Representations of Animality and Sexuality in Late Medieval Thought and Culture

Tess Sylvie Wingard

PhD

University of York

Medieval Studies

September 2020

Abstract

Representations of animals are ubiquitous in late medieval writings on sexuality. However, to date, little work has been done to analyse their meaning. This thesis addresses this lacuna by examining the role of animals in the construction and dissemination of ideologies of sexuality in north-western Europe c.1200-c.1540, focusing primarily on England. The investigation is organised into five thematic chapters analysing: 1) the development of Aristotelian zoology; 2) representations of animals and sexuality in adaptations of the biblical Flood story; 3) depictions of giants and rape in romances; 4) social and legal responses to bestiality; 5) the function of the hybrid in scientific, theological and literary discourses.

In order to advance such a broad cultural investigation, this research examines a diverse range of sources in Latin, French and English, including scientific and theological treatises; instructional manuals for priests; literary works such as romances, versified biblical adaptations, and dramas; legal commentaries; court records; and parliamentary legislation. It also includes some analysis of visual material, viz. 'profane' badges and manuscript illustrations. This research uses an interdisciplinary methodology drawing primarily on History and Literature, as well as theoretical approaches from animal studies, ecofeminism and queer theory. In addition to the core thematic areas of sexuality and animals, this thesis also engages with other key sub-fields such as the histories of Scholasticism, Lollardy, medieval exegesis, canon law, and English civic drama.

This thesis demonstrates that animals were fundamental to the development and reproduction of late medieval sexual norms. In particular, they played an important discursive function in the development of medieval ideologies of heteronormativity. As the first work of medieval scholarship to substantially engage with the intersection of animality and sexuality, this research proves the urgent need to consider the animal dimension in future studies on gender and sexuality in the later Middle Ages.

Contents

List of figures

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my thanks must go to my supervisors Dr Jeremy Goldberg and Dr Nicola McDonald: their support has guided me through the highs and lows of this project. Additionally, Prof. Tim Ayers and Dr Tom Johnson served as TAP advisors, bringing new perspectives to my research and encouraging me to reach outside my comfort zone. Special thanks go to Gillian Galloway, Dr Harriet Evans Tang, and Dr Tim Rowbotham, the administrators for the Centre for Medieval Studies, for their compassion and assistance throughout this project. I am grateful to researchers who took the time to share their specialist expertise with me, and whose guidance shaped the course of my thesis, namely Prof. Pete Biller, Prof. Christine Ekholst, Dr Jo Edge, Prof. Jason Edwards, Dr Laura Gelfand, Dr Kate Giles, Prof. Richard Helmholz, Dr Karen Jones, Dr Kathleen Walker-Meikle, and Dr Lydia Zeldenrust.

Much of this thesis has been presented at various conferences and research seminars, and I am grateful for all the feedback I received from audiences at these events. In particular I want to thank the participants of the CMS SCRAMS seminar series; the Durham MEMSA seminar series; the 2018 Insular Romance Conference at Cardiff; 'The Animal in Medieval Romance' sessions at ICMS Kalamazoo 2018; the 2019 Oxford Medieval Graduate Conference; and the 2020 Gender and Medieval Studies Conference at Swansea, whose comments were invaluable for the process of writing my chapters. I thank those who read and gave feedback on drafts of my work: Dr A.E. Brown, Dr James Hillson, Fabienne Schwizer, and Dr Eric Wolever. I am also indebted to the assistance of staff from the University of York Libraries (including the Borthwick Archives and Minster Library), British Library, Cambridge University Library, Kent Archives, University of Leeds Library, Senate House Library, Wellcome Library, and West Sussex Record Office.

Finally, a personal note. Many friends and family supported me emotionally throughout this doctoral research. Such support was invaluable particularly in the final stages of this project, which were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. I

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Note on translations

In all instances where I have quoted from a published translation alongside an edition, the translator is noted in the first citation only. Consequently, all subsequent quotations in both languages should be assumed to be citing both edition and translation unless noted otherwise. Where no translator is listed for a text, the translation is my own. Wherever possible, I have referenced premodern texts according to line numbers, book and chapter divisions, or accepted scholarly conventions such as Bekker numbers, rather than modern pagination, in order to facilitate easier cross-referencing between separate editions and translations. All biblical quotations are from Albert Colunga and Lorenzo Turrado's 1946 edition of the Clementine Vulgate and Richard Challoner's 1750 edition of the Douay-Rheims English translation unless otherwise noted.

Introduction

Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee

Figure 1: *Pilgrim badge depicting cockerel mating with hen, c.1350-1399, lead-tin alloy, 2.1 x 2.7 in. (5.33 x 6.86 cm). Museum of London, London, BWB83 14. Kunera Database for Late Medieval Badges and Ampullae object no. 03667. <https://www.kunera.nl> Accessed Aug 16 2020.*

I begin this investigation with an image of animal sexual intercourse. This object (figure 1) is a small pewter badge held in the collections of the Museum of London. A clasp on the reverse would have enabled its owner to wear it on clothing with the aid of a pin to fix it in place. One catalogue describes this badge as portraying a cockfight between two roosters.[1] However, it seems more credible to interpret this as a depiction of intercourse between a rooster and hen: the upper bird pecking the comb of the lower bird mirrors how roosters bite the head-feathers of hens when mounting them. Modern zoology recognises that mounting behaviour is not exclusive to male-female pairs; for instance, hens are sometimes observed mounting other hens.[2] However, as will become apparent in chapter 1, the pair depicted on this badge were almost certainly intended by its creators to be a rooster and hen. This artefact was uncovered on a site in London on the banks of the river Thames and is believed to have been cast between 1350 and 1399. Eleven other badges with a similar

---

[1] Michael Mitchiner, *Medieval Pilgrim and Secular Badges* (London: Hawkins Publications, 1986), 216–17.

[2] See e.g. A.M. Guhl, 'Unisexual Mating in a Flock of White Leghorn Hens', *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 51, no. 1 (1948): 107–11.

design have been found at sites in London and Salisbury, and at Reimerswaal and Nieuwlande in the Netherlands, all dating from between 1375 and 1499.[3] Although the place of production cannot be confirmed with certainty for any of these objects, the presence of pin-fastenings suggests that the three Dutch examples were originally cast in England.[4] The discovery in the Low Countries of badges associated with the shrine of St. Thomas Becket demonstrates cross-Channel pilgrimage traffic, and further supports the hypothesis that these chicken badges were brought over from England.[5]

Mass-produced badges, cast out of poor-quality metal with simple designs, are one of the rare surviving medieval artefacts which can truly be called 'popular culture'. These objects were cheap and portable, sufficiently within the means of ownership for a much greater number of people than elite items such as manuscripts, sculpture, or paintings.[6] Most scholars conventionally categorise these badges into one of three groups, viz. 'pilgrim' (associated with pilgrimage sites, local cults, or other religious themes), 'livery' (displaying the wearer's political allegiances), and 'profane' (everything else). Profane badges are something of a category of convenience, a label for finds whose meanings are unclear to the modern observer. Within the corpus of profane badges there are a large number of objects with ostensibly sexual imagery, a veritable bestiary of winged penises, vulvas on horseback, copulating human couples and hybrid genital-animal monsters. The majority of these explicit badges have been found on the continent; our English-made copulating chickens are unusual in this regard.

In the absence of pertinent textual evidence, the ideological purpose of the profane badges remains enigmatic, although scholars have advanced several explanations. Malcolm Jones proposes that they may have been worn under clothing to ward off evil.[7] Stefanie

---

[3] Kunera Database for Late Medieval Badges and Ampullae object numbers 00716, 02669, 02670, 02671, 02672, 02674, 06971, 09920, 09921, 09922, 17128 <http://www.kunera.nl> Accessed Aug 16 2020.

[4] Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 4.

[5] Brian Spencer, 'Canterbury Pilgrim Souvenirs Found in the Low Countries', in *Heilig En Profaan 2: 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse Insignes Uit Openbare En Particuliere Collecties*, ed. H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldeweij, and D. Kicken (Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 2001), 105–111.

[6] Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, 7–16.

[7] Malcolm Jones, 'The Secular Badges', in *Heilig En Profaan 1: 1000 Laat-Middeleeuwse Insignes Uit de Collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, ed. H.J.E. van Beuningen and A.M. Koldeweij (Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 1993), 99–109; Malcolm Jones, 'The Sexual and the

Stockhorst argues that they were a form of risqué entertainment, gently satirising the culture of pilgrimage whilst ultimately adhering to normative moral values and religious belief.[8] Sebastiaan Ostkamp fully rejects the notion that these badges were transgressive; rather, in portraying the subversion of morality and the social order in a 'world turned upside-down', they are more appropriately read as icons of conservative, hegemonic ideology.[9] Ostkamp even proposes that they may have possessed a punitive function, arguing that they may have been forcibly pinned to the clothing of adulterers as a kind of informal community justice, analogous to the ubiquitous folk custom of charivari.[10] Sarah Hinds argues that the badges were worn by young men as a form of identification with urban youth subculture and as part of the performance of masculinity. Focusing on the chicken badges, she holds that representations of avian copulation signified that the wearer engaged in illicit premarital sexual intercourse.[11] My own interpretation lies somewhere between those of Ostkamp and Hinds: I argue that these badges likely possessed some degree of 'shock value', but that they ultimately derived their social meaning from deeply normative sexual values.

In the case of our chicken badges, iconographic parallels with a contemporaneous scientific manuscript supports the reading of these artefacts as ideologically normative rather than wholly transgressive or subversive. Bibliothèque nationale de France Latin 16169 is a luxuriously-illustrated copy of Albert the Great's *De animalibus* which was produced in the second half of the fourteenth century for use by the College of Sorbonne.[12] In the margins of f.84v, several pairs of animals are depicted in a naturalistic

Secular Badges', in *Heilig En Profaan 2: 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse Insignes Uit Openbare En Particuliere Collecties*, ed. H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldeweij, and D. Kicken (Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 2001), 196–206.

[8] Stefanie Stockhorst, 'Passionate Pilgrims: Secular Lead Badges as Precursors of Emblemata Amatoria', in *Profane Imagery in Marginal Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. Elaine C. Block and Malcolm Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 157–181.

[9] Sebastiaan Ostkamp, 'The World Upside Down. Secular Badges and the Iconography of the Late Medieval Period: Ordinary Pins with Multiple Meanings', *Journal of Archaeology in the Low Countries* 1, no. 2 (2009): 107–125.

[10] Ibid., 123.

[11] Sarah Hinds, 'Late Medieval Sexual Badges as Sexual Signifiers: A Material Culture Reappraisal', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55, no. 2 (2019): 170–91.

[12] For an overview of the manuscript's production and its influence on the dissemination of *De animalibus* in the University of Paris, see Amandine Postec, 'Un Exemplaire Singulier du *De*

style engaging in copulation (figure 2). The lower half of the left margin contains two chickens in an identical pose to that of the profane badges. At the centre of the page, directly underneath the book's heading, a man and woman embrace. Both figures are naked except for a green cap on the woman's head. This is an unambiguously erotic image: the man's right hand reaches around his partner's neck and grasps her shoulder; he holds her breast in his left hand; their lips are so close as to suggest the act of kissing. The composition of the page conveys a thematic connection between the human and non-human figures and the subject matter of the text: from the scientific perspective, the act of intercourse is the same whether performed by animals or humans, and the study of the former can inform our understanding of the latter. Perhaps a similar ideological perspective informed the wearers of the chicken badges. Thus, rather than possessing an apotropaic or counter-cultural function, they embodied a normative understanding of sexual intercourse as a natural, animalistic act. In this way, the act of wearing one of these badges can be read as mildly provocative, yet ultimately reproducing the values of culturally dominant ideologies of sex. By way of modern analogy, the symbolic associations of the chicken badges more closely resemble a stag party's inflatable sex doll than a leatherman's harness: while both can offend the sensibilities of onlookers, the former signifies the eroticism of culturally-dominant heterosexual masculinity, whereas the latter signifies the wearer's affinity with an erotic sub-culture that is marginal within an already (statistically and culturally) marginalised sexual minority.

These two avian images, created within different geographic and social contexts yet thematically and stylistically connected, illustrate the fundamental axiom of this thesis: animals are good to think about sex with. This same notion is expressed in the Middle English devotional treatise *Book to a Mother* (1370s). This text is structured around the device of an address from the anonymous author to his mother in order to instruct the reader in the lessons of scripture. In his meditation on the theme of marriage, he states that:

Animalibus d'Albert le Grand et son Illustration (Paris, BnF, Manuscrits, Latin 16169)', *Reinardus* 26 (2014): 137–60. Michael Camille also analyses this illustration in Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), 47-48.

Figure 2: Pairs of animals and humans copulating, manuscript of Albert the Great, De animalibus, *c.1301-1400, ink on parchment, 15.16 x 10.83 in. (38.5 × 27.5 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, lat. 16169, f.84v. Gallica ark:/12148/btv1b85409542. <https://gallica.bnf.fr> Accessed Aug 16 2020.*

[God's] wil is þat a man schulde onliche [only] knowe his wif to bringe forþ children, and for non oþer ende, as men schulden haue do in Paradis. For ony lust or likinge þat man or womman haþ but to þat ende is synne. And þis God techiþ [teaches] a man bi unresonable bestis, þat onliche knowen here makes to multeplie here kindes [that only have intercourse with their mates to multiply their species]. Þerfore Iob seiþ: "Axe [ask] *iumentes* or bestis, and þei shullen techen þe" (Job 12:7).[13]

Thus, God created animal intercourse as an example for humans to follow. In this way, *Book to a Mother* directs the reader to look to animals to learn virtuous sexual behaviour. As I shall argue, this concept of 'looking to animals' is fundamentally embedded in late medieval discourses on sex. These thematic connections between animals and sexuality are essential to a comprehensive analysis of the history of medieval sex and gender, yet to date they have been overlooked by modern scholars.

Historiography

To properly appreciate the new perspective introduced by combining an analysis of sexuality and animals, an overview of the major developments and debates in the fields of medieval sex and medieval animals is required. This overview is by necessity partial and, with some exceptions, privileges the work of scholars operating primarily within the disciplinary boundaries of history and literature. My intention here is to lay out the major currents guiding the field and how my own research has responded to them. I begin with the work of John Boswell, whose scholarship and community outreach in the 1980s materially contributed significantly to the fight for LGBTQ liberation and established the foundations for many subsequent debates in the field.[14] Boswell's core thesis holds that late antique and early medieval European societies, both pagan and Christian, did not systematically repress expressions of same-sex desire, outside of generalised theological condemnations of all forms of sexuality as fundamentally sinful.[15] In what remains as one

---

[13] Adrian James McCarthy, ed., *Book to a Mother: An Edition with Commentary* (Salzburg: Institut für Aglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981), 92.

[14] On the significant cultural impact of Boswell's work outside of academia, see Mathew Kuefler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[15] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 61–206.

of his most contentious and oft-criticised positions, he argues that twelfth- and thirteenth-century urbanisation in western Europe fostered the development of prototypical 'gay subcultures', an interpretation which has largely not held up to later critical scrutiny.[16] Lastly, he regards the thirteenth century as a key turning point in European attitudes, arguing that Scholastic authors such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas developed a coherent theology of, in Boswell's words, 'anti-gay prejudice' grounded in new intellectual representations of nature, which in turn generated persistent and systematic legal and cultural condemnations of same-sex desire.[17]

Later scholars revised and expanded on Boswell's notion of a high medieval turning point in repression. One of the most influential of these is R.I. Moore, who places the origins of the 'persecuting society' earlier than Boswell, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[18] Moore argues that in this period, a new class of literate clerics were beginning to acquire administrative positions within secular bureaucracies and sought to consolidate their authority over the exercise of justice. To do so, they conflated various marginalised out-groups such as heretics, Jews and lepers as a 'common enemy' of Christendom which necessitated new systems of detection and legal persecution. Moore identifies men who had sex with other men as one of the targets of this new 'persecuting society'. He characterises this persecution as a largely top-down phenomenon, with privileged elites and institutions imposing repression on a reluctant, even at times resistant population. Mark Jordan takes a comparable approach, arguing that the category of 'sodomy' developed gradually from the eleventh to the thirteenth century in the writings of theologians such as Peter Damian and Alain of Lille.[19] Jordan holds that although the concept of 'sodomy' [*sodomia*] as a category of acts remained unstable, the notion of the 'sodomite' [*sodomita*] became increasingly influential in theological discourse and motivated legal persecution. He also argues that the label 'sodomite' gradually gained specific associations with men who had sex with other

---

[16] Ibid., 207–66. On the almost universal subsequent criticism of this interpretation, see Mathew Kuefler, 'Homoeroticism in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Acts, Identities, Cultures', *American Historical Review* 123, no. 4 (2018): 1259.

[17] Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 269–332.

[18] R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). For a long-term view on the scholarly impact of Moore's work, see John H. Arnold, 'Persecution and Power in Medieval Europe', *American Historical Review* 123, no. 1 (2018): 165–74.

[19] Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

men. Many of the basic assumptions and interpretations of Boswell, Moore and Jordan have been subjected to substantial critique and much of their work has been superseded by several decades of subsequent research. However, their most significant conclusion remains a fundamental proposition of the field: late medieval attitudes towards sex were neither part of a homogenous lineage of Christian thought dating back to antiquity, nor expressions of an unchanging and universal 'human nature'. Rather, they were historically contingent, the outcome of historical processes and ideological formation.

One of the most important critiques of scholarship in the tradition of Boswell and his successors concerns their failure to integrate women as historical subjects into their analysis. This privileging of male subjects leads to distorted and reductive conclusions which do not adequately reflect the lived experience of women. For instance, where Boswell presents late antique society as tolerant insofar as it permitted men to openly pursue relationships and sexual intercourse with other men, Bernadette Brooten argues that the same kinds of freedoms were not extended to women.[20] As both Jacqueline Murray and Judith Bennett argue, the tendency of medieval texts to focus on the experiences of men further compounds the issue, as medievalists end up reproducing the thematic priorities of their sources in addition to their own internalised biases.[21] Karma Lochrie's *Heterosyncrasies* constitutes one notable project which attempts to redress this gendered imbalance: in privileging women in her analysis of late medieval sexuality, she critiques the assumption of the male experience as the default.[22] However, as the editors of *The Lesbian Premodern* note, the study of female subjects remain marginalised within the field of medieval sexuality despite almost twenty-five years of forceful scholarly interventions.[23]

The introduction of queer theory in the 1990s, heralded by the publication of influential works such as Carolyn Dinshaw's *Getting Medieval* and the edited collection

---

[20] Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10–14.

[21] Jacqueline Murray, 'Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 191–222; Judith M. Bennett, '"Lesbian-Like" and the Social History of Lesbianisms', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (2000): 1–24.

[22] Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xi–xxviii.

[23] Noreen Giffney, Michelle M. Sauer, and Diane Watt, eds., *The Lesbian Premodern* (New York: Pailgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1–13.

Queering the Middle Ages, marked a critical shift in the field.[24] Queer-inflected scholarship embraces fluidity, recognising the epistemological instability of medieval categories such as sodomy. It rejects the binaries of hetero/homosexual or straight/gay as anachronistic and argues that previous scholars such as Boswell limited the analytical potential of their research by using these categories. Instead, queer scholarship draws on the notion of 'queerness' as a malleable concept for identifying and analysing all forms of sexual desire and gender presentation that go against the societal norms of the period of study.[25] Work in this mode aims to read texts 'against the grain' in order to uncover evidence for same-sex sexual desire and emotional intimacy veiled in metaphor and euphemism.[26] Some scholars even characterise the Middle Ages as a 'queer utopia', a time before the development of effective institutional systems of moral discipline and sexual regulation, which permitted a degree of freedom in sexual expression when compared to the era that followed it.[27]

From the first decade of the 2000s, this initial paradigm of queer medievalism has been increasingly subjected to critique from within the field. Scholars such as Karma Lochrie, James Schultz, Kim Phillips and Barry Reay, and Robert Mills argue that earlier queer scholarship is fundamentally flawed through its assumption that medieval queerness was constructed in opposition to a presumed medieval ideology of 'heteronormativity', i.e. cultural norms of sexual behaviour which privilege reproductive intercourse within a relationship of marriage between a man and a woman as the default orientation, which all were assumed to possess unless proven otherwise and which was the only morally acceptable form of sexual act.[28] Lochrie argues that the concept of a sexual 'norm' which

---

[24] Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999); Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, eds., *Queering the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[25] Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, 'Introduction', in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xi–xxiii.

[26] See e.g. Anna Klosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[27] Bill Burgwinkle, 'État Présent: Queer Theory and the Middle Ages', *French Studies* 60, no. 1 (2006): 78–88.

[28] Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, xi–xxviii; James A. Schultz, 'Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 1 (2006): 14–29; James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality: A Premodern History* (Cambridge: Polity

the majority of the population is assumed to follow is in fact a highly modern construct evolving out of nineteenth- and twentieth-century medical-psychological discourse; per her analysis, medieval theologians regarded everyone as possessing the capacity for committing sexual sins, and that there was no meaningful difference between those who commit non-normative sexual acts and those who do not.[29] According to these critiques, earlier queer scholars, contrary to their claims of seeking to move beyond anachronistic binaries of hetero/homosexual, actually ended up universalising heterosexuality and particularising queerness by assuming that heterosexuality must first exist for queerness to define itself.[30] Consequently, this anachronistic bias distorts the capacity for such approaches to authentically reconstruct medieval experiences of gender and sexuality.

The notion that the Middle Ages was a 'time before heteronormativity' is currently the dominant paradigm in the field of medieval sexuality, although not without some dissention. Scholars such as Louise Sylvester and Amy Burge argue for the continuing utility of heteronormativity and heterosexuality as analytical tools for explaining medieval ideologies of sex and gender when applied critically rather than as unacknowledged assumptions underlying the research process.[31] As Burge writes in the context of Middle English romance, the genre 'privileges a relationship between a man and a woman whose desire for each other is represented as both natural and inevitable'.[32] In this way, medieval ideologies of gender and sexuality are not organised in precisely the same ways as modern ones, but they map onto modern frameworks closely enough as to render 'heteronormativity' a meaningful and productive way to interpret them. The ongoing dialogue in the field involving different paradigms of medieval sexuality – of repression, queerness, heteronormativity and anti-normativity – is the core of scholarship with which my thesis engages, and which each of my chapters seek to address.

Press, 2011); Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

[29] Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, 1–70.

[30] See e.g. Phillips and Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality*, 41–59; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, 299–303.

[31] Louise Sylvester, *Medieval Romance and the Construction of Heterosexuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Amy Burge, *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[32] Burge, *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance*, 12.

In addition to this core dialogue, there are several important thematic strands within the field with which this thesis engages. Scholarship in these sub-fields is no less influential on the wider discourse. Rather, I have chosen to address these thematically in order to emphasise how they have shaped my own work. The first category involves scholars who focuses on 'normative' sexual behaviour. Whereas much research on medieval sexuality privileges an analysis of the marginal, such as records of individuals who act in ways deemed transgressive by their societies, or cultural representations of transgressive sex, the behaviour of the majority is less frequently interrogated. Scholars such as Kim Phillips, Shannon McSheffrey, Cordelia Beattie, Jeremy Goldberg, Charles Donahue and Martin Ingram employ topics such as childbirth, childhood, marriage, and the litigation of familial and community disputes as productive frameworks in order to reconstruct the majority experience of sexuality and gender.[33] Likewise, studies by Felicity Riddy, Nicola McDonald and Carissa Harris among others emphasise the dissemination of normative sexual ideologies within families and communities through cultural products such as literary texts.[34] This strand of scholarship is valuable for two reasons. Firstly, it

---

[33] Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003); Shannon McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Cordelia Beattie, *Medieval Single Women: The Politics of Social Classification in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jeremy Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300-1520* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Jeremy Goldberg, 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation in the Church Courts in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of the Court of York', *Gender and History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 43–59; Jeremy Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender in Later Medieval England', *Viator* 39, no. 1 (2008): 249–62; Jeremy Goldberg, *Communal Discord, Child Abduction, and Rape in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Charles Donahue, Jr., *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages: Arguments About Marriage in Five Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Martin Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge: Regulating Sex in England, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[34] Felicity Riddy, 'Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 235–52; Felicity Riddy, 'Temporary Virginity and the Everyday Body: *Le Bone Florence of Rome* and Bourgeois Self-Making', in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 197–216; Nicola McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction', in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 1–21; Nicola McDonald, 'Desire Out of Order and *Undo Your Door*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 34 (2012):

confronts the assumption in much earlier work that the dissemination of sexual ideology was an entirely top-down phenomenon, imposed on the reluctant masses by a political and/or clerical elite. Rather, as these studies demonstrate, sexual norms and the institutions which enforced them were constructed and maintained through the participation of most people in late medieval society. Norms cannot exist without the consent and complicity of the population, and an analysis of medieval sexuality must be prepared to examine sexual ideology as the product of complex and ongoing negotiations within societies. Secondly, this strand responds to the critique of anti-normativity scholarship. A nuanced understanding of how medieval societies defined norms of sex and gender on their own terms enables medievalists to analyse the theme of sexual transgression and the sexually marginal without succumbing to the trap of modern categories.

Another key thematic strand pertains to scholarship which focuses on the role of medicine and science in the development of ideologies of sexuality. Work in this mode emphasises the diversity of academic thought and debate, contrary to the claims of many non-medievalists – and medievalists outside of the field of intellectual history – that the Middle Ages were a period of intellectual homogeneity and of uncritical acceptance of classical authority.[35] For instance, Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset and Joan Cadden variously explore how Scholastic authors synthesised the competing theories of Aristotle and Galen concerning sexual intercourse and reproduction and reconciled their ideas with Christian theology.[36] In her recent work, Cadden examines academic controversies over sodomy, highlighting disagreements concerning the physical causes of

---

247–75; Carissa M. Harris, *Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

[35] e.g. Thomas Laqueur's claim that medical thought from antiquity through to the eighteenth century recognised no meaningful physiological distinction between men and women, aka the 'one-sex theory' model. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1992). This notion has been debunked by scholars such as Katharine Park, who demonstrates that the one-sex model did not significantly impact on medical discourse during the Middle Ages and only became influential during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Katharine Park, 'Cadden, Laqueur, and the "One-Sex Body"', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 46, no. 1 (2010): 96–100.

[36] Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988); Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

unnatural sexual behaviour.[37] Likewise, Maaike van der Lugt's study of 'extraordinary generation' outlines the contrasting interpretations of different medieval authors concerning the physical processes by which reproduction could be achieved without sexual intercourse, such as spontaneous generation or semen transfer via unconventional means.[38] Another important conclusion of this strand of scholarship is that scientific discourse had a tangible impact on lived experience outside of the universities. For example, as Monica Green argues, the development of gynaecology as a field of Scholastic inquiry in the thirteenth century resulted in the increasing marginalisation of female practitioners of women's medicine.[39] Likewise, Elise Histed examines the influence of Scholastic theories of will and appetite on law, the litigation of rape, and issues of consent.[40] Overall, scholarship in this mode demonstrates that there was no monolithic understanding of sexuality, but rather a multiplicity of intellectual discourses.

There are several other strands which have been less significant in the research process for this thesis. Nevertheless, they are important and influential developments within the field and need to be addressed. The first of these is the emerging sub-field of medieval trans studies. Trans studies invites researchers to look for traces of recognisably transgender lived experience in the textual record such as a disjunction between the subject's socially assigned gender and their own self-perception (in modern clinical terms, 'gender dysphoria'), in the same way as how early work on medieval sexuality prompted a search for evidence of same-sex desire.[41] Work in this mode challenges the readings found

---

[37] Joan Cadden, 'Sciences/Silences: The Natures and Languages of "Sodomy" in Peter of Abano's *Problemata* Commentary', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 40–57; Joan Cadden, *Nothing Natural Is Shameful: Sodomy and Science in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

[38] Maaike van der Lugt, *Le Ver, le Demon et la Vierge: Les Théories Mediévales de la Génération Extraordinaire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004).

[39] Monica H. Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[40] Elise Bennett Histed, 'Mediaeval Rape: A Conceivable Defence?', *Cambridge Law Journal* 63, no. 3 (2004): 743–69.

[41] For a survey of the growing field, see M.W. Bychowski and Dorothy Kim, 'Visions of Medieval Trans Feminism: An Introduction', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55, no. 1 (2019): 6–41. The definitive study of medieval transgender identity has yet to be published, but from the same volume of *MFF*, articles by Blake Gutt and M.W. Bychowksi represent some of the most influential work to date.

in older scholarship of historical and literary figures such as Eleanor Rykener which use the language of 'transvestism' or same-sex desire, and instead argues that their lives are more properly understood through the lens of trans experience.[42] Likewise, the relationship between discourses of race, sex and gender remains an underexplored topic, although recent works such as the edited collection *Intersections of gender, religion and ethnicity in the Middle Ages* and Sylvia Huot's analysis of the racialised sexuality of giants in Old French literature indicate that this is a productive avenue for further research.[43] The intersection of social status and sexuality is another issue with scope for greater development: Ruth Karras and Carissa Harris are relatively unusual in centring the issue of how ideologies of sex shaped the sexual experience of men and women in different ways according to their social status in their analysis.[44] Overall, the field of medieval sexuality has yet to fully reckon with the radical challenges posed by the study of transgender identity, race and social status.

The field of medieval animal studies is smaller than that of medieval sexuality. It is a comparatively young field, with the bulk of scholarship having been published only within the last twenty years. Moreover, as Anna Taylor notes, medievalists to date have been more reluctant to engage with animals than their colleagues in early modern and modern studies.[45] Nevertheless, my survey of the field presented here is highly selective,

---

[42] For instance, see the transformation on Ruth Karras' interpretation of the Rykener case across her career. Ruth Mazo Karras and David Lorenzo Boyd, "'*Ut Cum Muliere*': A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London', in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (London: Routledge, 1996), 99–116; Ruth Mazo Karras and Tom Linkinen, 'John/Eleanor Ryekener Revisted', in *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies: Essays in Honor of E. Jane Burns*, ed. Laine E. Doggett and Daniel E. O'Sullivan (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), 111–22. See also Kadin Henningsen's reading of the case: Kadin Henningsen, "'Calling [Herself] Eleanor": Gender Labor and Becoming a Woman in the Rykener Case', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55, no. 1 (2019): 249–66.

[43] Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton, eds., *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Sylvia Huot, *Outsiders: The Humanity and Inhumanity of Giants in Medieval French Prose Romance* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 69–104.

[44] Ruth Mazo Karras, "'Because the Other Is a Poor Woman She Shall Be Called His Wench": Gender, Sexuality, and Social Status in Late Medieval England', in *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, ed. Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternack (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 210–29; Harris, *Obscene Pedagogies*, 26–66.

[45] Anna Lisa Taylor, 'Where Are the Wild Things? Animals in Western Medieval European History', *History Compass* 16, no. 3 (2018): 2.

focusing on the strands of scholarship most pertinent to this thesis. The first strand concerns the symbolic meaning attached to animals in medieval culture and their role in the formation of ideology. As I shall explore in greater depth in chapter 1, allegory was the predominant mode of reading animals in the Middle Ages, and hence this is the starting point for many scholars' analysis. Scholarship in this mode often focuses on the bestiary owing to its position as the most prominent medieval text concerning animals and their symbolic interpretation. For example, Debra Hassig argues that the portrayal of individual animals served to reinforce normative ideologies of sexuality, gender and race.[46] Likewise, Dorothy Yamamoto argues that the bestiary depicts a highly conservative model of society through its animal allegories.[47] However, animals were not solely used as allegories for normative ideology. Another related strand of scholarship examines the value of representations of animals for social critique. Harriet Spiegel examines how Marie de France used the genre form of the animal fable to explore gender relations: Marie deployed animals as metaphors to establish a contrast between the male social sphere of hierarchies and dominance and the female social sphere grounded in mutual care, compassion and friendship.[48] Other scholars such as Lesley Kordecki and Sara Gutmann have analysed Geoffrey Chaucer's use of birds both as imagery and as literary subjects in order to explore the lived experience of womanhood and to critique patriarchal society.[49] Likewise, Peggy McCracken examines how French literature used animals to question aspects of dominant

---

[46] Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Another prominent collection on bestiaries and ideology edited by Hassig takes a similar approach. Debra Hassig, ed., *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999). Note that Debra Hassig currently publishes under the name Debra Strickland.

[47] Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12–33.

[48] Harriet Spiegel, 'The Male Animal in the Fables of Marie de France', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 111–26.

[49] Lesley Kordecki, *Ecofeminist Subjectivities: Chaucer's Talking Birds* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Sara Gutmann, 'Chaucer's Chicks: Feminism and Falconry in "The Knight's Tale", "The Squire's Tale", and *The Parliament of Fowls*', in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 69–83.

political and social structures.[50] Medieval animals were malleable symbols which could be used to both critique and reinforce dominant ideologies.

Another key thematic strand examines how medieval categories of human and non-human animal were constructed and the implications that this entailed for the anthropocentric ideology of human dominance over the natural world. Many scholars emphasise the epistemological instability of these categories and distinctions. For instance, Karl Steel explores how the medieval human/animal binary had to be continually maintained and upheld through the regulation of violence, i.e. humans may kill animals, yet an animal which kills a human transgresses the natural order. Steel argues that it was through violence against animals that 'humans attempt to claim a unique, oppositional identity for themselves'.[51] Similarly, Joyce Salisbury argues that the categories of 'human' and 'animal' were increasingly represented as fluid and unstable in intellectual and literary discourses from the twelfth century onwards.[52] Susan Crane and the contributors to the edited collections *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts* and *Animal Languages in the Middle Ages* analyse representations of interspecies relations and communication in a variety of textual genres, demonstrating that scientific and theological notions of anthropocentrism did not preclude empathy for non-human life.[53] Likewise, Sarah Kay argues that bestiaries could also encourage their readers to develop empathy and kinship towards non-human animals and explore the animal dimension to human nature.[54] Carolynn Van Dyke argues that certain texts credited animals with individuality and recognised their capacity to act in their own ways rather than their behaviour being fully determined by their species.[55] Anselm Oelze's

---

[50] Peggy McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast: Sovereignty and Animality in Medieval France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[51] Karl Steel, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 15.

[52] Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).

[53] Carolynn Van Dyke, ed., *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Alison Langdon, ed., *Animal Languages in the Middle Ages: Representations of Interspecies Communication* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[54] Sarah Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[55] Carolynn Van Dyke, 'Names of the Beasts: Tracking the *Animot* in Medieval Texts', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 34 (2012): 1–51.

study of the place of animals in medieval theories of cognition argues that Scholasticism recognised the capacity of certain animals for possessing cognitive abilities which resembled elements of rationality, in spite of the fundamental axiom that humans were the only rational creatures.[56] Overall, scholarship in this field demonstrates that medieval approaches to animals were more nuanced than previously believed and that intellectual discourses recognised the interrelationship of human and animal natures.

My research fits in the intersection of these two fields of sexuality and animals. This represents a significant lacuna in the literature: to date, there are no studies of medieval sexuality which substantially engage with representations of animals or the critical framework of animal studies. There is certainly a rich tradition of scholarship which explores the formation of sexual and gender norms in relation to abstracted conceptions of the natural, and some of it engages briefly with representations of animals.[57] However, there is no prior work on sexuality which substantially addresses the role of animals within constructions of the natural. Both Boswell and Cadden briefly raise the theme of the animal in late medieval Scholasticism and its implications for intellectual representations of sexuality, but they do not tease out all the possibilities of this approach.[58] Within the field of medieval animal studies, there is some scholarship which explores the relation of animals to ideologies of sex, such as that of Hassig and of Salisbury, but more work needs to be done to expand on this work and especially to link it more extensively to the social and

---

[56] Anselm Oelze, *Animal Rationality: Later Medieval Theories 1250-1350* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018).

[57] For an overview of this scholarship, see Sarah Kay and Nicolette Zeeman, 'Versions of the Natural', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 49, no. 3 (2019): 445–56 and other essays in this special issue. Notable works include: Jacques Chiffoleau, 'Contra Naturam: Pour une Approche Casuistique et Procédurale de la Nature Médiévale', *Micrologus* 4 (1996): 265–312; Hugh White, *Nature, Sex, And Goodness in a Medieval Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Joan Cadden, 'Trouble in the Earthly Paradise: The Regime of Nature in Late Medieval Christian Culture', in *The Moral Authority of Nature*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 207–31; Noah D. Guynn, *Allegory and Sexual Ethics in the High Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Maaike van der Lugt, 'L'Autorité Morale et Normative de la Nature au Moyen Âge', in *La Nature Comme Source de la Morale au Moyen Âge*, ed. Maaike van der Lugt (Firenze: Sismel, 2014), 3–40.

[58] Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 303–32; Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, 105–65.

historical contexts of sexual ideology in the later Middle Ages.[59] The work of bringing together the study of sexuality and animals is both necessary and productive because it entails a radical new perspective on the core scholarly debates surrounding repression, queerness and normativity in the middle ages.

Animals and sexuality

In bringing together methodological approaches from the fields of medieval sexuality and medieval animal studies, I seek to answer the core driving question of how representations of animals were used to construct ideologies of sexuality in late medieval thought and culture. I will investigate how different groups such as clerics, the aristocracy and urban elites responded to these ideologies and adapted them to fit their own cultural and political aims. I will examine how far these ideologies permeated throughout society, and how successful they were in shaping everyday life. I will explore the relationship between intellectual and literary culture and ask how intellectual discourses of animals and sex influenced literary representations. However, I will also address how certain texts interpreted these ideas in ways which differed from dominant ideological perspectives, and how literary culture could speak back to intellectual discourses. Furthermore, I will also consider how these ideologies changed over time and were both affected by and influenced contemporary historical events and political and religious movements. For instance, I examine the impact of factors such as the significant mortality caused by major plague pandemics in the fourteenth century; the development of civic identity and new institutions of urban governance; growing anti-clericalism; and religious heterodoxy and reform movements.

To address these questions, I will analyse a diverse range of source types, including scientific texts, theological and didactic works, romances, alliterative poetry, civic drama, legal commentaries and court cases. Specific texts of note will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter outline. The inclusion of such a range of sources is highly ambitious and requires familiarising myself with a large number of source-specific historiographies and methodologies in addition to linguistic and palaeographical skillsets in order to conduct this research. However, this diverse source base is fundamentally necessary for answering the kinds of wide-ranging questions about ideology and society that this thesis poses. I use the different classes of sources to address different research needs. Scientific and theological works functioned as 'high theory' texts in that they

---

[59] Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries*, 169–80; Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 61–80.

established many of the basic academic ideas about animals and sexuality which informed the production of other texts and were often cited as textual authorities by other authors. Literary works serve as productive case studies in how these academic theories were translated and disseminated to wider audiences, although it is reductive to overlook the genuine originality and intellectual innovation of many of these texts. The conventions of literary genres could give authors the freedom to explore notions of animals and sexuality in new ways in texts such as romances. Didactic works relating to confession and preaching, legal treatises, parliamentary legislation, and records of Church courts also demonstrate the circulation of these ideologies throughout society, including among groups who did not have direct access to elite intellectual and literary texts.

In terms of region, this study privileges texts produced and circulated in England, and to a lesser extent texts produced in continental north-western Europe, focusing particularly on the intellectual *milieux* of Paris and Cologne. A more elegant rationale would have been to focus solely on England, or otherwise commit more fully to a pan-European study. However, the decision to widen the geographic scope of this thesis was made for pragmatic reasons. During this period, the most important works of scholarly inquiry into animals and the natural world were produced outside of England, but these texts circulated in English academic and literary circles and hence influenced other discourses in England. I have analysed Latin, English and French texts. I have not incorporated sources composed in the other languages spoken in England, territories under its political control, and its immediate geographic neighbours during this period such as Cornish, Irish, Welsh, Scots, and (before the expulsion of the Jews in 1290) Hebrew. This is also for pragmatic reasons: it would not have been feasible to acquire the necessary proficiency in these languages within the time allotted for this project in addition to the other intellectual demands of this research.

Several important methodological considerations shape the production of this thesis. Firstly, throughout this investigation, I will privilege looking at sexual intercourse in terms of acts involving bodies over other forms of desire and intimacy in my definition of sexuality. There are some exceptions: for instance, my analysis in chapters 2 and 5 will focus on the family as a unit of social organisation. However, in both instances I will ultimately circle back to examining how these social relationships are defined in my texts in relation to sexual reproduction. This choice was made for pragmatic reasons of scope. Much work has been done by scholars such as Anna Kłosowska and Robert Mills to analyse forms of social relation such as friendship and spiritual community as potential sites

of queer desire without an explicit focus on sexual acts.[60] However, privileging forms of sexuality which involved acts of intercourse enabled me to keep the focus of this thesis on the animal dimension and to therefore ensure the originality of my approach.

Terminology is a contentious issue in research on medieval sexuality, particularly concerning what labels are both appropriate and useful to describe different forms of sexual desire in medieval texts. James Schultz contends that terms such as hetero/homo/bisexuality and their colloquial counterparts such as straight/gay are inappropriate and counter-productive to analysing medieval sexuality because they implicitly invoke the modern baggage of object choice and persistent sexual orientation. These definitions do not reflect medieval understandings of sexuality and hence scholarly analysis which uses them is constricted by modern intellectual frameworks.[61] Conversely, Judith Bennett advocates for the use of terms such as 'lesbian' as an act of deliberate and constructive anachronism. For Bennett, the category of 'lesbian' brings a radical political weight to historical analysis, forcing the researcher and their readers to engage with the sexual diversity of the Middle Ages and confront their heteronormative (and patriarchal) biases.[62] Bennett's formulation of 'lesbian-like' recognises the need for analytical flexibility in encompassing the study of lives which resembles the modern lesbian experience otherwise left out by dogmatic adherence to overly strict definitions.

Queerness provides an alternative category of historical analysis with potentially less baggage. David Halperin defines queerness as 'whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence. "Queer" then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative'.[63] In the context of sexuality, queerness covers sexual acts and desire which conflicts with culturally dominant ideologies of what is considered acceptable. This working definition is the foundation for many studies of medieval sexuality which use a queer framework. However, as Schultz notes, the risks of using 'queer' is that the scholar will uncritically conflate the normative sexual ideology of their own society with that of the society under examination, in effect reproducing the same issues as 'heterosexual' etc.[64]

---

[60] Klosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*, 117-44; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, 254-70.

[61] Schultz, 'Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies', 16–20.

[62] Bennett, '"Lesbian-Like" and the Social History of Lesbianisms', 10–17.

[63] David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 62.

[64] Schultz, 'Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies', 26–28.

Karma Lochrie and Robert Mills favour the use of categories native to the middle ages such as 'sodomy' or the binary of natural/unnatural acts.[65] In many respects the categories of sodomy or the natural were as malleable to medieval writers as 'queer' is to the modern researcher. At their most reductive, the criteria for these categories usually entailed reproductive potential or its lack: any act that cannot result in conception is unnatural/sodomitic, regardless of the biological sex of the participants. Hence, for example, an act between two men or two women will always be unnatural, but oral sex between a man and a woman will also be unnatural. Three issues emerge here. First, these categories were not always clearly defined and their definition shifted between texts. Secondly, they fall short of some of the descriptive work that a concept like 'queer' performs. If a man and a woman have an adulterous affair, this act conflicts with normative ideology, it can even be a punishable crime, but it is still 'natural' behaviour. In this way, as Lochrie notes, 'nature' did not always equate with 'normative'.[66] Thirdly, there is the risk that scholars misapply these categories outside of their original contexts. As Tom Linkinen argues, there is a tendency to deploy sodomy as a 'universalising category' despite the fact that medieval authors actually use the term 'sodomy' and 'sodomites' far less frequently than their early modern counterparts.[67]

My own approach involves privileging the normative/non-normative binary as my main categories of analysis. I will use normative to describe sexual behaviour which is regarded as acceptable in clerical and magisterial ideologies, and non-normative for sex acts which are not. I will broadly use queer as synonymous with non-normative, though I will centre medieval constructions of normativity in my use of normative and non-normative. I will use 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' as adjectives to describe an act or relationship rather than as a noun to describe a persistent orientation, mainly for the practical reason that 'same-sex' is cumbersome and raises issues of essentialism and the distinction between sex and gender. More commonly, I will default to the languages and terms used in the medieval sources, particularly the notion of natural and unnatural acts. As I shall argue more fully in chapter 2, I regard 'heteronormativity' as a useful and productive theoretical

---

[65] Karma Lochrie, *Covert Operations: The Medieval Uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 177–227; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, 3–11.

[66] Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, xxii–xxiii.

[67] Tom Linkinen, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 34–45.

concept for analysing medieval sexuality despite the critiques of Schultz, Lochrie and others.

There are several key theoretical concepts and a terminology which inform my analysis. Many of these are ubiquitous in medieval scholarship and may appear self-evident to the reader. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify exactly how I will use these. The first of these is the concept of 'ideology'. As Terry Eagleton notes, there are multiple contradictory definitions of the term in use according to different disciplinary contexts.[68] In its originating context of Marxist philosophy, Antonio Gramsci identifies ideology as the means by which the state and the dominant economic class (bourgeoisie) in contemporary capitalist societies maintain power through the propagation of values and beliefs which legitimise their authority, a process which he calls 'cultural hegemony'.[69] This set of values and beliefs (ideology) are transmitted through education, media, religious practice etc. to the point where it becomes accepted as 'common sense'. In this way, the bourgeoisie and their institutions can 'manufacture the consent' of the subordinate economic class (proletariat) without recourse to the overt use of violence: cultural hegemony ensures that the proletariat willingly accepts domination because ideology shapes their worldview to render alternatives unthinkable. Although Gramsci grounds his definition in the specific manifestation of ideology under capitalism, it has a more general productive analytic value for social and cultural history. Eagleton's simplified formulation is more helpful for a study of the Middle Ages: ideology involves the promotion and legitimation of the interests of social groups through ideas and beliefs.[70] Purists may argue that, strictly speaking, a proper definition specifies that the social groups must be dominant within their societies. However, in the context of late medieval societies, competing institutions and groups attempted to exert power. The Church, the crown, the nobility, and civic governments often had conflicting interests and overlapping spheres of authority. Hence, I will draw on Eagleton's more general definition of 'ideology' throughout this thesis to designate the ways in which different groups within medieval society promote their interests through the use of different media.

---

[68] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London and New York: Verso, 2007), 1–3.

[69] Gramsci develops this notion throughout his work, but see e.g. his essay 'The Formation of the Intellectuals' in: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 3–23.

[70] Eagleton, *Ideology*, 29–30.

The second key concept is 'discourse'. My use of this concept draws heavily on the works of Michel Foucault. In its most reductive form, in the context of Foucault's analysis of the relationship between knowledge and power, 'discourse' denotes a collective body of knowledge and ways of talking about a given subject. A discourse is more than the opinion of a single author; rather, it is grounded in multiple texts, visual media and spoken conversations. There can be multiple competing discourses about the same subject. Foucault holds that shaping the discourse is a potent tactic available to hegemonic institutions for the exertion of power and a more subtle alternative to overt repression: for instance, he argues that modern society shapes how people talk about sex so that they conceive of certain kinds of acts as normal and others as abnormal.[71] Ideology and discourse are sometimes treated as synonymous, but in this thesis I will use 'ideology' to denote a set of beliefs and values (or, the 'message') and 'discourse' to denote the means by which ideology is conveyed through different texts (or, the 'medium').

'Deviance' is another important concept in this thesis. In the discipline of sociology, deviance is defined as 'acts, beliefs, and characteristics that violate major social norms and attract, or are likely to attract, condemnation, stigma, social isolation, censure, and/or punishment by relevant audiences'.[72] These norms are enforced through two types of 'social control', viz. 'formal' (e.g. law codes, courts, policing) and 'informal' (e.g. interpersonal relationships, stigma, community exclusion).[73] Hence, deviance encompasses both acts that are considered punishable crimes and also acts that are considered immoral or offensive, but not unlawful. In this way, deviance provides a useful conceptual framework for analysing sexual behaviour that, while not cognizable under medieval systems of law, nevertheless contradicted dominant social norms.

The concept of 'animality' is also central to this thesis. In order to understand animality, it is necessary to first establish the fundamental axiom of animal studies and related fields such as ecofeminism and queer ecology. 'Animal' not a natural, self-evident category but rather an ideologically and linguistically constructed universalising concept,

---

[71] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1978), 17–35.

[72] Erich Goode, 'The Sociology of Deviance: An Introduction', in *The Handbook of Deviance*, ed. Erich Goode (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 30.

[73] Ibid., 33.

defined in opposition to the human.[74] Giorgio Agamben refers to the discursive process by which the category of animal is created as the 'anthropological machine', and argues that the criteria for what constitutes 'human' and 'animal' are sufficiently malleable to enable the dehumanisation/animalisation of marginalised groups of people – literally designating them as 'less than human'.[75] Ecofeminist thinkers such as Carol Adams have examined how the animalisation of women figures as a strategy of patriarchal domination.[76] Recent animal studies work is also increasingly informed by critical race theory. For example, Mel Chen takes this analysis further through exploring the specific ways in which animalisation/dehumanisation factors into the construction of race.[77] In this thesis, 'animality' signifies both the process of ideological construction of the non-human in relation to the human (i.e. Agamben's 'anthropological machine'), and also the state of 'being animal' which results from it.

When I first started my doctoral research, I was eager to use theory and to integrate it as much as possible into my analysis. I even established and ran a postgraduate reading group dedicated to critical theory in order to expand my knowledge and experience and share my ideas with my colleagues. However, over the course of the project I have become more ambivalent about theory. This is not intended a wholesale dismissal of theory or of

---

[74] See e.g. Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Post-Humanist Theory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 44–94; Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 1–51.

[75] Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 33–38.

[76] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2015). As Susan Fraiman and Greta Gaard note, the field of animal studies has often failed to acknowledge its philosophical debt to pioneering ecofeminist scholars such as Adams, who had been exploring questions of animality long before the popularisation of critical approaches to animality by (predominantely male) philosophers such as Derrida. To this day, ecofeminism tends to be marginalised in critical conversations on animality. Susan Fraiman, 'Pussy Panic versus Liking Animals: Tracking Gender in Animal Studies', *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 1 (2012): 89–115; Greta Gaard, 'Posthumanism, Ecofeminism, and Inter-Species Relations', in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, ed. Sherilyn MacGregor (London: Routledge, 2017), 115–29.

[77] Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). For an overview of other recent approaches to the intersection of critical race theory and animal studies, see Julie Sze, 'Race, Animality, and Animal Studies', *American Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2020): 497–505.

medievalist scholarship grounded in theoretical paradigms, and I continue to regard a firm grasp of theory as essential to rigorous medieval research. Nevertheless, increasingly I have found it to be more constraining than productive for my analysis. Consequently, in this thesis I will tend to use theory more as an initial provocation which encourages me to see my medieval sources in a new light or to help me to construct my categories of analysis, rather than as an overly dogmatic framework. I will also integrate medieval theoretical models such as exegetical modes of reading more closely into my analysis.

In terms of periodisation, my thesis will focus on the period from the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) to the Buggery Act (1534). These start and end dates are in many respects arbitrary, however there are several reasons for this choice. Firstly, the Fourth Lateran Council introduced the requirement of annual confession for all Christians and is commonly regarded as a symbolic milestone in the increasing involvement of the Church in the discipline of lay sexuality. At the other end of the period, the passing of the Buggery Act marks the criminalisation of sodomy as a capital offence in England and a major turning point at which disciplinary authority over sexuality was increasingly transferred from the Church to the emergent English state. Hence, the period from the early thirteenth to the break with Rome under Henry VIII marks three centuries in which the Church was one of the dominant (though not the only) institutions shaping ideologies of sexuality.[78] The start and end points of this period also line up with important milestones in the periodisation of intellectual history: most of Aristotle's works on nature, and particularly his studies of animals, were re-introduced to western Europe in the 1200s and continued to shape the dominant intellectual discourses on animality until the publications of early modern authors such as Conrad Gesner introduced new paradigms of zoological thought in the 1540s and 50s.[79] In this way, c.1200-c.1540 emerges as a functionally discrete period around which to structure an analysis of the discursive relationship between sexuality and animality. Of course, this period also encompassed significant historical, intellectual and literary change. However, if periodisation is a necessary evil of historical research, then c.1200-c.1540 serves as a relatively pragmatic framework in which to examine the themes of this thesis. There is certainly more rationale for extending my definition of 'late medieval' into the 1530s, particularly in relation to themes of secular moral reform, where the Henrician Reformation serves as a far more productive (if still arbitrary) turning point

---

[78] For an extensive discussion of the contexts of Lateran IV and the Buggery Act, see chapter 4.

[79] Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 10-11 and 236-243.

than other conventional end-points to the Middle Ages such as the regime change from Yorkist to Tudor, the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, or Columbus' voyage to North America.

Chapter outlines

I will divide my investigation into five chapters, each arranged around a core thematic focus. In chapter 1, I will explore the development of a 'naturalising' Aristotelian/Scholastic discourse of animal sexual behaviour in zoological texts. According to this discourse, humans were the only living beings capable of committing 'unnatural' sexual acts. This affected how animals were perceived in moral discourse, generating an alternative to the formerly predominant Augustinian paradigm in which individual species of animal were capable of signifying both moral and immoral behaviour. Under the Aristotelian paradigm, all animals as a class signified virtuous sexuality. To explore this intellectual shift, I will compare the representations of animal sexuality in the bestiary, the most prominent example of Augustinian zoology, with Albert the Great's *De animalibus*, the foremost late medieval commentary on Aristotle's writings on animals. I will locate both texts within their respective theoretical interpretative traditions of Augustinian exegesis and Aristotelian natural philosophy. I will also draw extensively on the notion of 'naturalisation through animality', i.e. the justification of moral norms through arguments from the natural world, developed as a tool of critical analysis in the field of queer ecology, in order to explain the development of this zoological discourse. I will conclude this chapter by analysing a case study in the practical application of the new naturalising discourse in the anti-Lollard polemic of the late fourteenth century theologian Roger Dymmok.

In chapter 2, I will directly engage with the historiographical debate over the applicability of the concept of 'heteronormativity' to describe the dominant sexual ideology the later Middle Ages. To do so, I will examine how the heterosexual married couple was naturalised through representations of animals and the figure of Noah and his wife in late medieval literary adaptations of the biblical Flood narrative. I will focus on close readings of a range of texts including verse adaptations of Scripture such as *Cleanness*, *Cursor Mundi* and the *Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament*; illustrated Bibles; a sermon by John Mirk; the didactic prose treatise Dives and Pauper; and dramatic adaptations such as the York, N-Town, Towneley/Wakefield and Chester Flood pageants. I will historicise changes in literary representations of the Flood by exploring the broader context of changing notions of collective divine punishment for sexual sin, the impact of the Black Death on moral rhetoric, and the growing influence of ideologies of civic moral reform.

Throughout this chapter, I will engage with Judith Butler's theory of performativity to illustrate the ways in which Flood texts construct certain sexual acts as normative. I will argue that focusing on the animal in the Flood narrative makes a strong case for the existence of medieval heteronormativity.

In chapter 3, I will further develop the arguments established in chapter 1 concerning the naturalising discourse of animal sexuality by focusing on Aristotelian concepts of appetites, continence and temperance and their relation to the human/animal binary. In this chapter, I will explore representations of rape as an expression of incontinent sexual appetite, using the portrayal of the giant in Middle English romance as a case study. To do so, I will engage in a close reading of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, focusing on the giant of Mont St Michel. I will relate this episode to the broader themes of the poem concerning masculinity and self-control. I will read the giant as a hybrid, monstrous figure who possesses the semblance of human form, yet resembles an animal in his uncontrollable appetites for sex and food. I will connect the poem's themes of appetites to the social context of ideologies of temperance and anxieties over the nature of human sexual desire. In this way I will highlight the tension inherent in medieval naturalising discourse: animal appetites are used to construct the notion of normative sexuality, yet they are potentially also threatening to the social order.

In chapter 4, I will explore pastoral and legal responses to bestiality, focusing on the systems of canon and common law in England. This is a seriously neglected area of research. I will argue that an analysis of this topic is essential to understanding broader historical developments in late medieval sexual ideology and disciplinary institutions. To do so, I will analyse a range of sources including treatises on the sacrament of confession; ecclesiastical and secular legislation; legal commentaries; records from church court cases, focusing particularly on the 1520 trial of Thomas Frogbrook, a West Sussex man accused of having committed intercourse with a cow; and parliamentary records pertaining to the passing of the 1534 Buggery Act, which made bestiality a capital offence. I will connect changing legal responses and increasingly harsh rhetoric concerning punishments for human-animal intercourse with broader shifts in conceptions of the role of communities, institutions and the state in the regulation of sexuality, building on the work established in chapters 2 and 3 regarding the formation of a secular ideology of sexual morality.

In chapter 5, I will explore representations of inter-species hybrids in discourses on sex and species and the role they played in the development of the ideology of heteronormativity. To do so, I will engage in close reading of three texts that explore the

theme of sex and species: Nicole Oresme's *De causis mirabilium*, which sought to explain the physical causes of monstrous hybridity through Aristotelian natural philosophy; *Dives and Pauper*, which uses themes of demonic rape and monstrous hybridity to examine sexual norms and anxieties around female sexuality; and *Cheuelere Assigne*, a romance which plays with the theme of sex and species to in its representation of the heteronormative family unit. In this chapter I will draw heavily on the concept of 'species panic' derived from the field of queer ecology, which explains how representations of instability of species are used to reinforce social norms; and theoretical scholarship in the field of monster studies. To date, there has been comparably little scholarship on the concept of species in the Middle Ages, and none that engages with the relationship between species and sex. Here, I demonstrate that notions of species are essential to the construction of heteronormativity, drawing on ideas established in all four previous chapters.

1: 'No animal whatever copulates through the mouth'

Scholasticism and the Development of a Naturalising Discourse

In 1395 during a session of Richard II's parliament, a group of religious reformers broadly aligned with the teachings of the heretical theologian John Wycliffe (c.1320s-1384), known to their opponents as the Lollards, nailed a document to the doors of Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral criticising the practices of the English Church.[1] This text structured its critique around twelve Conclusions, each one articulating a point of disagreement with orthodox doctrine. Among its many targets, the Twelve Conclusions took aim at the vow of celibacy which bound all men and women who participated in religious life, including monks, nuns, priests, and friars. According to the Lollards, this law of continence 'induces sodomy in the whole of the holy Church' [*inducit sodomiam in totam sanctam ecclesiam*] and 'is the reason for the introduction of the most heinous sins possible in human nature' [*est causa induccionis maximorum peccatorum possibilium humane nature*].[2] The forces of orthodoxy responded swiftly to this provocation. Within a year or two of the publications of the Twelve Conclusions, the Dominican friar Roger Dymmok (c.1352-c.1418) had completed his rebuttal, the *Liber contra XII errores et hereses Lollardorum*. To the Lollards' charge that celibacy induced sodomy, Dymmok replied that:

> It is a great insult to the entire human race to attribute such a need of coitus to them, for man would therefore be of a worse nature than wild animals, who, even if they were to always lack the females of their species, still would never carry out an unnatural act with a male – an act which those advocates of immoderate desires nevertheless assert that human beings are compelled to if they lack the enjoyment of women, that without a doubt is contemptible and detestable to hear, and excessively shameful to the entire human race.[3]

---

[1] A contemporary account of the incident can be found in: Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: The 'Chronica Maiora' of Thomas Walsingham*, ed. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 12–29.

[2] Ibid., 14–15 and 24–25.

[3] *Est eciam magnum scandalum toti generi humano talem coitus necessitatem ei imponere; tunc enim deterioris condicionis esset homo quam animalia bruta, que si feminis sui generis semper carerent, nunquam tamen actum innaturalem in masculum perpetrarent, ad quem tamen actum homines necessitari isti libidinum suasores affirmant, si usu careant feminarum, quod procul dubio absurdum est et abhominabile auditu ac nimis opprobriosum toti generi*

Dymmok's phrasing needs some unpacking here to make the underlying meaning clearer. Dymmok claimed that the Lollards believed that men have an innate impulse – a 'need of coitus' [*coitus necessitatem*] – which compels them towards intercourse.[4] If they are prevented from having sex with women, the Lollards claimed that this same 'need of coitus' will drive them to find it with other men. Therefore, one reason to abolish clerical celibacy is that it removes a significant motivating factor that compels men to engage in homosexual intercourse. However, Dymmok found this argument unconvincing. Reason tells us that animals do not, under any circumstances, have homosexual sex; whatever 'need for coitus' they might have, it does not compel them to do this. It follows that humans cannot have an innate impulse that would drive them to commit homosexual acts either as this would make them be 'of a worse nature' than other animals, which is impossible. The Lollards' premise that clerical celibacy induces sodomy was therefore invalid. In doing so, Dymmok made a claim for an orthodox position on human sexuality that is grounded in knowledge of animality.

Modern science informs us that the premise on which Dymmok built his counterargument is false. Homosexual intercourse and courtship behaviour has been extensively documented in hundreds of species from all the major classes of animals.[5] Although the fact of sexual diversity in nature has only found widespread acceptance in mainstream zoology in recent decades, people outside of the academy who live and work with animals have often recognised this much earlier. Indeed, queer animality has been a fundamental part of systems of belief and understandings of the natural world for many indigenous communities across the globe.[6] This is not meant to accuse Dymmok of inaccurately observing nature, thereby failing to live up to the standards of modern empirical science. Rather, it serves to remind us that his claim regarding animal sexuality

---

humano. Roger Dymmok, *Liber Contra XII Errores et Hereses Lollardorum*, ed. H.S. Cronin (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1922), 79.

[4] In this passage, Dymmok focuses exclusively on male sexual desire, although the Lollards were concerned for the implications of celibacy for both men and women.

[5] Bruce Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity* (London: Profile Books, 1999). For mammals, see 269-476. For birds, see 479-655. For reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and other invertebrates, see 657-670. In fact, some philosophers have argued that sexual diversity plays an important role in the process of evolution: Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 126–31.

[6] Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance*, 215–30.

was not simply an expression of some natural truth (if such a thing is ever possible) but was a constructed stance within a broader framework of knowledge. A stance, moreover, possessing an intellectual history that we are called on to reconstruct and interrogate.

Before we can begin to pull apart the history that lies behind Dymmok's claim, we need to identify some basic theoretical perspectives which will benefit this investigation. Dymmok's use of animals in support of his stance on clerical celibacy can be characterised as a form of 'naturalisation', a process which Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal define as 'shor[ing] up a social convention (for example, reading from left to right) or political arrangement (the disenfranchisement of slaves and women, for instance) by asserting that it is dictated by nature and is therefore either irrevocable or optimal or both'.[7] Sexuality, probably more so than any other sphere of human activity, is a fertile site for naturalisation. As Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson argue, sex is 'historically and in the present, located in particular formations of nature. [...] There is an ongoing relationship between sex and nature that exists institutionally, discursively, scientifically, spatially, politically, poetically, and ethically, and it is our task to interrogate that relationship in order to arrive at a more nuanced and effective sexual and environmental understanding'.[8]

Animals play an integral part of this naturalisation of sexuality. Theorists of queer ecology have analysed how the animal has been a contested site of meaning in contemporary Western debates on sex. For example, LGBTQ activists naturalise queerness by pointing to the evidence of 'queer animals' (a term coined by Jennifer Terry to denote animals which engage in acts of non-reproductive intercourse, same-sex courtship, or otherwise exhibit behaviour which disrupts traditional scientific models of male/female sexual distinction).[9] In turn, social conservatives respond that supposedly 'queer animals'

---

[7] Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, 'Introduction: Doing What Comes Naturally', in *The Moral Authority of Nature*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2.

[8] Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 'Introduction: A Genealogy of Queer Ecologies', in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 4–5.

[9] Jennifer Terry, '"Unnatural Acts" in Nature: The Scientific Fascination with Queer Animals', *GLQ* 6, no. 2 (2000): 151–93. For examples of the naturalisation of queerness through animality, see Stacy Alaimo, 'Eluding Capture: The Science, Culture, and Pleasure of "Queer" Animals' and David Bell, 'Queernaturecultures', in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 51-72 and 134-45.

are the product of anthropomorphism, or look to media representations of animal 'heterosexuality' to reinforce heteronormative values.[10] The animal can thus be a malleable symbol, capable of being moulded to suit a variety of sexual discourses.

Medievalists have also made significant inroads into thinking about the naturalisation of sexuality in the Middle Ages.[11] Hugh White, Noah Guynn and Joan Cadden among others have explored representations of nature and sex across a range of late medieval Latin, French and English narratives and the ways in which they were formed through ongoing dialogues between literary and academic discourses.[12] However, the role of the animal in the ideological construction of normative sex has to date received little sustained analysis; a puzzling omission given the prevalence of appeals to animality in many canonical texts. In Alain of Lille's *De planctu naturae* (c.1160-65), the allegorical figure of Nature complains that while all other living beings willingly obey her laws, only humans attempt to 'denature their natural natures' [*nature naturalia denaturare*] by engaging in lustful acts, including homosexual sex.[13]

In his continuation of *Le Roman de la Rose* (c.1269-78), Jean de Meun's Reason's description of love evokes the natural language of Scholastic science:

> There is another, natural, kind of love, which Nature created in the animals and
> that enables them to produce their young, and to suckle and rear them. If you wish

---

[10] For an example of conservative naturalisation of heterosexuality through the genre of the nature documentary, see Noël Sturgeon, 'Penguin Family Values: The Nature of Planetary Reproductive Justice', in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 102–33. For examples of political critiques of the naturalisation of queerness from a queer perspective, see Claire Colebrook, 'How Queer Can You Go? Theory, Normality and Normativity', in *Queering the Non/Human*, ed. Myra H. Hird and Noreen Giffney (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 17–34; Ladelle McWhorter, 'Enemy of the Species', in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 73–101.

[11] For a fuller survey of medievalist scholarship on nature, see Kay and Zeeman, 'Versions of the Natural', 445–56; Lugt, 'L'Autorité Morale et Normative de la Nature au Moyen Âge', 3–40.

[12] Hugh White, *Nature and Salvation in Piers Plowman* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988); White, *Nature, Sex, And Goodness in a Medieval Literary Tradition*; Guynn, *Allegory and Sexual Ethics in the High Middle Ages*; Cadden, *Nothing Natural Is Shameful*.

[13] Alain of Lille, 'De Planctu Naturae', ed. Nikolaus M. Häring, *Studi Medievali* 19, no. 2 (1978): chap. 8, prose IV, ll.16–20.

me to define for you the love of which I speak, it is a natural and properly-motivated inclination to wish to preserve one's fellow creatures, either by engendering them or by seeing to their rearing. Men and beasts are equally well-fitted for this love.[14]

Jean's Nature, self-consciously modelled on that of Alain, expresses her frustration with humanity's disobedience: 'I do not complain of the other animals, whose heads I have bent downwards to look at the earth. None of them has ever waged war against me; all do my service as their fathers did. The male goes with the female to form a pleasing couple, and they come together to beget young whenever it seems good to them'.[15] Only man 'causes me more distress than any wolf-cub' [*cist me fet pis que nus louveaus*] (l. 19024).

In *Ovide moralisé* (c.1317-1328), a French adaptation of the *Metamorphoses*, Iphis – a girl who is raised as a boy on account of her mother concealing her sex at birth, but who nevertheless internalises a female gender identity – laments that she has fallen in love with Ianthe, whom she is arranged to marry. Although the marriage is perceived as normative and unproblematically heterosexual by those around her, Iphis interprets her desire for Ianthe as homosexual, that of one woman for another:

> What cow is wont to seek out another cow, nor what mare is wont to have intercourse with another mare? The ewes have the dear ram and the cow has carnal knowledge of the bull. Thus every female in her place wants to have sex with the

---

[14] *Autre amor naturel i a / que Nature es bestes cria / par quoi de leur feons chevissent / et les aletent et norrisent. / De l'amor don je tiegn ci conte / se tu veuz que je t'en raconte / quels est li defenissemenz / c'est naturiex enclimenez / de volair garder son semblable / par entencion convenable / soit par voie d'engendreüre / ou par cure de norreture. / A ceste amor sun prez et prestes / ausinc li home com les bestes*. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de La Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, vol. I (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1970), ll. 5733–5746. Translation from: Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Frances Horgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[15] *Ne ne me plain des autres bestes / cui je faz anclines les testes / et regardanz toutes ver terre. / Ceus ne me murent onques guerre / toutes a ma cordele tirent / et font si con leur pere firent. / Li malles vet o sa femele / ci a couple avenant et bele / tuit angendrent et vont ansamble / toutes les foiz que bon leur samble*. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de La Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, vol. III (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1970), ll. 18969–18978.

male. None of them desires to have sex with herself, nor with a woman on account of lechery.[16]

Iphis, like Nature before her, asserts the unnatural exceptionality of humans: only we have the capacity for queer desire, while blameless non-human animals dutifully engage in natural heterosexual intercourse. In these texts, animals perform a naturalising function, demonstrating the righteousness of normative sex and thereby chastising humans for engaging in homosexual acts. In other words, Dymmok's defence of clerical celibacy through an appeal to nature was made in the context of a broader culture of naturalisation through animality. Consequently, we need to think more deeply about the origins of this appeal to the animal.

Joyce Salisbury is one of the few medievalists to explore the origins of medieval naturalisations of sex through animality.[17] Salisbury identifies 'inconsistencies in the use of animals to exemplify either "natural" or "perverse" sexual practices' as being emblematic of the contradictions of medieval thought on animality.[18] She further ties the notion of animals possessing the capacity for both natural and unnatural intercourse to her broader arguments regarding the epistemological destabilisation of categories of human and non-human animal after the twelfth century in western Europe.[19] Salisbury's analysis, in concord with contemporary queer ecological thought, recognises that multiple (sometimes diametrically opposed) interpretive readings could be projected onto the sexual behaviour of animals. Despite this, her assessment of these different readings as constituting 'inconsistency' or 'contradiction' collapses the diversity of medieval intellectual and literary discourses on animality into a homogenous singular narrative.

The broader aim of this chapter is to explore the naturalisation of sexuality through animals in certain strands of late medieval zoological discourse. I begin by exploring the

---

[16] *Quel vache seult vache requerre / ne quel eque autre eque atoucher? / Les brebis ont le moton cher / et la vache dou tor s'acointe / ensi veult à male estre jointe / chasque femele en son endroit / ne de soi joindre n'avroit cure / a femel en non de luxure.* C. de Boer, Martina G. de Boer, and Jeannette Theodora Maria van 't Sant, eds., *Ovide Moralisé*, vol. III (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1931), bk. IX, ll.2934–2942.

[17] In addition, Joan Cadden has also briefly explored the contribution of zoological knowledge to biological discourses of sex: Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, 105–65.

[18] Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 66.

[19] Ibid., 121–45. Caroline Walker Bynum proposes a similar thesis, although her approach focuses on the instability of the category of species in terms of bodily transformation: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 19–33.

absence of naturalising discourse in Augustinian zoology, focusing on the multiple recensions of the bestiary. Then, I analyse the radical break with tradition introduced by thirteenth-century Aristotelianism: the notion, eventually taken up by Roger Dymmok, that 'animals do not commit unnatural acts'. I look at this new form of naturalisation through animality in the works of the Dominican philosopher Albert the Great. Lastly, I analyse the implications of this idea for late fourteenth-century debates around clerical celibacy and Lollardy and the ways in which orthodox authors invoked naturalisation through animality in opposition to heterodox social and religious critique. Throughout this chapter, I wish to emphasise that the model of animal sexuality which I present here was only one type of discourse, grounded in Scholasticism and closely linked with the academic *milieux* of the universities and *studia*. The development of this new zoological discourse in the thirteenth century did not eliminate all other ways of conceptualising the animal but offered a new way of thinking about nature and animality that complemented existing approaches – not contradiction, but intellectual diversity.

My use of the terms 'zoology', 'zoological science' and 'zoological discourse' in this chapter is an act of deliberate and constructive anachronism.[20] 'Zoology' here should be taken to denote the body of knowledge about animals, academic approaches to transmitting and developing that body of knowledge, and self-reflexive analysis of the broader purpose of studying animals. In this respect, medieval texts from disparate genres which lack a shared self-identified purpose or methodology nevertheless share a common interest in animals and in thinking critically about animality and can therefore be productively read in tandem. While some scholars have been eager to draw an epistemological division between 'Augustinian' or 'Platonist' texts such as the bestiary and the 'Aristotelian' animal treatises of late medieval Scholastic philosophy, I argue that it is more useful to regard these as belonging to different interpretative traditions within a broader history of scholarly interest in animals.[21] Here, I am indebted to recent work on bestiaries by Susan Crane and Sarah Kay which forcefully argue for reading the bestiary not simply as a naive compilation, but as a serious intellectual attempt at thinking about

---

[20] The Neo-Latin word *zoologia* first appeared in 1630, and its Englished form 'zoology' in 1663. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), s.v. "zoology".

[21] For example, see Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 2–22.

animality, structured with a clear taxonomic rationale, and deeply concerned with the construction of categories of human and non-human animal.[22]

Animals and sex in Augustinian zoology

In order to properly comprehend the development of naturalising discourses of sex and animality in the thirteenth century, we need to first recognise the intellectual environment out of which they emerged, to which Scholastic philosophers were responding. Prior to the reintroduction of Aristotle's treatises on animals, early medieval zoology was centred around the concept of the animal-as-sign. This approach was shaped by the thought of patristic Neo-Platonists, foremost among them being Ambrose of Milan (c.333-397) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430).

In his proto-semiotic treatise *De doctrina Christiana* (397-426), Augustine distinguished the 'natural sign' [*signum naturale*], in linguistic terms denoting a signifier which conveys its signified meaning passively without active intent, from the 'given sign' [*signum datum*], a signifier transmitted between living beings (including non-human animals) with the intention of conveying signified meaning.[23] Animals are one such class of natural signs, whose properties are capable of passively conveying meaning to humans. An animal signifier can signify both its literal meaning and its metaphorical signifieds; in this way, the signifier *bos* can denote the literal body of the animal known as an ox, but it also represents the broader semiotic meaning attributed to the ox in scripture.[24] As a result, a comprehensive knowledge of the 'nature' [*natura*] of animals is essential for a proper and full understanding of the allegorical use of animal signifiers in the Bible.[25] In this way, Augustine called for the academic study of animals in the service of typological (allegorical) exegesis.

Ambrose's theorisation of the animal-as-sign in his *Hexameron* (c.389) was similar to that of *De doctrina Christiana*, though he privileged the tropological (moralising) potential of the animal signifier to a greater extent than Augustine. As well as elucidating scriptural metaphor, animals also conveyed moral meaning. Humans could derive lessons about

---

[22] Susan Crane, 'A Taxonomy of Creatures in the Second-Family Bestiary', *New Medieval Literatures* 10 (2008): 1–48; Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 69–100; Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*.

[23] Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, ed. Joseph Martin, CCSL 32 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962), 2.1.

[24] Ibid., 2.10.

[25] Ibid., 2.16.

proper and improper behaviour by observing that of animals: as Ambrose stated, 'there is something in the nature of quadrupeds which prophetic speech urges us to imitate'.[26] In fact, he asserted that a full understanding of ourselves as human beings could only be accomplished by a thorough knowledge of the nature of animals.[27] In this way, the twin exegetical functions of typology and tropology as elaborated by Ambrose and Augustine represent the main ideological role of animals in the construction of early medieval zoological discourse. For the sake of convenience, this form of discourse can be termed 'Augustinian'.

