

The Medieval (Music) Book: A Multimodal Cognitive Artefact
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In this chapter I explore the idea of a medieval manuscript book as a cognitive artefact. By this broad term, I mean to express that the manuscript book is both a product of a cognitive ecology and an example of embedded creative cognition, both of which, crucially, involve the reader in an active role in re-creating the text. Through a multimodal analysis of an opening from Paris, BnF fr. 146 (the *Livre de Fauvel*), presented in the light of these notions together with medieval theories of memory and consumption, I show that the medieval manuscript book is at once multimodal and cognitive, and that the present-day reader has much to gain from taking an active part in the book's re-creation.

You beat back the weakness of my vision; your light shone upon me in its brilliance, and I thrilled in love and dread alike. I realized that I was far away from you. It was as though I were in a land where all is different from your own and I heard your voice calling from on high, saying, 'I am the food of full-grown men. Grow and you shall feed on me. But you shall not change me into your own substance, as you do with the food of your body. Instead you shall be changed into me.' (Augustine, *Confessions* 7.10: 147.)¹

In this quotation, Augustine describes his realisation that the consumption of the word of God changes the body that is consuming it. This communion with the text is an idea that prevailed throughout the Middle Ages, and is essential for an understanding of medieval reading and composition practices, which are closely entwined as we shall see. The structure of the medieval book (much of which is still, of course, used in books today) is itself cognitive, in that it reflects contemporary thought about the memory. This was established by Frances Yates (1966), advanced by Mary Carruthers (1990, 1998), and embellished with relation to music by Anna Maria Busse Berger (2005). I have argued elsewhere that the manuscript page is a site of multimodal performance (Maxwell 2009, Maxwell, Simpson, and Davies 2013, Maxwell 2015), and here I shall further develop that premise with reference to the extended (creative) mind.²

The chapter is divided into two principal sections. First, I will elucidate the theory behind my approach. In this section I draw not only on distributed cognition and multimodality, but also on related material from the Middle Ages, particularly Augustine and the consumption of the text. In the second section, I put the theory into practice by offering a detailed case study analysis of a single opening from a

¹ Translation from C. Brown 2000: 561. Translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own, and all dates are given in new style. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the Leeds International Medieval Congress, 4-7 July 2016. My sincere thanks to the organisers of the session, Sara Ellis Nilsson and Steffen Hope, as well as to the panellists and audience, for the feedback and discussions. Thanks are also due to Steffen Hope, Lilli Mittner, and Narve Fulsås who read and commented on drafts of this chapter. The reviewers of the *History of Distributed Cognition* project, and the patient editing of Miranda Anderson, did much to clarify my thinking, and specific thanks are due to Miranda Anderson and Michael Wheeler for the supply of references and work pre-publication.

² 'Performance' as a term is here understood as encompassing the theatrical as well as the theoretical. In brief, readers of a medieval manuscript take part in the ongoing performance of the page (Maxwell, Simpson, and Davies 2013).

multimodal medieval manuscript: the beast enthroned in the *Livre de Fauvel*. I end with a consideration of the relevance of such an approach, and such a book, to our own time, and how the consumption of old texts continues to change those who take the time to learn.

Section 1: Theory

In the Middle Ages both writing and reading were intrinsically linked to memory (Carruthers 1990): one did not ‘know’ a text unless it was, in fact, memorised, internalised in the mind. A text was typically composed in the mind, dictated to a secretary, and then learnt by a reader (for examples see *ibid.* 5–8, 10–11). The network thus created of author, scribe, and reader – the meeting of (at least three) minds, parchment, ink, quill, and other technologies of writing and knowing – can thus be considered a cognitive ecology:

A cognitive ecology is a structured setting in which individuals or groups remember, create, imagine or engage in other flexible, intelligent action. Cognitive ecologies are often multidimensional, involving physical, technological, and social resources all at once ... The unit of analysis, then, is the whole shifting and dynamic system seen as a interacting whole, rather than a single individual. (Sutton and Keane 2016: 48)

Nevertheless, the interplay between the book, the body, and the mind is far from straightforward in the later Middle Ages. With the design of the book (and other artefacts) reflecting the medieval art of memory, it would be deceptively simple to claim that the book is an extension of the mind. The extended mind theory (A. Clark 2014) is here enacted in reverse: rather than information being stored in a medieval book in order to be retrieved at a later date, the information in the book is laid out in such a way as to enable it to be efficiently memorised (Carruthers 1990: 11). Clark’s assertions that we are ‘natural born cyborgs’ (A. Clark 2003), and that ‘brains like ours trade access against on-board storage’ (A. Clark 2014), therefore need some unpacking for the medieval manuscript book. The medieval book was less a way to extend the mind by storing information outside of the body than a physical reflection of the mind’s own memory storage so that the information presented in the book could be consumed and re-created in the mind of the reader.

