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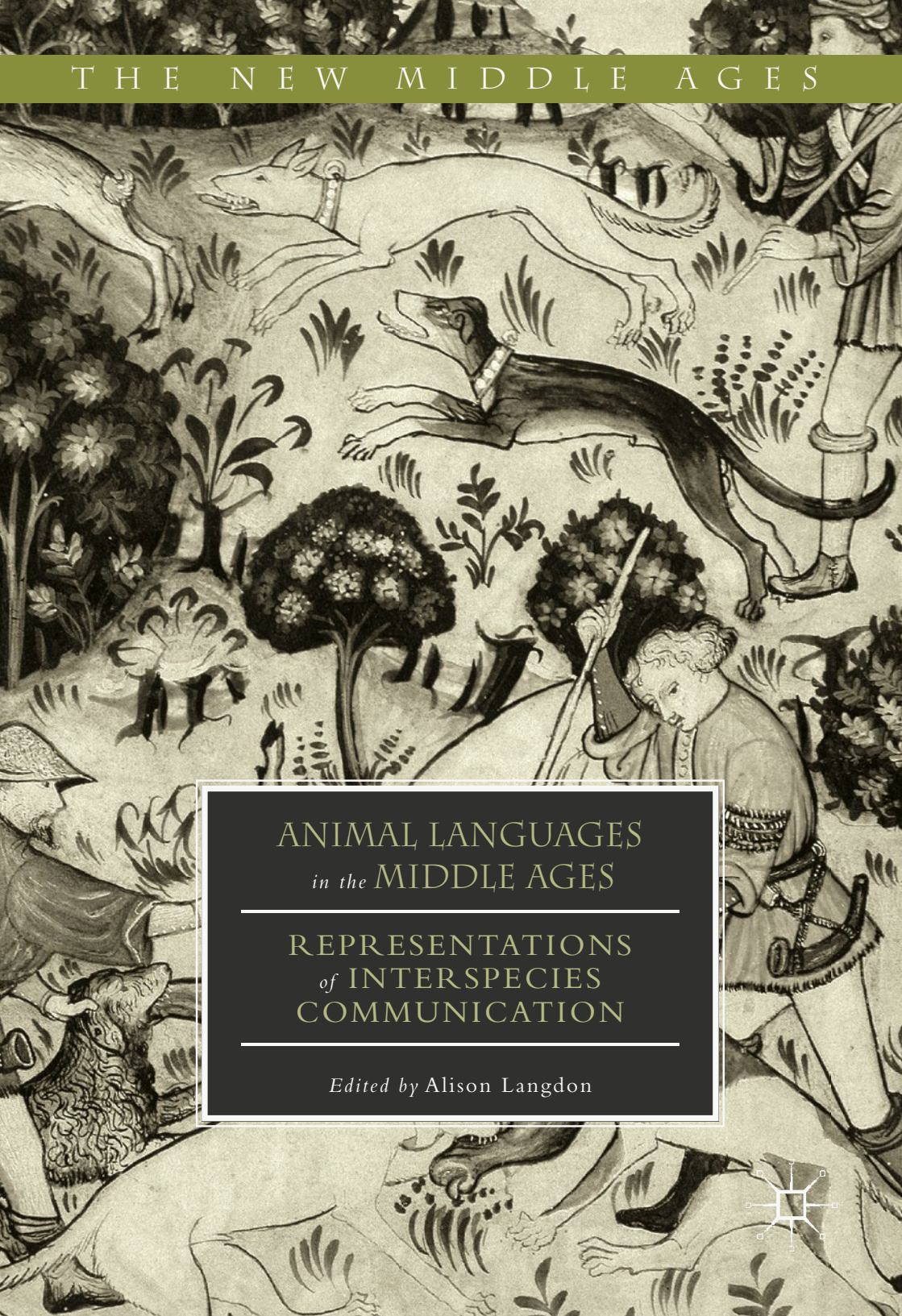

ANIMAL LANGUAGES *in the* MIDDLE AGES

REPRESENTATIONS *of* INTERSPECIES COMMUNICATION

Edited by Alison Langdon

The New Middle Ages

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Editor

Animal Languages in the Middle Ages

Representations of Interspecies Communication

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Contents

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Alison Langdon

Foillo li bosc, e li aucel
Chanton, chascus en lor lati,
Segon lo vers del novel chan

(As woods leaf out, each bird must raise
In pure bird-latin of its kind
The melody of a new song.)
—Guillem de Peiteus, "Ab la dolchor del temps novel"

