Christ crucifié*. Through close readings and the theoretical framework of *l'écriture féminine* and Julia Kristeva's notion of the "abject," *Radical Immanence* ultimately argues that it is possible to trace a gradual shift in the Queen's late verse from abstraction to the concrete, from medieval allegory toward proto-Romantic forms of lyricism and, from there, to a decentralized and monstrous form of subjectivity whereby Marguerite reorients our attention toward the inescapability of the body, the poem as a work of art, and her status as an artist of modern sensibility.

Dissertation Committee:

Alison Calhoun, Co-Chair, Associate Professor of French

Eric MacPhail, Co-Chair, Professor of French

Hall Bjørnstad, Associate Professor of French

Sarah Van der Laan, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature

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This defense will be held via Zoom. Those interested in participating should contact Alison Calhoun (abcalhou@indiana.edu) for permission.