Patristic authors had called for the study of animals as a prerequisite for exegesis. This in turn necessitated the creation of compilations of zoological knowledge, which could be used as reference works for interpreting animal signifiers. Numerous texts such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (c.615-630) and the *Hexameron* itself were devised to fulfil the need for animal knowledge, as well as the other range of topics contained within their encyclopaedic scope. However, out of all these works, the *Physiologus* and its successor the bestiary had the greatest and most durable impact on medieval European literary and intellectual representations of animals and remain synonymous with medieval zoology in the popular and scholarly imagination.

The precise origin of the *Physiologus* remains uncertain. However, it is generally agreed that the first version of the text was produced in Greek in Eygpt in either the second or mid-third century.[28] The earliest Latin translations must have been extant by the time of Ambrose, as his description of the partridge in the *Hexameron* directly borrows from its wording.[29] New recensions of the Latin text were produced in Europe throughout the early middle ages. Beginning in the ninth century, the *Physiologus* was dramatically expanded and revised with new material lifted from Isidore's *Etymologiae* and other

---

[26] *Est tamen etiam in natura quadrupedum quod imitari nos sermo adhortetur propheticus*. Ambrose, 'Hexameron', in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera*, ed. Karl Schenkl, vol. I, CSEL 32 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1896), 6.4.14.

[27] Ibid., 6.2.3.

[28] For the controversy over the dating of the text, see Alan Scott, 'The Date of the *Physiologus*', *Vigiliae Christianae* 52, no. 4 (1998): 430–41.

[29] Cf. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 6.3.13; Francis J. Carmody, ed., *Physiologus Latinus (Versio B)* (Paris: Droz, 1939), chap. 25.

sources.[30] These later versions referred to themselves as the 'bestiary' [*bestarium*]; texts in this tradition are conventionally regarded as distinct from the older *Physiologus*. The recension known by scholars as the 'second family' was produced in the twelfth century, with the earliest manuscript (British Library, Add. MS 11283) dating to around 1160-80. This would become the most popular bestiary version by number of surviving manuscripts, with around fifty in total.[31] Additionally, from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth centuries, four authors wrote French texts which they titled 'bestiaries', but which in fact were predominantly translations of older recensions of the *Physiologus*.[32] Various other translations and adaptations of the *Physiologus* and bestiary also appeared in almost all European vernacular languages, including a Middle English *Physiologus* dating from the last quarter of the thirteenth century.[33]

The relationship between different recensions and translations of these texts has been a source of contention in the scholarship on the *Physiologus* and bestiaries. Earlier formative surveys of the genre had prioritised the categorisation of these texts into neat 'families', stressing the distinctions between Latin and vernacular works and the textual traditions of England from those of continental Europe, as well as emphasising their intellectually conservative character.[34] However, much recent research has emphasised reading the bestiary as a dynamic text which was responding to new academic

---

[30] For a chronological timeline of Latin *Physiologus*/bestiary development, see Sarah Kay, "'The English Bestiary", the Continental *Physiologus*, and the Intersections Between Them', *Medium Aevum* 85, no. 1 (2016): 122–25.

[31] *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second Family Bestiary. Commentary, Art, Text and Translation*, ed. and trans. Willene B. Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 12.

[32] In roughly chronological order, these are: Philippe de Thaon, *Bestiaire*, ed. Luigina Morini (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2018); Gervaise, 'Le Bestiaire de Gervaise', ed. Paul Meyer, *Romania* 1, no. 4 (1872): 420–43; Pierre de Beauvais, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: Pierre de Beauvais' Bestiary*, ed. and trans. Guy R. Mermier (Lewis, Queenston and Lampter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992); Guillaume le Clerc, *Le Bestiaire: Das Thierbuch Des Normannischen Dichters Guillaume Le Clerc*, ed. Robert Reinsch (Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1892).

[33] Hanneke Wirtjes, ed., *The Middle English Physiologus*, EETS OS 299 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), xii–xv.

[34] See especially: M.R. James, *The Bestiary: A Reproduction in Full of MS Ii. 4.25 in the University Library, Cambridge* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1928); Florence McCulloch, *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1962). For a recent interpretation of the bestiary's conservatism, see Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, 15.

developments in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[35] In particular, Sarah Kay has criticised the parochial focus of older paradigms of scholarship, arguing instead that the cross-pollination of ideas and literary innovations across the different versions problematise simplistic categorisation by 'family', language or region.[36] Although I acknowledge the importance of Kay's critique, I will be privileging a reading of the second family Latin bestiary in this chapter over other textual variants (though I will also incorporate analysis of the vernacular translations where they supplement the original Latin in productive ways).[37] My rationale for this choice is that this recension was the most immediately chronologically proximate to thirteenth-century Scholasticism, and therefore is the most broadly indicative representation of the Augustinian discourse on animality during this moment of intellectual transformation.

The bestiary followed the Augustinian framework of animal signification. Redactors and translators aligned themselves with the philosophical aims of Augustine and Ambrose in their presentation of zoological knowledge. As Guillaume le Clerc declared:

> For in this book he [Guillaume] teaches us
> The natures of beasts and their ways,
> Not of all but of a good many,
> In which will be much moral teaching
> And a good share of theology.
> By this may a man example take
> To do well and to learn well.[38]

---

[35] See especially Ilya Dines, 'The Earliest Use of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*: Third Family Bestiaries', *Viator* 44, no. 1 (2013): 107–118; Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 1–48; Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self*, 1–21.

[36] Kay, '"The English Bestiary", the Continental *Physiologus*, and the Intersections Between Them', 137–38.

[37] I have omitted discussion of Richard de Fournival's *Bestiaire d'Amour* and its *Response*. Although these fascinating texts have the potential for ecofeminist/animal studies-inflected readings, they differ so greatly in terms of genre and ideology that they cannot be productively read in concert with other bestiaries. Richard de Fournival, *Le Bestiaire d'Amour et La Response Du Bestiaire*, ed. and trans. Gabriel Bianciotto (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009).

[38] *Car en cest livre nos aprent / natures de bestes e mors / non de totes mes de plusors / ou mult avra moralite / e bon pas de divinte / ou l'em porra essample prendre / de ben faire e de ben aprendre.* Guillaume le Clerc, *Le*

In the bestiary, the signifying function was in fact the primary purpose for the existence of non-human animals: according to Pierre de Beauvais, they were created by God 'so that they be examples of faith and belief for men'.[39] This theoretical approach was reflected in the literary construction of the text. The standard entry for a given individual animal was composed of a nature [*natura*] and a meaning [*significatio*]. An animal's *natura* comprised of knowledge about its physiology or behaviour, often taken from a classical or late antique compendium; its *significatio* was the moralising or allegorical meaning through which the *natura* could be interpreted. The medieval critical apparatus in many manuscripts foregrounds the construction of the *natura/significatio* model to aid comprehension: take for example the headings in red ink marking these elements in the manuscript of the Middle English *Physiologus*,[40] or the Latin rubrics surrounding the French verse in manuscripts of Philippe de Thaon's *Bestiaire* which summarised the *significatio* for each entry (e.g. 'Depicted here is the hyena, who signifies human avarice').[41] In this way, the bestiary fulfilled the need established by Augustinian zoology for a reference compilation of animal signifiers and their signifieds.

Certain 'rationalist' scholars have attempted to rehabilitate the text against the charges of scientific inaccuracy laid against it by early critics.[42] To do so, they look for traces of 'real' behaviours in the *naturae* of bestiary animals: for instance, the text's description of intercourse between male partridges can be explained as the result of observing 'real' avian homosexual intercourse.[43] Pamela Gravestock has critiqued the rationalist interpretation, arguing instead that the bestiary was not intended to be read literally since compilers assigned *significationes* according to the need for structural unity

---

Bestiaire, ll. 26–32; translation from Guillaume le Clerc, *The Bestiary of Guillaume Le Clerc, Originally Written in 1210-11*, trans. George Claridge Druce (Ashford: Invicta Press, 1936).

[39] *Crea il pour homme et pour prendre exemple de creanche and de foy en elles*. Pierre de Beauvais, *Pierre de Beauvais' Bestiary*, chap. 1.

[40] British Library, London, MS Arundel 292, f.4r.

[41] *Hyena hic pingitur, que cupidem hominem significat*. British Library, London, MS Cotton Nero A.V, f.56r.

[42] For examples of the rationalist perspective, see William Brunsdon Yapp, 'A New Look at English Bestiaries', *Medium Aevum* 54, no. 1 (1985): 1–19; Wilma B. George and William Brunsdon Yapp, *The Naming of the Beasts: Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary* (London: Duckworth, 1991). For an example of a particularly scathing critique of the bestiary's scientific accuracy, see James, *The Bestiary*, 1.

[43] George and Yapp, *The Naming of the Beasts*, 154.

within the text.[44] While I agree that judging the bestiary by the criteria of modern scientific practice, for better or worse, is futile, I am not convinced that most contemporary readers would have interpreted the text on a purely symbolic level either. As we shall see further on in this chapter, later authors criticised the literal truth of many bestiary *naturae*. This indicates that at least some of its medieval readers perceived it as a text to be read literally in the context of academic zoological discourse. Furthermore, bestiary authors themselves explored the difference between literal and metaphorical truth and the need to balance these two poles during the process of writing. Pierre de Beauvais explained his patron's request that he render his translation in prose (unusual among vernacular bestiary/*Physiologus* translations) 'because writing in verse requires that we use words which are far from the truth'.[45] For Pierre and his patron, the bestiary was a text that needed to be able to convey literal as well metaphorical meaning, and fidelity to this literal truth necessitated retaining the prose form of the original. To reiterate the point I made earlier in this chapter, we ought to read the bestiary as a genuine zoological work, not solely as a text that only operated on the purely symbolic/allegorical level, because its authors and readers expected that its description of animal behaviour accurately reflected the nature of animals in the 'real world'.[46]

Sexuality was a common topic of many *naturae* in the bestiary. Animals were credited with possessing the virtue of chastity in the manner of humans, as with the example of the turtledove:

> It is said that whenever the female turtledove is widowed by the loss of her mate, she holds conjugal practice and the very name of marriage in contempt, because her first love disappointed her, because she was deceived by the death of her beloved,

---

[44] Pamela Gravestock, 'Did Imaginary Animals Exist?', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), 119–40.

[45] *Pour ce que rime se voelt afaitier de mos concuellies hors de verite*. Pierre de Beauvais, *Bestiary*, chap. 1.

[46] Considering the genre's compilatory nature, it is also important to make the distinction that the ideological strategy of the bestiary's compilers generally lay in the selection of particular textual elements from older authorities, not in original composition. Although in many cases it is perhaps strictly speaking more accurate to say that 'Ambrose said X' or 'Isidore said X' than 'the bestiary said X', new ideological meanings can be inscribed onto quotations from other sources when they are placed into new contexts by the compilers. Therefore, when I talk of the bestiary's interpretation of an animal signifier, I am referring to its ideological meaning in the context of its compilation and reception and not to any meanings intended by the text's original sources.

and because he, who created more grief by his death than sweetness by his love, was both the more eternally faithless and bitter toward love. And so she refused to marry again, nor does she loosen her vows of chastity or promises to her chosen man; she keeps her love for him alone, for him she keeps the title of wife.[47]

The turtledove's 'virtue of continence' [*virtutem continentiae*] gives her the knowledge of how to 'maintain chastity' [*castimoniam servare*]. Elephants were attributed with a similar capacity for continence: 'they never fight over the females; they commit no adultery'.[48]

If some animals were known to avoid adultery, others revelled in it. Concerning the male viper, the bestiary stated that:

> Whenever he feels a desire for coitus, he seeks a familiar union with the moray eel or arranges a new one. And having proceeded to the beach and having announced his presence with a whistle, he summons the eel to a conjugal embrace. Moreover, the eel that is summoned does not flee, and bestows the desired enjoyment of her intimacy on the poisonous serpent.[49]

This act of intercourse was described using the specific language of adultery [*adulterium*] and attributed to the presence of the vice of lust in the viper: it is 'not according to the law of kind, but according to the fire of lust' [*non iure generis, sed ardore libidinis*]. Likewise, the leopard was believed to be 'born of an adulterous relationship between the lioness and the pard' [*ex adulterio laenae nascitur et pardi*].[50]

Some animals were believed to engage in homosexual intercourse and other non-normative sexual practices. In modern critical terms, they functioned as 'queer animals' according to medieval normative models of sexual behaviour. For example, the bestiary stated that the partridge 'is a woeful and unclean bird, for male mounts male, and lust

---

[47] *Fertur enim turtur ubi iugalis proprii fuerit amissione viduata, pertaesum usum thalami et nomen habere coniugii, eo quod primus amor fefellerit eam, dilecti morte deceptam, quoniam et infidelius ad perpetuitatem fuit et amarus ad gratiam, qui plus doloris ex morte quam suavitatis ex caritate generavit. Itaque iterare coniunctionem recusat, nec pudoris iura autcomplaciti viri resolvit foederal illi soli suam caritatem reservat, illi custodit nomen uxoris.* Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, chap. 80.

[48] *Propter feminas numquam dimicant; nulla enim noverunt adulteria.* Ibid., chap. 80.

[49] *Ubi coeundi cupiditatem assumpserit, muraenae maritimae notam sibi requirit copulam, vel novam praeparat. Progressaque ad litus, sibilio testificata praesentiam sui, ad coniugalem amplexum illam evocat. Muraena autem invitata non deest, et venetatae serpenti expetitos usus suae impertit coniunctionis.* Ibid., chap. 94.

[50] Ibid., chap. 3.

rashly forgets sex'.[51] Male partridges 'fight over mating and believe that the losers must endure sexual intercourse in the manner of females'.[52] Other creatures were believed to conceive through members besides the genitals. For example, the weasel was said to conceive either by the ear and give birth through the mouth, or vice versa.[53] Oral copulation was likewise attributed to the viper: 'the male spits semen with his mouth inserted into the mouth of the female viper; and she, frenzied by lust, bites off the head of the male as he withdraws his mouth'.[54] Some animals were also known to be able to transform their biological sex back and forth, such as the hyena which 'was sometimes male, sometimes female, and for that reason it is an unclean animal'.[55] Later recensions of the text, such as the 'third family' bestiary, attributed this same nature to the hare.[56]

As well as incorporating a diverse range of sexual *naturae*, the bestiary also featured *significationes* concerning human sexual behaviour. Tropological readings concerning the virtue of chastity were associated with several animals. The female turtledove's commitment to chaste widowhood was presented as a model for humans: 'learn, O women, how great the love of widowhood may be, which is taught even in birds'.[57] Her *natura* was also used to gloss St. Paul's pronouncements on marriage being a lesser evil: 'Paul desired for women what persisted in turtledoves, and elsewhere he urges youths to marry, because our women can only with difficulty imitate the chastity of the turtledoves'.[58] Likewise, the beaver's autocastration was interpreted allegorically as signifying chaste living:

---

[51] *Avis dolosa atque immunda, nam masculus in masculum insurgit, et obliviscitur sexum libido praeceps.* Ibid., chap. 71. Clark glosses *sexus* as 'gender'; however, 'sex' (i.e. biological sex) more accurately conveys the sense of the original Latin, i.e. the males' sexual desire overcomes the natural and appropriate set of relations between male and female partridges.

[52] *Dimicant circa conubium, victosque credunt feminarum vice venerem sustinere.* Ibid., chap. 72. Here I have substituted my own translation for Clark's, in order to draw attention to the implications of *feminarum vice venerem.*

[53] Ibid., chap. 47.

[54] *Masculus ore inserto viperae semen exspuat; illa autem ex voluptate in rabiem versa, caput maris ore recepto praecidit.* Ibid., chap. 94.

[55] *Aliquando masculus sit, aliquando femina, et ideo est immundum animal.* Ibid., chap. 12.

[56] Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, MS Kk.4.25, f. 74r.

[57] *Discite mulieres quanta sit viduitatis gratia, quae etiam in avibus praedicatur.* Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, chap. 80.

[58] *Optat Paulus in mulieribus quod in turturibus perseverant et alibi iuniores hortatur ut nubant, quia mulieres nostrae turturum puditiciam implere vix possunt.* Ibid., chap. 80.

'thus, any man who is turned towards God's command and wishes to live chaste cuts himself off from all vices and all acts of lewdness, and tosses them in the Devil's face'.[59] Animal chastity could also be read though typology: the elephant's lack of lust signified Adam and Eve's sexual innocence in Paradise, and the belief that the creature consumed mandrake as an aphrodisiac represented the loss of this innocence through eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.[60]

Tropological critiques of the sin of adultery were also derived from animal *naturae*. The bestiary drew a link between the 'adultery' of the viper and moray eel and that of humans. The serpent signified women's 'evil deeds and the readiness of female inconstancy' [*mala portat et levitatis feminae facilitatem*] and the text admonished wives for pushing away their husbands into the arms of other women by their provocations in the manner of the viper's venom.[61] Husbands were also warned:

> Do not, O men, seek another's bed; do not seize upon an unsuitable connection. Adultery is serious; it is an insult to nature. [...] Learn, O men, because a man wants to seduce another's wife, he longs to adopt the concubinage of this serpent, to which serpent he might surely be compared.[62]

Pierre de Beauvais also constructed a warning against improper sexual intercourse through a tropological reading of the antelope. One of the animal's *naturae* is that its horns are said to become tangled in the branches of a thicket, so that the animal is trapped and becomes easy prey for hunters. According to Pierre, the branches of this bush signify the branches of sin ('adultery, fornication, avarice, greed, pride, homicide, detraction, drunkenness, lust, and all other kinds of sin') which the faithful can avoid through knowledge of the Bible.[63] Furthermore, while many of the bestiary's moralisations concerning adultery were addressed to both men and women, others adopted a specifically anti-feminist stance. The final entry in the Latin second family bestiary, on the 'fire stones', addressed an exclusively

---

[59] *Sic omnis qui iuxta mandatum Dei versatur et caste vult vivere secat a se omnia vitia et omnes impudicitiae actus et proicit eos a se in faciem Diaboli.* Ibid., chap. 10.

[60] Ibid., chap. 9.

[61] Ibid., chap. 94.

[62] *Nolite quaerere viri torum alienum; nolite insidiari alienae copulae. Grave est adulterium; naturae inuria est.* [...] *Discite, O viri, quia alienam permollire quaerit uxorem, cuius serpentis sibi ascicere cupiat contubernium, cui etiam comparandus ipse serpenti sit.* Ibid., chap. 94.

[63] *Adultere, fornications, avarisce, envie, orguel, homecide, detractions, ivresce, luxure et tout autre maniere de pechiet.* Pierre de Beauvais, *Bestiary*, chap. 2.

male audience, admonishing 'you, O men of God, who value that life of yours, distance yourselves from women, lest, when you approach one another, the fire be kindled in you both and consume the good that Christ bestowed upon you'.[64]

Notably, the bestiary did not include any tropological interpretations of queer animal behaviour. In fact, the partridge's engagement in acts of homosexual intercourse was not used as the basis for any *significatio* whatsoever. While there is (limited and highly problematic) evidence for the use of the bird in fifteenth century heraldry as a visual symbol of homophobic mockery, there is nothing in the text of the bestiary itself that discursively links homosexual partridges with human sodomites.[65] Animals capable of changing their sex such as the hyena were allegorised as signifying the vice of inconstancy more generally than any meaning specific to unnatural intercourse:

> Thus, whoever among us is a slave to riotous living and avarice are compared to this beast, since they are neither men nor women, that is, they are neither faithful or unfaithful, but are, without a doubt, those about whom Solomon [sic] said, "A double-minded man is constant in all his ways" (Jas 1:8).[66]

The language of naturalisation was also absent from many of these accounts. In the Latin bestiaries, the partridge, hyena and hare were described as 'impure' [*immunda/immundum*] animals on account of their sexual behaviour or ability to change sex. The rhetoric of

---

[64] *Vos homines Dei qui istam vitam geritis separate vos long a feminis ne cum appropinquaeveritis ad invidem accendatur in vobis ignis illi geminus et consumat bona quae Christus contulit in vobis.* Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, chap. 123.

[65] The heraldic evidence concerns an episode in Nicholas Upton's *De studio militari* (1447). Upton related that his patron Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester granted a coat of arms bearing three partridges to an unnamed retainer as a veiled insult, insinuating through the imagery of the bird that the man was a sodomite. See Rodney Onslow Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1975), 50; Luuk Houwen, 'Animal Parallelism in Medieval Literature and the Bestiaries: A Prelimary Investigation', *Neophilologus* 78, no. 3 (1994): 489. However, Clive Cheesman argues that semiotic associations between the bird and sodomy – if they were even well-known at all outside of the circle of Upton and his readers – do not appear to have significantly impacted on its popularity in coats of arms. Clive Cheesman, 'Partridges: The History of a Prohibition', *The Coat of Arms* 4, no. 215 (2008): 50–52.

[66] *Quicumque ergo inter nos luxuriae et avariciae inserviunt huic beluae comparantur, cum nec viri nec feminae sint, id est, nec fideles nec perdifidi sunt, sed sunt sine dubio de quibus ait Salomon [sic], "Vir duplex animo inconstans est in omnibus viis suis" (Jas 1:8).* Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, chap. 12.

impurity was carried over into many French translations, which described the hyena as an 'unclean animal' [*orde beste*].[67] Guillaume le Clerc's adaptation was unusual in rendering the partridge's sexual transgression in the language of nature: according to him, the bird 'forgets the law of nature' [*il oblient dreite nature*].[68] Naturalising discourse was more commonly invoked in the context of heterosexual intercourse, such as in the case of the viper's adultery being 'not according to the law of kind' [*non iure generis*] and signifying human adultery being 'an insult to nature' [*naturae iniuria est*] and 'an adulteration of nature' [*naturae adulterium est*].

Several critics have analysed the ideology of sex in the bestiary and conclude that the genre consciously upheld normative sexual values.[69] Debra Hassig and Willene Clark further argue that textual changes in later recensions (such as a greater focus on moralisations concerning adultery) can be linked with an increasing 'secularisation' of the bestiary, with the text being reoriented around the pastoral needs of the laity rather than a previously monastic audience.[70] I agree that the bestiary was a fundamentally heteronormative text, although I am not convinced that it should be called secularised.[71]

---

[67] Philippe de Thaon, *Bestiaire*, l. 1192.

[68] Guillaume le Clerc, *Le Bestiaire*, l. 2354.

[69] Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries*, 169–80; Carmen Brown, 'Bestiary Lessons on Pride and Lust', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), 53–70; Debra Hassig, 'Sex in the Bestiaries', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), 71–98; Alison Syme, 'Taboos and the Holy in Bodley 764', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), 163–84; Ron Baxter, 'Learning From Nature: Lessons in Virtue and Vice in the *Physiologus* and Bestiaries', in *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 29–41; Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, 39–44.

[70] Other important studies on lay involvement in bestiary production and ownership include: Ron Baxter, 'A Baronial Bestiary: Heraldic Evidence for the Patronage of MS Bodley 764', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 196–200; Margaret Haist, 'The Lion, Bloodline, and Kingship', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), 3–22.

[71] See e.g. Ron Baxter's survey of Latin bestiary production and consumption in England, which demonstrates that the text was primarily used by monastic orders (primarily Benedictine but also Cistercians and Augustinians) in abbeys, cathedral priories and schools rather than by lay users. Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages*, 180.

However, I argue that the bestiary did not naturalise heteronormativity through animality, because it depicted animals as capable of engaging in queer sexual acts. Individual species of animals could model virtuous forms of sexual behaviour for humans to emulate, but animal sexuality and natural sexuality were not synonymous categories in Augustinian zoological discourse.

Animals and sex in Aristotelian zoology

New forms of animal discourses were introduced into medieval Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The first stage of this process involved a moment of intellectual transformation in the twelfth century which Marie-Dominique Chenu famously termed the 'discovery of nature'. During this period, closely linked with rising urbanisation in western Europe, the focal point for intellectual activity shifted from monasteries to new urban centres of learning including the schools, such as the institution founded at Chartres, and later also the universities.[72] Influenced by a stream of translations of Greco-Arabic philosophical and scientific texts, including many previously 'lost' Aristotelian works, the schoolmen began to reconceptualise nature as a valid subject of study in its own right and not simply as a tool of exegesis.

---

[72] Two of the most influential traditional accounts of the 'discovery of nature' are: Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 1–43 and Jacques Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 5–64. Recent scholarship has started to reassess this narrative: Jean Dunbabin, 'Jacques Le Goff and the Intellectuals', in *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History*, ed. Miri Rubin (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 157–67 critiques the extent to which the 'discovery of nature' can be characterised as a product of urbanisation, questioning the relationship between the scholars of these new centres of learning (drawn from primarily rural aristocratic backgrounds) and the artisanal and mercantile groups who were driving the growth of cities. Robertson, *Nature Speaks*, 43–44 expresses scepticism regarding the extent of real intellectual change in this period, arguing that the twelfth-century Neo-Platonists' conception had greater continuities with the older Augustinian model than has sometimes been acknowledged. In a similar vein, Stephen Epstein provocatively questions how far this constituted a broader cultural change in the relationship between European societies and the natural world, noting that the academic 'discovery of nature' excluded those with first-hand experience of working with plants and animals as being valid sources of authority. Stephen A. Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 15–19.

Within this new philosophical framework, knowledge acquired through reason [*scientia*] could be used to complement and reinforce divinely-revealed knowledge [*sapientia*]. Philosophers could draw upon the *scientia* contained in these new translations in order to challenge the arguments of older authorities. Adelard of Bath (c.1080-c.1152) elucidated one of the most radical examples of this critique as part of an imagined dialogue with his nephew in the *Questiones naturales*: 'About animals my conversation with you is difficult. For I have learnt one thing from my Arab masters, with reason as a guide, but you another: you follow a halter, being enthralled by the picture of authority.'[73] In this way, the 'discovery of nature' established the foundations for a new Aristotelian zoology in the thirteenth century which was critical of earlier zoological authorities. Moreover, within the new 'Chartrian spirit' of intellectual inquiry, the study of the natural world grew to be regarded as an important means of gaining knowledge about human beings: not merely as moral analogy, as per Ambrose, but also in terms of the physical properties shared in common between humans, other forms of life, and inorganic phenomena.[74]

The process of transformation that had started in the twelfth century accelerated in the following century. During this time, Aristotle's zoological treatises (*Historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium* and *De generatione animalium* – collectively called *De animalibus*), were translated twice: first by Michael Scot, who produced a complete translation from an Arabic intermediary copy before 1220, and secondly by William of Moerbeke, who produced a partial translation from a Greek copy in 1260.[75] Translations of commentaries by Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) were also made around this time, further

---

[73] *De animalibus difficilis est mea tecum dissertio. Ego enim aliud a magistris Arabicis ratione duce didici; tu vero aliud, auctoritatis pictura captus, capistrum sequeris.* Adelard of Bath, 'Questiones Naturales', in *Adelard of Bath, Conversations with His Nephew: 'On the Same and the Different', 'Questions on Natural Science' and 'On Birds'*, ed. and trans. Charles Burnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 102–3.

[74] Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, 55–57.

[75] Michael Scot was heavily criticised by his contemporaries, including Albert the Great, for misunderstanding many of Aristotle's theories. Nevertheless, his translation of *De animalibus* was the most popular medieval version of the text and was used by Albert as the basis for his commentary. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. II (New York: Macmillan Press, 1923), 314–15. On issues with Scot's translation, see Aafke M.I. van Oppenraay, 'Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation of Aristotle's "Books on Animals". Some Remarks Concerning the Relation Between the Translation and Its Arabic and Greek Sources', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 31–43.

contributing to the transmission of Aristotelian zoology from the eastern to western spheres.[76] Although *De animalibus* was not the most widely-read of Aristotle's works, it still acquired a comfortable position on the syllabi of the universities. The text was listed as required reading on the arts curriculum at Paris in 1255.[77] At Oxford, it was also recorded as required reading for bachelors who wished to incept in the early fourteenth century.[78] In addition to *De animalibus*, Aristotle's zoological thought was also present in many of his more influential treatises such as *De anima*, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Physics*. Together, these texts formed the basis for a new discursive approach to animality that can be identified as Aristotelian or Scholastic in character.[79] Scholasticism as a movement was closely (although not exclusively) associated with the new mendicant orders, and

---

[76] Stefano Perfetti, *Aristotle's Zoology and Its Renaissance Commentators (1521-1601)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 6; On the broader impact of Aristotle's *DA* on high medieval philosophy, see Theodor Wolfram Köhler, 'Die Wissenschaftstheroetische und Inhaltliche Bedeutung der Rezeption von *De animalibus* für den Philosophisch-Anthropologischen Diskurs im 13. Jahrhundert', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 249–74.

[77] H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, eds., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. I (Paris: Delalain, 1889), 278.

[78] James A. Weisheipl, 'Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts at Oxford in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 161; On the broader reception of *DA* in Britain during this period, see Charles Burnett, 'The Introduction of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy Into Great Britain: A Preliminary Survey of the Manuscript Evidence', in *Aristotle in Britain During the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the International Conference at Cambridge, 8th-11th April 1994, Organised by the Société Internationale Pour l'Étude de La Philosophie Médiévale*, ed. John Marenbon (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 21–50.

[79] For a further overview of the circulation of Aristotelian natural philosophy, see Sybil Douglas Wingate, *The Mediaeval Latin Versions of the Aristotelian Scientific Corpus, with Special Reference to the Biological Works* (London: Courier Press, 1931); Pieter De Leemans and Matthew Klemm, 'Animals and Anthropology in Medieval Philosophy', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brigitte Resl (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 153–78; Michael H. Shank, 'Natural Knowledge in the Latin Middle Ages', in *Wrestling with Nature: From Omens to Science*, ed. Peter Harrison, Ronald L. Numbers, and Michael H. Shank (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 83–115.

individuals from these groups would go on to produce the most influential works of Aristotelian synthesis and commentary.[80]

Far and above the most prominent figure in the new zoological discourse was Albert the Great (c.1193-1280). Albert's career exemplified the geographic mobility of thirteenth-century intellectual culture: born in Germany, probably in Lauingen, and generally believed to have entered the Dominican Order while studying in Padua, he later taught at the University of Paris during the 1240s, and was appointed as regent to the new Dominican *studium generale* in Cologne in 1248.[81] From c.1250 onwards, Albert embarked on a systematic project of writing commentaries on the entirety of the Aristotelian corpus. Using Michael Scot's translation as a base, he began his commentary on *De animalibus* c.1256-60 and completed it by c.1263-68.[82] While at Cologne, Albert delivered a disputation on the text in c.1257, a record of which was preserved by Conrad of Austria under the title *Quaestiones super de animalibus* in c.1260; this text provides supplementary evidence for Albert's zoological thought.[83] Witnessed in over forty manuscripts, including a possible autograph (Cologne, Historisches Archiv W258a), Albert's *De animalibus* was by far the most widely-read European commentary on Aristotle's text.[84] It is therefore one of the most important sources for medieval Aristotelian discourse on sex and animality.

---

[80] On the role of the Dominicans and Franciscans in the development of Scholastic science, see Roger French and Andrew Cunningham, *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

[81] Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, 'Introduction: The Life and Works of Albert the Great', in *On Animals: A Medieval 'Summa Zoologica'*, trans. Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, vol. I (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 3–17. For a comprehensive summary of biographical scholarship on Albert, see Irven Michael Resnick and Kenneth F Kitchell Jr., *Albert the Great: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography (1900-2000)* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), 1–33.

[82] On the controversy over the dating of DA, see Kitchell Jr. and Resnick, 'Introduction: The Life and Works of Albert the Great', 35.

[83] Albert the Great, 'Quaestiones Super de Animalibus', in *Sancti Doctoris Ecclesiae Alberti Magni Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Episcopi Opera Omnia*, ed. Ephrem Filthaut and Bernhard Geyer, vol. XII (Aschendorff: Monasterii Westfalorum, 1955), 77–309. For an English translation, see Albert the Great, *Questions Concerning Aristotle's 'On Animals'*, trans. Irven Michael Resnick and Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

[84] However, Albert's was not the only Latin commentary, nor even the first. For instance, Peter of Spain wrote his own commentary on *DA* in 1246-1249. Miguel de Asúa, 'Medicine and Philosophy

A concise summary of Albert's zoological methodology can be found in the alternative opening to *De animalibus* recorded in an early manuscript, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Cod. Vat. lat. 718 (c.1262-63). Albert began by asserting the commonalities between all living beings:

> All animals share in all these things which are known about animals, even though they may differ in the types of principles. Therefore, there should be one investigation concerning the entire diversity of animals, both according to their genuses and their species. For their principles are the same, whether they be of generation, of life, of nourishment, or of their lifestyles, even though they may differ in the method in which they participate in these principles.[85]

Albert then further outlined the structure of his treatise:

> This investigation ought, moreover, to be dealt with in two ways, for the things to be examined should first be set down and then the causes of the things to be examined should be investigated. For in every philosophy one should hold to this method. [...] Therefore, it is for this reason that we are distributing our investigation on animals in the following fashion. First, we will be speaking of all the known differences of animals in their members, generation, food, customs, and other things. Afterward we will set out in order all the causes of these differences.[86]

---

in Peter of Spain's Commentary on *De animalibus*', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 189–211.

[85] *Quia vero in omnibus his que sciuntur de animalibus omnia communicant animalia, licet differant in modis principiorum, ideo unam scientiam oportet esse de tota animalium diversitate tam secundum genera quam secundum species ipsorum. Quia enim principia o⌈sorum eadem sunt sive sint generationis sive vite sive nutrimenti sive regiminis vite ipsorum, licet differant in modis participandi principia illa.* Albert the Great, *On Animals: A Medieval 'Summa Zoologica'*, trans. Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, vol. II (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), appendix. Several folios have been lost from the beginning of Albert's autograph manuscript. Hermann Stadler used the revised version of the opening found in later copies for his critical edition of the text. The Latin text here is taken from; Franz Pelster, 'Die Ersten Beiden Kapitel Der Erklärung Alberts Des Großen Zu De Animalibus in Ihrer Ursprünglichen Fassung, Nach Cod. Vat. Lat. 718', *Scholastik* 10 (1935): 233.

[86] *Hanc autem scientiam totam duobus modis tradi oportet, quoniam prius ponenda sunt quesita et deinde investigande sunt cause quesitorum. In omni enim philosophia hunc oportet tenere modum [...] Hac igitur de causa*

In this way, he established the epistemological distinction between the old Augustinian zoological discourse and the new Scholastic zoology. Whereas authors in the Augustinian tradition had compiled lists of animal signifiers for the purpose of exegesis, Albert presented data on animals in a systematic manner as a starting point for theorising the general principles of anatomy and behaviour.[87] Moreover, instead of foregrounding the semiotic meaning of animal natures, Albert sought to investigate and explain their physical causes.[88]

Another crucial aspect of Albert's methodology lay in his emphasis on the human as a species of animal, embodied in his frequently-used formulation 'humans and other animals' [*homines et alia animalia*], and on the importance of comparative zoological study, which built upon the twelfth-century re-conceptualisation of human beings as part of nature. This comparative approach did not disrupt the dominant position of the human over other forms of life:

> The human is the most worthy of the animals and has, with respect to number and shape, more perfect members than any of the others [...] A human is more diversely

---

etiam nostram scientiam de animalibus sic distribuimus, ut primo dicamus omnes notas animalium diversitates in membris et generatione et cibo et moribus et aliis et postea omnium diversitatum per ordinem causas disseramus. Ibid.

[87] On the Aristotelian methodology of compiling zoological data and the way in which this has been misinterpreted by modern critics as 'poor taxonomic practices', see Michael W. Tkacz, 'Albert the Great and the Interpretation of Aristotle's *Historia animalium*', in *Proceedings of the Patristic, Mediaeval and Renaissance Conference 18*, ed. Karl A. Gersbach, Frederick van Fleteren, and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (Augustinian Historical Institute: Villanova, 1996), 217–27. See also: Benedict M. Ashley, 'St. Albert and the Nature of Natural Science', in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980*, ed. James A. Weisheipl (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 73–102; Joan Cadden, 'Albertus Magnus' Universal Physiology: The Example of Nutrition', in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980*, ed. James A. Weisheipl (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 321–39.

[88] For a further overview on Albert's zoological thought, see Heinrich Balss, *Albertus Magnus als Biologe* (Stuttgart: Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H., 1947); Christian Hünemörder, 'Die Zoologie des Albertus Magnus', in *Albertus Magnus Doctor Universalis 1280/1980*, ed. Gerbert Meyer and Albert Zimmerman (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1980), 235–48. For a discussion of the influence of Aristotle's zoology on Albert prior to his commentary on *DA*, see Henryk Anzulewicz, 'Die Aristotelische Biologie in den Frühwerken des Albertus Magnus', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 159–88.

composite than is any other animal, for his being is only held together by and composed of a great diversity of organs, and his complexion is further from an excess of opposites than is that of any other animal.[89]

However, the perfection of humans did not disprove their status as animals, but rather lent credibility to the methodology of comparative study: 'further, that which is more imperfect can be known better from those that are perfect and well-known, and the human's [members] are better known to us than the others'.[90] In this manner, Albert asserted the importance of zoological science for thinking about human nature and vice versa.

The third significant feature of Albert's zoology was his commitment to Aristotelian empiricism and the evidence of experience, which resulted in a critical approach to the authority of older texts. Repeatedly throughout *De animalibus*, Albert critiqued the accounts of animal natures given by his textual sources such as Pliny, Jorach, and on occasion even Aristotle, if they were contradicted by observations of the animals in question made by Albert or his contemporary informers, or otherwise could be disproved by deductive reasoning from known physiological principles. Albert's empiricism must not be mischaracterised as resembling modern experimental scientific practice: as Pauline Aiken has shown, the majority of Albert's corpus of zoological data, especially in books 22-26 of *De animalibus*, was reproduced with minimal alteration from Thomas of Cantimpré's *De natura rerum* (1225-1244).[91] However, as James Rochester Shaw argues, the radical potential of his method lay not in his role as an experimental scientist, but rather in the challenge that his emphasis on sense experience and critique of zoological authority posed to the transcendental model of the natural world endorsed by medieval Neo-Platonism.[92]

---

[89] *Homo dignissimum est animalium et perfectiora membra habet secundum numerum et figuram quam aliquod aliorum [...] Homo magis est compositus ex diversis quam aliquod aliorum animalium: no enim figitur et componitur esse suum nisi ex diversitate magna organorum: et sua complexio magis recedit ab excellentia contrariorum quam complexio alicuius alterius animalis.* Albert the Great, *On Animals: A Medieval 'Summa Zoologica'*, trans. Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, vol. I (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 1.107-108; Albert the Great, *De Animalibus Libri XXVI*, ed. Hermann Stadler, vol. I (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916).

[90] *Ex perfectis enim bene cognitis melius poterunt et imperfectiora cognosci: notiora etiam sunt nobis humana quam aliena.* Albert, *De animalibus*, 1.107.

[91] Pauline Aiken, 'The Animal History of Albertus Magnus and Thomas of Cantimpré', *Speculum* 22, no. 2 (1947): 205–25.

[92] James Rochester Shaw, 'Scientific Empiricism in the Middle Ages: Albertus Magnus on Sexual Anatomy and Physiology', *Clio Medica* 10, no. 1 (1975): 53–64.

This challenge to authority in turn supported the text's Scholastic focus on the systematic study of physical causation and enabled a critique of dominant beliefs about animal sexuality transmitted through Augustinian zoology.[93]

Having outlined Albert's methodology, we can now begin to understand his representation of sexuality. Albert regarded copulation in a positive light as an act which preserved the stability of the natural world. He drew upon on the concept of *telos* (τέλος), meaning the ultimate end or purpose for an object, from Aristotle's *Physics* to explain the function of reproduction.[94] Albert argued that the *telos* of living beings was the preservation of their continued existence on the level of the individual (through the pursuit of nourishment and safety) and the species (through the production of new individual members of the species via generation).[95] His pupil Thomas Aquinas would go on to develop this interpretation of *telos* in the *Summa theologiae* (1265-74), wherein it constituted one of the five proofs for the existence of God: if all non-intelligent things acted towards an end, and since non-intelligent things (including non-rational animals) could not move towards an end unless directing by a being possessing intelligence, there must therefore be an intelligent creator responsible for the ends of such living beings.[96]

Albert himself did not go so far in *De animalibus*, but nevertheless he regarded the fulfilment of animals' *teloi* through reproduction as a foundation of the natural order and a fulfilment of God's intention for living beings. Citing Constantine the African, he asserted that 'the Creator, wishing the race of animals to remain in a stable and fixed manner and not to perish, saw to it that the race would be renewed both through intercourse and through generation, so that it would not take its renewal from total destruction'.[97] To ensure that animals are driven to perform intercourse in spite of the physical pains of

---

[93] While Albert did not directly reference the *Physiologus* or bestiary, his critique embodied a response to the broader Augustinian discourse of sex and animality, of which the bestiary was a representative text. As a result, *De animalibus* can be productively read as part of a wider intellectual dialogue on the naturalisation of sexuality.

[94] Aristotle, *Physics*, eds. and trans. P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford, vol. I, LCL 228 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), II.3, 195a.

[95] Albert, *De animalibus,* 16.1-3.

[96] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. and trans. Thomas Gilby et al (London: Blackfriars, 1964-1975), 1a 2, 3.

[97] *Creator enim sicut in libro de Coitu dicit Constantinus Cassinensis volens animalium genus firmiter ac stabiliter permanere, et non perire, per coitum illud ac per generationem disposuit renovari, ut renovatum non ex toto haberet interitum.* Albert, *De animalibus,* 22.1.

pregnancy and childbirth which might otherwise deter them, God endowed a sense of pleasure on the sexual act. This is demonstrated by the fact that all animals' penises, irrespective of the diversity of their form and composition, possess a capacity for the sense of touch which enables pleasurable sensations.[98] Heterosexual intercourse was therefore not inherently negative, but instead contributed to a living being's natural and God-given aim of preserving itself and its species. As Leopold Brandl argues, Albert's positive stance on sexuality was pushing back against the 'sexual pessimism' of much prior Augustinian theology which had regarded all forms of intercourse as irredeemably sinful.[99] In the Aristotelian worldview, sex became regarded not as inherently sinful but as a productive and positive act. Zoological discourse formed an important part of this reassessment of sex.

Albert's account of reproduction followed the standard Aristotelian methodological roadmap, beginning with a description of the simplest forms of generation used by 'hard-shelled animals' [*animalium durae testae*] (e.g. insects and other arthropods) and moving onto increasingly complex forms used by 'quadrupeds' and other more perfect animals, culminating in a description of human reproduction.[100] He observed that all animals which copulate (i.e. excluding 'vermin' [*vermis*] which reproduce through spontaneous generation) possess either a male or female sex.[101] Albert did recognise the existence of 'hermaphrodites' [*ermafroditi*] which possessed both male and female members; however, he emphasised that in species which otherwise reproduced through copulation, intersex individuals were accidental exceptions whose causes lay in specific irregularities in the physical process of generation.[102] In this way, his theory of sexual reproduction was underpinned by a binary model of biological sex.

---

[98] Ibid., 2.42.

[99] Leopold Brandl, *Die Sexualethik Des Heiligen Albertus Magnus* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1955).

[100] Albert, *De animalibus,* 5.1-7.

[101] Ibid., 5.3-6.

[102] Ibid., 18.65-69. 'Hermaphrodite' is considered disrespectful when used to refer to humans born with ambiguous primary or secondary sex characteristics; the term 'intersex' is preferred by activists and healthcare professionals who advocate for the rights of this marginalised group. Out of respect for this modern context, I will be using 'intersex' in this chapter except in quotations from the medieval sources.

Albert explained the psychological motivation for sexual intercourse in terms of the Aristotelian concept of the 'appetite' (Greek ὄρεξις/*orexis,* Latin *appetitus*). According to Aristotle, the appetite denoted the motivating power of the soul to drive motion in an ensouled body.[103] Within the Aristotelian model, there were three types of soul ascribed to living beings: the vegetative/nutritive soul (possessed by all plants, animals and humans); the sensitive/animal soul (possessed by all human and non-human animals); and the rational/intellectual soul, which only humans possessed. All living beings with sensitive souls were motivated by sensitive appetites towards certain acts of nourishment and generation which would fulfil their *teloi.* The drive towards reproduction was a key part of this sensitive appetite. Therefore, for Albert, the 'natural inclination' [*naturae inclinationem*] that drove the turtledove towards its imitation of chastity was a form of 'imaginative appetite' [*appetitus ymaginativus*] which, along with spirit [*spiritus*], humour [*humor*] and 'windiness' [*ventositas*], formed the biological processes which caused an animal to feel sexual arousal as a necessary prerequisite to intercourse.[104] In humans, the feeling of arousal and subsequent experience of pleasure during sex was heightened due to their unparalleled cognitive capacity to understand the future outcome of acts as a result of possessing a rational soul as well as a sensitive soul. Therefore, a woman perceiving the form of a man to whom she was attracted (or vice versa) experienced not only the physiological processes of arousal, common to all animals, but also the intellectual process of anticipating the pleasure of intercourse.

In the same way that animals were driven by their 'sensitive appetite' towards certain forms of intercourse, they were also motivated to avoid other sexual acts. Here, Albert was particularly interested by the ways in which certain animals were driven to avoid incestuous copulation. He recalled two anecdotes from Aristotle concerning humans compelling animals to engage in incest against their natures. In the first story, he explained how camels have a 'natural ability' [*ingenio naturali*] to recognise their mothers and avoid incest with them, and that:

> In a certain city a person wished to trick a camel into having relations with its
> mother. He covered the mother up when her son was in rut and then raised up the

---

[103] Aristotle, 'On the Soul', in *On the Soul. Parva Naturalia. On Breath.*, ed. and trans. W.S. Hett, LCL 288 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), III.9, 432a-433a.

[104] Albert, *De animalibus,* 22.2-3.

offspring over its mother. When it had begun copulation, but before it had finished, it dismounted, turned on the author of this crime, and bit him to death.[105]

He recounted a similar tale concerning horses:

> It is said that one of the kings of the Aquilonares had a most beautiful mare which bore a most beautiful colt. When the king wished to produce and to breed another beautiful animal from the mother and son, he saw to it that the mother was mounted by her son. The mother had been covered so that she would not be recognised by her son, and he then had relations with his mother. Afterward, however, the son saw that the mare he had copulated with had been his mother and he flew off, running without direction and, in shame over the crime he had committed, threw himself to his death from a high place.[106]

These stories raised a troubling philosophical issue. Albert had grappled elsewhere with the problem of whether non-human animals could make distinctions among particulars, or if this was a function of reason that was beyond their capacities.[107] While he did not acknowledge this in his account of the camel and horse in *De animalibus*, he resolved this issue in his c.1257 disputation where he covered the same material. Here, he argued that 'differentiation among individual intentions can be made by estimation, just as a bird differentiates between grain and a stone, and a sheep between a wolf and a lamb or a man'.[108] Therefore, the drive of the camel and horse to avoid incest was not the result not of rational choice but of innate impulse. Although Albert did not directly address homosexual intercourse in animals, a living being's sensitive appetite should also guide it

---

[105] *In quadam civitate quidam per ingenium volebat efficere, quod filius camelus cognoscerent matrem suam, et cooperuit matrem quando filius erat in desiderio coitus, et tunc elevavit pullum supra matrem, et cum incepisset coire cum matre, antequam completetur coitus, descendit et convertens se ad auctorem huius sceleris mordendo interfecit eum.* Ibid., 8.209.

[106] *Fertur autem, quod quidam regum Aquilonarium habebat equam pulcherrimam, quae peperit equum pulcherrimum: et cum rex ex matre et filio vellet extrahere alium pulchrum et ingeniari fecit quod mater saltaretur a filio, et cooperta fuit mater ut non agnosceretur a filio, et tunc filius cognovit matrem. Postea autem videns filius, quod mater eius erat, cum qua coiverat, currendo vagabatur et fugit et ab alto se praecipitavit et mortuus est pro sceleris verecundia quod admiserat.* Ibid., 8.210.

[107] Oelze, *Animal Rationality*, 70–77.

[108] *Immo per aestimationem potest fieri discretio inter intentiones individuales, sicut avis discernit inter granum et lapidem et ovis inter lupum et agnum vel hominem.* Albert, *Quaestiones super de animalibus,* 8.39.

away from engaging in intercourse with other inappropriate sexual partners, such as another individual of the same sex.

Having established appetite as a physiological cause for animal sexual behaviour, Albert firmly rejected the notion that animals could participate in the same moral system of virtue and vice as humans. Here, he elaborated on the concept of the *regimen vitae*, drawing from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in his comparison of the moral capacity of humans and non-human animals.[109] *Regimen vitae* denoted living an ordered life, governed by rationality, in pursuit of the fulfilment of an individual's intended function. One of the main component parts of living an ordered life entailed the contemplation of truth, to which ethics was ordered. This involved subordinating one's passions to moral virtue, regulating one's actions to equity under the law, and directing one's intellect through reason. However, as humans were the only living beings to possess reason, non-human animals could not participate in the *regimen vitae* but rather only 'in some sort of imitation, for the principle of their actions does not possess virtue but rather some natural inclination to a likeness of virtue'.[110] So, while he recognised that a turtledove could 'imitate' chastity, this was not understood to mean that the bird could literally behave virtuously as the bestiary had claimed, on account that it lacked the necessary cognitive capacity.[111] Only humans had the capability to distinguish virtue from vice, whereas animals merely lived in pursuit of what was 'useful and pleasurable' [*utilia et delectabilia*].[112] Likewise, where the bestiary had characterised animals' sexual practices in the language of marriage, such as the elephant's fidelity and aversion to 'adultery', Albert emphasised that only humans could enter into the institution of marriage, on account of their unparalleled capacity for social organisation and

---

[109] Albert, *De animalibus,* 1.53-58. c.f. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. and trans. H. Rackham, LCL 73 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926), I.9, 1099b-1100a.

[110] *Animalia igitur regimen vitae participantia non participant ipsum nisi secundum imitationis modum: non enim principium suarum operationum habent virtutem, sed quamdam naturae inclinationem ad virtutis similitudinem.* Albert, *De animalibus,* 1.54.

[111] On different Scholastic approaches to non-human animals' capacity for reason, see Oelze, *Animal Rationality*, especially 132-161. Oelze argues that although no medieval philosopher granted animals the status of fully rational beings, there were ambiguous 'grey zones' in medieval understandings of animal sensory experience and cognition which permitted authors to explore the possibility of liminal cases of non-human subjectivity. For a comparable early modern study, see Erica Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[112] Albert, *De animalibus,* 22.11.

intellectual cognition: 'only the human is a perfectly conjugal animal since he makes honourable marriages ordained by laws'.[113] This did not by itself deny the potential tropological value of stories about animal behaviour as a form of metaphor, but it did present a radical alternative to the form of Augustinian zoological discourse which had located animals within the same moral framework as humans.[114]

Albert further critiqued specific Augustinian beliefs about queer animality on the grounds that they were inconsistent with Aristotelian principles of anatomy and behaviour. He disputed the claim that certain animals, such as the octopus, were capable of oral insemination:

> There are those who feel that the males of such animals have a thing like a penis on the end of their foot [...] and that the male places this member in the female's mouth, and that its copulation is accomplished in this fashion. But this cannot be, for no animal whatever copulates through the mouth, because the mouth is for the taking in of food, whereas the place for the emission of the semen which is digested and purified last can only be some pore located at the end of the body, so that the semen, received there after dripping through the entire body, might have the universal power of the body in itself.[115]

Albert likewise condemned the belief that female partridges could be impregnated merely by the scent of the males on account of his own experience: 'They then copulate as do a rooster and a hen. This has been seen very often in parts of Germany, even in domesticated partridges, which I have watched with my very own eyes.'[116] Further, Albert regarded cases of entire species that could supposedly change their biological sex (as

---

[113] *Solus homo perfecte coniugale est animal eo quod honestas legibus ordinatas facit nuptias*. Ibid., 22.12.

[114] For further discussion of the necessity of reason for inclusion in the natural moral order in Albert's philosophy, see Ernest J. McCullough, 'Nature and Natural Law in Albert', in *Philosophy and the God of Abraham: Essays in Memory of James A. Weisheipl, OP* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1991), 129–46.

[115] *Sunt tamen quidam opinantes, quod in talibus animalibus mares in extremo pede habent similie virgae [...] et quod illud membrum mas ponit in os feminae, et quod sic perficitur coitus eius. Et hoc stare non potest: quia nichil omnino coit per os, eo quod os est ad recipiendum cibum sed locus emissionis seminis ultimo digesti et depurati non potest esse nisi porus aliquis in extremitate corporis existens, ut semen ibi receptum per totum corpus distillando virtutem universalem corporis in se habeat.* Albert, *De animalibus,* 5.19.

[116] *Coeunt sicut gallus et gallina: et hoc saepissime visum est in partibus Germaniae etiam in domesticis perdicibus, quas ego ipse vidi oculis propriis.* Ibid., 5.18.

opposed to individual examples of intersex animals) to be the result of flawed observation, as in the case of the hare:

> What they believe about the hare, which the Arabs call the *adhab* – namely, that it has each set of members on alternate months – is not true. Rather, it has beneath its tail certain lines which resemble the clefts of vulvas and these lines are always found in both males and females. Avicenna even says that these clefts increase in number according to the number of the years of its life and that thus one was captured which the hunters believed had eight vulvas. But this is nonetheless false, for those lines are found both in males and females alike, but since males are caught more often, it is more often thought that they are hermaphrodites than any others.[117]

The kinds of queer animal behaviours which featured prominently in Augustinian zoological texts were in this way regarded as factually suspect and inconsistent with Aristotelian scientific principles.

Overall, Albert's *De animalibus* achieved the goal of explaining the origin of reproduction and heterosexual desire in humans and non-human animals via an Aristotelian framework of appetites of the soul which motivated living beings towards appropriate intercourse and away from inappropriate sexual acts, in order to fulfil their ultimate function of continuing the species through generation. This Aristotelian biological model rendered the notion of a 'queer animal' conceptually impossible. In order to engage in unnatural intercourse, one had to be able to act against the natural appetites which motivated all animals towards normative sexual acts. Humans, being the only living creatures able to exercise reason, were therefore the only creatures capable of performing non-reproductive sexual acts. Despite his understanding that animals could not freely engage in unnatural sexual behaviours, Albert did not attribute this to any inclination of virtue on their part. He rejected the notion of non-human animals engaging in a shared system of virtue and vice with humans. In this respect, he might have perhaps found the notion of his zoological works being appropriated for the purposes of naturalisation to be

---

[117] *Hoc autem quod aestimant de lepore, quem* adhab *Arabes vocant quod habeant utrumque mebrum per vices mensium, non est verum, sed sub cauda habet quasdam lineas fissuris vulvarum similes quae lineae semper invenitur in maribus et feminis. Et dicit Avicenna quod secundum numerum annorum aetatis suae multiplicantur illae fissurae, ita quod aliquis captus est de quo venatores putabant quod octo vulvas haberet. Falsum tamen est: quia illae lineae inveniuntur et in maribus et in feminis aequaliter, sed quiae pluries deprehenduntur mares, magis putatur de eis quod sint ermofroditi quam de aliis.* Ibid., 17.38.

philosophically troubling. Nevertheless, after the thirteenth century, the new Scholastic model of sexuality grounded in zoological knowledge held the radical potential to enable naturalisation of normative sex through animality in ways which had not been conceptually possible under a framework of Augustinian zoology. This had been enabled by the rediscovery of Aristotle's animal texts and their popularisation through commentators such as Albert.

Naturalisation and normativity in the controversy over clerical celibacy

Although Scholastic philosophers such as Albert the Great introduced a new form of zoological discourse in the thirteenth century, this did not constitute a complete 'paradigm shift'. As much recent medieval scholarship demonstrates, notably in the research of Mary Franklin-Brown and Kellie Robertson, Aristotelian Scholasticism did not replace Augustinian Neo-Platonism, but rather the two intellectual approaches co-existed and influenced each other in late medieval intellectual and cultural spheres.[118] Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.6.5 (c.1425), one of the final bestiary manuscripts to be produced in England, attested to this intellectual dialogue.[119] This text, known as the only example of the 'fourth family' bestiary recension, appropriated material from the Franciscan Bartholomew the Englishman's Scholastic encyclopaedia *De proprietatibus rerum* (c.1245) and recontextualised it within the traditional genre conventions and stylisations of the bestiary. In their studies of CUL MS Gg.6.5, Baudouin van den Abeele and Elizabeth Keen argue that the otherwise opaque function of this manuscript can be more readily understood if we recognise that that contemporary readers would not have made such a clear distinction between the epistemological function of an Augustinian bestiary and a Scholastic encyclopaedia that we as modern scholars would identify.[120] In light of the

---

[118] Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 33–56; Robertson, *Nature Speaks*, 43–50.

[119] As Baxter notes, the production of new Latin bestiary manuscripts had all but ceased by the 1400s. 90% of all manuscripts were produced before 1300 and most of the remaining 10% were produced in the first half of the fourteenth century. Only one other survivng manuscript (Det Kongelige Bibliotek GKS 1633 4°) dates from the fifteenth century. Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages*, 169.

[120] Baudouin van den Abeele, 'Un Bestiaire Latin à la Croisée des Genres. Le Manuscrit Cambridge UL Gg.6.5 ("Quatrième Famille" du Bestiaire Latin)', *Reinardus* 13 (2000): 215–36; Elizabeth Keen, 'Separate or Together? Questioning the Relationship Between the Encyclopedia and Bestiary Traditions', *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 2 (2006): 121–139. Luuk Houwen

citations of the *Physiologus* and the bestiary in late medieval sermons[121] and vernacular literature[122], it is evident that these texts retained cultural prestige long after production of new manuscripts and textual recensions had been halted. Moreover, the literary convention of using animal signifiers as exegetical types to represent sins found a home in the genre of treatises on vice and virtue, such as in Richard Lavynham's *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins* (late fourteenth century) where the hog denoted the vice of lust.[123] It is therefore unsurprising that the compiler of CUL MS Gg.6.5 would have seen value in recontextualising the Aristotelian zoological knowledge of *De proprietatibus rerum* into the older Augustinian format.

Late medieval commentators likewise read Aristotle's zoology through the lens of tropology and typology in the same manner as the bestiary. Van den Abeele describes a moralised version of Aristotle's *De animalibus*, originally composed in the mid-fourteenth century and witnessed in three English manuscripts.[124] In this text, descriptions of individual animals' behaviour are given an exegetical commentary. Out of 490 separate moralisations, 52 relate to the sin of luxury, continuing the medieval tradition of regarding the animal signifier as a valuable ideological construct for thinking about sexuality. Likewise, Aafke van Oppenraay has found numerous exegetical and moralising marginal glosses in other manuscripts of *De animalibus*.[125] As with van den Abeele's moralised

---

pursues a similar line of inquiry while focusing on other recensions in: Houwen, 'Animal Parallelism in Medieval Literature and the Bestiaries'.

[121] Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, cited the authority of the bestiary on the lark and the peacock in two sermons delivered in 1375. Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, II vols., Camden Society Third Series 85-86 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1954), vol. I no. 48 and vol.II no.70.

[122] c.f. 'For Phisiologus seith sikerly / how that they [mermaids] syngen wel and myrily'. Chaucer, 'Nun's Priest's Tale,' *Canterbury Tales*, fragment 7, lines 4461-2.

[123] Richard Lavynham, *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. J.P.W.M. Van Zutphen (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1956), 22.

[124] Baudouin van den Abeele, 'Une Version Moralisée du *De animalibus* d'Aristote (XIVe Siècle)', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Louvain: University of Louvais Press, 1999), 338–54. Van den Abeele noted that he had found very little prior scholarship on this text in the course of his research. As of 2019, I am not aware of any other publications since his that discuss this text.

[125] Aafke M.I. van Oppenraay, 'The Reception of Aristotle's *History of Animals* in the Marginalia of Some Latin Manuscripts of Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation', *Early Science and Medicine* 8, no. 4 (2003): 387–403.

Aristotle, many of these glosses interpreted the natures of animal signifiers as illustrations of virtue or vice. These examples demonstrate that contemporary thinkers did not see Augustinian and Aristotelian zoological discourses as necessarily mutually exclusive. However, the moralisation of Aristotelian zoology is an underexplored topic which deserves deeper scholarly attention in a future study.

In addition to acknowledging the blurred boundaries between Augustinian and Aristotelian approaches to knowledge, any assessment of the long-term impact of Scholastic zoological discourse must also reckon with the fact of Aristotle's complicated position in relation to the medieval Church. While many scholars had eagerly accepted his newly rediscovered works, there was also significant institutional resistance to Aristotelianism. Writing in the 1280s but looking backwards towards the 1270s, the English Franciscan John Peckham observed a deep doctrinal split opening up at the University of Paris between those associated with Augustinian orthodoxy and those who adopted a more radical Aristotelian stance.[126] Matters came to a head in 1277 when Étienne Tempier, bishop of Paris, issued a condemnation against Aristotelian scholarship at the university, prohibiting the teaching and discussion of 219 propositions thought to be incompatible with orthodox Christian belief.[127] This text had serious implications for Aristotelian theories of sexuality: for instance, many of the condemnations criticised the notion that human agency was subject to compulsion by appetites and took aim at the apology for fornication which the Scholastic model of divinely-ordained generation supposedly entailed.[128] Although some historians such as David Knowles have argued that the 1277 Condemnation limited further scientific innovation, David Luscombe contends that while the output of new scientific scholarship did slow down after the thirteenth century, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were characterised by a significantly greater penetration of philosophical and scientific ideas into broader cultural discourses outside of the universities.[129] In any case, the continued circulation of Aristotle's *De animalibus*, Albert's commentary, and other works drawing on these authorities throughout northern Europe attests to the ongoing relevance and reception of Aristotelian zoological discourse.

---

[126] Franz Ehrle, 'John Peckham Über den Kampf des Augustinismus und Aristotelismus in der Zweiten Hälfte des 13. Jhs.', *Zeitschrift Für Katholische Theologie* 13 (1889): 172–93.

[127] A critical edition of the condemnation can be found in: Étienne Tempier, *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277*, ed. and trans. David Piché and Claude Lafleur (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999).

[128] See e.g. propositions 113-169 and 205-210.

[129] David Luscombe, *Medieval Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 133–36.

That such zoological discourse was able to survive despite its troubled relationship with theological orthodoxy was in no small part due to its ideological expediency. Much recent scholarship, building on the theoretical contributions of Michel Foucault concerning the relationship between knowledge and power in societies, argues that the development of new intellectual formations of nature in the later Middle Ages can be explained in part as a reaction to the rise of heterodox religious movements. These scientific discourses were then co-opted by the hegemonic institutions of the Church in service of enforcing doctrinal discipline. For example, Roger French and Andrew Cunningham interpret the Scholastic model of nature as a response to dualist heresy: in promoting the study of the natural world as a means through which to reach a deeper understanding of the divine nature of God, the Aristotelians offered a counterargument to refute the notion that the material world is irredeemably corrupt and sinful.[130] In this way, the Dominican Order's programme of education grounded in Aristotelian learning, particularly in regions with Cathar sympathies, formed the basis by which to impose cultural hegemony through ideology (as per Antonio Gramsci), as a counterpart to the imposition of orthodoxy through martial violence via the Albigensian Crusade.[131]

Other scholars such as Jacques Chiffoleau, Maaike van der Lugt and Clare Monagle take this line of thought further, reading the scientific and cultural construction of the natural and the anti-natural [*contra naturam*] as an essential step in the development of new forms of institutional power after the thirteenth century in the realm of secular law and royal authority.[132] Naturalising discourse became a means for the imposition of power in a diverse range of contexts.[133] The development of naturalisation of sex through animality in

---

[130] French and Cunningham, *Before Science*, 71–145.

[131] Ibid., 146–72.

[132] Jacques Chiffoleau, 'Contra Naturam', 265–312; Lugt, 'L'Autorité Morale et Normative de la Nature au Moyen Âge', 3–40; Clare Monagle, *The Scholastic Project* (Kalamazoo and Bradford: Arc Humanities Press, 2017).

[133] On the other hand, Joan Cadden has offered a useful corrective against seeing medieval conceptions of nature as an exclusively normalising phenomenon. She demonstrates how certain authors such as Peter of Abano located the causes of non-normative sexual behaviour in human nature and how others identified nature as a potential source of social disorder. While Cadden's work is essential for nuancing our interpretations of medieval natural discourses, this does not undermine the significance of naturalisation through animality in the texts which I have been exploring here. See especially Cadden, 'Sciences/Silences', 40–57; Cadden, 'Trouble in the Earthly Paradise', 207–31; Cadden, *Nothing Natural Is Shameful*.

thirteenth-century Scholastic texts in this way formed part of a broader pattern of new discursive uses of nature in the later Middle Ages in service of institutional power. When certain sexual acts were naturalised, they were constructed as normative. Acts that were unnatural, because they were not attributed to animals, could therefore be more effectively subject to discipline. In this way, Aristotelian zoology served the needs of sexual regulation which had become a greater priority for the Church's mission of pastoral care after the reforms of Lateran IV in 1215. Looking at the circulation of new forms of zoological knowledge therefore enables us to nuance our understandings of how non-normative sexuality was ideologically constructed and regulated.

Returning to where we began in this chapter, our understanding of the development of naturalising discourses of sex enables a new perspective on the controversy over clerical celibacy in the late fourteenth century. Much recent scholarship agrees that Lollard social critique, insofar as one can make generalisations about it at all, did not call for a substantial reassessment of normative categories of sex and gender.[134] In fact, Lollard polemic often invoked the spectre of sodomy lurking within the institutions of the Church as proof of their fundamental corruption.[135] The criticisms of clerical celibacy made by some Lollard authors should be located within this tradition of social conservativism. As Wycliffe had argued in the *Trialogus* (early 1380s), separating lascivious young men from the company of women inevitably led them to seek sexual release with each other.[136] However, it should be emphasised that this view was not shared by all of his followers, many of

---

[134] See Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, 47–70; J. Patrick Hornbeck II, 'Theologies of Sexuality in English "Lollardy"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60, no. 1 (2009): 19–44; J. Patrick Hornbeck II, *What Is a Lollard? Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 104–41. As Shannon McSheffrey and Jeremy Goldberg argue, strains of this social conservatism persisted in Lollardy communities throughout the fifteenth century. Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities 1420-1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); Jeremy Goldberg, 'Coventry's "Lollard" Programme of 1492 and the Making of Utopia', in *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities, 1200-1630*, ed. Rosemary Horrox and Sarah Rees Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 97–116.

[135] Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 54–99.

[136] John Wycliffe, *Trialogus Cum Supplemento Trialogi*, ed. Gotthard Lechler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869), 206.

whom regarded the virtue of continence as a moral ideal and held that clerical marriage was, if perhaps a lesser evil, nevertheless still to be avoided.[137]

Irrespective of how much traction it actually gained among Wycliffites, this critique, given prominent public expression through the Twelve Conclusions, formed a convenient straw-man against which orthodox theologians could engage in vigorous condemnation. The enforcement of clerical and monastic celibacy had been an ongoing priority of ecclesiastical reform, starting with the efforts of Pope Gregory VII in the late eleventh century and given renewed urgency at the papal councils of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[138] Anti-celibacy polemic could be perceived to be attacking well-established normative beliefs about the appropriate relationship between priests, their institutional hierarchies and their congregations. Furthermore, the Lollard stance could with little difficulty be interpreted to condone tacit acceptance of disordered or non-normative sexual behaviour under the guise of pessimism concerning the frailty of human nature. The association of heresy with sexual impropriety was an ideological tactic with a long history within Christian theology, and one which was eagerly deployed by counter-critics of Wycliffe and his followers in order to undermine their calls for reform.[139]

Dymmok fully capitalised on the anti-Lollard obsession with clerical celibacy in his *Liber contra XII errores*. In order to refute their Conclusions, he decided to fight fire with fire: just as the Lollards had sought to maximise the impact of their call for reform by publishing it during the session of Parliament, Dymmok directly addressed his treatise to Richard II and prepared an illustrated manuscript with the hope that it would be received

---

[137] H. Hargreaves, 'Sir John Oldcastle and Wycliffite Views on Clerical Marriage', *Medium Aevum* 42 (1973): 141–45. In any case, the notion of a cohesive Lollardy has become increasingly contested in recent historiography, problematising discussion of a distinctively 'Lollard' stance on sexuality. Ian Forrest, 'Anti-Lollard Polemic and Practice in Late Medieval England', in *Authority and Subversion*, ed. Linda Clark, The Fifteenth Century, III (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 63–65.

[138] On Gregory's reforms and the wider context of the campaign against clerical marriage, see Hugh M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 154–89. c.f. Lateran I (1123), canons 7 and 21; Lateran II (1139), canons 6-8; Lateran III (1179), canon 11; Lateran IV (1215), canon 14. Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* vol. I (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990).

[139] Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 94–99; Forrest, 'Anti-Lollard Polemic and Practice in Late Medieval England', 65–74.

into the royal library.[140] Dymmok stated that he was going to dispense with 'subtle and Scholastic arguments' [*subtilia et scolastica argumenta*] in his treatise, and would instead present his refutations in accessible terms.[141] However, the *Liber contra XII errores* nevertheless relied heavily upon evidence drawn from a range of academic sources, particularly Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* and Aristotle's *Ethics* and *De animalibus*, which Dymmok would have encountered in the course of studying for a doctorate in theology at Oxford.[142]

In drawing on Scholastic authority, he was further countering the Lollards on their own terms. The Twelve Conclusions had stated that 'reason and experience' [*racio et experiencia*] proved that continence induced sodomy, citing a physiological cause for such acts as evidence: the rich food and drink consumed by men of the church 'requires inevitable natural purgation or worse' [*requirit necessariam purgacionem naturalem uel peiorem*].[143] Dymmok replied with comprehensive proof from scripture, saints' legends, history, and the authority of the doctors of the Church and natural philosophers that, on the contrary, continence was an achievable aim for humans.[144] Per the evidence of *De animalibus*, he argued that the belief that superfluity necessitated purgation through intercourse was completely invalid: Aristotle had shown that in continent humans, such superfluities were converted into turgid urine, or menstrual blood in women, and in this way were expelled from the body through urination, menstruation, or nocturnal emission, without the need for active sexual pleasure, whether natural or unnatural.[145] In proclaiming continence as a

---

[140] Dymmok, *Liber Contra XII Errores et Hereses Lollardorum*, 3–10. Trinity Hall, Cambridge, MS 17 is the presentation copy given to Richard.

[141] Ibid., 9. Fiona Somerset argues that while Dymmok was attempting to position his work as suitable for a broader non-academic audience, he was prevented from fully realising this aim by his own suspicions of 'public persons' who presented theological arguments to a non-clerical audience, as the Lollards had done. Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 103–33.

[142] The most comprehensive study of Dymmok's career is: Anne Hudson, 'Dymoke [Dymock], Roger (fl. 1370–c. 1400), prior of Boston and theologian,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Sept 23, 2004, accessed Dec 8, 2019, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8361.

[143] Dymmok, *Liber Contra XII Errores et Hereses Lollardorum*, 71.

[144] Ibid., 72–79.

[145] Ibid., 81–82; c.f. Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, ed. and trans. D.M. Balme, vol. III, LCL 439 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), IX.2, 582b-583a.

biological impossibility, the Lollards had simply revealed their low estimation of the human capacity for self-control and their own immorality. The case of Roger Dymmok and the controversy over clerical celibacy serves as a perfect demonstration of the practical application of Aristotelian discourses of naturalisation through animality. Ideologically orthodox authors could invoke zoological knowledge in order to justify sexual norms.

2: "Of alle manere beestis take þe tweyne"

Noah's Ark and Heteronormativity

The Holkham Bible Picture Book provides fascinating evidence for the ways in which late medieval English Christians visualised the events of biblical history.[1] This manuscript was produced c.1327-40 in London, probably at the bequest of a Dominican patron as indicated by the image of a Dominican friar instructing a secular artist on f.1r. As Michelle Brown argues, the incorporation of distinctive elements of fashion and architecture suggest that the artist was drawing on everyday experience of life in the capital.[2] It contains 231 illustrations depicting scenes from Genesis, the Life of Christ, and the Day of Judgement, accompanied by captions in Anglo-Norman. Two full-page miniatures on facing folios portray episodes from the story of the Flood. In the upper half of the first miniature (Figure 3), Noah builds an Ark out of planks and wattle according to the direction of God. In the lower half, Noah climbs a ladder onto the now-completed Ark while carrying on his back a basket filled with animals. Following him are the seven members of his family: his wife; his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and their wives. Three of the seven are carrying pairs of identical birds in their arms. The accompanying text explains that Noah had been ordered to bring on board with him one pair of every animal, 'male and female' [*male et femmele*].[3] Through the union of image and text, the manuscript portrays the Ark's human and non-human passengers as neatly paired-up in opposite-sex couples.

In the second miniature (Figure 4), the artist compresses the events of Genesis 8:6-11 into a continuous narrative. The Ark is adrift on the waves, with dry land beginning to emerge from the floodwaters at the lower margins of the scene. From within the window of the Ark, Noah releases a dove and a raven. Simultaneously, the dove is already returning with an olive branch in its beak. On the lower half of the miniature we observe the dove finding a patch of ground with an olive tree growing out of it and the raven

---

[1] The Holkham Bible is a unique manuscript (British Library, London, Add. MS 47682) with no other known copies. However, it is only one example of the sizable late medieval genre of illustrated bibles.

[2] Michelle P. Brown, *The Holkham Bible Picture Book: A Facsimile* (London: British Library, 2007), 1–24.

[3] For a full edition of the text, see F.P. Pickering, ed., *The Anglo-Norman Text of the* Holkham Bible Picture Book, Anglo-Norman Texts 23 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971).

Figure 3: Noah builds the ark, instructed by God and later boards it, carrying animals, followed by his family, Holkham Bible Picture Book, c.1327-40, ink on parchment, 11.22 x 8.27 in. (28.5 x 21 cm). British Library, London, Add. MS 47682, f.7v. <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682> Accessed Aug 26 2020.

Figure 4: The dove and the raven released by Noah, with drowned people and animals in the water beneath the ark, Holkham Bible Picture Book, British Library, Add. MS 47682, f.8r.

Figure 5: *Detail of the Blessed entering the gates of Heaven, Holkham Bible Picture Book, British Library, Add. MS 47682, f.42v.*

pecking at the eye of a dead horse. Floating besides the horse are three other corpses: a cow, a man, and a woman. The two humans are naked. On closer inspection, the artist has included subtle details of their genitals: the outline of the head of the man's penis is visible, as are the folds of the woman's labia, surrounded by a patch of darker shading that might signify pubic hair.

The depiction of these two drowned humans stands out from other portrayals of nudity in the manuscript. In scenes such as the baptisms in the river Jordan (f.18v), the dead rising from their tombs on the Day of Judgement (ff.41v-42r) or the Blessed entering Heaven while the Damned enter Hell (f.42v), anonymous naked figures are drawn with smooth, featureless crotches (Figure 5). The same holds for miniatures featuring named naked persons, including the account of Adam and Eve's creation and expulsion from Eden (ff.3r-4v), Christ's baptism (f.19r), Christ mocked and scourged (f.29v), the Flagellation (f.30v), the Crucifixion (ff.31v-32r), or Joseph and Nicodemus rescued from Hell (f.34r). The only exceptions are Noah's drunkenness (f.9r) and Christ's circumcision (f.13v).[4] In these latter two miniatures, the visibility of the figure's genitals can be explained

---

[4] The outline of a penis and scrotum is potentially visible on one of the four baptizands on f.18v, though this is less readily apparent than in the other examples.

by their integral role in the text. There are no such textual clues to guide us to interpreting the meaning of the drowned humans' genitals. However, on account of the broader context of the manuscript, we should interpret the artist's choice to portray them in this manner as significant. Conventionally, in medieval iconography, naked genitalia are rarely portrayed in the context of sexual intercourse. Rather, as Michael Camille argues, artists almost always alluded to sex through an element of visual omission or erasure such as unkempt bedsheets or the parting of curtains.[5] When artists did depict genitals, this was usually deployed as a tactic of othering intended to emphasise the subject's sexual transgression and hypersexualisation, such as the naked copulating couples encountered by Alexander the Great or the well-endowed members of the monstrous races in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Roman d'Alexandre*.[6] Furthermore, as Jeremy Goldberg notes, witnesses in disputed marriage cases in English Church courts often testified to having seen a man and a woman naked in bed together as legally-valid proof that they had engaged in sexual intercourse; in this way, nakedness was a visual marker of sexual activity.[7] Considering this knowledge, we could interpret the drowned man and woman in figure 4 as sinners who, having committed acts of lechery with each other in life, were punished in death with drowning.