Houndes … moost hunt al þe day questyng and makyng gret
melody in her langage ….
—Edward of Norwich, *Master of the Game*

Talking animals abound in medieval texts. They speak to us in fables, ventriloquizing human morals and social norms; they trade insults and insights in debate poems; they offer miraculous testimony of divine power and grace in saints' lives. At the same time, medieval writers often insisted upon language as a singularly human attribute. Drawing on a tradition stretching back to antiquity, many identified language as evidence of the possession of reason—that faculty believed to separate humans from the

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rest of God's creation. Human beings were understood to exist at the apex of a divinely ordained hierarchy, a position justified because of the possession of a rational soul through which they bear a likeness to God. While nonhuman animals may be gifted with superior senses, the human animal was seen to surpass all others by virtue of its powers of intellect, made manifest through language. The capacity for language thus became one of the primary means for articulating the conceptual boundary between human and nonhuman animals.

In the Greco-Roman and Patristic traditions, as well as in the medieval traditions that grew out of them, language was intimately connected with reason and was deemed a necessary prerequisite for rational thought, a connection reflected in the use of the Greek word *logos* to refer to both concepts.[1] Indeed, for the Roman writer Quintilian, language was essential to the exercise and discernment of reason: "Reason itself would not help us so much, or be so evident in us, if we did not have the power to express the thoughts we have conceived in our minds."[2] Among the ancients Aristotle's views on the natural world would prove to be the most influential among medieval thinkers, and it is he who makes the most explicit assertion of humanity's singular claim to *logos*: "Man alone among animals has speech."[3] According to Aristotle, animals are capable of communicating pleasure and pain, but they lack the faculty of reason that would allow them to perceive abstract concepts such as justice and injustice, an argument that Albertus Magnus would later elaborate on extensively.[4] Some writers granted that animals might produce sounds that are to some degree intentional—that is, a dog's yelp may express a precise concept such as joy or fear not just as a symptom of physical sensation but also with the aim of eliciting a specific response in another—but they do so through the sensitive rather than rational soul.[5] For Augustine, the fact that animals share our bodily senses means that they can perceive the beauty of God in the created world, but lacking logos they cannot reflect upon its significance. Human beings, on the other hand, can question what they see and "observe that the unseen things of God are understood through all that has been made."[6] Through such questioning the human soul ascends toward the divine; through *logos* humans alone can reach toward Logos.

Although such writers did not see animals as being capable of producing their own meaning, they nevertheless perceived animals to be meaningful as reflections of divine truth in nature. If, as Vincent of Beauvais wrote, "This sensible world is like a book, written by the finger of God,"[7] animals formed much of the text of that book. One way of thinking about

representations of animals participating in language, then, is to emphasize their role in the creation of human meaning. Scholars have long noted the ways that medieval writers deployed animals as symbolic language for humans to talk to other humans about human concerns. This is perhaps most apparent in beast fables in which animals are made to ventriloquize moral truths. We may also see this in some of the more highly allegorized entries in the medieval bestiaries—compendiums of animal lore that originally derive from the *Physiologus,* an immensely popular text throughout the Middle Ages that provided moralized lessons illustrated through descriptions of animal physiognomy and behavior.

The Augustinian emphasis on animals as signs of divine truth makes it tempting to conclude that the supposed characteristics of a given bestiary animal were significant only in the ways they could be used to illustrate Christian truth; for example, bestiaries seem far more interested in tracing parallels between wolves and the devil than in presenting empirical facts about wolf physiognomy and behavior. As Laura Hobgood-Oster observes, in such readings "the literal animal is absent, replaced by the metaphorical or symbolic animal."[8] But the bestiaries' treatment of animals becomes more complicated as they move away from their origins in the *Physiologus*, paying closer attention to the real animals themselves alongside their allegorized meanings.[9] As Susan Crane argues, with their dual interest in spiritual truth and natural history, bestiaries offer "a vision of creation that is not purely concerned with moral and religious teaching."[10] In this way even the more allegorical textual traditions may evince an interest in animals themselves, in ways that sometimes inquire into the agency and interiority communicated through behavior.

