The Path to Heaven in

*Le Miracle de Théophile* and the Théophile Façade at Notre-Dame

Geoffrey Skousen

*Le Miracle de Théophile* is a proto-Faustian play, written by Rutebeuf around 1260, which outlines the life of Théophile. Théophile is a priest who angrily leaves the church as a result of tensions with another priest. He immediately seeks Salatin, a servant of the devil, who arranges a meeting so that Théophile can promise his soul to the devil. After seven years of service, Théophile decides, for reasons unknown to the viewer, to return to the church, so he enters a church to plead his case with Mary. She decides to help him, defeats the devil, and destroys Théophile’s contract. Approximately five years after the play’s creation, a façade designed by Pierre de Montreuil depicting *Le Miracle de Théophile* was created over the north transept portal of the cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris, an entrance dedicated to the virgin Mary. Although the façade is a representation of the play, there are several striking differences between the text and the façade. The movement between the body of text and work as a sculpture is particularly interesting, because they are not the reflection of a time gap or even a geographical distance. Rather, the variations between the play and façade are related to a larger dispute within the medieval church surrounding the act of contrition and penance, where the façade supports priest involvement in the act of penance, while the play supports the idea of a more direct relationship with God.

According to church theology before the 13th century, in order to be forgiven for a sin, an individual was required to perform penance, a multi-step process that included “heartfelt regret, confession [to God] and a reparation to the person wronged or to God” (Lynch 285). An individual, to determine the correct reparation in the early era of the church, might have consulted a priest, but the priest was not necessary during the moment of contrition, when an individual is forgiven by God. In 1215, the medieval church\(^1\) changed the priest’s role in the performance of penance in a decree from the Fourth Lateran Council. The decree states, “all the faithful [members of the church] should confess to their own priest...[which] strengthen[s] existing obligations on the laity and [gives] the authorities greater disciplinary sanctions against those who [do] not comply” (Thomson 209). In other words, not only was it necessary for the priest to be present during confession and contrition, but this power was taken by the clergy with some force, otherwise disciplinary sanctions would not have been necessary. Ultimately, this debate is important within the theology, because confession, contrition, and penance are all the vehicles for the obtainment of heaven. If the church theology states that a priest must be present during contrition, then they are, in essence, controlling how an individual reaches heaven, which

---

\(^1\) The term ‘medieval church’ is used within this paper to denote the Catholic Church in the middle ages. Because of the theological shifts and adaptations, it would not do the modern Catholic Church justice to simply use the term ‘Catholic church’ when referring to the church, as it existed in the Middle Ages.
is displayed in two paths visually in the figure to the right. Returning to the representations of Théophile, the façade placed on Notre-Dame cathedral, as one might expect, supports the decree of 1215. On the other hand, although Le Miracle de Théophile does not explicitly state it, there is ample textual evidence to support the circumventing of the priest during the confession act in the penance performance.

The Historical and Literary Figure of Théophile

The historical person of Théophile was a church official who died around 537 in Asia Minor (Sangster 192). Théophile was an administrator in the church who was offered the position of bishop when the predecessor died. When Théophile refused the position out of humility, the Bishop who was appointed in his place relieved Théophile of his church position, which left him without financial support. According to the Théophile legend, once he had been relieved of his position, he sought a sorcerer to help him contact the devil, made a pact, and served the devil for many years before his pleading to Mary broke the contract (Catholic Online).

During the high Middle Ages, Théophile became a popular figure. Théophile was a “pre-Faustian” (Lazar 31) literary figure who had great popularity in the Middle Ages, especially, as Michael Davis explains (103), between 1200 and 1400. During this period of popularity, Rutebeuf wrote the miracle play, Le Miracle de Théophile, approximately 1261 (Rutebeuf 167).

The Text

Michael T. Davis and Meyer Schapiro have both done brilliant readings on Le Miracle de Théophile and have found that Théophile did not use church prescribed methods of obtaining grace. In other words, by the end of the play Théophile has obtained grace from Mary, but he did not follow the strict linear method of penance as it was outlined in the contemporary church. While both of their arguments are pertinent to the subject of Théophile’s act of penance, this essay will focus on the social status of Théophile during the act of penance.