This exercise cautions against the erroneous yet commonplace assumption that medieval visual representations of the Bible were necessarily intended to be accessible to uneducated 'illiterate' audiences as substitutes for written texts. As Frans van Liere argues, a sophisticated degree of visual and scriptural literacy is required on the part of both medieval readers and modern scholars to properly interpret the complex set of meanings contained in these kinds of images.[8] We may be able to deduce from our initial reading that the creators of the Holkham Bible likely had an interest in examining sexuality through the narrative of Noah's Ark, but in order to understand its deeper meaning we need to

---

[5] Michael Camille, 'Manuscript Illumination and the Art of Copulation', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 67–80.

[6] Sherry C.M. Lindquist, 'The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art: An Introduction', in *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art*, ed. Sherry C.M. Lindquist (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 22.

[7] Jeremy Goldberg, 'John Skathelok's Dick: Voyeurism and "Pornography" in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), 108–16.

[8] Frans van Liere, *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 237–60.

investigate the broader cultural representation of the Flood and the ways in which late medieval culture appropriated this story for new ideological purposes.

The Flood story occupied a ubiquitous position in late medieval culture through representations in both visual and written media. In addition to manuscript illustrations, depictions of Noah and the Ark were a common feature of English church art, including stained glass in York Minster, Lincoln Cathedral and Canterbury Christ Church Cathedral, a misericord in Ely Cathedral, and a striking series of carved panels forming part of Lincoln Cathedral's Romanesque frieze.[9] Homilists such as John Mirk discussed the Flood in vernacular sermons intended for the edification of the laity. Dramatic adaptations, of which we have seven surviving texts in Middle English and Middle Cornish and historical evidence of performances from an additional eight English towns and cities as well as English-occupied Dublin from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, could potentially reach audiences of significantly greater sizes compared to most contemporary texts.[10] Through its presence in visual culture and civic drama, the Flood was one of the most widely recognisable Old Testament narratives in late medieval society.

One of the main reasons for its ubiquity was the multiple exegetical interpretations it accrued at the hands of medieval commentators. Noah was understood to have prefigured Christ: the repopulation of the Earth after the Flood stood for the salvation of Mankind, and Noah as builder of the Ark represented Christ as builder of the Church.[11] The Ark itself could also signify Christ through the relation of the dimensions of the vessel to the proportions of the human body.[12] In an anagogic reading, the Flood of Genesis prefigured the flood at the hour of the Last Judgement and the passengers of the Ark

---

[9] For an overview of the development of visual representations of the Flood narrative in the Middle Ages, see Richard W. Unger, *The Art of Medieval Technology: Images of Noah the Shipbuilder* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991); Brigitte Resl, 'Beyond the Ark: Animals in Medieval Art', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brigitte Resl (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 198–99.

[10] Ian Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) nos. 45, 55, 58, 376, 389, 529, 768, 785, 866, 937, 1227, 1295,1304, 1560 and 1736. Due to a lack of familiarity with Middle Cornish, I will not be discussing the Cornish Ordinalia in depth in this chapter.

[11] Hugh of St Victor, *De arca Noe morali,* PL 176:0629.

[12] Peter Comestor, *Scolastica Historia: Liber Genesis*, ed. Agneta Sylwan, CCCM 191 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 62–64.

represent the souls of those who will be saved.[13] Most important of all was the allegorical reading which connected the Ark with baptism, an interpretation which had already been proposed in the New Testament (1 Peter 3:18-21). The Ark itself signified the baptismal font, and the floodwaters washing away antediluvian society prefigured the sacrament of baptism cleansing away original sin.[14] As Jeremy Goldberg argues, the symbolic associations between the acts of drowning and baptism influenced the narrative construction of legal and hagiographical accounts of victims of drowning and near-drowning in late medieval England.[15] In this way, the Flood was a supremely powerful metaphor potent with spiritual meaning. It stands to reason that such an omnipresent narrative would be an important site for ideological meaning. At the core of the story are two important elements: the relationship between humans and animals, and the act of reproduction, and I intend to explore the intersection of these two elements this chapter

Academic studies of representations of the Flood from antiquity to the early modern period are too numerous to list in full, though works by Don Cameron Allen, Jack P. Lewis, Norman Cohn and Brian Murdoch remain influential.[16] More recently, Jeffrey Cohen and Julian Yates have explored the possibilities of ecocritical and post-humanist readings of the medieval sources.[17] This research has established the foundations for

---

[13] Bede, *Opera, Pars II: Opera Exegetica, 1: Libri Qvator in Principivm Genesis Vsqve Ad Nativitatem Isaac et Eiedictionem Ismahelis Adnotationvm*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 118 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1967), 102–3.

[14] Bede, *In Genesim*, 103–4 Pseudo-Augustine, *Dialogus quaestionum LVX*, PL 40:0749.

[15] Jeremy Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child: An Essay in Medieval Cultural History', *WerkstattGeschichte* 63 (2013): 7–23.

[16] Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963); Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Norman Cohn, *Noah's Flood: The Genesis Story in Western Thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996); Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 96–126.

[17] Although Cohen and Yates' *Noah's Arkive: Towards an Ecology of Refuge* is forthcoming, they have published excerpts online at *In the Middle* and have presented material at various conferences, e.g. Cohen, "Noah's Arkive," *In the Middle* (blog), Mar 17, 2015, accessed Mar 02, 2019, http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2015/03/noahs-arkive.html; Cohen, "every ark," *In the Middle* (blog), Jul 24, 2018, accessed Mar 02, 2019, http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2018/07/every-ark.html; Cohen and Yates, "On generation space ships and Noah's ark," *In the Middle* (blog), Dec 30, 2015, accessed Mar 02, 2019,

thinking critically about the role of the animal in Flood narratives. However, to date, medievalists have not substantively engaged with the theme of sexuality in these stories. I hold that this is a serious oversight. I argue that the politics of sex lay at the heart of medieval understandings of the Noah story, and that the animal is key to those interpretations. I will explore this theme through the lens of scripture and in medieval responses transmitted via a variety of vernacular texts. These are not unified in genre: some are relatively unadorned verse adaptations of the Bible; some are poems using biblical themes to stress a polemic message; some are dramatic texts. For lack of a better all-encompassing category, I will use the term 'vernacular Flood literature' to denote these sources, as this best describes the function they fulfil in my analysis – that is to say, they are among the most prominent extant extra-biblical written sources of knowledge about Noah and the Ark produced for late medieval audiences.[18]

Brian Murdoch's influential theory of the 'medieval popular Bible' is a useful intervention here to explore the links between academic Latin theology and 'popular' belief. Murdoch conceives of the 'popular Bible' not as a singular text but as an accumulation of beliefs and traditions mediated through different forms including histories, metrical adaptations, dramas and sermons.[19] We must avoid the fallacy of assuming that vernacularity entailed a lack of theological sophistication. In fact, as Murdoch suggests, it could offer authors greater scope for original and heterodox interpretations.[20] Additionally, we should not underestimate the capacity of even illiterate medieval Christians to understand exegetical thought. In his study of English sermons, Walter Meyers has shown that homilists such as John Mirk quoted and analysed the ideas of prominent academic

---

http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2018/12/on-generation-space-ships-and-noahs-ark.html; Cohen, "Outside Noah's Ark: Sympathy and Survival as the Waters Rise," (conference paper, International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, July 3-6, 2017).

[18] Although many critics have read Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" as a parodic inversion of the Flood narrative, I will be focusing on texts which more closely follow the biblical account. See in particular V.A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales* (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), 158–216; Sandra Pierson Prior, 'Parodying Typology and the Mystery Plays in the "Miller's Tale"', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16 (1986): 57–73; Melvin Storm, 'Uxor and Alison: Noah's Wife in the Flood Plays and Chaucer's Wife of Bath', *Modern Language Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1987): 303–19.

[19] Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible*, 1–18.

[20] Ibid., 6.

exegetes.[21] Likewise, Peter Travis' analysis of the Old Testament pageants of the Chester cycle reveals a sophisticated perception of typological interpretations by the playwright and a sustained effort to convey these messages to the pageants' audiences.[22] The medieval sources which I will analyse here alongside the text of the Vulgate should be read in light of this model. Vernacular authors were capable of a deep understanding of the themes and ideology of scripture and adapted it in novel ways to serve contemporary moral concerns.

The vernacular Flood literature which I will be subjecting to close reading can be divided into two chronological phases of development. The first and more diverse set of texts span a chronological range from the second quarter of the fourteenth century to the first decade of the fifteenth century: the aforementioned Holkham Bible (c.1327-40); *Cleanness* (c.1370-1400), an alliterative poem recorded in British Library Cotton MS Nero A.x attributed to the anonymous Gawain- or Pearl-Poet;[23] the Egerton Genesis (third quarter of fourteenth century), an illustrated Bible similar to the Holkham Bible;[24] the southern recension of *Cursor Mundi*, a late fourteenth-century revision of a northern verse adaptation of biblical history originally composed c. 1275-1325;[25] the *Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament* (c.1380);[26] a sermon for Sexagesima (the second Sunday before Ash Wednesday in the medieval liturgical calendar) from the *Festial* (late 1380s) by John Mirk, canon of the Augustinian abbey of Lilleshall;[27] and *Dives and Pauper* (c.1402-

---

[21] Walter E. Meyers, 'Typology and the Audience of the English Play Cycles', in *Typology and English Medieval Literature*, ed. Hugh T. Keenan (New York: AMS Press, 1992), 261–73.

[22] Peter W. Travis, *Dramatic Design in the Chester Cycle* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 70–107.

[23] Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, eds., 'Cleanness', in *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, 4th ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 111–84. On the difficult question of the poem's date, see William Vantuono, ed., *The Pearl Poems: An Omnibus Edition*, vol. I (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), xix–xxii.

[24] Mary Coker Joslin and Carolyn Coker Joslin Watson, eds. and trans., *The Egerton Genesis* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

[25] Sarah M. Horrall, ed., *The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi*, V vols (Ottawa: University of Ottowa Press, 1978-2000). However, John Thompson questions whether the southern 'version' is actually so distinct as to constitute a separate recension. John J. Thompson, *The Cursor Mundi: Poem, Texts and Contexts* (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1998), 16–17.

[26] Michael Livingston, ed., *The Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011).

[27] John Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Susan Powell, vol. I, EETS OS 334 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 66–70.

1410), an anonymous prose didactic treatise.[28] Except for the Holkham Bible, the creation of these texts post-dated the major plague pandemics in 1348-9 and 1361–62 which by recent estimates may have resulted in the deaths of as much as two thirds of the population of England.[29] As I shall argue, the creators of these post-plague texts explored the theme of the Flood as divine punishment for sexual sin in response to the lasting social and cultural impacts of plague.

The second set of texts are dramatic works dating from the mid-fifteenth century to the post-Reformation era. The task of dating these texts with any degree of historical specificity is arguably even more contentious than with the former group of sources. Manuscript copies of the pageant scripts may only reflect a snapshot of how they were staged at the time of inscription; moreover, the text of certain manuscripts, such as that of the N-Town Plays, continued to be revised over several decades. The script of a pageant as recorded in any given manuscript may therefore not reflect the state of productions over the full duration of its performance history. The earliest known manuscripts for five of the six surviving Middle English Noah dramatic texts are: the York *Building of Noah's Ark* and *Flood* (c.1463–77);[30] the N-Town *Noah* (c.1460-1520);[31] the Wakefield/Towneley *Noah* (c.1500);[32] and the Chester *Noah's Flood* (1591).[33] The manuscript for the sixth play, the Newcastle *Noah's Ark*, has been lost and the script is preserved in a 1736 modernisation by Henry Bourne, although Norman Davis proposes that the original text was composed in

---

[28] Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper*, II vols, EETS OS 275, 280, 323 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976-2004).

[29] Ole J. Benedictow, *The Black Death 1346-1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 377.

[30] Richard Beadle, ed., 'The Building of the Ark' and 'The Flood', in *The York Plays: A Critical Edition of the York Corpus Christi Play as Recorded in British Library Additional MS 35290*, vol. I, EETS SS 23 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 40–54.

[31] Stephen Spector, ed., '4. Noah', in *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, vol. I, EETS SS 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 41–50.

[32] Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley, eds., '3. Noah', in *The Towneley Plays*, vol. I, EETS SS 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 25–48. I discuss the controversy over the identification of the Towneley manuscript plays with Wakefield later in this chapter.

[33] R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds., 'The Thirde Pageante of Noyes Fludd', in *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, vol. I, EETS SS 3 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), 42–56.

the mid-fifteenth century.[34] The dating of these texts is a highly contentious issue in the scholarship on late medieval drama, and this is a problem which I will treat in greater detail further on in this chapter. However, as I shall argue, the adaptation of the Flood narrative in these dramas should be read in light of a rising emphasis on secular moral reform in English towns and cities and increasingly conservative attitudes to sexual morality in a manner which draws some parallels with the earlier phase of literary appropriation in the fourteenth century.

Much debate within the body of criticism on vernacular Flood literature has been concerned with identifying the relationships between individual works and their textual sources. For instance, Sarah Horrall argues that *Cursor Mundi* was a direct source for *Cleanness*, whereas Ad Putter regards both poems as the product of a broader tradition of biblical versification drawing on twelfth-century exegesis as well as older classical and late antique influences.[35] My own approach most closely follows that of Putter. I am not particularly concerned to seek the precise links between these texts, but rather to consider the general set of traditions and beliefs which they contain and which they all reproduce in broadly similar terms. Nevertheless, I recognise the common line of descent from the early medieval exegetes through Peter Comestor and other twelfth-century exegetical compilations to the various French and English poetic, dramatic and theological works of the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

One of the broader aims of my investigation into the sexual ideology of vernacular Flood literature is to reassess the validity of heteronormativity as a category of historical analysis for medievalists. Heteronormativity, a term popularised by Michael Warner, is a key concept in queer theory. It denotes the dominant ideology of sexual norms in contemporary western society, including: the binary model of gender and sex; the naturalisation of heterosexual desire as a biological norm presumed to be innate in the

---

[34] Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS SS 1 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), xlvi–xlvii.

[35] Sarah M. Horrall, 'An Old French Source for the "Genesis" Section of *Cursor Mundi*', *Mediaeval Studies* 40 (1978): 361–73. For her argument concerning *Cursor Mundi* as one William Caxton's sources for his translation of the *Golden Legend*, see 'William Caxton's Biblical Translation', *Medium Aevum* 53, no. 1 (1984): 91–98; Ad Putter, 'Sources and Backgrounds for Descriptions of the Flood in Medieval and Renaissance Literature', *Studies in Philology* 94, no. 2 (1997): 137–59; '*Cleanness* and the Tradition of Biblical Versification', in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, ed. J.A. Burrow and Hoyt N. Duggan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 166–84.

majority of humans and non-human animals; and the notion of sexual orientation as a stable identity grounded in attraction towards individuals of a particular sex.[36] Heteronormativity is closely associated with the concept of compulsory heterosexuality developed by feminist scholars such as Adrienne Rich. This theory focuses on how patriarchal norms of heterosexual behaviour are enforced and policed through law, custom and discourse.[37] Heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality are powerful tools for examining the social construction and enforcement of ideologies of sexuality, but they were initially proposed as means for critiquing contemporary societies: their usefulness for examining historical cultures remains a hotly debated question.

Beginning in the late 1990s, a growing number of scholars of medieval gender and sexuality have rejected heteronormativity as a useful category of analysis.[38] These scholars argue that medieval categories of gender identity and sexual orientation were characterised by fluidity and instability; that medieval thinkers neither associated normative sexual behaviour with natural sexual desire, nor presumed normative heterosexual desires in the majority of people; and that the uncritical use of concepts such as heterosexuality and heteronormativity by medieval scholars distort our understanding of the period and projects the heteronormativity of our own societies onto the past.[39] While I acknowledge the importance of critiquing our received assumptions, I disagree with this basic premise. I argue that heteronormativity is a useful theoretical concept by which sexuality in this period can be understood. I hold that the ideological significance of the Flood narrative cannot be properly comprehended without reference to heteronormativity and that medieval vernacular Flood literature implicitly represents heteronormative reproductive couples in order to reproduce normative ideologies of sex.

In this way, I locate my analysis within the tradition of scholarship in literary studies which regards the theoretical concepts of heteronormativity and heterosexuality as essential

---

[36] Michael Warner, 'Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet', *Social Text* 29 (1991): 3–17.

[37] Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631–60.

[38] See e.g. Burger and Kruger, 'Introduction', xi–xxiii; Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*:; Schultz, 'Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies', 14–29; Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality*; Phillips and Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality*:; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*.

[39] In particular, note the critiques of: Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, xxii–xxiii; Schultz, 'Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies'; Phillips and Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality*, 41–59.

for making sense of the presentation of sexual and romantic relationships in medieval texts.[40] As Louise Sylvester argues, heterosexual desire is just as much the product of construction, both in medieval and modern contexts, but medievalists have tended to focus on representations of disruptive or deviant sexuality and have overlooked the normative ideology against which they are constructed in medieval texts.[41] Likewise, Amy Burges argues that the genre of Middle English romance 'privileges a relationship between a man and a woman whose desire for each other is represented as both natural and inevitable'.[42] Carolyn Dinshaw takes a similar approach in her analysis of the use of metaphors of penetration and generation in the opening lines of the Canterbury Tales, arguing that they 'may indeed be the first in English to articulate a normative heterosexuality with such clarity'.[43] Although medieval ideologies of gender and sexuality differ in important ways from our own, they nevertheless resemble the modern framework of heteronormativity to the extent that this concept becomes a valid and necessary means by which to analyse them.

In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate the limits of the anti-normativity thesis and the ways in which a scholarly focus on the animal highlights those limits. I will begin by examining the fundamental sexual ideology inherent in the late medieval received text of the Bible, then broaden out to explore the wider historical context of the story's adaptations in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. I argue that vernacular Flood literature naturalises heterosexual intercourse and provide the basis for heteronormative ideology, and that representations of the human/animal binary are key to this process of naturalisation.

Two of Each Sort

We begin with the scriptural account of the Flood. At its ideological core, Noah's Ark is a story about sex grounded in two precepts: the command to bring two of each sort of animal onto the Ark, and the command to increase and multiply. I shall examine each of

---

[40] See e.g. Riddy, 'Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy',, 235–52; Sylvester, *Medieval Romance and the Construction of Heterosexuality*; Burge, *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance*.

[41] Sylvester, *Medieval Romance and the Construction of Heterosexuality*, 15–17 and 38–39.

[42] Burge, *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance*, 12.

[43] Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 113–21.

these precepts in turn. At the beginning of the Flood narrative, God instructs Noah to preserve both human and non-human life by bringing them onto the Ark in breeding pairs:

> Thou shalt enter into the Ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and the wives of thy sons with thee. And of every living creature of all flesh, thou shalt bring two of each sort into the ark, that they may live with thee: of the male sex, and the female. Of fowls according to their kind, and of beasts in their kind, and of every thing that creepeth on earth according to its kind; two of every sort shall go in with thee, that they may live (Gen. 6:18-20).[44]

Once Noah has built the Ark, God speaks to him again, increasing the number of animals that he is ordered to take on board:

> Of all clean beasts take seven and seven, the male and female. But of the beasts that are unclean two and two, the male and female. Of the fowls also of the air seven and seven, the male and the female: that seed may be saved upon the face of the whole earth. (Gen. 7:2-3)[45]

From the perspective of biblical criticism, this contradiction and others, such as the fact that Noah and his family embark twice (once in Gen.7:7-9 and again in Gen.7:13-16) can be explained as the result of the conflation of two parallel Flood traditions during the composition of the Book of Genesis. In one tradition, Noah's act of sacrifice after the disembarkation necessitates a surplus of animals or else the sacrificial species would be rendered extinct. The other tradition omits this episode as the distinction between clean and unclean animals and the practice of sacrifice were not revealed to humans until the revelation at Mount Sinai and therefore requires only one pair of each species.[46]

---

[44] *Ingredieris arcam tu et filii tui, uxor tua, et uxores filiorum tuorum tecum. Et ex cunctis animantibus uniuersae carnis bina induces in arcam, ut uiuant tecum: masculini sexus et feminini. De uolucribus iuxta genus suum, et de iumentis in genere suo, et ex omni reptili terrae secundum genus suum: bina de omnibus ingredientur tecum, ut possint uiuere.*

[45] *. Ex omnibus animantibus mundis tolle septena et septena, masculum et feminam: de animantibus uero immundis duo et duo, masculum et feminam. Sed et de uolatilibus caeli septena et septena, masculum et feminam: ut saluetur semen super faciem uniuersae terrae.*

[46] By attempting to reconcile the two traditions, Genesis therefore creates a paradox: how could Noah distinguish between clean and unclean animals before the time of Moses? Peter Comestor attempted to resolve this contradiction by asserting that humans had a natural understanding of the

These verses generated some confusion among medieval readers, prompted by strained readings of 'seven and seven' [*septena et septena*] and further complicated by the fact that during both embarkation scenes, clean and unclean animals alike board 'two and two' [*duo et duo* in Gen.7:9, *bina et bina* in Gen.7:15]. To some exegetes, 'seven and seven' denoted seven individuals rather than seven pairs.[47] For instance, Bede rationalised this interpretation firstly on the grounds that the repetition of 'seven' and 'two' was a rhetorical device intended to emphasise the great number of species being accommodated on the Ark, and that secondly that the number of seven clean and two unclean animals held a mystical significance.[48]

Vernacular Flood literature took a variety of approaches to reconciling the ambiguity of the passage. Most attempted to limit the confusion by eliminating one of the addresses from God, with the life of Noah inserted by William Caxton into his translation of the *Golden Legend* (1483) being a rare exception that stayed as close as possible to the full sequence of events in the Vulgate.[49] In *Cleanness*, God orders seven pairs of every clean and one pair of every unclean animal (ll. 333–335). The Chester *Noah's Flood* retains much of the same ambiguity of the Vulgate: 'vii and vii' of clean beasts and 'ii and ii' of unclean beasts, yet only seven of clean birds and 'twayne' [a pair] of unclean birds (ll. 117–125).The Egerton Genesis is unusual in specifying two pairs of unclean animals and seven pairs of clean animals.[50] A number of texts including *Cursor Mundi* (l. 1687), the Holkham Bible (ll. 10.20 and 11.15-19), and the late-fifteenth-century English translation of the *Historia Scholastica* known by the modern editorial title *Historye of the Patriarks*, attempted to simplify matters further by eliminating the distinction between clean and unclean animals and asserting that only one or two pairs of every creature were brought on board, although they retain Noah's sacrifice after the disembarkation.[51] Others removed both the clean/unclean

---

distinction, which was merely codified in Mosaic Law. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, PL 198:1083D.

[47] *Glossa Ordinaria*, PL 113:0106D.

[48] Bede, *In Genesim*, 113–14.

[49] Jacobus da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea Sancotorum, Sive Lombardica Historia*, trans. William Caxton (London: William Caxton, 1483), f.39v.

[50] Joslin and Watson, *The Egerton Genesis*, 265.

[51] Mayumi Taguchi, ed., *The Historye of the Patriarks: Edited from Cambridge, St John's College MS G.31* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2010), 53. A perceptive reader will note that this raises the problematic and unanswered question of which animals were presumably rendered extinct by being sacrificed.

distinction and Noah's sacrifice, including the *Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament* (ll. 311–312), the York *Building of Noah's Ark* (ll. 131–132), the Wakefield/Towneley *Noah* (ll. 219–220) and N-Town *Noah* (l. 120) pageants and the Newcastle *Noah's Ark* (ll. A.68-70).

Such simplifications had an obvious ideological function. By eliminating potentially distracting contradictions and ambiguities present in the original scripture, these texts focused the reader's attention towards the more substantially important element of these verses: the pairing of male and female. In the Vulgate, the phrases 'male and female' [*masculus et femina*] and 'of the male sex and the female' [*masculini sexus et feminini*] are used six times throughout Gen.6-7 to describe the animals; in both embarkation verses, they board in opposite-sex couples. These verses clearly emphasise the importance of the normative pairing-off of the animals over the exact number of individuals, a prioritisation which the vernacular authors appeared to have grasped more readily than their Latinate exegetical predecessors.[52]

Vernacular Flood literature continued to use the language of 'pairs', 'couples', and 'male and female' when adapting these verses. Most texts retained the form of God's command as direct speech (including *Cursor Mundi*, *Cleanness*, the *Metrical Paraphrase*, and all the surviving dramatic texts), with the Egerton Genesis being an atypical example of a text that instead paraphrased it.[53] Obviously, the usefulness of being able to convert pre-existing speech into dialogue is self-evident in the case of the Flood dramas. However, if we also consider other non-dramatic adaptations, the authorial decision to preserve direct address further indicates the key importance of God's words to the overall meaning of the narrative. Some vernacular texts stayed close to the Vulgate, with relatively little emendation to the phrasing of the command. In the *Metrical Paraphrase*, God instructs Noah to build cages "wher bestes and fowles may be / of ylka kynd a payre" (ll. 311–312). Likewise in *Cursor Mundi*, God says "of alle manere beestis take þe tweyne / to wone [dwell] þere wiþ her makes certeyne [specific mate]" (ll. 1687–1688). In the York *Building of*

---

[52] There was also an understanding popularised by Augustine and transmitted in many subsequent exegetical texts that the phrasing 'male and female' precluded the need for Noah to take on board any creatures which reproduced asexually through the corruption of matter, such as flies, as these would be able to spontaneously generate in the postdiluvian world anyway. Augustine, *City of God*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. Philip Levine, vol. IV, LCL 414 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), 15.27.

[53] Joslin and Watson, *The Egerton Genesis*, 265.

Noah's Ark, He says "of ilka kynde thou sall take twoo / bothe male and femalle fare in fere [agreeable in each other's company]" (ll. 130–131), and in the Wakefield/Towneley *Noah* he says to "take to thi ship also / of ich kynd beestys two / mayll and femayll bot no mo" (ll. 218–220).

The N-Town *Noah* introduces an innovation by inventing an angelic intermediary between God and Noah. The instruction to bring a pair of every animal is therefore spoken three times: firstly from God to the angel (l. 114) and then relayed to Noah by the angel (l. 120), who then repeats it again (ll. 133-134). On this third occasion, the angel betrays a note of exasperation ("of byrd and of beste take as I thee tolde / a peyr into the shypp" (ll. 133–134)) in response to Noah's initial reluctance to undertake the task on the grounds of his infirmity. In the context of the pageant as a performance text, the threefold verbalisation of this command emphasised to the audience the significance of the animal couplings.

The Chester *Noah's Flood* has the lengthiest direct address from God to Noah out of all the dramatic texts:

> DEUS. Of cleane beastes with thee thoe take
> > vii and vii or then thou slake [before you cease]
> > hee and shee, make to make [mate and mate],
> > bylyve in that thou bringe [bring you without delay into the Ark];
>
> > of beastes uncleane ii and ii,
> > male and female, bowt moo [and no more];
> > of cleane fowles seaven alsoe,
> > the hee and shee together;
> > of fowlees uncleane twayne and noe more,
> > as I of beastes sayde before. (ll. 117–126)

The repetition of 'male and female' parallels the same usage in the York and Wakefield/Towneley pageants, and of course in all three cases these ultimately derive from the Vulgate. Chester innovates by introducing a new gendered pair, 'hee and shee'. This achieves two effects. Firstly, it complements the emphasis on heteronormativity through the pairing of the animals that 'male and female' was already doing. Secondly, the use of gendered personal pronouns humanises the animals and invites identification with them. Although Middle English gendered pronouns could be used for animals outside of explicitly anthropomorphising texts - e.g. according to John Trevisa's translation of *De proprietatibus rerum*, the drone bee 'haþ þat name *fucus* ffor he eteþ þe trauayle of oþere [the

fruits of others' labour]' - they were more commonly prefixed to nouns to specify animal gender: c.f. John Mirk's reference to 'a quene callud Lupa, þat is in Englys an scheo-wolf'.[54] The use of standalone gendered pronouns here therefore allows the animal pairs to be read as paralleling married human couples, a naturalising metaphor which I will explore in more depth further on.

This theme is developed further through the pageant's staging. After the Ark has been constructed on stage, each of Noah's sons and their wives, as well as Noah's own wife, names a number of animals which they are tasked with guiding onto the ship. The stage directions give instructions for the boards which make up the Ark to be painted with all the animals named in the text, 'that ther wordes may agree with the pictures' (l. 160+SD). Lisa Kiser has analysed the gendered meaning of which animals are assigned to each character and notes the comic nature of the animals assigned to Noah's wife, particularly the bear, ape and owl, mirroring her own anti-feminist portrayal throughout the pageant.[55] As well as reinforcing the gender politics of the text, the combination of image and word at this moment enables the audience to more effectively imagine the connection between the animals and the human couples as exemplary heteronormative pairs.

Increase and Multiply

In both the Vulgate and vernacular Flood literature, the boarding of the animals onto the Ark sets the framework for the second aspect of the Flood narrative's heteronormative ideology. After the floodwaters subside, God addresses Noah once again:

> Go out of the ark, thou and thy wife, thy sons, and the wives of thy sons with thee. All living things that are with thee of all flesh, as well in fowls as in beasts, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, bring out with thee, and go ye upon the earth: increase and multiply upon it. (Gen. 8:16-17)[56]

---

[54] Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' De Proprietatibus Rerum, A Critical Text*, ed. M.C. Seymour, trans. John Trevisa, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1206; John Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Susan Powell, vol. II, EETS OS 335 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 190.

[55] Lisa J. Kiser, 'The Animals in Chester's "Noah's Flood"', *Early Theatre* 14, no. 1 (2011): 15–44.

[56] *Egredere de arca, tu et uxor tua, filii tui et uxores filiorum tuorum tecum. Cuncta animantia, quæ sunt apud te, ex omni carne, tam in volatilibus quam in bestiis et universis reptilibus, quæ reptant super terram, educ tecum, et ingredimini super terram : crescite et multiplicamini super eam.*

After Noah makes a sacrifice of clean animals, God blesses him and says again: "increase and multiply, and fill the earth" [*crescite, et multiplicamini, et replete terram*] (Gen. 9:1). Then, he repeats one final time: "but increase you and multiply, and go upon the earth, and fill it" [*vos autem crescite et multiplicamini, et ingredimini super terram, et implete eam*] (Gen. 9:7). As with the use of 'male and female' throughout these verses, the reiteration of the phrase 'increase and multiply' indicates the ideological significance of the message behind these words.

The command to 'increase and multiply' is repeated several times throughout the Old Testament to Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph and his sons, and the Children of Israel.[57] However, the most influential occasion for this precept is God's commandment to Adam in Gen. 1:22 and 1:28. Lynn White Jr. famously interpreted this precept as the basis for a late medieval ideology of human domination over nature and hence justification for untrammelled exploitation of natural resources.[58] Subsequent generations of critics have disputed White's reading.[59] For instance, Jeremy Cohen argues that in its original scriptural context, it was intended as a formularised guarantee of divine protection and a renewal of God's covenant with humanity.[60] Moreover, an analysis of later theological and literary interpretations indicates that the theme of sexuality was a crucial component of medieval interpretations of this command. Later medieval Christian exegetes glossed this commandment in order to address whether human sexuality was ultimately sinful or divine.[61] We can see an example of this kind of reading in the *Liber contra XII errores*, wherein Roger Dymmok noted that the Lollards appropriated the commandment to 'increase and multiply' as an argument against clerical celibacy. Dymmok replied that this was a false interpretation of Gen. 1:28: as long as the population of Christians was sufficiently numerous, not all members of the community needed to follow this precept, making the vow of celibacy fully consistent with God's instructions for mankind.[62] This

---

[57] Jeremy Cohen, *Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It: The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 33.

[58] Lynn White Jr., 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis', *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–7.

[59] For an overview of responses to White's thesis, see Elspeth Whitney, 'Lynn White Jr.'s "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" After Fifty Years', *History Compass* 13, no. 8 (2015): 396–410.

[60] Cohen, *Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*, 33.

[61] Ibid., 313.

[62] Dymmok, *Liber Contra XII Errores et Hereses Lollardorum*, 274-276. For an overview of Roger Dymmok and the controversy over clerical celibacy, see chapter 1.

was a view shared by most late medieval theologians: while the precept may have been necessary in the time of the Old Testament, it was not applicable in their own era.[63] Furthermore, the use of this precept in Gen. 8-9 stresses the importance of normative sex and the associations between human and non-human sexuality. Though these verses grant primacy to humans among all living beings, the commands to increase and multiply in Gen. 8-9 are addressed equally to both humans and non-human animals. The Flood narrative already establishes the commonality of humans and animals as 'all flesh, wherein is the breath of life' [*omnem carnem, in qua spiritus vitæ est subter cælum*], both as beings which are to be jointly destroyed by the Flood, and as the flesh which is to be preserved on the Ark (Gen. 6:17-19 and 7:15-16.). The instruction addressed to both Noah's family and the animals which disembark with him in Gen. 8:16-17 is therefore a continuation of this blessing. Animals and humans are therefore governed by the same principles of normative sexual behaviour. The order to 'increase and multiply' establishes a paradigm of natural sexuality in the postdiluvian world.

Vernacular Flood literature took a variety of approaches to adapting the command to increase and multiply. Some, such as the N-Town *Noah* and the Holkham Bible omit it completely. Others, such as *Cleanness* (ll. 521-522) and the Chester *Noah's Flood* (ll. 277-278), simply translate the Latin phrase into English while cutting out its extra repetitions. The Wakefield/Towneley *Noah* likewise provides a direct translation, although it is inserted into God's initial address to Noah before the construction of the Ark (ll. 259–260). The York *Flood* eliminates the character of God from the stage during the disembarkation.[64] Although this authorial choice is not uncommon, as both the Wakefield/Towneley and N-Town *Noah* pageants do likewise, the York pageant is unusual in transferring the words from God to the mouth of Noah, as seen in the dialogue between him and one of his sons at the end of the drama:

> I FILIUS   Fadir, howe sall this lyffe be ledde
>
>   sen non are in this worlde but we?

[63] Peter Biller, *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 111–34.

[64] The York cycle divides the events of Gen.6-9 between the Shipwrights' pageant, which covers God's first address to Noah and the construction of the Ark, and the Fishers and Mariners' pageant, which covers the embarkation, flood, and disembarkation, although the two texts were probably originally a single pageant. God is entirely absent from the latter drama.

NOE   Sones, with youre wiffes ye salle be stedde [stationed]

and multyplye youre seede sall ye.

Youre barnes sall ilkon othir wedde

and worshippe God in gud degré.

Beestes and foules sall forthe be bredde [beasts and birds shall bring forth offspring]

and so a worlde begynne to bee (ll. 309–316)

In effect, Noah's address to his family reiterates God's commandment from the first pageant. It retains the familiar language of 'multiplien' and 'breden'. These verbs were used interchangeably in Middle English to refer to the begetting of offspring by both humans and animals and did not differ substantially in their broader connotations. 'Breden' for instance was used in the context of Adam and Eve's immediate descendants, as in *Cleanness* ('for hit was þe forme foster þat þe folde bred' (l. 257)) and in *Cursor Mundi* ("þe folke þat of hem firste was bred" (l. 5343)). Equally, 'multiplien' could be applied to animals, as in *Book to A Mother* (c.1370-80)*:* 'þis God techiþ a man bi unresonable bestis, þat onliche knowen here makes [copulate with their mates] to multeplie here kindes'.[65] The lack of human/animal distinction between the two terms therefore emphasises in this passage that the command to increase and multiply applies equally to human and non-human alike.

By way of these various devices and techniques, vernacular Flood literature adapted the direct address from God to Noah to enhance the theme of sexual normativity present in the Flood narrative. The core ideological message behind the commands to bring animals on board in pairs and to increase and multiply is one which vernacular Flood literature consistently identified as significant and developed through a variety of textual strategies. Ultimately, it is a strongly heteronormative one. Almost all the humans and animals on board the Ark are destined either for procreation – i.e. Noah's sons and their wives, and most of the animal couples – or for immediate sacrifice. Noah and his wife are the sole exceptions to this rule, having already had three sons; they subsequently have no further children.

At this point in the discussion, it should be apparent that repetition is fundamental to the representation of animal and human sexuality in our vernacular Flood texts and in the scriptural account itself. This occurs most obviously in the Vulgate, with the multiple repetitions of the command to take pairs on board and of the phrase 'male and female' and

---

[65] McCarthy, *Book to a Mother*, 92.

the three occurrences of 'increase and multiply', but also in numerous vernacular adaptations. I have consistently invoked repetition to argue for the ideological impetus behind these authorial choices, but what exactly is the link between repetition and heteronormativity? To understand this, we must turn to the theorist Judith Butler's concept of performativity. She outlines this idea in two key works, *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*.[66] The core of Butler's theory is that gender and sexual identities are not fixed entities but 'a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being', constructed through the constant performance of behaviours and speech acts through which ones identity is affirmed and recognised by others.[67] Butler argues that this process is ongoing and never fully realised. She further argues that an individual does not consciously participate in the performance of gender as a subject, but does so without for the most part recognising that what they are doing is performance. The policing of gender performance (i.e. the social marginalisation of those who fail to properly 'perform' the correct behaviours and speech acts), which Butler calls the 'heterosexual matrix', is the means by which heteronormativity is enforced.

A crucial aspect of the theory of performativity is the notion of the 'performative speech act', a concept which Butler borrows from the field of linguistics.[68] These are phrases that, when spoken, contribute to the social construction of gender and sexual categories. For example, when a priest or registrar declares that a couple are now married, this speech act recognises and confirms the newlyweds' identities as members of a socially-sanctioned relationship. Performative speech acts gain their power through 'citationality'. This means that a speech act declaring a couple to be married would only be valid if spoken by someone with recognised and accepted authority to marry, and only in a situation where that speech act is considered applicable. If a fisherman were to declare a couple to be married, or if a priest or registrar were to declare a pair of non-human animals to be legally married, these performative speech acts would be considered invalid because they lack the necessary citationality.

---

[66] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).

[67] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 45.

[68] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 170.

Using the theory of performativity, we see that on a fundamental level, the intra- and intertextual repetition of the commands to 'take two of each' and 'increase and multiply' across Flood literature functions as the ideal performative speech acts. As these phrases are either phrased as direct speech from God, or (more uncommonly) are paraphrased from his instructions, they possess the citationality of being all-encompassing orders with divine authority. As elements of biblical history, they possess the citational power of exegetical meaning: they have significance and meaning on a trans-historical level, being applicable to the world of their late medieval audiences. Furthermore, this creates a category of heterosexuality within the Flood narrative. This norm involves the subject experiencing sexual desire for one member of the opposite sex, and wishing to have sex exclusively for procreation. It becomes established as the standard, 'natural' way of experiencing sexuality for both humans and animals; in other words, heteronormativity. Animals are key to the ideological formation of the narrative's logic: they are presented as exemplary models of proper normative sexual action and pairing for humans to learn from. While this message is present in the basic scriptural text, medieval vernacular adaptations amplify this theme and use it as the basis for a sustained tropological parallel to be drawn between the relationships of the human passengers, the pairing of male and female animals, and normative sexual and marital relations.

Plague, craft, and pleasure

Having exposed the heteronormative ideology which underpins the Flood story both trans-historically and specifically in medieval reworkings, I now turn to a closer analysis of the first phase of vernacular Flood literature in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Although a reading through the lens of Butler's theory of performativity makes it abundantly clear that these texts discursively reproduce heteronormativity, I intend to further make the case that medieval authors and patrons implicitly understood the value of these narratives for regulating sexual discourses and norms of behaviour and deployed these texts with such aims in mind.

The fourteenth century saw a shift in representations of the Flood in vernacular culture compared with older theological interpretations. Genesis 6-9 had been a fruitful subject for late antique and early medieval exegesis by influential commentators such as

Augustine, Origen, and Alcuin.[69] In the twelfth century, Hugh of St Victor made a substantial and novel contribution to exegetical thought on the Ark with his treatises *De arca Noe morali*, *De arca Noe mystica*, and *De vanitate mundi*.[70] In the same century, the various interpretations of earlier exegetes were synthesised and condensed in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, and Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*.[71] These three works were subsequently chosen to be the core texts of the theological curricula at Paris in 1228 and Oxford in 1253, thereby cementing their position as the main late medieval works of reference for scriptural commentary.[72] Of these three, the *Historia scholastica* in particular became one of the most important sources for late medieval vernacular biblical adaptations.

These earlier scholars tended to find common ground in privileging literal-historical, typological, and anagogical readings of the Flood over moralised interpretations. The Church Fathers in particular emphasised the pragmatic importance of historical interpretation: Origen and Augustine recognised the urgent need to defend the literal truth of scripture in the face of pagan and Gnostic critics who attacked the plausibility of the Flood narrative and from fellow Christians who argued for a purely symbolic understanding of the passage.[73] I have already outlined the various allegorical readings of the Flood narrative, such as the associations of the Ark with the sacrament of baptism and the Christological figure of Noah. Tropological readings were comparatively rarer and focused on the use of the Ark as a meditative prompt for spiritual contemplation. For instance, Origen likened the Ark to a spiritual library which he instructed his listeners to build within their hearts: the uniform, cleanly-cut planks of the ship signified the books of divine knowledge which were to fill their shelves.[74] Hugh developed this metaphor further

---

[69] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.26-27; Origen, *Origenes Werke, Sechster Band: Homilien Zum Hexateuch*, ed. W.A. Baehrens, trans. Rufinus of Aquileia (Leipzig: J.C Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1920), 22–39; Alcuin, *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesin*, PL 100: 0526-0532.

[70] Hugh of St Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. Aelred Squire (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 11–12; Conrad Rudolph, *The Mystic Ark: Hugh of Saint Victor, Art, and Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[71] J.P. Migne mistakenly attributed the *Glossa Ordinaria* to Walafrid Strabo; the text's genuine compiler is unknown.

[72] James H. Morey, 'Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible', *Speculum* 68, no. 1 (1993): 6–7.

[73] Origen, *Origenes Werke, Bd.6*, 27–30; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.27.

[74] Origen, *Origenes Werke, Bd.6*, 37–39.

by structuring *De arca Noe morali* around the core concept of building an Ark of virtues within oneself, and guided his readers through the meditative practices needed to achieve this.[75] Moralisations concerning sexual behaviour were extremely rare in these texts. This should not surprise us; such works of exegesis generally did not have an explicit pastoral focus and were not intended for the instruction of the laity but rather for the celibate religious communities in which their authors resided and worked, such as Hugh's Abbey of St Victor.[76]

From the second half of the fourteenth century, Noah texts began to emphasise a more explicitly moralised interpretation.[77] This relied upon a reading of Gen. 6 which interpreted the cause of the Flood to be sexual deviance. This reading has only a somewhat limited textual basis in the Vulgate itself and found relatively little support in early medieval exegesis. According to Genesis, God saw that 'the wickedness of men was great on the Earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times' [*multa malitia hominum esset in terra, et cuncta cogitatio cordis intenta esset ad malum omni tempore*] (Gen.6:5-6); the Earth was 'corrupted before God, and was filled with iniquity' [*corrupta est autem terra coram Deo, et repleta est iniquitate*] (Gen. 6:11-13). Without further qualifiers, neither *iniquitas* nor *malitia* hold any particular connotations of exclusively sexual misbehaviour.[78] Exegetical references in the New Testament offered little by way of clarification: Peter cited the Flood as an example of God punishing the unrighteous, but merely described the antediluvian world as 'the world of the ungodly' [*mundo impiorum*] (2 Peter 2:5).[79] Augustine had understood Genesis 6:4 to offer a partial explanation. In his reading, the descendants of Cain (the 'daughters of men') had seduced the lineage of Seth (the 'sons of God') and drawn them away from godly behaviour, leading to general moral disorder.[80] However, high and late medieval texts, both in Latin and vernacular languages, focused less on the

---

[75] Hugh of St Victor, *De arca Noe morali*, PL 176:0635.

[76] Hugh of St Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 39.

[77] The general tendency to moralise the Bible and 'endow its history with a moral teleology' has already been well-documented in the context of Bible versifications. Ad Putter, '*Cleanness* and the Tradition of Biblical Versification', in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, ed. J.A. Burrow and Hoyt N. Duggan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 184.

[78] *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources,* eds. Richard Ashdowne, David Howlett and Ronald Latham (Oxford: British Academy, 2018), s.v. "iniquitas" and "malitia".

[79] c.f. Matthew 24:37-39 and Hebrews 11:7.

[80] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.22. I will examine Augustine's discussion of the mixing of the two lineages and the 'giants' [*gigantes*] who resulted from these unions in greater depth in chapter 3.

intermixing of the lineages of Seth and Cain and more on the general condemnation of sexual immorality.[81] Michael Twomey has identified the most common immediate origin of this interpretation in the *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius, as transmitted both through manuscripts of its two eighth-century Latin translations and its three Middle English translations, and more widely disseminated through citation by Comestor in the *Historia scholastica*.[82]

The Flood began to be interpreted as a tropological type representing God's vengeance for the sin of *luxuria* and was paired alongside the type of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.[83] The twinning of these types originated in hagiographic accounts of St Dominic's vision of the Virgin Mary.[84] This typological pairing was further popularised in the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (c.1310-1324), one of the most popular late medieval guides to exegesis with 394 manuscript witnesses and translations in several languages.[85] In this account of the vision, Mary appears before Dominic to lament the spread of wickedness and error in the world, and particularly the prevalence of the sins of pride, avarice and lechery. She says that 'lechery submerged nearly the entire world by means of water / and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by means of fire'.[86] The lecherous behaviour of the author's contemporaries continues to anger God; however, Mary's ongoing intercession on humanity's behalf protects the world from further destruction. As a result, the story of Noah and the Ark became associated with Sexagesima. Passages from

---

[81] However, this idea was not unknown in vernacular adaptations, such as in certain Irish and German texts. Brian Murdoch, 'From the Flood to the Tower of Babel: Some Notes on "Saltair Na Rann" XIII-XXIV', *Ériu* 40 (1989): 74–75; Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible*, 102.

[82] Michael Twomey, '*Cleanness*, Peter Comestor, and the Revelationes Sancti Methodii', *Mediaevalia* 11 (1985): 203–17.

[83] Although the Flood was typologically paired with Sodom and Gomorrah in most texts, there were notable exceptions. For example, the *Biblia pauperum* paired Sodom with the destruction of Dathan and Abiron as types that prefigured the antitype of the Damned entering Hell. Avril Henry, ed., *Biblia Pauperum: A Facsimile and Edition* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987), 122–23.

[84] See e.g. *Acta Sanctorum* August 4, 503.

[85] J. Lutz and P. Perdrizet, eds., *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, vol. I, (Mulhouse: Ernest Meininger, 1907). For the Middle English translation (produced before 1429), see Avril Henry, ed., *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun: A Middle English Translation of 'Speculum Humanae Salvationis'* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1986).

[86] *Luxuria totum mundum fere per aquam submersit / Sodomam et Gomorrham per ignem subvertit*. Lutz and Perdrizet, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, I:cap.37, ll. 33–34.

Gen.6-9 were set as lections appropriate for Sexagesima services in the Breviary.[87] John Mirk was one of the most influential preachers to make use of the new exegetical and homiletic context of the Flood to deliver moral teaching about sexuality in contemporary society. Mirk incorporated the Breviary's lections pertaining to Noah into his sermon for Sexagesima Sunday, whose moralisation was to avoid sin in all its forms, with a close focus on the sin of lechery and on unnatural sex.[88] Mirk said that 'God hatuth synne so mech þat he toke vengeauns on alle þe worlde, as Holy Chyrche now makuth mynde, and namely for þe synne of lechery and of avowterye and for synne aȝenne kynde'.[89] Having related the story of Noah, he concluded his sermon by drawing on Dominic's vision of Mary as a *narratio*, lamenting that the world was as sinful in his own time as it was in the generations after Adam: 'Þus, gode men, ȝe mon vnderstande how grete vengeans God toke alle þe worlde for wykkydnesse of synne. And now, more harme is, þe pepul is as ful of synne as it was þat tyme.[90]

Dives and Pauper took a similar approach to Mirk in its application of the Flood story to lay sexual morality. *Dives and Pauper* recommended reflection on biblical types of God's vengeance against human individuals and societies for sexual sin as a 'remedy against lechery' [*remedye aȝenys lecherye*]. Reflection on the Flood, along with its counterpart type of Sodom and Gomorrah, was one of these 'remedies': as the text stated, 'for auouterye & vnlauful wedlac al mankende was dystryyd in tyme of þe flood of Noe'.[91] However, as with *Cleanness*, *Dives and Pauper* held a generally positive attitude towards normative sexuality among the laity, citing the Apostle Paul's praise for marriage and being concerned with regulating its abuses rather than recommending the practice of celibacy for all.[92]

This new interpretation of the Flood narrative in late-fourteenth-century texts was part of the broader context of polemic responses to the major plague pandemics in England in 1348-9 and 1361–62. Chroniclers identified a breakdown in sexual morality and gender norms in English society before and after the peak years of the epidemic. Thomas

---

[87] Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth, eds., *Breviarium Ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*, vol. I (Cambridge: Typis Academiae, 1879), dxiii-dxxxii.

[88] Mirk, *Festial*, I:69.

[89] Ibid., 69.

[90] Ibid., 70.

[91] Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper*, vol. I pt.2, EETS OS 280 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 104–5.

[92] Ibid., 62.

Burton, monk of the Cistercian abbey at Meaux writing in c.1388-96 recalled that in the year before the 1348 outbreak, the English nobility had held tournaments attended by many married women who used the occasion as a pretext for adulterous affairs.[93] At these same events, according to Burton's Augustinian contemporary Henry Knighton (d.1396), groups of up to fifty ladies rode onto the tournament ground dressed as men and 'wantonly and with disgraceful lubricity displayed their bodies, as the rumour ran'.[94] John of Reading, monk of Westminster Abbey (d.1368/9), recorded that, in the wake of the 1361-2 pandemic, people irrespective of status, class or degree no longer cared about sexual lapses but instead regarded fornication, adultery and even incest as a game rather than a sin: supposedly, in many places brothers entered into relationships with their sisters.[95]

Plague thus began to be viewed as divine punishment for the sexual immorality of contemporary society. Many observers, such as the anonymous chronicler of the Cistercian abbey of Louth Park, drew parallels between the catastrophic loss of life from plague and the destruction of the world during the Flood.[96] Such comparisons proved fruitful material for homilists. Thomas Brinton, bishop of Rochester, composed a sermon in 1375 calling for moral reform in response to a minor outbreak of plague that year.[97] Brinton placed the blame for the plague squarely at the feet of sinners, rejecting alternative astrological explanations which had also gained traction in the decades after the first outbreak of plague in 1348: 'Let those who ascribe such things to planets and constellations rather than to sin say what sort of planet reigned at the time of Noah, when God drowned the whole world

---

[93] Thomas Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa, a Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396*, ed. Edward A. Bond, vol. III, Rolls Series 43 (London: Longmans, 1868), 72.

[94] *Corpora sua ludibriis et scurilosis lasciuiis uexitabant, ut rumor populi personabat*. Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. G.H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 92–95.

[95] John of Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis 1346-1367*, ed. James Tait (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914), 150. This John of Reading should not to be confused with his namesake, an English Franciscan theologian who taught at Oxford and Avignon and died in 1346.

[96] Edmund Venables, ed., *Chronicon Abbatiae de Parco Ludae: The Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey*, trans. A.R. Maddison (Horncastle: Lincolnshire Record Society, 1891), 38.

[97] Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*,. II:322. Mary Devlin proposes that Brinton composed this sermon in response to a letter issued by Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, calling for prayers and processions in response to the outbreak and which likewise identified moral decay as the cause of the plague. For Sudbury's letter, see David Wilkins, ed., *Concilia*, vol. III (London: R. Gosling et al., 1737), 100.

except for eight souls, unless the planet of malice and sin'.[98] However, the sins of antediluvian humanity were incomparable to those of the fourteenth-century English:

> Today the corruption of lechery and the imagining of evil are greater than in the days of Noah, for a thousand ways of sinning which were unknown then have been discovered now, and the sin of the Sodomites prevails beyond measure, and today the cruelty of lords is greater than in the time of David. And therefore, let us not blame the flails of God on the planets or the elements but rather on our sins, saying, as in Genesis, 'We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned' (Gen. 42:21).[99]

In this way, Brinton argued that God had punished contemporary society for disorderly sexuality by inflicting the plague and would continue to do so if this behaviour was not reformed, just as he had punished the sexual excess of the people of the First Age. As I have shown, the moralising association between the Flood and the sin of *luxuria* predated the outbreaks of plague, but the pandemics of the mid fourteenth century spurred the popularisation of this *topos* in the rhetoric of moral reform.

The association between the Flood and *luxuria* also influenced the production of non-homiletic texts in different ways. In some texts, the sexual sin of the people of the First Age was identified as intercourse between unmarried men and women, framed in terms of 'lust' or 'lechery', or more rarely 'adultery'. Often lechery was the sole sin, though it could also be listed among the other cardinal sins. *Dives and Pauper* states that 'for auouterye [adultery] & vnlauful wedlac al mankende was dystryyd [destroyed] in tyme of þe flood of Noe'; likewise, according the *Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament*,

---

[98] *Illi qui talia ascribunt ceteris planetis et constellacionibus, non peccatis, dicant qualis planeta regnauit tempore Noe, quando exceptis octo animabus Deus totum mundum per diluuium submergebat, nisi planeta malice et peccati.* Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II:323. Translation from: Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 145. On astrological and other contemporary physical explanations for the causes of the Black Death, see the report of the Paris medical faculty, October 1348, printed in: Robert Hoeniger, *Der Schwarze Tod in Deutschland* (Berlin: Eugen Grosser, 1882), 152–56.

[99] *Igitur cum maior sit hodie luxurie corrupcio et malicie cogitacio quam in diebus Noe, quia mille modi peccandi qui tunc non erant hodie sunt inuenti, et peccatum Sodomiticum nimis regnat, et maior est hodie crudelitas dominorum quam in tempore Dauid, flagella Dei non imputemus planetis vel elementis sed pocius peccatis nostris, dicentes illud Genesis,* Merito hec patimur quia peccauimus. Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II:323; Horrox, *The Black Death*, 146.

humanity before the Flood 'lyfyd in lust evyn at ther lyst' [lived in lust to even the least degree] (l. 278). Other texts identified this antediluvian sin as unnatural. In his 1387 translation of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* (first half of the fourteenth century), John Trevisa writes that 'Seth [and] his children were good men anon to þe seuenþe generacioun; bot afterward men mys vsede men and women mysuesede women'.[100] The verb 'mysusen' [to misuse] had clear connotations of unnatural sex, and in this context it would have been understood to be denoting same-sex intercourse. Trevisa also uses the term in a similar way in his translation of *De proprietatibus rerum* ("Many mysvsen þis membres [i.e. the genitals], þat vsyn ham nouȝt to þe frute [not for procreation] but more aȝenst þe ordre of resoun [against the order of reason] and lawe of kynde, and nouȝt to gete children but to foule lust)'.[101] *Cursor Mundi* presents a similar account:

> Wymmen as we hit fynde
> Wente togider aȝeyne kynde
> And men also þe same wyse [in the same manner]
> As þe deuele wolde deuyse [as the devil would contrive] (ll. 1568a–1568d)

These lines were exclusive to the southern recension and more directly link unnatural intercourse with homosexual intercourse. The northern version suggests unnatural sin more ambiguously: 'Þe lau o kind þai sua for-did' [the law of nature they deserted in this way].[102]

The theme of unnatural intercourse as artificially-invented practice was invoked in passing by Brinton's thousand ways of sinning 'discovered now' [*hodie sunt inuenti*] and the southern *Cursor Mundi*'s acts of homosexual sex 'as þe deuele wolde deuyse'. However, this theme would be more fully deployed in the account of the humans of the First Age in *Cleanness*:

---

[100] *Usque ad septimam generationem filii Seth fuerunt boni; sed postmodum viri abysi sunt viris, et mulieres mulieribus.* Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis, Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Churchill Babington, trans. John Trevisa, vol. II, Rolls Series 41 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1869), 230.

[101] Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' De Proprietatibus Rerum, A Critical Text*, ed. M.C. Seymour, trans. John Trevisa, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 263.

[102] Richard Morris, ed., *Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem of the Fourteenth Century*, vol. I, EETS OS 57, 59, 62 and 66 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1874), l. 1576.

Þer watz no law to hem layd bot loke to kynde,

And kepe to hit, and alle hit cors clanly fulfylle.

And þenne founden þay fylþe in fleschlych dedez,

And controued agayn kynde contraré werkez,

And vsed hem vnþryftyly vchon on oþer,

And als with oþer, wylsfully, upon a wrange wyse. (ll. 263–268)

There was no law laid upon them but to look to nature

And to keep to it, and all its course cleanly fulfil

And then they discovered filth in deeds of the flesh

And devised against nature contrary acts

And each person used them wickedly on others

And also with others, wilfully, contrary to what is right

Although the exact nature of the 'contraré werkez' is not specified in the Flood section of the poem, comparisons with other passages in the text show that these should be read as denoting homosexual acts. When God addresses Abraham, he describes Sodom as a place where "vch male matz his mach [chooses as his mate] a man as hymseluen [himself]' and rejects the 'kynde crafte' of sex with women which God provided for them and has "scorned natwre' (l. 693). Likewise, the Sodomites demand that Lot surrender the angels which they perceive as 'Ʒong [young] men' so "þat we may lere hym of lof [teach them of love], as oure lyst biddez [as our lust demands]" (l.843). Lot responds by offering up his daughters to be raped: "I schal kenne [teach] yow by kynde a crafte þat is better" (l. 865). In all these examples, heterosexual sex is identified as a natural act given to humans by God, a 'kynde crafte', and homosexual desires and acts are contrasted as its binary opposite: unnatural, invented by humans. The 'contraré werkez' of the people of the First Age are therefore evidently intended to be read as homosexual.

The notion that humans 'controued' unnatural intercourse signals a much deeper ideological discourse of invention and the distinction between humans and animals. 'Controven' could be translated in several different ways that would significantly alter the meaning of this passage.[103] Potentially, the line could read to mean that humans 'discovered' unnatural acts, with the implication that they had some degree of prior

---

[103] On the full diversity of meanings associated with the word, compare the four different senses in *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Robert E. Lewis et al (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), s.v. "cǒntrēven".

existence in the natural world, or that humans were granted knowledge of them through a third party.[104] However, I find it more persuasive to read this through its alternative connotations of devising, fashioning, and inventing.

Invention was a dominant motif throughout late medieval portrayals of human society before the Flood, and it was often depicted in an ambivalent or negative light. According to Trevisa's translation of Pseudo-Methodius, 'þere were men wickid doeris & fynderis [doers and inventors] of worst crafte of þe sones of Caym [Cain]' who were the first people to 'fonden' [create] works of brass, iron, gold and silver and the first to grind grain, as well as the first to develop the musical arts.[105] Cain himself was noted to be the first person to found a city and transform the 'symple lyuynge' of the first humans through the introduction of weights and measures and the conversion of land into property.[106] Although texts usually emphasised Cain's urbanity, he was also on occasion depicted as the inventor of agriculture, as portrayed in a combination of text and image in the Holkham Bible.[107] Additionally, the hunter Lamech was commonly stated to be 'þe firste þat brouȝt yn bygamye, and so spousebreche [adultery] aȝenst þe lawe of God and of kynde'.[108] This last case established a textual precedent for the portrayal of antediluvian humans as the inventors of deviant sexual acts, although in contrast with *Cleanness*, Lamech's sin involved prohibited intercourse with women rather than with other men. Across all these examples, for better or for worse the ability to invent brought humans further away from their 'natural' state in the Garden of Eden and distinguished them from animals, which lacked the ability to create tools and objects and manipulate their environments.

---

[104] Compare with Gower's use of the word in the context of scientific study: 'These olde philosophres wise / Of al this worldes erthe round / Hou large, hou thikke was the ground / Controeveden th'experience'. John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, bk.7, ll. 184-187.

[105] Pseudo-Methodius, 'Þe Bygynnyng of Þe World and Þe Ende of Worldes', in *'Dialogus Inter Militem et Clericum, Richard FitzRalph's Sermon: 'Defensio Curatorum', and Methodius: 'Þe Bygynnyng of Þe World and Þe Ende of Worldes' by John Trevisa, Vicar of Berkeley*, ed. Aaron Jenkins Perry, trans. John Trevisa, EETS OS 167 (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 96.

[106] Higden, *Polychronicon*, II:227.

[107] Brown, *The Holkham Bible Picture Book*, 36. Brown interprets this unusual agricultural depiction in light of the manuscript's probable commissioning and production within the London bourgeois *milieu* as evidence of contemporary urban anti-rural sentiment.

[108] Higden, *Polychronicon*, II:227.

As well as the intertextual connotations of antediluvian humans as inventors, this passage also forms part of a broader motif of invention and craft within *Cleanness*. Charlotte Morse has explored the theme of 'crafte' as a sustained metaphor for Christ's powers of healing and of the covenants between God and humanity.[109] However, the use of this motif within the poem's framework of heteronormativity deserves closer scrutiny. We turn again to God's address to Abraham, where he laments that "I compast hem a kynde crafte and kende hit hem derne [discreetly]" (l. 697) and that "haf þay skyfted [ignored] My skyl" (l. 709). The 'kynde crafte' that God refers to, and which Lot later invokes against the Sodomites, denotes specifically heterosexual intercourse. Using the address as a starting point for sustained critique, several critics have remarked on the ways in which the poet celebrates normative sexual intercourse, and specifically sexual pleasure, in order to criticise non-normative practices.[110] In doing so, this passage also creates an opposition between the 'kynde crafte' of natural, normative, pleasurable heterosexual sex created by God and gifted to humanity and the 'contraré werkez' – acts of unnatural intercourse created artificially by humans in conscious rejection of divine craftsmanship.

This dichotomy in turn enhances the core ideological message of heteronormativity at the heart of the Flood narrative: heterosexual sex is naturalised through the representation of the animal couples, whereas the unnatural-ness of homosexual sex is emphasised through its artificiality and its associations with human invention. The ideological need to distinguish between the normative sexual behaviour of non-human animals and the unnatural non-normative sex of humans, as well as the conceptual impossibility of queer animals in Aristotelian thought, most likely explains the limited impact on medieval Christian thought and culture of Jewish traditions regarding the shared sexual deviance of pre-Flood animals and humans.[111] *Aggadot* and later Jewish exegetes such as Rashi held that antediluvian animals had been just as immoral as humans by engaging in interspecies intercourse, hence they too were deserving of divine punishment.[112] Likewise, those creatures which were permitted onto the Ark were those who had remained sexually

---

[109] Charlotte C. Morse, *The Pattern of Judgement in the* Queste *and* Cleanness (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 178–85.

[110] Calabrese and Eliason, 'The Rhetorics of Sexual Pleasure and Intolerance in the Middle English *Cleanness*'; Keiser, *Courtly Desire and Medieval Homophobia*.

[111] On the conceptual impossibility of queer animals in medieval Scholasticism, see chapter 1.

[112] Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold and Paul Radin, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 144–46; Michael Carasik, ed., *The Commentators' Bible: Genesis: The Rubin JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2018), 67.

pure in the manner of Noah and his family. Even within early medieval Christian exegesis, this belief sat uncomfortably with Christian doctrine regarding the inability of non-humans to sin and likewise achieve salvation. For instance, Bede had glossed the statement in Genesis 6:12 that 'all flesh had corrupted its way' to mean that only mankind had sinned, 'for neither birds nor four-footed animals had corrupted their way by sinning, just as it is not they, but all mankind that will see the salvation of God' [*non enim uolucres aut quadrupedia viam suam peccando corruperant, sicut nec illa salutare Dei, id est Christum, sed omnis homo uidebit*].[113] Nicholas of Lyra, who had engaged heavily with Rashi's works, was one of the few Christian authors to entertain this possibility, writing in the *Postilla* (c.1322-1331) that 'birds and animals had intermingled irregularly with those who were not of their species or kind' [*aues et animalia inordinate commiscuerant se cum illis que non erat sui generis vel speciei*].[114] However, this belief could not be found in the twelfth-century exegetical compilations and did not make its way into the English texts.

The dichotomy in *Cleanness* between 'kynde craft' and 'contraré werkez' should be read within the context of the Aristotelian rational human/irrational animal binary discourse of sex, which I have outlined in the previous chapter. As we have seen, the prerequisite for engaging in unnatural intercourse was the ability granted by reason to overcome the living organism's natural appetite for reproductive heterosexual sex. Humans, as the sole creature with the capacity for reason, were therefore the only ones capable of unnatural sex. The invention of 'contraré werkez' is therefore a product of human rationality, and a process which separates the people of the First Age from the non-human animals with which they shared their world. In this way, *Cleanness* dramatises the invention of queer sex as one of the first acts of human civilisation. Butler's theory of performativity clarifies how the poem's representation of sexual acts as constructed crafts reinforces its defence of heteronormativity. *Cleanness* identifies that the 'kynde craft' of heterosexual intercourse is an act which is divinely constructed, natural, and common to human and animal, and which forms the basis for proper normative relationships. Queer 'werkez' are artificial in the sense that they are constructed by humans rather than God, and

---

[113] Bede, *In Genesim*, 102; Bede, *On Genesis*, trans. Calvin B. Kendall (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 172.

[114] Nicholas of Lyra, *Biblia Sacra Cum Glossis, Interlineari et Ordinaria, Nicolai Lyrani Postilla et Moralitatibus, Burgensis Additionibus, & Thoringi Replicis*, vol. I (London: Gaspard Trechsel, 1545), f.50v.

hence originate from outside of nature. In this way, the poem naturalises heterosexuality through the theme of craft and invention.

The dichotomy of 'kynde craft' and 'contraré werkez' involved the rhetorical defence of the former in addition to the condemnation of the latter. Vernacular Flood literature portrayed 'natural intercourse' not only as morally preferable to 'unnatural sex', but also as a pleasurable act. At the same time, these texts acknowledged that intercourse could only be truly virtuous in the context of married life. *Cursor Mundi* exemplifies this kind of attitude. The poet begins the text by lamenting that contemporary audiences' obsession with secular romance has led to breakdown in normative sexual values, as lay people now seek to emulate the adulterous behaviour of Arthurian heroes (ll. 1-27). Now, men are held in contempt unless they take mistresses ('For now is heholden nouȝt in shouris / But he con loue paramouris' (ll.51-52)). The poet hopes to rectify this situation by educating the reader on the Bible and the virtues of the Virgin Mary.[115] This condemnation of sexual misbehaviour extends to a sustained critique of unnatural acts: the poem's tropological reading of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals a familiar interest in the theme of sodomy and its relation to 'kynde'. Here, the poet directly addresses the reader to learn from the example of the people of Sodom ('Alle cristen men I rede ȝe take / Ensaumple bi þis wooful wrake' (ll. 2881–2882)), whose crime is understood in this text to be sexual ('Out of kynde her synne was done / Þerfore her kynde lost was soone' (ll. 2889–2890)). However, the poem's attitude to sexual appetites remains resignedly pragmatic:

> if ȝe nede synne shal do
> Þe synne of kynde holde ȝou to
> Þe kyndely synne wiþ wommon
> But sib ne spoused take ȝe noon (ll. 2895–2898)

> If you must commit sin
> Limit yourself to natural sin

> Sin naturally with women
>
> But take neither kin nor a betrothed or married woman as a lover

The poem's Flood episode develops this theme further by emphasising the pleasure of heterosexual intercourse. After the floodwaters recede, Noah ushers out all the creatures from the Ark:

> Siþ he made hem alle out dryue
>
> foule & beest man & wyue
>
> Þese beestis were ful glad in moode
>
> whenne þei hadde her kyndely foode
>
> Oure lord dide hem soone to sprede
>
> wiþinne her owne kynde to brede (ll. 1909–1914)

However, Noah himself and his family remain onboard, as God subsequently commands him 'to leue þe ship wift his meyne [household]' (l. 1916).[116] Therefore, God effectively issues two 'increase and multiply' blessings: one on the animals in ll. 1913-1914 and one to Noah in ll. 1931-1932 ('I wol þat of þi osprynge brede / al maner nacioun and lede'). The separate blessing issued to the animals here results in deeper implications for the line 'foule & beest man & wyue' (l. 1910), which must refer solely to the disembarking animals since, at this point in the narrative, all the humans are still on the Ark. The Middle English word 'wif' was used in scientific contexts to refer to non-anthropomorphised female animals, c.f. Trevisa's translation of *De proprietatibus rerum:* 'Þe bore [...] freteþ and fomeþ at þe mouth [...] when he gendreþ [copulates] wiþ his wyf' and 'Among cattes in tyme of loue is hard fightynge for wyues'.[117] However, the word 'man' specifically denoted a human (more commonly the male, although it could also be used for female humans) and in ordinary usage was not used for male non-human animals.[118] In this context, a persuasive reading of the phrase 'man & wyue' would be to see it as polemical: the contradictory image of pairs of animals as married couples evokes a broader discourse around matrimony and natural sexual appetites.

The 'married animal' was a potent metaphor. As we saw in the previous chapter, Albert the Great said that 'only the human is a perfectly conjugal animal since he makes

---

[116] According to some exegetical texts, Noah was reluctant to leave the Ark on account of fearing another Flood. Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible*, 96–126.

[117] Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things*, 1975, II:1119 and 1229.

[118] c.f. *MED*, s.v. "man", 1.(a) and 3.(a).

honourable marriages ordained by laws'.[119] However, Augustinian zoological texts found that animals including elephants could be useful tropological exemplars of virtuous marital behaviours. The *Cursor Mundi* poet likewise deploys animal exemplars in defence of marriage. Elsewhere in the text, the poet expresses a particular concern for infidelity. One of the worst crimes of the people of the First Age is that 'Þe broþer took þe oþeres wyf' (l. 1574), and the poet advised the amorous reader that sex with an unmarried person was still preferable to an affair with another person's spouse. The poet therefore uses the metaphor of the married animal to shame lustful sinners and naturalise heterosexual marriage: animals perform married heterosexuality better than humans.

Like *Cursor Mundi*, *Cleanness* naturalises heterosexual marriage and places a strong emphasis on normative pleasure. God's 'take two of each sort' address to Noah deploys this theme to significant effect:

> Of vche best þat berez lyf busk þe a cupple
> of vche clene comly kynde enclose seuen makez
> of vche horwed in ark halde bot a payre
> for to saue Me þe sede of alle ser kyndez.
> And ay þou meng with þe malez þe mete ho-bestez
> vche payre by payre to plese ayþer oþer (ll. 333–338)

> Of each beast that bears life bring forth a couple
> of each clean kind of animal, enclose seven mates
> of each unclean animal, preserve only one pair
> in order to preserve for me the seed of all their kinds
> and make sure to join the males with their own females
> thus pair by pair, they shall please one another

As in our earlier example, the poet emphasises the theme of normativity through the repetition of the language of pairing. In this passage, three synonyms for pair ('cupple', 'makez', 'payre') are used to end the first three lines. The poet explicitly establishes the pair as the fundamental unit by which all living beings to be saved are reckoned, superseding in importance the division between 'clene' and 'horwed' [unclean]. Humans as well as animals are potentially encompassed by the 'vche best þat berez lyf', enabling an identification between the human and animal couples on board the Ark. The parallels between pairs of

---

[119] *Solus homo perfecte coniugale est animal eo quod honestas legibus ordinatas facit nuptias.* Albert, *De animalibus,* 22.12

humans and animals here parallels the part of God's address immediately preceding this passage, where he tells Noah to bring "Þe makez of þy myry sunez": the use of the word 'makez' for both human wives and animal pairs invites comparisons between these two groups. This can be compared with the use of 'mach' to describe the male lovers taken by the men of Sodom ("vch male matz his mach a man as hymseluen" (l. 695)), or God's command that intercourse should take place "bytwene a male and his make" (l. 703)]. In this way, the use of a shared vocabulary of 'make/mach' for human and animal relationships is consistent throughout *Cleanness*.

God also grants explicit responsibility to Noah for controlling and disciplining the sexual behaviour of the animals under his care. In the command to "meng [join] with þe malez þe mete ho-bestez", the use of the verb 'mengen' grants a more active sense to this interpretation of the scriptural verse than in other Noah texts. Here, Noah is expected to take a much more direct role in the normative coupling of the animals, not just making sure to bring pairs but to actively ensure that they become mates. Furthermore, 'mengen' carries overtly conjugal and sexual resonances. The word can simply mean 'to join' or 'to mix', but it also denotes the acts of marrying and copulation.[120]

By pairing them in this way, the animals will 'plese ayþer oþer'. 'Plesen' has essentially the same range of connotations as its modern counterpart 'to please', from the neutral (to treat kindly, to flatter etc.) to the explicitly sexual (to gratify sexually – c.f. "[use] the lustes of youre wyf attemprely [in moderation] / and [...] plese hire nat to amorously").[121] Contemporary medical understandings of the role of sexual pleasure in reproduction further lend weight to the sexualised reading of 'plesen'. As we have seen in the previous chapter, pleasure was considered an essential component of sexual intercourse in late medieval theories of generation. According to Scholastic commentators on Aristotle, God granted human and non-human animals the capacity to experience genital pleasure through the sense of touch to ensure that they would desire intercourse in order to

---

[120] C.f. the translations of Lev. 18:23 ('A woman shall not lie down to a beast, nor copulate with it' [*a womman shal not vnder-ligge to a beest ne shal be menged to hit*]) and 21:15 ('He shall not mingle the stock of his kindred with the common people of his nation' [*ne menge he þe lynage of his kynde to þe comunte of his peple*]) in the Early Wycliffite Bible. Josiah Forshall and Frederick Madden, eds., *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his Followers*, IV vols (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1850)

[121] Geoffrey Chaucer, "Merchant's Tale," *Canterbury Tales*, frag. 4, ll. 1679-1680.

reproduce.[122] Furthermore, pleasure was considered a necessary physical prerequisite for the emission of semen required for conception to occur within both Galenic and Aristotelian theories, although the two authorities disagreed as to whether this required both the male and female partners to experience pleasure (Galen) or only the male (Aristotle).[123] In contrast to the 'sexual pessimism' of early medieval Augustinian theology which held that all sexual pleasure was indefensibly sinful, Scholastic natural philosophers argued that pleasure had an important and necessary function within the context of reproductive heterosexual intercourse.[124] Consequently, in order for the animals to reproduce once they leave the Ark, they required sexual pleasure. Thus, the command to ensure that they please each other reinforces Noah's role in controlling the reproductive function of the Ark. This emphasis on the pleasure of heterosexuality is another of the poem's running themes: in his address to Lot, God extols the 'doole alþer-swettest' [sweetest share] (l. 699) and 'merþe' [mirth] (l. 703) which accompanies the normative pairing of human men and women.