Context matters too, of course. Medieval theologians were at pains to justify humanity's claim to the highest rung on the ladder of creation and so focused their attention on establishing a clear boundary between humans and other animals. In other contexts, though, medieval writers were more willing to attribute to animals the powers of reasoning and language that theological texts claimed for humans. Crane points out a telling contrast between Thomas Aquinas's stance that animals are unreasoning creatures driven solely by natural instinct and Gaston Phébus's confident assertion in his hunting manual *Livre de Chasse* that his dogs behave thoughtfully and communicatively—if not in ways that exactly replicate *logos*, then at least in ways that reflect cognitive and communicative affinities between species.[11] Animals in imaginative texts sometimes behave incongruously—Yvain's lion in

Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au lion* seems far more canine than leonine in his behavior, for example—but as Carolynn Van Dyke argues, even when "sculpted and literary beasts often act and speak in ways impossible for their species, their stares and whispers transmit an agency no less real than our own."[12] Such moments belie David Salter's conclusion that medieval writers were less interested in animals as real, living creatures in their own right than simply as vehicles through which they might reflect upon their own humanity.[13]

A growing body of work in medieval animal studies has critiqued traditional humanist scholarship and challenged assumptions of a reflexive anthropocentricism governing attitudes toward nonhuman animals in the Middle Ages. As scholars such as Dorothy Yamamoto, Karl Steel, Susan Crane, Jeffery Jerome Cohen, and Peggy McCracken make clear, despite a supposed humanistic insistence upon an absolute distinction between human and animal throughout the Middle Ages, medieval writers continually troubled any such distinction by revealing the inseparability of the concepts "human" and "animal" and by showing the ways in which human identity is always bound up in the question of the animal.[14] These studies increasingly emphasize the need to consider animals in medieval texts as something more than vehicles for human symbolic expression, turning our attention back to what Van Dyke terms "the animal real."[15]

While building on previous studies, the current collection of essays brings a new emphasis on the role of language in challenging the supposed distinction between humans and other animals in the Middle Ages. *Animal Languages* acknowledges a multiplicity of communicative and discursive practices through which animals signify and through which they operate as both vehicles for human meaning and agents of their own, ultimately showing that attentiveness to the real, living creature and the various means by which animals and humans communicate is very much present in a range of medieval texts. In attempting to discourse with nonhuman animals in something approaching their own terms, medieval texts open possibilities for more meaningful engagement with the Other and allow us to come closer to our shared nature. Animal languages include not only the typically privileged verbal form but also gesture, touch, olfaction, posture, and other forms of embodied expression. The essays in this volume explore language, broadly construed, as part of the continued interrogation of the boundaries of human and nonhuman animals in the Middle Ages, finally asking in what ways might deconstructing the medieval anthropocentric view of language speak to the broader question of human singularity.

Part I: Communicating Through Animals

The chapters in Part I acknowledge that even when animals are used as symbolic language to convey human meaning, they do so in a way that fundamentally blurs the boundaries between species by stressing affinities between humans and the rest of the natural world. Iva Jevtić's analysis of animal representations in *Ancrene Wisse* resists the assumption that animals there function as a purely metaphorical language. Although animals in this text do "speak" the predetermined meaning of exempla, they also speak through the material reality of their bodies, a reality that *Ancrene Wisse* depends upon for comprehension of spiritual truths. Metaphorical comparisons of the bodies of anchoress and animal may suggest the downward pull of corporeality, but they can also serve as vehicles of transformative potential that facilitate spiritual development. Sara Petrosillo continues the exploration of the dual nature of animal language/animals as language in the third chapter, which argues that medieval poets' use of the trope of the molting falcon as a metaphor for a woman's changing heart is dependent upon the nonverbal interspecies communication between bird and falconer. Petrosillo's analysis finds that Chaucer's particular deployment of the trope in *Troilus and Criseyde* works to subvert both androcentric and anthropocentric meaning.

The next two chapters embrace Hobgood-Oster's call to "attend to the active roles of animals" in medieval texts where animals have traditionally been read as "only and always symbolic."[16] In saints' lives, the subject of Sally Shockro's chapter, one marker of the saint's holiness is his or her ability to read accurately the book of nature, but the animals in such stories are not always mere passive vehicles conveying sanctity. In the lives of saints Cuthbert and Guthlac, Shockro traces a progressive relationship in which the saint learns to read what is communicated through an animal's behavior, how to respond to the animal intelligibly, and finally how to engage in a spiritual exchange based on mutual empathy and Christian values, an exchange facilitated by the saint's acknowledgment of the animal's active agency. Humans and animals are also shown to share a common spiritual force in Michelle Hamilton's chapter, which explores the ways in which the claim that humans are the only animals to possess a rational, speaking soul are challenged through representations of the phoenix in medieval Arabic and Persian literary traditions.