When Théophile enters the church, he is given the rare opportunity, as a mortal, of speaking directly with a deity, a theme rare in both classical and medieval literature. As stated earlier, during the period when Rutebeuf wrote this work, the medieval church began to have theological debates with the concept of confession and contrition. Before this period, the act of contrition, or the moment of forgiveness by God during the penance process, was experienced within the individual. However, beginning in the 13th century, the medieval church began to modify the theology so that a priest needed to be present during the moment of contrition. In other words, the only members of society that had the power to speak directly with a deity are the clergy. If Théophile is still a priest, then the medieval church’s conditions of confession and contrition would be met, because a priest would be present during Théophile’s confession to Mary, even if the priest is, in fact, himself. As a result, it is necessary to define the theological status of Théophile during the scenes when he enters the church and speaks with Mary to determine whether or not he is a priest. There are, of course, only two possibilities in terms of status as priest: either he is or is not. In the case that he is a priest, then the story is following the contemporary views of contrition, because a priest is present (even if the priest is himself) as a mediator between the mortal and a deity during the act of penance and contrition. However, if
he is not of priest status, then he is, in essence, breaking the rules of contemporary theology by directly speaking with Mary, rather than using a priest as a mediator.

What is known about the character of Théophile from the text of *Le Miracle de Théophile* is that he was forcibly removed from a position in the church, which destroyed his loyalty to his master, God. In other words, losing a church position caused Théophile to give up loyalty to a master. Considering Théophile is seeking a new master when he enters the church, and considering what is known about the character’s previous loyalty and behavior, it is probable that he has lost the position that was granted to him seven years previously by the devil. This is verified in the text, when Mary refers to Théophile as “the clerk” (line 576). The term “clerk” is used once previously in the text, in a conversation between Pinceguerre and Théophile and it reveals the function of this term “clerk”:

Théophile. Who are you?
Pinceguerre. I am a clerk.
Théophile. And I am a priest. (295-297)

This difference between clerk and priest is clearly contrasted in this dialogue. Pinceguerre is a clerk within the church and his church status is below the position of priest, as evident by the emphasis by Théophile that he is a priest. Théophile is emphasizing his position as a priest and making the social difference clear, not only to his intended listener, Pinceguerre, but to the audience of the play as well. Therefore, when Mary uses this term “clerk”, she is referring to the status difference already established earlier in the play. As a result, Théophile does not have the status of a priest during the plea with Mary.

After his lamentation to Mary, she appears and asks him the question, “Who are you?” (540). The question “Who are you” is asked once previously in the play, in the quotation provided above (295-297). What results from the original question between Théophile and Pinceguerre is a discussion about theological status. When Mary asks, “Who are you?” she is following a similar line of questioning. In other words, Mary is not asking, “Who are you?” as an expression of not recognizing Théophile; rather, she is asking how it is possible that a clerk could be directly addressing her in a confession scenario. This question is a reflection of contemporary views about the clergy and their status with Christian deities. Because Théophile is not of clerical status, then, following contemporary views, he should not be able to have a direct conversation with any deities; yet, he is.

In the scene that leads to Théophile’s confession, he has a lengthy monologue about his sins and his fear of hell. It might be possible to read this monologue, not as a confession, but simply as a lamentation. If it was only a lamentation and not a confession, then Théophile would not be officially confessing any sins, and therefore, would not be breaking any theological decrees. However, there are several striking examples that indicate that this monologue is a confession and not a lamentation. First, he begins his speech with a section that sounds strikingly similar to the Hail Mary prayer used in priestly confession.² He uses language in this

² The original prayer states: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.” As a side note, the Hail Mary prayer was modified and added in the mid-13th Century.
section of the speech such as “heavenly virgin…full of grace indeed…Delivering from sin…Call me to your Son” (432-443). In the speech itself, Théophile declares himself as guilty (489) and asks “Heal me, make me strong” (521). The first declaration indicates a “heartfelt regret” and the second is the beginning of a “reparation…to God” (Lynch 285). Therefore, the speech is a confession. However, the foremost difference between his confession with Mary and the confession as practiced in the 13th century is the presence of a priest. This distinction implies that Théophile is circumventing the priest in the moment of confession and is directly negotiating his penance with a deity.

As a result of Théophile circumventing the church, the play has some subversive qualities. Although the rhetoric does not explicitly rebel against or contradict the theological dictates of the contemporary church, when all of the pieces are placed together, the text is revolutionary to a degree. Considering these subversive elements, it is interesting that the designers of Notre Dame decided to sculpt not just the Théophile legend, but specifically the play *Le Miracle de Théophile* on the north transept portal. This theme and its implications will be revisited after a more thorough discussion of the façade itself.