Michael Calabrese, Eric Eliason, Allen Frantzen, Jane Lecklider and Elizabeth Keiser have all explored the didactic function of *Cleanness*.[125] According to their readings, the poet portrays normative sexual desire and behaviour in a highly positive light as both enjoyable and virtuous, in an effort to counterbalance the text's negative and critical depiction of non-normative sex as corrupting and unclean. I find their analysis persuasive, but I argue that it can be productively extended further from the realm of human experience into that of animal sexuality. The poet's representation in the Flood episode of non-human sex as being governed by the same logic of pleasure as that of humans enhances the poem's presentation of its central theme of natural sexuality. The shared heteronormativity between humans and animals means that the animals' roles as sexual

---

[122] For further explanation, see chapter 1.

[123] For the differing perspectives of these two authors on pleasure and semen, see Sophia M. Connell, 'Aristotle and Galen on Sex Difference and Reproduction: A New Approach to an Ancient Rivalry', *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 31, no. 3 (2000): 405–27. For further discussion on the role of pleasure in medieval theories of sex, see Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, 134–64.

[124] Brandl, *Die Sexualethik des Heiligen Albertus Magnus*.

[125] Calabrese and Eliason, 'The Rhetorics of Sexual Pleasure and Intolerance in the Middle English *Cleanness*'; Allen Frantzen, 'The Disclosure of Sodomy in *Cleanness*', *PMLA* 111, no. 3 (1996): 451–64; Jane K. Lecklider, *Cleanness: Structure and Meaning* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 1–24; Keiser, *Courtly Desire and Medieval Homophobia*, 41–70.

exemplars for humans to follow is strengthened. *Cleanness* and *Cursor Mundi* are deeply invested in depicting the pleasure of heteronormative sex and naturalising normative pleasure using the metaphor of the married animal, in opposition to the human-created craft of unnatural sex. The use of the imagery of sex-as-craft and the pleasure of heterosexual intercourse in later fourteenth-century vernacular Flood literature ultimately relates back to the moralising appropriation of the Flood narrative in the wake of the Black Death: for authors who believed contemporary society to be in a state of crisis due to sexual immorality, this story offered a valuable polemic in defence of heteronormativity.

Civic morality and the dramatic portrayal of Noah's Wife

Having analysed the appropriation of the Flood narrative in the context of English society in the aftermath of the Black Death in a number of verse and prose texts, I will now examine dramatic adaptations of the story of Noah from the Corpus Christi cycles of several northern English towns and cities dating from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century. A number of other urban centres also hosted some form of live performance of the Flood narrative. A list of pageants for the Corpus Christi play c.1520 from the Beverley Great Guild Book mentions a performance of 'Noe Shipp' by the Watermen, who had previously been listed in a 1411 ordinance as one of the guilds responsible for the annual production of the cycle.[126] A 1503 entry in the Hereford Mayor's Book confirms that the town had a Noah pageant performed by the Carpenters' guild for the Corpus Christi procession.[127] A wheeled Noah's ship formed part of the annual St. Anne's Day procession in Lincoln in the first half of the sixteenth century.[128] Seven craft guilds collaborated to perform the 'Noah's Ship' pageant for the annual Pentecost week cycle in Norwich, as recorded in a list ca.1530.[129] 'Noah and his Ship' was one of the

---

[126] Arthur F. Leach, 'Some English Plays and Players, 1220-1548', in *An English Miscellany: Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. W.P. Ker, Arthur S. Napier, and Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 218; Arthur F. Leach, ed., *Beverley Town Documents*, Selden Society 14 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1900), 33. It should be noted that the 1411 ordinance does not specify any pageant titles, which leaves a degree of uncertainty regarding this matter. See also: Diana Wyatt, 'Performance and Ceremonial in Beverley before 1642: An Annotated Edition of Local Archive Materials' (PhD dissertation, University of York, 1983).

[127] David N. Klausner, ed., *REED: Herefordshire/Worcestershire* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 115–16.

[128] James Stokes, ed., *REED: Lincolnshire*, vol. II (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 414–19.

[129] Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*, no. 1227.

sixteen Corpus Christi pageants in Dublin as recorded in 1498 and performed between 1498-1569.[130] Non-cycle Noah pageants involving large movable prop ships were regularly performed for Plough Day celebrations throughout the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries at Hull and Grimsby, and variously for Pentecost or Corpus Christi at Boston.[131] A one-off Noah pageant was also performed as part of the celebrations for Margaret of Anjou's entry into London on 28th May 1445.[132] However, most of these examples differ from the Noah pageants of York, Chester, Wakefield/Towneley and Newcastle in lacking clear evidence for complex scripts, instead being more akin to tableau or modern parade floats; in other cases, we know of no surviving scripts at all.

The performance history of the northern cycle plays and the question of their origin requires some initial explanation. David Mills and Lawrence Clopper have critiqued older scholarship which argued that the Corpus Christi plays grew out of liturgical traditions and continued to be mediated by ecclesiastical authority until late in their history.[133] Instead, as Mills and Clopper argue, the plays emerged specifically as response to lay piety, and their development was governed by the desire of secular civic organisations to assert political independence from ecclesiastical authority. Similarly, Jeremy Goldberg and Christina Fitzgerald argue for the development of the Corpus Christi plays as integral to the formation of the corporate identity of the new urban guilds.[134] Goldberg also

---

[130] Ibid., no. 1736.

[131] Anna J. Mill, 'The Hull Noah Play', *Modern Language Review* 33, no. 4 (1938): 489–505; Stokes, *Lincolnshire*, II:423; Cameron Louis, 'The "Nauiculum Noie" of Boston', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 31 (1992): 91–100. Diana Wyatt argues that similar prefabricated movable ship floats were also used in the York and Newcastle pageants: Diana Wyatt, 'Arts, Crafts and Authorities: Textual and Contextual Evidence for North-East English Noah Plays', *Yearbook of English Studies* 43 (2013): 48–68.

[132] Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*, no. 937.

[133] David Mills, 'The Chester Mystery Plays: Truth and Tradition', in *Courts, Counties and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Diana E.S. Dunn (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1996), 1–26; Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 138–68. For an example of an alternative stance, see Alan J. Fletcher, 'Marginal Glosses in the N-Town Manuscript, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian D.VIII', *Manuscripta* 25, no. 2 (1981): 113–17, who interprets exegetical glosses pertaining to the genealogy of Noah and the dimensions of the Ark as evidence of a clerical owner of the manuscript.

[134] Jeremy Goldberg, 'Performing the Word of God: Corpus Christi Drama in the Northern Province', in *Life and Thought in the Northern Church c.1100-c.1700*, ed. Diana Wood (Woodbridge:

proposes a tentative timeline for the development of the York Corpus Christi play as an illustrative case study of the genre's early history: he argues that the play began life in the 1380s as a series of shorter tableaux scenes without dialogue performed by collective groups of craftsmen and gradually evolved into fully-scripted textual productions with dialogue and elaborate staging by the 1420s alongside the development of formal craft guilds.[135] During this timeframe, the biblical scope of the pageants also evolved from a more limited Passion sequence to a full Creation-to-Doomsday cycle. By the later fifteenth century the York play increasingly fell under the direct control of civic government. Goldberg argues that this model holds true for the other Corpus Christi cycles: for instance, the authorities in Chester exerted control over their city's play by shifting the date of the production from Corpus Christi to Whitsun.[136]

The period at which civic governments began to wrest control of the Corpus Christi cycles from the craft guilds roughly coincides with the dates of production for most surviving play manuscripts. The scripts of the York cycle were recorded in British Library Add. MS 35290 in c.1463-77.[137] Huntington MS HM 1, containing the Wakefield/Towneley plays, was produced c.1500. Although some scholars have argued for alternative provenances for the pageants, references to the town in the manuscript, corroborated by external documentary evidence, securely locates the performance of these pageants to the town of Wakefield.[138] Furthermore, as Goldberg argues, Wakefield's rising economic importance in the later fifteenth century and its attempts to establish a clear civic identity gave it both the impetus and the resources to stage a cycle comparable to York or Chester.[139] While the evidence is more tentative than in the cases of York, Wakefield or Chester, the earliest evidence for the production of a Corpus Christi cycle by craft guilds in Newcastle dates to around the mid-fifteenth century.[140]

Boydell, 1999), 145–70; Jeremy Goldberg, 'From Tableaux to Text: The York Corpus Christi Play ca.1378-1428', *Viator* 43, no. 2 (2012): 247–76; Christina M. Fitzgerald, *The Drama of Masculinity and Medieval English Guild Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[135] Goldberg, 'From Tableaux to Text', 276.

[136] Goldberg, 'Performing the Word of God', 156.

[137] Richard Beadle, ed., *The York Plays: A Critical Edition of the York Corpus Christi Play as Recorded in British Library Additional MS 35290*, vol. I, EETS SS 23 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xii.

[138] Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley, eds., *The Towneley Plays*, vol. I, EETS SS 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), xix–xxii.

[139] Goldberg, 'Performing the Word of God', 156–60.

[140] Davis, *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, xliii.

The Chester cycle is something of an anomaly compared with York, Wakefield/Towneley and Newcastle in several respects. Firstly, the pageants' scripts are recorded in multiple manuscripts. However, while two fragmentary manuscripts survive from the fifteenth century, the remaining six manuscript witnesses are all much more recent (1591-1607).[141] The position of the Noah pageant within this broader context is particularly troubling: Lawrence Clopper argues that the majority of the Old Testament sections, including the Noah episode, were first added to the cycle in the first half of the sixteenth century, perhaps as late as 1532.[142] Furthermore, Kathryn Walls has interpreted that the omission of the dove-and-raven scene from the Noah pageant in several of the Chester manuscripts as the result of Reformation-era censorship, deriving from the potential liturgical associations between the dove prop specified in the script and the pyx-and-pulley system used in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century altars.[143] Any conclusions about fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century performance and textual histories of the Chester play must therefore be derived through careful comparisons with the other cycles. Looking at the broader picture and bearing a note of caution in mind regarding Chester, we can state that the cycle dramas incorporating the Flood narratives were probably first recorded in manuscripts from around the mid fifteenth century to the early sixteenth century at around the same time that they fell under the control of urban governments.

The timing may not have been coincidental. I posit that the act of transcribing the plays formalised their texts into authorised versions which were in line with the ideological aims and values of the civic authorities which had sought to exert greater control over them. Historians have identified a growing emphasis on discourses of moral reform in the governance of many towns and cities across England including London, Coventry and York from c.1450 onwards.[144] This programme of reform was characterised by a hardening

---

[141] R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds., *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, vol. I, EETS SS 3 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), ix–xl.

[142] Lawrence M. Clopper, 'The History and Development of the Chester Cycle', *Modern Philology* 75, no. 3 (1978): 231.

[143] Kathryn Walls, 'The Dove on a Cord in the Chester Cycle's "Noah's Flood"', *Theatre Notebook* 47 (1993): 42–47.

[144] Goldberg, 'Coventry's "Lollard" Programme of 1492 and the Making of Utopia', 97–116; Jeremy Goldberg, 'Cherrylips, the Creed Play, and Conflict: York in the Age of Richard III', *Czech and Slovak Journal of the Humanities* 2016, no. 2 (2017): 29–42; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*.

of social attitudes, including new policies limiting the economic opportunities of women outside of the domestic sphere and a concern with sexual morality, such as greater restrictions on sex work and increasingly severe judicial responses to adultery. The tightening of control over cycle drama gave civic governments the opportunity to promote moral reform through the performance of the pageants. Indeed, contemporary records demonstrated an appreciation for the moralising potential of the cycles. An entry into the York Memorandum Book in 1422 concerning a restructuring of the order of the pageants noted that:

> The play on the day of Corpus Christi in this city, the institution of which was made of old for the important cause of devotion and for the extirpation of vice and the reformation of customs, alas, is impeded more than usual because of the multitude of pageants.[145]

Similarly, the Early Banns of the Chester cycle (composed c.1539-40) emphasised the importance of the improvement of the faith of the 'common people' and the city's prosperity as aims of the pageants:

> ffor asmyche as of old tyme not only for the Augmentacion & incresse of the holy and catholyk ffaith of our sauyour cryst Iesu and to exhort the myndes of the comen peple to gud deuocion and holsom doctryne ther of but Also for the comen welth and prosperitie of this Citie A play [...] to be declared & playde now in this whison weke.[146]

Since the 1980s, modern scholars have also begun to recognise the ideological significance and function of cycle drama. Mervyn James was one of the earliest to consider the social history of the pageants, drawing on anthropological theory to consider the ways in which the granting of responsibility for their production could be used to manipulate hierarchies of prestige and honour for individuals and guilds within the urban

---

[145] *Ludus in die corporis christi in ista ciuitate cuius institucio ob magnam deuocionis causam & viciorum extirpacionem morumque reformacionem antiquitus facta fuit heu plus solito impeditur pre multitudine paginanarum.* Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, eds., *REED: York*, vol. I (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 37. Translation is from vol. II, 722.

[146] Lawrence M. Clopper, ed., *REED: Chester* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 33.

community.[147] In the decades since the publication of James' essay, researchers have explored the importance of ideologies of gender in these texts.[148] Theresa Coletti, Ruth Evans and Katie Normington have explored the gendered presentation of biblical figures in relation to the late medieval urban construction of masculinity and femininity.[149] Christina Fitzgerald argues that the plays offered a means of masculine self-fashioning for members of the craft guilds of York and Chester.[150] D. Thomas Hanks Jr. and Kathleen Ashley examine how civic drama taught appropriate conduct to children and young women in the audience.[151] Historians such as Jenny Kermode and Jeremy Goldberg have linked dramatic productions to specific political programmes of moral reform in Chester and York respectively.[152] The moralising function of the cycle plays is thus self-evident.[153] The

[147] Mervyn James, 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', *Past and Present* 98 (1983): 3–29.

[148] For an overview of studies of medieval drama and gender, see Katie Normington, 'Faming of the Shrews: Medieval Drama and Feminist Approaches', *Yearbook of English Studies* 43 (2013): 105–20.

[149] Theresa Coletti, 'Purity and Danger: The Paradox of Mary's Body and the En-Gendering of the Infancy Narrative in the English Mystery Cycle', in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 65–95; Ruth Evans, 'Body Politics: Engendering Medieval Cycle Drama', in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, ed. Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 112–39; Katie Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).

[150] Fitzgerald, *The Drama of Masculinity and Medieval English Guild Culture*, 13–39.

[151] D. Thomas Hanks Jr., '"Quicke Bookis" - The Corpus Christi Drama and English Children in the Middle Ages', *Journal of Popular Culture* 19, no. 4 (1986): 63–73; Kathleen M. Ashley, 'Medieval Courtesy Literature and Dramatic Mirrors of Female Conduct', in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), 25–38.

[152] Jenny Kermode, 'New Brooms in Early Tudor Chester?', in *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England 1000-1700*, ed. John C. Appleby and Paul Dalton (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), 144–57; Goldberg, 'Cherrylips, the Creed Play, and Conflict', 41.

[153] A more contentious issue has been the extent to which the plays were formally influenced by exegetical theology directly. Scholars who argue for the pageants being explicitly exegetical include Travis, *Dramatic Design in the Chester Cycle*; Meyers, 'Typology and the Audience of the English Play Cycles'; Frederick S. Holton, 'The Wakefield Noah: Notes Towards a Patristic Interpretation', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1992): 55–72. For the counter-argument to pro-typology scholarship, see

purpose of this final part of the chapter is therefore to examine the links between heteronormative ideology and the representation of the Flood narrative in the cycle dramas.

The character of Noah's wife is key to understanding the representation of heteronormativity in the Flood pageants. Noah's wife (variously designated as Uxor, Wife, or Mrs Noah by modern critics) is portrayed in many vernacular sources, especially the dramatic texts, as the quintessential shrew archetype, aggressive and disobedient towards her husband and initially unwilling to board the Ark with her family.[154] In the Wakefield/Towneley, York and Chester pageants, she is physically hauled onto the ship by Noah.[155] Much recent scholarship on the depiction of Uxor, guided by feminist literary criticism, has explored how her portrayal ties into broader misogynistic themes in late medieval literature and visual art. Critics such as Laura Hodges, Ruth Evans, Jane Tolmie and Christina Fitzgerald have analysed her portrayal from a historical perspective, considering her use of a distaff to attack her husband and her assertions of independence as an expression of patriarchal anxieties concerning rebellious women, in the context of increasing female economic marginalisation in late fifteenth-century England.[156] In addition to these readings, I argue that the portrayal of Uxor's rebelliousness is connected with the Flood narrative's focus on reproduction and heterosexual intercourse.

The Wakefield/Towneley pageant's Uxor is the most outspoken of all the dramatic interpretations of the character in her resistance to Noah's demands, and on this account I will focus my analysis on her. After God issues his instructions to Noah, Uxor voices her discontent with her husband:

Edgar Schell, 'The Limits of Typology and the Wakefield Master's "Processus Noah"', *Comparative Drama* 25, no. 2 (1991): 168–87.

[154] Lisa LeBlanc, 'Noah's Uxor: A Shrew Worth Redeeming', *Gender Forum* 33 (2011): 6–24.

[155] This scene is also depicted in an illustration in the Queen Mary Psalter (c.1310-1320). British Library, London, Royal MS 2 B VII, f.6v.

[156] Laura F. Hodges, 'Noe's Wife: Type of Eve and Wakefield Spinner', in *Equally in God's Image: Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Julia Bolton Holloway, Constance S. Wright, and Joan Bechtold (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 30–39; Ruth Evans, 'Feminist Re-Enactments: Gender and the Towneley "Vxor Noe"', in *A Wyf Ther Was: Essays in Honour of Paule Mertens-Fonck*, ed. Juliette Dor (Liège: University of Liège, 1992), 141–54; Jane Tolmie, 'Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses', *Early Theatre* 5, no. 1 (2002): 11–35; Christina M. Fitzgerald, 'Manning the Ark in York and Chester', *Exemplaria* 15, no. 2 (2003): 351–84.

VXOR. We women may wary [curse]

    All ill husbandys.

    I have oone, bi Mary,

    That lowsyd me of my bandys. (ll. 300–303)

The 'bandys' [bonds] here likely refer to the conjugal debt, the theological and legal notion that a husband or wife could expect their spouse to engage in sexual intercourse with them for the purpose of procreation.[157] Hence, to be 'lowsyd' [loosed] from the bonds of the conjugal debt meant that Noah and Uxor were no longer having sex. Later, Uxor expresses that she wishes to be widowed: "might I onys have a measse [serving] / of wedows coyll [widow's pottage]" (ll.561-562). She also addresses the women in the audience: "of wifys that ar here, / for the life that thay leyd, / wold thare husbandys were dede" (ll. 567-570). These statements can be read in part as a longing for a life free from the control of a husband. Ultimately this moment of resistance against normativity is short-lived. After a lengthy and physically violent confrontation with Noah, she accedes to her husband's wishes and boards the Ark. The narrative resumes its usual course, and the possibility of subversion is contained. In this way, as Tolmie argues, the possibility of female resistance to patriarchy embodied in Uxor's rebellion is sublimated through male violence.[158]

    Uxor's subversion lies in her preference for ties of emotional companionship with her friends over her commitment to her husband. By the time of the Flood, she has fulfilled her reproductive function. On the one hand, late medieval texts did not generally state that Uxor was menopausal or otherwise unable to conceive children by the time of the Flood, nor, given the exaggerated lifespan measured in centuries of antediluvian humans as presented in the Bible and its medieval adaptations, can we easily make assumptions in that regard. However, neither do any texts attribute any further children to Uxor besides the three sons who had already reached maturity and married their wives before the events of the narrative. In the Wakefield/Towneley pageant, Uxor's statement that her husband 'lowsyd' her of her 'bandys' suggests that sex is no longer a part of their relationship by choice. In any case, whether by choice or by biology, she will not take part in God's blessing to 'increase and multiply'. In this way, Uxor troubles the

---

157 On the history of the conjugal debt, see James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 89–93.

158 Tolmie, 'Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses', 13.

Wakefield/Towneley *Noah*'s narrative of heteronormativity by critiquing the ideology of reproduction and of heterosexual intercourse.

The character of Uxor can mount this critique because her role in the pageant would have been played by a male actor. It is now generally agreed that women were excluded from acting in English Corpus Christi drama, at least by the later fifteenth century. Documentary evidence proves that women did participate in support roles such as catering and costuming, but this labour – though essential – was rendered invisible and reflected their broader social and economic marginalisation from public life.[159] The reasons for this exclusion remain largely a matter of modern conjecture, although Meg Twycross plausibly argues that male craft guild members may have found the idea of their wives and daughters performing in a mixed cast morally improper.[160] Goldberg proposes that female actors may have been involved in productions in the early stages of the development of Corpus Christi drama, but they were almost certainly pushed out towards the end of the period.[161]

The issue of whether cross-dressed male actors would have played a given role in a comedic or naturalistic manner and how they would have been received by audiences has been a subject of intense debate and relies on further conjecture regarding the identities of the performers. Twycross and Tolmie argue that female characters were played by adult men and would have been performed by as something akin to a modern pantomime dame: exaggerated and slapstick.[162] On the other hand, Richard Rastall controversially speculates that a tentative older average age of puberty in the Middle Ages ensured that guilds had a sizable pool of apprentices and journeymen who could convincingly pass as female in order to play these roles.[163] In this context, the actors' performance of femininity could be perceived by an audience as more authentic.[164] Whether comedic or naturalistic, medieval

---

[159] Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 35–54.

[160] Meg Twycross, 'Transvestism in the Mystery Plays', *Medieval English Theatre* 5, no. 2 (1983): 128. Less plausible is the claim that a woman's vocal range is naturally unsuited to outdoor performance, an ignorant belief that can be swiftly dispelled by watching modern productions but which has nonetheless proliferated in the literature on medieval drama. Normington has firmly refuted this explanation: Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 37–39.

[161] Goldberg, 'From Tableaux to Text', 261.

[162] Twycross, 'Transvestism in the Mystery Plays', 162–72; Tolmie, 'Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses', 17–25.

[163] Richard Rastall, 'Female Roles in All-Male Casts', *Medieval English Theatre* 7, no. 1 (1985): 25–50.

[164] c.f. Evans, 'Feminist Re-Enactments', 148–50.

dramatic crossdressing was creatively useful: as Katie Normington, Robert Clark and Claire Sponsler argue, cross-dressed male actors could voice subversive critiques of heteronormative ideology that would be excessively transgressive if performed by female actors.[165] The artificiality of cross-dressed performance drew attention to issues of gender and sexuality while safely containing them. We cannot be certain as to the degree of comedy or naturalism in the performance of Uxor. What we can say is that the distance afforded by cross-dressing actors enables her character to articulate a critique of heteronormativity in a way which navigates anxieties around the reproductive function of women within the family, whilst having this critique safely contained within the frame of the narrative.

The narrative containment of Uxor's subversive potential is achieved through Noah's patriarchal domination. One of Noah's strategies for responding to his wife's resistance is to animalise her:

> NOAH. Thou can both byte and whyne
>> With a rerd [roar]
>> For all if she stryke,
>> Yit fast will she skryke [shriek] (ll. 333–336)

He reframes her defiance not as rational speech but as the inarticulate sounds and irrational actions of a dog or a bird (biting, whining, roaring, shrieking). While all of these words had non-animalising uses in Middle English, they nevertheless carried strong animal associations. The line 'thou can both byte and whyne' has parallels with the equine simile used by the Wife of Bath as self-description ("As an hors I koude byte and whyne").[166] The noun 'rerd' [roar] likewise could denote the loud cry of a predator, c.f. the lion companion in *Ywain and Gawain*: ('And wen þe lyon saw his blude / he brayded als he had bene wode / þan kest he up so lathly rerde / ful mani fok myght he have ferde').[167] Finally, the verb 'skryke' evokes the piercing cries of birds, c.f. *The Anturs of Arther* ('The bryddus in the boes

[165] Robert L.A. Clark and Claire Sponsler, 'Queer Play: The Cultural Work of Crossdressing in Medieval Drama', *New Literary History* 28, no. 2 (1997): 319–44; Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 55–70.

[166] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," *Canterbury Tales*, frag. 3, l. 392.

[167] Maldwyn Mills, ed., 'Ywain and Gawain', in *Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arther* (London: J.M. Dent, 1992), ll. 2071–2074.

/ that on the gost gous / thay scryken in the scoes').[168] Noah's threats of coercive violence towards Uxor also carry connotations of the disciplining of animals: he says that she shall "lik on [have a taste of] the whyp" (l. 546).

Uxor is aware of her animalisation at the hands of her husband and makes clear her resistance to this process in her speech. When Noah attempts to get her on board the Ark, she complains that the accommodation is wholly unsuitable:

> WIFE. I was never bard [confined] ere
>> As euer myght I the [thrive]
>> In sich an oostré [hostelry] as this.
>> In fath I cannot fynd
>> Which is before, which is behynd.
>> Bot shall we here be pynd [penned]
>> Noe, as haue thou blis? (ll. 475–482)

She uses the language of animal husbandry to criticise the cramped living conditions on board. The verb 'pynen' parallels the descriptions of the animals' dwellings built into the Ark, and evokes intertextual resonances with the 'well bounden penez' [well-enclosed pens] that God commands Noah to build in *Cleanness* (l. 322). The Wife's description of herself as being 'bard' lends further weight to her likening herself to a penned animal. She declares that she will not go "from doore to mydyng [dungheap]" (l. 544), thus further developing the metaphor of the Ark's living quarters as a stables and herself as its beastly occupant. In this way, Uxor rejects her animalisation.

Uxor's animalisation and her eventual subjugation by Noah is also symptomatic of a broader strategy of misogynistic dehumanisation through animality identified by ecofeminist theorists. As Carol Adams argues in her analysis of 'fused oppressions', language under a patriarchal culture conflates the status of women with that of non-humans.[169] Animalising descriptions and naming enables the reduction in the status of women and the dismissal of their agency and subjectivity. In the medieval Flood traditions, the patriarchal subjugation of wives to their husbands parallels the domination of humans over animals. According to one exegetical tradition, recorded in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the *Historia Scholastica* and the Egerton Genesis, God gives Noah and his family lordship over

---

[168] Maldwyn Mills, ed., 'The Anturs of Arther', in *Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arther* (London: J.M. Dent, 1992), ll. 126–128.

[169] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 45–65.

all the animals after disembarkation 'because they were so worried that so many beasts would conquer so few as they were'.[170] In this way, God reaffirmed man's dominion over animals, as in the Chester *Noah's Flood*: 'Eache beast and fowle that may flye / shalbe feared of you' (ll. 279–280).

After the disembarkation, God also introduces carnivorism to humanity: "And every thing that moveth and liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herbs have I delivered them all to you. Saving that flesh with blood you shall not eat." (Gen. 9:3-4).[171] According to exegesis, prior to the Flood, hunters such as Lamech killed animals for sport and for their skins but did not eat their flesh.[172] As Karl Steel argues, the domestication of livestock and the consumption of animal flesh were important aspects of the late medieval fashioning of human identity.[173] The disembarkation and the new dietary laws therefore denote one of the most important aspects of the subordination of non-human animals to human uses. This renewed dominion over the natural world was gendered. In *Cleanness*, when Noah's family leave the Ark, it is specifically the men who lay claim to the newly-available land: 'þe fowre frekez of þe folde fongez þe empyre' [the four men inherit the realm of the world] (l. 540). Noah's wife and his daughters-in-law are rendered invisible here, despite their essential role in repopulating the earth. In this way, the Flood simultaneously produces new norms of gender and human-animal interactions. Although the Wakefield/Towneley pageant does not depict this episode in the Flood narrative, the pageant's portrayal of Uxor nevertheless plays with combining the representation of these two forms of power dynamic common to vernacular Flood literature in order to emphasise the core message of heteronormativity: the subjugation of the rebellious Uxor signifies the establishment of proper relations between men and women and between humans and non-humans and positions challenges to these norms as a subversion of the natural order.

The Wakefield/Towneley *Noah*'s Uxor is merely the most developed example of this type in the genre. To a greater or lesser degree, all the cycle dramas use the character of Noah's Wife to explore the tensions inherent in the late medieval ideology of heteronormativity. Uxor's resistance to her husband and the reproductive programme of

---

[170] *Pur ce qils furent / doutifs qatant de bestes purroient defaire si pou come ils furent*. Joslin and Watson, *The Egerton Genesis*, 269; Peter Comestor, *Scolastica Historia: Liber Genesis*, 69–71.

[171] *Et omne, quod movetur et vivit, erit vobis in cibum : quasi olera virentia tradidi vobis omnia. Excepto, quod carnem cum sanguine non comedetis.*

[172] Higden, *Polychronicon*, II:228.

[173] Steel, *How to Make a Human*, 136–78.

'increase and multiply' are a means of portraying and thereby sublimating critique of these norms. The containment of Uxor's subversive potential through her animalisation at her husband's hands and the parallels between the patriarchal domination of both women and non-human animals contribute to the construction of normative hierarchies of gender and the relationship between humans and the natural world. In this way, the Noah pageants are an expression of and means of reproducing increasingly conservative discourses of normative civic morality which were evolving in English towns and cities in the latter half of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. In this respect, the Noah pageants are ideal examples of how vernacular Flood literature drew on the human and animal couples on board the Ark as potent metaphors in the construction and reproduction of heteronormative ideologies in the late medieval world.

3: "He has forsede hir and fylede and cho es fay leued"

Giants, Rape, and (In)human Appetites

With the storytelling competition of the *Canterbury Tales* underway, the Chaucer-pilgrim offers his own contribution at the prompting of Harry Bailey.[1] "Sir Thopas" narrates the adventures of the titular knight of Flanders who, whilst searching for an elf-queen to take as a lover, encounters a 'greet geaunt' (l.806) named Sir Olifaunt. The giant threatens Thopas with violence if he does not leave his land and tells him that "heere is the queene of Fayerye / with harpe and pipe and symphonye / dwellynge in this place" (ll.814-6). Thopas, retreating under a hail of stones slung by Olifaunt, returns to his men and makes preparations to fight the giant 'for paramour and jolitee [pleasure]' (l.843).[2] Before the Chaucer-pilgrim can conclude Thopas' fight with Olifaunt, he is interrupted by a derisive Bailey who demands that he begin a new tale.

That "Sir Thopas" was intended to be read as a parody of the genre of Middle English popular romance is easily discernible from the poem's form and content. The Chaucer-pilgrim compares his protagonist to the heroes of the most widely-circulated romances in fourteenth-century England: Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, and Lybeaus Desconus. The tale also adopts and exaggerates several notable tropes of the genre, such as the extended scene of the arming of Thopas before his battle with the giant (ll.857-886). Moreover, the poem is written in tail-rhyme, a verse form used in around one-third of all Middle English romances and nowhere else in Chaucer's oeuvre.[3] Bailey objects to the use of this form, dismissing it as 'rym dogerel' (l.925) and instead challenges the Chaucer-pilgrim to tell a tale in prose, a form which he regards as more elevated. His attack on the Chaucer-pilgrim's supposed 'lewednesse' (l.921) – a word denoting ignorance and a lack of education, Latinity, and sophistication – speaks to this question of aesthetic distinction.[4] Bailey evidently considers the genre of tail-rhyme romance to be debased and poor in literary merit. It is less clear as to how far the Chaucer-poet shared his sentiments. Chaucer's liberal borrowing of romance narratives and poetic forms in, among others,

---

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer, "Sir Thopas," *Canterbury Tales*, frag. 7, ll. 712-966.

[2] In Middle English, 'paramour' could mean the emotion of sexual passion or romantic love, in addition to its more familiar definition of 'lover' or 'mistress'. c.f. *MED*, s.v. "paramǒur(e", 2.(a).

[3] Rhiannon Purdue, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), 1.

[4] c.f. *MED*, s.v. "leued", 1.(a).

"The Franklin's Tale" and "The Wife of Bath's Tale" suggests a more nuanced relationship with the genre than the words of stark condemnation placed in the mouth of the Host.

Regardless of whether the poem's critique of the genre was intended as good-humoured, the parodic nature of "Sir Thopas" plays with the motifs of popular romance and helps to clarify the ideological contexts behind them. In particular, the giant Olifaunt merits closer reading. Olifaunt guards the queen of the land of Fairye, whom Thopas seeks to take as his own 'lemman' [lover] and for whose 'paramour' he intends to fight. The portrayal of Olifaunt draws on the conventional set of genre tropes which establish giants as monstrous others: he is deformed bodily, possessing three heads; he threatens and enacts violence against the hero; he swears by Termagant, one of the gods whose worship was attributed to Muslims by medieval Christians. By the conventions of romance, we expect that Olifaunt would pose a violent threat to the safety of the elf-queen. However, she appears to be living in comfort: according to the giant, she is surrounded by musical instruments, 'with harpe and pipe and symphonye [hurdy-gurdy]' (l.815). Nor is there any actual evidence that the queen is being held captive against her will; Thopas desires to claim her from Olifaunt for himself, but there is no reason to believe that this is motivated by her own wishes. Through Olifaunt, the Chaucer-poet creates an incongruity between generic expectation and parodic subversion.

This incongruity can be read through the historical circumstances of Chaucer's life. In a document dated 4th May 1380, copied onto the Close Rolls of the Royal Chancery, Cecily Chaumpaigne released Chaucer from a charge of *raptus*. Three days later, another document was copied into the records of the King's Bench, this time omitting the reference to *raptus* and instead releasing him from unspecified offences.[5] Further detail on the precise nature of Chaumpaigne's charge of *raptus* against Chaucer cannot be ascertained from other sources with any degree of certainty. The matter is complicated by the complex meaning of the term in medieval English law. As Henry Ansgar Kelly argues, when plaintiffs sought a charge of *raptus*, the primary grievance could be abduction, forced coitus, or a combination of both.[6] In Kelly's view, there is simply too little evidence to make a definitive judgement on how to interpret the case. However, Christopher Cannon

---

[5] For an overview of the documentary evidence for the Chaumpaigne case, see Christopher Cannon, '*Raptus* in the Chaumpaigne Release and a Newly Discovered Document Concerning the Life of Geoffrey Chaucer', *Speculum* 68 (1993): 74–94.

[6] Henry Ansgar Kelly, 'Meanings and Uses of *Raptus* in Chaucer's Time', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 20 (1998): 145–47.

compares the release with other *raptus* cases recorded on the Close Rolls for which a greater amount of detail is known. Cannon finds that charges brought by female plaintiffs who were themselves the alleged victim of the crime, as indicated in the Chaumpaigne case by the use of the possessive *raptu meo* in the Close Rolls release, usually emphasised the role of forced coitus and specifically worded their complaints to distinguish their cases from those with no stated sexual component, such as the abduction of male wards.[7] This interpretation supports the hypothesis that Chaumpaigne's grievance included an element of forced coitus.

Jeffrey Cohen's psychoanalytic interpretation of "Sir Thopas" takes as axiomatic that the charge against Chaucer was sexual in nature.[8] Cohen reads Chaucer's parodic portrayal of Olifaunt as a 'miniaturisation of sexuality', a means of reducing and containing Chaumpaigne's accusation of rape through absurdity.[9] When read alongside the evidence for Chaucer's abiding interest in themes of consent, rape and the law throughout his work, I find Cohen's reading persuasive.[10] For the purposes of this current study, this brief analysis of "Sir Thopas" and the historical context of Chaucer's life contributes two important points. Firstly, the problems of interpretation concerning the Chaumpaigne release speak to the complex position of rape in late medieval English culture and the difficult task faced based by contemporary scholarship in picking apart these discourses. Secondly, the incongruous portrayal of Olifaunt indicates the value of analysing the figure of the giant in relation to representations of rape in the genre of romance. The focus of my investigation here will be on the construction of forced coitus as a discrete component of

---

[7] Cannon, '*Raptus* in the Chaumpaigne Release', 82–88.

[8] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 96–118.

[9] Cohen, 115. More recently, Kristin Bovaird-Abbo has challenged Cohen's interpretation. She instead reads Thopas as a predatory threat to the elf-queen's sexual integrity and Olifaunt as her defender. Taking an alternative historicising approach, she argues the poem explores broader contemporary social anxieties around men and women manipulating rape legislation in order to enter into marriages against their parents' wishes. Kristin Bovaird-Abbo, 'Is Geoffrey Chaucer's "Tale of Sir Thopas" a Rape Narrative? Reading Thopas in Light of the 1382 Statute of Rapes', *Quidditas* 35 (2014): 7–28.

[10] See e.g. Christina M. Rose, 'Reading Chaucer Reading Rape' and Christopher Cannon, 'Chaucer and Rape: Uncertainty's Certainties', in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Robertson and Christina M. Rose (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 21–60 and 255–80.

medieval understandings of rape and how these were influenced by the scientific discourses of appetites and sexual desire which I introduced in chapter 1. However, we must first establish the broader cultural context of rape in late medieval England before we can narrow the scope of this analysis.

Raptus in late medieval theology and law

It is important to recognise that late medieval legal and social definitions of rape differed from our own in several important respects. Currently, in England and Wales, the statutory offence of rape is defined as when a person 'intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis', where person B 'does not consent to the penetration', and where 'A does not reasonably believe that B consents'.[11] Note here that the law presumes that the offender must be cisgender and male (hence, 'his penis'). Feminist critics have challenged the limitations of this narrow definition and argue that it should be expanded in line with commonplace social understandings of rape, for instance to include acts of penetration using other bodily parts or inanimate objects or non-penetrative sexual acts, and to acknowledge that both victims and perpetrators can be of any gender.[12] Generally, however, the essential quality common to most contemporary legal and social definitions is the absence of consent: the primary harm inflicted by the offender is understood to be the violation of the victim's bodily autonomy.

Acts of forced coitus, which we would now call rape, fell under the medieval theological and legal category of *raptus*. However, modern rape and medieval *raptus* were not wholly synonymous. As we have already seen in the context of the Chaumpaigne case, the category of *raptus* also included a variety of acts which did not contain a sexual component. Nevertheless, understanding the category of *raptus* is key to unpicking the relevant historiographical debates and to understanding medieval representations of forced coitus. In the *Summa Theologiae* (1265-74), Thomas Aquinas described two 'species of lust' [*specie luxuriae*] which had some parallels with the modern category of rape. The first of these, *stuprum*, was defined as 'a sex-act which ravishes a virgin' [*actu venereo quo virgo defloratur*].[13] The harm caused by *stuprum* was not the violation of bodily autonomy but rather the loss of virginity, which prevented the victim from subsequently contracting an

---

[11] Sexual Offences Act, 2003, c. 42 (England and Wales): para. 1.1.

[12] See e.g. Maria Bevacqua, *Rape on the Public Agenda: Feminism and the Politics of Sexual Assault* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 58.

[13] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae 154, 6.

honourable marriage. *Stuprum* was injurious not only to the victim but also to her father, to whom the offender must pay damages.

Aquinas' other category, *raptus*, entailed the removal of a girl or woman from her home by force with the intention of marrying her, a definition which had earlier been codified in canon law.[14] Strictly speaking, *raptus* did not in and of itself denote coitus, but rather the act of abduction. Nevertheless, that it was classified as a 'species of lust' and regarded as 'proceeding from the greatness of lust' [*procedere ex magnitudine concupiscentiae*] of the (male) sinner indicates that the term carried a strongly sexual connotation for Aquinas. *Raptus* could overlap with *stuprum*, though the two were not always connected: a widow or married woman could be the victim of *raptus* but not *stuprum* if she was seized from her house but was no longer a virgin, and a man could be guilty of *stuprum* but not *raptus* if he unlawfully deflowered a virgin without offering violence. As with *stuprum*, the girl's father was regarded as being equally a victim of the act. The essential quality of this definition was the use of force: 'wherever an element of violence enters, there you have the quality of *raptus*' [*qualitercumque enim violentia adsit salvatur ratio raptus*]. Consent was incidental to the construction of *stuprum* and *raptus*: in both cases, a female victim could give consent to intercourse or seizure, but this did not mitigate the harm of the act.[15]

The *stuprum/raptus* distinction of Thomist theology was preserved and circulated throughout fourteenth-century England via treatises on sin. Richard Lavynham wrote in *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins* (second half of fourteenth century) that 'rauysschyng' [ravishment], the Middle English translation of *raptus*, is 'whan a man ledith a wey anoþer mannys dowȝter wiþowtyn his wil & his wityng [knowledge]', while 'vyolacion of maydenhod' [i.e. *stuprum*] is 'whan a man be nomyth [takes away from] a womman þe flowr of her maydenhed be sche secler or regler [i.e. whether she is a laywoman or a member of a religious order]'.[16] Robert Mannyng likewise reproduced this distinction in *Handlyng Synne* (1303), but unlike Aquinas he regarded the lack of the woman's consent as a factor which

---

[14] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae 154, 7; Gratian, *Decretum* II, 36, q.1, c.2.

[15] c.f. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae 154, 6: '[concerning *stuprum*] a double injury is involved: one with regard to the maiden who is ravished, if not by force then by persuasion' [*habet autem duplicem injuriam annexam: unam quidem ex parte virginis, quam etsi non vi corrumpat, tamen eam seducit*]; 2a2ae 154, 7: '[*raptus* may be inflicted] only on the father [of the maiden], as when she consents to be abducted by force from her home' [*quandoque autem infertur patri, sed non virgini, puta cum ipsa consentit ut per violentiam de domo patris abstrahatur*].

[16] Lavynham, *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins*, 23–24.

aggravated the severity of the infraction. If a man was to 'rauys anouþer mannys wyfe', when done 'aȝens here wyl [against her will] / þe more he douþ hym seluen yl [does himself ill]'.[17] However, if a man were to 'rauvsh a womman here maydenhede' (l. 7292), the harm which he would be held culpable for would be the subsequent decline of the woman into sinfulness, even if she consented to the intercourse. Nevertheless, Mannyng's use of the phrase 'aȝens here wyl' throughout the text, as also seen in his condemnation of lords who 'rauys a mayden aȝens here wyl' (l. 7421), may imply a greater concern for the consent of the women subjected to these acts.

Initially, under English common law, *raptus* was framed more in terms of violence against the victim's body rather than the loss of virginity. According to Ranulf de Glanvill's *Tractatus de legibus et consuetudinibus regni Anglie* (c.1187–1189) and Henry de Bracton's *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae* (c.1235), the definition of *raptus* included the component of forced coitus.[18] An anonymous commentary on Bracton, *Fleta* (c.1290) indicates that this understanding of *raptus* persisted into the later period. *Fleta* provided a template for a woman bringing an appeal 'for *raptus* and violence done to her body [*de raptu et violencia corpori suo*]': 'A. appeals F. for that, as she was etc., the said F. came with his force or alone and wickedly and feloniously and against the king's peace lay with her against her will'.[19] The unambiguously sexual meaning of *concubuit* and the focus on the impact of the violence on the victim's body puts the emphasis on forced coitus in this definition. Beginning in the late thirteenth century and continuing into the late fifteenth century, new legislative efforts

---

[17] Robert Mannyng, *Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne, A.D. 1303, with Those Parts of the Anglo-French Treatise on Which It Was Founded, William of Wadington's* Manuel Des Pechiez, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, vol. I, EETS OS 119 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901), ll. 7402–6.

[18] c.f. 'The words of the appeal of a woman complaining of rape: A., such a woman, appeals B. for that [...] the said B. came with his force and wickedly and against the king's peace lay with her and took from her her maidenhood (or 'virginity') and kept her with him for so many nights' [*De verbis appelli mulieris querentis de raptu: A. Femina talis scilicet appellat B. quod* [...] *venit idem B. cum vi sua et nequiter et contra pacem domini regis concubuit cum ea et abstulit ei pucelagium suum sive virginitatem, et eam secum detinuit per tot noctes*]. Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, ed. George E. Woodbine, trans. Samuel E. Thorne, vol. II (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), 415. See also: Ranulph de Glanvill, *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*, ed. and trans. G.D.G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 175

[19] *A. appellat F. quod ipsa fuerit, etc. venit idem F. cum vi sua vel solus nequiter et in felonia, et contra pacem Regis concubuit cum ea contra suam voluntatem*. H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, eds. and trans, *Fleta*, vol. II, Selden Society 72 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1955), 88–89.

focused on the trespass of abduction more in line with the Thomist interpretation of *raptus* as abduction, whether through forced kidnapping or consensual elopement. The statutes of Westminster I (1275) and II (1285) provided the Crown with the option to prosecute the abduction of maidens and married women irrespective of whether she had consented to her abduction.[20] The Statute of Rapes (1382) extended this right of prosecution to the victim's family.[21] As many historians have argued, these statutes were motivated more with the aim of securing wealthy families' control over their children's marriages than with any particular concern for the women involved.[22] This lack of concern was evident in the legal grey area which remained for women who had been abducted and forced into marriage. Even though such marriages had been contracted against their will, wives in these cases could not bring an appeal against their new husbands. This loophole was closed through two further statues in 1453 and 1487.[23]

Kim Philips argues that the shift in legislative emphasis from the violent impact on the victim's body to their loss of virginity and the harm caused to their male kin represents a decline in women's access to judicial restitution.[24] Nevertheless, women who were victims of forced coitus continued to pursue the appeal of *raptus* as outlined in Glanvill and Bracton alongside other legal strategies throughout this period.[25] Caroline Dunn argues that the greatest degree of legal fluidity occurred in the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, when *raptus* and its vernacular equivalents were freely deployed as umbrella terms to prosecute different kinds of acts which would otherwise fall into the categories of abduction, seduction, or forced coitus.[26] However, Jeremy Goldberg disputes the predominant historiographical consensus, arguing that scholars have overstated the definitional fluidity of *raptus*. Rather, he holds that medieval English legal systems

---

[20] 3 Edw. I Stat. Westm. prim., c. 13; 3 Edw. I Stat. Westm. sec., c. 34 and 35.

[21] 6 Ric. II stat. 1, c. 6.

[22] See e.g. J.B. Post, 'Sir Thomas West and the Statute of Rapes, 1382', *Historical Research* 53, no. 127 (1980): 24–30; Shannon McSheffrey and Julia Pope, 'Ravishment, Legal Narratives and Chivalric Culture in Fifteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 5 (2009): 818–836; Caroline Dunn, *Stolen Women in Medieval England: Rape, Abduction and Adultery, 1100-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 50.

[23] 31 Hen. VI, c. 9; 3 Henry VII, c. 2.

[24] Kim M. Phillips, 'Written on the Body: Reading Rape from the Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries', in *Medieval Women and the Law*, ed. Noël James Menuge (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 125–44.

[25] Dunn, *Stolen Women in Medieval England*, 67–71.

[26] Ibid., 50.

recognised abduction and forced coitus as clearly distinct and separate acts and that any confusion concerning the definition of *raptus* arises out of modern scholarly interpretations and are not actually present in the medieval sources.[27]

The complexities surrounding medieval definitions of *raptus* and the problem of their interpretation has sparked much historiographical debate. Although much of the legislative development concerning *raptus* from the late thirteenth century onwards demonstrably prioritised the interests of families of victims of *raptus*, many scholars have explored how female victims appropriated judicial mechanisms for their own interests. In their quantitative studies of English courts during the earlier parts of the period, Barbara Hanawalt and Patricia Orr seek to identify how legal theory was put into practice. They find that conviction rates for *raptus* trials were low, as little as 10.3% during 1300-1348 according to Hanawalt's calculation.[28] On this account, they conclude that women lacked substantial legal recourse for *raptus*. Other historians say that this is an overly crude interpretation which takes the documentary evidence at face value. Anthony Musson and Caroline Dunn argue that low rates of conviction by themselves meant very little. A verdict of acquittal on the record did not necessarily indicate a 'failure' for the plaintiff but rather could conceal a variety of other resolutions for the litigants.[29] A private financial settlement or perhaps even a marriage to her rapist would have been regarded as fair recompense by victims and their families for the damage incurred to their marital prospects.[30] Recent scholarship by Kim Phillips, Cordelia Beattie and Jeremy Goldberg explores these kinds of nuanced strategies which women deployed in order to secure beneficial legal outcomes for themselves, despite the many gendered restrictions placed upon them under the different legal systems of England.[31] This perspective is tempered by the work of Sue Sheridan

---

[27] Goldberg, *Communal Discord, Child Abduction, and Rape in the Later Middle Ages*, 163–67.

[28] Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), 59; Patricia Orr, 'Men's Theory and Women's Reality: Rape Prosecutions in the English Royal Courts of Justice, 1194-1222', in *The Rusted Hauberk: Feudal Ideals of Order and Their Decline*, ed. Liam O. Purdon and Cindy L. Vitto (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), 121–60.

[29] Anthony Musson, 'Crossing Boundaries: Attitudes to Rape in Late Medieval England', in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Musson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 84–101.

[30] Dunn, *Stolen Women in Medieval England*, 76.

[31] Kim M. Phillips, 'Four Virgins' Tales: Sex and Power in Medieval Law', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 80–101;

Walker, who shows that the punishment of imprisonment applicable to the statutory trespass of abduction was rarely enforced in practice and was more commonly used as a threat to ensure the defendant's compliance with the court's award.[32] Though her study focuses on instances of abduction rather than forced coitus, it is a vital reminder that there was often a gap between legal theory and practice in late medieval England. Ruth Mazo Karras finds that social status determined access to justice for victims of forced coitus. She argues that the sexual consent of lower-status women was routinely disregarded by higher-status men and that courts were reluctant to prosecute cases involving a higher-status rapist and a lower-status victim.[33]

Moving from the legal sphere to the broader domains of art and literature, we find that scholars are divided over how *raptus* was represented in late medieval culture. Kathryn Gravdal's influential study of French literature established the fundamental points of contention for much of the subsequent debate.[34] Gravdal argues that male authors tended to aestheticise rape, sanitising portrayals of the act to make it palatable as a vehicle for commentary on chivalric values, legal satire, or pornographic titillation for a male readership. Art historians such as Diane Wolfthal and Madeline Caviness take a complementary approach to Gravdal's whilst also drawing on feminist theories of the male gaze.[35] They interpret visual representations of rape and other forms of female suffering as erotically-charged fantasies of masculine power which invite the male viewer to identify with the torturers and rapists in these images. Corinne Saunders' study finds a more ambivalent response in her selection of English texts, coloured less by humour and

Cordelia Beattie, 'Single Women, Work, and Family: The Chancery Dispute of Jane Wynde and Margaret Clerk', in *Voices from the Bench: The Narratives of Lesser Folk in Medieval Trials*, ed. Michael Goodich (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 177–202; Goldberg, *Communal Discord, Child Abduction, and Rape in the Later Middle Ages*, 115–57.

[32] Sue Sheridan Walker, 'Punishing Convicted Ravishers: Statutory Strictures and Actual Practice in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England', *Journal of Medieval History* 13 (1987): 237–50.

[33] Karras, 'Gender, Sexuality, and Social Status in Late Medieval England', 210–29.

[34] Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

[35] Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The 'Heroic' Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Madeline H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and the Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

eroticism, but ultimately more concerned with the public effects of rape than with the personal violation experienced by women.[36]

As Evelyn Vitz notes, the ubiquitous presence of women as patrons and consumers of literary works problematises the straightforward characterisation of representations of rape solely in terms of the notion of the male gaze and male desires.[37] Vitz argues that radically different notions of consent mean that portrayals of abduction and forced coitus would not have disturbed a late medieval reader as it would a modern reader, and indeed may have had as much a capacity to titillate the female reader as the male. Louise Sylvester and Amy Burge take a similar perspective in their analysis of Middle English romance.[38] They argue that normative 'scripts' of heterosexual intercourse required female passivity and a pretence of resistance: if a woman expressed her consent too readily, she risked being perceived as lustful and sexually deviant. Therefore, romance portrayals of abduction or forced coitus could function as a safe and socially-acceptable fantasy of female desire. Recent work by Carissa Harris on female perspectives in the Middle English pastourelle proposes that literary representations of rape could also function as forms of 'peer education' and 'survivor speech'.[39] Harris finds that such texts offered a means for female audiences to collectively share experiences of forced coitus and strategies of rape prevention, and help women to articulate their own sexual agency. Furthermore, as scholarship by Elise Histed and Elizabeth Casteen shows, theological, legal, and literary discourses of *raptus* were not separate spheres, but rather mutually constitutive.[40] For instance, philosophical ideas about free will and consent were referenced in legal proceedings. In 1436, Isabel Butler petitioned the king to seek redress for her abduction and forced coitus at the hands of William Pulle. Later references to the case relate that she

---

[36] Corrine Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001).

[37] Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature: Literary, Historical and Theoretical Reflections', *Romantic Review* 881 (1997): 1–26.

[38] Sylvester, *Medieval Romance and the Construction of Heterosexuality*, 43–65; Burge, *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance*, 137–77.

[39] Carissa M. Harris, 'Rape Narratives, Courtly Critique, and the Pedagogy of Sexual Negotiation in the Middle English Pastourelle', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2016): 263–87.

[40] Histed, 'Mediaeval Rape: A Conceivable Defence?', 743–69; Elizabeth Casteen, 'Rape and Rapture: Violence, Ambiguity and *Raptus* in Medieval Thought', in *The Sacred and the Sinister. Studies in Medieval Religion and Magic*, ed. David J. Collins (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 91–116.

had become pregnant as a result of the rape, and that she had unsuccessfully attempted to invoke academic arguments concerning the distinction between the consent of the body and of the mind in order to refute the notion that the conception proved that she had consented to the intercourse.[41] This chapter will therefore consider the relationship between academic theories of sexuality and literary representations of rape as forced coitus in the texts at hand.

A fundamental tenet of modern feminist theory holds that rape is primarily a crime of power, not of sex. The belief that rape is driven by sexual passion lies at the roots of harmful myths, which significantly contribute to our societies' failure to support survivors of rape and sexual assault. The rejection of this belief is a vital step in the fight for the liberation of women and advocacy for and by survivors. As Maria Bevacqua argues, 'the assertion that rape is violence provided feminists with a whole new framework in which to analyze rape, to remove blame from victims, and to develop a convincing argument to gain acceptance for their claims'.[42] In no way do I wish to dispute the pivotal importance of 'violence, not sex' in analyses of the dynamics of rape, both in contemporary and historical contexts. Rather, my aim in this chapter is to explore the concept of forced coitus – i.e. one discrete component of a broader medieval notion of *raptus* – in relation to medieval scientific discourses on sexuality. This approach has been underexamined in the scholarship on rape, aside from the work of scholars such as Histed who examine the broader cultural influence of medical theories concerning the role of pleasure in conception. The writings of Aquinas demonstrate the importance of this approach. As Aquinas says, 'the use of force [in an act of *raptus*] springs from the greatness of lust, for which cause a man will go to any lengths and risk the consequences'.[43] Though Aquinas here is talking more broadly of *raptus*, not simply of forced coitus, he nevertheless emphasises the role of sexual motivation in the act. Aquinas' reference to the 'greatness of lust' ties his understanding of *raptus* into a wider scientific/philosophical discourse of appetite, cognition, and self-control. Consequently, although both modern rape and medieval *raptus* are about more than just sex, we need to interrogate the relationship between ideologies of sexuality, scientific discourses on sexual desire, and literary representations of forced coitus as a component of *raptus*. I argue that the framework of

---

[41] Histed, 'Mediaeval Rape: A Conceivable Defence?', 755–57.

[42] Bevacqua, *Rape on the Public Agenda*, 58.

[43] *Illatio violentiae viedtur procedere ex magnitudine concupiscentiae, ex qua aliquis non refugit periculo se injicere violentiae inferendae.* Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae 154, 7.

Aristotelian zoological discourse of sexuality which I established in chapter 1 is a productive way to address this theme.

Giants and popular romance

As studies by Sylvester and Burge indicate, Middle English popular romances are a productive source base through which to analyse ideological responses to rape in late medieval England. Traditionally maligned by literary scholars as debased and derivative, the genre is in fact ideally suited to this kind of cultural investigation.[44] The evidence from manuscript ownership strongly suggests that the audience for English romances was drawn heavily from the urban mercantile elite and the rural gentry, not the higher echelons of the nobility nor, as was once naively believed, the 'the common people', although such divisions of class were not impermeable and did allow for some social mixing.[45] These texts were, to borrow Felicity Riddy's phrase, a key element of 'bourgeois-gentry cultural formation'.[46] While romances often outwardly adopted the aesthetic trappings of courtly culture and literature, they also interrogated aristocratic values and valorised an identifiably socially middling ideology.[47] Following from this, Middle English romance was a resolutely didactic genre, a functionality which was recognised by contemporary readers: William Caxton invoked the moral value of romance in order to promote his edition of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*.[48] In addition to their explicitly moralising purpose, romances

---

[44] On the history of critical dismissal of popular romance, see McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction', 3–10.

[45] Carol M. Meale, '"Gode Men / Wiues Maydnes and Alle Men": Romance and Its Audiences', in *Readings in Medieval English Romances*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), 209–25; Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert, 'Introduction', in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert (New York: Longman, 2000), 1–38; Riddy, 'Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy', 235–52; Michael Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[46] Riddy, 'Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy', 237.

[47] Stephen Knight, 'The Social Function of the Middle English Romances', in *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology and History*, ed. David Aers (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), 99–122; Nancy M. Bradbury, *Writing Aloud: Storytelling in Late Medieval England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 14.

[48] Melissa Furrow, *Expectations of Romance: The Reception of a Genre in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 22–31. Susan Crane argues that Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances were markedly more didactic in focus than their continental counterparts, although she regards the genre as more baronial than socially middling in nature. Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith,*

also reproduced normative ideology through their transgressive potential. As Nicola McDonald argues, the genre's conventions of form granted these texts the narrative and imaginary space to explore illicit themes and desires.[49] A romance could feature cannibalism, incest, bestiality and rape because the audience understood from their expectations of the genre that the text's plot would always reach a satisfying conclusion and any transgression would be safely contained and resolved.

There is also the matter of the mixed audience for romances in terms of age, gender, class and social status. Several scholars have made the case for women as owners and readers of romance manuscripts, challenging the default assumption of men as the main consumers of literature during this period.[50] Alongside this is the increasingly-popular theory that communal reading was the dominant mode of consumption for these texts, and indeed for most literary forms in this period.[51] According to this interpretation, a romance would have been read aloud from a manuscript to the entire household including children, adolescents, guests, and servants. This theory is immensely attractive for the possibilities it offers for reconstructing the tastes, values and experiences of a broader range of social groups, and given the genre's extensive and well-studied emphasis on themes of domesticity, familial relationships and childhood, it is highly persuasive. Overall, the nature of Middle English popular romance as a genre lends itself well to an analysis of representations of rape in relation to dominant ideologies of sexuality in the context of a mixed-gender, mixed-age and mixed-status audience.

---

and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1986).

[49] McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction', 12–16. See also: Nicola McDonald, 'Eating People and the Alimentary Logic of Richard Coeur de Lion', in Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 124–50.

[50] Carol M. Meale, '"…Alle the Bokes That I Haue of Latyn, Englisch, and Frensch": Laywomen and Their Books in Late Medieval England', in Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 128–58; Rhiannon Purdue, 'Sexing the Manuscript: The Case for Female Ownership of MS Chetham 8009', Neophilologus 82, no. 1 (1998): 139–48; James Weldon, 'The Naples Manuscript and the Case for a Female Readership', Neophilologus 93, no. 4 (2009): 703–22.

[51] Bradbury, Writing Aloud, 3–21; Phillips, Medieval Maidens, 61–107. On orality as the dominant mode of reading in the later Middle Ages, see Joyce Coleman, Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Within the genre of romances, the figure of the giant is a productive case study for analysing such representations. Giants were infinitely malleable metaphors in medieval culture. At times they were deployed as negative figurations of racial, religious or national alterity.[52] However, as Timothy Brinded demonstrates, they were also appropriated in civic pageantry and visual culture as symbols for the self-figuration of local or national identity.[53] Lena van Beek finds that giants in German literature embodied positive characteristics of heroism or Christian piety just as often as they were monstrous antagonists.[54] Focusing on the theme of human subjectivity and interiority, Jeffrey Cohen and Sylvia Huot argue that literary representations of giants and giant-slayers were closely tied to discourses of desire.[55]

The hybridity of giants made them ideally suited for this kind of ideological work. In the later Middle Ages, giants were ascribed with a literal historical existence on account of their presence in scripture. The Vulgate relates that after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, 'now giants were upon the earth in those days' [*gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis*] due to the intercourse between the 'sons of God' [*filii Dei*] with the 'daughters of men' [*filias hominum*] (Gen.6:4). This enigmatic verse generated differing interpretations in later commentaries and literary adaptations. For instance, in *De civitate Dei* (413-426), Augustine held that although the offspring of these unions were 'not like our own human kind but giants' [*non quasi homines generis nostri, sed gigantes legimus esse*], they were nevertheless unquestionably still humans, whose large size simply accorded with the greater stature of human beings in ancient times.[56] In other works, such as the

---

[52] Notable studies on this theme include: Laurie Finke and Martin Shichtman, 'The Mont St. Michel Giant: Sexual Violence and Imperialism in the Chronicles of Wace and Laȝamon', in *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts*, ed. Anna Roberts (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), 56–74; Cohen, *Of Giants*, 29–61; Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 16–61 and 114–79; Kofi Omoniyi Sylvanus Campbell, *Literature and Culture in the Black Atlantic: From Pre- to Post-Colonial* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 53–84; Huot, *Outsiders*, 69–104.

[53] Timothy Simon Brinded, 'The Meanings of Late Medieval and Early Modern Giants: An Analysis Using English Literary, Visual and Material Sources' (PhD dissertation, University of Chichester, 2014), 199–254.

[54] Anna Lena van Beek, 'Riesen in der Literatur des Mittelalters' (PhD dissertation, University of Hamburg, 2020), 75–141.

[55] Cohen, *Of Giants*, 96–184; Huot, *Outsiders*, 105–291.

[56] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 15.23.

reworking of the Flood narrative in *Cleanness*, these giants were demonic in origin and nature:

> So ferly fowled her flesch þat the fende loked
>
> How þe deȝter of þe douþe wern derelych fayre
>
> And fallen in felaȝschyp with hem in folken wyse
>
> And engendered on hem jeauntez with her japez ille. (ll. 269–272)

> They defiled their flesh so horribly that the fiends gazed
>
> At how the daughters of the people were sumptuously fair
>
> And fell in fellowship with them in the guise of men
>
> And engendered on them giants with their evil deceits

Demonic hybridisation was also invoked to explain the origin of the indigenous giants exterminated by Brutus and the other Trojan refugees during the initial colonisation of Britain per the histories of Geoffrey of Monmouth and his successors. In *Des Grantz Geanz*, a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman poem, the first settlers on the island are identified as thirty daughters of a Greek king who were exiled from their homeland for conspiring to murder their husbands. The exiles, who name their new home 'Albion' after their eldest sister Albina, attract the attentions of fiends:

> The passion of nature aroused them exceedingly through lustful desire to have
> human company – of this they were frequently tempted. Demons, who possessed
> such power, perceived those women. They took human forms, along with their
> semen. Together with the women they made a mixture. So much pleasure they had
> from them that in this state they seized [*pargiserent*] them, frequently they
> engendered children, and soon after the women fainted.[57]

The Anglo-Norman *pargisir* carries similar connotations to the Latin term *raptus*: seizure, abduction, and forced coitus.[58] However, the poet presents the intercourse between demons and women with some ambiguity: it is unclear as to how far the latter consent to

---

[57] *La chaline de nature / Les somount a desmesure / Par desir de lecherie / D'avoir humeine cumpanie— / De ceo sunt mult sovent tempte. / Ceo aperceurent li maufez / Ke tel poer aveient: / Humaine forme perneient, / Ovesqe ceo la nature; / Oves les femes firent mixture; / Kaunt en delit les troverent / En cel point les pargiserent, / Sovent enfauntz engendrerent, / Et tost aprés se esvanirent.* Georgine E. Brereton, ed., *Des Grantz Geanz: An Anglo-Norman Poem* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1937), ll. 401–416.

[58] See *Anglo-Norman Dictionary,* eds. Geert De Wilde et al (Aberystwyth and Swansea: Anglo-Norman Online Hub, 2001), s.v. "pargisir".

the act, since it is their 'lustful desire' which attracts the demons. Their children grow to become the 'giants great of body' [*grauntz geantz de corps*] (l.439) encountered by the Trojan refugees. This poem was initially inserted as a separate text before the opening of histories of Britain, but later adaptations such as the English *Prose Brut* (c.1400) fully integrated it into the text proper.[59] Demonic parentage also became a stock trope in representations of giants in Middle English romance. In *The Sowdone of Babylone* (late fourteenth or early fifteenth century), the Saracen giant Astrogot is 'a develes sone / of Belsabubbis [Beelzebub's] lyne'.[60] Guy of Warwick refers to the giant Amourant as 'the devels rote [offspring]'.[61] In *Torrent of Portyngale* (c.1400), the third giant Slongus is 'get [begotten] of the dewell [devil] of hell / as hys moder on slepe lay' and the fifth giant Weraunt is 'of the fendus [fiend's] blood'.[62]

As well as their demonic hybridity, giants' liminality was also emphasised through their bestial bodies. In *The Sowdone of Babylone*, Astrogot has the heard of a boar (l.347), whereas Alagolofur has 'an hede like a liberde [leopard]' and 'tuskes like a bore' (ll.2197-2198). Other romances drew on animalising metaphors to describe their appearances. The giant Magus of *Lybeaus Desconus* (c.1325-50) "berreth on euery browe / as it were brystillus [bristles] of a sowe".[63] Vernagu, of *Roland and Vernagu* (before 1330) is also described as having porcine 'brestles' in his brow.[64] The widespread porcine associations of the giant drew on the tradition of boars and pigs signifying the sin of lust: for instance, Richard

[59] James P. Carley and Julia Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past: An Annotated Edition of *De Origine Gigantum*', in *Arthurian Literature XIII* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 41–114; Friedrich W.D. Brie, ed., *The Brut, or The Chronicles of England, Edited from MS. Rawl. B 171, Bodleian Library, Part I*, EETS OS 131 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1906), 4.

[60] Alan Lupack, ed., 'The Sultan of Babylon', in *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990), ll. 356–357.

[61] Alison Wiggins, ed., *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), l. 922.

[62] James Wade, ed., *Sir Torrent of Portingale*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2017), ll. 925–926 and 1667.

[63] M. Mills, ed., *Lybeaus Desconus*, EETS OS 261 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969), ll. 1311–1312 [L-text].

[64] Sidney J.H. Herrtage, ed., 'Roland and Vernagu', in *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear (About 1475 A.D.) (From the Unique Copy of Lekpreuik's Edition of 1572), With the Fragments of 'Roland and Vernagu' and 'Otuel' (From the Unique Auchinleck MS., about 1330 A.D.)*, EETS ES 39 (London: Humphrey Milford, 1931), l. 480.

Lavynham compared the lecherous man to a sow or swine as both live in foul places in which they can fulfil their desires.[65] Likewise, the leopard bore connotations of adultery and hybridity, as it was said to be 'born of an adulterous relationship between the lioness and the pard' [*ex adulterio laenae nascitur et pardi*].[66] In heraldry, to bear a leopard in arms denoted that the first bearer of the arms was a bastard.[67] In this way, the animalising association of giants with animals such as leopards and boars emphasised their connection with sexual deviance and their hybrid origins. This placed them in a liminal category, neither fully human nor fully animal.

Although they were often animalised, many giants retained troublingly human characteristics. Despite their bestial appearance, the giant's frame remained recognisably humanoid. As Robert Mannyng wrote in his *Chronicle* (1338), 'lyke men þey ar in flesche and bon [bone] [...] of membres haue þey liknes / þe lymes [limbs] alle þat in man ys'.[68] The resemblance also goes beyond physical likeness, to the realm of their nature. The giants of *Sir Eglamour of Artois* (mid-fourteenth century) lay claim to property: Arrok quite rightly asks the knight Eglamour, an intruder in his land, "thefe! traytour! what doos þou here / in my forest to stele my dere [deer]?".[69] His death is mourned by his brother Marras; as the king of Sidon reports, "now ys he gon, with care inowȝ [enough] / to bery [bury] hys brodyr þat þou slowȝ [slew] / that eueyrmore be hym woo [woe]!" (ll.487-489 [C-text]). Marras also grieves for his pet boar, slain by the knight. Though his lament is tragicomic, it conveys a sense of the giant's empathy and moral code which elevate him above the level of irrational beast:

> Alas, my bore, art þou dead?
> My trust was mykyll [much] in þe!
> Be [by] the lawe þat I lefe inne
> My lytyll spotted hogelynne
> Dere bowȝt þy lyfe schall be! (ll.545-549 [C-text])

---

[65] Lavynham, *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins*, 22.

[66] Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, chap. 3.

[67] Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination*, 135.

[68] Robert Mannyng, *The Story of England*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1887), ll. 1757–1760.

[69] Frances E. Richardson, ed., *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, EETS OS 256 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965), ll. 313–314 [C-text].

The affection contained in the ironic diminutive 'lytyll spotted hogelynne', along with the fraternal loyalty he displays for Arrok, contrasts incongruously with his monstrous actions in feeding 'crysten men' (l.486 [C-text]) to the boar. In one of the foundational texts of monster studies, Jeffrey Cohen writes that the monster 'polices the borders of the possible'.[70] The monster's hybrid body, confounding easy taxonomic classification, is perfectly suited as a narrative device for exploring anxieties around norms of behaviour and the categories of normative and non-normative whilst ultimately containing them and reaffirming hegemonic ideology. The giant, a hybrid admixture of human and animal traits, is arguably the archetypal monster under this definition. Just as English popular romance is a genre of ideological experimentation and containment, the giant is a case study of this process in miniature.

If the giant is, to borrow the clichéd maxim, 'good to think with', then it is especially good to think about sex with. Giants are creatures of desire; in English romance, their motivation for interacting with human society usually lies in the pursuit of women.[71] The giant Amourant, whose name is a pun on the Anglo-Norman present participle *amourant* [loving], tells Guy of Warwick that the villainous Sultan has promised his daughter to him should he slay Guy (ll.1453-1464). Likewise, Arageous, of *Octovian* (c.1350), is promised the fair maiden Mersabele in exchange for bringing her father the head of Dagaberde, king of the French. From outside the walls of Paris, Arageous taunts Dagaberde: "thi heuede [head] I hafe my leman highte [promised to my lover] / scho salle [shall] me kysse with thi".[72] Marras of *Eglamour* similarly threatens the king of Sidon: "sent owt to me / Organata thi doghetir [daughter] free / or I sall spill thi blode!" (ll.535-537 [L-text]). Though the threat of rape is often implicit in the giant's pursuit of women, in some texts this is made explicit. In *Ywain and Gawain* (first half of fourteenth century), the giant Harpyns of Mowntain desires to marry the sister of Gawain. When her father refuses to

---

[70] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 12.

[71] With the notable exception of *The Sowdone of Babylone*, giants in Middle English romance are almost exclusively male. As Huot notes, giantesses are more common in French romance; in these texts, they sometimes desire to copulate with knights just as their male counterparts lust for princesses. Huot, *Outsiders*, 131–41.

[72] Frances McSparran, ed., *Octovian: Edited from Lincoln, Dean and Chapter Library, MS 91 and Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.2.38*, EETS OS 289 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986), ll. 727-728 [L-text].

assent, Harpyns is enraged and demands that she be handed over in exchange for the lives of her brothers, whom he is holding hostage. He warns that:

> I sal hir gif to warisowne [as a reward to]
>
> ane of þe foulest quisteroun [knave, servant boy]
>
> þat ever ȝit [yet] ete any brede:
>
> He sal have hir maydenhede[73]

Here, although the threat is transferred from Harpyns himself to his servants, the giant nevertheless remains a sexual threat to the girl. Likewise, in *Lybeaus Desconus*, the titular hero rescues the maiden Vyolette from two giants who were holding her captive. This episode frames the threat to Vyolete in the language of sexual violence and dishonour. Lybeaus declares "be Seynt Jame! / to saue þys mayde fro schame / hyt wer a fayr apryse [victory]" (ll. 592-594 [C-text]). After her rescue, Vyolette expresses her relief: "of hem [them] Y hedde [would have] ben y-schent / ne God me socour hadde y-sent" (ll.670-671 [C-text]). In other Middle English romances, the verbs 'schamen' and 'schenden' are commonly used to describe acts of forced coitus. For instance, in *Le Bone Florence of Rome* (late fourteenth century), the villainous Mylys prepares to rape the heroine Florence under a tree while they are travelling through a forest: 'there he wolde haue leyn hur by [lain with her].[74] Florence prays to God and Mary "let neuyr [never] thys false fende / my body nodur [neither] schame nor schende" (ll.1440-1441), and Mylys' sexual desire instantly and miraculously vanishes. Through comparison of different texts, it is evident that popular romance constructs the trope of the giant as (potential or actual) rapist. As we saw at the outset of this chapter, the incongruity and ironic humour of Olifaunt in "Sir Thopas" is borne out of Chaucer's parody of this genre convention.

While a general survey of English romance highlights the role of giants in literary representations of rape, close readings are necessary to flesh out the detail of the broader picture. As Carol Meale, Murray Evans and Myra Seaman argue, overreliance on decontextualised modern editions can obfuscate questions of reader response and interpretation; the same romance text could exist in wildly disparate manuscript contexts.[75]

---

[73] Albert B. Friedman and Norman T. Harrington, eds., *Ywain and Gawain*, EETS OS 254 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1964), ll. 2399–2402.

[74] C.F. Heffernan, ed., *Le Bone Florence of Rome* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), l. 1438.

[75] Meale, 'Romance and Its Audiences', 225; Murray J. Evans, *Rereading Middle English Romance: Manuscript Layout, Decoration, and the Rhetoric of Composite Structure* (London: McGill-Queen's

Instead, a focus on reconstructing the histories of individual manuscripts and their owners can more effectively draw out the social and ideological contexts of a romance. Fortunately, an ideal case study exists for such an investigation. The *Alliterative Morte Arthure* features the most graphically violent portrayal of rape by a giant in the entire corpus of English romance and uses this motif to explore deeper themes of sex, gender and nature. It also survives in only one manuscript copy, for which we have a healthy body of evidence for its production and ownership. For the remainder of this chapter, I will be analysing how the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* uses the giant as a liminal figure to tease out the problems of 'natural sexuality', focusing on rape as an expression of uncontrolled sexual appetite, and how this ties in to broader ideologies of gender and sexual continence.

The *Alliterative Morte Arthure* and the Giant of Mont-St-Michel

The *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (henceforth abbreviated *AMA*) is a 4,346-line poem whose date of composition is conventionally given as c.1400, though a reasonable case can be made that allusions to contemporary political and military events date it earlier to the reign of Edward III or the early years of Richard II, perhaps in the 1370s or early 1380s. [76] The sole known extant copy of the text is in Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91 (the 'Lincoln Thornton'), a manuscript composed in c.1420-60 by Robert Thornton, a member of the Yorkshire minor gentry. [77] Thornton's compilation also included several popular romances such as *Eglamour* and *Octovian*, mystic texts by Richard Rolle and other religious material, and a collection of medical recipes. [78] As Philippa Hardman argues, his choice of texts strongly indicates that the Lincoln Thornton was intended for multiple uses within the Thornton household, including the spiritual and moral education of his children, the entertainment of the entire family, and serving as a practical manual for treating everyday

University Press, 1995); Myra Seaman, 'Tugging at the Roots: The Errant Textography of Middle English Romance', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2009): 283–303.