One of the important notions at work here is therefore creativity, particularly its relation to the cognitive ecology of the medieval book and the role of the reader in what I have elsewhere called the performance of the page (Maxwell, Simpson, and Davies 2013). This fits in with what Michael Wheeler has termed creativity’s ‘entangled, inside-*and*-outside logic’, in which cognitive creative processes are in constant dialogue with contexts, bodies, and spaces, and are thus both internal and external (Wheeler, forthcoming). As we will see from the case study of the *Livre de Fauvel* in section 2, the reader of a medieval manuscript is heavily involved in this process; indeed, the reader is required to complete the text.³ Indeed, without reading (and memorisation), composition cannot take place. Mary Carruthers explains it thus:

³ The active role of the reader is to be found in various medieval texts in addition to my case study here, particularly those containing anagrams, a device in which the intertwined roles of reader and author are exploited sometimes humourously, sometimes frustratingly (de Looze 1991).

Medieval reading habits are based upon a model of craft mastery, the ‘courses’ of one stone or brick or other materials which a master mason may make in building a wall, with concomitant emphasis upon preparation (the ground), routines of exercise (discipline), and stages in a *way* towards making a finished artifact, a mastery that affords pleasure. (Carruthers 1998: 20–21)

Thus medieval reading and creative practices can be linked as ‘embedded creative cognition’ (Wheeler, forthcoming), for the medieval book is ‘an external technological element that may account for some of the distinctively creative aspects of an artwork’ (ibid.). Indeed, the attentive reader of a medieval book, re-creating the text in their mind, has a dynamic relationship with this external resource that then becomes ‘a partner or participant in the creative process’ (ibid.). Thus the medieval book is more than memorial scaffolding, or off-site storage. It is a cognitive artefact, one that is at once external and public (an object that has survived the centuries), and internal and private (re-created according to the individual knowledge of each reader).⁴ And this cognitive artefact is multimodal.

While it could be argued that all medieval manuscripts are multimodal, in that they all employ various semiotic modes to make meaning, some exploit this to a greater extent than others. My case study in this chapter is the interpolated *Livre de Fauvel* (Paris BnF fr. 146), a manuscript book containing music combined with text, image, and manifold other semiotic modes for meaning-making. It is therefore inherently multimodal. The use of the framework of multimodality for the analysis of medieval texts is relatively new, and here I draw on the model developed in Maxwell 2015. This means that I understand the individual modes in use to fall into three categories that are dependent on the context of the analysis: cultural practices (for example reading and writing, as discussed above), semiotic resources (for example page layout, the use of Latin or vernacular), and elements (for example rhythm, colour). In section 2.2 below I undertake a multimodal analysis of a single opening from the *Livre de Fauvel* in order to demonstrate how each mode contributes to the complex performance of that opening, and how the reader’s realisation of this contributes to their understanding of the book as a whole, and thus they become part of the cognitive ecology. One of the advantages of a multimodal analysis is that it helps readers of medieval texts today to see how our interpretations of manuscripts fit into the history of the text, as well as offering insights into our own time (Maxwell 2015). This is an idea to which I return in the conclusion.

Perhaps learning is the closest modern understanding of the cultural practice of reading in the Middle Ages. But this learning was not rote memorisation, nor was it pedagogical per se. It is instead a learning which changes the learner from within, a consummation which transfigures the one who consumes. This is a notion that was current at the start of the common era, and is found in Judeo-Christian writings including those found in the Old and New Testaments (see, for example, Ezekiel 2–3, 1 Corinthians 11, Revelations 10, and most famously, the opening to the gospel of John). Thus something enters the mind via the body (ears, eyes, mouth), where it enacts creation and change – where it can be built upon to bring the soul closer to the

⁴ This can be compared to the concept of musicking (Small 1999, discussed in relation to medieval music manuscripts in Maxwell 2009 and to the musically extended mind in Krueger 2014).

truth. The book itself embodies the moral imperative to change the reader who reads ‘well’.

It is therefore not surprising that a trope of medieval music theorists was that music was ‘scientia bene modulandi’ – the science of modulating well. This phrase is from the first book of Augustine of Hippo’s *De musica*, and was current throughout the period, even if reference to Augustine (or his source Varro) was not usually made (Østrem 2012: 222). It does not simply imply a case of good singing; rather, ‘modulandi’ refers to the orderly arrangement of sounds, and the ‘bene’ invokes ethical considerations (Østrem 2012: 226, 231). While Augustine wrote some centuries before the development of music notation, it is notable that the resurrection of his incomplete treatise on music took place after the changes widely referred to as the *ars nova*,⁵ and indeed his words were often used in debates about the ethically dubious state of music in religious services (Østrem 2012). If music was to be permitted, then a good song or singer was not enough: the music, however it was received, also had to nourish the soul.