**The History and Function of the Façade and Portal**

The north transept portal of the cathedral of Notre-Dame is an entrance dedicated to the Virgin Mary and is often referred to as the Virgin’s or Mary’s Entrance. The façade was designed by Pierre de Montreuil between 1265 and 1270. Michael T. Davis, in his exceptional reading of the Theophilus story in the Choir Reliefs at Notre-Dame, gives a brief history of the portal: unlike the Choir Reliefs, which are the main subject of Davis’ article and were only seen by clergy members during the middle ages, the north transept portal was publicly used in the Middle Ages. It functioned as “a ceremonial entrance and as an occasional set for liturgical dramas” (Davis 111). As a ceremonial entrance, the use of the portal was probably not daily, but was nonetheless frequent. Consequently, the façade was seen recurrently by the public and it was most likely a piece of contemplation as the viewer entered the church. Considering the popularity of the Théophile theme during the period of the façade’s creation, it is at least a possibility that the viewer was familiar with *Le Miracle de Théophile* and could identify the various aspects of the play as they are represented in the façade. As a result of all of these factors, the façade can be seen as a counter-image\(^3\) to the text.

\(^3\) Similar to counter-text, counter-image is being used here to denote a form of variation between the text and image. In addition, the variation may include a form of vivid contrast.
The Images of the Façade

In this façade, *Le Miracle de Théophile* is represented in five scenes. Below this façade is another story, this one outlining the story of Mary as she flees with Joseph and the infant Jesus from the decree of King Herod, seen in the third panel, which stated that all children under the age of two should be killed. At first glance, this story of Mary appears to be unrelated to the story of Théophile. However, this depiction of Mary is vital to understanding the façade as a whole and especially to complete the story of Théophile. There are several themes that run throughout the façade that have their origins and basis for interpretation within the Mary story. In addition, when the façade is read as one continuous story, themes of medieval church authority in individuals’ lives begin to manifest themselves.

When first approaching the façade, it is unclear whether the panels representing the life of Mary were based on the tradition or legend of Mary’s life, or whether the Mary panels were based strictly within the text of a single gospel. Upon further research, it became clear that the Mary panels were based on the text in St. Matthew, chapter two. The other texts of the gospels contain elements from the façade, but it is only Matthew’s account that contains all of the
elements of the façade. Moreover, the events occur in the same chronological order in the façade story and in Matthew, chapter two: the birth of Jesus, the arrival of the magi (or wise men), the introduction of King Herod, the slaying of children, and the fleeing to Egypt. Interestingly, the only element that is represented in the Mary panels that is not present in St. Matthew, chapter two is found within the second panel.

In the second panel, two of the traditional three magi stand behind Mary holding gifts. To the viewer’s right, Mary and Joseph both hold Jesus over what appears to be a baptismal basin. In St. Matthew, it states that Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan after the events represented in the façade of Mary fleeing to Egypt (Matt. 3:15-16). Therefore there is a discrepancy between the text of St. Matthew and the representation in the façade. There is a passage in St. Luke that states, “they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord” (2.22), which might be, at first glance, represented here in the second panel. However there are two problems with this assessment. First, the text states two verses later that this ceremony involved the sacrifice of two turtledoves, which are not present in the panel. Second, the St. Luke account does not include the fleeing of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus into Egypt, nor does it include the magi. Considering that the façade’s central theme is Mary’s flight into Egypt, and also considering that the second panel specifically represents the magi, while St. Luke does not contain either of these elements, it is doubtful that this panel is the presentation “to the Lord” discussed in St. Luke.

Another element, which should be considered to verify if the second panel contains a baptismal basin, is contemporary representations of baptismal fonts and basins. At St. Bartholomew’s Church in Liege, Belgium, there is a bronze relief representing the baptism of Jesus, in this case he is represented as an adult. This relief was created in the late 12th century, which dates it about sixty years before the façade at Notre-Dame. In addition, the geographical location is similar enough that a comparison between artistic representations should be possible. Overall, the shape of the font in this bronze relief is similar to the basin represented in the façade at Notre-Dame. They appear to be about the same height, coming to the waist of the other characters represented, and the same bands that surround the barrel shape of the bronze relief of St. Bartholomew’s church can be seen in the façade basin. Considering the textual evidence presented above and the

4 Of the other gospels that contain parts of the façade, but not the complete story, St. Mark begins with the baptism of Jesus and, beyond this element, contains no elements represented within the façade. St. Luke contains the birth of Jesus and mentions the existence of King Herod, but does not tell the full story of the children being killed. St. John begins when Jesus is an adult and there is no mention of the events represented in the façade.