[76] Karl Heinz Göller, 'Reality versus Romance: A Reassessment of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*', in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 17–21; P.J.C. Field, '*Morte Arthure*, the Montagus, and Milan', *Medium Aevum* 78, no. 1 (2009): 98–117.

[77] On Thornton's background, see George R. Keiser, 'Robert Thornton: Gentleman, Reader and Scribe', in *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, ed. Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2014), 67–108.

[78] For the full contents of the manuscript, see Susanna Fein, 'The Contents of Robert Thornton's Manuscripts', in *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, ed. Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2014), 13–65.

health problems.[79] This manuscript context therefore supports the hypothesis that *AMA* was read aloud to the family, with each member finding their own perspective on the text.

The poem's plot adapted the standard narrative of Arthurian history initially popularised by Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c.1136) and subsequently translated and adapted into several different literary and historical genres by authors including Wace (c.1155), Laȝamon (c.1190-1215), and Robert Mannyng (1338). However, the true innovation of *AMA* lay in the recasting of the basic Arthurian material into alliterative verse. The Alliterative Revival emerged in the second half of the fourteenth century as a literary movement spearheaded by the northern gentry in response to the French-influenced court poetry of southern and eastern England.[80] Although it is possible to overstate the geographic division between the literary cultures of north and south and the extent to which this movement constituted a 'revival' so much as a continuation of compositional trends, the broader alignment of the fourteenth-century alliterative tradition with the gentry class enables a deeper exploration of the social context of poems such as *AMA*.[81]

Critics disagree as to whether *AMA* should be classified as a romance or as an epic-heroic poem in the tradition of the *chanson de geste*.[82] Inexorably linked into this debate is the question of whether the poem offers a critique of chivalric violence or whether it should be read as a celebration of martial values. In Karl Göller's assessment, the text's tragic denouement represents a punishment for Arthur's hubris, a condemnation of the horrors of war and the ideology which enables them.[83] However, if, as Fiona Tolhurst and K.S. Whetter argue, the poem is instead read as epic-heroic, the tragedy is simply a convention of the genre; Arthur's deeds in battle are valourised, even when to a modern reader they

---

[79] Phillipa Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of "Household Miscellanies" in Late-Medieval England', in *Women and Writing c.1340-c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, ed. Anne Lawrence-Mathers (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2010), 21–28.

[80] Jutta Wurster, 'The Audience' and Manfred Markus, 'The Language and Style: The Paradox of Heroic Poetry', in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 44–69.

[81] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *The Alliterative Revival* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977), 26–47; Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 14–40.

[82] On the controversy over genre, see K.S. Whetter, 'Genre as Context in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*', *Arthuriana* 20, no. 2 (2010): 45–65.

[83] Göller, 'Reality versus Romance', 26–29.

constitute atrocities.[84] Nevertheless, for the purposes of this discussion, I shall treat *AMA* as a romance for several reasons. Firstly, as Melissa Furrow argues, the boundaries between the genres of romance and *chanson de geste* in England were never as distinct to medieval readers as they are to modern critics.[85] Secondly, the poem's placement in the Lincoln Thornton manuscript alongside texts such as *Eglamour* and *Octovian* invites an exploration of the thematic overlap between these works. Consequently, intertextual reading should inform our reading of the portrayal of giants in *AMA*.

The plot of *AMA* begins with Arthur, having already conquered much of Europe, declaring war on Lucius, Emperor of Rome. Appointing his nephew Mordred as regent in his absence, Arthur crosses the sea with his British troops into France to begin a long campaign against the Romans. Lucius is eventually slain, though at the cost of the lives of the knights Kay and Bedevere. Arthur continues fighting across Europe until Rome itself surrenders. However, Arthur learns that Mordred has betrayed him, usurping his crown and taking Guinevere as his wife. Arthur and his men return to England. On landing, Gawain is killed by Mordred. Grieving for Gawain, Arthur pursues Mordred into Cornwall where he finally slays the traitor, although he is mortally wounded in the process. The dying king is taken to Glastonbury to be buried, his kingdom in disarray and bereft of a successor to the throne.

Arthur and his knights fight several giants numbering among Lucius' armies. However, the most extensive encounter with a giant occurs early in the poem when the king lands at Barfleur in Normandy to begin his military campaign. A Templar comes to Arthur and tells him of a 'grett geaunte of Geen [Genoa]' that is terrorising the surrounding region.[86] This giant, unnamed in *AMA* although called 'Dynabroke' in Robert Mannyng's chronicle account of the story, has devoured over five hundred people, killed many male children and carried their bodies back to his lair to be eaten, and has kidnapped the Duchess of Brittany in order to rape her.[87] Arthur resolves to avenge the dead and climbs up to the crag where the giant lives, which is identified as Mont-St-Michel, a tidal island in Normandy which was the site of a church since the eighth century. There, he encounters

---

[84] Fiona Tolhurst and K.S. Whetter, 'Memories of War: Retracting the Interpretive Tradition of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*', *Arthuriana* 29, no. 1 (2019): 88–108.

[85] Furrow, *Expectations of Romance*, 43–141.

[86] Valerie Krishna, ed., *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1976), l. 843.

[87] Mannyng, *The Story of England*, ll. 12144–12492.

the grave of the murdered Duchess along with her 'foster modyr' [i.e. nursemaid or governess rather than legal guardian], who tells him of the girl's gruesome death and advises him on how to reach the giant. Arthur confronts the giant and they begin to fight. After a great struggle, Arthur slays and decapitates him. Upon returning to Barfleur, he orders that a church be built on the crag in memory of the Duchess.

AMA establishes the giant's liminality initially through the conventional reference to demonic parentage (he is "engenderde of fendez" (l.843)), but also more substantially in the physical description of the creature when Arthur confronts him (ll.1074-1103). Here, the giant's appearance is described through an extended series of alliterative animal similes: he is 'huke-nebbed [hook-nosed] as a hawk', 'bulle-nekkyde', 'brok-brestede [broad-chested] as a brawne [boar]' and so on. Though this does not mean he is literally a hybrid, the effect is to portray him as animalistic: his bestial appearance is incongruous with his human frame. The giant's nudity also contributes to his animality. Arthur encounters him 'breklesse' [not wearing breeches] (l.1048) as he warms 'his bakke and his bewschers [buttocks] and his brode lendez [loins]' (l.1047) by the fire.[88] As Peggy McCracken argues, clothing signified one of the key marks of distinction between humans and animals: the wearing of animal furs and skins was a 'technology of sovereignty' over non-human lives.[89] The giant's nakedness therefore represents a rejection of humanity.

The giant's liminal monstrosity also lies in his unrestrained, unnatural appetites for food and sex. Per Thomas Crofts' assessment, he is 'an eating and fucking machine', a creature in constant pursuit of pleasure.[90] His anthropophagy is transgressive because it transforms the bodies of his human victims into meat, reducing them to the status of animals. In his lair are 'beerynes and bestail brochede togeders [men and beasts spitted together]' (l.1050); he eats from 'þe thee [thigh] of a mannys lymme lyft vp by þe haunche' (l.1046), like an oversized roast chicken leg. However, the giant does not simply eat his food raw: he 'soupes', or he makes a meal out of it. The nursemaid relates that his meat is

---

[88] The word 'bewschers' appears in no other medieval text and has no definite etymology. Editors of the poem have tended to gloss it as 'buttocks', and from the context of the line this seems like the most plausible choice. Eric Björkman, 'Etymological Notes', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 5, no. 4 (1905): 501–4.

[89] McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 12–19.

[90] Thomas H. Crofts, 'Perverse and Contrary Deeds: The Giant of Mont Saint Michel and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*', in *The Erotic in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, ed. Amanda Hopkins and Cory James Rushton (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 127.

prepared "choppid in a chargour[91] [serving dish] of chalke-whytt syluer / with pekill [pickle] and powdyre of precious spycez / and pyment [spiced wines] full plenteuous of Portyngale [Portuguese] wynes" (ll.1026-1028). As Nicola McDonald remarks in relation to *Richard Coeur de Lion* (c.1300), the process of butchering and cooking is rare in portrayals of anthropophagy in romance and serves to make palatable the consumption of human flesh.[92] Its presence in *AMA* upsets the neat division between acceptable and unacceptable food, and between human cooking and animal consumption. This is embodied in Arthur's condemnation of the giant's cooking as "cury vnclene" (l.1063): though it has the semblance of human cuisine, it is nevertheless impure, spiritually polluted, and unfit for consumption. The giant's alimentary habits are a sign of his transgression of the categories of human and animal.

The giant's sexual desire is likewise established from the outset, when the Templar reports that he took the Duchess "to lye by that lady aye whyls hir lyfe lastez" (l.855). *AMA* focuses on the violence of the rape and the suffering of the victim. The Templar says that when she was taken, "cho cryede so lowde" (l.858). The nursemaid describes the act in graphic detail: "he has forsede hir and fylede [defiled] and cho es fay leued [she is left to die] / He slewe hir vnslely [crudely] and slitt hir to þe nauyll" (ll.978-979). Saunders argues that Middle English romance tended to skirt around the brutality of rape, reducing it to a threatened act of violence whose outcome is never actually realised, or otherwise containing and diminishing it through the inclusion of supernatural elements.[93] Compare for instance, the rape of the princess by the fairy knight in *Sir Degare* (early fourteenth century):

> Tho nothing ne coude do she
> But wep and criede and wolde fle
> And he anon gan hire at holde [began to take hold of her]
> And dide his wille, what he wolde
> He binam hire here maidenhod [deprived her of her maidenhead][94]

---

[91] An Anglo-Norman term, c.f. *AND*, s.v. "chargeur".

[92] McDonald, 'Eating People and the Alimentary Logic of *Richard Coeur de Lion*', 134–37.

[93] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, 187–233.

[94] Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, eds., 'Sir Degare', in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), ll. 109–113.

Though *Degare* draws attention to the princess's emotional distress through her weeping and crying, the depiction here is still sanitised: the fairy knight euphemistically does as he will and takes what he wants, while the text never states outright what this 'will' actually involves. By contrast, in *AMA* the giant's act of penetration literally tears open the Duchess, confronting the reader with the unavoidable violence of rape. Perhaps a closer parallel can be found not in other romances, but in Bracton's description of the formal process by which a woman was expected to make an appeal of rape:

> She must go at once and while the deed is newly done, with the hue and cry, to the neighbouring townships and there show the injury done her to men of good repute, the blood and her clothing stained with blood, and her torn garments.[95]

Vitz argues that the impulse to seek out realism in medieval literary portrayals of rape and to condemn its absence as trivialisation is a fundamentally anachronistic one.[96] Yet, I find in *AMA* an aspect of realism, despite the story's fantastical elements. The thematic emphasis in the rape of the Duchess is neither erotic fantasy nor political satire, but on the horror of the act as a form of bodily injury and personal violation.

AMA frames the giant's rape of the Duchess in the language of fleshly desires. The nursemaid relates the plight of three other girls being held captive by the giant, with whom he intends to have intercourse:

> Thre balefull birdez [damsels] his brochez [spits] þey turne
>
> Þat byddez his bedgatt[97] [bedtime] his byddyng to wyrche [work]
>
> Siche foure scholde be fay [dead] within foure hourez
>
> Are his fylth ware filled [fulfilled] that his flesch ȝernes (ll.1029-1032)

When Arthur confronts the giant, he says that he shall fight him "for this faire ladye þat þow has fey leuyde / And þus forced one foulde [raped on the ground] for fylth of þi

---

[95] *Cum igitur virgo sic corrupta fuerit et oppressa contra pacem domini regis, statim et dum factum recens fuerit, cum clamore et huthesio accedere debet ad villas vicinas et ibi iniuriam sibi illatam probis hominibus ostendere, sanguinem et vestes suas sanguine tinctas, et vestium scissiones.* Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, II:415–16.

[96] Vitz, 'Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature', 2–7.

[97] The *Catholicon Anglicum*, a c.1483 English-Latin dictionary, glossed 'bedgate' as *concubium*, i.e. 'the time of sleeping'. Sidney J.H. Herrtage, ed., *Catholicon Anglicum: An English-Latin Wordbook*, EETS OS 75 (London: Trübner, 1881), 25.

selfen" (ll.1070-1071). 'Filth' signified several concepts in late medieval discourse on the sin of lust. It could denote an act of deviant sexual intercourse, such as in the translation of Rom. 1:27 found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Parker MS 32 (c.1425) where the 'filth' referred specifically to the act of sodomy: 'also forsoþe [likewise] the males þe kyndeley use forsaken, breden in þeyre desyres. þe males in to males þe filthe werkende'.[98] Alternatively, the word could refer to sexual desire itself, as in Richard Misyn's 1435 translation of Richard Rolle's *Incendium Amoris*: 'no man þerfore more dampnabyll [damnably] his saull [soul] forgettis, þen he þat is ee [his eye] on woman settis for lichery [...] Fylth forsoth he consauyd [conceived], þat is to say, wykkid desire'.[99] In this way, *AMA* drew on contemporary discourses of filth in order to the giant's acts of rape as a fulfilment of his sexual appetite.

Critics such as Thomas Crofts and Dana Oswald have remarked on the giant's excessive appetites for food and sex, but no substantial attempt has yet been made to properly interrogate the concept of appetite itself in the poem in relation to medieval scientific discourses of human and animal natures.[100] I hold that reading *AMA* through Scholastic theories of sexual desire brings a vital new perspective on this aspect of the text. In chapter 1, I introduced Aristotle's concept of 'appetite' (Greek ὄρεξις/*orexis*, Latin *appetitus*), the motivating power which drives all creatures to perform acts of nourishment and reproduction to ensure the continued survival of the individual and the species. Aristotle regarded the fulfilment of these appetites as bodily pleasures, specifically concerning the sense of touch, which were fundamental to the sensory experience of humans and non-humans alike.[101] In order to live a virtuous life in accordance with reason, one needed to exercise self-control over the appetites.[102] Ideally this would take the form of

---

[98] Margaret Joyce Powell, ed., *The Pauline Epistles Contained in MS. Parker 32 Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, EETS ES 116 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1916), 4. c.f. the Douay-Rheims translation of the same verse: 'And, in like manner, the men also, leaving the natural use of the women, have burned in their lusts one towards another, men with men working that which is filthy'.

[99] Richard Rolle, 'The Fire of Love', in *'The Fire of Love' and 'The Mending of Life or the Rule of Living'*, ed. Ralph Harvey, trans. Richard Misyn, EETS OS 106 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1896), 52.

[100] Crofts, 'Perverse and Contrary Deeds', 116–31; Dana M. Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 159–95.

[101] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III.10, 1117b-1118b.

[102] Ibid., VII.1-10, 1145a-1152a.

'temperance' (Greek σωφροσύνης/*sophrosyne*, Latin *temperantia*), where one is completely free from the extremes of appetites and indulges in bodily pleasures only in moderation. Less virtuous is the state of 'continence' (Greek ἐγκράτεια/*enkráteia*, Latin *continentia*), wherein one experiences extremes of temptation but avoids acting on them. However, this is nevertheless preferable to 'incontinence' (Greek ἀκρασία/*akrasia*, Latin *incontinentia*), wherein one succumbs to the extremes of appetites, although the incontinent individual remains able to perceive that this succumbing represents an act of vice. As moderation over the appetites requires one to possess the capacity for reason, the state of incontinence necessarily remains a human condition; an animal following the drive of its appetites cannot be considered incontinent.

Aristotle's theory of appetites would become married to Christian theological notions of sin in the work of Scholastic philosophers, most notably in the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, fellow Dominican and former pupil of Albert the Great. Following Aristotle, Aquinas held that practicing continence in the sense of resisting the temptations of bodily pleasures was an admirable act, though ideally as a stepping stone towards the more virtuous state of temperance.[103] Aquinas placed great emphasis in the conflict between human and animal natures in his interpretation of temperance: he held that this virtue was 'against the grain for merely animal nature uncomplying with reason' [*contrariatur tamen inclinationi naturae bestialis non subjectae rationi*] and 'exercises control over the lower levels of human life, namely those of our animal nature' [*ea a quibus refrenat temperantia sunt infima in homine, convenientia ei secundum naturam bestialem*].[104] Continence thus involved resisting the natural passions in each human which drove one to consume food and engage in intercourse.

Just as Albert had regarded argued that reproductive intercourse was not inherently sinful but rather a fulfilment of God's intended purpose for living beings, Aquinas held that 'natural desires themselves are no great cause of sin' [*non multum contingit peccare circa naturales concupiscentias*] as long as they were acted upon only to 'preserve our nature' [*ad consevationem naturae*]:

> For nature requires no more than supplies its needs, and sin enters into these
> desires, so Aristotle thinks, only when they are excessive as to amount. The main

---

[103] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae 155, 4.

[104] Ibid., 2a2ae 141, 1 and 2.

trouble arises from the incentives to concupiscence contributed by human ingenuity, for instance over-sophisticated dishes and women's fashions.[105]

In other words, the sin of lust [*luxuria*] arises not from the appetite itself but from immoderate excess and a lack of self-control. Aquinas argued that under these circumstances the fulfilment of 'natural' appetites could be regarded as unnatural, yet at the same time transforming the sinner into something more animal than human. Whereas for non-human animals, acting purely upon their appetites was a natural condition, humans were bound by divine law to act according to reason and exercise moderation.[106] Incontinence was therefore against the natural condition of humans and made the sinner akin to an irrational beast.

The *topos* of incontinence as a state of animality was not solely derived from Aristotle and his commentators. The metaphor of the carnal human as akin to an animal was deployed throughout the Bible, as in Ps. 48:21 ('he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them' [*comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis*])[107], 2 Pet. 2:10-12 (those 'who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness' [*qui post carnem in concupiscentia immunditiæ ambulant*] are 'as irrational beasts' [*velut irrationabilia pecora*]), and 1 Cor. 2:14 ('but the animal man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God' [*animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei*]).[108] Augustine's gloss on the latter verse in *De civitate dei* emphasised that *animalis* and *carnalis* were synonymous terms to illustrate the same figure of speech, denoting a person who lived according to their fleshly

---

[105] *Natura enim non requirit nisi id per quod subvenitur necessitati naturae, in cujus desiderio non contingit esse peccatum, nisi solum secundum quantitatis excessum. Et secundum hoc solum peccatur circa naturalem concupiscentiam, ut Philosophus dicit. Alia vero circa quae plurimum peccatur sunt quaedam concupiscentiae incitamenta, quae hominum curiositas adinvenit; sicut curiose praeparati cibi, et mulieres ornatae.* Ibid., 2a2ae 142, 2.

[106] Ibid., 1a2ae 91, 6.

[107] Psalm 48 per the Septuagint numbering, as used in the Vulgate; in most modern translations, it is numbered Psalm 49.

[108] Douay–Rheims glosses *homo animalis* as 'sensual man'. As I shall discuss shortly, 'animal man' is arguably a more fitting, though also more literal, translation, especially given the conventional associations of *animalis* with animality in medieval usage. c.f. *Harpers' Latin Dictionary*, eds. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879), s.v. "ănĭmālis", 2; *DMLBS*, s.v. "animalis", 2 and 3.

desires.[109] This metaphor persisted in medieval discourses on love and sex, commonly in the service of belittling those of a lower social status than the author of the text. Andreas Capellanus wrote in *De amore* (mid-1180s) that 'farmers can scarcely ever be found serving in Love's court; they are impelled to acts of love in the natural way like a horse or a mule, just as nature's pressure directs them'.[110] As Paul Freedman argues, the portrayal of peasants' sexual behaviour as animalistic and uncontrolled in texts such as *De amore* was one of the ideological strategies of dehumanisation of the lower classes that were deployed to justify the late medieval economic structure.[111]

Nevertheless, while the conflation of incontinence and animality was evidently not solely derived from the Aristotelian concept of appetites, its role in the cultural dissemination of the *topos* should not be discounted. As Kellie Robertson argues, Scholasticism and vernacular literature were mutually constitutive discourses.[112] Although critics have long explored the relationship between court poets such as Chaucer and medieval science, studies of *Sir Gowther* by Joanne Charbonneau and Neil Cartlidge also show the influence of academic discourse on popular romances.[113] A similar case can be made in relation to the reception of *AMA*, if not necessarily its composition. Julie Orlemanski's analysis of the medical texts copied into Robert Thornton's two manuscripts demonstrates the significant extent to which Thornton would have had access to contemporary understandings of medicine and the human body.[114] It is not too great a leap of the imagination to consider that the philosophical notion of the appetites may have

---

[109] Augustine, *De civitate Dei,* 14.5.

[110] *Agricolae in amoris inveniantur curia militare, sed naturaliter sicut equus et mulus ad Veneris opera promoventur, quemadmodum impetus eis naturae demonstrat*. Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, ed. and trans. P.G. Walsh (London: Duckworth, 1982), I.11.

[111] Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 133–73.

[112] Kellie Robertson, *Nature Speaks: Medieval Literature and Aristotelian Philosophy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

[113] Joanne A. Charbonneau, 'From Devil to Saint: Transformations in *Sir Gowther*', in *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, ed. Phillipa Hardman (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), 21–28; Neil Cartlidge, '"Thereof Seyus Clerkus": Slander, Rape and *Sir Gowther*', in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corrine Saunders (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 135–147.

[114] Julie Orlemanski, 'Thornton's Remedies and the Practices of Medical Reading', in *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, ed. Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2014), 235–55.

influenced how the audience of *AMA* would have read the poem's account of the giant's sexual and alimentary excess.

Further evidence for the relevance of discourses of appetite and continence to the reception of *AMA* can be found in one of the other texts known to have been read by the Thornton family: John Lydgate's *Dietary* (first half of fifteenth century), found in ff.97r–v of the London Thornton, another manuscript copied by Thornton. The *Dietary* was one of the most widely-circulated Middle English verse texts, being preserved in fifty-six manuscripts – surpassed in number only by the *Prick of Conscience*, the *Canterbury Tales*, *Piers Plowman* and the *Confessio Amantis*.[115] As Sponsler argues, the success of the *Dietary* was connected to the growing market for books in the fifteenth century.[116] In this didactic poem, Lydgate recommended a holistic regimen of moderation in order to preserve bodily and spiritual health:

> Off mykil [much] or litel cometh al infirmyte
> Attween [between] thes too for lak of governaunce
> Dryve out a mene [mean], excesse or scarsete
> Set thi botaill [boundaries] vpon temperaunce[117]

Lydgate instructed the reader to practice 'abstynence ageyns glotonye' (l.51), warning against the 'gret superfluyte' (l.74), humoural imbalances and specific ailments caused by eating too much food. Sexual moderation was also vital. Lydgate advised 'keep welle thi-silf from incontynence / in stiwes ['stews', a contemporary euphemism for brothels][118], bathis [bath-houses], no soiour [sojourn] that thou make' (ll.13-14) and to avoid having intercourse with 'women aged flesshly' (l.29). The reader was recommended to let themselves be guided by their 'naturall appetite' (l.92) in order to achieve this temperance. The presence of the *Dietary* in Thornton's library demonstrates how the discourses of appetite and continence would have informed the Thornton family's reading of *AMA*.

---

[115] Ibid., 251.

[116] Claire Sponsler, 'Eating Lessons: Lydgate's *Dietary* and Consumer Conduct', in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L.A. Clark (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 1–22.

[117] John Lydgate, 'A Dietary, and a Doctrine for Pestilence', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, vol. II, EETS OS 192 (London: Humphrey Milford, 1934), ll. 77–80.

[118] See *MED*, s.v. "steu(e n.(2)", 2.(a).

Read through the context of Scholastic philosophy, the giant of Mont-St-Michel is thus an allegory for incontinence. Hence, Arthur's triumph over the giant signifies the victory of self-control over excesses of appetite. This ties into the motif of dreams and dream-interpretation. *AMA* is a poem that is deeply invested in the interpretation of dreams and what they can tell us about ourselves. During the sea crossing to Barfleur, while asleep in one of the ship's cabins, Arthur dreams of a dragon flying out of the western lands and a bear coming from the 'Orient' fighting in the sky (ll.756-805). The bear bites and claws at the dragon, but the dragon gains the upper hand and kills the bear, leaving his body to sink into the ocean. Arthur awakes, troubled by his dream, and asks 'two phylozophirs that folowede hym euer / in the seuyn scyence the suteleste fonden [most sharply-minded in the seven sciences]' (l.808) who are accompanying him on the campaign to interpret its meaning. The inclusion of the philosophers is a notable alteration in *AMA* from its main textual sources. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, Arthur seeks counsel on his dream from 'those standing around him' [*astantibus*].[119] In Wace's *Roman de Brut*, they are 'clerks' [*clers*], whereas in Laȝamon's Brut they are described as 'boc-ilærede [educated, lit. 'book-learned'] men'.[120] The choice to raise their status from clerks to philosophers trained in the seven liberal arts suggests a desire by the poet to accentuate the role of higher academic discourse in the interpretation of Arthur' dream.

The philosophers read the dream as a literal prophecy of events. They explain that the dragon in flight signifies Arthur himself, sailing across the sea with his knights. The bear signifies the 'tyrauntes' tormenting his people, over whom he will ultimately claim victory. These tyrants could be understood to mean Lucius himself or his forces, but the philosophers also say that the dream-fight could more specifically portent that "with some gyaunt some journée sall happyn" (l.825). On this level, the dream can be read simply as a foreshadowing of the fight with the giant of Mont-St-Michel. This interpretation is strengthened by the identification of the dragon with the western lands of Arthur and the bear with the east, just as the giant is said to come from Genoa, an Italian port which was

---

[119] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Neil Wright, vol. I (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), 116–17.

[120] Wace, *La Partie Arthurienne Du Roman de Brut (Extrait Du Manuscrit B.N. Fr.794)*, ed. Ivor Deinlol Osborn Arnold (Paris: Klincksieck, 1962), l. 2716; Laȝamon, *Brut, Edited from British Museum Ms. Cotton Caligula A. IX and British Museum Ms. Cotton Otho C. XIII*, ed. G.L. Brook and R.F. Leslie, vol. II, EETS OS 277 (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), l. 12789.

infamous in the fourteenth century for its economic traffic with the Islamic world.[121] However, arguably this is not the only valid reading. Consider the symbolism of the dragon. In the bestiary, the creature stood as an allegory for the Devil, who deceives the foolish with worldly pleasures.[122] In Arthur's dream, the dragon is a dangerous and malevolent beast, 'dredfull to beholde' (l.760), who destroys all that he touches and spits 'vennymous flayre [fire]' from his lips (l.772), and who seeks to 'drenschen hys pople' (l.761) – that is, drown Arthur's own countrymen. The dragon's negative symbolic associations problematise the interpretation of his victory over the bear as a straightforward aggrandising prophecy of the king's martial triumphs. Critics have offered alternative readings of the dream-vision's meaning. Melissa Elmes argues that this episode evokes the symbolism of alchemy in order to signify the transformation of Arthur into a Christian warrior-king.[123] Göller reads it as a foreshadowing of Arthur's hubris and downfall, comparing the dragon's act of 'drenchen' with the destructive impact of the king's wars on his own people.[124] I propose another reading: this dream signifies internal conflict between the competing human and animal appetites within Arthur.

Such a reading is consistent with widely circulating medieval theories of dream interpretation. Macrobius explained in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (early fifth century) that there were five types of dreams.[125] The *visum* or *insomnium* were merely inconsequential daydreams or nightmares which held no deeper significance. The *visio*, a prophetic vision, or *oraculum*, in which a figure appears to the dreamer, were dreams whose meaning were easier to understand. However, the *somnium* was a more enigmatic and metaphorical type of dream, whose meaning could only be discerned through more subtle interpretation. Another text, the *Somniale Danielis* (fifth century), took a similar approach. An English translation of the text in the portion of British Library Harley MS 2253 composed by the 'Harley scribe' c.1330-1340 demonstrates the range of meanings attributed to dreams. While most of the interpretations were concerned with foretelling

---

[121] On the giant of Mont-St-Michel as an allegory for English nationalism and anxieties around Italian trade with the East, see Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 114–79.

[122] Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, chap. 91.

[123] Melissa Ridley Elmes, 'He Dreams of Dragons: Alchemical Imagery in the Medieval Dream Visions of King Arthur', *Arthuriana* 27, no. 1 (2017): 73–94.

[124] Karl Heinz Göller, 'The Dream of the Dragon and Bear', in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 130–39.

[125] Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, *Comentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, ed. James Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1970), I.3.

events that will come to pass, some involved reflection on the dreamer's internal moral and spiritual state. For instance, the text states that 'whose foule sith is honde [whoever sees that his hand is foul] / he is fol of sunne [sin] ant shonde [shame]'; the same applies if one perceives one's own face as 'lodlych [ugly]'.[126] If one dreams that their 'soster [sister] taken him to monne [have sexual intercourse with him]', that is a sign 'of sunne ant of mournyng [sorrow]' (ll.221-224). If someone dreams of a girdle being washed, that is a sign that the dreamer is chaste (ll.312-313). Macrobius's commentary and the *Somniale Danielis* were widely-read texts in the fourteenth century, as attested by Chaucer's reference in "The Nun's Priest's Tale" (ll.3123-3129). It is therefore likely that the readers of *AMA* could have understood Arthur's dream as a *somnium*, a mirror of the internal conflict of appetites, an interpretation which is strengthened by the poem's invocation of philosophical discourse. If the giant signifies incontinence, then Arthur's dream and his subsequent victory over the giant signifies self-mastery over appetite.

The theme of conflicting appetites also makes sense when considered within the poem's broader preoccupations with gender and the performance of masculine self-control. As critics such as Geraldine Heng have argued, *AMA* is a text about homosocial relationships.[127] This does not conflict with the idea that the poem was read before a mixed audience: as Rachel Moss argues, homosociality was a fundamental aspect of many Middle English romance narratives irrespective of audience.[128] Women in *AMA* are largely peripheral to the narrative, passive and vulnerable figures whose presence enables male self-figuration.[129] Bonds of kinship and friendship between men, not romantic love between men and women, form the emotional focus of the poem. Arthur's emotional response to the fact that Guinevere has cuckolded him seems subdued, almost a footnote, compared to the raw grief that he expresses at the deaths of his knights: when Kay dies, 'thane remmes [bellows] þe riche kynge fore rewthe [grief] at his herte' (l.2197). Arthur

---

[126] Susanna Greer Fein, David Raybin, and Ziolkowski, eds., 'A Bok of Swevenyng', in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, vol. III, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2015), ll. 151–152 and 249–250.

[127] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 173–79.

[128] Rachel Elizabeth Moss, '"And Much More I Am Soryat for My Good Knyghts": Fainting, Homosociality, and Elite Male Culture in Middle English Romance', *Historical Reflections* 42, no. 1 (2016): 101–12.

[129] Arlyn Diamond, 'Heroic Subjects: Women and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*', in *Medieval Women: Text and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain. Essays for Felicity Riddy.*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 293–308.

expresses a greater affection for his sword Clarent, "my derlyng daynteuous and full dere holden" (l.4196), than for Guinevere, and appears to find the fact that it has been given it to Mordred as a greater injury than his wife's sexual betrayal. Arthur and his knights also attack Lucius' masculinity throughout the poem. When issuing a declaration of war to the Roman senator at his court, Arthur states that he will occupy Lucius's territories and challenges him to retaliate: "byd hym make reschewes [i.e. recover his conquered territory] fore mensk [honour] of hym seluen / and mette me fore his manhede in þase mayn landes" (ll.433-434). Later, with the campaign underway, Gawain rides to the Roman encampment to issue a challenge directly to Lucius, insulting him as a "cuckewalde [cuckold]" (l.1312) and "the vnlordlyeste lede [man] þat I on lukede euer" (l.1313). In both instances, the failure of masculinity is equated with a loss of political legitimacy: Arthur's military threat to the emperor is also a personal affront to his manhood, and the loss of sexual control denoted in the insult of cuckoldry connects with his failure to be truly 'lordly'.

If the first half of *AMA* is primarily concerned with Arthur's unmanning of Lucius, the second half charts the progressive failure of his own masculine performance. Whereas Arthur had previously shown grief at the loss of Kay, his anguish at losing Gawain is incomparably magnified. Arthur's expression of grief is mixed with tender affection shown towards Gawain's body: he groans with 'gretande teris [weeping tears]' (l.3950); he holds Gawain in his arms and kisses him multiple times until his beard is matted with blood; he laments the loss of "my concell, my comforthe, þat kepide myn herte" (l.3960). This grief represents a pivotal moment of Arthur's loss of masculine self-control. Arthur himself says that he is "vttirly vndon" (l.3966) by his grief. His knights warn him that his behaviour is unmanly:

> It es no wirchipe [worship], iwysse, to wryng thyn hondes;
> To wepe als a woman it es no witt holden!
> Be knyghtly of contenaunce, als a kyng scholde,
> And leue such clamoure, for Cristes lufe [love] of Heuen! (ll.3977-3980)

Through his excessive and uncontrolled expression of grief, Arthur therefore fails to correctly perform the knightly masculinity which is expected of him. He himself also reflects on how the loss of his male companions unmans him. At the beginning of the poem, Arthur tells his knights that "my menske [honour] and my manhede ȝe mayntene in erthe [i.e. in this world]" (l.399). This is echoed again at the end of the text, when the dying Arthur laments the loss of his lords who "mayntenyd my manhede be myghte of theire

handes, / made me manly on molde [upon this world] and mayster in erthe" (ll.4278-4279). As Jeff Westover argues, the unravelling of Arthur's court and his failure to secure the line of succession signify a form of emasculation.[130] The loss of Arthur's 'manhede' and his womanly weeping are manifestations of the same concern as the giant's succumbing to his 'fylth': the failure of appropriate masculine self-control.

In his reading of *Torrent of Portyngale* (c.1400), Roger Dalrymple argues that the repeated cycle of giant-killing functions as an ongoing process of self-figuration of the protagonist's nascent manhood.[131] One could argue that the victory over the giant in *AMA* narratively demonstrates Arthur's exemplary masculinity in the same way as it establishes him as a figure of the triumph of Christian order over pagan disorder, as John Finlayson and Kateryna Schray propose.[132] However, when read within the context of the poem's focus on masculinity and its undoing, a compelling case exists for seeing the giant of Mont-St-Michel as a mirror to Arthur's own immoderate excesses. It is no coincidence that Arthur holds court at the 'geauntes toure [Giant's Tower]' (l.244) as he plans his campaign against Lucius. Consider the discomforting parallels between the giant's 'cury vnclene', served with spices, wines and fine tableware, and the lavish feast at court, dismissed with feigned humility by Arthur as "feeble" fare (ll. 176-242). Jennifer Bartlett argues that medieval readers of the poem would have understood the feast scene as ostentatious not on account of the perceived exoticism of the food – as Bartlett notes, even a middling gentleman of Robert Thornton's station would have had access to a variety of imported spices and wines– but rather from the excessive amount of courses and dishes.[133] Arthur's consumption of food here goes well beyond the acceptable bounds of 'preserving one's nature' as per Aquinas's terms and into the realm of incontinence. The failure of Arthur's masculine self-control – his emotional incontinence – by the end of the poem is signalled from its outset by his display of culinary excess.

---

[130] Jeff Westover, 'Arthur's End: The King's Emasculation in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*', *Chaucer Review* 32, no. 3 (1998): 310–24.

[131] Roger Dalrymple, '*Torrent of Portyngale* and the Literary Giants', in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corrine Saunders (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 159–70.

[132] John Finlayson, 'Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount', *Medium Aevum* 33, no. 2 (1964): 112–20; Kateryna A. Rudnytzky Schray, 'The Plot in Miniature: Arthur's Battle on Mont St. Michel in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*', *Studies in Philology* 101, no. 1 (2004): 1–19.

[133] Jennifer Bartlett, 'Arthur's Dinner; or, Robert Thornton Goes Shopping', *Arthuriana* 26, no. 1 (2016): 165–79.

While scholars such as Tolhurst and Whetter have argued that *AMA* uncritically valourises chivalric masculinity, an analysis of the poem's treatment of the theme of moderation reveals that it takes a far more nuanced approach to representations of gender and sexuality – as one would expect from a text in a genre that thrives on exploring the tensions and contradictions of normative ideology. The conflict between human self-control and animal appetite is the driving force of the text's narrative. Arthur's decline is as much a product of his unmanning, his gradual loss of emotional self-control. The giant of Mont-St-Michel embodies the extremes of incontinence: his acts of rape and his 'cury vnclene' are expressions of the same monstrous 'fylth' that lies behind Arthur's extravagant feasting and his uncontrolled, feminised grief. The giant's monstrosity lies in the fact that, like humans, he can control his appetites but chooses not to; hence he is incontinent. In this way, romance representations of giants and rape demonstrate the inherent tensions in medieval discourses on 'natural' appetites. As I argued in chapter 1, because humans possess the unique capacity for reason – and thus can act outside of their natural drives – they have the capacity to decide who they have sex with, and in what way. Equally, reason grants them the capacity to control their sexual desire. Consequently, incontinence is the failure to regulate desire, something that is only available to humans because of their rationality. Although the 'natural' appetite possessed a positive naturalising function in orienting humans towards morally normative intercourse, when indulged in immoderate excess it could also result in monstrous and deviant sexual acts. Men who rape, according to this discourse, do so out of incontinence – a failure of self-control over their appetite.

4: 'The Detestable and Abominable Vice'

Bestiality in Late Medieval England

In the previous three chapters I explored the ideological construction of normative sexual desire through animality, focusing particularly on the discursive function of 'natural' appetites and rationality. In this chapter and continuing into the final chapter, I will analyse representations of deviant, 'unnatural' sexual intercourse in relation to cultural anxieties concerning the boundaries of the human and non-human animal. In this chapter specifically, I will explore the social and legal responses of late medieval English society to human-animal sexual intercourse, focusing on the context of canon and common law discourse and the practice of confession.

Bestiality is one of the last remaining taboos in the field of the history of sexuality, and especially in medieval studies. Academically rigorous historical studies of human-animal intercourse are rare. This subject deserves a more serious treatment. Sociologists find that human-animal intercourse is prevalent in modern societies. Alfred Kinsey, using an anonymised survey of 12,000 US adults in the 1940s, found that 8% of men and 3.6% of women had reported having some form of sexual contact with an animal at least once; for men who grew up on farms, the proportion was estimated to be as high as 50%.[1] Also often overlooked are the violence and trauma inherent in bestiality. Feminist theorists and criminologists have identified sexual abuse involving animals as a common element in patterns of intimate partner violence by men against women: perpetrators sometimes abuse their partners' pet in order to cause emotional harm or coerce their partners into engaging in intercourse with animals.[2] The suffering of non-human victims is also often underexamined. Penetration by humans causes significant internal injuries to animals, leaving philosopher and animal rights activist Barbara Noske to call for the use of the term

---

[1] Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia and London: W.B. Saunders Company, 1949), 669–74; Alfred C. Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia and London: W.B. Saunders Company, 1953), 505–6.

[2] Carol J. Adams, 'Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals', in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 55–84; Piers Beirne, 'On the Sexual Assault of Animals: A Sociological View', in *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Angela N.H. Creager and William Chester Jordan (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 193–227.

'interspecific rape'.[3] Furthermore, bestiality plays a greater influence in the cultural formation of ideologies of sexuality and human-animal distinction than scholars have previously been willing to accept. Midas Dekkers and Harriet Ritvo highlight the role of bestiality in modern discourses of desire and erotic fantasy, race, class, national identity, colonialism, and scientific discovery.[4] Jens Rydström argues that perceptions of bestiality as a societal issue shaped distinctive social and legal responses to homosexuality in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Sweden, such as the lack of distinction between 'passive' and 'active' same-sex partners.[5] Consequently, an analysis of bestiality ought to be an integral part of any assessment of the ideological construction of normative sexuality and the category of natural intercourse in the later Middle Ages.

Bestiality was condemned in the strictest terms in Mosaic Law. In Leviticus, God instructs Moses that "thou shalt not copulate with any beast, neither shalt thou be defiled with it. A woman shall not lie down to a beast, nor copulate with it: because it is a heinous crime" (Lev. 18:23).[6] The punishment for this act was death: "he that shall copulate with any beast or cattle, dying let him die, the beast also ye shall kill. The woman that shall lie under any beast, shall be killed together with the same: their blood be upon them" (Lev. 20:15-16).[7] This punishment was also preserved in the Covenant Code: "whosoever copulateth with a beast shall be put to death" [*qui coierit cum jumento, morte moriatur*] (Exod. 22:19). In Deuteronomy, Moses says "cursed be he that lieth with any beast" [*maledictus qui dormit cum omni jumento*] (Deut. 27:21).

The late antique Church opted for a more lenient approach, favouring penance over capital punishment. Under canon 16 of the Synod of Ancyra (314), people under the age of twenty who had sex with an animal were assigned fifteen years of humiliation before the doors of their church followed by five years of prayer after which they could again

---

[3] Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality*, trans. Paul Vincent (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 126.

[4] Dekkers, 93–191; Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid, and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 51–187.

[5] Jens Rydström, *Sinners and Citizens: Bestiality and Homosexuality in Sweden, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 320.

[6] *Cum omni pecore non coibis, nec maculaberis cum eo. Mulier non succumbet jumento, nec miscebitur ei, quia scelus est.*

[7] *Qui cum jumento et pecore coierit, morte moriatur: pecus quoque occidite. Mulier, quae succubuerit cuilibet jumento, simul interficietur cum eo: sanguis eorum sit super eos.*

receive the sacrament of communion.[8] Married men over the age of twenty were assigned twenty-five years of humiliation followed by five years of prayer. Married men over the age of fifty who sinned in this way would be refused communion until their deathbeds.[9] Early medieval penitentials (lists of set penances) took an even more relaxed attitude to the sin, specifying the same relatively light penances for bestiality as for masturbation.[10] However, the Ancyran penances were favoured by later canonists such as Burchard of Worms (d.1025) and Ivo of Chartes (c.1040-1116).[11] As late as the thirteenth century, Robert of Flamborough and Thomas Chobham continued to include the Ancyran penances for bestiality in their manuals on confession, though by this time their inclusion was more symbolic than reflective of actual confessional practice.[12]

In late medieval theology, bestiality was categorised as an unnatural act, in opposition to the forms of 'natural' sexual intercourse which we have previously examined. Aquinas classified bestiality [*bestialitas*], which he defined as 'intercourse with a thing of another species' [*si fiat per concubitum ad rem non ejusdem speciei*], as a form of 'unnatural vice' [*vitium contra naturam*], one of the 'species of lechery' [*species luxuriae*].[13] According to Aquinas, this was the gravest of all sins. Glossing Gen. 37:2 ('he accused his brethren to his father of a most wicked crime' [*accusavitque fratres suos apud patrem crimine pessimo*]), he argued that the 'most wicked crime' [*crimine pessimo*] of which Joseph accused his brothers was 'copulating with cattle' [*cum pecoribus miscebantur*].[14] Aquinas distinguished bestiality as a separate kind of act from the category of 'sodomy' [*sodomiticum vitium*], which he defined as intercourse 'with a person of the same sex, male with male and female with female' [*si fiat per concubitum ad non debitum sexum, puta masculi ad masculum, vel foeminae ad foeminam*].[15] However, other texts often did not preserve the distinction between bestiality and sodomy:

---

[8] Cuthbert Hamilton Turner, ed., *Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Iuris Antiquissima: Canonum et Conciliorum Graecorum Interpretationes Latinae*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 24–25.

[9] The text does not specify penance for women who have sex with animals.

[10] Pierre J. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code, 550-1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 44–46.

[11] Burchard of Worms, *Decretum*, PL 140:924d-925a; Ivo of Chartes, *Decretum*, PL 161:686a-686b.

[12] Robert of Flamborough, *Liber Poenitentialis: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes*, ed. J.J. Francis Firth (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1971), 230; Thomas Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain and Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1968), 402.

[13] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae 154, 11.

[14] Ibid., *ST* 2a2ae 154, 12.

[15] Ibid., 2a2ae 154, 11.

for instance in 1515, Richard Noryngton was presented in Rochester Consistory Court, accused of having committed a 'sodomitic crime' [*crimine sodomitico*] with a cow.[16] Bestiality was always an 'unnatural' act; sometimes, it was also a 'sodomitic' one.

As Martin Ingram notes, human-animal intercourse in medieval England has yet to receive a detailed study.[17] Joyce Salisbury briefly explores cultural responses to bestiality across Europe from antiquity to the early modern period in one chapter as part of her broad survey of animal history in *The Beast Within*.[18] More focused regional studies of late medieval and early modern Sweden, Germany and Switzerland, as well as colonial New England and the post-revolutionary United States, can complement our picture of England in the later Middle Ages, as does Erica Fudge's work on English bestiality in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[19] Scholars of English history have also yet to connect this theme to the broader histories of sexual regulation and moral reform prior to the Henrician Reformation. It receives only passing mention in key survey works by R.H. Helmholz and Martin Ingram.[20] This historiographical silence can in large part be explained by the dearth of documentary evidence. Prior to human-animal intercourse being made a felony by the 1534 Buggery Act and hence cognizable under secular jurisdiction, only a

---

[16] *Ex officio c. Noryngton*, 1515, Bishopric of Rochester Act Books DrB/Pa6, f.113v, Kent Archives.

[17] Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, 34.

[18] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 61–80.

[19] For Sweden, see Jonas Liliequist, 'Peasants Against Nature: Crossing the Boundaries Between Man and Animal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Sweden', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (1991): 393–423; Christine Ekholst, *A Punishment for Each Criminal: Gender and Crime in Swedish Medieval Law* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 182–89. For Germany and Switzerland, see E. William Monter, 'Sodomy and Heresy in Early Modern Switzerland', *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1 (1981): 41–55; Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003). For New England, see Robert F. Oaks, '"Things Fearful to Name": Sodomy and Buggery in Seventeenth-Century New England', *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 2 (1978): 268–81. For the post-Revolutionary US, see Doron S. Ben-Atar and Richard D. Brown, *Taming Lust: Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). For England after the end of my period of study, see Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 115–42.

[20] R.H. Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England, Vol. I: The Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 629; Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, 33–34.

handful of cases of bestiality can be found in the records of the ecclesiastical courts.[21] For example, Karen Jones finds only two individuals accused of bestiality in all of the cases brought before the Canterbury Church courts in the period between 1462 and 1560.[22] Helmholz has identified a further two cases in the dioceses of Rochester and Chichester and is confident that the total number of cases across England is unlikely to be much higher than those already listed.[23] Helmholz's assessment is further corroborated by the evidence of the published records. I found only one additional example of an individual accused of bestiality in all the published records for English consistory and lower ecclesiastical courts, as well as visitation records: one Richard Mayne from Tingewick who was recorded in a 1519 visitation in the diocese of Lincoln as having had intercourse with a horse.[24]

---

[21] 25 Hen. VIII, c. 6.

[22] Karen Jones, *Gender and Petty Crime in Late Medieval England: The Local Courts in Kent, 1460-1560* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 129–133. The cases in question are *ex officio c. Indry*, 1464, Canterbury Consistory Court Act Books, DCb/J/X/8.3, f.32r, Kent Archives, and *ex officio c. Goldworth*, 1505, Canterbury Archdeacons' Court Act Books, DCb/PRC/3/2. f.22r, Kent Archives. I am indebted to Dr Jones for sharing with me the call numbers for these cases, which are not published in her monograph.

[23] The cases in question are *ex officio c. Noryngton*, Kent Archives, and *ex officio* c. *Frogbrook*, 1520, Chichester Consistory Court Act Books Ep I/10/2, f.53v-55r, West Sussex Record Office. In a private email exchange, Prof. Helmholz stated that he did not believe he had come across any other cases besides these during his research on the English ecclesiastical courts. R.H. Helmholz, email message to author, March 14, 2018.

[24] This case is found in: A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531*, vol. I, Lincoln Record Society 33 (Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1940), 47. Other published sources consulted in this survey include: James Raine, ed., *Depositions and Other Ecclesiastical Proceedings from the Courts of Durham, Extending from 1311 to the Reign of Elizabeth*, Surtees Society 21 (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1845); Joseph Thomas Fowler, ed., *Acts of the Chapter of the Collegiate Church of SS Peter and Wilfrid, Ripon, 1452-1506*, Surtees Society 64 (Durham: Andrews & co., 1875); F.S. Pearson, 'Records of a Ruridecanal Court of 1300', in *Collectanea*, ed. Sidney Graves Hamilton (London: Worcestershire Historical Society, 1912), 70–79; Charles Johnson, ed., *Registrum Hamonis Hethe, Diocesis Roffensis*, vol. II, Canterbury and York Society 49 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948); Sandra Lee Parker and L.R. Poos, 'A Consistory Court from the Diocese of Rochester, 1364-4', *English Historical Review* 106, no. 420 (1991): 652–65; L.R. Poos, ed., *Lower Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in Late-Medieval England: The Courts of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, 1336-1349* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Christopher Whittick and Ian Forrest, 'The Thirteenth-Century Visitation

The conventional explanation for the paucity of documentary evidence is that because acts of unnatural intercourse such as bestiality did not pose a risk to community cohesion in the same way that, for instance, adultery between a man and a woman might cause disputes over a child's legitimacy or inter-familial relations, they were not regarded as sufficiently important business to bring to the attention of the Church courts, irrespective of their legal status under canon law. [25] Alternatively, court officials may have wished to avoid making such cases public knowledge by declining to pursue prosecutions.[26] However, neither of these are entirely satisfactory answers. Firstly, the impact of individual immorality on public morality was one of the key issues at stake in late medieval discourse on moral reform. As we saw in chapter 2, acts of unnatural intercourse were framed as having potentially catastrophic consequences for the wider community. The courts therefore had a compelling spiritual motive for detecting and eradicating bestiality. There is a significant tension between rhetoric and practice – between what theological texts would lead us to expect to see, and what we actually find – that demands closer examination. Secondly, as we have seen throughout this thesis, medieval discourses of sexual normativity placed great emphasis on the promotion of the concept of the natural sexual act. The construction of heteronormativity, as we explored in chapter 1 and 2, requires the ideological construction of categories of natural and unnatural sexual intercourse – but the failure to engage with the discursive function of bestiality as a category of unnatural sex means we do not fully understood this process. On this account, the lack of scholarly engagement with the history of human-animal intercourse represents an important gap in our understanding of sexual regulation and moral reform in this period.

Given the sources available to us, a cultural study is the most productive solution to bridging this gap. The miniscule sample size of relevant documentary evidence is completely unsuitable for the data-driven approach to analysing mechanisms of social

Records of the Diocese of Hereford', *English Historical Review* 131, no. 551 (2016): 737–62. A search of the online databases which index the consistory court records of London (partially) and York (completely) likewise returned no relevant material. Consistory: Testimony in the Late Medieval London Consistory Court, accessed March 1, 2018, http://consistory.cohds.ca/; Cause Papers in the Diocesan Courts of the Archbishopric of York, 1300-1858, accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.dhi.ac.uk/causepapers/.

[25] e.g. Shannon McSheffrey advances this theory in the context of the absence of trials for sex between men in London. McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*, 148–50.

[26] On silence as a tool of suppressing late medieval discourse on non-normative sex, see Linkinen, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture*, 85–109.

control taken by historians such as Marjorie MacIntosh and Charles Donahue.[27] Without any evidence for as-yet-unstudied clusters of bestiality trials in surviving ecclesiastical court records, a systematic search of archival material in the style of local studies such as those by Irene Churchill, Brian Woodcock, Richard Wunderli and Karen Jones would have required a considerable expenditure of time for no certain outcome and so could not be justified in the context of the thesis as a whole.[28] Instead of attempting to quantify judicial responses to bestiality, I will approach the gap in our knowledge through close readings of texts which provide evidence of cultural responses to human-animal intercourse. To do so, I will analyse texts which talk about the practice of confession; the records of the handful of unpublished ecclesiastical court cases already identified by other scholars; ecclesiastical and secular legislation; and legal commentaries. I will explore the extent to which bestiality was regarded as a social problem; the nature of various theological and legal responses; and how this fits into the broader pattern of moral reform which I have explored in previous chapters. In this chapter, I follow the language of my sources in describing bestiality as a 'sin' [*peccatum*] in the context of confession (i.e. a private matter of conscience requiring absolution) or as a 'crime' [*crimen*] in the context of litigation in the ecclesiastical and secular courts (i.e. a transgression against specified legislation). However, in practice these texts were often imprecise in their use of terminology,

Bestiality and confession

Canon 21 of Lateran IV mandated that every Christian over the age of discretion should confess to a priest at least once a year.[29] This was a fundamental, non-negotiable tenet of the relationship between the believer and the Church from 1215 until the Reformation. As John de Burgh wrote, not even the Pope himself had the power to release a person from the obligation for annual confession.[30] Some dioceses went further: Bishop

---

[27] Marjorie Keniston MacIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages*.

[28] Irene Josephine Churchill, *Canterbury Administration: The Administrative Machinery of the Archbishopric of Canterbury Illustrated from Original Records*, II vols (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1933); Brian L. Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952); Richard M. Wunderli, *London Church Courts and Society on the Eve of the Reformation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Medieval Academy of America, 1981).

[29] Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* vol. I: Nicaea I to Lateran V (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 245–46.

[30] John de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, ed. Augustin Agge (Paris: Wolfgang Hopyl, 1510), f.29v.

Richard Poore advised in the synodal statutes of Salisbury (1217x1219) that the laity should confess at least three times a year.[31] Confession was therefore a key element in the transmission of moral ideology from the Church to the laity. However, historians of late medieval penance disagree as to how far the practice of confession was intended as a method for social control by the Church.[32] This dispute came to a head in the debate between Thomas Tentler and Leonard Boyle at a 1972 conference at the University of Michigan, the proceedings of which were published as *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*.[33] Tentler's core thesis, revised and expanded in his 1977 monograph, was that confession restricted social deviance through a carrot-and-stick approach by offering consolation to the sinner, thus freeing them of guilt and mental anguish, as well as discipline through penance imposed by the confessor on the penitent.[34] Boyle argues that Tentler overemphasises the punitive character of confession and underplays the didactic value of the practice, to which Tentler answers that education is as much a part of reinforcing normative values as is punishment. Since the 1970s, the influence of the 'social turn' on confession studies has encouraged scholars such as John Bossy and Mary Mansfield to view confession not merely as a tool of social control imposed by the Church onto a passive laity, but rather as a means of promoting cohesion within local communities by encouraging penitents to confess to, and by extension to avoid committing, sins which were disruptive to the social order such as adultery, theft, and

---

[31] F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, eds., *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church,* Vol. II: AD 1205-1313, Pt.I: 1205-1265 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 72–73. William Lyndwood later mistakenly attributed this canon to the fourteenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury Simon Sudbury. William Lyndwood, *Provinciale, Seu Constituiones Angliaes*, ed. Henry Hall (Oxford: Richard Davis, 1679), 343–45.

[32] For surveys of the historiography of late medieval penance, see Peter Biller, 'Confession in the Middle Ages: Introduction', in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1998), 3–33; R. Emmet McLaughlin, 'Truth, Tradition and History: The Historiography of High/Late Medieval and Early Modern Penance', in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 18–71.

[33] See Tentler, Boyle, and Bouwsma in: Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman, eds., *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 103–37.

[34] Thomas N. Tentler, 'The *Summa* for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control', in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 103–26; Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 3–27.

slander, rather than private sins such as masturbation.[35] This accords with the growing influence of the 'social church' thesis on twenty-first century scholarship, which recognises ecclesiastical social regulation to be the product of cooperation between the Church and the communities which it served.[36] It is therefore imperative to read the sources for confessional practice in terms of the broader social function of the sacrament, rather than solely as a handbook of disciplinary regulation.

In response to the new demands imposed by Lateran IV, a diverse array of texts were produced to provide guidance on how to properly administer confession to the laity. As Leonard Boyle notes, this was a heterogenous genre: the class of texts which he calls 'pastoralia' included priests' manuals, *summae confessorum* and treatises on virtues and vices.[37] England was notable during the fourteenth century for the production of a large number of pastoral texts in both Latin and vernacular languages.[38] For the most part, these texts were not marked by any significant degree of innovation. Peter Biller stresses the fundamental underlying continuity between fourteenth-century works and older post-Lateran IV pastoral texts.[39] Much of the guidance on administering confession had not changed much from that of Thomas Chobham, whose *Summa confessorum* continued to be copied (and later, printed) and circulated alongside newer texts.[40] John de Burgh's *Pupilla oculi* (1385) is a representative example of the genre. *Pupilla oculi* is a priests' manual, a text which covered all aspects of a priest's duties, including substantial focus on the sacrament of confession.

---

[35] John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975): 37–38; Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[36] The term 'social church' was coined by Ian Forrest and Sethina Watson in 2006. On the concept of the social church, see e.g. Ian Forrest, 'The Transformation of Visitation in Thirteenth-Century England', *Past and Present* 221 (2013): 3–38; Ian Forrest, 'Trust and Doubt: The Late Medieval Bishop and Local Knowledge', *Studies in Church History* 52 (2016): 164–85; Ian Forrest, *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 1–7.

[37] Leonard E. Boyle, 'Summae Confessorum', in *Les Genres Littéraires Dans Les Sources Théologiques et Philosophiques Mediévales: Définition, Critique et Exploitation. Actes Du Colloque International de Louvain-La-Neuve 25-27 Mai 1981* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982), 227–37.

[38] W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 189–243 and 261–62.

[39] Biller, *The Measure of Multitude:*, 194–204.

[40] Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, lxxiv–lxxv.

Judging by the number of surviving manuscripts, de Burgh's treatise was highly popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and it went on to be printed at least fourteen times between 1510 and 1527.[41] Although some scholars argue that it was an elite work intended for the use of better-educated graduate clergy, Stacey Gee presents strong evidence from bequests in wills that *Pupilla oculi* and other similar pastoral texts were in the possession of a wide range of Yorkshire clergy, including parish priests.[42] However, an important caveat is that such works were unlikely to have been used as prompts during the hearing of confession, which would have been highly impractical given the size of the texts and the number of parishioners requiring attention. Rather, they likely served as models of 'best practice' and aided in the pastoral training of priests.

Alongside pastoral texts, there is a wealth of canon law material pertaining to the administering of confession. As with pastoralia, there was relatively little innovation in canon law in the later Middle Ages, and for the most part later English provincial and diocesan statutes reaffirmed legislation which had been passed in the thirteenth century.[43] However, as Dorothy Owen argues, there was a dramatic rise in the study of canon law in England from the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards. This manifested firstly in increased numbers of students attending the faculties of canon law at Oxford and Cambridge and secondly in the production of works by authors such William Lyndwood who assembled and glossed the corpus of English legislation, making it accessible to a broader readership.[44] As the foremost record of 'living law', Lyndwood's *Provinciale* (begun in 1422 and completed by 1434) remains an invaluable source for understanding confession within the context of canon law, even if, as C.R. Cheney notes, Lyndwood often misattributed the statutes which he glossed.[45] When read in concert, pastoral texts, ecclesiastical legislation and legal commentary can give us an impression of how a priest would have responded to a parishioner confessing to the act of bestiality.

---

[41] Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, 213–14.

[42] Stacey Gee, '"At the Sygne of the Cardynalles Hat": The Book Trade and the Market for Books in Yorkshire, c.1450-1550' (PhD dissertation, University of York, 1999), 135–46.

[43] James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 165–84; Helmholz, *The Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s*, 147–236.

[44] Dorothy M. Owen, *The Medieval Canon Law: Teaching, Literature, and Transmission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1–16.

[45] C.R. Cheney, *Medieval Texts and Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 158–84.

Priests' manuals drew on the harsh rhetoric of Old Testament condemnation of human-animal intercourse. Thomas Chobham remarked that bestiality was the most repugnant form of unnatural sin, and that such was the horror of the act that, as specified in Lev. 20:16, both the human and animal participants should be killed.[46] John de Burgh said that it was graver sin to copulate with a beast than with one's own mother.[47] Bestiality was regarded as a 'public and flagrant crime' [*crimine publico et manifesto*] and a threat to the community.[48] Chobham stated that before a sinner could be assigned penance, the first priority was to ensure that the animal which had been copulated with was slaughtered and the remains were either burned or buried. This would ensure that 'the memory of the crime could not be excited again by [the beast], and [it] could not pass into human uses'.[49] The requirements of pastoral care in this respect extended beyond merely the absolution of the individual penitent but also mandated protecting their neighbours from the consumption of polluted flesh. Priests were required to detect and respond to acts of bestiality not only for the care of individual parishioners' souls, but for the spiritual health of their entire congregation.

The confessor's imperative to identify those who were guilty of copulating with beasts placed him in a difficult position. He was required to not only passively listen but also to actively interrogate his penitents and guide them through the process of composing a comprehensive and articulate confession. Simultaneously, however, he was also warned to be cautious in his questioning 'lest he through indiscretion be the occasion of ruin to his penitent than make the healing remedy of guilt'.[50] The confessor could straightforwardly ask if his penitent 'had copulated with a beast or committed the vice of sodomy' [*si cum bestia coierit vel vicium sodomiticum commiserit*], but de Burgh recommended that this be investigated discreetly, for example by asking whether the penitent had emitted seed into anywhere except a woman's private parts.[51] Robert of Flamborough, whose *Liber poenitentialis* predated Lateran IV by around a decade but continued to influence later pastoral texts, advised a blunter approach in his model dialogue between confessor and penitent. Although he did not specifically ask about human/animal intercourse in this

---

[46] Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, 400–403.

[47] de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.44v.

[48] Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, 402.

[49] *Ne per ipsum memoria criminis refricetur et ne ipsum in usus transeat humanos*. Ibid., 402.

[50] *Ne quod facere curati remedia culpe perindiscretionem suam penitenti sit occasio ruine*. de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.39r.

[51] Ibid., f.40r.

dialogue, his later discussion of the sin of sodomy included those who 'have polluted themselves with cattle or men' [*cum pecoribus vel masculis se coinquinaverunt*].[52]

> Priest: Have you at any time been polluted by lust?
>
> Penitent: Yes.
>
> Priest: At any time against nature?
>
> Penitent: Yes.
>
> Priest: At any time with a man?
>
> Penitent: Yes.[53]

However, the situation presented a double bind for the confessor. If the penitent admitted they had sinned against nature, the priest was obligated to press them further. If a penitent asks the priest to explain the sin to them, he must not respond or give any specific detail and should move on to questions regarding other species of lust.[54] The parish priest had to tactfully compromise between the task of obtaining a full and frank confession with the need to avoid giving his parishioners unintended inspiration.

The authors of priests' manuals were greatly concerned with the risk of a priest inadvertently spreading knowledge of unnatural acts to his parishioners. In his *Instructions for Parish Priests*, John Mirk advised the reader that, concerning the 'synne aȝeynes kynde', 'thow schalt thy paresch no þynge teche / any of that synne no thynge preche', but that it would suffice for one's parishioners to know that it was a great sin for any man to 'do hys kynde other way' besides with his wife.[55] Regarding the confession of such sins, Mirk advised that 'myche more þou moste wyten, / þenne þou fyndest here I-wryten'. In this manner, Mirk tacitly directed the reader towards other texts for guidance on matters of unnatural vice. The French theologian and author of pastoral texts Jean Gerson likewise warned in *De arte audiendi confessiones* (c.1406) that certain matters could not be safely written down 'in order to avoid scandal to some people' [*evitandum quorumdam scandalum*] but ordered confessors to learn about these matters secretly, otherwise they would be unable to

---

[52] Robert of Flamborough, *Liber Poenitentialis*, 229–31.

[53] *Sacerdos: Umquam luxuria pollutus es? Poenitens: Nimis. Sacerdos: Umquam contra naturam? Poenitens: Nimis. Sacerdos: Umquam cum masculo? Poenitens: Nimis.* Ibid., 195–6.

[54] Ibid., 196–97.

[55] Here, Mirk illustrated the multiplicity of meanings of 'kynde', using it to denote the act of sexual intercourse ('don kynde') as well as the more familiar 'nature'.

fulfil their pastoral duties towards parishioners who came to them regarding such issues.[56] Mirk's evasiveness conveys a similar concern: priests would be expected to know more about the spiritual treatments for the vice against nature than could be freely discussed in this work. As Mirk intended for his manual to be used by less well-educated clergy, whose poor Latin could preclude them from accessing texts like *Pupilla oculi*, the unspoken assumption is his readers might look to more senior or learned colleagues for guidance on issues such as bestiality.[57]

On account of being an act of unnatural vice, bestiality was classified under canon law as a 'reserved case': a sin which, on account of its grievousness, could not be absolved by a parish priest, but which had to be referred on to the bishop of the diocese or his licensed penitentiary for absolution. The practice of reserved cases was initially enshrined in English canon law in Bishop Poore's statutes for Salisbury and Durham and was incorporated into the legislation of several other dioceses including Chichester (1245x1252) and London (1245x1259).[58] The 1367 and 1518 Constitutions of York also included statutes pertaining to reserved cases.[59] Whereas the thirteenth-century legislation referred only to unnnatural vice, pastoral texts and legal commentaries which cited conciliar statutes regarding reserved cases specified men and women who 'had intercourse with brute animals' [*concubuerit cum bruto animali*] as examples of penitents whose sins constituted reserved cases.[60] In order to ensure compliance, the penitent's parish priest was responsible for either accompanying them to the bishop, or providing them with a letter outlining the details of their sin.[61] Meanwhile, for the duration of time until the penitent was able to undertake this journey, the priest ought to explain to them that they were unable to offer absolution but that they should do good works in order to prevent them from falling into despair.[62]

---

[56] Jean Gerson, 'De Arte Audiendi Confessiones', in *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Palémon Glorieux, vol. VIII (Paris: Desclée et Cie, 1971), 11.

[57] Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, 68.

[58] Powicke and Cheney, *Councils and Synods,* II pt.1: 75, 455 and 638.

[59] David Wilkins, ed., *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, Ab Anno MCCCL Ad Annum MDXLV, Accedunt Constitutiones et Alia Ad Historiam Ecclesiae Anglicanae Spectantia*, vol. III (London: R. Gosling et al., 1737), 72 and 680.

[60] Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, 215; de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.59r; Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 328–30.

[61] Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 328.

[62] Ibid., 331.

A penitent who travelled to the seat of the bishop in their diocese, potentially accompanied by their parish priest, would inevitably attract attention from their local community. This was problematic as it could lead to breaking the seal of confession. Lateran IV emphasised the importance of secrecy with harsh punishments for confessors who broke confidence: priests who revealed the confessed sins of a penitent were to be deposed from office and relegated to a monastery.[63] In England, this principle was affirmed shortly after the publication of the canons of Lateran IV in the synodal statutes of Bishop Richard Poore for Salisbury (1217x1219) and Durham (1228x1236); a modified version of the relevant statute, mistakenly attributed to Archbishop Walter Reynolds, was also incorporated into the *Provinciale*.[64] Lyndwood went further in his gloss, outlining a procedure by which a penitent could prove that their confessor had violated the secrecy of their confession by bringing forward two witnesses, leading to harsh penalties for the priest. However, late medieval confession was usually not a truly private matter. Provincial canon law specified that the priest 'should choose a public place for the hearing of confessions, where he will be generally seen by all, and [he] should not accept anyone in concealed places in the church', with the only exception being in cases of penitents too infirm to travel.[65] Lynwood provided a justification for avoiding holding confession in hidden areas: 'such places are suitable for the doing of evil'.[66] Such requirements for openness were intended to be a form of accountability, ensuring that priests would be less likely to commit certain abuses. De Burgh, for instance, warned his reader not to hear confession with the intent of receiving temporal benefits. Likewise, Lyndwood cautioned that hearing women's confessions in private was likely to result in scandal.[67] It follows that the same conditions of public scrutiny which safeguarded parishioners against exploitation would also increase the risk that the penitent would have their confession overheard by a prying neighbour. A similar outcome was possible if the procedures for reserved sins were followed according to the letter of the law. Consequently, the practice of reserved sins came under increasing scrutiny during the later Middle Ages. While broadly favouring the practice, de Burgh noted that the opinions of the Doctors varied regarding the legitimacy

---

[63] Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* I:245–46.

[64] Powicke and Cheney, *Councils and Synods,* II pt.1:74; Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 334–35.

[65] *Sacerdos ad audiendum Confessiones communem sibi locum eligat, ubi communiter ab omnibus videri poterit in Ecclesia, et in locis absconditis non recipiat Sacerdos alicujus*. Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 331.

[66] *Talia loca ad operandum mala atiora sunt*. Ibid., 331.

[67] de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.39r; Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 331.

of reservation.[68] Lyndwood cited the opinion of William Durandus, who argued that the practice of reservation unduly restricted the power of the priest to grant absolution.[69] Lyndwood also criticised the requirement that priests should have to either accompany penitents to the bishop or provide them with a letter to bring with them. He argued that since bishops were free to hear the confession of anyone from their diocese and any parishioner could go to a bishop without a curate's permission, it followed that they should be trusted to undertake this process without the need for enforcement by their parish priest.[70]

In addition to the intellectual critiques of reserved sins in these texts, there is also some evidence for grassroots resistance against the practice. In 1367, Archbishop John Thoresby of York published his *Constitutiones* with the stated aim of correcting numerous abuses and errors committed in the diocese, with a particular focus on improving standards of clerical behaviour and targeting immorality.[71] These statutes formed part of Thoresby's broader programme of religious and disciplinary reform: he also published a set of religious instructions for priests to read aloud in English throughout the province and promoted a number of administrative reforms in the archbishopric.[72] One area in which he hoped to make significant disciplinary improvements was with regards to reserved cases. As he remarked in the *Constitutiones*:

> [We] have carefully observed so many rectors, vicars, and parish priests receiving [penitents] for confession without distinguishing between those crimes which are outrageous and those which are light.[73]

Parish priests were therefore disregarding canon law and overextending the limits of their authority by absolving cases which should have rightly been referred to the bishop's attention. Thoresby reminded his subordinates that all penitents who had committed a reserved sin, with the sole exception of those on their deathbed, should be sent to his

---

[68] de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.47v.

[69] Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 329.

[70] Ibid., 330.

[71] Wilkins, *Concilia*, III:68–73.

[72] Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, 212–13; Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988), 127–73.

[73] *Tam rectores, quam vicarii, quam presbyteri parochianos suos ad confitendum passim admittere perpendimus, inter crimina, et crimina, quae sint enormia, et quae levia, non distinguentes.* Wilkins, *Concilia*, III:72.

penitentiary along with a letter explaining the circumstances of their sin.[74] The punishment of the sin against nature, 'and especially [those who sin] with animals' [*et maxime cum brutis*] was a high priority, being the second out of thirty-seven reserved cases to be cited in the statute.

Once confession had been made, whether to bishop or his penitentiary, or to a parish priest willing to disregard the proper processes, there were several different penalties which could be assigned to an individual who had copulated with an animal. There were three types of penance: private, public and solemn.[75] The nature of private penance was self-evident, while both public and solemn penance were supposed to be performed in public, although in the case of the latter, the sinner's crimes were not to be publicised. The most severe penalty was, of course, excommunication. De Burgh, citing the authority of the *Clerici* decree of Lateran III, stated that clerics who copulated with animals or otherwise sinned against nature were to be deposed from office and consigned to a religious community to do penance, whereas laymen were to be excommunicated.[76] Chobham prescribed a notably extreme penance, which functioned as a *de facto* excommunication: penitents were prevented from entering church, barred from consuming meat, fish and alcohol, and were forbidden from wearing shoes, except for 'pattens without soles' [*impagines sine soleis*].[77] This penalty was not given a specific duration, but was only to be reduced 'after a long time' [*post longa tempora*].[78] Alternatively, the confessor could assign the default punishment of seven years of penance including fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays for any public mortal sin as stipulated in Gratian's *Decretum*.[79] From a theological point of view, the seven years or more of penance represented the true amount of time needed for a sinner to be absolved for a given sin. By undertaking a more lenient period of temporal punishment while alive, the sinner would extend the length of time they would spend in Purgatory. However, provincial canon law granted priests the authority to exercise judgement in the assignation of penance and to take into account the circumstances of the

---

[74] Ibid., 73.

[75] de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.27r.

[76] Ibid., f.44v; Emil Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, vol. II (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1881), 836.

[77] Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, 402–3.

[78] Ibid., 403.

[79] de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.41v; Emil Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, vol. I (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1879), 1155; Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, 159.

sinner and sin.[80] John Mirk warned against setting too heavy a penalty, for fear that parishioners would not actually perform it, noting that 'bettur hyt ys wyth penaunce lutte / in-to purgatory a mon to putte / þen wyþ penaunce ouer-myche / sende hym to helle pyche'.[81] Mirk further bemoaned that few of the laity in his time were willing to undergo the seven years' penance stipulated by canon law, let alone the decades-long penitential punishments.[82]

Overall, the practice of confession was characterised by pragmatic leniency rather than repressive surveillance and discipline when it came to the sin of bestiality. While in theory, authors of pastoral manuals identified human-animal intercourse as a serious matter which needed immediate escalation to higher authorities, in practice priests were limited in how far they could respect procedure. Confessors were restricted from interrogating their penitents too thoroughly, and the need to maintain the secrecy of confession disincentivised priests from passing reserved cases onto their bishops. The nature of confession as a means of maintaining community cohesion meant that the confessor had to balance the imperative to detect and issue penance to individuals who had intercourse with animals with their responsibility of pastoral care: following due process in this instance would have caused serious harm to the social standing of the penitent and introduced disruption into the parish. The process of reserved cases also entailed an additional burden of bureaucracy, and the evidence of Thoresby's *Constitutiones* indicates that priests were often reluctant to do so. The 'model of best practice' for the confession of bestiality was a difficult if not impossible ideal for confessors to follow. We do not have the documentary evidence to prove how closely priests followed the mandated procedure for reserved cases, but it seems highly plausible that in practice, a confession of bestiality usually remained a private matter between the penitent and their confessor.

Bestiality and the ecclesiastical courts

Although we can reconstruct a 'model of best practice' for detecting and providing absolution for the act of bestiality through the sacrament of confession and can present informed speculation concerning the extent to which this model was put into actual practice, it is impossible to advance beyond speculation in this area. This is because the process of confession, being primarily verbal in nature and subject to the demands of

---

[80] Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, 334.

[81] Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, 155.

[82] Ibid., 159.

confidentiality, left minimal written evidence pertaining to individual cases. However, the ecclesiastical courts have left us with a more substantial set of records through which we can analyse the Church's responses to bestiality. As Mary Flannery and Katie Walter argue, the processes of confession and ecclesiastical litigation were similar in terms of shared procedures, discourses and aims.[83] In this respect they were closely related yet separate tools for the reproduction of clerical social ideology, though as we shall see, this was not merely a top-down process. Just as in the study of confession, the 'social turn' in the study of ecclesiastical jurisdiction increasingly portrays the Church courts not as a blunt instrument of social control imposing discipline on a recalcitrant populace, but as an institution which operated with the consent and often at the behest of lay communities. Studies of Rochester consistory court by Sandra Lee Parker, L.R. Poos and Andrew John Finch demonstrate that the range of cases brought to court primarily reflected the interests of the local lay community in controlling socially disruptive behaviour, such as acts of adultery or slander.[84] As Shannon McSheffrey argues, the Church in late medieval London did not seek to exert power over the individual's sexual behaviour for power's own sake but at the behest of the secular community and especially of male heads of households eager to limit the sexual freedom of their dependents when it went against their own interests.[85]

More conservative scholars of canon law, such as Kenneth Pennington, criticise the emphasis placed by social historians on the role of social, emotional and political factors in the operation of the courts and call for an approach more thoroughly grounded in jurisprudence.[86] However, this approach exaggerates the true extent of the courts' power and minimises the agency of litigants and their efforts to manipulate court procedure for their own aims. As shall become apparent in this analysis, the litigation of bestiality in the

[83] Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter, 'Introduction: Imagining Inquisition', in *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England*, ed. Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 2–3.