Part II: Recovering Animal Languages

The essays in Part II work to deconstruct the rigid definition of language as the sole prerogative of humans while simultaneously recognizing the limits of any language to signify. Robert Stanton's chapter examines onomatopoeic representations of animal sounds in Anglo-Saxon voice catalogues, or *voces animantium* (voices of animate things). Placed as they are within texts such as grammatical treatises, glossaries, and discourses on poetics and linguistic structure, these lists probe the boundaries between the rational and articulate speech claimed to be the province of humans and the instinctual and inarticulate noise attributed to animals. In doing so, voice catalogues open the door to a reevaluation of the categories of human and animal. In the next chapter, Angela Jane Weisl shows how Chaucer's use of "briddes wise" is more than representational but, rather, stands alongside human speech as a fully articulate language, albeit one that is always only partially apprehended. Chaucer's attentiveness to animals beyond the merely symbolic creates space for poetry as a "multispecies event," in Aaron Moe's term,[17] one that hints at a recognition of animal interiority and agency while also revealing the anthrosemiotic impulse to impose meaning within a human idiom.

Taking on the question of whether the anthrosemiotic impulse can ever be resisted, Carolynn Van Dyke discusses the various strategies—existential, onomatopoeic, and catachrestic—that medieval poets used to close the gap between animal interiority and its expression in human language, producing texts that both acknowledge and defy a divide between animal and human. Paradoxically, animal speech becomes meaningful precisely through the conflation of creaturely reality and incongruously human discourse. Moreover, in revealing both the unity and the disparity of "beastly life and human thought," such texts remind us of the bodily origins of language itself. My own chapter answers Emily Plec's call to "expand our understanding of communication beyond that very human obsession with the structure and substance of verbal utterances"[18] by inviting consideration of canine communicative strategies in Marie de France's twelfth-century lai *Bisclavret*. The tale's action is precipitated by a crisis of language that calls into question the privileged status of human verbal communication. Only by the eloquence of *Bisclavret*'s nonlinguistic expression through his animal body is he restored to the human form lost through his prior entanglement in verbal language, undermining the scholastic assertion that it is language that makes us human.

Part III: Embodied Language and Interspecies Dependence

The chapters gathered here argue for the ways in which, in Debra Hawhee's words, nonhuman animals invite us "to suspend the habituated emphasis on verbal language and consciousness," offering instead "models of rhetorical behavior and interaction that are physical, even instinctual, but perhaps no less artful."[19] In the first chapter of Part III, Elizabeth S. Leet explores cooperative interspecies communication in Jordanus Rufus's popular thirteenth-century horse training and veterinary manual, *La Marechaucie des chevaux*. Rather than insisting that the horse accommodate human linguistic communication, Rufus advocates training determined by the horse's needs conveyed through the tactile language of equine communication. In doing so, Rufus defies the traditional chivalric narrative of human dominance and anticipates modern theories of humane horse training. Attentiveness to equine creaturely reality as the basis for interspecies communication continues in the next chapter. Reading fifteenth-century equine veterinary manuals next to late medieval English vernacular poetry, Francine McGregor considers the horse's body as language and suggests that medieval "listening" to such speech, and to the equine hoof in particular, marks a new mode of identification with the horse. No longer primarily a symbol of human prowess or power, the horse becomes an object of empathy as a physical being, a potential companion in sensation. Veterinary attention to the hoof—to its development, structure, ailments, cures, and capacity to suffer pain—describes a willingness to listen to animal languages in whatever form they may take and indeed to reimagine the human self in light of what the animal has to say.

The final two chapters focus on interspecies communication as constitutive of human identity and social intelligence. Jamie C. Fumo uses Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*, the anonymous romance *Sir Gowther*, and the medieval Tristan tradition to illustrate the ways in which encounters with dogs in medieval literature create opportunities to reform and rehabilitate human beings. Dogs in these narratives provide lessons in empathy that facilitate not only human–animal relationships but also relationships between humans. In the concluding chapter, Monica A. Ehrlich builds upon recent work in animal studies and affect studies to argue that Chrétien de Troye's depiction of interspecies communication between Yvain and the lion in *Le Chevalier au lion* reveals how embodied communication and emotional literacy can indeed function as a sort of *lingua franca*, one that allows humans to communicate with other animals while also fostering a better sense of community in human society.