5 In addition, in St. Luke, it states that he is baptized and the next verse states, “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age” (3.23), which is a strong indication that Jesus was an adult when baptized. Moreover, in Matthew’s account, Jesus has the ability to walk and talk, a strong indication that he is, at the very least, not an infant (3.13-15).
contemporary methods of baptism representation, it is safe to assume that the panel representation is, in fact, a baptismal basin. As a result, the representation is an anachronistic element in the façade.

As an anachronistic representation, it stands out and the viewer cannot help but question the placement of this anachronistic element and the purpose behind its deviation from the textual account. In essence, this panel is the first critical step in establishing the importance of the medieval church and the clergy as intermediaries between God and individual. Baptism in the middle ages occurred when the subject was an infant and it was considered the first step on the pathway to heaven (Lynch 284). Therefore, the panel is a reflection and reinforcement of contemporary medieval views on baptism. In addition, baptismal basins or fonts were only placed within churches. In contrast to the gospels, in which Jesus is baptized in the natural setting of a river, the façade portrays this event in the man-made setting of a church. This difference is extremely important in the reinforcement of ideals that occur within the façade. Not only is the façade portraying the de-contextualized idea that Jesus was baptized as an infant, but it is placing the baptismal event inside of a church. As a medieval viewer entered the church, both of these variations from the Biblical text would have been a strong reinforcement of contemporary views on baptism and the need for the church, as an organization and as a physical space, in the path to heaven.

As described above, in the second panel, two of the traditional three wise men or magi can be seen standing behind Mary. The missing wise man is apparent, and the viewer begins to search for the third wise man to complete the trio. He can be found in the third panel, where the devil makes his first appearance. In this panel, King Herod is listening to the third magi, while the devil, who is represented as a small figure, talks into Herod’s left ear and persuades him to exterminate the children in his kingdom. The devil is an important element in this panel, because he is responsible for the outcome that occurs within the next two panels. In many ways, by representing the devil upon Herod’s shoulder coercing him into action, it takes the responsibility away from Herod and places him in a more passive role. St. Matthew does not mention the devil being present. In fact, it states that Herod became angry with the magi and in his rage sent the decree to kill the children (2.16). Yet, if the devil can take the responsibility for these actions, as the originator of the idea, then Herod is simply a vehicle for the devil’s plan, which makes his role more passive. In this paper, the devil’s “responsibility” is not being used to denote some kind of action/punishment scenario or even the idea of a person doing something ‘wrong’ and therefore should take responsibility for it. Rather, (of course assuming that the façade is representing a possible scenario) if the devil had not placed the idea of infanticide into Herod’s mind, it is possible and quite probable that acts of infanticide would not have been committed. Therefore, although the devil did not directly kill any children, nor did he force Herod into action, he is nonetheless, in the context of the façade, the originator for the ideas that led to the murderous actions in panel four. Because Herod’s role is more passive, the devil’s is more active. Herod’s passivity, as represented in the façade, is a theme throughout the façade, because Théophile also plays a passive role.

In the sixth panel, Salatin, the sorcerer and helper of the devil, is seen with his left hand on Théophile’s left shoulder and Salatin’s right hand is gracefully placed on his chest, over his

---

6 This, of course, varies if there is an adult or post-infant conversion.
heart. He stands between Théophile and the devil and is bringing these two individuals together. His role as an intermediary is important in this façade representation. It is interesting to note that, according to Le Miracle de Théophile, Salatin should not be present within this scene. It states, “Théophile. I’ll go.” (235) and through the stage directions, “Here Théophile shall go to the devil…” (238) and there is no reference to Salatin being present in this situation. In fact, the only action that Salatin has in this arrangement is to coordinate the meeting (145-159), but he does not participate in the final step of bringing Théophile to the devil. By having Salatin present within the façade, he takes the role of a person literally leading another person to the devil. As a result, this representation places Théophile in a more passive role, in that he is led by the shoulder to the devil, but does not freely go of his own will. The ninth panel is a mirror image to the sixth panel; except in this case, Mary is the intermediary between the devil and Théophile. This passivity is important because it represents the power of the devil and God, but removes the freedom to choose from the individual. Individuals are passive subjects that are pulled, according to the façade, to the binary poles of God or the devil, but they do not have the power to move themselves. By placing the individual on a passive level, it elevates the role of the church in its ability to move individuals. The church has the power to act as an intermediary to pull individuals back towards God. As a result, the only two active subjects in the façade are the devil and the church.