[84] Parker and Poos, 'A Consistory Court from the Diocese of Rochester, 1364-4', 655; Andrew John Finch, 'Sexuality Morality and Canon Law: The Evidence of the Rochester Consistory Court', *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994): 261–75.

[85] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*, 190–94.

[86] Kenneth Pennington, 'Introduction to the Courts', in *The History of Courts and Procedure in Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 5–6.

Church courts was heavily influenced by the lay community's involvement and bore little resemblance to the due process outlined under canon law.

By the later Middle Ages the Church courts had both the motive and the legal mechanisms means by which to prosecute human-animal intercourse. Augustine's declaration that 'grievous offences which are against nature, such as those which were of the Sodomites, should everywhere and at all times to be rejected and punished' provided a precedent for the litigation of unnatural vice under canon law.[87] In England, the writ *Circumspecte agatis* (1286) of Edward I confirmed the limits of ecclesiastical and secular legal jurisdictions and conceded responsibility for the disciplining of mortal sins involving lust to the Church courts, meaning that the prosecution of bestiality fell solely under the jurisdiction of the Church.[88] Furthermore, the introduction of *inquisitio* by Innocent III's decree *Qualiter et quando* (canon 8 of Lateran IV) enabled judges to bring cases to court without accusers based solely on *publica fama*, i.e. that the defendant's actions were common knowledge within his or her local community.[89] Although scholars have tended to associate inquisition with the detection and prosecution of heresy, Henry Ansgar Kelly notes that Innocent III did not originally develop the practice of *inquisitio* to be used against heretics, but rather intended it to be applied to a range of crimes falling under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.[90] In order to bring charges against an individual on the basis of *publica fama*, the judge was required to find two or more reputable individuals to testify that the person was generally believed by the wider community to be guilty of a particular crime. The court acted as plaintiff in these cases, hence the designation of office case or *ex officio,* as opposed to instance (suits initiated by a plaintiff) and probate (matters relating to wills) business.[91] However, office causes could also be instigated at the promotion of a third party. Acts of

---

[87] *Flagicia, que sunt contra naturam, ubique ac semper repudianda atque punienda sunt, qualia Sodomitarum fuerunt*. Friedberg, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 1879, I:1143.

[88] F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, eds., *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, Vol. II: AD 1205-1313, Pt.II 1265-1313* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 974.

[89] Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* I:237–39.

[90] Henry Ansgar Kelly, 'Inquisition, Public Fame and Confession: General Rules and English Practice', in *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England*, ed. Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 9–13.

[91] A more detailed outline of church court procedure can be found in: Dorothy M. Owen, *The Records of the Established Church in England* (Cambridge: British Records Association, 1970), 36–45.

bestiality, like most other offences relating to sexual immorality lacking an injured party to act as plaintiff to instigate a suit, were tried as office business.

Unnatural vice was the target of greater legislative efforts in some English dioceses. For instance, Bishop Fulk Basset ordered in the first set of statutes for London (1245x1259) that 'it is furthermore to be carefully inquired in every religious chapter whether the rectors, vicars or chaplains have any parishioners that are defamed among good and dignified persons [...] concerning any sin that is against nature'.[92] Compared with the rest of Europe, England was relatively unusual in the degree to which its ecclesiastical courts pursued *ex officio* cases concerning sexual misdemeanours against laypeople, whereas most continental jurisdictions tended to focus on cases involving clergy.[93] Ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England was a highly complex matter. A parish could fall under the aegis of courts operating by the authority of archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, rural deans, cathedral dignitaries and monastic houses, so cases could fall under the remit of several different courts.[94] Three of the four bestiality cases discussed in this chapter were heard in consistory courts and one (*ex officio c. Goldworth*) was heard in an archdeacons' court.[95] It is likely no coincidence that all four were heard in dioceses (Canterbury, Rochester and Chichester) known for litigating a high volume of *ex officio* cases.[96]

Of the cases identified in the initial survey, *ex officio c. Frogbrook* provides the greatest volume of material for analysis. Details of the court proceedings, witness depositions, and other suits involving the defendant are all recorded in the Chichester consistory court act book. By contrast, I was unable to identify comparable amounts of evidence for the other three cases. Only one line pertaining to *ex officio c. Indry* and *ex officio c. Goldworth* were recorded in their respective act books. Although two witness depositions for *ex officio c. Noryngton* were recorded in the Rochester consistory court act book, the overall amount of documentary evidence for this case remains limited. Consequently, in this chapter I will

---

[92] *Inquiratur etiam diligenter in singulis capitulis a rectoribus, vicariis, capellanis, utrem habeant aliquem parochianum infamatum apud bonos et graves [...] super aliquo peccato quod est contra naturam.* Powicke and Cheney, *Councils and Synods, Vol. II, Pt.I*, 632.

[93] Kelly, 'Inqusition, Public Fame and Confession', 20.

[94] Charles Donahue, Jr., *The Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts, Part II: England* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1994), 21–26.

[95] *Ex officio c. Indry*, Kent Archives; *ex officio* c. *Goldworth*, Kent Archives; *ex officio c. Noryngton*, ff. 113v-114, Kent Archives; *ex officio c. Frogbrook*, f.53v-55r, WRSO.

[96] Donahue, *The Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts, Part II: England*, 23.

focus on *ex officio c. Frogbrook*, bringing in evidence from the other three cases to supplement my core analysis. Our knowledge of the principal actors in *ex officio c. Frogbrook* is further supplemented by information from the substantial body of edited and unpublished documentary sources for the county of Sussex in the early sixteenth century. This amount of material enables us to examine the broader narratives of the case and the motivations of its participants. This enables the case to be treated as a text subject to the same techniques of close reading as we have engaged in throughout this study, an approach to archival material pioneered by Natalie Zemon Davis in her work on early modern French pardon records.[97] Contrary to the criticisms of scholars such as Pennington, this methodological approach to legal material remains a potent means of addressing questions of social history, and is one of the most substantial means available to us for exploring the social response to bestiality.

On 12th June 1520 in the church of Pulborough in Sussex, the consistory court for the diocese of Chichester heard the case of one Thomas Frogbrook alias White of the parish of West Grinstead, accused of having 'committed misdeeds against nature with a cow' [*commisit contra naturam cum vacca*] two years prior to the trial on 2nd February 1518.[98] Initially, the court formally classified the case as office business, although it was litigated 'at the promotion' [*ad promotionem*] of one Emery Penfold.[99] In practical terms, Penfold acted as plaintiff throughout the case. He requested to be admitted to court to prove the crime himself [*pecijt se admitti ad probandum criminem*], to which the judge [*iudex*] assented, and over the course of the trial he produced four witnesses to testify on his behalf against Frogbrook.[100] At the 12th June session, the court received testimony from the first of these witnesses, Edward Lynfield and Peter a Wever. During the subsequent session on 3rd July, this time held at the church of Storrington, the court received testimony from two further witnesses, John Lynfield and Henry Sopar.[101] By the request of both parties, copies of all four depositions were made and given to Penfold and Frogbrook.[102] At this stage,

---

[97] See e.g. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[98] *Ex officio c. Frogbrook*, f.55r, WRSO. The more common term for the presiding officer in senior ecclesiastical courts during this period was 'official' [*officialis*]. However, in the Chichester consistory court act books, this position is designated as '*iudex*'.

[99] See e.g. the marginal annotation on the case at f.63v.

[100] Ibid., f.55r.

[101] Ibid., f.63v.

[102] Ibid., ff.53v-54r.

Frogbrook also empowered one Master Segar to act as his proctor (legal counsel). Finally, at the session held on 30th July at the church of Horsham, Frogbrook contested the charge against him and sought to clear his name through the process of purgation.[103] This required the defendant to first make a sworn declaration of innocence, after which he or she had to produce compurgators, the number of whom would be set by the judge, who had to declare their belief in the defendant's good character. In this case, the judge had required Frogbrook to produce three compurgators. Three men from Frogbrook's parish – John Harvey, John Mylis, and John Milis - acted as compurgators, and as a result he was acquitted.[104] Frogbrook then initiated a suit against Penfold for making a vexatious accusation against him. The judge set the date for the hearing of this new case for the Monday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (22nd September).

The depositions of the four witnesses outlined the facts of Frogbrook's crime and how it became a publicly known fact in the parish of West Grinstead. The first, Edward Lynfield, was the only person who claimed to have witnessed Frogbrook in the act.[105] Lynfield related that two years prior, around the Feast of the Purification (2nd February), he was travelling on horseback from his home at that time in the parish of Cowfold (a journey of around 4km as the crow flies) to the house of one Cunstance Scutt in West Grinstead, when, at some time between 10am-1pm while passing through a pasture [*pastura*] belonging to his father, he saw Thomas Frogbrook having intercourse with a cow. Lynfield challenged Frogbrook, saying "thou lewde felow, what dost thou?".[106] Frogbrook did not reply, but fled to a certain croft [*croftam*] belonging to Lynfield's father. After this encounter, Lynfield immediately made for his father's house, and on the way there met Peter a Wever, whom he told about the incident. Wever said to him that he had just passed Frogbrook in a certain hedge [*clausura*]. Then, reaching his father's house, Lynfield related the incident again to the two men present there: his father John Lynfield and Henry Sopar. Although none of the other three witnesses had seen the act themselves, they all corroborated the facts of Edward Lynfield's testimony concerning his reporting of the

---

[103] Ibid., f.71r.

[104] 'John Mylys' and 'John Myllys' both appear in the Lay Subsidy rolls for West Grinstead, assessed at £1 and £2 respectively. Julian Cornwall, ed., *The Lay Subsidy Rolls for the County of Sussex 1524-1525*, Sussex Record Society 56 (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1956), 59.

[105] Edward Lynfield's deposition was copied on f.53v.

[106] As was standard practice for documents of this type, the text of the depositions and court proceedings for the case were written in Latin, with the exception of records of direct speech such as Lynfield's utterance.

incident on the day.[107] John Lynfield and Henry Sopar both confirmed that they had heard about Frogbrook from Edward Lynfield in John Lynfield's house. Peter a Wever verified Edward Lynfield's account of their meeting, and that he had previously encountered Frogbrook. Both the Lynfields and Sopar confirmed that the *fama* of Frogbrook's crime had gone on to circulate and grow throughout the community through Edward's subsequent retelling of the story. Curiously, however, Wever claimed to have been ignorant of the *fama*.

While the depositions tell us relatively little information directly about the social background of the parties to the case and the witnesses, we can piece together some observations based on this text and supporting documentary material. West Grinstead was a rural, heavily-wooded agricultural parish, whose economy was dominated by pasturage; arable farming would not become significant until a greater area of land was reclaimed through assarting later in the sixteenth century.[108] Edward Lynfield's references to his father's pasture and croft indicate that John Lynfield was a farmer. I have yet to identify any information from probate records for any of the other men that would clarify their occupation with a strong degree of certainty. However, according to the records of the lay subsidy of 1524-5, Edward Lynfield, John Lynfield, Henry Sopar and Thomas Frogbrook were all assessed on the value of their goods, i.e. capital assets, rather than income from land or wages. In the context of rural areas, this usually indicated that the taxpayer was a farmer.[109] Peter a Wever was the sole exception, being assessed for the value of his yearly wages as a day labourer. All the men were assessed for £1 or £2, the lowest taxable amount under the subsidy.[110] To put this into context, the lay subsidy identified 41 individuals liable to pay tax in the parish of West Grinstead, of whom 33 were assessed for between £1-3. In the absence of demographic data for the parish, the proportion of the working population which fell below the tax threshold remains unknown.

At the time of the trial in 1520, Edward Lynfield was 22 years old, Peter a Wever was 23, and Henry Sopar was 30. John Lynfield did not state his age, but assuming that he had fathered Edward no earlier than at the age of 14 (the age of majority), in 1520 he

---

[107] The other depositions were copied onto ff. 53v-54r.

[108] T.P. Hudson, *A History of the County of Sussex*, vol. 6 pt 2, Victoria County History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 83–99.

[109] R.W. Hoyle, 'Taxation and the Mid-Tudor Crisis', *Economic History Review* 51, no. 4 (1998): 652–53.

[110] Cornwall, *Lay Subsidy Rolls, 1524-5*, 59–60 and 90.

would have been at least 36; given that the average age at first marriage in this period was 20-25, it is more likely that he would have been in his early 40s.[111] This would place him in his mid-70s to early 80s at the time of his death in 1559.[112] Frogbrook's age is harder to determine. Henry Sopar stated that he had known Frogbrook 'from childhood' [*a pueritia*] and John Lynfield said that he had known him from the year that he was born, meaning he had to have been younger than Lynfield. Similar dates for significant events in the lives of Sopar and Frogbrook further suggest that the two men were close in age. Frogbrook made a will in 1557 and was buried in 1567.[113] Henry Sopar made a will the year after Frogbrook and was buried in 1570, aged 80.[114] Consequently, we can deduce that Frogbrook was probably in his late 20s or early 30s at the time of the trial. Broadly speaking, the defendant and witnesses were, from an economic and social perspective, middling members of their local communities: possessing sufficient wealth to qualify for the lay subsidy and to justify writing wills at the end of their lives, yet still being among the majority of their taxpaying neighbours in paying only the minimum rate.

Emery Penfold is the sole individual involved in the case who identity remains elusive. He was not assessed in the lay subsidy, and no will for him has been indexed in either the *Calendar of Wills in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Chichester* or the *Transcripts of Sussex Wills*.[115] The Steyning parish register records that Elizabeth, a daughter of one Emery Penfold, was baptised on 15th April 1572 and that this same Emery was later buried on 30th October that same year.[116] It is unclear if this is the same man as our plaintiff. If it is, he would have been at least 70 years when he fathered Elizabeth, an unlikely though not

---

[111] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, 358.

[112] Burial of Edward Lynfield, 1559, West Grinstead Parish Registers Par 95/1/1/1, f.33r, WRSO.

[113] Will of Thomas Frogbrook, 1557, Archdeaconry of Chichester Will Registers Ep/I/27/STC I/9, f.6v, WRSO; Edward Huth, ed., *The Parish Registers of Bolney, Sussex- 1541-1812*, Sussex Record Society 15 (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1912), 67.

[114] Will of Henry Sopar, 1558, Archdeaconry of Chichester Will Registers Ep/I/27/STC I/9, f.165r, WRSO; Burial of Henry Sopar, 1570, West Grinstead Parish Registers Par 95/1/1/1, f.36r, WRSO.

[115] Edward Alexander Fry, ed., *Calendar of Wills in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Chichester, 1482-1800* (London: British Record Society, 1915); R. Garraway Rice, ed., *Transcripts of Sussex Wills as Far as They Relate to Ecclesiological and Parochial Subjects, up to the Year 1560*, IV vols, Sussesx Record Society 41, 42, 43 and 45 (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1935-40).

[116] Baptism of Elizabeth Penfold and Burial of Emery Pynfold, 1572, Steyning Parish Registers Par 183/1/1/1, f.3r, WRSO.

impossible feat. Potentially, part of his motivation for promoting the case to the consistory court could have been that he may have been a churchwarden, a parishioner who was a point of contact between the church and the wider community. These men would have responsibility for reporting crimes cognisable as office business to the courts.[117] Unfortunately, the earliest surviving parish records for West Grinstead which would allow us to confirm this date from 1558 onwards. In any case, a more substantial motive was that Penfold had a personal grievance against Frogbrook. On 7th March 1520, Frogbrook sued Penfold in the Chichester consistory court for defamation for claiming that he had 'committed fornication' [*committere fornicationem*] with one Margaret Jobes.[118] On 27th March, the court compelled Penfold to receive penance for this crime.[119] In light of this, Penfold's promotion of the case against Frogbrook and his personal involvement in the examination of the defendant seems to be an act of opportunistic revenge. Officials of the consistory court appear to have recognised the element of personal grievance in the case which blurred the boundaries between office and instance business: a marginal note for the 30th July session in which Frogbrook purgated himself names the case as '*Pynfolde contra Whyte*', whereas the previous session had designated it '*Whit ex officio*'. In this way, the case against Frogbrook was the continuation of an earlier round of litigation between the two men.

If *ex officio c. Frogbrook* was in truth a matter of personal grievance, then the community of West Grinstead seemed to side more strongly with the defendant. Frogbrook appeared to have little difficulty in finding compurgators from within the parish to clear his name. Meanwhile, Penfold left (or was forced out of) the parish in the aftermath of the trial: in the 22nd September session which heard the beginning of Frogbrook's new suit against him, he was recorded as living in Thakeham, around 8km southwest of West Grinstead.[120] The depositions imply that Penfold was a relative newcomer to West Grinstead. John Lynfield, who had lived in the parish his entire life, and his son Edward had both known Penfold for only four years prior to the trial, and Henry Sopar had only known him for two years prior. In contrast, Frogbrook had far greater roots in the area. As we have seen, John Lynfield and Henry Sopar had both known him since his childhood, and Edward Lynfield knew him 'from the age of discretion' [*ab annis*

---

[117] On the role of churchwardens as agents of social control, see MacIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370-1600*, 23–45; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*, 150–63.

[118] *Frogbrook c. Penfold* (1), 1520, Chichester Consistory Court Act Books Ep I/10/2, f.31v, WRSO.

[119] Ibid., f.37v.

[120] *Frogbrook c. Penfold* (2), 1520, Chichester Consistory Court Act Books Ep I/10/2, f.83r, WRSO.

discretion] (i.e. 14). Peter a Wever was the exception, having known both Penfold and Frogbrook for 12 years. The discrepancy here is difficult to explain: perhaps Wever was familiar with the parish in which Penfold had been living prior to moving to West Grinstead. If, in promoting the case against Frogbrook Penfold had intended to stake his reputation against that of his enemy, he had seriously misjudged the goodwill of the community towards him.

The judge also appears to have regarded the charges against Frogbook as unpersuasive. Three 'hands' was an unusually low number of compurgators to be held by; defendants were more commonly required to produce five or six or more.[121] This had been the case in the trial of Peter Indry in the Canterbury consistory court in 1464, who had successfully purgated himself by six hands against the charge of having intercourse with a calf.[122] Canon law allowed judges discretion in the choice of the number of compurgators as a means of countering abuses in the system of purgation, but the question of why the judge opted for leniency in *ex officio c. Frogbrook* despite the seriousness of the charge against him has no clear answer.[123] Perhaps he found the evidence against Frogbrook unconvincing and sought to ensure an innocent man would be acquitted. Alternatively, perhaps the judge perceived a threat to social cohesion should Penfold's grievance be vindicated through a verdict of guilt against Frogbrook, a more established member of the community, and regarded an easy compurgation as a tactful resolution to the case.

Another factor which also affected the proceedings of *ex officio c. Frogbrook* was the reforming influence of Bishop Robert Sherborne on the operation of the Church courts in the diocese of Chichester. Sherborne took the see in 1508 and remained in the position until 1536. While in office, Sherborne pursued numerous reforms pertaining to the operation of ecclesiastical justice in his diocese including limiting the jurisdiction of archdeacons and installing men supportive of his reforming aims in judicial positions.[124]

---

[121] Colin R. Chapman, *Ecclesiastical Courts, Officials and Records: Sin, Sex and Probate*, 2nd ed. (Dursley: Lochin Publishing, 1997), 51.

[122] *Ex officio c. Indry*, Kent Archives.

[123] R.H. Helmholz, 'Local Ecclesiastical Courts in England', in *The History of Courts and Procedure in Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 382.

[124] Stephen Lander, 'Church Courts and the Reformation in the Diocese of Chichester, 1500-1558', in *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church in England, 1500-1642*, ed. Rosemary O'Day and Felicity Heal (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976), 215–37.

Crucially, under his administration, the Chichester courts litigated a substantially higher number of office cases. Prior to his appointment, the diocese's courts heard fewer of these cases on account of their unprofitability in comparison to more lucrative instance cases. In 1506-7, the courts processed 220 instance cases and only 65 office cases; however, in 1520 they processed 227 instance and 195 office cases.[125] Under Sherborne's drive for moral improvement, the 1520s were a time of strenuous activity in Chichester consistory court which only began to wane in the 1530s as a result of the break with Rome. We can only speculate as to how far Sherborne's influence was directly felt in this case. Perhaps Penfold was aware of Sherborne's reforming initiative and the drive for increased office litigation and hence saw an opportunity to push for the case against Frogbrook. West Grinstead was only about a day's walk from Chichester, and it is conceivable that Penfold could have been aware of broader developments in the diocese, especially given that he was sufficiently familiar with the system of ecclesiastical justice to be able to promote a case and to act as plaintiff himself. Moreover, the officials of the consistory court, emboldened by Sherborne's reforming agenda, were likely prepared to take Penfold's promotion of the case more seriously than they previously would have when such a case would not have been regarded as sufficiently lucrative.

A similar connection is observable in the case of *ex officio c. Noryngton*, heard in 1515 in the consistory court of Rochester. Sherborne's contemporary John Fisher held the bishopric of Rochester from 1504 until his execution in 1535 for his refusal to acknowledge Henry VIII as the head of the Church of England. Fisher was not a reformer in the same degree of intensity as his counterpart in Chichester, but he nevertheless gained a reputation for his emphasis on pastoral care and discipline, both of the clergy and the laity, within his diocese.[126] An anonymous *Life* written within a few decades of his execution noted that shortly after he was appointed, he embarked on a visitation of all his parish churches and 'all such as were accused of any crime, he put to their purgation, not sparinge the punishment of simonie and heresie with other crimes and abuses'.[127] Fisher

[125] Ibid., 223.

[126] Stephen Thompson, 'The Bishop in His Diocese', in *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and Eamon Duffy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 77–78.

[127] Carolus De Smedt et al., eds., 'A Treatis Contayninge the Lyfe and Maner of Death of That Most Holy Prelat and Constant Martyr of Christ John Fisher Bishop of Rochester and Cardinall of the Holy Church of Rome', in *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. X (Paris and Brussels: Société Générale de Librairie Catholique/Société Belge de Librairie, 1891), 217.

continued to carry out all visitations in person until 1523 and again during the period 1529-31.[128] Noryngton's trial was heard during the first period of Fisher's personal involvement in visitations. As with *ex officio c. Frogbrook*, this case was likely influenced by an individual bishop's programme of moral reform.

We also need to consider the role of Frogbrook's age and social status as determining factors in the court's decision to hear the case against him. As Liliequist argues, early modern Swedish society associated the act of bestiality with youth. Although the Swedish courts did not necessarily tolerate or display leniency towards boys and young men who engaged in human-animal sexual contact, there was an understanding that individuals from this group were more prone to commit such acts on account of their close proximity to animals without adult supervision. A grown man who copulated with an animal was doubly transgressive because his behaviour was perceived as childlike.[129] Rydström argues that a similar discourse was present in late nineteenth/early twentieth century rural Sweden: local communities and police forces identified a lack of normative sexual outlets, influence from peers, and misinformation regarding sexual norms as common factors which led boys and young men to copulate with animals. When older men with higher social standing committed such acts, they were punished more harshly than younger men by courts because they were expected to know better.[130] A similar dynamic might have influenced the Chichester consistory court's initial willingness to seriously entertain the charges against Frogbrook. The fact that he was an adult with some degree of social standing in 1520 meant that the accusation against him was regarded as more serious and hence worthy of litigation than if he been a boy at the time; otherwise, the courts might have been inclined to dismiss the accusation as youthful indiscretion in spite of the broader clerical discourse on bestiality.

Summing up, the proceedings of *ex officio c. Frogbrook* were guided as much by individual grievance and exceptional circumstances as by the due process of canon law. I can only guess as to whether Thomas Frogbrook really did have intercourse with a cow on 2nd February 1518. The case against him is certainly problematic. Edward Lynfield was the only alleged eyewitness, and two of the three corroborating witnesses were his family and

---

[128] Thompson, 'The Bishop in His Diocese', 74–75.

[129] Liliequist, 'Peasants Against Nature', 413–18.

[130] Rydström, *Sinners and Citizens*, 59–67.

friends.[131] Although we lack the evidence to fully understand the relationship between Penfold and his deponents, we cannot discount the possibility that they were collaborating with him to fabricate the allegation against Frogbrook in pursuit of their own interests. On the other hand, assuming that the accusation was a complete invention on the part of Penfold and the witnesses, it is not clear as to their motivation for claiming that the act had occurred two years prior, rather than more recently. This discrepancy lends some credence to the notion that there was an element of truth to the accusation. Unfortunately, I have so far been unable to identify whether any visitations were made to the parish during this period which could have prompted the making of these charges, which would help to address this issue. In any case, whether the accusation was true or false, Emery Penfold, bitter over the defamation suit, exploited it by promoting the case to the Chichester consistory court with the aim of taking revenge against him. The court, driven by Sherborne's reform agenda, was receptive to the notion of *ex officio* litigation for a crime of sexual immorality which they would have previously regarded as inappropriate for such a forum. However, Penfold seriously misjudged the strength of communal support for Frogbrook and was forced to leave the parish in disgrace after he was acquitted. In the long run, Frogbrook suffered no ill effects over the trial: his will lists bequests to a daughter, one Anne White, and an unspecified number of godchildren, indicating that the accusation had not sufficiently damaged his standing in the community to prevent him being regarded as a suitable candidate for marriage or godparenthood.[132]

Ultimately, although *ex officio c. Frogbrook* has much to tell us about responses to bestiality in the ecclesiastical courts, we must be cautious about overgeneralising from a single case. Nevertheless, the paucity of evidence for litigation in spite of the strength of theological condemnation of bestiality remains a vexing problem. It seems necessary to conclude that courts and communities were largely turning a blind eye to human-animal intercourse. Perhaps, if Kinsey's reported statistics also reflect the situation in medieval England as much as the mid-twentieth-century USA, adolescent male sexual experimentation with animals was so widespread in agricultural communities as to be considered impossible to effectively police through the courts except in particularly egregious cases. Ubiquity may have also entailed familiarity: if bestiality was indeed a common experience of adolescence in these communities, then people may have been

---

[131] Henry Sopar's presence at John Lynfield's farm indicates that he was a friend of the family. There is, admittedly, less evidence to connect Peter a Wever to the other witnesses.

[132] Will of Thomas Frogbrook, WRSO.

disinclined to report such acts, regarding them as a relatively harmless act of youthful indiscretion. I have explored several specific factors at work in *ex officio c. Frogbrook* which explain why this case was pursued despite the broader trend towards tacit acceptance; a more general factor which I will now address is the changing zeitgeist concerning bestiality by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which entailed increasingly severe rhetoric around acts of human-animal intercourse and calls for stricter legislative responses.

Bestiality and the Common Law

In the previous sections, we explored social responses to bestiality through the lens of canon law as it pertained to the practice of confession and the operation of the Church courts. As we already noted, the prosecution of acts of human-animal intercourse in England fell solely under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as confirmed by *Circumspecte agatis*. This came to an end in 1534 through the passing of the Buggery Act (25 Hen. VIII, c. 6), which made bestiality a felony. Scholars conventionally regard the Buggery Act as a significant turning point in the legal status of bestiality and other forms of unnatural vice, and one which marks the beginning of systematic legal persecution of unnatural intercourse in England.[133] However, little attempt has been made to examine the context of the Act within the broader history of English secular legal discourse on bestiality and the tensions between canon and common law jurisdictions which were becoming apparent towards the end of the Middle Ages and which Thomas Cromwell exploited during the Reformation Parliament.

This omission merits closer attention when one considers that England was relatively late in transferring cognisance of bestiality to the secular jurisdiction compared to other European societies. Under the Castilian *Siete Partidas* (*Seven-Part Code*) (c.1265), men or women who were found guilty of having copulated with an animal were to be executed.[134] In Sweden, the *Kristofers landslag* (*Country Law of Christopher*) (1442) secularised the offence as part of the national law code, although it had previously been a capital offence under regional laws.[135] Documentary evidence from France, Majorca, and Germany demonstrates that secular courts were prosecuting and executing people for the act of

---

[133] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 79; Linkinen, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture*, 302–3.

[134] Robert I. Burns, ed., *Las Siete Partidas*, trans. Samuel Parsons Scott, vol. V (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 1427.

[135] Ekholst, *A Punishment for Each Criminal*, 184–89.

bestiality from the late fourteenth century onwards.[136] However, the particularity of each country's legal system and the context of their historical development problematises such comparisons. For example, as Charles Donahue argues, regional differences in marriage practices resulted in significantly divergent patterns of marriage litigation in England and northern France and the Low Countries despite the courts operating under broadly the same system of canon law.[137] The distinctions between England and other regions in terms of secular jurisdiction were even more significant: whereas many continental societies operated under a system of civil law based on the Roman *Corpus iuris civilis*, England operated under the system of common law. Consequently, it is necessary to analyse the history of English secular legal responses to bestiality in the context of English common law.

Over two centuries before the passing of the Buggery Act, one legal commentator was already exploring the theoretical considerations of bringing bestiality under secular jurisdiction. The treatise *Fleta* survives in one complete copy (British Library, Cotton MS Julius B.viii), with a few passages also copied into Cotton MS Nero D.vi. It is a commentary on Bracton which summarised and glossed the dense legal theory of the original text into a more accessible format.[138] *Fleta* was not widely-read, nor did it have a significant impact on late medieval English legal practice beyond the extent to which it was consulted by the author of *Britton*, a much more popular commentary which was composed shortly after the completion of *Fleta*.[139] As the text's preface states that it 'might well be called Fleta because in Fleta it was written', Noël Denholm-Young argues that its author was Matthew de Scaccario, a yeoman of the royal household and lawyer who was imprisoned on charges of forgery in Fleet Prison in 1290, although the identification is not conclusive.[140] *Fleta*'s intended readers were stewards: the text's emphasis on legal procedure over theory and its integration of material from treatises on household management

---

[136] Henri Duplès-Agier, ed., *Registre Criminel Du Chatelet de Paris, Du 6 Septembre 1389 Au 18 Mai 1392*, vol. I (Paris: C.H. Lahure, 1861), 93–114, 184–89 and 556–67 and vol. II (Paris: C.H. Lahure, 1864), 264–74; Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 79; Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 17–31.

[137] Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages*, 598–632.

[138] For the background to Bracton, see chapter 3.

[139] Francis Morgan Nichols, ed., *Britton: The French Text Carefully Revised with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, trans. Francis Morgan Nichols, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865), xxvii.

[140] Noël Denholm-Young, 'Who Wrote "Fleta"?', *English Historical Review* 58, no. 229 (1943): 1–12.

suggests that it was designed to convey an understanding of the law as it pertained to the running of estates.[141]

In the second part of book I, *Fleta* outlined the procedure for the prosecution of various crimes. Chapter 35, ostensibly titled 'On arson' [*De combustione domorum*], also discussed various other acts which the author stated to be capital offences:

> If anyone in time of peace maliciously burn the house of another, through enmity or for the sake of spoil, and if he be convicted thereof, by appeal or without appeal, he should be punished with a capital sentence. Apostate Christians, sorcerers and the like should be drawn and burnt. Those who have connexion with Jews and Jewesses or are guilty of bestiality [*pecorantes*] or sodomy [*sodomitae*] shall be buried alive in the ground, provided they be taken in the act and convicted by lawful and open testimony. Traitors, who slay their lord or lady, or who lie with their lords' wives or daughters or with the nurses of their lords' children, or forge their lords' seals, or who administer poison secretly to anyone whereof he dies, and are convicted thereof, shall be drawn and hanged, and, if they be women, they shall be burnt.[142]

Although this passage faithfully quoted Bracton's account of the appeal for the felony of arson, the remainder of the text, beginning with the reference to apostates and sorcerers, was an amalgamation of inaccurate references to other passages in Bracton and the author's own invention.[143] Apostasy was a capital offence, but *Fleta* omitted the procedure that the offender be first convicted in the Church courts and then handed over to the secular arm to be burnt.[144] Homicide and the forging of seals were capital crimes, but Bracton made no distinction regarding the status of perpetrator and victim.[145] Bracton made no mention of

---

[141] Ibid., 3–4.

[142] *Si quis aedes alienas nequiter ob inimicitiam vel praedae causa tempore pacis combusserit, et inde convictus fuerit per appellum vel sine, capitali debet sententiam puniri. Christiani autem Apostatae, Sortilegii et hujusmodi detractari debent et comburi. Contrahentes vero cum Iudeis vel Iudeabus, pecorantes et sodomitae in terra viui confodiantur, dum tamen manu opere capti, per testimonium legale vel publice conuicti. Traditores autem qui dominum dominamve interfecerint, vel qui cum uxoribus dominorum suorum vel filiabus, vel nutricibus dominorum concubuerint, vel sigilla dominorum suorum falsaverint, vel qui alicui occulte venenum praebuerint unde expiravit, et inde convincantur, detractentur et suspendentur, et si mulieres fuerint, concremantur.* Richardson and Sayles, *Fleta*, II: 90.

[143] Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, II:414.

[144] Ibid., 349.

[145] Ibid., 337 and 340.

intercourse between Christians and Jews, sorcery, bestiality, sodomy or adultery as felonies. *Fleta* brought these disparate acts together under the same heading because they all significantly disrupted the social and economic order. Arson undermined one of the most fundamental principle of ordered society through the destruction of others' property, just as forgery of seals eroded the collective trust which formed the basis for all legal agreements. Servants who killed or cuckolded their masters made a mockery of the proper hierarchy of relations. Apostasy, sorcery and relations with Jews threatened the unity of the Christian community, and bestiality and sodomy subverted the institution of Christian marriage and normative gender relations between men and women. Carolyn Dinshaw proposes the phenomenon of 'murder-sodomy-simony-leprosy-heresy clustering', in which polemicists grouped together accusations of acts which undermined the cohesion of Christian society as a means of marking political and religious opponents as deviant.[146] In a similar manner, 'On arson' was a manifestation of anxieties concerning threats to normative social and economic systems, which played to the fears of an author and readership who, by virtue of their position were deeply invested in maintaining the stability of these systems.

Fleta's equation of Christian-Jewish relationships with bestiality drew on a sordid tradition of antisemitic discourse. Marriages between Christians and Jews were forbidden under canon law, and were penalised with excommunication unless the Jewish spouse promised to accept baptism.[147] As James Brundage argues, the prohibitions on intermarriage drew on anxieties around ritual impurity and the spiritual pollution of Christians through intimate contact.[148] These anxieties had fatal consequences: Bracton recalled an occasion at a Council of Oxford in 1222 held by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury when 'a certain deacon who apostatized for the sake of a Jewess and who, when he had been degraded by the bishop, was forthwith committed to the flames by the lay arm'.[149] Jews in England were subject to increasingly harsh surveillance and persecution

---

[146] Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 63.

[147] James A. Brundage, 'Intermarriage between Christians and Jews in Medieval Canon Law', *Jewish History* 3, no. 1 (1988): 28.

[148] Ibid., 31–32.

[149] *Quodam diacono qui se apostatavit pro quadam Iudea, qui cum esset per episcopum degradatus statim fuit igni traditus per manum laicalem*. Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, II:349. William Maitland discusses the other documentary evidence for this case in: Frederic William Maitland, *The Collected Papers of Frederic William Maitland*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 385–406.

over the course of the thirteenth century, culminating with the Edict of Expulsion under Edward I in 1290.[150] To the author of Fleta, Christian-Jewish relationships and human-animal intercourse were deviant sexual acts which threatened the order of normative sexual behaviour.

Fleta also engaged in an act of linguistic creation in order to define and condemn bestiality. *Pecorantes*, the word used to describe those who have intercourse with animals, has no precedent in classical Latin, nor is there evidence of its use in any other medieval text. The *DMLBS* reconstructs a persuasive, though speculative, etymology for the word: *pecorantes* is a verbal noun derived from the theoretical verb *pecorare*, i.e. 'to have intercourse with an animal', in turn derived from the (non-theoretical) noun *pecus*, i.e. 'beast, animal'.[151] It may also be a play on the verb *peccare*, 'to sin'. The word *pecorantes* also parallels the other category named alongside it in the text, *sodomitae*, i.e. the plural of *sodomita*, 'Sodomite, one who commits sodomy'.[152] This etymological parallel reveals the ideological intent behind *Fleta*'s invention of the *pecorantes*: naming the crime and the criminal enabled their effective detection and legal persecution. As Mark Jordan argues, when Peter Damian invented the term *sodomia*, he was drawing on an already extensive tradition of Christian theologians coining proper nouns to categorise and discredit heterodox beliefs and practices.[153] Another historical parallel can be found in Sweden: Rydström connects the coinage of words for the act of bestiality (*tidelag*) and for the perpetrator of bestiality (*tidelagare*) in Swedish to the country's much more extensive tradition of legislation against human-animal intercourse than in its Scandinavian neighbours, whose languages have no comparable terminology.[154] In this way, *Fleta*'s act of naming should be read as an attempt to make identifiable and hence punishable the act of bestiality.

According to *Fleta*, the punishment for those found guilty of bestiality was vivisepulture, i.e. burial while still alive. Although immolation, i.e. death by burning, tended to be the more common method of execution for the offence in other European countries

---

[150] Geraldine Heng, 'England's Dead Boys: Telling Tales of Christian-Jewish Relations Before and After the First European Explusion of the Jews', *MLN* 127, no. 5 (2012): 54–58; Kathy Lavezzo, *The Accomodated Jew: English Antisemitism from Bede to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 64–99.

[151] *DMLBS*, s.v. "pecorare".

[152] Ibid., s.v. "sodomita".

[153] Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, 29–44.

[154] Rydström, *Sinners and Citizens*, 33.

during the later Middle Ages, vivisepulture was prescribed in several regions, such as in Sweden. Christina Ekholst argues that in the specific context of Swedish law, death by burial was a gendered punishment which was usually reserved for female criminals. There, the symbolic function of burying men who had intercourse with animals was to emphasise that they had forfeited their masculinity through committing such an act, thereby feminising them in death.[155] In *Fleta*, the associations of vivisepulture were not strongly gendered, but rather drew from an older theological discourse on bestiality. The punishment for *pecorantes* echoed Thomas Chobham's guidance on the destruction of the remains of animals who had been used for intercourse, which were to be burnt or destroyed so that 'the memory of the crime could not be excited again by [the beast], and [it] could not pass into human uses'.[156] Execution by burial or burning removed the remains of the offender from public view, thus ensuring the erasure of the community's memory of the offender. Given *Fleta*'s concern with bestiality as a socially-disruptive act, the method of execution becomes legible as a means of containment.

Fleta did not outline any judicial process by which one could be indicted or convicted of bestiality. No such process ever existed in England during the Middle Ages. Given the author's familiarity with Bracton, they may have had the fate of the unfortunate deacon in mind when imagining the practical matter of how *pecorantes* would be 'convicted by lawful and open testimony'. The process of the Church handing individuals convicted in the ecclesiastical courts to the secular arm for punishment was already established by the time of *Fleta* and would become more widely deployed against heresy during the fifteenth century. Henry IV's statute *Contra lollardos* (1401), enacted at the request of the English clergy, required bishops to hand over relapsed or obdurate heretics convicted in the ecclesiastical courts to the secular authorities, by whose hand they were to be executed through immolation.[157] One fifteenth-century manuscript copy of *Britton*, the more widely-read successor to Fleta, suggested that the mechanism of handing over to the secular arm should also be used for the punishment of sodomites, although this text did not explicitly discuss bestiality:

> The inquisitors of the Holy Church shall make their inquests of sorcerers,
> sodomites, apostates, and heathens, and if they find any such, they shall deliver him

---

[155] Ekholst, *A Punishment for Each Criminal*, 187–89.

[156] *Ne per ipsum memoria criminis refricetur et ne ipsum in usus transeat humanos*. Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, 402.

[157] 2 Hen. IV, c. 15.

to the king's court to be put to death. And if the king by inquest finds any such persons guilty of such horrible sin, he may put them to death, as a good marshal of Christianity.[158]

The author of *Fleta* may have conceived of the same judicial process being applied to the offence of bestiality, although this was not proposed in the text itself.

In the long run, *Fleta* had only a limited influence on the development of late medieval legal discourse on bestiality and the treatise's understanding of judicial responses to human-animal intercourse bore little relation to actual practice. However, close reading of the text indicates that the idea of bestiality as a threat to social cohesion which ought to fall under secular jurisdiction was conceivable to legal commentators long before the large-scale transfer of responsibility from the ecclesiastical courts during the Henrician Reformation.

On 17th January 1534, at the beginning of the fifth session of the so-called 'Reformation Parliament' that had been sitting since 1529, the Judges of the King's Bench put forward a memorandum before the House of Lords calling for the abolition of the benefit of the clergy for clerics who had 'perpetrated diverse abominable crimes deserving of death' [*diversa scelera detestabilia* [...] *morte digni perpetratra*] and who were protected from punishment under the king's law.[159] The memorandum emphasised that under the proposed changes, anyone 'who commits sodomy will suffer capital punishment' [*qui Sodomiam committit, penam Capitis permittel*].[160] Two days later, the Bill concerning the execution of 'perpetrators of sodomy' [*pertetrantem Sodomiam*] was put forward before the Lords and was read for the first time.[161] After a second and third reading in the Lords, the Solicitor General and the Clerk of the Crown carried the engrossed Bill to the House of Commons on the 22nd January, and on 7th February it was passed.[162] The 'Act for the Punishment of the Vice of Buggery' was broader in scope than what had originally been proposed in the judges' memorandum, criminalising all acts of sodomy or bestiality, though

---

[158] *Les enquerours de seynte Eglise ferunt lui enqestes de sorciers, sodomites, renoiez, et mescreans. E si il troeuunt nul tiel si le deliurent a la court li Roy pur mettre a la mort. E si le Roy neqedent troeuvre nuls tiels par enqueste culpabler de tiel peche si horible si les peut il mettre a la mort come bon Mareschal de la Chrestienete.* Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, MS Dd.vii.6, f.94v.

[159] *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. I (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1767), 59.

[160] Ibid., 59.

[161] Ibid., 60.

[162] Ibid., 60–65.

the text of the statute reflected many of the grievances which had been aired on the 17th January:

> For asmuch as there is not yet sufficient and condign Punishment appointed and limited by the due Course of the Laws of this Realm, for the detestable and abominable Vice of Buggery committed with Mankind or Beast: it may therefore please the King's Highness, with the Assent of his Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons, of this present Parliament assembled, that it may be enacted by Authority of the same, That the same Offence be from henceforth adjudged Felony, and such Order and Form of Process therein to be used against the Offenders as in Cases of Felony at the Common Law; and that the Offenders being hereof convict by Verdict Confession or Outlawry, shall suffer such Pains of Death, and Losses and Penalties of their Goods Chattels Debts Lands Tenements and Hereditaments, as Felons be accustomed to do, according to the Order of the Common Laws of this Realm; and that no Person offending in any such Offence shall be admitted to his Clergy; and that Justices of the Peace shall have Power and Authority, within the Limits of their Commissions and Jurisdiction, to hear and determine the said Offence, as they do use to do in Cases of other Felonies.[163]

As well as making bestiality and other forms of unnatural intercourse cognisable under common law, the Act also stripped the ecclesiastical courts of any claim to jurisdiction over the offence. An anonymous treatise composed after the passing of the Act outlined the implications of the legislation on the Church courts: 'the clergy may theryn take no examinations for the cryme [designated by the text as 'sins against nature' [*peccata contra naturam*]] ffor if they shold their processe and sentence therafftor myght blynde the treuthe vpon the triall of the ffelonye at the kynge lawe'.[164] This moment marked the first substantial shift in the legal status of bestiality in England since the early Middle Ages.

The passing of the Buggery Act was influenced by two broader historical processes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The first was the growth of discourse concerning the role of the monarch in moral reform. We can see the beginnings of this idea in the text of CUL MS Dd.vii.6, which declared that the king had a responsibility to ensure the execution of sodomites in his capacity 'as a good marshal of Christianity' [*come bon Mareschal*

---

[163] 25 Hen. VIII, c. 6.

[164] British Library, London, Cotton MS Cleopatra F.II, f.251v.

de la Chrestienete].[165] As Jeremy Goldberg and Martin Ingram both argue, the rhetoric of sexual reformation resonated with Yorkist and Tudor kings, who manipulated their public image in order to garner support from urban communities.[166] For example, Richard III issued the 'Proclamation for the Reform of Morals', which castigated the members of the Duke of Buckingham's rebellion as 'orible Adultres and Bawdes'.[167] In this way, Richard linked the suppression of political disorder with the repression of sexual immorality and fashioned his own image as a defender of virtue. As we saw in chapter 2, civic moral reform had been an increasingly powerful force in English towns and cities throughout the fifteenth century; monarchs were wise to portray themselves as in alignment with their urban subjects' civic values. Consequently, the growing role of the king, and by extension the system of common law which derived its legitimacy from his authority, in the enforcement of sexual morality laid the foundations for the judges in Parliament to argue the case for bringing litigation against bestiality under secular jurisdiction.

The second major influence on the Buggery Act was growing discontent with the perceived jurisdictional overreach and abuses of the system of canon law. By the 1520s and 1530s, hard-line reformers and moderate critics alike were voicing open condemnations of the Church courts. Addressing Henry VIII in *A Supplication for the Beggars* (1529), Simon Fish argued that the Church had completely fettered the secular courts: 'so captyue are your lawes vnto theym that no man that they lyst to excommunicat may be admitted to sue any accion in any of your courtes. If eny man yn your sessions dare be so hardy to endyte a prest of eny suche cryme he hath or the yere go out suche a yoke of heresye leyd in his necke that it maketh him wisshe that he had not done it'.[168] Fish claimed that even the king was impotent against the ecclesiastical jurisidction, asking 'whate remedy: make lawes ageynst theim? I am yn doubt whether ye be able'.[169] In his own *Supplication* (1531), Robert Barnes questioned whether the Church courts were fit to adjudicate over matters of sexual immorality given the ubiquity of clerical incontinence:

> Who hathe geuyn you power to be iudges over bawdrie? Is bawdrye a spirituall
> cause? Dothe bawdrye belonge to spyrituall men? S. paul calleth yt the worke of the

---

[165] CUL MS Dd.vii.6, f.94v.

[166] Goldberg, 'Cherrylips, the Creed Play, and Conflict: York in the Age of Richard III', 29–42; Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, 232–38.

[167] Thomas Rymer, ed., *Foedera*, 3rd ed., vol. V pt.3 (The Hague: Joannem Neulme, 1741), 138.

[168] Simon Fish, *A Supplicacyon for the Beggers* (Antwerp: J. Grapheus, 1529), 8.

[169] Ibid., 8.

fleshe? And will you call yt a spirituall cause? It may well be spyrytuall of youre spryte but I am suer it is agenste the sprete of god. But by thys meanys haue you absolved a greate doubte whereat þe kynges grace and all hys noble lordes haue often mused: that ys, how yt came that there was so great wherdome and bawdrye amonge them that be called spirituall men? But now yt ys no wonder for bawdry ys a spirituall cause and belongeth onlye to the iudgement of bysshops.[170]

Of course, Fish and Barnes were extreme outliers; facing accusations of heresy and the risk of arrest, both had to flee abroad to publish their works. However, their complaints also represented more mainstream opinion. The common lawyer Christopher St. Germain sought to present himself as a less incendiary, mediating voice in the debate over ecclesiastical jurisdiction, though his *Treatise Concerning the Division Between the Spirituality and Temporality* (1532) presented harsh condemnations of the Church courts. St. Germain fiercely criticised *ex officio* procedure and how it could be exploited by malevolent individuals bringing false accusations against innocent persons.[171]

Criticisms of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction were also articulated in Parliament at this time. As Stanford Lehmberg notes, the Parliament of 1529-36 was driven by a strong feeling of resentment against the Church courts, and MPs regarded this session as an opportunity to tackle the problem of clerical abuses through the passing of new legislation.[172] In February 1532, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk wrote to William Benet, the English ambassador in Rome, informing him of 'the infenyte clamours of the temporaltye here in parliment agaynst the mysvsyng of the spirytuell Jurysdiction'.[173] MPs shared the opinions of critics such as Fish, Barnes and St. Germain in regarding *ex officio* cases as open to abuse, and in March of that same year they presented their grievances in writing before the king.[174] This ultimately laid the groundwork for the 1534 legislation. To a certain extent, the Buggery Act was the product of opportunism. As the 17th January memorandum indicates, the initial focus of the Judges of the King's Bench was on

---

[170] Robert Barnes, *A Supplicatyon Made by Robert Barnes* (Antwerp: S. Cock, 1531), f.13v.

[171] Christopher St. Germain, *A Treatise Concernynge the Diuision Betwene the Spirytualtie and Temporaltie* (London: Robert Redman, 1532), 16–17.

[172] Stanford E. Lehmberg, *The Reformation Parliament, 1529-1536* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1–7.

[173] Letters and Papers vol. V (2nd Jan-30th Apr, 1532), SP 1/69, f.121, State Papers Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, The National Archives, London, United Kingdom.

[174] Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: J. Johnson, 1809), 784.

individuals abusing the benefit of the clergy to avoid prosecution for felonies, with sodomy being an afterthought. Lehmberg argues that Thomas Cromwell may have supported the progress of the Act through parliament in order to give himself a new legal mechanism for prosecuting monks in preparation for the upcoming visitation of the monasteries, given that accusations of sodomy were a common feature of anti-monastic discourse by this period and a key rhetorical tool in Cromwell's campaign against the monasteries.[175] In this respect, bestiality and other forms of unnatural intercourse were more of a symbolic pretext for critics of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. However, regardless of the true intentions of the Act's supporters, recognition has to be given to the wording of the statute: as the text of the Act stated, prior to its enactment, 'there is not yet sufficient and condign Punishment appointed and limited by the due Course of the Laws of this Realm, for the detestable and abominable Vice of Buggery committed with Mankind or Beast'. Ultimately, the mechanisms of detection and punishment of bestiality under the Church courts were perceived as ineffective and requiring new measures under secular jurisdiction. In this way, the Buggery Act reflected a broader discourse of dissatisfaction with the system of canon law, and grew out of a genuine drive for the reform of sexual morality.

We must be cautious of overstating the material impact of the Buggery Act and the extent to which it changed the landscape of bestiality litigation. In the first instance, the Act was repealed and reinstated multiple times during the reigns of Henry's heirs. Further, as Erica Fudge demonstrates, the number of prosecutions under the act remained insignificant in the decades after its passing and did not increase substantially until after the sixteenth century.[176] Nevertheless, the Act marked a symbolic turning point in which bestiality passed from ecclesiastical to secular jurisdiction, and represented the culmination of an ongoing legal discourse which, as *Fleta* indicates, long predated the beginnings of the Henrician Reformation. Overall, there was a growing secular dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the Church's confessional and judicial responses to bestiality in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which was being increasingly regarded as an issue of public morality rather than private conscience. The Buggery Act was conceived as a response to this sense of dissatisfaction and theoretically served to bring the crime of human-animal intercourse under greater social control, although in practice this was not extensively achieved. A close reading of *Fleta* suggests that the desire to bring bestiality under the secular jurisdiction may have predated this period.

---

[175] Lehmberg, *The Reformation Parliament*, 185.

[176] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 115–42.

As I argued in chapter 2, from the second half of the fourteenth century there was a shift towards perceiving acts of 'unnatural' intercourse such as bestiality as a 'public crime', which could imperil the spiritual and physical safety of the community as well as the individual sinner. However, the Church was slow to respond to this ideological shift through its practices of confession and litigation in the ecclesiastical courts. This is because such mechanisms were never really intended for social control in the manner of Foucault's disciplinary institutions of modernity; rather, they primarily acted in the interests of community cohesion. The changing emphasis in the early 1500s, recognising the increasing societal demand to prosecute 'public crimes', allowed for cases to begin to enter the courts, such as that of Thomas Frogbrook, though these were still to a large extent governed by the circumstances of personal grudges and individual bishops' reforming agendas rather than systematic change. Growing dissatisfaction with ecclesiastical jurisdiction and a demand for secular institutions to deal more effectively with issues of moral reform led to bestiality being brought out of the Church's authority and under that of the state. This discourse did not originate out of the Henrician Reformation, although Protestant reformers did contribute to it. Rather, as has been established throughout this thesis, discourses of the reform of sexual morality were already developing by the fourteenth century. As the ideology of heteronormativity became more extensively articulated, forms of unnatural intercourse increasingly came under scrutiny.

5: "What beste is þat?"

Hybrids, Sex and Species

> Once in a village [Albert the Great] saw a cow give birth to a calf that was half
> human [*uitulum qui erat semi homo*]. When the villagers learned of this, they assumed
> that the shepherd had had sexual intercourse with the cow and therefore they
> wanted to burn him at the stake. However, Albert observed the planets and
> concluded that the monster [*monstrum*] had been generated by a special
> constellation, so the shepherd was freed.[1]

This anecdote was included in the analysis of foetal developmental irregularities in one of
the commentaries of *De secretis mulierum* (*On the Secrets of Women*). This late-thirteenth-
century treatise discussed a range of topics pertaining to gynaecology and obstetrics,
focusing on the biological process of reproduction. *De secretis mulierum* (henceforth *DSM*)
was one of the most widely circulated late medieval scientific texts, with 88 manuscript
copies and over 120 separate fifteenth- and sixteenth-century printed editions identified to
date.[2] Multiple commentaries were produced and circulated alongside the original text; the
passage cited above was included in commentaries from at least as early as 1374, a
recension which Helen Lemay designates 'Commentary B'.[3] Although *DSM* was attributed
to Albert the Great in the premodern era, the modern scholarly consensus holds that it was
not written by Albert himself but rather someone in his circle with the same kind of

---

[1] *Semel uidit in una uilla uaccam generasse uitulum qui erat semi homo. Cum ipsi rustici uidentes putauerunt
pastorem habuisse coitus cum vacca et ita uoluerunt ipsum combere. Sed tunc Albertus superueniens considerauit per
aspectus planetarum quod illud monstrum sic erat generatum ex speciali constellatione et sic pastor fuit liberatus.*
Pseudo-Albert the Great, *De Secretis Mulierum Cum Commento* [Commentary B], ed. Lucas Panaetius
(Venice: Petri Bergomatis, 1508), unpaginated. Translation from: Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Women's
Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' 'De Secretis Mulierum' with Commentaries*, trans. Helen
Rodnite Lemay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 116.

[2] For a full list of these manuscripts and early editions, see Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *El De Secretis
Mulierum, Atribuido a Alberto Magno. Estudio Edición CrÍtica y Traduccion*, ed. José Pablo Barragán Nieto
(Porto: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2012), 535–48.

[3] See e.g. Wellcome Library, MS 11, f.42v. Lemay, *Women's Secrets*, 2. In fact, Lemay's taxonomy is
oversimplified. José Pablo Barragán Nieto has identified five distinct recensions, and Monica Green
counts at least seven. However, as much of the scholarship on *DSM* continues to use Lemay's
classificatory schema when discussing the commentaries, I will also use these labels.

Scholastic intellectual training, perhaps one of his students.[4] The evidence for this identification lies in the author's address to his 'brothers' [*fratres*] as readers of the text and his extensive use of technical concepts from the works of Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd.[5]

The attribution to Albert was first made in the recension designated 'Commentary A' by Lemay, whose earliest extant manuscript copy dates to 1353.[6] The author of the original text stated that he wrote the work at the request of an unidentified 'companion and friend in Christ' [*in Christo socio et amico*] who wanted to 'bring to light certain hidden, secret things about the nature of women' [*quedam vobis de hiis que apud mulierum naturam et condiciones occulta et secreta sunt manifestarem*].[7] Commentary A expanded on this sparse rationale, stating that 'a certain priest' [*quidam sacerdos*] had requested that Albert compose this treatise while he was residing in Paris.[8] This priest wished to learn the 'secrets of women' [*secretis mulierum*] firstly on account of his 'natural appetite' [*appetitu naturali*] for knowledge, 'for men naturally desire to know' [*unde homines natura scire desiderant*], and also for pragmatic reasons, fearing the power of women to infect others with their venom and therefore wishing to know more about their physiology.[9] Evidently, men were the intended readership for *DSM* and its commentaries. The text addressed a male reader, and according to some recensions he was also assumed to have pastoral responsibilities: Commentary A advised that the reader might find the treatise useful for curing the infirmities of women and to aid in the hearing of their confession.[10] Women were excluded from the work's community of readers, as they were constructed as passive subjects of study and could not actively participate in the creation and circulation of knowledge about their bodies. Contemporary critics exploited this exclusion in their condemnations of the work. Christine de Pisan argued that the author forbade women from reading the text "for fear that if they did, they would pour scorn on it and would recognise it for the utter rubbish that it is".[11] This was because "any

---

[4] Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*, 209.

[5] Pseudo-Albert, *DSM* [base text], 528.

[6] Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*, 218.

[7] Lemay, *Women's Secrets*, 59.

[8] Pseudo-Albert the Great, *De Secretis Mulierum* [Commentary A] (Lyons: Ioannes Quadratus, 1580), 5–6.

[9] Ibid., 7.

[10] Ibid., 5.

[11] *Se elles le lisoyent ou ouoyent lire, que bien savoyent que bourdes sont, se le contrediroyent et s'en moqueroyent.* Maureen Cheney Curnow, 'The *Livre de la Cité des Dames* of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition'

woman who reads it can see that, since certain things it says are the complete opposite of her own experience, she can safely assume that the rest of the book is equally unreliable".[12] Christine drew the same conclusion as modern scholars of the text: *DSM* was an exemplary model of the late medieval tradition of medical misogyny, which constructed the female body as an impure and polluting threat.[13]

 DSM's intention to court an exclusively male community of readers also supported its broader ideological aims. As Karma Lochrie and Katharine Park argue, Pseudo-Albert's construction of gynaecological information as 'secrets' [*secreta*] drew on gendered and classed epistemologies.[14] In Scholastic discourse, *secreta* denoted knowledge that was gained through practical experience and transmitted orally between practitioners, and was contrasted with *scientia*, knowledge that was deduced through reason from theory and textual authority. *Secreta* was associated with those who lacked access to Latin texts and education such as women and labourers, whereas *scientia* was the domain of the intellectual. In repackaging the text's corpus of gynaecological knowledge as *secreta*, Pseudo-Albert was engaging in an act of marketing: having represented information about female bodies as having originally been constructed by and transmitted between women, he was now offering the male reader privileged access to this sphere of knowledge from which he had been formerly excluded. Moreover, by synthesising gynaecological *secreta* with Scholastic *scientia*, Pseudo-Albert claimed male ownership over this female body of knowledge. Rendering it in Aristotelian theories and terminology legitimised it as a scholarly field of study.[15] This accords with the broader history of medicine in this period. Monica Green demonstrates that by the late thirteenth century, university-educated men were increasingly taking over the practice of women's medicine from female practitioners, bringing with them an infusion of material from Aristotelian and Galenic sources.[16] At the same time, as she argues, the focus of academic texts on gynaecology shifted from curing women's

---

(PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1975), bk. 1 ch.9. Translation from: Christine de Pisan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Rosalind Brown (London: Penguin, 1999).

[12] *Les femmes pueent clerement par espreuve savoir que aucunes choses que il touche ne sont mie vrayes, ains pures bourdes, pueent elles conclure que les autres particularités dont il traitte sont droittes mençonge*. Ibid., bk.1 ch.9.

[13] Sarah Alison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 55–89.

[14] Lochrie, *Covert Operations*, 118–31; Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (New York: Zone Books, 2006), 77–120.

[15] Park, *Secrets of Women*, 83–91.

[16] Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*, 70–117.

diseases more generally to matters of fertility and reproduction, i.e. issues of greater concern to husbands wishing to ensure the successful conception of heirs.[17] Consequently, the discourse of *secreta* in *DSM* served to legitimise gynaecology as a male sphere of knowledge and privilege Latinate men as the foremost authorities on women's bodies.

Knowing this historical context enables us to unpack the ideological work done by the story of the 'calf that was half human' [*uitulum qui erat semi homo*]. Firstly, it supported the text's theoretical discussion of the principles of generation by providing a practical example of how errors could occur in this process. In this respect, *DSM* was grounded in the fundamental principle of Scholastic natural science: the bodies of humans and non-human animals operated under the same biological processes, and therefore the same errors of generation could affect an animal or a human embryo. Secondly, it reinforced the epistemological narrative of the treatise. This story demonstrates the superiority of academic *scientia* informed by Scholastic theory for explaining the causes of enigmatic phenomena. The true nature of the calf is perceived through Albert's knowledge of physics; it is not, as the uneducated villagers [*rustici*] mistakenly believe, a true hybrid of human and cow, but merely has the appearance of being one. Lastly, it indicates broader cultural anxieties concerning the instability of categories of human and non-human as embodied in the figure of this half-human half-cow 'monster' [*monstrum*], which the text seeks to resolve through reason by way of Scholastic science. In this way, this brief anecdote introduces the key themes and concerns of this final chapter.

The subjects of this chapter are creatures like the calf encountered by Albert: living beings which appear to be the product of inter-species intercourse. Medieval authors had many ways of naming such creatures, with 'monster' [*monstrum*] being the most common term. The same usage transferred over into vernacular works, such as the account of the birth of the Minotaur in William Caxton's 1481 translation of *Ovide moralisé*: 'and thus conceyued Pasyphe of þe bulle. And when tyme cam that she sholde be delyuerd, she was delyuerd of a monstre whiche was half man and half bulle'.[18] However, this word conveyed much linguistic ambiguity, creating problems for its use in modern critical analysis. *Monstrum* and its vernacular counterparts could also describe any kind of living being, human or non-human, whose body deviated from the norm for its species, with no implication of hybridisation. Hence, in Caxton's 1480 translation of Gautier de Metz's

---

[17] Ibid., 204–45.

[18] Richard J. Moll, ed., *The Booke of Ovyde Named Methamorphose*, trans. William Caxton (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2013), 261.

encyclopaedia *Image du monde*, 'men see of somme beestis of whiche somme haue two heedes and vj feet or it hath a membre lasse [less] than he ought to haue of whiche he abydeth [exists] without veray [true] fourme naturell and may be called therfor a monstre'.[19] In some texts, *monstrum* could also designate an entire species of animal or a people [*gens*] who derived their epistemological state of monstrosity not from hybridisation but through other factors including their unusual size or behaviour, such as the 'monstrous humans of the East' [*monstruosis hominibus orientis*] or the sea monsters [*monstra marina*] in Thomas of Cantimpré's *Liber de rerum natura* (c.1240).[20]

Medieval authors recognised a meaningful distinction between these two kinds of monster. As Isidore of Seville wrote in the *Etymologies* (c.621-36), 'just as, in individual nations, there are instances of monstrous people, so in the whole of humankind there are certain monstrous races'.[21] When analysing the phenomenon of cross-species hybridisation, some authors clarified that they were discussing living beings which resembled their parents 'not in species, but only in genus of animal' [*non ad speciem, sed ad genus tantum animalis*] or were 'of another species' [*alterius speciei*] from their parents, in order to distinguish their subjects from other kinds of monster.[22] Other texts eschewed the specific terminology of monstrosity and simply described hybrids in terms of their mixed parentage and physical characteristics. For instance, Gerald of Wales reported two Irish hybrids in the *Topographica Hibernica* (1188): one 'man-calf' [*vitulum virilem*] born 'from coitus of man with cow' [*ex coitu viri cum vacca*] in the mountains near Glendalough, and a man living near Wicklow who 'had namely an entirely human body except for the extremities, which were that of an ox'

---

[19] Gautier de Metz, *Mirrour of the World*, ed. Oliver H. Prior, trans. William Caxton, EETS ES 110 (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1913), 44.

[20] Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de Natura Rerum: Editio Princeps Secundum Codices Manuscriptos*, ed. Helmut Boese, vol. I (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 97–100 and 232–49.

[21] *Sicut autem in singulis gentibus quaedam monstra sunt hominum, ita in universo genere humano quaedam monstra sunt gentium.* Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarvm Sive Originvm Libri XX*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), XI.iii.12. Translation from: Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, and J.A. Beach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[22] Albert, *De animalibus*, 16.46; Nicole Oresme, *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: A Study of His 'De Causis Mirabilium' with Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Bert Hansen (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985), 3.495.

[*habebat enim totum corpus humanum praeter extremitates, quae bovinae fuerant*].[23] Likewise, in his subsequent work *Itinerarium Cambriae* (1191), he related that in Chester, 'a dog, impregnated by an ape, at last produced puppies, appearing ape-like in the front parts, however becoming a dog towards the rear parts'.[24] The words 'hybrid' [*hybrida*] and *bigener* were also used by some authors such as Isidore and Thomas, although these appeared in far fewer texts than other terms.[25] The basic axiom of my analysis is that medieval authors had a stable epistemological category of a creature that is generated from the intercourse of parents from two separate species, even if they were not always consistent in the language used to describe it. Consequently, in this chapter I will mainly use 'hybrid' except when directly quoting the sources, as this term signifies the concept of inter-species mixing with less ambiguity than alternatives such as 'monster'. However, I recognise the semantic malleability with which medieval authors and modern critics have used the terms 'hybrid' and 'monster', and that this requires me to be flexible in my own approach.

In 1936, when J.R.R. Tolkien argued that the monsters of *Beowulf* 'are not an inexplicable blunder of taste; they are essential, fundamentally allied to the underlying ideas of the poem', such a statement was revolutionary.[26] Today, the notion of scholars taking seriously the ideological and discursive function of the monster is no longer so contentious. Jeffrey Cohen's pioneering essay 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)' established a theoretical framework for the cultural analysis of monsters that would go on to influence much of the work in the field of monster studies from the mid-1990s onwards.[27] Cohen's propositions are straightforward: monsters bear symbolic meaning, which can be adapted to fit new cultural contexts; they destabilise epistemological categories, yet their presence in texts serve to discursively reinforce normative values and ideologies; all kinds of alterity can be inscribed on their bodies; and yet simultaneously, monsters have a potentially liberatory

---

[23] Gerald of Wales, 'Topographia Hibernica', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. James F. Dimock, vol. V, Rolls Series 21 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1867), 108–9.

[24] *Canem, ex simia praegnantem, catulos tandem produxisse, parte anteriore tota simiam praeferentes, in canem vero versus posteriora descendentes.* Gerald of Wales, 'Itinerarium Kambriae', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. James F. Dimock, vol. VI, Rolls Series 21 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1868), 28.

[25] Isidore, *Etymologies*, XII.i.56; Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de Natura Rerum*, 138.

[26] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics, and Other Essays* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 19.

[27] Asa Mittman's chapter places Cohen's 'Monster Culture' within the context of the longer history of monster studies and assesses its ongoing impact on the field. Asa Simon Mittman, 'Introduction: The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies', in *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 1–14.

function through encoding unspeakable desires or as a means for marginalised people to express their experiences of marginalisation.[28]

Medievalists have productively applied this theoretical approach to exploring themes of identity in the Middle Ages. Drawing on the work of Edward Said, scholars of medieval race find that depictions of the monstrous races possessed an orientalising function in western European texts, ascribing monstrosity to racial and religious difference and calling into question the humanity of peoples living outside the boundaries of Christendom.[29] Cohen combines monster theory with the concept of hybridity, that is the internal conflict between competing cultural identities within the mentality of the coloniser and colonised subject, theorised by postcolonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha, in order to analyse the fluidity of national identity in the historical writings of early and high medieval British authors.[30] Cohen reads Gerald of Wales's accounts of Irish and Welsh hybrids as a projection of his conflicted relationship with his own mixed Marcher (Welsh/Anglo-Norman) heritage, a reading which has also been advanced by Asa Mittman.[31] Moving from race and nationality to gender and sexuality, Sarah Miller argues that depictions of the female body as monstrously permeable and corrupting contributed to the late medieval patriarchal discourse of the spiritual and biological inferiority of women.[32] Dana Oswald explores the discursive role of monsters in Old and Middle English texts in policing the boundaries of normative masculinity and femininity.[33] Recent work influenced by the field of disability studies also explores medieval representations of physical and mental

---

[28] Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', 3–25.

[29] See e.g. Sarah Salih, 'Idols and Simulacra: Paganity, Hybridity and Representation in *Mandeville's Travels*', in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 113–34; Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages', in *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 365–86.

[30] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[31] Cohen, 76–108; Asa Simon Mittman, 'The Other Close at Hand: Gerald of Wales and the "Marvels of the West"', in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 97–112.

[32] Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body*, 11–89.

[33] Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Middle English Literature*.

impairment through the signifiers of monstrosity.[34] However, as Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills argue, medieval representations of monstrosity did not always reinforce normative ideology or serve to exclude, but could encode a positive desire for difference.[35] Mills finds that theological authors drew on metaphors of monstrosity in order to communicate metaphysical and affective messages about the nature of Christ.[36] Overall, it is evident that monstrosity is an indispensable analytical tool for examining ideology and identity in the Middle Ages.

From the perspective of this investigation, the existing literature has largely overlooked two important issues. In the first instance, more work needs to be done to historicise the hybrid. Most scholars to date have focused on what monsters signified, but few examine how medieval people responded to them as historical phenomena. Many medieval texts treated monsters as beings which the reader could conceivably encounter in their everyday lives and whose existence had pragmatic implications for the practice of law and pastoral care. For instance, Bracton stated that monsters were excluded from the legal definition of 'child', and hence were ineligible for inheritance: 'those born of unlawful intercourse, as out of adultery and the like, are not reckoned among children, nor those procreated perversely, against the way of human kind, as where a woman brings forth a monster or a prodigy'.[37] Likewise, John de Burgh offered guidance to parish priests wishing to know whether a monster which is 'half human and half puppy or another animal' [*medius homo et medius catulus vel ita de alijs bestiis*] could legitimately participate in the sacrament of baptism.[38] In this respect, John Friedman's work *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Thought and Art* -- misleadingly titled, as his focus is as much on individual monsters as the monstrous

---

[34] See e.g. Richard H. Godden and Asa Simon Mittman, eds., *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[35] Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 'Introduction: Conceptualizing the Monstrous', in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 1–27; Robert Mills, 'Monsters and Margins: Representing Difference', in *The History of British Art 600-1600*, ed. Tim Ayers (London and New Haven: Tate/Yale Center for British Art, 2008), 203–25.

[36] Robert Mills, 'Jesus as Monster', in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 28–54.

[37] *Item qui ex damnato coitu nascuntur inter liberos non computantur, sicut ex adulterio et huiusmodi. Item qui contra formam humani generis converso more procreantur, veluti si mulier monstruosum aut prodigiosum sit enixa.* Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, 31.

[38] de Burgh, *Pupilla Oculi*, f.7r.

races --more substantially analysed the legal, scientific and theological context of monsters than many of the subsequent theoretically-inflected studies.[39] Early modernists have also taken a more historicising approach to monsters than their medievalist colleagues, though this is in part on account of the wealth of popular printed accounts of monstrous births and specialist teratological texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for which there are few medieval parallels.[40] In this chapter, I historicise the hybrid by analysing how my texts present it as a natural being generated through the operation of physical processes, and not merely as a signifier for non-literal kinds of meaning.

In speaking of historicisation, I do not intend to rationalise medieval hybrids through recourse to modern science.[41] This is not to deny the potential value of such an approach: as Richard Godden and Asa Mittman argue, discourses of monstrosity can be productively read to link modern and premodern embodied experiences of disability.[42] However, my aim in this investigation is to locate hybrids within medieval theoretical frameworks, with their own sets of specialist terminology and concepts; to incorporate speculative diagnoses based on modern medicine would mean introducing an unnecessary and confusing additional layer of complexity. Bildhauer and Mills note that 'the "monsters" produced in the context of subject formation and identification are not purely cultural fantasies, but often real people too' and warn that scholars should 'remain aware of the ethical implications that arise from employing terminology like "freak" and "monster" (as

---

[39] John Friedman Block, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 59–86 and 178–96.

[40] For exemplary studies, see e.g. Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 173–214, which straddles the divide between late medieval and early modern, and David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For a sample of the early modern pamphlet literature on monstrous births, see Simon McKeown, ed., *Monstrous Births: An Illustrative Introduction to Teratology in Early Modern England* (London: Indelible Inc., 1991). Widely-studied sixteenth-century treatises on monsters include Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses* (Wellcome Library, MS 136) and Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et Prodiges*, ed. Jean Céard (Geneva: Droz, 1971).

[41] See e.g. Armand Marie Leroi, *Mutants: On the Form, Varieties and Errors of the Human Body* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 3-6. Leroi proposes that the monster of Ravenna (1512) may had Robert's syndrome, a genetic disorder which causes extensive and destructive mutations of the limbs and genitals.

[42] Richard H. Godden and Asa Simon Mittman, 'Embodied Difference: Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman', in *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World*, ed. Richard H. Godden and Asa Simon Mittman (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 3–31.

well as a host of adjectives like "deformed" and "misshapen"): these words retain their power to offend in certain contexts and as such remain problematic'.[43] These ethical considerations have troubled me throughout the process of researching this material and I feel that I have yet to fully resolve them. I offer two points by way of response. Firstly, I cite the language of monstrosity and deformity as the sources use it for the sake of close reading. Secondly, my texts discuss hybridity in abstraction using hypothetical examples, not identifiable individuals.

The second limitation of the scholarship on medieval monstrosity is that, despite the theme of how societies include or exclude individuals from the definition of humanity being central to the study of monsters, most scholars in this field have not substantially engaged with either medieval discourses of animality or the modern critical school of animal studies. Cohen is the main exception, drawing on the work of Cary Wolfe to explore how the politically dominant group in post-Conquest England (Anglo-Norman Christians) ascribed bestial behaviours and characteristics to subaltern groups (English, Irish, Welsh, Jews) in order to legitimise their subjugation.[44] Even so, his analysis does not critically examine the ideological construction of categories of human and non-human animal. This silence on the part of monster studies scholars is a missed opportunity: as I shall demonstrate, the hybrid provides new ways of engaging with medieval animality.

In my analysis of the medieval hybrid, I draw on the critical concept of species panic, developed within the fields of queer ecology and animal studies. Species panic, following Marjorie Garber's model of category crisis, describes cultural responses to manifestations of the instability of the category of species with a strong focus on the dichotomy of human and non-human animal.[45] Critical analysis reveals that the category of species is just as much a construct of ideology as scientific fact and that its definitions are

---

[43] Bildhauer and Mills, 'Conceptualizing the Monstrous', 20–21.

[44] Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain*, 38–41. Karl Steel has also engaged with the intersection of monstrosity and animality; however, he restricts his analysis to the monstrous races. Karl Steel, 'Centaurs, Satyrs, and Cynocephali: Medieval Scholarly Teratology and the Question of the Human', in *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 257–74.

[45] David Huebert, 'Species Panic: Human Continuums, Trans Andys, and Cyberotic Triangles in "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?"', *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (2015): 244. On Garber's original concept of category crisis, see Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 16.

constantly in flux. As David Huebert writes, 'species being is a lie we tell ourselves to hold our world together. It is a tentative, transitive category, and what we call a "species" exists only under the constant threat of extinction and change'.[46] In this respect, there are productive resonances between contemporary theory and medievalist scholarship. Recent work by Sophie Page, Joyce Salisbury, Carolynn Van Dyke, Steven Epstein and Susan Crane demonstrates medieval authors' interest in themes of taxonomic hybridity and the fluidity of species.[47] Species panic inevitably speaks to broader societal anxieties. As Harriet Ritvo argues, animal husbandry and eugenics were mutually constitutive discourses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: notions of inheritance, hybridisation, and zoological taxonomy in academic zoology and livestock breeding influenced the development of theories of racial difference in humans and the application of eugenic concepts to human populations.[48] In this way, the concept of species panic offers a productive theoretical lens for examining the intersection of species and ideologies of gender and sexuality in the Middle Ages.