In summary, then, it is my contention that the medieval book is a multimodal cognitive artefact that sees the reader as part of a cognitive ecology. This can be understood in medieval terms through architectural metaphors (Carruthers 1998), or through an Augustinian understanding of the changing power of reading. It is also a creative process that displays the clear ‘inside-and-outside logic’ of embedded cognition (Wheeler, forthcoming). The medieval book may reflect composition and reading practices that were based on memory, but the book is much more than a temporary storage space for information to be later taken into the mind. Rather, the book is a site of performance between producers and readers, and that performance requires that the readers play their part, and play it ‘well’, so that they are changed from the inside. Since without such reader engagement the medieval book is incomplete, we must now turn to a case study to demonstrate the cognitive ecology in action. In so doing we shall re-create for our own society a 700-year-old text through a multimodal analysis of a single manuscript opening.

Section 2: Theory in performance

2.1. The *Livre de Fauvel*

The interpolated *Roman de Fauvel* as it is preserved in fr. 146, the manuscript known as the *Livre de Fauvel*, is an example *par excellence* of a cognitive ecology working to produce a multimodal book. It is a book that is lavishly yet tastefully presented with muted greens, purples, and golds: it is designed to be sweet as honey when tasted by the reader, but its message is bitter in the belly (Revelations 10:10), a stark warning of impending disaster should political change not occur. It is a tour de force of music, image, and text, but more than this: it uses every semiotic resource available to make its message of change visible and audible to anyone seeking it.

⁵ The *ars nova*, to put it simply, allowed musical rhythm to be notated. In the early fourteenth century, therefore, music notation was a mode that was in a state of flux, and was an area in which boundaries could be stretched.

The *Livre de Fauvel* measures 46cm x 33cm when closed, and contains over 100 parchment folios: as a physical artefact it is large, heavy, imposing. Its contents at first seem disparate: it opens with a lament which is followed by the index, then follow the two books of the *Roman de Fauvel* by Gervais de Bus with their abundant additions (a lengthy musical and pictorial scheme, together with significant textual additions). Following the *roman* are a series of political *dits* in French and Latin by Geffroy de Paris, then 34 songs by Jehannot de l'Escurel, and finally a rhymed metrical chronicle of events in France between 1300 and 1316 (Bent and Wathey 1998: 6-7). The whole is flanked by blank flyleaves, and is now enclosed in a red leather binding dating from the 17th or 18th century (Dillon 2002a: 12).

To the modern reader this motley crew of genres and arts is bewildering, even assuming a working knowledge of Middle French and of fourteenth-century textual and musical writing. Yet the manuscript is undoubtedly also attractive and amusing even to the untrained modern eye, but it teaches some important lessons. The *livre* can be consumed gluttonously and self-indulgently for entertainment only, or it can be nobly and devoutly understood as a deep moral imperative on the reader to employ their Augustinian rhythms of judgment and to bring about change. What is most intriguing for our purposes here is that these lessons must be learnt through the reader's cognitive engagement, which can take place on a multitude of levels – something that Nancy Freeman Regalado has termed 'reciprocal reading' (1998, *passim*). And, as Emma Dillon has pointed out, the term 'reader' here includes the producers of the manuscript, who, perhaps more than anyone, consumed the book at the same time as they produced it (Dillon 2002a: 7–8). The *livre* is thus a cognitive ecology in full swing.

Who were the compilers of this extraordinary book? Much scholarly thought has gone into this very question (for overviews see Roesner, Avril, and Regalado 1990, Bent and Wathey 1998, E. Brown 1998, Dillon 2002a) so I will merely summarise here. The recipient was almost certainly Philip V, on the occasion of his somewhat unlikely and not entirely secure succession to the French throne in 1316 (coronation January 1317). The compilers were equally likely to be clerks and notaries of the royal household of France, who included authors, composers, and artists. They had witnessed the damaging rise and fall of Philip IV's all-powerful favourite adviser Enguerran de Marigny (hanged in 1315), the short reign of Louis X which was plagued with an adultery scandal and hasty re-marriage, the birth and death of Louis's posthumous son (the infant king Jean I (1316)), and the political manoeuvres of Philip (V) to secure first the regency and then the crown itself. The manuscript was therefore produced at a time of political upheaval, when a strong and wise leader was badly needed. Yet royal clerks, no matter how skilled, could not go about making a lavish manuscript such as fr. 146 on their own: someone had to pay for it, and that someone had to be sure enough of their own position to not incur certain retaliation for the manuscript's bitter message. I have demonstrated elsewhere (Maxwell 2004) that the elusive authorial naming in fr. 146 conceals the name of Charles de Valois, brother of Philip IV and uncle to Philip V. Valois was a major actor in the overthrow of Marigny (a likely model for the character Fauvel), and Philip (V) owed his successful negotiations for the regency and succession in large part to the support of Valois. While the manuscript was undoubtedly produced by a collective, if anyone had the financial wherewithal and political clout to back such a project, it was Charles de Valois.