Notes

1. Deborah Levine Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 182; Thorsten Fögen, "Animal Communication," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, ed. Gordon Lindsay Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 216. The dependency of *logos* on speech is suggested by the development of the concept itself, which first denoted only speech but later came to refer to the inner rational process articulated through speech. According to John Heath, the first attested meaning of *logos* in Homer and Hesiod clearly denotes speech; it is only when Heraclitus and Parmenides "use logos not simply as a 'verbal utterance' but as something rational … [that] they set the word on its fateful and well-documented course. It is in this *secondary* development that the word becomes not just the outward form by which inward thought is articulated, but the inward thought itself, the ability to give voice to some reasoned conception." The etymological evolution of *logos*, then, speaks to the inseparability of the concepts "speech" and "reason." *The Talking Greeks: Speech, Animals, and the Other in Homer, Aeschylus, and Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8; emphasis in original.
2. Quintilian, *The Orator's Education, Books 1–2,* ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2.16.14–16.
3. Aristotle, *Politics,* trans. Carnes Lord, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1.2.1253a.10.
4. For a detailed analysis of Albertus's views on the distinctions between animal and human languages, see Irven M. Resnick and Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr., "Albert the Great on the 'Language' of Animals," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1996): 41–61.
5. See, for example, Abelard, *Glossae super Peri hermeneias,* in *Peter Abaelards Philosophische Schriften,* ed. Bernhard Geyer, BGM 32 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1919–33), 335. For an extended discussion, see Umberto Eco, Roberto Lambertini, Constantino Marmo, and Andrea Tabarroni, "On Animal Language in the Medieval Classification of Signs," in *On the Medieval Theory of Signs*, ed. Umberto Eco and Constantino Marmo (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989), 3–41.
6. Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. 2: Books 9–13, ed. and trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 10.10.
7. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum universale,* I.10, translated in Roger French and Andrew Cunningham, *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot, UK: Scolar, 1996), 175.
8. Laura Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses: Animals in the Christian Tradition* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 15.
9. This progression is due in no small part to additions from Book 12 of Isidore's *Etymologies*, additions that differ in character from the *Physiologus*

text by including details relating to behavior, appearance, and etymology without tying these details to specific moralizing conclusions. The largest group of bestiaries—the so-called Second Family Latin bestiaries from the twelfth century onward—also lessen the emphasis on strict moralization by rearranging the order of the chapters toward classification of the animals themselves, grouped by those who walk, fly, slither, or swim. For an extended analysis of the bestiaries' decreasing emphasis on allegorization, see Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages* (London: Sutton, 1998), esp. 83–88.

10. Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2013), 71.
11. Susan Crane, "Medieval Animal Studies: Dogs at Work," in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 8–9, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.103.
12. Carolynn Van Dyke, "Introduction: *In Hir Corages*: Chaucer and the Animal Real," in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6.
13. David Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), 3.
14. Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Karl Steel, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011); Crane, *Animal Encounters*; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., *Inhuman Nature* (Brooklyn: Punctum, 2014); Peggy McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast: Sovereignty and Animality in Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).
15. Van Dyke, "Introduction," 5.
16. Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses*, 15.
17. Aaron M. Moe, *Zoopoetics: Animals and the Making of Poetry* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 8.
18. Emily Plec, "Perspectives on Human-Animal Communication: An Introduction," in *Perspectives on Human-Animal Communication: Internatural Communication*, ed. Emily Plec (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3.
19. Debra Hawhee, "Toward a Bestial Rhetoric," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 44, no. 1 (2011): 83.

PART I

Communicating Through Animals

CHAPTER 2

Becoming-Birds: The Destabilizing Use of Gendered Animal Imagery in *Ancrene Wisse*

Iva Jevtić

In describing the concept of rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari speak of the "wisdom of the plants: even when they have roots, there is always an outside where they form a rhizome with something else—with the wind, an animal, human beings."[1] The idea of the *outside*, of plants seeking underground connections with their roots, but also extending their networks to include other forms of organic and nonorganic world, of reaching beyond the confines of fixed species or individual organisms, is a hallmark of thought bursting into multiplicity. A multiplicity is a complex and dynamic structure, an open-ended patchwork of associations in continuous motion. It is an unimpeded flow of possibility.

An outside, however, is never a simple opposition of inside; this is not a question of dialectics. Rather, all systems, no matter how ostensibly closed, have at least the potential for openness. Seen this way, *enclosure*, one of the defining features of medieval anchoritic life, emerges as *exposure*, an unstable point of connection subjected to continuous change. This is decidedly not a modern realization. The constant exhortations for

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female anchorites to protect the sanctity of the enclosure by a vigilant regulation of all aspects of their daily life, focusing intently on the correct distribution of bodily affect and speech, prove as much. The question is whether this very striving for control opens up new lines of associations, as if against itself, and at what lines such an expansion occurs.