Throughout this thesis, I have treated the categories of 'human' and 'non-human animal' as self-evidently distinct and immutable, following the same assumptions which governed my sources. Although the texts which I have been analysing identified traits common to both groups, such as the same set of appetites in service of a shared *telos* which was essential to the ideological construction of 'natural' sexual intercourse, this discourse was also fundamentally grounded in human exceptionalism. Only humans possessed rationality and hence free will, which granted them the capacity to exercise moderation in sex but also to commit unnatural acts against the 'natural' urges of their appetites; in this respect they were set apart from animals, who could be neither continent nor incontinent, nor could copulate unnaturally. In this final chapter, I intend to problematise this assumption by exploring representations of hybrids and how they troubled this fundamental dichotomy, and the implications of this for medieval ideologies of sexuality.

---

[46] Huebert, 'Species Panic', 257.

[47] Sophie Page, 'Good Creation and Demonic Illusions: The Medieval Universe of Creatures', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brigitte Resl (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 27–58; Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 121–45; Van Dyke, 'Names of the Beasts', 1–51; Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*, 40–77; Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 42–68.

[48] Harriet Ritvo, 'Barring the Cross: Miscegenation and Purity in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Human, All Too Human*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 37–57; Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, 85–130. See also McWhorter, 'Enemy of the Species', 73–101.

To do so, I will analyse three texts which respond in different ways to the ideological challenge posed by the hybrid and the intersection of sex and species. In the first section, I will be analysing the Scholastic treatise *De causis mirabilium*, Nicole Oresme's intellectual response to the concept of the hybrid. This text was grounded in Aristotelian theory and engaged with broader epistemological concerns regarding the category of species. In the second section, I will explore the overlap between discourses of demonology and hybridity and how species panic was deployed in response to anxieties concerning female sexuality in the didactic text *Dives and Pauper*. Finally, in the third section, I will explore how discourses of sex and species shape the central conflict in the Middle English romance *Cheuelere Assigne*.

The Hybrid in Nicole Oresme's *De causis mirabilium*

My first case study is a scientific treatise, *De causis mirabilium* (*On the Causes of Miracles*), written by the fourteenth-century Parisian philosopher Nicole Oresme. Oresme rose from humble origins to move in the highest circles of power over the course of his career until his death in 1382.[49] Born c.1320 in Normandy, Oresme studied at the University of Paris and obtained a master's degree in arts in 1341 or 1342. Initially teaching in the arts faculty, he later became master of theology in 1355 or 1356 and grand master of the college of Navarre in 1356. Around this time he established connections at the French royal court, serving first Jean II and, after 1364, Charles V, by whose patronage he was elevated to the bishopric of Lisieux in 1377. Much of his intellectual output was produced at the behest of his patrons, including original treatises on astronomy, mathematics and optics as well as translations of several of Aristotle's works from Latin into French along with commentaries, specifically his *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Economics*, *Politics*, and *De caelo*.

De causis mirabilium (henceforth *DCM*) was the product of Oresme's years of advanced academic study. *DCM* is a modern editorial title denoting the second section of a longer four-part work which scholars have called the *Quodlibeta*. The work was most likely

---

[49] Key biographical studies of Oresme and his works include: Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. III and IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 398–471; Edward Grant, 'Scientific Thought in Fourteenth-Century Paris: Jean Buridan and Nicole Oresme', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 314 (1978): 105–26; Bert Hansen, '*De causis mirabilium*: Study', in *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: A Study of His De Causis Mirabilium with Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Bert Hansen (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1985), 3–26; Stefano Caroti, 'Oresme, Nicole', in *Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008).

completed in 1370 as indicated by the date given in the conclusion to its first part, the *Questio contra divinatores*. Some, however, have argued that it must have been produced at an earlier stage in Oresme's career on the grounds that his treatment of certain topics appears inconsistent with the development of his scientific thought in later decades.[50] The subject-matter of the *DCM* drew upon a diverse range of disciplines from medicine to physics. Its character was deeply Aristotelian, frequently citing Aristotle himself as well as his thirteenth-century interpreters Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. With the text surviving in only four known manuscript copies and never having been printed before the modern edition of 1985, *DCM* arguably cannot be called an 'influential' work.[51] Its impact on the wider cultural discourse of hybridity would therefore have been starkly limited, both within intellectual circles and beyond. However, *DCM* was representative of broader medieval Aristotelian responses to hybrids insofar as Oresme drew essentially the same conclusions as, for instance Albert the Great had done in his interpretations of Aristotle's writings on monsters. Oresme also explored both the Aristotelian theoretical underpinning and the social implications of this line of argument to a far greater extent than his predecessors. This combination of representativeness and originality makes *DCM* the ideal case study for this investigation.

Oresme outlined the primary goal of *DCM* in its prologue: 'to show the causes of some effects which seem to be marvels and to show that the effects occur naturally, as do the others at which we commonly do not marvel'.[52] Phenomena which were labelled as 'marvels' [*mirabilia*] on account of supposedly breaking the laws of nature were often simply misunderstood by observers, either as the result of errors of sensory perception or out of insufficient understanding of their physical causes. Oresme took as his watchword a proverb from Cato's *Distichs*: 'belief [should be] rare then, since many people say many things'.[53] He stated that even theologians were often too quick to attribute miraculous origins to phenomena and overlook more credible natural causes.[54] Rejecting Isidore's etymological premise that monsters derive their name because they show [*monstrare*] hidden meanings, which many later authors continued to follow, he argued instead that monsters

---

[50] Hansen, '*De causis mirabilium*: Study', 43–48.

[51] Ibid.*,* 123–29.

[52] *Aliquorum que mirabilia videntur causas proposui hic declare et quod naturaliter fiant sicut ceteri effectus de quibus communiter non miramur.* Oresme*, DCM,* P.3-5.

[53] *Rara fides ideo, quia multi multa loquuntur.* Ibid.*,* 3.351 and 3.351.

[54] Ibid.*,* 3.919.

need have no meaning at all.[55] The occurrence of a monstrous birth in a place does not signify that evil will come to pass, and that we interpret the former as a portent of the latter is on account of confirmation bias: we only remember the times when a monster was born and a disaster occurred, and we forget the times that a monster was born and nothing happened.[56] In bringing monsters from the realm of the supernatural to the natural, Oresme sought to fulfil his aim of demystifying miraculous events by demonstrating them to be the result of comprehensible natural processes.

Despite Oresme's stated intentions in *DCM*, some historians have interpreted a more complicated motivation lying behind his work. Edward Grant argues that Oresme's presentation of multiple causal explanations for phenomena was intended to demonstrate the limits of experience and natural reason as a means for achieving knowledge of the physical world.[57] By appropriating the methods of natural philosophy against itself, he was advocating for the primacy of knowledge revealed through scripture [*sapientia*] over knowledge gained through deduction [*scientia*]. Bert Hansen is sceptical of this stance, responding that Oresme's commitment to causal explanation and Aristotelian philosophy appeared to be genuinely-held, even while he acknowledged that true certainty could ultimately be achieved only through faith.[58] Furthermore, Oresme's stated intentions to refute credulous and commonplace beliefs concerning supernatural causation placed him firmly within a longer tradition of intellectual elitism in Scholasticism. As Stephen Epstein argues, Scholastic authors such as Thomas of Cantimpré and Albert the Great regarded non-academic sources of natural knowledge with contempt, dismissing individuals with practical experience of working with plants and animals as ignorant *rustici*.[59] This was a view which Oresme's student Henry of Langenstein had openly expressed in his *Lecturae super Genesim* (c.1386-c.1393).[60] In light of this broader context, I find it more convincing to read Oresme's statements of purpose at face value: he did genuinely intend to refute those who, in ignorance of Aristotelian physics, sought supernatural explanations for natural phenomena.

---

[55] Isidore, *Etymologies*, xi.iii.3; Oresme, *DCM*, 3.881-2.

[56] Oresme, *DCM*, 3.719-51.

[57] Grant, 'Scientific Thought in Fourteenth-Century Paris', 111–16.

[58] Hansen, '*De causis mirabilium*: Study', 96–101.

[59] Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*, 19–25.

[60] Nicholas H. Steneck, *Science and Creation in the Middle Ages: Henry of Langenstein (d.1397) on Genesis* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 117–20.

Oresme classified monstrous births as a specific kind of marvel involving the bodily faculty of 'generative power' [*virtus generative*]. He began by explaining how all types of deviation from the normative body could be produced during the process of reproduction, leaning heavily on Aristotle's account of embryology in *De generatione animalium*.[61] For a child to be generated correctly, several variables had to be taken into account: the seminal material [*materia*] had to be the right temperature and consistency; the 'plastic spirit' [*spiritus plasmativus*] which shapes the material into the form of an embryo had to be sufficiently strong; and the environmental conditions in the womb had to be sufficiently temperate. If any of these factors were lacking, then an 'imperfect human' [*homo imperfectus*] would be generated. Given the complexity of the process, he stated that it was more marvellous that such monsters were not generated more frequently.

For Oresme, different kinds of bodily 'monstrosity' [*monstruositas*] could be placed on a continuum of imperfection/incompleteness to perfection/completeness according to the degree of deviation in their process of generation.[62] Under ideal conditions with no errors, a 'well-formed male' [*pulcher vir*] would be born. If only certain variables deviated, then a woman or a 'deformed male' [*turpis homo*] would be born. The greater the degree of generative error, the greater the deviation from the normative body. This could manifest as individuals being born without arms, being 'without a well-formed head' [*sine capite pulchro*], or otherwise denoted as *claudus*, a generic description for different forms of physical disability.

Oresme conceded that a final category of non-normative body, the 'monsters of another species' [*monstra alterius speciei*], raised further difficulties necessitating explanation.[63] Examples given for this kind of monster included a horse generating a pig, or a human generating a cat. This type of 'error in species' [*error in specie*] was more marvellous because it seemingly broke a fundamental law of Aristotelian metaphysics, that like has to beget like. These monstrous births generated difficult questions: were such monsters truly 'of another species'? Did they constitute a new species, generated *de novo*? Or were they something else entirely? Oresme anticipated that some observers would perceive these monsters as being evidence that 'a male of one species had copulated with a female of another' [*masculus*

---

[61] Oresme, *DCM*, 3.459-479. c.f. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, ed. and trans. A.L. Peck, LCL 366 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942), 763b2-778a12.

[62] Oresme, *DCM*, 3.484-494.

[63] Ibid., 3.495.

alterius speciei cum femella alterius speciei coyerit].[64] As the hapless shepherd of *De secretis mulierum* illustrates, this explanation was attractive. It enabled the responsibility for monstrous birth to be assigned to an identifiable perpetrator, providing a potential target for retribution. However, this explanation ultimately derived from a fundamental misunderstanding of the natural faculty of generation. Instead, Oresme held that monstrous hybrids could be more readily understood as being generated by the same kinds of physical causes as any other form of monstrosity.

Oresme's use of the term 'species' requires clarification. Oresme's account of monstrosity was predicated on the taxonomic concept of 'species' as developed in Aristotle's writings on animals, particularly *Historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium* and *De generatione animalium*. According to Aristotle, individual organisms which resembled each other could be classified as a 'species' (Greek εἶδος, Latin *species*), and multiple similar species could be brought together as part of a proximate group, or 'genus' (Greek γένος, Latin *genus*). Two species within the same genus could be distinguished from each other by identifying a 'differentia' (Greek δῐᾰφορᾱ́, Latin *differentia*), the essential/substantial property which an individual must possess in order to be recognised as a member of a species, whereas individuals within a single species differ from each other in terms of 'accidental' properties (those characteristics which it does not need to possess).[65] Categories of species and genus also had a multiplicity of other functions within Aristotelian logic and metaphysics not directly related to the classification of living organisms. However, in Oresme's teratological discussion, these terms were deployed in a primarily zoological sense to denote distinct groups of individual animals.

Oresme was closely familiar with Aristotle's works on animals, citing them extensively by their combined medieval title *De animalibus* throughout his text. However, he would have encountered them not in the original Greek but in the Latin translation made by Michael Scot before 1220. Thus, for instance, Oresme used the Latin word *species* in place of the Greek εἶδος. Some of the philosophical nuances of Aristotle's original theorisation of 'species' are likely to have been lost in Oresme's discussion as a consequence of this process of intellectual transmission, an issue which Aafke M.I. van

---

[64] Ibid., 3.715.

[65] Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, ed. and trans. A.L. Peck, vol. I, LCL 437 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), 486a15-487a36; Aristotle, 'Parts of Animals', in *Parts of Animals. Movement of Animals. Progression of Animals*, ed. and trans. A.L. Peck and E.S. Forster, LCL 323 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1937), 642a5-644a10.

Oppenraay has identified more broadly within the medieval translations of *De animalibus*.[66] In this chapter I am privileging Oresme's interpretation of the Aristotelian category of 'species' over fidelity to a 'pure' form of Aristotle's thought; consequently, I default to using the Latin translations of Aristotelian concepts as used by Oresme over their original Greek forms.

Before explaining the embryological causes of monstrous hybridity, Oresme began by critiquing the premise that a monstrous hybrid merely possessing the appearance of a different species from that of its mother proved essential biological difference. He argued that 'not every variation in shape and colour is sufficient for concluding that [a monster] is of another species'.[67] Moreover, we do not necessarily have the means to know what degree of variation is sufficient to make such judgements and as a result we often falsely categorise an object, such as when we mistake copper for gold.[68] As was abundantly clear, it was not always possible to establish the differentiae necessary to distinguish one species from another. As he wrote:

> Among fully generated things as well, some species are related like wolf and dog; and, in fact, concerning some, there is even doubt whether they differ in species, for example, pygmies[69] and men or some others. Among brute animals, at least,

---

[66] Aafke M.I. van Oppenraay, 'Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation of Aristotle's "Books on Animals". Some Remarks Concerning the Relation Between the Translation and Its Arabic and Greek Sources', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 31–43.

[67] *Non queque diversitas in figura et colore suffict ad concludendum quod sit alterius speciei*. Oresme, *DCM*, 3.503.

[68] Ibid., 3.510.

[69] In the context of medieval Scholasticism, 'pygmy' denoted a kind of ape which resembled humans in appearance and possessed a likeness of some human behaviours, but which lacked rationality and other marks of human distinction such as the capacity for speech. While Oresme did not discuss the relationship between humans and pygmies at any length, Albert the Great had explored the status of the pygmy in relation to questions of human/animal classification in *De animalibus*. c.f. Albert, *De animalibus*, 22.11-14.

there are many species for which it is uncertain how they differ and whether only accidentally or essentially.[70]

Here, he posited a version of the 'species problem' which continues to trouble the study of zoology to the present day.[71] For us, this conundrum illustrates the ways in which 'species' as a concept is something of a (necessary) scientific fiction. For Oresme, the species problem demonstrated a degree of uncertainty in our ability to perceive the natural world rather than any inherent instability of the category of species: we cannot necessarily trust our own judgement when attempting to assess the species of a given monster based on physical appearance alone. Even if a monster differed from its mother in terms of accidental differences, this does not mean that its substantial form – its state of thing-ness – is different. A dog does not necessarily lose its inherent 'dog-ness' simply because it is not properly shaped like a dog. Oresme's analysis of the monstrous hybrid therefore did not represent a critique of the category of species as such, but rather of the human observer's ability to accurately perceive how such a monster *should* be classified.

In the case of 'human monsters' [*hominum monstris*], i.e. monsters born to human mothers, Oresme introduced an additional factor: reason [*ratio*] granted by the possession of a rational soul [*anima rationalis*]. In Scholastic thought, the capacity for reason was the key differentia which marked the human species as distinct from all other forms of living organism. As Anselm Oelze notes, whilst some medieval philosophers did explore conceptual 'grey areas' of cognition relating to non-human animals' possession of a likeness of certain aspects of human cognition for non-human animals, none crossed the line into attributing true rationality to non-humans.[72] This distinction was complicated by the existence of humans who were believed to lack the capacity for reason, predominantly those perceived as unable to communicate. Oresme compared examples of these individuals with others born with a greater degree of physical (though not cognitive) difference and argued that:

It always must be doubted whether a child or foetus be a human until it is seen whether it can use reason; and if not, it seems to me that it should be considered as

---

[70] *Etiam in generatis sunt alique species vicine ut species lupi et canis ymo et de aliquibus est dubium utrum differant in specie ut pigmei et homines vel aliqui alii. Saltim in brutis multe species sunt [de quibus] dubium est quomodo differant et utrum solum accidentaliter vel essentialiter*. Oresme, *DCM*, 3.530-34.

[71] Philip R. Sloan, 'The Species Problem and History', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 44, no. 2 (2013): 237–41.

[72] Oelze, *Animal Rationality*, 204–37.

not human in the cases posed, rather than in a case of having a different shape right at birth etc., because with respect to the nature of humans the greater monstrosity is a defect in the members of the senses and the seat or organs of the soul than in the other members.[73]

While Oresme's conclusion denied personhood to the former group, it also extended the status of human to the latter, regardless of physical difference, thereby reinforcing his broader claim that physical difference in a monstrous hybrid did not constitute essential difference.

Having critiqued the notion of the monstrous hybrid being truly 'of another species', Oresme followed with an alternative embryological explanation for monstrous hybridity which expanded on his earlier account of the physical causes of monstrosity. Following Aristotle, Oresme explained that there was 'an order in the successive generation of species or individuals' by which sperm was transformed into a fully-developed foetus.[74] Once 'spirit and sperm' [*spiritus et sperma*] are received in the womb of a female organism after coitus, the spirit begins to work on the sperm.[75] Eventually, the seminal material is 'changed to another species' [*mutatur in aliam speciem*] and becomes akin to a plant.[76] The spirit continues to work on the material until it develops the capacity for sensation and the powers which distinguish animal from plant. In human embryos, an additional stage of development results in the ensoulment of the organism with a rational soul. Oresme illustrated this process using the example of the sequence of steps involved in the generation of a human, from its beginnings as sperm; then into a form of vegetative life like a fungus; then into something still unformed but nevertheless animal-like; then something like a monkey; then something like a pygmy, closer to a human in appearance; and finally, a completed human being.[77]

If this formative process occurs as it should, 'everything will be worked through completely until the foetus is like that from which it was separated', i.e. the parent

---

[73] *Semper esset dubitandum utrum puer vel fetus sit homo usquequo videatur si possit uti ratione; quod si non, videtur michi quod magis deberet credi in casibus positis quod non sit homo, quam in principio nativitatis propter diversam figuram et cetera, quia in natura humana est maior monstruositas defectus in membris sensuum et sedibus seu organis anime quam in aliis membris.* Oresme, *DCM*, 3.546-52.

[74] *In generatione succesiva specierum seu individuorum est ordo.* Ibid., 3.560-61.

[75] Ibid., 3.567.

[76] Ibid., 3.569-70.

[77] Ibid., 3.592-96.

organisms.[78] However, if the process cannot be successfully completed on account of deviations in the conditions of sperm, spirit or womb, the embryo or foetus could be destroyed or restricted to a prior stage in development. This would account for the bodily difference of monstrous hybrids. As Oresme stated, 'if a woman bears a living animal like a cat or pig or monkey, I say that the said spirit, or formative power, could not make a round head and could not make broad hands etc., but made only clefts etc'.[79] Evoking his overarching theme that the natural faculty of generation is so complex that it is more marvellous that it does not err more often, he asked:

> Is it not more difficult to make the hands of a human than the feet or a pig or cow or dog? And likewise for feet etc. Therefore it is more marvellous how nature does not fail more often in this process, than how it often does so.[80]

The mere appearance of monstrous 'hybridity' thus did not indicate actual biological hybridisation but rather developmental incompleteness. Since a significant degree of bodily difference could be attributed to the natural process of generation, it became even more problematic to attempt to identify any given monstrous hybrid as being truly 'of another species'. This argument defended the validity of the stable category of species as a means for classifying living organisms which otherwise appeared to fit awkwardly within Aristotelian taxonomy. Oresme's explanation of the underlying physical causes for monstrous hybridity thereby supported his broader defence of the concept of species.

Ultimately, Oresme did not categorically rule out the possibility of a monster being a genuine product of hybridisation, but rather argued that this was a less plausible explanation than the alternatives. Referencing the example of a sow giving birth to a monster that resembled a dog, he concluded that he would prefer to say that the offspring was a 'deformed pig, not having the head or feet it ought etc., and that it differs from another pig only accidentally not essentially, rather than say that it is of another species when generated in a sow from the spermatic matter of a pig in the proper place and in the

---

[78] *Faciet omnia complete usquequo fetus sit similis illi a quo decisus est.* Ibid., 3.578-79.

[79] *Si mulier pariat animal vivum ut cattum aut porcum aut symeum, dico quod spiritus dictus sive virtus formativa non potuit caput facere rotundum et manus non potuit perficere latas et cetera, sed solum scissuras fecit et cetera.* Ibid., 3.604-7.

[80] *Nunquid difficilis est manus hominis facere quam pedes porci aut vacce aut canis? Et ita de pedibus et cetera. Plus igitur mirandum est quomodo sepius natura non deficit in via quam quomodo ita sepe.* Ibid., 3.619-22.

time required etc.[81] He conceded that if the pig-monster's behaviours and physiology continued to deviate from the norms of other pigs into maturity, he would allow that it could be a dog in Aristotelian form and not merely in a semblance of appearance. However, in all other cases he would tend towards the stance that it was unambiguously a pig in species.

Oresme's willingness to allow for the possibility of true hybridisation despite his broad scepticism towards this causal explanation likely explains his reluctance to engage with the broader intellectual debate on this issue. Though he noted that the question of whether two animals of distinct species were physically capable of interbreeding had a place within the broader philosophical discourse, he reserved his opinion and referred the reader to a relevant passage in Aristotle's *De animalibus*.[82] There, Aristotle argued that because animals take significantly different lengths of time to develop in the womb, an animal of one species could not be successfully gestated in the womb of an animal belonging to another.[83] Animals with similar gestation periods such as dogs and wolves or horses and donkeys could produce infertile hybrid offspring.[84] Although the issue of incompatible gestation periods featured in other Scholastic authors' explanations of monstrous hybridity, this did not occupy a prominent place in *DCM* and was instead taken up by other Scholastic authors such as Albert the Great.[85]

Oresme's exploration of the monstrous hybrid in *DCM* reaffirmed the value of the category of species for the purposes of Scholastic intellectual inquiry. He held that the limitations of the human observer's ability to discern meaningful essential properties from accidental differences when attempting to identify an individual's species categorisation should make us sceptical about assigning the status of being a 'monster of another species' to living organisms, and particularly of denying the personhood of a 'monstrous' child born to a human mother, simply on account of deviation from bodily norms. By providing an

---

[81] *Sit porcus turpis non habens caput aut pedes ut deberet et cetera et quod solum differt ab alio porco accidentaliter et non essentialiter quam quod sit alterius speciei generatus in porca ex materia spermatica porci et in loco debito et in tempore requisito et cetera.* Ibid., 3.652-56.

[82] Ibid., 3.656. Oresme cited books 15 and 16 of *De animalibus*, but as Hansen indicates, it appears that he had in mind a section of book 18 (corresponding with book 4 of *De generatione animalium*).

[83] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, ed. and trans. A.L. Peck, LCL 366 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942), 769b22-26.

[84] On Scholasticism's fascination with mules, see Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*, 40–77.

[85] Albert, *De animalibus*, 18.46-54

alternative embryological causation for the appearance of monstrous hybrids, he rebutted the notion that they were the unnatural product of bestiality. The extent of Oresme's intellectual novelty lay in this stance. In rejecting this causal explanation of monstrous hybridity, Oresme was making a claim for the superiority of Aristotelian taxonomy and natural philosophy over other forms of medieval teratological discourse.

Some medievalists have argued that in the period from the twelfth century until the beginnings of modern empirical zoology in the sixteenth century, categories of 'human' and 'animal' were regarded as more unstable, fluid and permeable than in modern western societies. For instance, Joyce Salisbury has characterised this as an age of hybridity in which 'skepticism seems to have been cast away' and credulity towards monstrous hybrids dominated all strands of discourse.[86] However, we should not downplay the fact that the Middle Ages contained multitudes: monstrous credulity could co-exist comfortably with monstrous scepticism. Nicole Oresme recognised the inherent tension arising out of the dissonance between the construction of categories of species and the human/animal binary in Aristotelian Scholasticism and the troubling reality of monstrous hybrid and resolved this tension in his unique interpretation of teratology. In this way, *De causis mirabilium* represented one potential response to species panic: an approach grounded in textual authority and the dominance of *scientia* over *secreta*.

Demonic Hybridity and Female Sexuality in *Dives and Pauper*

My second case study is *Dives and Pauper*, an early fifteenth-century didactic treatise which we have already encountered in chapter 2 in the context of late medieval Flood literature. In the text's commentary on the Sixth Commandment, Dives proclaims that he has heard of 'fendys' [demons] in the form of men impregnating women, which he believes is 'wondirful' because "þe fend is but a spryth and hat neyþer flech ne bon ne onyþing of mankende wherby he schulde gendryn [have intercourse] with woman".[87] Pauper replies that these demons, which he names by the Latin terms *incubi* (when appearing in the form of men) and *succubi* (when appearing in the form of women), are real, and he explains to Dives the nature of their copulation with humans:

---

[86] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 129. Similar arguments are made by: Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 178–96; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 19–28; Page, 'Good Creation and Demonic Illusions', 27–58.

[87] Barnum, *Dives and Pauper* I pt 2: 118.

And for þei han no materie ne seed of hemself to gendryn þerfor þey gaderyn and takyn þe superfluyte of þe materie of þe seed of man þat passyt3 from man slepyng and oþer tymes and with þa materye medelyn [copulate] with women. And also þey gederyn materie and seed of women and with þat medelyn with man in wommenys lycnesse. And of swych medelyng, as God suffryth, comyn somytme goode childryn, somtyme wyckyd, somtyme wel schapyn, somtyme euyl schapyn. But nedys þe on must ben man or woman, for fend with fend may nout gendryn.[88]

Demons therefore cannot reproduce by themselves and must act as carriers for the transfer of 'materie' and 'seed' between humans. *Dives and Pauper* grounded its explanation of demonic intercourse in the same scientific language of generation as Oresme, although this text did not use the technical concepts of *materia* and *sperma* with the same degree of specificity. A child may be born from a *succubus* or from a human woman impregnated by an *incubus*, but in both cases it is the product of a mixture of matter of two individuals who did not have direct sexual contact; the *incubus*/*succubus* acts as a conduit for their respective 'seed'. In the same manner, seed could also be transferred between individuals of different species:

And swyche foule sprytys don her lecherie in þis maner nout only with man and woman but also with irresonnable bestis and apperyn to hem in lyknesse of bestis, as a bole to kyne [cow] and as a ram to schep, and so be þe fendis doynge comyn many of þese myschapyn þingis þat ben born boþin of women and of bestis, as a calf with a neddrys [snake's] tayl, a child with a neddrys hefd [head], or a child born of a schep with wolle in þe nekke. Alle þese han fallyn [occured] be our days.[89]

Incubi/*succubi* could therefore enable the generation of hybrids by proxy. Priscilla Barnum places this passage within the context of exegesis of Genesis 6:1-4 relating to the offspring of spiritual entities and human women.[90] However, the association of *incubi*/*succubi*, with hybrids was also influenced by the growing body of literature on demonology, on which the author of *Dives and Pauper* drew. Alain Boureau argues that the thirteenth century was marked by a growing Scholastic interest in demons partly growing out of attempts to incorporate newly translated classical pagan and Islamic texts about supernatural beings

---

[88] Ibid., 118–19.

[89] Ibid., 118–19.

[90] Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper*, vol. II, EETS OS 323 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 220–21. For further discussion of this biblical passage, see my analysis in chapter 2.

into contemporary Christian cosmology, and also as a consequence of growing intellectual interest in angels and their fallen counterparts.[91] As Dyan Elliott and Elizabeth Casteen argue, this growing academic interest also reflected increasing concerns about the susceptibility of humans to demonic possession.[92] Women were perceived as being especially vulnerable due to the physical permeability of their bodies compared to men. In response to these issues, theologians attempted to rationalise demonology with Aristotelian natural philosophy by making spirits subject to the physics of the natural world. For instance, Thomas Aquinas argued in *De malo* (c.1272) that demons do not have physical bodies. As he wrote:

> Devils can produce everything visible in this world by intermediate causes, not by their own power alone [...] [They] can use natural causes as instruments to produce certain effects. But the instruments act by the power of the chief cause, not only by their own power.[93]

He further argued that demons could only move material substances in proportion to their natural abilities, in the same manner as human beings.[94] The extent of demonic power was therefore circumscribed: they could not, for example, create life by themselves but were required to manipulate matter to enable the physical causes necessary for generation to occur. These basic tenets of the demonic relationship with the physical world were generally accepted by theologians from Aquinas onwards.[95] However, before Aquinas, the Parisian theologian William of Auvergne proposed the form of demonic hybridity which would later influence *Dives and Pauper*. In his *De universo* (c.1231), William was animated by the question of demonic generation and recounted how the Huns, the Cypriots, and the

---

[91] Alain Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 94–99.

[92] Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 35–60; Casteen, 'Rape and Rapture', 91–116.

[93] *Omnia que uisibiliter fiunt in hoc mundo, possunt fieri per demones non sola propria uirtute, set mediantibus actiuis naturalibus* [...] *demon utitur actiuo naturali ad aliquem effectum producendum sicut instrumento; instrumentum autem agit non solum in uirtute propria set etiam in uirtute principalis agentis.* Thomas Aquinas, 'Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo', in *Opera Omnia*, ed. P.M. Gils, vol. XXIII (Rome and Paris: Leonine Commission, 1982), 325. Translation from: Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, ed. Brian Davies, trans. Richard Regan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 495.

[94] Aquinas, 'Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo', 327.

[95] Thomas B. de Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne: By Fire and Sword* (Lewis, Queenston and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 129–30.

giants of Albion encountered by Brutus had all been born from the copulation of *incubi* with humans.[96] Addressing the theme of demons generating through the mixture of individuals' seed, William pondered whether an *incubus* could impregnate a human using animal seed, concluding that such a feat would be possible on account of a story he had heard:

> In the province of Saxony a certain bear seized the wife of a certain soldier, and carried her to a cave in which he was living, and he held her there for many days and years, and he begat many sons by her in this place.[97]

Though William's anecdote does not actually mention demons, he nevertheless cited it as proof of the possibility of cross-breeding and that an incubus could therefore theoretically create a human-animal hybrid in this manner.

Many theologians disputed William's arguments, replying that demons transferred only human seed.[98] Nevertheless, although William's theory of demonic hybrids did not gain significant traction in philosophical discourse in the universities, the notion continued to circulate in northern European culture during this period. Although it is not clear whether the author of *Dives and Pauper* was referencing William's work directly in this passage or a textual intermediary, the text's participation in the Scholastic discourse of demonological hybridity links back to the theoretical model put forward in *De universo*. The text's extensive citation from academic exegetical works and the body of canon law indicate that its author likely possessed a university education, and hence had access to the kinds of intellectual discourses on demonology discussed above.[99]

The text's discussion of demonic hybrids also drew on the author's broader interest in wonders and their significance. Such hybrids were positioned as part of the collective historical memory of the text's community of readers: hence, as the text stated, "alle þese han fallyn be our days".[100] They were one of the "wondrys þat fallyn aȝens kende in þe

---

[96] *In pronviciae Saxoniae ursus quidam rapuit uxorem cuisdam militis, et detulit in speluncam, in qua inhabitabat, ibique habuit eam diebus multis, & annis, genuitque Ibidem filios ex ea.* William of Auvergne, 'De Universo', in *Opera Omnia*, ed. F. Hotot, vol. I (Paris: Dionysium Thierry, 1674), 1070–71.

[97] Ibid., 1071.

[98] de Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne: By Fire and Sword*, 172. On the wider context of Scholastic debates on demonology and generation, see Lugt, *Le Ver, le Demon et la Vierge*, 209–302.

[99] Barnum, *Dives and Pauper* II:xxv.

[100] Barnum, *Dives and Pauper* I pt 2:119.

bodyis abouyn", including "cometys and sterrys, brennyngge castelys in þe eyir, clyps of þe sonne or mone aȝens kende [unnatural eclipses of the sun or moon], meen in þe eyir armyd or fyghtyngge, þe reynbowe turnyd vpsodoun, mysshape thynggys in here berthe aȝens kende", which, according to the author, had occured with greater frequency in recent years.[101] Such wonders were portents of God's displeasure with human behaviour. For example, the text related the appearance of a 'wondryful comete' which appeared in the sky during the late winter and early spring of 1402.[102] The chronicler Adam Usk had also reported witnessing this comet during his journey from Cologne to Pisa and said that it had foretold the imminent death of the duke of Milan.[103] However, the author of *Dives and Pauper* interpreted this comet as an "opyn tokene of þe grete offens of God wyth þe [people] of Engelond".[104] The text's stance on the signifying function of wonders had resonances with the 'prodigy culture' identified by scholars such as Daston and Park as being a feature more associated with the early modern period than the Middle Ages.[105] This contrasted with the arguments of Scholastics such as Oresme, who held that such wonders were natural occurrences which did not signify moral meaning. *Dives and Pauper*'s discussion further indicates the multiplicity of academic responses to hybrids: two contrasting models of explanation co-existed in the same intellectual ecology of the late fourteenth century.

Hybrids also served a moralising function within the broader didactic strategy of *Dives and Pauper*. As we saw in chapter 2, this text was deeply invested in advocating for heteronormative sexual behaviour and marriage. The passage on demonic hybrids was located in the text's commentary on the commandment 'þu schal don non lecherie ne medle with noþing fleschly but only with þin lauful wif'.[106] The text thus glossed *incubi* as a warning about the sexual immorality of women:

---

[101] Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper*, vol. I pt 1, EETS OS 275 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 147.

[102] Ibid., 149.

[103] Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421*, trans. C. Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 154–56.

[104] Barnum, *Dives and Pauper* I pt 1:148.

[105] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 173–80.

[106] Barnum, *Dives and Pauper* I pt 2:58.

> Swyche fendys ben mest besy to schendyn [rape] women, and therfor it is perlyous to women þat desyryn mychil mennys companye to ben ouyr mychil solitarie withoutyn onest companye.[107]

This invoked the extensive discursive associations of demons with the rape of women, which we have already examined in chapter 3. In this way, demons posed a threat to the safety of women and to their bodily integrity. This text spoke to broader cultural anxieties over female sexual behaviour and the misgovernance of young women. Late medieval conduct texts instructed girls to avoid being alone with men, especially strangers. For example, *The Good Wife Taught her Daughter* (before 1350) advised the reader that if she was to meet a man in the street, 'lat him go bi þe wai, bi him þou ne stonde / þat he þorutʒ no uilenie þin herte noþing chonge'.[108] Drawing on feminist theory, Carissa Harris frames this poem's guidance as a form of 'rape prevention strategy', pragmatic advice transmitted between women based on shared experience of forced coitus.[109] However, Felicity Riddy argues that the intent of the poem's moral guidance on the part of its author and the owners of copies of the work was less concerned with rape than with controlling the sexual behaviour of young women.[110] As Riddy suggests, such conduct texts may have been used by the older women of a household for the moral education of female servants as well as daughters; being older adolescents, their potential risk for sexual behaviour was greatly concerning to the heads of households. The hybrids in *Dives and Pauper* served the same ideological function of controlling female sexuality: the threat of demonic rape and impregnation with a monstrous child served as a warning of the potential consequences to young women of letting their guard down around men. In this way, the text also implicitly assigned fault to the women who had given birth to such hybrids: by the logic of the text, this was a sign that they had failed to uphold proper sexual conduct and had therefore allowed themselves to be raped and inseminated with non-human seed.

---

[107] Ibid., 119.

[108] Tauno F. Mustanoja, ed., 'Þe Gode Wif Tauhte Hire Douster Fele Sithe and Ofte', in *The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter. The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage. The Thewis of Gud Women* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran, 1948), ll. 67–68.

[109] Harris, 'Rape Narratives, Courtly Critique, and the Pedagogy of Sexual Negotiation in the Middle English Pastourelle', 263–87.

[110] Felicity Riddy, 'Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text', *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 66–86.

Elliott and Boureau argue that the rise of academic demonology was intimately related to growing concerns in the Church over the risks from heterodoxy, initially from heresy and later expanding to include witchcraft.[111] In this way, demonological discourse contributed to the increased exertion of judicial and institutional power over the everyday lives of people in the later Middle Ages. *Dives and Pauper* demonstrates how this discourse influenced the development of heteronormativity during this period. According to Cohen, the monster 'polices the borders of the possible', contributing to normative ideologies and serve as a warning against breaking taboos on proscribed acts.[112] Such a description is apt in this instance. The demonic hybrids of *Dives and Pauper* 'police the borders' of acceptable female sexuality, threatening rape and impregnation with a monster on any young woman who succumbs to the temptation of letting their guard drop around strange men. Thus, the text deployed species panic to reinforce moral messages concerning normative sexuality, in the same way that it drew on the motif of the Flood in order to promote the married heterosexual couple as the only acceptable form of sexual intercourse.

Species and the Pedagogy of Heteronormativity in *Cheuelere Assigne*

My third and final case study, unlike the earlier sources I have been analysing, is a literary text. The Middle English romance *Cheuelere Assigne* remains extant in only one manuscript, British Library Cotton Caligula A.II, produced c.1446-60, though the text itself is believed to have been originally composed about a century earlier, in the latter half of the fourteenth century.[113] It is a loose translation of the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne* (*Birth of the Swan Knight*), the opening to the lengthy series of Old French romances recounting the First Crusade, known as the Crusade Cycle. The *Naissance* invents a mythical ancestral origin for Godfrey of Bouillon, the protagonist (also a historical individual) of the cycle's main narrative. Multiple redactions of the *Naissance* exist, though as W.R.J. Barron notes, it is not clear from which one *Cheuelere Assigne* was adapted.[114] In Cotton Caligula A.II, the English adaptation is divorced from its original historical context: the poem does not

---

[111] Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, 107–26; Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, 200.

[112] Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', 12.

[113] Henry H. Gibbs, ed., *The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne*, EETS ES 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1868), xv–xvi.

[114] W.R.J. Barron, '*Chevalere Assigne* and the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*', *Medium Aevum* 36, no. 1 (1967): 25–37; W.R.J. Barron, 'Versions and Texts of the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*', *Romania* 89, no. 356 (1968): 481–538.

mention Godfrey or the Crusade, and it is presented as a standalone narrative. Though some modern critics are dismissive of the aesthetic merit of such forms of textual abbreviation, Tony Davenport notes firstly that the practice of abbreviation was accepted as a valid stylistic choice and indicative of poetic skill in classical and medieval literary theory and, secondly, in the case of *Cheuelere Assigne*, this process strips the narrative down to its thematic core.[115] In particular, I argue that the abbreviation of the poem brings to the surface its fundamental concern with the theme of sex and species. Unlike the other texts I have been analysing in this chapter, hybrids are not the central thematic focus of this romance; rather, it is the interplay of sex and species.

The romance's plot begins with the birth of seven children, who are all born with silver chains around their necks, to Queen Beatrice and her husband, King Oriens. Matabryne, Oriens' mother, orders her servant Markus to drown the children and has them replaced with a litter of seven puppies in order to falsely incriminate the queen for the crime of bestiality, for which she is imprisoned. However, Markus cannot bring himself to kill the children and abandons them in a forest, where they are found by a hermit and a hind who raise them for eleven years. After some time has passed, the forester Malkedras spies the children and relates this to Matabryne, who orders him to kill the children and bring back their chains. Malkedras finds only six of the seven children, with the seventh having accompanied the hermit on a foraging trip. Malkedras takes the chains from around their necks, but before he can kill them, they turn into swans. An angel then visits the hermit and explains to him the circumstances of the children's birth and the plight of Beatrice, who is to be executed. The hermit names the last remaining child 'Enyas', and together they go to rescue Beatrice. Enyas and the hermit arrive just as Beatrice is about to be burned to death. Enyas confronts Oriens and says that he will fight in a trial by combat in order to clear the queen's name. Matabryne orders Malkedras to fight Enyas. Enyas defeats Malkedras, then captures Matabryne as she attempts to flee. Beatrice is freed, and Matabryne is executed in her place. Enyas explains the truth of his relationship to the king and queen and seeks out the six silver chains which had been taken from the other children. When five of the chains are placed around the necks of five of the six swan children, they return to human form. However, as the sixth chain had been destroyed, the remaining child is forced to remain as a swan.

---

[115] Tony Davenport, 'Abbreviation and the Education of the Hero in *Chevalere Assigne*', in *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, ed. Phillipa Hardman (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), 9–11.

Species panic generates the inciting incident which drives the narrative of *Cheuelere Assigne*. When Beatrice gives birth to six sons and one daughter, Matabryne finds elsewhere in the castle 'seuenne whelpes [puppies] [...] sowkynge þe damme [suckling at their mother]' (l. 61). She kills the bitch and presents the puppies to Oriens, claiming that they are Beatrice's babies: "sone paye þe with þy qene and se of her berthe" (l. 65). Having convinced the king to take action against her, she goes to Beatrice and addresses her with the accusation:

> Bothe howndes and men haue hadde þe [have had intercourse with you] a wylle
> Thow shalt to prisonn fyrste and be brente aftur (ll.79-80)

The canine appearance of Beatrice's substituted offspring implicates her in bestiality, for which she is to be executed by burning. This accusation did not appear in earlier redactions of the *Naissance* and was a product of the gradual narrative evolution of the text.[116] As Barron argues, this alteration served to further enhance the heroic ancestry attributed to Godfrey by emphasising the virtue of his ancestor's defence of his falsely-accused mother.[117] This episode is an example of the calumniated/accused queen motif, a common plot element in romances and other medieval literary genres.[118] *Cheuelere Assigne* shares many common points with other texts that incorporate this motif, such as antagonistic mothers-in-law (e.g. *Octavian* and *Emaré*), the use of falsified evidence for implicating the accused queen in sexual misconduct (e.g. *Octavian* and *Erle of Tolous*), and the trial by combat to rescue the victim from execution (e.g. *Erle of Tolous*).[119] This motif is especially prevalent in the category of 'family romances' of which *Cheuelere Assigne* is a typical example, i.e. romances structured around the separation and reunion of an aristocratic or royal family, because the imprisonment or exile of the accused queen served as a useful narrative device for separating the female protagonist from her father, husband, and/or children, thereby

---

[116] Barron, 'Versions and Texts of the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*', 525.

[117] Ibid., 489.

[118] This motif is extensively catalogued and analysed in: Margaret Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York: New York University Press, 1927).

[119] McSparran, *Octovian*; Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, eds., 'Emaré', in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995); Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, eds., 'Erle of Tolous', in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, TEAMS METS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995).

creating the fundamental conflict driving the plot.[120] What distinguishes *Cheuelere Assigne* from other romances of this type is the use of species panic in the accusation against the queen: Beatrice's transgression is heightened through the charge of bestiality, a more serious crime than adultery, although Matabryne accuses her of both acts, which is physically embodied in the hybrid form of her canine children.

From the perspective of the modern reader, Matabryne's plot seems outlandish even by the standards of a genre that typically eschews realism. The text itself even offers a more plausible grounds for constructing an accusation against Beatrice. Before her pregnancy, Beatrice and her husband spy a 'poure womman' carrying twins. The queen slanders the woman to Oriens:

> The qwene nykked hym with nay and seyde "it is not to leue
> oon manne for oon chylde and two wymmen for tweyne
> Or ellis hit were vnsemelye þynge as me wolde þenke
> But eche chylde hadde a fader how manye so þer were" (ll. 28-31)

Here, Beatrice implies that each of the twins had a separate father, so the woman must have had sex with more than one man. Beatrice's argument drew on contemporary understandings of anatomy. According to some texts, such as the late thirteenth-century *Livre de Sidrac* (translated into English during the reign of Henry VI), the human womb contained seven chambers, each of which could be inseminated separately from multiple acts of intercourse with different men.[121] Davenport reads the accusation against Beatrice as moralising punishment for slandering the 'poure womman' by making her own marital fidelity the subject of suspicion.[122] However, by the internal logic of the text, this moralisation would still be effective if the plot were to be rewritten so that the accusation of adultery relied on interpreting the birth of the septuplets through the theory of the seven-chambered womb. The authorial choice to introduce the substitution of the puppies is meaningful when read through the text's broader thematic concern with species and sex.

---

[120] On the classification of family romances, see e.g. Knight, 'The Social Function of the Middle English Romances', 110–13.

[121] T.L. Burton, ed., *Sidrak and Bokkus: A Parallel-Text Edition from Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 559 and British Library, MS Landsdowne 793*, vol. I, EETS OS 311 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 198–200.

[122] Davenport, 'Abbreviation and the Education of the Hero', 19.

Matabryne's plot exploits the anxiety generated by species panic and causes the breakdown of Beatrice's family, but her actions also have the unintended consequence of creating a non-normative kinship bond which transcends the boundaries of species. When Markus is ordered to murder Beatrice's (human) children, he finds that he cannot bring himself to commit the act and abandons the infants in the forest. Their wailing is heard by a 'holy hermyte', who begs Christ to send him succour to assist the children. His appeal is answered thus:

> Thenne an hynde kome fro þe woode rennynge fulle swyfte
>
> And felle be-fore hem adowne þey drowȝe to [drew towards] þe pappes [teats]
>
> The heremyte prowde was þer-of and putte hem to sowke [suckling]
>
> Sethen [then] taketh he hem vp and þe hynde folowethe
>
> And she kepte hem þere whylle our lorde wolde
>
> Thus he noryscheth hem vp and criste hem helpe sendethe
>
> Of sadde leues [shed leaves] of þe wode wrowȝte [wrought] he hem wedes [clothes]
>
> (ll.113-119)

These lines emphasise the co-operation of hermit and hind in caring for the children. The physical act of suckling the infants involves both the hind offering her teats and the hermit placing the infants alongside her. Just as the hind nourishes the children through her milk, the hermit fashions them clothes out of fallen leaves. The hind acts by her own agency: she freely offers herself to the children, and she chooses to follow the hermit and stays with them. As with the calumniated queen, the motif of a wild animal suckling an abandoned human child appears in other romances, such as when a lioness suckles the infant Octavian. However, the distinctive element in *Cheuelere Assigne* is the inter-species co-operation. Together, the hermit, hind and children make a queer family: 'queer' because it is formed not through bonds of blood and marriage in the manner of the heteronormative families analysed in chapter 2 of this thesis, but through chosen kinship between 'parents' of two different species.

The post-humanist philosopher Donna Haraway has explored how humans find ways of forming bonds of 'inter-species kinship' with non-human animals, whom she calls 'companion species', and calls for the extension of this process of kin-formation as a means of redressing the human-driven destruction of the global ecosystem.[123] The hermit and the

---

[123] The theme of inter-species kinship permeates Haraway's work, but is most extensively developed in: Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis and London: University of

hind's queer family is a model of this kind of inter-species kin-formation: it is a radical vision of possibilities lying outside the normative framework of affective relations. In this way, *Cheuelere Assigne* presents a critique of the normative model by offering a functional alternative. The text asks whether, if this queer family 'noryscheth' the children and receives divine sanction – the hind stays with the infants 'whylle our lorde wolde [as our lord commands]' – in the same manner as a normative family, then is the normative model always necessary? Circling back to the analysis of romance which I made in chapter 3, a text like as *Cheuelere Assigne* can advance such a radical critique of normative ideology because of the conventions of the genre. The reader understands that the narrative inevitably dictates that the abandoned children will eventually return to their human parents; the queer family can only be a temporary substitute for the 'real thing'. It is the knowledge of the certainty of a normative conclusion which enables the text to play with the transgressive potential of alternatives to normativity.

The imaginary space of *Cheuelere Assigne* enables the exploration of a queer, inter-species alternative to the heteronormative family. However, the narrative conventions of the genre require a normative resolution to the conflict generated by the separation of Beatrice's family. In romance, the exiled child of noble birth will always be reintegrated into courtly society; his aristocratic nature inevitably triumphs over wild nurture.[124] In her reading of the *Naissance*, Peggy McCracken argues that Elias (the name of Enyas in the original French) must suppress his animality in order to restore his noble status.[125] The same holds true for the English adaptation, but I intend to push this line of analysis further. I argue that Enyas' transformation from wild child into aristocratic knight is an ideological process through which he is educated in normative relations of sex and species. Prior to the angel's visitation, Enyas is a *tabula rasa*. His knowledge of the world does not extend beyond his constructed family of hermit, hind and his siblings, and as part of his transformation he learns knowledge that others in his society would take for granted. In order to portray the child's education, the poet incorporates the structure and pedagogic conventions of pupil/master dialogues into a series of question-and-answer passages

---

Minnesota Press, 2008), 66–67 and 134; 'The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness', in *Manifestly Haraway* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 91–198; *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 99–103.

[124] For analysis of this motif in romance, see Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature*, 169–96; McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 126–56.

[125] McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 137.

involving Enyas and the adults around him. As Davenport notes, this refocusing around the theme of pedagogy is one of the notable divergences between the English *Cheuelere Assigne* and its French predecessors.[126] This literary device is able to effectively convey ideologies of sex and species in a subtle way.

After the angel's visitation, the hermit tells Enyas that Christ had 'formeth' [created] him in order "to fy3te for þy moder" (l.209). Enyas asks him 'what was a moder', to which the hermit replies "a womman þat bare þe to man sonne, and of her reredde [reared]" (ll.209-210). The hermit's explanation provides Enyas with a brief lesson in heteronormative sex education: a mother is defined through her impregnation by a man ('bare þe to man') and the act of giving birth ('reredde'). His definition privileges the reproductive function of the mother over her role in nurturing and socialising the child. This definition implicitly excludes the hind from the category of motherhood. In this way, Enyas learns that the normative family is based around the reproductive unit of man and woman. Enyas is also confused when the hermit explains that he will need to ride a horse, as he had never heard of this animal:

> "What beste is þat?" quod þe chylde "lyonys wylde?
>
> Or elles wode? or watur" quod þe chylde þanne
>
> "I sey3e neuuer none [I have never seen one]" quod þe hermyte "but by þe mater of bokes
>
> They seyn he hath a feyre hedde and fowre lymes hye
>
> And also he is a frely [noble] beeste for-thy he man seruethd" (ll. 214-8)

A parallel episode occurs later, once Enyas is at court and is arming himself in preparation for the trial by combat against Malkedras. Oriens lends Enyas the use of his horse Feraunce, and when he is led over to the horse, he asks the knight accompanying him:

> "What beeste is þis" quod þe childe "þat I shall on houe [ride]?"
>
> "Hit is called an hors" quod þe kny3te "a good and an abulle"
>
> "Why etethe he yren [iron]?" quod þe chylde "wylle he ete no3the elles?
>
> And what is þat on his bakke of byrthe or on bounden? [i.e. was he born with it, or is it fastened to him?]"
>
> "Nay, þat is in his mowthe men kallen a brydelle
>
> And that a sadelle on his bakke þat þou shalt in sytte" (ll. 288-293)

---

126 Davenport, 'Abbreviation and the Education of the Hero', 16.

What Enyas learns from both the hermit and the knight is that the horse's purpose is to serve its human masters. From the knight, he is taught to identify the technologies of domination – the saddle and bridle – which enable the rider to master the will of the horse. These episodes also function through a distinctively aristocratic ideology of masculinity. The hermit, lacking in chivalric experience, can only convey to him a limited understanding of the horse gained through book-learning. In order to complete the child's martial education, the knight must take over from the hermit. In this way, Enyas learns the proper relation of species: humans dominate non-human animals for their own needs. This is ideologically connected to the same lessons in heteronormativity which he earlier learned from the hermit. Suppressing his animality involves rejecting the bond of kinship and nurturing between Enyas and the hind. By the romance's conclusion, the hermit and hind have vanished entirely from the narrative; Enyas' queer inter-species found family has been replaced by his heteronormative birth family.

For the most part, the ending of the poem restores the status quo: Matabryne's evil is revealed and she is executed; all but one of the swan-children are returned to human form; the family of Oriens and Beatrice are reunited. However, the conclusion does not fully resolve one of the central conflicts of the text. One swan-child remains trapped in avian form, on account of the destruction of the necklace which would have enabled him to become human once again. The poet emphasises the bodily horror felt by the last swan-child:

> Hit was doole [distressing] for to se þe sorowe þat he made
> He bote [bit] hym self with his byll þat all his breste bledde
> And alle his feyre federes fomede vpon blode [were covered with blood]
> And alle formerknes [murkied] þe watur þer þe swanne swymmethe
> There was ryche ne pore þat my3te for rewthe [pity]
> Lengere [Any longer] loke on hym but to þe courte wenden [they went] (ll. 359-64)

In the original French versions of the story, where this episode serves to introduce the protagonist Elias and the swan who accompanies him on his subsequent travels, the lack of resolution is less problematic. In the English redaction, it leaves a note of tension in an otherwise conventionally optimistic ending. Davenport reads this as a moment of pathos drawing on the conventions of the folktale, which permit a more ambiguous resolution.[127] Species panic offers an alternative way to read meaning into this ending and tie it to the

---

[127] Ibid., 20.

broader themes of the poem. The swan-knight feels distress from the experience of being a human consciousness trapped in the body of a bird. Unable to communicate this grief through language, yet fully aware of his own condition, he manifests his pain through self-injury by biting his own breast. In this way, his pain is a manifestation of the same anxiety felt by the villagers in Albert's tale, yet internalised against himself: fear towards bodies that trouble the dichotomy of human and non-human.

In reading three texts from disparate genres alongside each other through the critical lens of species panic, I have demonstrated the importance of sex and species to the construction of the ideology of heteronormativity and the intimate connection of discourses of animality, sexuality and intellectual knowledge. Authors drew on representations of species panic in order to convey normative sexual ideology and to legitimise masculine intellectual forms of knowledge concerning women's bodies and the natural world. The hybrids in these texts speak to a broader anxiety over the instability of the socially constructed category of species. Furthermore, the recognition of epistemological instability in relation to hybrids, species and sex spoke to broader anxieties concerning frameworks of heteronormativity.

Conclusion

With this thesis drawing to a close, I return to the fourteenth-century chicken badge with which I began my introduction (figure 1). Earlier, I argued that the badge reflected normative ideologies in its representation of copulating chickens, by drawing on the iconographic parallels between itself and the illustrations of human and animal intercourse in a contemporaneous luxury scientific manuscript (figure 2). In doing so, I demonstrated the importance of 'looking to animals' in medieval discourses on sexuality. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that late medieval authors drew on animals in order to construct and maintain sexual norms, a process of naturalisation through animality. This process normalised heterosexual intercourse and established heterosexual desire as the default, natural orientation for all living beings. As part of this process, animals became synonymous with normative sexuality across a variety of discourses: they embodied natural, virtuous sexual relations because they were incapable of acting otherwise. When animals were represented in the act of copulation, they operated as referents for human heterosexual intercourse. Consequently, the copulating chickens depicted on this badge functioned as animal signifiers of heterosexuality and signalled the wearer's identification with this normative ideology. The implicit message broadcasted by the iconographic use of this signifier on this badge was that its wearer engaged in natural sexual intercourse with members of the opposite sex, and that conversely, they did not have unnatural intercourse with others of the same sex. In this way, the badge demonstrates how widely the ideologies I have been analysing throughout this thesis were disseminated in late medieval society. Despite originating in elite intellectual and literary textual cultures, discourses of animals and sexuality influenced the iconography of popular culture and guided the thinking of ordinary people. If the function of ideology is to shape the worldview of the masses in service of the aims of dominant social groups, the evidence of the chicken badges suggests that we should regard the ideological project of constructing norms of 'natural' sexuality through animality as having successfully achieved its aims.

I began my investigation by examining how intellectual changes in the thirteenth century affected understandings of animal sexuality by comparing the representation of animals in Augustinian and Aristotelian zoological discourses. I argued that a new naturalising discourse of animal sexuality emerged in this period as a consequence of the revival of Aristotelian learning. This new epistemological paradigm did not replace older Augustinian zoology, but co-existed with it. This entailed a shift from regarding individual animals or species as signifiers, as had been the case in Augustinian texts such as the

bestiary, to regarding all animals as a singular signifier of sexual moralisation. Under this new paradigm, representations of 'queer animals' such as the partridge's homosexual intercourse or the hyena's physical transformation became epistemologically untenable. This was because the new zoological discourse emphasised the fulfilment of *telos* through reproduction as the ultimate function of living beings. *Orexis*, the motivating force which drove living beings towards the fulfilment of their *telos*, functioned as a form of sexual orientation, guiding animals and humans towards heterosexual intercourse. Only humans could act against the drive of their *orexis* by engaging in acts of queer, non-reproductive sexual intercourse. This new naturalising discourse played a pragmatic role in cultural debates, for instance being used to counter the calls of Lollard reformers to abolish clerical celibacy.

Having established how the Aristotelian discourse of animal sexuality was fundamental to the construction of sexual norms, I then explored how literary and dramatic representations of Noah's Ark drew on this new process of naturalisation through animality. I demonstrated how Flood literature used the metaphor of the 'married animal' as a strategy for the construction of heteronormativity. By universalising the experience of sexual pleasure in both humans and animals, these texts constructed heterosexual desire as natural and normative. Furthermore, these texts linked into wider discourses of cognition by arguing that the human capacity for rationality and invention enabled them to devise new acts of unnatural sexual intercourse that did not exist in nature. During the later Middle Ages, authors also began to appropriate the Flood as a potent metaphor for the existential risks that sexual immorality, particularly unnatural intercourse, posed to Christian society. Engaging in these acts imperilled the spiritual and physical safety of the community, not just the individual sinner. This literary *topos* evolved in dialogue with new discourses of civic moral reform. In later dramatic texts, the character of Noah's wife presented a radically transgressive critique of the heteronormative ideology of the Flood narrative by challenging its central commandment to marry and reproduce. However, I argued that her critique is contained through the use of cross-dressing male actors and the use of humour in the texts themselves, and that ultimately her transgression served to reinforce the heteronormative message of these productions. In this way, we see that the Flood narrative was an essential part of the ideological construction of normativity in the later Middle Ages because it identified the married, reproductive couple as the natural and normative mode of sexual behaviour.

While the process of naturalisation through animality in late medieval ideologies of sexuality predominantly emphasised the virtuousness of following the drives of natural

appetites, there were also tensions in how these appetites was represented. Although the appetite possessed a positive naturalising function in orienting humans towards morally normative forms of intercourse, when indulged in immoderate excess it could also result in monstrous and deviant sexual acts such as rape. In order to explore these nuances in cultural and intellectual discourses on appetites, I analysed the romance motif of the giant-as-rapist, focusing on a close reading of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*. I argued that romances deployed giants as monstrous, liminal figures in order to represent the internal conflict between competing animal appetites and human moderation and to explore the tensions in discourse on *orexis*. Furthermore, I demonstrated that representations of the giant-as-rapist served to maintain and reproduce ideologies of moderation over the appetites, which were becoming increasingly influential in lay society during the later Middle Ages.

Although I examined the development of ideologies of sexuality and animality from a primarily theoretical perspective, focusing on scientific, theological and literary discourses, I also argued that these theories had a practical influence on the relationship between the Church, the secular state, and ordinary people. To demonstrate this, I examined social and legal responses to human-animal intercourse in late medieval England. I argued that bestiality was increasingly constructed as a 'public' sin in both theological and legal discourses, meaning that sinners who committed this act posed a threat to the spiritual integrity of the community. However, I demonstrated that the practice of confession did not constitute an effective tool of discipline for responding to the existential threat posed by acts of bestiality. The litigation of bestiality in the Church courts was ultimately shaped more by the needs of communities than by the model of best practice established in canon law. Cases were only very rarely brought to the attention of the courts because their litigation did not serve the interests of maintaining order and social harmony. When a handful of cases such as *ex officio c. Noryngton* (1515) and *ex officio c. Frogbrook* (1520) began to be brought to court from the later fifteenth century, these tended to be heavily shaped by specific circumstances such as the impact of reforming bishops on dioceses or the ambitions of individual litigants to appropriate legal procedure in order to pursue private grievances using accusations of bestiality as a proxy, although broader ideologies of moral reform also had some influence. At the same time, a new magisterial discourse was emerging which advocated extending the jurisdiction of secular courts to cover acts of human-animal intercourse, citing the limitations of the canon law courts. This was prefigured in some early texts such as *Fleta* (c.1290) but gained prominence from the early sixteenth century in the works of religious reformers. The Reformation Parliament

exploited this sentiment and the earlier theological notion of bestiality as a 'public' sin in order to make human-animal intercourse a capital offence, thereby marking a significant turning-point in the history of legal responses to unnatural sexuality. In focusing on bestiality, I demonstrated the relationship between institutions, intellectual elites, and lay communities in the formation and enforcement of the new ideology of heteronormativity.

Late medieval ideologies of naturalisation through animality depended upon the assumption that the categories of 'human' and 'non-human animal' were self-evidently distinct and immutable. As I have argued, the unique human capacity for reason and free will was integral to how authors constructed both the differences and the similarities between human and animality sexuality. The concept of the hybrid challenged the immutability of these categories and hence problematised the process of naturalisation. However, drawing on the critical concept of species panic and examining the intersection of sex and species across a variety of texts, I demonstrated that hybrids also provided a productive framework for medieval authors to test normative ideologies of sexuality and theories of reproduction. Scholars such as Nicole Oresme examined the hybrid monster through the framework of Aristotelian science and concluded that their cause was not the hybridisation of two species but rather errors in the physical process of generation. In this way, Oresme emphasised the authority of masculine, elite intellectual systems of knowledge over other forms of discourse on hybrids. In other contexts, on account of the influence of demonological thought, the author of *Dives and Pauper* used representations of hybrids to reinforce heteronormativity. Here, the demonic hybrid became a threat used to police female sexuality. Likewise, I showed that romances such as *Cheuelere Assigne* used species panic as a thematic device in order to convey heteronormative ideology. On account of the genre's transgressive potential, the narrative space of *Cheuelere Assigne* afforded the exploration of queer interspecies alternatives to the normative family, which are ultimately contained through the resolution of the plot's central conflict.

The most important achievement of this thesis is that it has established the intersection of sexuality and animality as an important new area of research for medieval studies. As the first scholar to have produced a sustained analysis on this topic, I have demonstrated that animals performed a fundamental role in how late medieval people thought and wrote about sexuality. Scientific understandings of animality formed an essential part of the development of new forms of sexual ideology and continued to influence how these ideologies were deployed in intellectual, literary and legal cultures throughout late medieval north-western European society, particularly England, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. Authors drew on animals both to construct norms and

to maintain and reproduce them. It was only possible to reach these conclusions on account of the ambitious range of sources and theoretical approaches which I integrated into in this thesis, many of which have been underexamined in prior work on medieval sexuality. I have also shown that the study of this theme offers vital interventions in key debates in other fields such as the intellectual history of Scholasticism, Middle English literary criticism, and the study of canon law. In this way, I have demonstrated the need for future scholarship to seriously consider animality, and the essential role of interdisciplinary approaches such as the one taken by this thesis in new research on medieval sexuality.

A significant finding which emerges from this research is that it demonstrates the validity of heteronormativity as a useful explanatory framework for the later Middle Ages. This challenges one of the most influential current paradigms in the field. This thesis demonstrates that the Aristotelian concept of *orexis* and its influence on medieval ideologies fulfilled an analogous discursive function to the role of the modern medical/psychological concept of sexual orientation in the construction of modern heteronormativity. The analogy is not perfect: whereas modern ideology identifies heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality etc. as discrete orientations, in medieval heteronormativity there existed only the natural *orexis* which drove all living beings towards 'heterosexual' intercourse. Other sexual acts were only possible because humans had the capacity to act out of free will against the compulsion of their *orexis*. In this respect, it might be more appropriate to talk of unnatural sexuality as being an 'anti-orientation'. Not all behaviour which involved acting against *orexis* was regarded as unnatural or immoral: for instance, those who strove for celibacy such as priests, monks and nuns were considered virtuous because they resisted the drive of their appetites. Nevertheless, the theory of appetites served to construct the norm of sexuality in a similar manner to the role that heterosexual orientation plays in the construction of the modern norm.

In arguing for the validity and utility of heteronormativity as a category of analysis, I wish to stress the differences between its medieval and modern iterations. Obviously, many of the modern institutions through which heteronormativity is generated and reproduced, such as clinical psychiatry and compulsory primary education, did not yet exist. I also do not intend to universalise heteronormativity by claiming that it is an essential component of all human societies. I have argued that close analysis of late medieval north-western Europe, and England in particular, reveals that it is a heteronormative culture, not that the theory of heteronormativity dictates *a priori* how the construction of sexual ideology operated in this time and place. However, my fundamental point is that the concept of heteronormativity describes a relationship between power, knowledge and

sexuality which productively explains the fundamental operation of sexual ideology in the later Middle Ages. This conclusion matters because heteronormativity as an analytical tool enables us to more clearly discern the links between ideological formations of sexuality and lived experience. The discourse of natural sexuality to which Albert the Great contributed informed the stories which Robert Thornton shared with his family. This same discourse influenced how dramatists, actors and audiences appropriated the myth of Noah's Ark as a story about sexual morality. It shaped how people responded to the violence of rape or the act of bestiality. The theory of heteronormativity makes these links legible and prompts new questions about the social function of medieval academic fields of knowledge. I challenge the argument that heteronormativity restricts and distorts the capacity of scholars to analyse the Middle Ages. Rather, I hold that when applied critically and not simply as part of a set of *a priori* assumptions, it encourages new and productive ways of thinking about medieval sexuality.

The findings of this thesis also prove the intellectual vitality of late medieval thought on animality. I have demonstrated that authors deployed concepts such as hybridity, species, cognition and appetite in novel ways in order to address social concerns and contemporary lived experience. There has been a tendency among medievalists, even within the field of animal studies, to regard academic discourses on animals as separate from other spheres of experience. This approach underplays the liveliness of late medieval intellectual debate in favour of a model of relative stasis. The study of animals was not merely some arcane science, divorced from everyday experience and marginalised within intellectual discourse, but was rather an essential part of the process of ideological construction and a point of engagement between Scholasticism and society. For example, Roger Dymmok and Nicole Oresme applied Aristotelian scholarship on animals in new ways in order to explain the workings of the world and to intervene in contemporary social and political controversies. Consequently, this thesis prompts further investigation concerning the influence of intellectual discourses on animality on late medieval society.

My findings also suggest productive new avenues of research, which could be explored to further develop the conclusions advanced in this thesis. One approach would be to examine whether interactions with animals in everyday life affected how people responded to naturalising ideologies. Modern zoology has demonstrated the prevalence of 'queer' behaviour throughout the animal kingdom, including in many familiar domesticated species such as dogs, cats, horses, cattle, pigs and sheep.[1] However, people have been

---

[1] Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance*, 81.

confronted with the existence of 'queer animals' even before the widespread acceptance of this notion in science and mainstream cultural discourse. When I have talked informally about my research with others, many people have shared childhood anecdotes of having witnessed family pets or livestock engaging in same-sex copulation and other forms of sexual acts. These informants reported that their families had responded to this behaviour in different ways. Some had accepted it as 'natural', sometimes even linking the 'naturalness' of queer animal behaviour to their own explicit acceptance for queerness in humans. Others had denounced it as 'dirty' or 'unnatural' or had observed silence or denial on the issue. The question of how medieval people would have reacted when confronted with 'queer animals' is intriguing. Given that this observation of lived experience was so completely incompatible with the kinds of naturalising ideology that I have examined in this thesis, would they have responded with silence or denial like the families of some of my informants? Alternatively, could it have prompted scepticism towards the prevailing theories of animal behaviour? This theme could be investigated through the lens of practices of human-animal interaction such as animal husbandry, hawking and hunting.

Another avenue for further research would to think about the relationship of naturalising ideologies to social groups in late medieval society who were expressly forbidden from engaging in any form of sexual behaviour, even 'natural' intercourse. How did notions of appetites, animality and naturalisation shape the experience of sexuality for groups such as monks, nuns, priests and friars? My discussion of the use of Aristotelian zoology in the controversy over clerical celibacy indicates that this is likely to be a profitable area for further work. It is interesting to note that many of the texts which I have analysed in this thesis were written by priests or friars who expressed the intention to address a lay audience and change their behaviour. Did they regard animality as a useful way of talking about the conduct of their peers within their own communities? As I noted in chapter 1, there is an existing body of scholarship which examines the use of bestiaries for moralising purposes within monastic communities. However, there is significant scope to extend this line of inquiry into later medieval monastic, mendicant and clerical communities.

The findings of this thesis could also be productively extended to examine how animality and sexuality was used to construct of ideologies of marginalisation on the basis of religious, racial and ethnic difference. For example, Jews were often identified with 'queer animals' such as hyenas in Augustinian zoological discourse. As Debra Hassig notes, these texts deployed animal sexual deviance as a signifier for idolatry and spiritual

impurity.[2] Likewise, the racial coding of giants as black Africans in many romance texts while simultaneously portraying them as sexually voracious rapists evokes resonances with the hypersexualisation of blackness in modern racist ideology, which constructs the bogeyman figure of the sexually aggressive black rapist whilst also projecting white fantasies of promiscuous yet submissive black women.[3] Trans studies offers another avenue for expanding this research. Essays in the 'Tranimalities' special issue of *Transgender Studies Quarterly* indicate the value of exploring the intersection of animality and trans theory in analysis of contemporary thought and culture.[4] This analytical framework could be usefully applied to examine medieval texts. For instance, Augustinian zoological discourse featured animals which could change their biological sex, such as hyenas and hares. Likewise, the *Mabinogion*, a prominent collection of Middle Welsh stories recorded in two fourteenth-century manuscripts, relates the tale of Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, two brothers who are punished for the crime of rape by being successively transformed into opposite-sex pairs of animals and forced to copulate with each other.[5] Led by the self-advocacy of scholars of colour and trans scholars and influenced by political action outside of academia such as the activism of Black Lives Matter and the fight against transphobic 'bathroom bills', themes of race and transgender identity have become an increasingly important part of the critical conversation around medieval studies over the last few years. Medievalists now have the ethical imperative to confront the implications of this current critical moment for our own research. We need to decolonise our bibliographies, engage seriously with critical race theory, and unpick the racist and transphobic assumptions which shape our research. Had I begun this thesis now, I would have given these issues a far more prominent place in my analytical approach. However, I only became aware of much of the critical conversation around these issues late in the process of research, by which point it was not possible to significantly restructure my approach. To take a positive perspective on this issue, this offers a productive opportunity for me to build on my findings in future work by more extensively considering the relationship of themes of race and transgender identity to medieval discourses on animality and sexuality.

My thesis ultimately took a very different trajectory from what I had expected at the beginning of the project. At the outset of my doctoral research, I anticipated that I would

---

[2] Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries*, 145–54.

[3] bell hooks, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 67.

[4] Eva Hayward and Jami Weinstein, eds. "Tranimalities," Special issue, *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no.2 (2015).

[5] Sioned Davies, trans., *The Mabinogion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 47–64.

find much more evidence of animality being used as a signifier of queerness in late medieval culture. This was on account of previous research that I had conducted on representations of sexuality in the bestiary, which demonstrated the range of 'queer animals' in this text and how these were influenced by broader sexual ideologies.[6] As my research progressed, I found that my sources significantly challenged my expectations and led me in new and unexpected directions. The conclusion that animals were fundamental to the construction of normativity was not one which I had anticipated, but this is where my evidence had taken me. At times, I have felt that this conclusion sits uncomfortably with the political dimension inherent to work on medieval sexuality. A thesis such as this, which examines themes of sexuality and queerness, must engage with the politics of writing queer history and the writer's own place within that intellectual project. Reflecting on the life of Eleanor Rykener, Carolyn Dinshaw writes:

> As queer historical projects aim to promote a queer future, the possibility of queerness in the past – of lived lives or fictional texts – becomes crucial. Rykener doesn't have to function as a role model for latter-day queers, but the mere idea that such an obscure life suggests queerness in the past makes it seem less likely that queers could ever be completely exterminated in the future – not because there is a clear continuity of deviant identities or behaviours across time, but because queerness seems always to haunt dominant structures.[7]

What does my research offer to the project of building a deep queer past? This thesis has emphasised the repressive aspects of medieval ideologies: the exertion of institutional and cultural power over individuals and the construction of norms which hindered the free expression of sexual desire. This is not to deny the possibility of toleration in the later Middle Ages. For instance, Kadin Henningsen draws attention to how Rykener's testimony highlighted the support of the women around her who taught her the trade of sex work and provided her with female clothing.[8] Rykener's community was likely not the only one to accept individuals who defied the expectations of normative ideologies of gender and sexuality. Likewise, the history of medieval sexuality was not uniformly repressive at all times and in all places: while there is no evidence that anyone was executed for sodomy in

---

[6] T. Wingard, 'Hermaphrodite Hyenas and Promiscuous Partridges: Analysing Discourses of Sexuality and Gender in the Later Medieval Bestiary' (Masters dissertation, University of York, 2015).

[7] Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 140.

[8] Henningsen, 'Gender Labor and Becoming a Woman in the Rykener Case', 252.

England before the sixteenth century, sodomites were being regularly burned and drowned in Germany and the Low Countries by the fifteenth century.[9] However, following the model of Heather Love's call to reclaim histories of negative queer self-identification – of narratives of shame, self-hatred and suffering – I argue that in order to write authentic queer history, it is just as essential for scholars to confront how medieval societies constricted and limited queer lives as it is to explore histories of transgression, resistance and joy.[10] By demonstrating the role of the animal in the construction of normative ideology, this thesis aids the project of reconstructing medieval queer experience and producing a nuanced deep history for queer communities.

---

[9] Marc Boone, 'State Power and Illicit Sexuality: The Persecution of Sodomy in Late Medieval Bruges', *Journal of Medieval History* 22, no. 2 (1996): 135–53; Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 17–30.

[10] Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Abbreviations

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EETS ES, OS, SS	Early English Text Society Extra Series, Original Series, Supplementary Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
PL	Patrologia Latina
REED	Records of Early English Drama
Rolls Series	Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages
TEAMS METS	Teaching Association for Medieval Studies Middle English Text Series

Bibliography

Primary sources (unpublished)

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Latin 16169. Albert the Great. *De animalibus*. c.1301-1400.

British Library, London

Add. MS 47682. Holkham Bible Picture Book. c.1327-40.

Arundel MS 292. Devotional miscellany. c.1275-1300.

Cotton MS Cleopatra F.II. Papers relating to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. 1500-1650

Cotton MS Nero A.V. Miscellany. c.1150-c.1250.

Royal MS 2 B VII. The Queen Mary Psalter. 1310-1320.

Cambridge University Library, Cambridge

MS Dd.vii.6. Legal miscellany. c.1421-71.

MS Kk.4.25. Didactic miscellany. c.1230.

Kent Archives, Maidstone

DCb/J/X/8.3. Canterbury Consistory Court Act Books. Records of the Diocese of Canterbury. 1462-8.

DCb/PRC/3/2. Canterbury Archdeacons' Court Act Books. Records of the Diocese of Canterbury. 1504-11.

DrB/Pa6. Rochester Consistory Court Act Books. Records of the Diocese of Rochester. 1513-18.

The National Archives, London

SP 1/69. Letters and Papers vol. V. State Papers Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII. 1532.

Wellcome Library, London

MS 11. Pseudo-Albert the Great. *De secretis mulierum*. 1376.

MS 136. Pierre Boaistuau. *Histoires prodigieuses*. 1559.

West Sussex Record Office, Chichester

Ep I/10/2. Chichester Consistory Court Act Books. Records of the Diocese of Chichester. 1518-21.