10v

Regitur de la vi. masca
 Du sue diez amas. il fides
 Dar me. Et oit r. marton etre
 Dour il font. l'usur conquire

De cress iouans ioumes iolis o gams
 amoc est. mhis car au ioune est. sed d
 he et au ioume sa nouerme r au idd
 est. s'edocant. r au genil est. la nature
 a duare par. auct d'nyis bonis qui
 pult. ne hie. amous s'ent. idore
 ne sen dno. Defaire. sang de. dies con
 diaons car. le creus ioune. l'icmen r
 il. rames. s'aprament. fessie. l'evr
 tes. odor. r. il. colla. m'g'ouement. et. il
 gertis. amoc. l'omene. l'au. r. le. ioune
 m'ntem. commot. d'ore. son. r'atme
 reme. cures. en. nature. telame. dam
 ce. r'at. d'icous. d'd. h'. car. die. p'ac
 t'ate. auant. genil. l'oh. j'emes

Se l'autre ab. garde. p'oufere
 amoc. f'auel. ne. f'entem. s'ent
 ar. l'ouate. et. uere
 amoc. l'ent. f'auel. q're

Jouans. audien. d'ore. il. ab. d'efinuo
 n'atoc. ne. d'or. d'amous. iou
Recus. confesse. d
 min. L'aducis. iustoc. l'omme. in
 dam. p'ellus. f'auoc. l'agm. uon
 conquire. m. au. d'icme. ero. roo
 qui. h'io. par. nomme. p'oc. s'is. ex
 aus. s'ingme. h'oc. m. ano. conquire
 miny. s'ig. moce. aus. l'equam
 d' m. uoch. f'auoc. on. l'icm. iou. r
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Ame
Pour. s'ehel. q're. qui. regie. oco
 d' l'. m'ere. r. m'ere. conquire
 amoc. m'atam

Seruat. regem. m'icradia. r. uino
 mon. clem. i'uday. rex. d'ed. s'io. ma
 l'um. tollit. al. p'oc. p'io. Rex. f'ap'oc. d'
 f'ur. imp'oc. n'p'ic. erag. m'f'oc.
 Imp'ic. r'og. s'itollit. u'f'ra. d'io
 nus. r'odis. f'ad'oi. am. d'om'at. u'f'ia
 a. f'isim. d'imitat. m'ed'ica. rex. q'u. d'io
 uidit. om. f'uo. r'us. ex'ud. d'emas
 r'og. s'ad'io. f'ic'us. aus. i'ud. l'io
 na. tu. aus. rex. nobis. Et. ne. er
 Rex. f'ad'it. est. et. aus. m'ortu. iuste
 quiar. r. f'ante. i'ou
Enoc. r. rex. d' amoc. m'atam



11r

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 cur. u'at. h'umane
 D. e. f'auel. ag'oc. h'io. n'oc
 E. r. bien. reger. en. mon'oc
 C. ar. l'ost. d'cur. mal. figure
 E. r. si. com. nou. d'oc. l'ef'ap'oc
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 S. est. f'auel. a. mon'oc. p'oc

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 S. est. f'auel. a. mon'oc. p'oc



Figure 1: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 146, fol. 10v-11r

2.2 A multimodal analysis of the opening 10v–11r: A reflection of kings and beasts

I will now turn my attention to a single opening in the *Roman de Fauvel* in order to demonstrate how a multimodal analysis can enhance our understanding of the cognitive performance of the page. The model I use for my multimodal analysis is that presented in Maxwell 2015, where the generic term ‘mode’ is refined into cultural practices, semiotic resources, and elements. I have already outlined much of what we can consider to be the cultural practices – here, reading and writing practices together with the socio-political context – surrounding the *Livre de Fauvel*. However, it is also significant that the ‘text’ of the *roman* by Gervais de Bus existed from 1310. On fol. 23v of fr. 146 Fortuna is interrupted mid-diatribes for an authorial intervention that states clearly that the tale that is presented builds on de Bus’s through its ‘additions’, which are first musical, and then an expanded text. This blunt statement occurs at the precise mid-point of the tale (Dillon 2002b: 229-230). The opening I will consider here, fol. 10v-11r (figure 1), shows the end of another, more extended authorial intervention, together with the resumption of de Bus’s tale. Rather than at the physical midpoint, it falls between books I and II of de Bus’s *Roman de Fauvel*. Fr. 146 marks this break by a rondeau and two motets (one introduced by a rubric), a series of author portraits, and a textual epilogue to the first book. Fol. 10v shows the end of the epilogue, the rubric, and the two motets (the second continues onto 11r, but the two voices presented on fol. 10v could stand alone, as could the two on 11r: see Dillon 1998: 220). Fol. 11r also contains the opening of the second book, together with its first additions: the introductory rubric, the author image, the conductus ‘O labilis fortis’, and the image of Fauvel enthroned.