As stated above, the panels representing Mary’s story are based on St. Matthew, chapter two. As a chapter, it has a very satisfying sense of symmetry; it begins with the birth of Jesus (a new beginning), the antagonist figure of Herod is introduced (the problem), there is a liminal period in which the protagonists are forced to flee to Egypt (the adventure and search for a solution), and then there is the return to the homeland (the return or synthesis). The chapter contains a total of twenty-three verses. However, the façade cuts off at verse eighteen. This sense of incompletion is apparent, even if the viewer is not familiar with the text. In the final fifth panel, Mary sits atop a donkey holding the infant Jesus in her hands. Joseph is holding the reins of the donkey and looking back at Mary, and quite possibly, to the horrific scene in the previous panel. In terms of the visual representation, Joseph is pushed out of the boundaries of the panel border and there does not appear to be enough room for him to stand. Because the panel’s focus is upon fleeing, there is a strong sense of being pushed into the next panel scene, but the border that surrounds the entire façade cuts off the viewer. As a result, the viewer immediately looks to the next row to see if there is a completion to this frantic atmosphere of fleeing. However, the viewer is somewhat disappointed because the sixth panel appears to shift in subject to the Théophile story. But in fact, the subject of the fifth and sixth panels are identical, but the context has changed: in both panels, a figure can be seen leaving the Promised Land. In the case of Mary, she is leaving the physical promised land of Jerusalem and Israel. In the case of Théophile, he is leaving the allegorical promised land of the church.

The sixth panel, which is also the first panel in the Théophile story, shows Théophile making the pact with the devil. The devil, making his second appearance, stands to the viewer’s left, holding the hands of a kneeling Théophile. In this gesture, Théophile is offering his service by clasping his hands together in a prayer-like stance, and the devil has placed his hands over Théophile’s hands in acceptance. This type of oath was common in the middle ages, occurring

---

7 As will be discussed later in this paper, Mary attributes her power to the church and clergy, which is only a vehicle for the salvation of Théophile. Similarly, Salatin attributes his power and ability to the devil.
between a vassal and lord. Typically after this type of oath, the vassal would rise to stand at the same level as their new lord. However, in this case, because of the short stature of the devil, Théophile and the devil are at the same level during this oath. This is representative of the medieval idea that humans must lower themselves to be at the level with the devil (Lynch 258). This can be contrasted to the ninth panel, when the devil is defeated, and the devil is lower than Théophile’s stature, even though Théophile is once again kneeling.

In the seventh panel, Théophile and another figure sit upon a raised platform. The small figure of the devil, comparable to his size in the third panel with King Herod, stands to the viewer’s left. The devil is exchanging materials with the seated Théophile, the devil using his right hand to place material into Théophile’s left. Théophile is using his right hand to bring these materials to the other seated figure. It is quite possible that this is the return of Théophile’s religious position, but there is little evidence that can be found within the representation. In the text, the return of Théophile’s position is the only reference of the devil directly affecting the exchanges of Théophile (line 245-254).

In the eighth panel, the image is deceptively simple. Théophile is seen on the viewer’s left, his hands raised in prayer. He is kneeling before a frame in the simplistic form of a church. Inside this frame, there is a pedestal, upon which sits a statue of Mary. This panel is interesting for several reasons; first, as a contrast to the text. In Le Miracle de Théophile, there is not a direct statement that a statue of Mary is present within the church; “Now Théophile repents and shall come to a chapel of Our Lady” (line 385). In fact, because Le Miracle is a play performance, there are three possibilities of representing Mary during the production of the play: first, she could be a statue that is later replaced by an actress; second, the actress could remain motionless during his prayer and then become animate; and third, the actress portraying Mary comes on stage for the first time after the completion of the prayer. Considering these possibilities, it is curious that the façade specifically chooses to represent this scene with a statue of Mary. By doing so, several ideals are being reinforced. First, Mary has a direct, almost physical, presence within the medieval church and, second, if a person is searching for Mary or grace, the place to find her is within the church. In addition, there is an emphasis on the physical church present within this panel. Théophile is kneeling in front of the church, praying. Although it is known that he is praying to Mary through the text of the play, if the panel is viewed in a decontextualized setting, he appears to be praying to the physical church. His entire body is outside of the church frame, and his eyes look up in hope, not to the statue, as one might expect, but to the upper level of the church frame.