An attempt to look at the linkages between the ideal of female anchoritic life and the specific use of gendered animal imagery in *Ancrene Wisse*, a thirteenth-century guide for anchoresses,[2] reveals an opening in which all the elements of a multiplicity transform. The normative drive of a work that looks to circumscribe the female religious through the use of animal images also establishes connections pushing toward an extreme where the organization of the entire structure shifts: an imposed silencing occurs alongside an extension into new forms of expressivity; discrete boundaries between humans and animals blur; ontologies dissolve.

The aim here is to acknowledge and at the same time move beyond the constricting visions of femininity and animality evident in medieval constructions of the ideal anchoress and in doing so to (re)discover dynamism lost in the narrowing of our notions of language and bodies. By broadening our understanding of animal and human language(s) beyond their metaphorical aspects, from meaning into sense-meaning, a transformative space is revealed in which human and nonhuman bodies and languages pulsate in a dynamic web of interconnectedness. For the anchoress, salvation was never a merely individual quest. Hidden from the eyes of the congregation, she remained a vital part of a community that depended on her for its deliverance. The anchoress, in turn, may have depended on a community even wider than thought—and certainly less human.

I

But what exactly does *less human* mean? Can a human be less human? For the anchorite, the answer is quite clear:

> Sein Jerome nu leate seith bi him-seolven: **Quotiens inter homines fui, minor homo recessi**. "As ofte as ich eaver wes," he seith, "bimong men, ich wende from ham leasse mon then ich ear wes." (III.492–95)[3]

> And St. Jerome, more recently, says of himself, *Quotiens inter homines fui, minor homo recessi*—"As often as I have ever been among people," he says, "I have left them less human than I was before."[4]

To be less human is to be a human among humans; the precondition for being closer to God is being further from the crowd, "for ther is eaver sunne" (III.496) ("for sin is always there" [109]). One of the central preoccupations of anchoritic guidance, therefore, was the shaping and maintenance of the ideal of solitude, which, alongside enclosure, chastity, and orthodoxy, represented one of the four ideological cornerstones of anchoritic life.[5] However, the life of an anchoress could never completely escape the specter of sociability that seemingly contradicted the demands of solitude. Indeed, the image of the entombed anchorite, dead to the outside world, is false to the extent that complete seclusion was an unattainable ideal rather than reality, so that anchoritic solitude necessarily included forms of "anchoritic sociability," both transgressive and acceptable.[6] The paradox lying at the heart of the solitary life is that it is predicated on some type of communality.

Rather than being closed off, then, solitude is porous and extending into a multitude of networks, not all of them necessarily human. These relations may be quite material, for instance, in the case of animal ownership:

> Ye, mine leove sustren, bute yef neod ow drive ant ower meistre hit reade, ne schulen habbe na beast bute cat ane. Ancre the haveth ahte thuncheth bet huse-wif, ase Marthe wes—ne lihtliche ne mei ha nawt beo Marie, Marthe suster, with grithfullnesse of heorte. For thenne mot ha thenchen of the kues foddre, of heorde-monne hure, olhnin the hei-ward, wearien hwen he punt hire, ant yelden thah the hearmes. (VIII.76–81)
>
> My dear sisters, unless need drives you and your director advises it, you must not have any animal except a cat.[7] As anchoress who has animals seems more like a housewife than Martha was; she cannot easily be Mary, Martha's sister, with peace in her heart. For then she has to think of the cow's food, of the herdsman's hire; to flatter the bailiff, curse him when he impounds it, and pay the damages anyway. (201)

Because, of course, Mary "has chosen the good part" (Luke 10:43)—that is, contemplative life—the anchoress is advised against having an animal unless absolutely necessary. Animals, at least domesticated animals, were seen as demanding a level of care and involvement that hindered spiritual progress, since they tied the anchoress to the "local economy."[8] This is true to the degree that animals were considered property and therefore presented a liability. But what if the problem is that owning an animal not

only ties the recluse to the community but also to the animal itself?[9] Instead of a straightforward property relationship, with a firmly established hierarchy between the owner and the owned, we have a tie of cordiality: the thought of the anchoress should be "in no way fastened" to the animal, but, more importantly, there ought to be nothing that "ut-ward drahe hire heorte" (VIII.84) ("draws her heart outward" [201]), human or nonhuman. Indeed, a fifteenth-century vision of purgatory paints a striking image of a nun pursued by a burning cat and dog, her "mawmettes" [idols], which she doted on excessively while alive. Even though there was no universal canonical prohibition against the keeping of pets, it was deemed distracting and therefore unfitting for a religious.[10]