On the opening 10v-11r, the physicality of the ‘livre’ is apparent in the authorial image of the tonsured clerk holding his book. He is reading, mouth closed, legs crossed, eyes on the book. The division of this miniature into the space of the clerk, and that of the group of nobles reaching impotently towards him across that divide, separates his world from theirs. The tonsured clerk’s garments are those of his profession which mark him as lower in social status than the glove-holding nobles, but he is presented as larger, as tall seated as they are standing. A symbol of the collective behind the *livre*, he is presented as an educated reader, separate from the bookless ‘others’. The knowledge, the book, belongs to him and, by inference, to all readers, if they engage in the contemplative reading he models.

Indeed, we can think of this clerk as our model for the embedded creativity that I propose is at work here. At once reader and compiler, he is pictured in active contemplation of the book. This book, the information it contains, is both inside and outside of his mind-body sphere – he is cradling it in his crossed limbs, turning the pages, and consuming it with his eyes. The mind-body-book relationship is dynamic and reciprocal. As reader, the information is helped to enter his mind, his memory, through both the structure of the individual folios and the divisions of the book as a whole. As a compiler of this (and other) texts, he builds on the knowledge thus accrued to create more, and so the cycle continues as long as the book is read and its information interpreted and re-created by attentive readers. This model does not present a fast boundary between the mind, the body, and the book; rather, it shows how each of these are intertwined with the others in a cognitive ecology, where each reader recreates the text anew. In the following analysis, I play my part through a multimodal analysis of the opening shown in figure 1, in order to show how the

cognitive ecology of the book works in tandem with the embedded cognition grounded in the reader's re-creation of the text.

I propose that the two folios that make up the opening 10v-11r can be read as mirror images of each other. Such a device is a literal interpretation of the medieval tradition of the mirror of princes, in which advice was given to newly crowned kings. Given the context of *Fauvel* in the wake of the crisis of succession of the Capetian royal line, the *livre* can indeed be considered as part of this tradition. Its mirror, though, employs biting satire: the beast Fauvel is not an image one wants to see reflected. In addition, as the emerging *ars nova* musical forms delighted in manipulating space and time (for example the frontispieces to the Chantilly codex where a song is in a shape of a heart and another in a circle, or in the word-layout-music networks of Machaut's 'Ma fin est mon commencement'), asking readers to join in a complex game of interpretation is far from unique to *Fauvel*.

In multimodal terms, the semiotic resource of page layout creates the meaning of the mirror (of princes). Also important are the elements, such as the placing of individual items or the divisions in the music. Let us return to our reading clerk on folio 11r. In his mirror image are reflected the last lines of the triplum to the motet 'Servant Regnum / O Philippe / Rex Beatum'. These lines are 'rex hodie est et cras moritur, iuste vivat et sancte igitur': Today he is king and tomorrow he dies. Let him therefore live justly and holily.⁶ In fr. 146, these lines are delivered without music, and they reflect the tight-lipped clerk. Due to the cultural practice of memory training, the educated medieval reader (such as our clerk) would be able to supply from memory the following from Ecclesiastes 10⁷:

Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are concerned by their own lips. At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness – and fools multiply words. No-one knows what is coming – who can tell what will happen after them? The toil of fools wearies them, they do not know the way to the town. Woe to the land whose king is a child, and whose princes feast in the morning. Blessed is the land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at a proper time – for strength and not for drunkenness. (Ecclesiastes 10:12–17)

With this link, these lines become not just a warning to the new king from the safe ground of Ecclesiastes, but a lament that his nephew died so young: 'the music, it seems, falls silent, not daring to sound the most controversial message of the piece' (Dillon 1998: 223). For, as Dillon shows (*ibid.*: 221-224), the triplum and motetus voices juxtapose through both their music and their texts the 'rex sapiens' (the infant Jean) and the 'rex insapiens' (Philip V). Reading with the mirror image, we can take this even further. The whole of the motetus and most of the triplum voices reflect each other, but at the point where the second notation of the tenor falls on 11r is the reflection of the words 'bona terra cuius rex nobilis' (good the land whose king is noble). While only the music to the tenor is presented on fol. 11r (the tenor text is on 10v with the first presentation of the music, as I shall shortly discuss), these words provide a fitting mirror to it at this point. The text of the triplum of fol. 10v continues

⁶ For this motet I use the edition and translation provided in Dillon 1998.

⁷ The reference is given in Dillon 1998: 222, citing the 1935 edition of the text by Emilie Dahnk.

with ‘sed ve terre si sit puerlis’ (woe to the land if he [its king] be childish); this is the reflection of the end of the tenor and at the start of the rubric. The following text ‘melior est pauper et sapiens atque puer quan rex insipiens’ (better a poor and wise boy than a foolish king) is entirely reflected in the rubric on 11r. This rubric marks the divide between the two books and gives an overview of what is to come with Fauvel – and, in my reading, it reflects what will befall the kingdom should the new king not be wise enough to consume the text with the right intentions and at the proper time.