The second reason this panel is interesting is because of its strong relationship with the surrounding panels. The church frame of the eighth panel affects the progression of the Théophile story. On the right side of the eighth panel, the column of the church can be seen...
protruding excessively. As a viewer who enters Notre-Dame, this protrusion becomes dramatically clear as one comes closer to the doorway of the church. This protrusion physically divides the story of Théophile in half. In the first two panels, Théophile is an unrepentant sinner, while in the last two panels, he finally submits to the will of God. By making this panel the keystone, the viewer is forced to consider the ramifications of this separation. The influence of the devil is to the viewer’s left and the influence of heaven is to the right, with the church placed clearly in the middle. This is an interesting contrast to the performance of the play. In the performance, Théophile’s house is placed in the middle of these two opposing sides (Rutebeuf 167-169), which seems to emphasize the choice that humans have between these opposing factions. However, in the façade, the church is placed between this binary of God vs. Devil.

In addition to dividing the Théophile story, the eighth panel has a direct relationship with the final tenth panel. In the final panel, there is a representation of a priest holding text with listeners contemplating his message. In the eighth panel, two spires of the church and the middle gable point upwards towards this final panel. The left spire points to the priest, but more importantly, to the text the priest is holding. The middle gable and the right spire point to two of the people listening to the priest. Reading the eighth and final panel together, a person not only needs to enter the church for absolution, but they need to contemplate and comprehend the message given by the priest. Again, this is a reinforcement of the necessity of the priest during the act of penance. The eighth panel is the representation of Théophile’s confession. By having the physical frame that represents confession point directly to the priest, the allegorical message is that confession and contrition require a priest.

The ninth panel represents the submission of the devil. It is interesting to note that Mary is holding a sword that, because of the position, resembles a cross. In fact, this cross resembles the cross carried by clergy during mass. Like the spires in the eighth panel, the cross creates a plane that is pointed directly at the priest. As a visual representation, this cross is an indication that the power that Mary is using to defeat the devil has a relationship with the priest figure.

On another note, considering this portal is dedicated to Mary, it is curious that this panel is not the final scene. It would seem logical, considering Mary has just defeated the devil and saved Théophile. Yet, there is another panel in the façade. Moreover, the final panel, as the apex of the entire work, does not even have Mary within the scene. Instead, the apex of the entire façade is a priest. Revisiting the themes of the façade, there is a clear reinforcement of the need for the church in an individual’s life. Whether it is the need for baptism in a church, confession to a priest, or the need for a priest to act as an intermediary between the individual and God, the need for the physical church and its clergy is consistently promoted.

On another level of interpretation, if the façade is viewed as a strict representation, without considering the historical or literary figures represented within the façade, the goal of the façade becomes clear: it is a story of an individual’s spiritual life and the importance of the church in this journey. In the first panel, a figure is born. In the second, a figure is baptized. In the third, a figure succumbs to temptation, and the results of this are seen in the fourth panel. In the fifth panel, a figure flees the kingdom of God because of events in the previous panels. In

---

8 Within the picture provided in this paper, the sword is broken and bottom half is missing below her hand. However, in earlier pictures of this scene, the sword is complete and pointed towards the devil’s head.
the sixth panel, a figure makes a pact with the devil and the unholy results are seen in the seventh panel. In the eighth, a figure goes to a church and confesses. In the ninth, a figure is saved by grace-bearing figure, who attributes their power to the priest. In the apex panel, the priest is seen overseeing the all of these events.

**Conclusion**

As stated earlier, *Le Miracle de Théophile* has elements of subversive rhetoric, even if they must be pieced together to uncover a complete picture. Therefore, it is curious that the church would use this specific play to create a publicly visible façade. Considering that the play and the façade were created concurrently, perhaps the representation of *Le Miracle de Théophile* on Notre Dame is more indicative of a political move to challenge any anti-theological or anti-church ideas that might gain momentum if left unchecked. By adding elements to the play that remind the viewer of the importance of the medieval church in an individual’s life, the church has appropriated the subversive message of the play, and possibly some of the anti-church ideas have been pacified.

**Works Cited**