The drawing of the heart outward may also appear in more subtle ways. Whereas earlier anchoritic guides tend to equate enclosure and solitude, the later guides see solitude in relation to contemplative experience; the enclosure is necessary to facilitate the experience, but it is contemplation itself that sets apart the recluse from the world.[11] A sort of doubling occurs: the spatial enclosure, the cell, is fortified in the physical enclosure, the body, "an eorthene castel" (VII.60) ("an earthen castle" [190]). The care and regulation of the senses is just as important as the safeguarding of the physical separateness of the recluse. *Ancrene Wisse* is relatively mild in its ascetic precepts[12]; there is a tension between the outer rule, aimed at the ordering of the body, and the inner rule—that is, love for God, which is seen as the more important of the two. Still, even though unequal, bodily discipline is important in the process of restructuring the "wits" so that they can turn toward what truly matters:

> For as the hali abbat Moyses seide, al thet wa ant al thet heard thet we tholieth o flesch, ant al thet god thet we eaver doth, alle swucche thinges ne beoth nawt bute as lomen to tilie with the heorte. (VII.11–13)
>
> For as the holy abbot Moses said, all the woe and all the hardship that we suffer in the flesh, and all the good that we ever do, all such things are nothing except tools with which to cultivate the heart. (189)

The body of the anchoress thus becomes the locus of tension between solitude and sociability, between worldly and other-worldly embodiment. Traversing the distance between these extremes is likened to a journey through the wilderness, the desert: *Ancrene Wisse* provides numerous biblical examples of retreat, including of St. John the Baptist, who fled "the feolahschipe of fule men … he fleh his hali cun … ant wende into anli stude ant wunede i the wildernesse" (III.459–62) ("the fellowship of foul

people … he fled his holy family … and went into a solitary place and lived in the wilderness" [107]). The anchoress is urged to go through the wilderness like "our Lord's people went, as the book of Exodus tells, toward the blessed land of Jerusalem,", but to go

> [Gath, thah] ful warliche, for i this wildernesse beoth uvele beastes monie: liun of prude, neddre of attri onde, unicorne of wreaththe, beore of dead slawthe, vox of yisceunge, suhe of yivernesse, scorpiun with the teil of stinginde leccherie- thet is, galnesse. (IV.203–206)
>
> warily, for in this wilderness are many harmful beasts [seven deadly sins]: the lion of pride; the serpent of poisonous envy; the unicorn of anger; the bear of deadly sloth; the fox of covetousness; the sow of gluttony; the scorpion with the tail of stinging lechery, that is, lust. (120)[13]

The transitional, in-between space between here and "high Jerusalem" is populated by a multitude of animals, some of them predators but others guides and harbingers of possible incarnations. In other words, the anchoress's interiority, her solitude, teems with (animal) life.

And while being part of a crowd makes you *less* human, the distance to being *more* human can be traveled only as part of a pack—for in a pack "each man will have neighbors to the right and left, but no one behind him; his back is naked and exposed to the wilderness."[14] According to Deleuze and Guattari, a human being can only encounter the animal within a pack, through a fascination with a multiplicity "already dwelling within us" that allows for becoming-animal, becoming in-human.[15] In a pack, one is both alone and in the company of others; rather than a sum total of its parts, a pack is a series of shifting relations between its members and the always changing positions they occupy between periphery and center: "[t]he wolf … is not a representative, a substitute, but an *I feel*."[16] It is precisely the intensity of this "*I feel*" that gives the animal imagery employed in *Ancrene Wisse* its transformative power while at the same time making it the place of greatest instability, where all lines of flight are open.[17]

II

It is necessary to cultivate the heart, so as not to unwittingly follow the heart, for "the heorte is a ful wilde beast ant maketh moni liht lupe" (II.7) ("the heart is a most wild beast and makes many a light leap out" [66]). This slipperiness of the heart warrants special attention,[18] for the entire Part II of *Ancrene Wisse* is devoted to the protection of the heart by the

five senses. The discussion of the senses is rich in animal imagery, the use of which culminates in Part III (on the inner feelings) and Part IV (on temptations) of the treatise. Anchoritic guides are difficult to define in terms of genre, since the nature of the guide is determined by its functionality: the gathering and use of various genres in anchoritic guidance literature is primarily dictated by the author's needs in constructing the ideal of the anchoritic life.[19] As the first work in English that equated the seven deadly sins with animals, *Ancrene Wisse* is certainly indebted to the genre of *exempla*, and in particular the bestiary lore, which oftentimes served as source of exempla.[20] The author most probably relied on some of the popular contemporary bestiaries derived from *Physiologus*.[21] Because *Ancrene Wisse* was written in an Anglo-French environment, the text may also have been influenced by French literature on the seven deadly sins, which often relied on animal imagery, with one of the most notable examples including Peraldus's penitential treatise *Summa seu tractatus de virtutibus et vitiis* from about 1236.[22]