The tenor of this motet, ‘Rex regum, dominus dominacium’ (King of kings, lord of lords), as our clerk would know, is a quotation from the chant for the second Sunday of advent and from Revelations 19:16 (A. V. Clark 1996: 128-129). It refers to the second coming of the Messiah, which is in keeping with the apocalyptic theme running throughout *Fauvel*. In the mirror scheme I propose here, its presentation on fol. 10v reflects the opening of book II of the *roman*, the second coming of Fauvel. This second coming is then presented in an image which was politically heretical: Fauvel on the throne of France.⁸

This image, which is the centre of fol. 11r, can be read both as part of the opening and as part of its folio. In the mirrored layout, it reflects the motetus (‘Rex beatus’) of the other motet on this opening, ‘Se cuers / Rex beatus confessor / Ave’. This voice first sings the praises of St Louis, the canonised Louis IX of France, and then appeals to a reader of the same name, presumably Louis X, Philip V’s deceased brother (E. Brown 1998: 58-59). Reading even more closely, in the mirror image the depiction of the enthroned Fauvel falls under the motetus words ‘Rex beatus confessor domini Ludovicus’ (Saintly king, confessor of the Lord, Louis).⁹ In the mirror, the beast Fauvel’s head is reflected by the words ‘ergo nos’. Here, the ‘ergo’ marks the transition in the motetus from praising St Louis to his descendant of the same name. Normally, the ‘nos’ is presumed to be an error for ‘ergo vos qui sub pari nomine’: therefore you who share his name. In the context of the reflection of Fauvel on the throne, letting ‘nos’ stand as ‘we’ brings Fauvel himself even further into the French royal line, into the communion of St Louis, the holy centre of the royal house of France.¹⁰ This is reflected under the image of Fauvel on fol. 11r, where we read in the text:

Un jour estoit en son palays
Fauvel, qui ne pert pas galoys,
Tout ait il eu païs de Gales
Chasteaux, danjons, manoirs et sales,
Entour ly avoit grant plenté
De gens, tous de son parenté,
Car il n’avoit de son mesnage
Nul qui ne fust de son lignage. (Långfors 1245-1252)

⁸ For an image of the French royal seal that was in use at this time, and a discussion of how the image on fol. 11r is a blatant copy, see Kauffmann 1998 (290 for the seal).

⁹ My translations and transcriptions for this motet are based on E. Brown 1998, Rose-Steel 2011, and Ricketts 1991.

¹⁰ The ‘vobis’ that occurs later in the motetus is not written as ‘nobis’, however. Similarly, although the written ‘nox et vita’ for ‘vox et vita’ does make some sense, it is probably explaining away errors a step too far to pretend that ‘night’ is a better reading than ‘voice’ in this case. That the ‘nos’ is likely a scribal error does not mean that it cannot be interpreted, however: it was, after all, left uncorrected.

[One day Fauvel, who had not lost the Gauls, was in his palace. He owned everything in the Gallic country, castles, donjons, manors, rooms. He was surrounded by people, all related to him, for he had no-one in his household who was not of his line.]

These lines, which in the reflection take up the space of the rest of the motetus ‘Rex beatus’, could not be more damningly placed: the relation of St Louis’s line to that of Fauvel is clear. The reading continues into the tenor line, ‘Ave’. Instead of praising (St) Louis, its mirror image details Fauvel’s decor: ‘semblant fin, mez ne le fut mie’ (seemingly fine, but was not at all). The description of the fake glory of Fauvel’s court is thus placed such that it is the mirror of tenor (falsely?) praising St Louis.¹¹ As if this were not enough, the text introducing the motet for Philip V is also placed here: ‘Pour Phelippes qui regne ores / si metreiz ce motet onquores’. These lines, that emphasise Philip ‘who now reigns’, sit uncomfortably in the belly when consumed with the ‘Ave’ for St Louis reflected in the description of Fauvel’s false court.

The layout of the triplum in ‘Se cuers’ is not as straightforward a reflection as is the motetus ‘Rex beatus’. As one of only two bilingual motets in the entire manuscript, the imposition of French, the language of Fauvel, onto the very opening of this royal motet, is a clear use of the semiotic resource of the vernacular.¹² ‘Se cuers’ speaks of the delights and desires of love. In the context of the depiction on this opening of kings wise and false and foolish, we are here firmly in the domain of Louis X, whose hasty second marriage, following his first wife’s adultery and convenient death, was well known (and is satirised at much greater length later in the manuscript). The focus on Fauvel’s upcoming trials of love – he laments and claims to be close to death after Fortuna’s refusal but bounces back when offered Vain Glory in her place – in the authorial introductory text to book II of the tale (folio 11r) also serves to highlight this comparison.