Ep/I/27/STC I/9. Archdeaconry of Chichester Will Registers. Records of the Diocese of Chichester. 1557-9.

Par 95/1/1/1. West Grinstead Parish Registers. West Grinstead Parish Records. 1558-1653.

Par 183/1/1/1. Steyning Parish Registers. Steyning Parish Records. 1565-1676.

Primary sources (published)

Adelard of Bath. 'Questiones Naturales'. In *Adelard of Bath, Conversations with His Nephew: 'On the Same and the Different', 'Questions on Natural Science' and 'On Birds'*, edited and translated by Charles Burnett, 81–235. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Alain of Lille. 'De Planctu Naturae'. Edited by Nikolaus M. Häring. *Studi Medievali* 19, no. 2 (1978): 797–879.

Albert the Great. *De Animalibus Libri XXVI*. Edited by Hermann Stadler. 2 vols. Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916-20.

———. *On Animals: A Medieval 'Summa Zoologica'*. Translated by Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick. 2 vols. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999.

———. 'Quaestiones Super de Animalibus'. In *Sancti Doctoris Ecclesiae Alberti Magni Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Episcopi Opera Omnia*, edited by Ephrem Filthaut and Bernhard Geyer, XII:77–309. Aschendorff: Monasterii Westfalorum, 1955.

———. *Questions Concerning Aristotle's 'On Animals'*. Translated by Irven Michael Resnick and Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008.

Alcuin. *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesin*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Patrologia latina 100, cols. 0515-0570. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1851.

Ambrose. 'Exameron'. In *Sancti Ambrosii Opera*, edited by Karl Schenkl, 1:1–261. CSEL 32. Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1896.

Andreas Capellanus. *On Love*. Edited and translated by P.G. Walsh. London: Duckworth, 1982.

Andrew, Malcolm, and Ronald Waldron, eds. *Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, 4th ed. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002.

Aquinas, Thomas. *On Evil*. Edited by Brian Davies. Translated by Richard Regan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

———. 'Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo'. In *Opera Omnia*, edited by P.M. Gils, XXIII:1–381. Rome and Paris: Leonine Commission, 1982.

———. *Summa Theologiae*. Edited and translated by Thomas Gilby et al. LX vols. London: Blackfriars, 1964-1975.

Aristotle. *Generation of Animals*. Edited and translated by A.L. Peck. LCL 366. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942.

———. *Historia Animalium*. Edited and translated by D.M. Balme. III vols. LCL 437-439. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965-91.

———. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Edited and translated by H. Rackham. LCL 73. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926.

———. 'On the Soul'. In *On the Soul. Parva Naturalia. On Breath*. Edited and translated by W.S. Hett, 8-204. LCL 288. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957.

———. 'Parts of Animals'. In *Parts of Animals. Movement of Animals. Progression of Animals*, edited and translated by A.L. Peck and E.S. Forster, 52–435. LCL 323. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1937.

———. *Physics*. Edited and translated by P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford. II vols. LCL 228, 255. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1934-57.

Augustine. *De Doctrina Christiana*. Edited by Joseph Martin. CCSL 32. Turnhout: Brepols, 1962.

———. *On the City of God Against the Pagans*. Edited and translated by George E. McCracken et al. VII vols. LCL 411-417. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-72.

Barnes, Robert. *A Supplicatyon Made by Robert Barnes*. Antwerp: S. Cock, 1531.

Barnum, Priscilla Heath, ed. *Dives and Pauper*. II vols. EETS OS 275, 280, 323. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976-2004.

Bartholomaeus Anglicus. *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus'* De Proprietatibus Rerum*, A Critical Text*. Edited by M.C. Seymour. Translated by John Trevisa. II vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Beadle, Richard, ed. *The York Plays: A Critical Edition of the York Corpus Christi Play as Recorded in British Library Additional MS 35290*. II vols. EETS SS 23 and 24. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009-2011.

Bede. *On Genesis.* Translated by Calvin B. Kendall. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

———. *Opera, Pars II: Opera Exegetica, 1: Libri Qvator in Principivm Genesis Vsqve Ad Nativitatem Isaac et Eiedictionem Ismahelis Adnotationvm*. Edited by Charles W. Jones. CCSL 118. Turnhout: Brepols, 1967.

Boer, C. de, Martina G. de Boer, and Jeannette Theodora Maria van 't Sant, eds. *Ovide Moralisé*. Vol. III. Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1931.

Brereton, Georgine E., ed. *Des Grantz Geanz: An Anglo-Norman Poem*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1937.

Brie, Friedrich W.D., ed. *The Brut, or The Chronicles of England, Edited from MS. Rawl. B 171, Bodleian Library, Part I*. EETS OS 131. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1906.

Brinton, Thomas. *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*. Edited by Mary Aquinas Devlin. II vols. Camden Society Third Series 85 and 86. London: Royal Historical Society, 1954.

Brock, Edmund, ed. *Morte Arthure, or The Death of Arthur, Edited from Robert Thornston's MS. in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral*. EETS OS 8. London: N. Trübner & co, 1871.

Brown, Michelle P., ed. and trans. *The Holkham Bible Picture Book: A Facsimilie*. London: British Library, 2007.

Burchard of Worms. *Decretum*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Patrologia latina 140, cols. 0537-1057. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1853.

Burns, Robert I., ed. *Las Siete Partidas*. Translated by Samuel Parsons Scott. Vol. V. V vols. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Burton, Thomas. *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa, a Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396*. Edited by Edward A. Bond. Vol. III. III vols. Rolls Series 43. London: Longmans, 1868.

Burton, T.L., ed. S*idrak and Bokkus: A Parallel-Text Edition from Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 559 and British Library, MS Landsowne 793*. Vol. I. II vols. EETS OS 311. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Carasik, Michael, ed. *The Commentators' Bible: Genesis: The Rubin JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2018.

Carley, James P., and Julia Crick. 'Constructing Albion's Past: An Annotated Edition of *De Origine Gigantum*'. In *Arthurian Literature XIII*, 41–114. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995.

Carmody, Francis J., ed. *Physiologus Latinus (Versio B)*. Paris: Droz, 1939.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Edited by Larry D. Benson. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008

Chobham, Thomas. *Summa Confessorum*. Edited by F. Broomfield. Louvain and Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1968.

Christine de Pisan. *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Translated by Rosalind Brown. London: Penguin, 1999.

Clark, Willene B., ed. *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second Family Bestiary. Commentary, Art, Text and Translation*. Translated by Willene B. Clark. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006.

Clopper, Lawrence M., ed. *REED: Chester*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1979.

Cornwall, Julian, ed. *The Lay Subsidy Rolls for the County of Sussex 1524-1525*. Sussex Record Society 56. Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1956.

Curnow, Maureen Cheney. 'The *Livre de La Cité Des Dames* of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition'. PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1975.

Davies, Sioned, trans. *The Mabinogion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Davis, Norman, ed. *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*. EETS SS 1. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Denifle, H., and E. Chatelain, eds. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*. IV vols. Paris: Delalain, 1889-99.

de Burgh, John. *Pupilla Oculi*. Edited by Augustin Agge. Paris: Wolfgang Hopyl, 1510.

De Smedt, Carolus, Josephus De Backer, Franciscus Van Ortroy, and Josephus Van Den Gheyn, eds. 'A Treatis Contayninge the Lyfe and Maner of Death of That Most Holy Prelat and Constant Martyr of Christ John Fisher Bishop of Rochester and Cardinall of the Holy Church of Rome'. In *Analecta Bollandiana*, X:202–365. Paris and Brussels: Société Générale de Librairie Catholique/Société Belge de Librairie, 1891.

Duplès-Agier, Henri, ed. *Registre Criminel Du Chatelet de Paris, Du 6 Septembre 1389 Au 18 Mai 1392*. II vols. Paris: C.H. Lahure, 1861-4.

Dymmok, Roger. *Liber Contra XII Errores et Hereses Lollardorum*. Edited by H.S. Cronin. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1922.

Fein, Susanna Greer, David Raybin, and Ziolkowski, eds. 'A Bok of Swevenyng'. In *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, Vol. III. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2015.

Fish, Simon. *A Supplicacyon for the Beggers*. Antwerp: J. Grapheus, 1529.

Fowler, Joseph Thomas, ed. *Acts of the Chapter of the Collegiate Church of SS Peter and Wilfrid, Ripon, 1452-1506*. Surtees Society 64. Durham: Andrews & co., 1875.

Friedberg, Emil, ed. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. II vols. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1879-81.

Friedman, Albert B., and Norman T. Harrington, eds. *Ywain and Gawain*. EETS OS 254. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Fry, Edward Alexander, ed. *Calendar of Wills in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Chichester, 1482-1800*. London: British Record Society, 1915.

Gautier de Metz. *Mirrour of the World*. Edited by Oliver H. Prior. Translated by William Caxton. EETS ES 110. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1913.

Geoffrey of Monmouth. *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*. Edited by Neil Wright. IV vols. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985-91.

Gerald of Wales. 'Itinerarium Kambriae'. In *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, edited by James F. Dimock, VI:3–152. Rolls Series 21. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1868.

———. 'Topographia Hibernica'. In *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, edited by James F. Dimock, V:3–204. Rolls Series 21. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1867.

Gervaise. 'Le Bestiaire de Gervaise'. Edited by Paul Meyer. *Romania* 1, no. 4 (1872): 420–43.

Gibbs, Henry H., ed. *The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne*. EETS ES 6. London: Oxford University Press, 1868.

Ginzberg, Louis. *Legends of the Jews*. Translated by Henrietta Szold and Paul Radin. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003.

Gower, John. *Confessio Amantis*. Edited by Russell A. Peck. Translated by Andrew Galloway. 2nd ed. TEAMS METS. Vol I. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006.

Guillaume de Lorris, and Jean de Meun. *Le Roman de La Rose*. Edited by Félix Lecoy. III vols. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1966-70.

———. *The Romance of the Rose*. Translated by Frances Horgan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Guillaume le Clerc. *Le Bestiaire: Das Thierbuch Des Normannischen Dichters Guillaume Le Clerc*. Edited by Robert Reinsch. Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1892.

———. *The Bestiary of Guillaume Le Clerc, Originally Written in 1210-11*. Translated by George Claridge Druce. Ashford: Invicta Press, 1936.

Hall, Edward. *Hall's Chronicle*. Edited by Henry Ellis. London: J. Johnson, 1809.

Heffernan, C.F., ed. *Le Bone Florence of Rome*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976.

Henry, Avril, ed. *Biblia Paperum: A Facsimilie and Edition*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987.

———. *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun: A Middle English Translation of 'Speculum Humanae Salvationis'*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1986.

Henry de Bracton. *On the Laws and Customs of England*. Edited by George E. Woodbine. Translated by Samuel E. Thorne. IV vols. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968-77.

Herrtage, Sidney J.H., ed. *Catholicon Anglicum: An English-Latin Wordbook*. EETS OS 75. London: Trübner, 1881.

———, ed. 'Roland and Vernagu'. In *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear (About 1475 A.D.) (From the Unique Copy of Lekpreuik's Edition of 1572), With the Fragments of 'Roland and Vernagu' and 'Otuel' (From the Unique Auchinleck MS., about 1330 A.D.)*, 37–61. EETS ES 39. London: Humphrey Milford, 1931.

Higden, Ranulph. *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis, Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*. Edited by Churchill Babington. Translated by John Trevisa. IX vols. Rolls Series 41. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1865-86.

Hoeniger, Robert. *Der Schwarze Tod in Deutschland*. Berlin: Eugen Grosser, 1882.

Horrall, Sarah M., ed. *The Southern Version of* Cursor Mundi. V vols. Ottowa: University of Ottowa Press, 1978-2000.

Horrox, Rosemary. *The Black Death*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Hugh of St Victor. *De arca Noe morali*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Patrologia latina 176, cols. 0617-0680. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1854.

———. *Selected Spiritual Writings*. Translated by Aelred Squire. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.

Huth, Edward, ed. *The Parish Registers of Bolney, Sussex- 1541-1812*. Sussex Record Society 15. Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1912.

Isidore of Seville. *Etymologiarvm Sive Originvm Libri XX*. Edited by W.M. Lindsay. II vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911.

———. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*. Translated by Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, and J.A. Beach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Ivo of Chartes, *Decretum*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Patrologia latina 161, cols. 0048- 1036c. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1855.

Jacobus da Varagine. *Legenda Aurea Sancotorum, Sive Lombardica Historia*. Translated by William Caxton. London: William Caxton, 1483.

James, M.R. *The Bestiary: A Reproduction in Full of MS Ii. 4.25 in the University Library, Cambridge*. Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1928.

John of Reading. *Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis 1346-1367*. Edited by James Tait. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914.

Johnson, Charles, ed. *Registrum Hamonis Hethe, Diocesis Roffensis*. II vols. Canterbury and York Society 48, 49. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935-48.

Johnston, Alexandra F., and Margaret Rogerson, eds. *REED: York*. II vols. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1979.

Joslin, Mary Coker, and Carolyn Coker Joslin Watson, eds. and trans. *The Egerton Genesis*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Journal of the House of Lords. Vol. I. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1767.

Klausner, David N., ed. *REED: Herefordshire/Worcestershire*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Knighton, Henry. *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*. Edited and translated by G.H. Martin. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Krishna, Valerie, ed. *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1976.

Lancashire, Ian. *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Laskaya, Anne, and Eve Salisbury, eds. 'Emaré'. In *The Middle English Breton Lays*, 145–99. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995.

———, eds. 'Erle of Tolous'. In *The Middle English Breton Lays*, 309–65. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995.

———, eds. 'Sir Degare'. In *The Middle English Breton Lays*, 89–144. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995.

Lavynham, Richard. *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins, Edited with an Introduction, Notes and a Glossarial Index Etc. from MS Harley 211 in the British Museum, with Variants from Thirteen Other Copies*. Edited by J.P.W.M. Van Zutphen. Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1956.

Laȝamon. *Brut, Edited from British Museum Ms. Cotton Caligula A. IX and British Museum Ms. Cotton Otho C. XIII*. Edited by G.L. Brook and R.F. Leslie. II vols. EETS OS 250, 277. London: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Leach, Arthur F., ed. *Beverley Town Documents*. Selden Society 14. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1900.

Livingston, Michael, ed. *The Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament*. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011.

Lumiansky, R.M., and David Mills, eds. *The Chester Mystery Cycle*. II vols. EETS SS 3 and 9. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974-86.

Lupack, Alan, ed. 'The Sultan of Babylon'. In *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances*, 1–103. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990.

Lutz, J., and P. Perdrizet, eds. *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*. IV vols. Mulhouse: Ernest Meininger, 1907-9.

Lydgate, John. 'A Dietary, and a Doctrine for Pestilence'. In *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, edited by Henry Noble MacCracken, II:702–7. EETS OS 192. London: Humphrey Milford, 1934.

Lyndwood, William. *Provinciale, Seu Constituiones Angliae*. Edited by Henry Hall. Oxford: Richard Davis, 1679.

Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius. *Comentarii in Somnium Scipionis*. Edited by James Willis. Leipzig: Teubner, 1970.

Mannyng, Robert. *Robert of Brunne's 'Handlyng Synne', A.D. 1303, with Those Parts of the Anglo-French Treatise on Which It Was Founded, William of Wadington's 'Manuel Des Pechiez'*. Edited by Frederick J. Furnivall. II vols. EETS OS 119, 123. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901-3.

———. *The Story of England*. Edited by Frederick J. Furnivall. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1887.

McCarthy, Adrian James, ed. *Book to a Mother: An Edition with Commentary*. Salzburg: Institut für Aglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981.

McKeown, Simon, ed. *Monstrous Births: An Illustrative Introduction to Teratology in Early Modern England*. London: Indelible Inc., 1991.

McSparren, Frances, ed. *Octovian: Edited from Lincoln, Dean and Chapter Library, MS 91 and Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.2.38*. EETS OS 289. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Migne, J.P., ed. *Glossa Ordinaria*. Patrologia latina 113, cols. 0067- 1316. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1852.

Mills, Maldwyn, ed. *Lybeaus Desconus*. EETS OS 261. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969.

———, ed. *Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arther*. London: J.M. Dent, 1992.

Mirk, John. *Festial*. Edited by Susan Powell. II vols. EETS OS 334 and 335. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009-11.

———. *Instructions for Parish Priests, Edited from MS Cotton Claudius A II and Six Other Manuscripts, With Introduction, Notes and Glossary*. Edited by Gillis Kristensson. Lund: Gleerup, 1974.

Moll, Richard J., ed. *The Booke of Ovyde Named Methamorphose*. Translated by William Caxton. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2013.

Morris, Richard, ed. *Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem of the Fourteenth Century*. II vols. EETS OS 57, 59, 62, 66, 69, 99, 101. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1874.

Mustanoja, Tauno F., ed. 'Þe Gode Wif Tauhte Hire Douster Fele Sithe and Ofte'. In *The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter. The Good Wyfe Wold a Pylgremage. The Thewis of Gud Women*, 158–70. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran, 1948.

Nicholas of Lyra. *Biblia Sacra Cum Glossis, Interlineari et Ordinaria, Nicolai Lyrani Postilla et Moralitatibus, Burgensis Additionibus, & Thoringi Replicis*. VII vols. London: Gaspard Trechsel, 1545.

Nichols, Francis Morgan, ed. *Britton: The French Text Carefully Revised with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes*. Translated by Francis Morgan Nichols. II vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865.

Oresme, Nicole. *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: A Study of His 'De Causis Mirabilium' with Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*. Edited and translated by Bert Hansen. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985.

Origen. *Origenes Werke, Sechster Band: Homilien Zum Hexateuch*. Edited by W.A. Baehrens. Translated by Rufinus of Aquileia. Leipzig: J.C Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1920.

Paré, Ambroise. *Des Monstres et Prodiges*. Edited by Jean Céard. Geneva: Droz, 1971.

Parker, Sandra Lee, and L.R. Poos. 'A Consistory Court from the Diocese of Rochester, 1364-4'. *English Historical Review* 106, no. 420 (1991): 652–65.

Pearson, F.S. 'Records of a Ruridecanal Court of 1300'. In *Collectanea*, edited by Sidney Graves Hamilton, 70–79. London: Worcestershire Historical Society, 1912.

Pelster, Franz. 'Die Ersten Beiden Kapitel der Erklärung Alberts des Großen zu de Animalibus in ihrer Ursprünglichen Fassung, nach Cod. Vat. Lat. 718'. *Scholastik* 10 (1935): 229–40.

Peter Comestor. *Historia Scholastica*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Patrologia latina 198, cols. 1049-1722. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1855.

———. *Scolastica Historia: Liber Genesis*. Edited by Agneta Sylwan. CCCM 191. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.

Philippe de Thaon. *Bestiaire*. Edited by Luigina Morini. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2018.

Pickering, F.P., ed. *The Anglo-Norman Text of the 'Holkham Bible Picture Book'*. Anglo-Norman Texts 23. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971.

Pierre de Beauvais. *A Medieval Book of Beasts: Pierre de Beauvais' Bestiary*. Edited and translated by Guy R. Mermier. Lewis, Queenston and Lampter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

Poos, L.R., ed. *Lower Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in Late-Medieval England: The Courts of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, 1336-1349*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Powell, Margaret Joyce, ed. *The Pauline Epistles Contained in MS. Parker 32 Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*. EETS ES 116. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1916.

Powicke, F.M., and C.R. Cheney, eds. *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*. II vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-81.

Procter, Francis, and Christopher Wordsworth, eds. *Breviarium Ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*. II vols. Cambridge: Typis Academiae, 1879-86.

Pseudo-Albert the Great. *De secretis mulierum*. Lyons: Ioannes Quadratus, 1580.

———. *De secretis mulierum cum commento*. Edited by Lucas Panaetius. Venice: Petri Bergomatis, 1508.

———. *El De secretis mulierum, Atribuido a Alberto Magno. Estudio Edición CrÍtica y Traduccion*. Edited by José Pablo Barragán Nieto. Porto: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2012.

———. *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' 'De Secretis Mulierum' with Commentaries*. Translated by Helen Rodnite Lemay. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Pseudo-Augustine. *Dialogus quaestionum LVX*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Patrologia latina 40, cols. 0733- 0752. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1845.

Pseudo-Methodius. 'Þe Bygynnyng of Þe World and Þe Ende of Worldes'. In *'Dialogus Inter Militem et Clericum, Richard FitzRalph's Sermon: 'Defensio Curatorum', and Methodius: 'Þe Bygynnyng of Þe World and Þe Ende of Worldes' by John Trevisa, Vicar of Berkeley*, edited by Aaron Jenkins Perry, translated by John Trevisa, 94–112. EETS OS 167. London: Oxford University Press, 1925.

Raine, James, ed. *Depositions and Other Ecclesiastical Proceedings from the Courts of Durham, Extending from 1311 to the Reign of Elizabeth*. Surtees Society 21. London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1845.

Ranulph de Glanvill. *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*. Edited and translated by G.D.G. Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Rice, R. Garraway, ed. *Transcripts of Sussex Wills as Far as They Relate to Ecclesiological and Parochial Subjects, up to the Year 1560*. IV vols. Sussex Record Society 41, 42, 43, 45. Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1935-40.

Richardson, Frances E., ed. *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. EETS OS 256. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Richardson, H.G., and G.O. Sayles, eds. and trans. *Fleta*. IV vols. Selden Society 72. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1955.

Robert of Flamborough. *Liber Poenitentialis: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes*. Edited by J.J. Francis Firth. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1971.

Rolle, Richard. 'The Fire of Love'. In *'The Fire of Love' and 'The Mending of Life or the Rule of Living'*, edited by Ralph Harvey, translated by Richard Misyn, 1–104. EETS OS 106. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1896.

Rymer, Thomas, ed. *Foedera*. 3rd ed. XX vols. The Hague: Joannem Neulme, 1739-45.

St. Germain, Christopher. *A Treatise Concernynge the Diuision Betwene the Spirytualtie and Temporaltie*. London: Robert Redman, 1532.

Spector, Stephen, ed. *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*. II vols. EETS SS 11 and 12. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Stevens, Martin, and A.C. Cawley, eds. *The Towneley Plays*. II vols. EETS SS 13 and 14. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Stokes, James, ed. *REED: Lincolnshire*. II vols. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Richard de Fournival. *Le 'Bestiaire d'Amour' et La 'Response Du Bestiaire'*. Edited and translated by Gabriel Bianciotto. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009.

Taguchi, Mayumi, ed. *The Historye of the Patriarks: Edited from Cambridge, St John's College MS G.31*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2010.

Tanner, Norman P. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. II vols. London: Sheed & Ward, 1990.

Tempier, Étienne. *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277*. Edited by David Piché and Claude Lafleur. Paris: J. Vrin, 1999.

Thomas of Cantimpré. *Liber de Natura Rerum: Editio Princeps Secundum Codices Manuscriptos*. Edited by Helmut Boese. Vol. I. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973.

Usk, Adam. *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421*. Edited and translated by C. Given-Wilson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

Thompson, A. Hamilton, ed. *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531*. III vols. Lincoln Record Society 33, 35, 37. Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1940-47.

Turner, Cuthbert Hamilton, ed. *Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Iuris Antiquissima: Canonum et Conciliorum Graecorum Interpretationes Latinae*. II vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1907.

Vantuono, William, ed. *The Pearl Poems: An Omnibus Edition*. II vols. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984.

Venables, Edmund, ed. *Chronicon Abbatiae de Parco Ludae: The Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey*. Translated by A.R. Maddison. Horncastle: Lincolnshire Record Society, 1891.

Wace. *La Partie Arthurienne Du Roman de Brut (Extrait Du Manuscrit B.N. Fr.794)*. Edited by Ivor Deinlol Osborn Arnold. Paris: Klincksieck, 1962.

Wade, James, ed. *Sir Torrent of Portingale*. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2017.

Walsingham, Thomas. *The St Albans Chronicle: The 'Chronica Maiora' of Thomas Walsingham*. Edited and translated by John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss. II vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002-11.

Whittick, Christopher, and Ian Forrest. 'The Thirteenth-Century Visitation Records of the Diocese of Hereford'. *English Historical Review* 131, no. 551 (2016): 737–62.

Wiggins, Alison, ed. *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*. TEAMS METS. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004.

William of Auvergne. 'De Universo'. In *Opera Omnia*, edited by F. Hotot, I:592–1074. Paris: Dionysium Thierry, 1674.

Wilkins, David, ed. *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, Ab Anno MCCCL Ad Annum MDXLV, Accedunt Constitutiones et Alia Ad Historiam Ecclesiae Anglicanae Spectantia*. IV vols. London: R. Gosling et al., 1737.

Wirtjes, Hanneke, ed. *The Middle English Physiologus*. EETS OS 299. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Wycliffe, John. *Trialogus Cum Supplemento Trialogi*. Edited by Gotthard Lechler. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869.

Databases

Cause Papers in the Diocesan Courts of the Archbishopric of York, 1300-185. Accessed March 1, 2018. https://www.dhi.ac.uk/causepapers/.

Consistory: Testimony in the Late Medieval London Consistory Court. Accessed March 1, 2018. http://consistory.cohds.ca/.

Kunera Database for Late Medieval Badges and Ampullae. Accessed Aug 16, 2020. https://www.kunera.nl.

Bibles

Challoner, Richard, ed. *The Holy Bible, translated from the Latin Vulgat: diligently compared with the Hebrew, Greek, and other editions in divers languages, and first published by the English College at Doway, Anno 1609: newly revised, and corrected, according to the Clementin edition of the scriptures: with annotations for clearing up the principal difficulties of Holy Writ*. Dublin: n.p., 1750.

Colunga, Alberto, and Lorenzo Turrado, eds. *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*. Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1946.

Forshall, Josiah, and Frederick Madden, eds. *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his Followers*. IV vols. Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1850.

Secondary sources

Abeele, Baudouin van den. 'Un Bestiaire Latin à la Croisée des Genres. Le Manuscrit Cambridge UL Gg.6.5 ("Quatrième Famille" du Bestiaire Latin)'. *Reinardus* 13 (2000): 215–36.

———. 'Une Version Moralisée du *De Animalibus* d'Aristote (XIVe Siècle)'. In *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens, 338–54. Louvain: University of Louvais Press, 1999.

Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

———. 'Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals'. In *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, edited by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, 55–84. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Open: Man and Animal.* Translated by Kevin Attell. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Aiken, Pauline. 'The Animal History of Albertus Magnus and Thomas of Cantimpré'. *Speculum* 22, no. 2 (1947): 205–25.

Alaimo, Stacy. 'Eluding Capture: The Science, Culture, and Pleasure of "Queer" Animals'. In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 51–72. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Allen, Don Cameron. *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963.

Anzulewicz, Henryk. 'Die Aristotelische Biologie in den Frühwerken des Albertus Magnus'. In *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens, 159–88. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.

Arnold, John H. 'Persecution and Power in Medieval Europe'. *American Historical Review* 123, no. 1 (2018): 165–74.

Ashley, Benedict M. 'St. Albert and the Nature of Natural Science'. In *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980*, edited by James A. Weisheipl, 73–102. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980.

Ashley, Kathleen M. 'Medieval Courtesy Literature and Dramatic Mirrors of Female Conduct'. In *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, edited by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, 25–38. New York and London: Methuen, 1987.

Asúa, Miguel de. 'Medicine and Philosophy in Peter of Spain's Commentary on "De Animalibus"'. In *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens, 189–211. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.

Bagemihl, Bruce. *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity.* London: Profile Books, 1999.

Balss, Heinrich. *Albertus Magnus als Biologe.* Stuttgart: Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H., 1947.

Barron, W.R.J. '*Chevalere Assigne* and the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*'. *Medium Aevum* 36, no. 1 (1967): 25–37.

———. 'Versions and Texts of the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*'. *Romania* 89, no. 356 (1968): 481–538.

Bartlett, Jennifer. 'Arthur's Dinner; or, Robert Thornton Goes Shopping'. *Arthuriana* 26, no. 1 (2016): 165–79.

Baxter, Ron. 'A Baronial Bestiary: Heraldic Evidence for the Patronage of MS Bodley 764'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 196–200.

———. *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998.

———. 'Learning From Nature: Lessons in Virtue and Vice in the *Physiologus* and Bestiaries'. In *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*, edited by Colum Hourihane, 29–41. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Beattie, Cordelia. *Medieval Single Women: The Politics of Social Classification in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

———. 'Single Women, Work, and Family: The Chancery Dispute of Jane Wynde and Margaret Clerk'. In *Voices from the Bench: The Narratives of Lesser Folk in Medieval Trials*, edited by Michael Goodich, 177–202. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Beattie, Cordelia, and Kirsten A. Fenton, eds. *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Beek, Anna Lena van. 'Riesen in Der Literatur Des Mittelalters'. PhD dissertation, University of Hamburg, 2020.

Beirne, Piers. 'On the Sexual Assault of Animals: A Sociological View'. In *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, edited by Angela N.H. Creager and William Chester Jordan, 193–227. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002.

Bell, David. 'Queernaturecultures'. In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 134–45. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Ben-Atar, Doron S., and Richard D. Brown. *Taming Lust: Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Benedictow, Ole J. *The Black Death 1346-1353: The Complete History*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004.

Bennett, Judith M. '"Lesbian-Like" and the Social History of Lesbianisms'. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (2000): 1–24.

Bevacqua, Maria. *Rape on the Public Agenda: Feminism and the Politics of Sexual Assault*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000.

Bildhauer, Bettina, and Robert Mills. 'Introduction: Conceptualizing the Monstrous'. In *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, edited by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 1–27. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Biller, Peter. 'Confession in the Middle Ages: Introduction'. In *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, edited by Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis, 3–33. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1998.

———. *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Björkman, Eric. 'Etymological Notes'. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 5, no. 4 (1905): 501–4.

Boone, Marc. 'State Power and Illicit Sexuality: The Persecution of Sodomy in Late Medieval Bruges'. *Journal of Medieval History* 22, no. 2 (1996): 135–53.

Boureau, Alain. *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*. Translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Bossy, John. 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of Reformation'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975): 21–38.

Boswell, John. *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Bovaird-Abbo, Kristin. 'Is Geoffrey Chaucer's "Tale of Sir Thopas" a Rape Narrative? Reading Thopas in Light of the 1382 Statute of Rapes'. *Quidditas* 35 (2014): 7–28.

Boyle, Leonard E. 'Summae Confessorum'. In *Les Genres Littéraires dans les Sources Théologiques et Philosophiques Mediévales: Définition, Critique et Exploitation. Actes du Colloque International de Louvain-la-Neuve 25-27 Mai 1981*, 227–37. Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982.

Bradbury, Nancy M. *Writing Aloud: Storytelling in Late Medieval England*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Brandl, Leopold. *Die Sexualethik des Heiligen Albertus Magnus*. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1955.

Brinded, Timothy Simon. 'The Meanings of Late Medieval and Early Modern Giants: An Analysis Using English Literary, Visual and Material Sources'. PhD dissertation, University of Chichester, 2014.

Brooten, Bernadette J. *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Brown, Carmen. 'Bestiary Lessons on Pride and Lust'. In *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, edited by Debra Hassig, 53–70. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999.

Brundage, James A. 'Intermarriage between Christians and Jews in Medieval Canon Law'. *Jewish History* 3, no. 1 (1988): 25–40.

———. *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

———. *Medieval Canon Law*. London and New York: Longman, 1995.

Burge, Amy. *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Burger, Glenn, and Steven F. Kruger. 'Introduction'. In *Queering the Middle Ages*, edited by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, xi–xxiii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

———, eds. *Queering the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Burgwinkle, Bill. 'État Présent: Queer Theory and the Middle Ages'. *French Studies* 60, no. 1 (2006): 78–88.

Burnett, Charles. 'The Introduction of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy into Great Britain: A Preliminary Survey of the Manuscript Evidence'. In *Aristotle in Britain During the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the International Conference at Cambridge, 8th-11th April 1994, Organised by the Société Internationale Pour l'Étude de La Philosophie Médiévale*, edited by John Marenbon, 21–50. Turnhout: Brepols, 1996.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York and London: Routledge, 1993.

———. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.

Bychowski, M.W., and Dorothy Kim. 'Visions of Medieval Trans Feminism: An Introduction'. *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55, no. 1 (2019): 6–41.

Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Metamorphosis and Identity*. New York: Zone Books, 2001.

Cadden, Joan. 'Albertus Magnus' Universal Physiology: The Example of Nutrition'. In *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980*, edited by James A. Weisheipl, 321–39. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980.

———. *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

———. *Nothing Natural Is Shameful: Sodomy and Science in Late Medieval Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

———. 'Sciences/Silences: The Natures and Languages of "Sodomy" in Peter of Abano's *Problemata* Commentary'. In *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, edited by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, 40–57. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

———. 'Trouble in the Earthly Paradise: The Regime of Nature in Late Medieval Christian Culture'. In *The Moral Authority of Nature*, edited by Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, 207–31. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Calabrese, Michael, and Eric Eliason. 'The Rhetorics of Sexual Pleasure and Intolerance in the Middle English "Cleanness"'. *Modern Language Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (1995): 247–75.

Camille, Michael. *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*. London: Reaktion Books, 1992.

———. 'Manuscript Illumination and the Art of Copulation'. In *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, edited by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, 58–90. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Campbell, Kofi Omoniyi Sylvanus. *Literature and Culture in the Black Atlantic: From Pre- to Post-Colonial*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Cannon, Christopher. 'Chaucer and Rape: Uncertainty's Certainties'. In *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, edited by Elizabeth Robertson and Christina M. Rose, 255–80. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

———. '"Raptus" in the Chaumpaigne Release and a Newly Discovered Document Concerning the Life of Geoffrey Chaucer'. *Speculum* 68 (1993): 74–94.

Caroti, Stefano. 'Oresme, Nicole'. In *Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 23:350–54. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008.

Cartlidge, Neil. '"Thereof Seyus Clerkus": Slander, Rape and *Sir Gowther*'. In *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, edited by Corrine Saunders, 135–147. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

Casteen, Elizabeth. 'Rape and Rapture: Violence, Ambiguity and "Raptus" in Medieval Thought'. In *The Sacred and the Sinister. Studies in Medieval Religion and Magic*, edited by David J. Collins, 91–116. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.

Caviness, Madeline H. *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and the Scopic Economy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Chapman, Colin R. *Ecclesiastical Courts, Officials and Records: Sin, Sex and Probate*. 2nd ed. Dursley: Lochin Publishing, 1997.

Charbonneau, Joanne A. 'From Devil to Saint: Transformations in *Sir Gowther*'. In *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, edited by Phillipa Hardman, 21–28. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002.

Cheesman, Clive. 'Partridges: The History of a Prohibition'. *The Coat of Arms* 4, no. 215 (2008): 29–62.

Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.

Cheney, C.R. *Medieval Texts and Studies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Chenu, Marie-Dominique. *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*. Translated by Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Chiffoleau, Jacques. 'Contra Naturam: Pour une Approche Casuistique et Procédurale de la Nature Médiévale'. *Micrologus* 4 (1996): 265–312.

Chism, Christine. *Alliterative Revivals*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Christie, Sheila. 'The Chester Cycle'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, edited by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker, 21–33. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Churchill, Irene Josephine. *Canterbury Administration: The Administrative Machinery of the Archbishopric of Canterbury Illustrated from Original Records*. II vols. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1933.

Clark, Robert L.A., and Claire Sponsler. 'Queer Play: The Cultural Work of Crossdressing in Medieval Drama'. *New Literary History* 28, no. 2 (1997): 319–44.

Clopper, Lawrence M. *Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

———. 'The History and Development of the Chester Cycle'. *Modern Philology* 75, no. 3 (1978): 219–46.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. "every ark." *In the Middle* (blog). Jul 24, 2018. Accessed Mar 02, 2019. http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2018/07/every-ark.html.

———. *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

———. 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)'. In *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 3–25. London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

———. "Noah's Arkive." *In the Middle* (blog). Mar 17, 2015. Accessed Mar 02, 2019. http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2015/03/noahs-arkive.html.

———. *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

———. "Outside Noah's Ark: Sympathy and Survival as the Waters Rise." Paper presented at International Medieval Congress. University of Leeds. July 3-6, 2017.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, and Julian Yates. "On generation space ships and Noah's ark." *In the Middle* (blog). Dec 30, 2015. Accessed Mar 02, 2019. http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2018/12/on-generation-space-ships-and-noahs-ark.html.

Cohen, Jeremy. *Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It: The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Cohn, Norman. *Noah's Flood: The Genesis Story in Western Thought*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996.

Colebrook, Claire. 'How Queer Can You Go? Theory, Normality and Normativity'. In *Queering the Non/Human*, edited by Myra H. Hird and Noreen Giffney, 17–34. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Coleman, Joyce. *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Coletti, Theresa. 'Purity and Danger: The Paradox of Mary's Body and the En-Gendering of the Infancy Narrative in the English Mystery Cycle'. In *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, edited by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, 65–95. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Connell, Sophia M. 'Aristotle and Galen on Sex Difference and Reproduction: A New Approach to an Ancient Rivalry'. *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 31, no. 3 (2000): 405–27.

Crane, Susan. 'A Taxonomy of Creatures in the Second-Family Bestiary'. *New Medieval Literatures* 10 (2008): 1–48.

———. *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

———. *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1986.

Cressy, David. *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Crofts, Thomas H. 'Perverse and Contrary Deeds: The Giant of Mont Saint Michel and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*'. In *The Erotic in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, edited by Amanda Hopkins and Cory James Rushton, 116–131. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007.

Dalrymple, Roger. '*Torrent of Portyngale* and the Literary Giants'. In *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, edited by Corrine Saunders, 159–70. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

Daston, Lorraine, and Fernando Vidal. 'Introduction: Doing What Comes Naturally'. In *The Moral Authority of Nature*, edited by Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, 1–20. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Daston, Lorraine, and Katharine Park. *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750*. New York: Zone Books, 2001.

Davenport, Tony. 'Abbreviation and the Education of the Hero in *Chevalere Assigne*'. In *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, edited by Phillipa Hardman, 9–20. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002.

Dekkers, Midas. *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality*. Translated by Paul Vincent. London and New York: Verso, 1994.

De Leemans, Pieter, and Matthew Klemm. 'Animals and Anthropology in Medieval Philosophy'. In *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, edited by Brigitte Resl, 153–78. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007.

De Mayo, Thomas B. *The Demonology of William of Auvergne: By Fire and Sword*. Lewis, Queenston and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007.

Denholm-Young, Noël. 'Who Wrote "Fleta"?' *English Historical Review* 58, no. 229 (1943): 1–12.

Dennys, Rodney Onslow. *The Heraldic Imagination*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1975.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet. Translated by David Wills. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

Diamond, Arlyn. 'Heroic Subjects: Women and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*'. In *Medieval Women: Text and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain. Essays for Felicity Riddy.*, edited by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchison, Carol M. Meale, and Lesley Johnson, 293–308. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.

Dines, Ilya. 'The Earliest Use of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*: Third Family Bestiaries'. *Viator* 44, no. 1 (2013): 107–118.

Dinshaw, Carolyn. *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999.

Donahue Jr., Charles. *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages: Arguments About Marriage in Five Courts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

———. *The Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts, Part II: England*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1994.

Dunbabin, Jean. 'Jacques Le Goff and the Intellectuals'. In *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History*, edited by Miri Rubin, 157–67. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997.

Dunn, Caroline. *Stolen Women in Medieval England: Rape, Abduction and Adultery, 1100-1500*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction*. London and New York: Verso, 2007.

Ehrle, Franz. 'John Peckham Über den Kampf des Augustinismus und Aristotelismus in der Zweiten Hälfte des 13. Jhs.' *Zeitschrift Für Katholische Theologie* 13 (1889): 172–93.

Ekholst, Christine. *A Punishment for Each Criminal: Gender and Crime in Swedish Medieval Law*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014.

Elliott, Dyan. *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

Elmes, Melissa Ridley. 'He Dreams of Dragons: Alchemical Imagery in the Medieval Dream Visions of King Arthur'. *Arthuriana* 27, no. 1 (2017): 73–94.

Epstein, Stephen A. *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Evans, Murray J. *Rereading Middle English Romance: Manuscript Layout, Decoration, and the Rhetoric of Composite Structure*. London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

Evans, Ruth. 'Body Politics: Engendering Medieval Cycle Drama'. In *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, edited by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson, 112–39. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

———. 'Feminist Re-Enactments: Gender and the Towneley "Vxor Noe"'. In *A Wyf Ther Was: Essays in Honour of Paule Mertens-Fonck*, edited by Juliette Dor, 141–54. Liège: University of Liège, 1992.

Fein, Susanna. 'The Contents of Robert Thornton's Manuscripts'. In *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, edited by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston, 13–65. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2014.

Field, P.J.C. '*Morte Arthure*, the Montagus, and Milan'. *Medium Aevum* 78, no. 1 (2009): 98–117.

Finch, Andrew John. 'Sexuality Morality and Canon Law: The Evidence of the Rochester Consistory Court'. *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994): 261–75.

Finke, Laurie, and Martin Shichtman. 'The Mont St. Michel Giant: Sexual Violence and Imperialism in the Chronicles of Wace and Laʒamon'. In *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts*, edited by Anna Roberts, 56–74. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998.

Finlayson, John. 'Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount'. *Medium Aevum* 33, no. 2 (1964): 112–20.

Fitzgerald, Christina M. 'Manning the Ark in York and Chester'. *Exemplaria* 15, no. 2 (2003): 351–84.

Flannery, Mary C., and Katie L. Walter. 'Introduction: Imagining Inquisition'. In *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England*, edited by Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter, 1–7. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013.

Fletcher, Alan J. 'Marginal Glosses in the N-Town Manuscript, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian D.VIII'. *Manuscripta* 25, no. 2 (1981): 113–17.

Forrest, Ian. 'Anti-Lollard Polemic and Practice in Late Medieval England'. In *Authority and Subversion*, edited by Linda Clark, 63–74. The Fifteenth Century, III. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003.

———. 'The Transformation of Visitation in Thirteenth-Century England'. *Past and Present* 221 (2013): 3–38.

———. 'Trust and Doubt: The Late Medieval Bishop and Local Knowledge'. *Studies in Church History* 52 (2016): 164–85.

———. *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. London: Penguin, 1978.

Fraiman, Susan. 'Pussy Panic versus Liking Animals: Tracking Gender in Animal Studies'. *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 1 (2012): 89–115.

Franklin-Brown, Mary. *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Frantzen, Allen. 'The Disclosure of Sodomy in *Cleanness*'. *PMLA* 111, no. 3 (1996): 451–64.

Freedman, Paul. *Images of the Medieval Peasant*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

French, Roger, and Andrew Cunningham. *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996.

Friedman, John Block. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

Fudge, Erica. *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006.

———. *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000.

Furrow, Melissa. *Expectations of Romance: The Reception of a Genre in Medieval England*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009.

Gaard, Greta. 'Posthumanism, Ecofeminism, and Inter-Species Relations'. In *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, edited by Sherilyn MacGregor, 115–29. London: Routledge, 2017.

Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Gee, Stacey. '"At the Sygne of the Cardynalles Hat": The Book Trade and the Market for Books in Yorkshire, c.1450-1550'. PhD dissertation, Univeristy of York, 1999.

George, Wilma B., and William Brunsdon Yapp. *The Naming of the Beasts: Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary*. London: Duckworth, 1991.

Giffney, Noreen, Michelle M. Sauer, and Diane Watt, eds. *The Lesbian Premodern*. New York: Pailgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Godden, Richard H., and Asa Simon Mittman. 'Embodied Difference: Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman'. In *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World*, edited by Richard H. Godden and Asa Simon Mittman, 3–31. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

———, eds. *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Goldberg, Jeremy. 'Cherrylips, the Creed Play, and Conflict: York in the Age of Richard III'. *Czech and Slovak Journal of the Humanities* 2016, no. 2 (2017): 29–42.

———. 'Childhood and Gender in Later Medieval England'. *Viator* 39, no. 1 (2008): 249–62.

———. *Communal Discord, Child Abduction, and Rape in the Later Middle Ages*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

———. 'Coventry's "Lollard" Programme of 1492 and the Making of Utopia'. In *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities, 1200-1630*, edited by Rosemary Horrox and Sarah Rees Jones, 97–116. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

———. 'From Tableaux to Text: The York Corpus Christi Play ca.1378-1428'. *Viator* 43, no. 2 (2012): 247–76.

———. 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation in the Church Courts in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of the Court of York'. *Gender and History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 43–59.

———. 'John Skathelok's Dick: Voyeurism and "Pornography" in Late Medieval England'. In *Medieval Obscenities*, edited by Nicola McDonald, 105–23. York: York Medieval Press, 2006.

———. 'Performing the Word of God: Corpus Christi Drama in the Northern Province'. In *Life and Thought in the Northern Church c.1100-c.1700*, edited by Diana Wood, 145–70. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999.

———. 'The Drowned Child: An Essay in Medieval Cultural History'. *WerkstattGeschichte* 63 (2013): 7–23.

———. *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300-1520*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Göller, Karl Heinz. 'Reality versus Romance: A Reassessment of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*'. In *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, edited by Karl Heinz Göller, 15–29. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.

———. 'The Dream of the Dragon and Bear'. In *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, edited by Karl Heinz Göller, 130–39. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.

Goode, Erich. 'The Sociology of Deviance: An Introduction'. In *The Handbook of Deviance*, edited by Erich Goode, 29–56. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Grant, Edward. 'Scientific Thought in Fourteenth-Century Paris: Jean Buridan and Nicole Oresme'. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 314 (1978): 105–26.

Gravdal, Kathryn. *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.

Gravestock, Pamela. 'Did Imaginary Animals Exist?' In *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, edited by Debra Hassig, 119–40. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999.

Green, Monica H. *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011.

Guhl, A.M. 'Unisexual Mating in a Flock of White Leghorn Hens'. *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 51, no. 1 (1948): 107–11.

Gutmann, Sara. 'Chaucer's Chicks: Feminism and Falconry in "The Knight's Tale", "The Squire's Tale", and *The Parliament of Fowls*'. In *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, edited by Carolynn Van Dyke, 69–83. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Guynn, Noah D. *Allegory and Sexual Ethics in the High Middle Ages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Haist, Margaret. 'The Lion, Bloodline, and Kingship'. In *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, edited by Debra Hassig, 3–22. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999.

Hanawalt, Barbara A. *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Hanks Jr., D. Thomas. "'Quicke Bookis" - The Corpus Christi Drama and English Children in the Middle Ages'. *Journal of Popular Culture* 19, no. 4 (1986): 63–73.

Halperin, David M. *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Historiography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Hansen, Bert. '*De causis mirabilium*: Study'. In *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: A Study of His De Causis Mirabilium with Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, edited and translated by Bert Hansen, 3-133. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1985.

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.

———. 'The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness'. In *Manifestly Haraway*, 91–198. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

———. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Hardman, Phillipa. 'Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of "Household Miscellanies" in Late-Medieval England'. In *Women and Writing c.1340-c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, edited by Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 15–33. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2010.

Hargreaves, H. 'Sir John Oldcastle and Wycliffite Views on Clerical Marriage'. *Medium Aevum* 42 (1973): 141–45.

Harris, Carissa M. *Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018.

———. 'Rape Narratives, Courtly Critique, and the Pedagogy of Sexual Negotiation in the Middle English Pastourelle'. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2016): 263–87.

Hayward, Eva, and Jami Weinstein, eds. "Tranimalities." Special issue. *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no.2 (2015).

Helmholz, R.H. 'Local Ecclesiastical Courts in England'. In *The History of Courts and Procedure in Medieval Canon Law*, edited by Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington, 344–91. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016.

———. *The Oxford History of the Laws of England, Vol. I: The Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Heng, Geraldine. *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

———. 'England's Dead Boys: Telling Tales of Christian-Jewish Relations Before and After the First European Explusion of the Jews'. *MLN* 127, no. 5 (2012): 54–85.

Henningsen, Kadin. '"Calling [Herself] Eleanor": Gender Labor and Becoming a Woman in the Rykener Case'. *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55, no. 1 (2019): 249–66.

Hinds, Sarah. 'Late Medieval Sexual Badges as Sexual Signifiers: A Material Culture Reappraisal'. *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55, no. 2 (2019): 170–91.

Histed, Elise Bennett. 'Mediaeval Rape: A Conceivable Defence?' *Cambridge Law Journal* 63, no. 3 (2004): 743–69.

Hodges, Laura F. 'Noe's Wife: Type of Eve and Wakefield Spinner'. In *Equally in God's Image: Women in the Middle Ages*, edited by Julia Bolton Holloway, Constance S. Wright, and Joan Bechtold, 30–39. New York: Peter Lang, 1990.

Holton, Frederick S. 'The Wakefield Noah: Notes Towards a Patristic Interpretation'. *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1992): 55–72.

hooks, bell. *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

Hornbeck II, J. Patrick. 'Theologies of Sexuality in English "Lollardy"'. *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60, no. 1 (2009): 19–44.

———. *What Is a Lollard? Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Horrall, Sarah M. 'An Old French Source for the "Genesis" Section of "Cursor Mundi"'. *Mediaeval Studies* 40 (1978): 361–73.

———. 'William Caxton's Biblical Translation'. *Medium Aevum* 53, no. 1 (1984): 91–98.

Houwen, Luuk. 'Animal Parallelism in Medieval Literature and the Bestiaries: A Prelimary Investigation'. *Neophilologus* 78, no. 3 (1994): 484–96.

Hoyle, R.W. 'Taxation and the Mid-Tudor Crisis'. *Economic History Review* 51, no. 4 (1998): 649–75.

Hudson, Anne. 'Dymoke [Dymock], Roger (fl. 1370–c. 1400), prior of Boston and theologian.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Sept 23, 2004. Accessed Dec 8, 2019. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8361.

Hudson, T.P. *A History of the County of Sussex*. Vol. 6 pt 2. Victoria County History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Huebert, David. 'Species Panic: Human Continuums, Trans Andys, and Cyberotic Triangles in "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?"' *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (2015): 244–60.

Hughes, Jonathan. *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988.

Hünemörder, Christian. 'Die Zoologie des Albertus Magnus'. In *Albertus Magnus Doctor Universalis 1280/1980*, edited by Gerbert Meyer and Albert Zimmerman, 235–48. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1980.

Huot, Sylvia. *Outsiders: The Humanity and Inhumanity of Giants in Medieval French Prose Romance*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016.

Ingram, Martin. *Carnal Knowledge: Regulating Sex in England, 1470-1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Jacquart, Danielle, and Claude Thomasset. *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Matthew Adamson. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.

James, Mervyn. 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town'. *Past and Present* 98 (1983): 3–29.

James, M.R. *The Bestiary: A Reproduction in Full of MS Ii. 4.25 in the University Library, Cambridge*. Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1928.

Johnston, Michael. *Romance and the Gentry in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Jones, Karen. *Gender and Petty Crime in Late Medieval England: The Local Courts in Kent, 1460-1560*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006.

Jones, Malcolm. 'The Secular Badges'. In *Heilig En Profaan 1: 1000 Laat-Middeleeuwse Insignes Uit de Collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen*, edited by H.J.E. van Beuningen and A.M. Koldeweij, 99–109. Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 1993.

———. 'The Sexual and the Secular Badges'. In *Heilig En Profaan 2: 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse Insignes Uit Openbare En Particuliere Collecties*, edited by H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldeweij, and D. Kicken, 196–206. Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 2001.

Jordan, Mark D. *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Karras, Ruth Mazo. '"Because the Other Is a Poor Woman She Shall Be Called His Wench": Gender, Sexuality, and Social Status in Late Medieval England'. In *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, edited by Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternack, 210–29. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Karras, Ruth Mazo, and David Lorenzo Boyd. '"*Ut Cum Muliere*": A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London'. In *Premodern Sexualities*, edited by Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero, 99–116. London: Routledge, 1996.

Karras, Ruth Mazo, and Tom Linkinen. 'John/Eleanor Ryekener Revisted'. In *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies: Essays in Honor of E. Jane Burns*, edited by Laine E. Doggett and Daniel E. O'Sullivan, 111–22. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016.

Kay, Sarah. *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

———. '"The English Bestiary", the Continental *Physiologus*, and the Intersections Between Them'. *Medium Aevum* 85, no. 1 (2016): 118–42.

Kay, Sarah, and Nicolette Zeeman. 'Versions of the Natural'. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 49, no. 3 (2019): 445–56.

Keen, Elizabeth. 'Separate or Together? Questioning the Relationship Between the Encyclopedia and Bestiary Traditions'. *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 2 (2006): 121–139.

Keiser, Elizabeth B. *Courtly Desire and Medieval Homophobia: The Legitimation of Sexual Pleasure in 'Cleanness' and Its Contexts*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997.

Keiser, George R. 'Robert Thornton: Gentleman, Reader and Scribe'. In *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, edited by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston, 67–108. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2014.

Kelly, Henry Ansgar. 'Inqusition, Public Fame and Confession: General Rules and English Practice'. In *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England*, edited by Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter, 8–29. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013.

———. 'Meanings and Uses of "Raptus" in Chaucer's Time'. *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 20 (1998): 101–65.

Kermode, Jenny. 'New Brooms in Early Tudor Chester?' In *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England 1000-1700*, edited by John C. Appleby and Paul Dalton, 144–57. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997.

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia and London: W.B. Saunders Company, 1949.

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia and London: W.B. Saunders Company, 1953.

Kiser, Lisa J. 'The Animals in Chester's "Noah's Flood"'. *Early Theatre* 14, no. 1 (2011): 15–44.

Kitchell Jr., Kenneth F, and Irven Michael Resnick. 'Introduction: The Life and Works of Albert the Great'. In *On Animals: A Medieval 'Summa Zoologica'*, translated by Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick, I:1–42. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Kłosowska, Anna. *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Knight, Stephen. 'The Social Function of the Middle English Romances'. In *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology and History*, edited by David Aers, 99–122. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986.

Köhler, Theodor Wolfram. 'Die Wissenschaftstheroetische und Inhaltliche Bedeutung der Rezeption von "De Animalibus" für den Philosophisch-Anthropologischen Diskurs im 13. Jahrhundert'. In *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens, 249–74. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.

Kolve, V.A. *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales*. London: Edward Arnold, 1984.

Kordecki, Lesley. *Ecofeminist Subjectivities: Chaucer's Talking Birds*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Kuefler, Mathew. 'Homoeroticism in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Acts, Identities, Cultures'. *American Historical Review* 123, no. 4 (2018): 1246–66.

———, ed. *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Lander, Stephen. 'Church Courts and the Reformation in the Diocese of Chichester, 1500-1558'. In *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church in England, 1500-1642*, edited by Rosemary O'Day and Felicity Heal, 215–37. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976.

Langdon, Alison, ed. *Animal Languages in the Middle Ages: Representations of Interspecies Communication*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Lavezzo, Kathy. *The Accomodated Jew: English Antisemitism from Bede to Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016.

Leach, Arthur F. 'Some English Plays and Players, 1220-1548'. In *An English Miscellany: Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, edited by W.P. Ker, Arthur S. Napier, and Walter W. Skeat, 205–34. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.

LeBlanc, Lisa. 'Noah's Uxor: A Shrew Worth Redeeming'. *Gender Forum* 33 (2011): 6–24.

Lecklider, Jane K. *Cleanness: Structure and Meaning*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997.

Lehmberg, Stanford E. *The Reformation Parliament, 1529-1536*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Leroi, Armand Marie. *Mutants: On the Form, Varieties and Errors of the Human Body*. London: Harper Perennial, 2005.

Lewis, Jack P. *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

Liere, Frans van. *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Liliequist, Jonas. 'Peasants Against Nature: Crossing the Boundaries Between Man and Animal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Sweden'. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (1991): 393–423.

Lindquist, Sherry C.M. 'The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art: An Introduction'. In *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art*, edited by Sherry C.M. Lindquist, 1–46. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

Linkinen, Tom. *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015.

Le Goff, Jacques. *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Lochrie, Karma. *Covert Operations: The Medieval Uses of Secrecy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

———. *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Louis, Cameron. 'The "Nauiculum Noie" of Boston'. *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 31 (1992): 91–100.

Love, Heather. *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Lugt, Maaike van der. 'L'Autorité Morale et Normative de la Nature au Moyen Âge'. In *La Nature Comme Source de la Morale au Moyen Âge*, edited by Maaike van der Lugt, 3–40. Firenze: Sismel, 2014.

———. *Le Ver, le Demon et la Vierge: Les Théories Mediévales de la Génération Extraordinaire*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004.

Luscombe, David. *Medieval Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

MacIntosh, Marjorie Keniston. *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370-1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Maitland, Frederic William. *The Collected Papers of Frederic William Maitland*. III vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911.

Mansfield, Mary C. *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Mardon, Ernest G. *The Narrative Unity of the Cursor Mundi*. Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1970.

Markus, Manfred. 'The Language and Style: The Paradox of Heroic Poetry'. In *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, edited by Karl Heinz Göller, 57–69. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.

McCracken, Peggy. *In the Skin of a Beast: Sovereignty and Animality in Medieval France*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

McCullough, Ernest J. 'Nature and Natural Law in Albert'. In *Philosophy and the God of Abraham: Essays in Memory of James A. Weisheipl, OP*, 129–46. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1991.

McDonald, Nicola. 'A Polemical Introduction'. In *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, edited by Nicola McDonald, 1–21. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.

———. 'Desire Out of Order and *Undo Your Door*'. *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 34 (2012): 247–75.

———. 'Eating People and the Alimentary Logic of "Richard Coeur de Lion"'. In *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, edited by Nicola McDonald, 124–50. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.

McLaughlin, R. Emmet. 'Truth, Tradition and History: The Historiography of High/Late Medieval and Early Modern Penance'. In *A New History of Penance*, edited by Abigail Firey, 18–71. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.

McSheffrey, Shannon. *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities 1420-1530*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

———. *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

McSheffrey, Shannon, and Julia Pope. 'Ravishment, Legal Narratives and Chivalric Culture in Fifteenth-Century England'. *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 5 (2009): 818–836.

McWhorter, Ladelle. 'Enemy of the Species'. In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 73–101. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Meale, Carol M. "'...Alle the Bokes That I Haue of Latyn, Englisch, and Frensch": Laywomen and Their Books in Late Medieval England'. In *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, edited by Carol M. Meale, 128–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

———. "'Gode Men / Wiues Maydnes and Alle Men": Romance and Its Audiences'. In *Readings in Medieval English Romances*, edited by Carol M. Meale, 209–25. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994.

Meyers, Walter E. 'Typology and the Audience of the English Play Cycles'. In *Typology and English Medieval Literature*, edited by Hugh T. Keenan, 261–73. New York: AMS Press, 1992.

Mill, Anna J. 'The Hull Noah Play'. *Modern Language Review* 33, no. 4 (1938): 489–505.

Miller, Sarah Alison. *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body*. New York and London: Routledge, 2010.

Mills, David. 'The Chester Mystery Plays: Truth and Tradition'. In *Courts, Counties and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages*, edited by Diana E.S. Dunn, 1–26. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1996.

Mills, Robert. 'Jesus as Monster'. In *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, edited by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 28–54. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

———. 'Monsters and Margins: Representing Difference'. In T*he History of British Art 600-1600*, edited by Tim Ayers, 203–25. London and New Haven: Tate/Yale Center for British Art, 2008.

———. *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Mitchiner, Michael. *Medieval Pilgrim and Secular Badges*. London: Hawkins Publications, 1986.

Mittman, Asa Simon. 'Introduction: The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies'. In *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, edited by Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle, 1–14. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

———. 'The Other Close at Hand: Gerald of Wales and the "Marvels of the West"'. In *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, edited by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 97–112. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Monagle, Clare. *The Scholastic Project*. Kalamazoo and Bradford: Arc Humanities Press, 2017.

Monter, E. William. 'Sodomy and Heresy in Early Modern Switzerland'. *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1 (1981): 41–55.

Moore, R.I. *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Morey, James H. 'Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible'. *Speculum* 68, no. 1 (1993): 6–35.

Morse, Charlotte C. *The Pattern of Judgement in the 'Queste' and 'Cleanness'*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1978.

Mortimer-Sandilands, Catriona, and Bruce Erickson. 'Introduction: A Genealogy of Queer Ecologies'. In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 1–47. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Moss, Rachel Elizabeth. "'And Much More I Am Soryat for My Good Knyghts": Fainting, Homosociality, and Elite Male Culture in Middle English Romance'. *Historical Reflections* 42, no. 1 (2016): 101–12.

Murdoch, Brian. 'From the Flood to the Tower of Babel: Some Notes on "Saltair Na Rann" XIII-XXIV'. *Ériu* 40 (1989): 69–92.

———. *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003.

Murray, Jacqueline. 'Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages'. In *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, edited by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, 191–222. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996.

Musson, Anthony. 'Crossing Boundaries: Attitudes to Rape in Late Medieval England'. In *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Anthony Musson, 84–101. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Normington, Katie. 'Faming of the Shrews: Medieval Drama and Feminist Approaches'. *Yearbook of English Studies* 43 (2013): 105–20.

———. *Gender and Medieval Drama*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004.

Oaks, Robert F. '"Things Fearful to Name": Sodomy and Buggery in Seventeenth-Century New England'. *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 2 (1978): 268–81.

Oelze, Anselm. *Animal Rationality: Later Medieval Theories 1250-1350*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018.

Ogilvie, Brian W. *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Oppenraay, Aafke M.I. van. 'Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation of Aristotle's "Books on Animals". Some Remarks Concerning the Relation Between the Translation and Its Arabic and Greek Sources'. In *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens, 31–43. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.

———. 'The Reception of Aristotle's "History of Animals" in the Marginalia of Some Latin Manuscripts of Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation'. *Early Science and Medicine* 8, no. 4 (2003): 387–403.

Orlemanski, Julie. 'Thornton's Remedies and the Practices of Medical Reading'. In *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, edited by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston, 235–55. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2014.

Orr, Patricia. 'Men's Theory and Women's Reality: Rape Prosecutions in the English Royal Courts of Justice, 1194-1222'. In *The Rusted Hauberk: Feudal Ideals of Order and Their Decline*, edited by Liam O. Purdon and Cindy L. Vitto, 121–60. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994.

Ostkamp, Sebastiaan. 'The World Upside Down. Secular Badges and the Iconography of the Late Medieval Period: Ordinary Pins with Multiple Meanings'. *Journal of Archaeology in the Low Countries* 1, no. 2 (2009): 107–125.

Oswald, Dana M. *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010.

Owen, Dorothy M. *The Medieval Canon Law: Teaching, Literature, and Transmission*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

———. *The Records of the Established Church in England*. Cambridge: British Records Association, 1970.

Page, Sophie. 'Good Creation and Demonic Illusions: The Medieval Universe of Creatures'. In *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, edited by Brigitte Resl, 27–58. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007.

Pantin, W.A. *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1980.

Park, Katharine. 'Cadden, Laqueur, and the "One-Sex Body"'. *Medieval Feminist Forum* 46, no. 1 (2010): 96–100.

———. *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection*. New York: Zone Books, 2006.

Payer, Pierre J. *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code, 550-1150*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

Pennington, Kenneth. 'Introduction to the Courts'. In *The History of Courts and Procedure in Medieval Canon Law*, edited by Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington, 3–29. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016.

Perfetti, Stefano. *Aristotle's Zoology and Its Renaissance Commentators (1521-1601)*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000.

Phillips, Kim M. 'Four Virgins' Tales: Sex and Power in Medieval Law'. In *Medieval Virginities*, edited by Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih, 80–101. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003.

———. *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.

———. 'Written on the Body: Reading Rape from the Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries'. In *Medieval Women and the Law*, edited by Noël James Menuge, 125–44. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000.

Phillips, Kim M., and Barry Reay. *Sex Before Sexuality: A Premodern History*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.

Post, J.B. 'Sir Thomas West and the Statute of Rapes, 1382'. *Historical Research* 53, no. 127 (1980): 24–30.

Postec, Amandine. 'Un Exemplaire Singulier du De *Animalibus* d'Albert le Grand et son Illustration (Paris, BnF, Manuscrits, Latin 16169)'. *Reinardus* 26 (2014): 137–60.

Prior, Sandra Pierson. 'Parodying Typology and the Mystery Plays in the "Miller's Tale"'. *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16 (1986): 57–73.

Puff, Helmut. *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Purdue, Rhiannon. *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008.

———. 'Sexing the Manuscript: The Case for Female Ownership of MS Chetham 8009'. *Neophilologus* 82, no. 1 (1998): 139–48.

Putter, Ad. '"Cleanness" and the Tradition of Biblical Versification'. In *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, edited by J.A. Burrow and Hoyt N. Duggan, 166–84. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010.

———. 'Sources and Backgrounds for Descriptions of the Flood in Medieval and Renaissance Literature'. *Studies in Philology* 94, no. 2 (1997): 137–59.

Putter, Ad, and Jane Gilbert. 'Introduction'. In *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, edited by Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert, 1–38. New York: Longman, 2000.

Rastall, Richard. 'Female Roles in All-Male Casts'. *Medieval English Theatre* 7, no. 1 (1985): 25–50.

Resl, Brigitte. 'Beyond the Ark: Animals in Medieval Art'. In *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, edited by Brigitte Resl, 179–201. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007.

Resnick, Irven Michael, and Kenneth F Kitchell Jr. *Albert the Great: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography (1900-2000)*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004.

Rich, Adrienne. 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'. *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631–60.

Riddy, Felicity. 'Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, edited by Roberta L. Krueger, 235–52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

———. 'Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text'. *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 66–86.

———. 'Temporary Virginity and the Everyday Body: *Le Bone Florence of Rome* and Bourgeois Self-Making'. In *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, edited by Nicola McDonald, 197–216. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.

Ritvo, Harriet. 'Barring the Cross: Miscegenation and Purity in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain'. In *Human, All Too Human*, edited by Diana Fuss, 37–57. New York and London: Routledge, 1996.

———. *The Platypus and the Mermaid, and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Robertson, Kellie. *Nature Speaks: Medieval Literature and Aristotelian Philosophy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

Rose, Christina M. 'Reading Chaucer Reading Rape'. In *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, edited by Elizabeth Robertson and Christina M. Rose, 21–60. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Rudolph, Conrad. *The Mystic Ark: Hugh of Saint Victor, Art, and Thought in the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Rydström, Jens. *Sinners and Citizens: Bestiality and Homosexuality in Sweden, 1880-1950*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Salih, Sarah. 'Idols and Simulacra: Paganity, Hybridity and Representation in *Mandeville's Travels*'. In *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, edited by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 113–34. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Salisbury, Joyce E. *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge, 2011.

Saunders, Corrine. *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001.

Schell, Edgar. 'The Limits of Typology and the Wakefield Master's "Processus Noah"'. *Comparative Drama* 25, no. 2 (1991): 168–87.

Schlauch, Margaret. *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens*. New York: New York University Press, 1927.

Schray, Kateryna A. Rudnytzky. 'The Plot in Miniature: Arthur's Battle on Mont St. Michel in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*'. *Studies in Philology* 101, no. 1 (2004): 1–19.

Schultz, James A. *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

———. 'Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies'. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 1 (2006): 14–29.

Scott, Alan. 'The Date of the *Physiologus*'. *Vigiliae Christianae* 52, no. 4 (1998): 430–41.

Seaman, Myra. 'Tugging at the Roots: The Errant Textography of Middle English Romance'. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2009): 283–303.

Shank, Michael H. 'Natural Knowledge in the Latin Middle Ages'. In *Wrestling with Nature: From Omens to Science*, edited by Peter Harrison, Ronald L. Numbers, and Michael H. Shank, 83–115. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Shaw, James Rochester. 'Scientific Empiricism in the Middle Ages: Albertus Magnus on Sexual Anatomy and Physiology'. *Clio Medica* 10, no. 1 (1975): 53–64.

Sloan, Philip R. 'The Species Problem and History'. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 44, no. 2 (2013): 237–41.

Somerset, Fiona. *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Spencer, Brian. 'Canterbury Pilgrim Souvenirs Found in the Low Countries'. In *Heilig En Profaan 2: 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse Insignes Uit Openbare En Particuliere Collecties*, edited by H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldeweij, and D. Kicken, 105–111. Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 2001.

———. *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*. 2nd ed. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010.

Spiegel, Gabrielle M. 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text'. *Speculum* 65 (1990): 59–86.

Spiegel, Harriet. 'The Male Animal in the Fables of Marie de France'. In *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, edited by Clare A. Lees, 111–26. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Sponsler, Claire. 'Eating Lessons: Lydgate's "Dietary" and Consumer Conduct'. In *Medieval Conduct*, edited by Kathleen Ashley and Robert L.A. Clark, 1–22. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Steel, Karl. 'Centaurs, Satyrs, and Cynocephali: Medieval Scholarly Teratology and the Question of the Human'. In *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, edited by Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle, 257–74. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

———. *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011.

Steneck, Nicholas H. *Science and Creation in the Middle Ages: Henry of Langenstein (d.1397) on Genesis*. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976.

Stockhorst, Stefanie. 'Passionate Pilgrims: Secular Lead Badges as Precursors of Emblemata Amatoria'. In *Profane Imagery in Marginal Arts of the Middle Ages*, edited by Elaine C. Block and Malcolm Jones, 157–181. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009.

Storm, Melvin. 'Uxor and Alison: Noah's Wife in the Flood Plays and Chaucer's Wife of Bath'. *Modern Language Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1987): 303–19.

Strickland, Debra Higgs (formerly Debra Hassig). *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

———. 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages'. In *Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, edited by Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle, 365–86. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

———. 'Sex in the Bestiaries'. In *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, edited by Debra Hassig, 71–98. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999.

———, ed. *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999.

Sturgeon, Noël. 'Penguin Family Values: The Nature of Planetary Reproductive Justice'. In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 102–33. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Sylvester, Louise. *Medieval Romance and the Construction of Heterosexuality*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Syme, Alison. 'Taboos and the Holy in Bodley 764'. In *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, edited by Debra Hassig, 163–84. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999.

Sze, Julie. 'Race, Animality, and Animal Studies'. *American Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2020): 497–505.

Taylor, Anna Lisa. 'Where Are the Wild Things? Animals in Western Medieval European History'. *History Compass* 16, no. 3 (2018): 1–12.

Tentler, Thomas N. *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

———. 'The *Summa* for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control'. In *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference*, edited by Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman, 103–26. Leiden: Brill, 1974.

Terry, Jennifer. '"Unnatural Acts" in Nature: The Scientific Fascination with Queer Animals'. *GLQ* 6, no. 2 (2000): 151–93.

Thomas, Hugh M. *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Thompson, John J. *The Cursor Mundi: Poem, Texts and Contexts*. Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1998.

Thompson, Stephen. 'The Bishop in His Diocese'. In *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher*, edited by Brendan Bradshaw and Eamon Duffy, 67–80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Thorndike, Lynn. *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*. VIII vols. New York: Macmillan Press, 1923-58.

Tkacz, Michael W. 'Albert the Great and the Interpretation of Aristotle's "Historia Animalium"'. In *Proceedings of the Patristic, Mediaeval and Renaissance Conference 18*, edited by Karl A. Gersbach, Frederick van Fleteren, and Joseph C. Schnaubelt, 217–27. Augustinian Historical Institute: Villanova, 1996.

Tolhurst, Fiona, and K.S. Whetter. 'Memories of War: Retracting the Interpretive Tradition of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*'. *Arthuriana* 29, no. 1 (2019): 88–108.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Monsters and the Critics, and Other Essays*. London: HarperCollins, 1997.

Tolmie, Jane. 'Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses'. *Early Theatre* 5, no. 1 (2002): 11–35.

Travis, Peter W. *Dramatic Design in the Chester Cycle*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Trinkaus, Charles, and Heiko A. Oberman, eds. *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference*. Leiden: Brill, 1974.

Trudel, Guy. 'The Middle English Book of Penance and the Readers of the Cursor Mundi'. *Medium Aevum* 74, no. 1 (2005): 10–33.

Turville-Petre, Thorlac. *The Alliterative Revival*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977.

Twomey, Michael. '*Cleanness*, Peter Comestor, and the *Revelationes Sancti Methodii*'. *Mediaevalia* 11 (1985): 203–17.

Twycross, Meg. 'Transvestism in the Mystery Plays'. *Medieval English Theatre* 5, no. 2 (1983): 123–80.

Unger, Richard W. *The Art of Medieval Technology: Images of Noah the Shipbuilder*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Van Dyke, Carolynn. 'Names of the Beasts: Tracking the Animot in Medieval Texts'. *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 34 (2012): 1–51.

———, ed. *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Vitz, Evelyn Birge. 'Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature: Literary, Historical and Theoretical Reflections'. *Romantic Review* 881 (1997): 1–26.

Walls, Kathryn. 'The Dove on a Cord in the Chester Cycle's "Noah's Flood"'. *Theatre Notebook* 47 (1993): 42–47.

Walker, Sue Sheridan. 'Punishing Convicted Ravishers: Statutory Strictures and Actual Practice in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England'. *Journal of Medieval History* 13 (1987): 237–50.

Warner, Michael. 'Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet'. *Social Text* 29 (1991): 3–17.

Weldon, James. 'The Naples Manuscript and the Case for a Female Readership'. *Neophilologus* 93, no. 4 (2009): 703–22.

Westover, Jeff. 'Arthur's End: The King's Emasculation in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*'. *Chaucer Review* 32, no. 3 (1998): 310–24.

Whetter, K.S. 'Genre as Context in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*'. *Arthuriana* 20, no. 2 (2010): 45–65.

Weisheipl, James A. 'Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts at Oxford in the Early Fourteenth Century'. *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 143–85.

White, Hugh. *Nature and Salvation in Piers Plowman*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988.

———. *Nature, Sex, And Goodness in a Medieval Literary Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

White Jr., Lynn. 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis'. *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–7.

Whitney, Elspeth. 'Lynn White Jr.'s "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" After Fifty Years'. *History Compass* 13, no. 8 (2015): 396–410.

Wingard, T. 'Hermaphrodite Hyenas and Promiscuous Partridges: Analysing Discourses of Sexuality and Gender in the Later Medieval Bestiary.' Masters dissertation, University of York, 2015.

Wingate, Sybil Douglas. *The Mediaeval Latin Versions of the Aristotelian Scientific Corpus, with Special Reference to the Biological Works*. London: Courier Press, 1931.

Wolfe, Cary. *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Post-Humanist Theory*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Wolfthal, Diane. *Images of Rape: The 'Heroic' Tradition and Its Alternatives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Woodcock, Brian L. *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury*. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Wunderli, Richard M. *London Church Courts and Society on the Eve of the Reformation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Medieval Academy of America, 1981.

Wurster, Jutta. 'The Audience'. In *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, edited by Karl Heinz Göller, 44–56. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.

Wyatt, Diana. 'Arts, Crafts and Authorities: Textual and Contextual Evidence for North-East English Noah Plays'. *Yearbook of English Studies* 43 (2013): 48–68.

———. 'Performance and Ceremonial in Beverley before 1642: An Annotated Edition of Local Archive Materials'. PhD dissertation, University of York, 1983.

Yamamoto, Dorothy. *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Yapp, William Brunsdon. 'A New Look at English Bestiaries'. *Medium Aevum* 54, no. 1 (1985): 1–19.

Zenon Davis, Natalie. *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Dictionaries

Anglo-Norman Dictionary. Edited by Geert De Wilde et al. Aberystwyth and Swansea: Anglo-Norman Online Hub, 2001.

Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources. Edited by Richard Ashdowne, David Howlett and Ronald Latham. III vols. Oxford: British Academy, 2018.

Harpers' Latin Dictionary. Edited by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879.

Middle English Dictionary. Edited by Robert E. Lewis et al. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. XX vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.