Reflecting ‘Se cuers’ in the mirror image on folio 11r is the conductus ‘O labilis’. In contrast to the fast-moving, courtly French text and music of ‘Se cuers’, ‘O labilis’ is a solemn Latin poem on mortality and the dangers of luxury and excess. The levity of ‘Se cuers’ is seen even in the elements: the breve divides into two, rather than the more solemn (and religious) three of ‘O labilis’. In addition, the speed of ‘Se cuers’ contrasts with the reverential pace of the conductus, a genre designed to be sung during the liturgy as the gospel was carried to the lectern. A multimodal reading of other elements in play allows us to see the alliteration in these two pieces. ‘Se cuers’ plays on ‘ioans, ionnes, iollis’ and ‘gentil’ (joyful, young, pretty/handsome, courtly/noble/gentle) at repeated points. ‘O labilis’ uses the same emphatic device but with an entirely different focus: ‘labilis’, ‘labitur’, ‘labori’, ‘laqueos’, ‘laberis’, ‘illicite’, also ‘lux’, ‘luxu’, ‘luxibus’ (transient, toil, snare, fall, illicit, light, luxury, excess). ‘O labilis’ contains contrasting imagery that is relentless and clear: ‘Flens oritur, vivendo moritur / In prosperis luxu dissolvitur’ (He arises weeping, he dies by living / amid prosperity is destroyed by luxury) in the first stanza; ‘Ha, moriens vita, luxu sopita / Nos inficis, fellitis condita’ (Ah, dying life, drugged by luxury / laced

¹¹ It has been claimed that the tenor ‘Ave’ comes from the office for St Louis, but no source has been found. See A. V. Clark 1996: 122-128.

¹² For a discussion of the *Fauvel* motets in or including French see Rose-Steel 2011: 101-104, and Bent 1998.

with gall, you poison us) is the refrain which is heard three times.¹³ Not only does this stand in contrast to ‘Se cuers’, ‘O labilis’ is also a firm commentary on Fauvel's false court as described by the *roman* text in the adjacent column.

The larger-scale layouts of the two folios 10v and 11r are planned so that ‘Rex beatus’ lies in the middle of 10v, whereas on 11r it is the beast Fauvel who literally takes centre stage. Both are surrounded by music and courtiers. St Louis is flanked by his kingly descendants - the youthful and loving Louis X and the wise/unwise infant Jean I and Philippe V. Fauvel, who is ‘flottez et lavez’ (petted and washed), is surrounded by Philippe, our clerkly author/reader and those who are reaching for his book, the call to learn about Fauvel (discussed below), the description of his court, and ‘O labilis’. While the primary contrast in this distorted mirror of princes is of course that between St Louis and Fauvel, their entourages cannot be overlooked. These are busy folios with a clamour of different voices and a myriad of visual symbols fighting for the reader’s attention, but, as this analysis shows, the mosaic of meaning is such that no reading should fail to pick up the didactical tone. That two of the three musical items on the opening are motets, with plural voices singing together, is a further symbol of the cacophony of meanings: humans are adept at tuning in to one voice in the midst of others (the so-called cocktail-party effect), and, as Anna Zayaruznaya has shown, this holds true for the polytextual motet (2010: 93-104). Indeed, the motets on this folio, together with the solemn warnings of ‘O labilis’, make up a cognitive soundscape in which voices can be imagined sounding in isolation or together.

There are two parts of this opening that this analysis has not yet covered, and they correspond to one another. The text that closes book I of the *roman* is found at the top of the two first columns on fol. 10v in what seems to have been a deliberate decision to make the *roman* text run over the top of both columns. This means that it serves to introduce the whole of this opening, relegating the ‘Pour Phelippes’ introduction to the bottom of the page where it can do more reflective harm, as we have seen. More significantly, this means that this folio of motets starts with the line ‘Recitant de lui un motet’ (reciting to him a motet). Who is the ‘lui’? The last name mentioned was St Louis, in the immediately preceding lines at the bottom of fol. 10r, yet these lines in fact focus on Philip IV. So, is ‘lui’ Louis or Philip? Margaret Bent raises the possibility that a third royal motet was planned to go here, for Philip IV (Bent 1998: 49). In fact, I think that the ambiguity is deliberate, in keeping with the wealth of interpretations on this opening, and, of course, the wordplay lui/Louis. Philip IV and V, Louis IX and X: Fauvel sits opposite them all, ‘mocking them in royal majesty from their throne’ (ibid.).

Book II of the *roman* starts with the decorated initial under the author image on 11r, and its introduction is formed of these lines plus the text above Fauvel on the French throne in column b. The opening to the second book stresses the importance of the Fauvel story being known throughout history:

Mès pour ce que nesessité
Seroit a toute humanité
De Fauvel congnoistre l’ystoire
Et bien retenir en memoire

¹³ The translations here are from Rosenberg and Tischler 1991, 48

Car il est de tout mal figure
Et, si com nous dit l'escripture,
Nul ne puet bien eschiver vice
S'il ne congnoist ainçois malice (Långfors 1229–1236)

[For this reason it is necessary that all humanity knows the story of Fauvel, and must keep it well in mind, for he is made up of all evil and, as scripture says, no-one can avoid vice unless they can recognise malice.]

This stress on the cognitive act of remembering well ('congnoistre l'ystoire / et bien retenir en memoire') is significant. Immediately before the image of the beast enthroned, we are reminded of the didactic purpose of the tale itself – a purpose that the multimodal additions serve and highlight. For the cognitive ecology of the medieval book includes the reader, who must properly digest and act upon the message of the whole *livre*. Without the reader using the book and their own embedded cognitive creativity to take the next step, the manuscript is nothing but decoration and the beast Fauvel will remain on the throne.

Conclusion: E(r)go nos

Through a multimodal analysis of this opening I have teased out a host of meanings, and certainly not all of these can be considered as hidden secrets planted by the manuscript's compilers, waiting to be found by the attentive reader. Rather, what I have shown is the reader's embedded creativity in action through the cognitive ecology of the medieval book. It is on this that I, as a reader, have built my re-creative reading based on the internal factor of my prior knowledge (memory), together with the external factor of my reading of the book. Like the clerk on folio 11r, this has necessitated both internal, quiet contemplation, and the use of external tools. I have not used the *livre* as a temporary storage repository for excess information; rather, it has been the foundation for my own creative enterprise.¹⁴

However, I wish to conclude by drawing some links between modern reading practices and the medieval artefacts we seek to understand. I shall therefore end with some thoughts on the further uses of this combined methodology. The detailed analysis and methodology I have presented here has covered, at some length, virtually every aspect of a single opening of a manuscript. I could not have done this without technology. Now that we can view entire corpora online, and share images freely, what is the purpose such a reading? Does it really matter what a modern-day reader gleans from this manuscript?

It does not take a long safari into the world of current humanities scholarship to realise that such a reading is not only absolutely necessary, but increasing in importance, particularly when it comes to the relationships between the past and contemporary issues (for just a handful of recent examples see Bychowski 2014, Ma 2012, Kim 2016, Watt 2016, Whitaker 2015). With the advent of the digital

¹⁴ This enterprise has, of course, made extensive use of another tool: the computer. I consider more fully the status of the digital manuscript in Maxwell (forthcoming), but I will note here in passing that, were anyone to produce an author portrait of me writing this article in the style of that of our clerk on folio 11r, it would show me cradling not a book but a laptop.

humanities we are finding that automation can achieve many things, but machines on their own cannot read reciprocally (cf. the discussion of the role of computers in creativity in Wheeler (forthcoming)). What they can do, however, is offer up similar examples that individual scholars might otherwise have overlooked. This, then, is the cognitive ecology of the manuscript book transforming again. As I write this article, fr. 146, opening 10v-11r, is in front of me at all times – the digital reproduction on Gallica is open constantly in a browser window, behind the document I am writing upon. By ‘writing’, here, I of course mean typing on a computer keyboard, an act that is now more natural to me than picking up a pen. Likewise, viewing a manuscript via a digital repository is for me a natural, automated activity. Flying to Paris and jumping through the hoops to see the *livre* in the flesh is not. We cannot know for certain whether Philip V read fr. 146, but by its very existence we do know that it was made and preserved – and such a manuscript was not made, or preserved, for no reason. While it can therefore take its place in the wider scheme of manuscript production, *ars nova* notation, textual repositories, art history, and all of the other historical narratives to which it belongs, the *Livre de Fauvel* is also an object in and of itself which resonates meaning across the centuries. This is true for all historical artefacts. A methodology and reading such as those employed here serve to emphasise the concerns of the object’s makers and users over time. Indeed, in some senses I have removed the object from its time, for we simply cannot fully understand the very real concerns of the educated and noble servants of the French crown in 1316. We can, however, consume their texts and learn from what they have to say. Exactly 700 years on, in 2016, there is a terrifyingly real prospect of Fauvel once again in power: a tan-coloured deceiver who is lauded and courted by those who serve only their own self-interests and greed has his eyes on one of the most important leadership positions in the world. The image in the *roman* of Fauvel’s offspring washing in the fountain of youth is all too true, of this or any time in history. We humans are swayed by strong words and crave strong leaders in times of perceived trouble and change (Greenaway 2015). Fauvel’s creators knew this as well as did Freud. E(r)go nos. We would all do well to consume the message of the *Livre de Fauvel*, and let it change us, so that we can better work to change our world.

Link to primary source

Paris, BnF fr. 146 (*Le livre de Fauvel*):
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8454675g>

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