The five wits under consideration in Part II are effectively equated with the sense organs tied to them—sight with the eye, speech and taste with the mouth, hearing with the ears, smell with the nose, and feeling, a more comprehensive form of touch that encompasses a range of sensations between pain and pleasure—with the entirety of the body.[23] The senses in general are treated as entryways into the soul and occupy a liminal position between the outside and the inside. Consequently, the protection of the heart demands unceasing vigilance, since "hund wule in bluthelich hwarse he fint open" (II.119–20) (a "dog [sin] will happily enter wherever he finds an opening" [69]).

The mouth and the "senses" of taste, speech, and according to the author, the *accompanying* sense of hearing—"as ha gath togederes" (II.202) ("since they [speech and hearing] go together" [72])—are intimately connected with language. Here, the advice is in keeping with the traditional prohibition against women preaching.[24] But there is more at stake than medieval misogyny: *Juge silentium cogit celestia meditari*. "Long silence ant wel i-wist nedeth the thohtes up towart heovene" (II.296–98) ("a long and well-kept silence impels our thoughts up toward heaven" [75]). The flow of speech is likened to the flow of water, which, when dammed, is forced upward rather than left flowing downward; if necessary, "hwen ye nede moten, a lute wiht lowsith up ower muthes flod-yeten" (II.302–303) ("the flood-gates of the mouth can be opened a little" [75]) to release tension, but are quickly to be let down again. The anchoress

should aim for a heavenly redistribution of the senses, directed upward. The text itself follows these two axes of distribution, the horizontal and the vertical, the one aimed at "damming" the correct limitation of speech and the other at leading the senses inward and inclining thought toward sublimity.

This separation is reflected in the animal images used for shaping correct behavior. The anchoress who is given to garrulousness is variously described as a cackling hen whose eggs [good works] are stolen by the "cave deovel" (II.223) ("devil-crow" [73]), a "rikelot" (II.485) ("a cackling magpie" [81]),[25] and a "chiterinde spearewe" (III.385) ("chattering sparrow" [105]). The mouth should be bridled like a horse's, especially because the bridle "sit sum up-o the ehnen, ant geath abute the earen" (II.319) ("sits above the eyes and goes around the ears" [76])—that is, it restrains sight and hearing, but also speech, since "i the muth sit tet irn, ant o the lihte tunge" (II.320) ("the iron sits in the mouth and on the wanton tongue" [76]). An anecdote is recounted in which a hermit says of his talkative brothers:

> "Gode, " quoth he, "ha beoth, ah hare wununge naveth na yete. Hare muth meatheleth eaver. Hwa-se eaver wule, mei gan in ant leaden forth hare asse" -thet is, hare unwise sawle. (II. 313–15)
>
> "God," said he, "they are good … but their dwelling has no gate; their mouths are always jabbering; whoever wants can go in and lead out their ass," that is, their unwise soul." (76)

Whereas the emphasis on silence was evidently pivotal to the anchoritic lives of both male and female recluses, there is indication that female transgression of speech was more severely chastised than male—for example, in comparable monastic settings—since as already mentioned, it was embedded in a structure of general prohibition against women teaching.[26] At least in the context of *Ancrene Wisse*, however, this does not mean that the anchoress is fully silenced, as the text also compares her to birds of heaven, "briddes of heovene the fleoth on heh ant sitteth singinde murie o the grene bohes" (III.163–64) ("who fly high up and sit singing merrily on the green boughs" [98]). As Hughes-Edwards points out, silence does not necessarily lead to silencing, since it becomes an active "medium for communicative interaction" between the female recluse and God.[27]

The distinctions between singing birds, cackling hens and magpies, and chattering sparrows points toward a hierarchy in the use of animal images, which is in part inspired by the bestiary lore and fables.[28] Animals were readily associated with sin and transgression, especially in view of their apparent irrationality—one of the main points of medieval separation between animals and humans, and the source of humanity's ostensible superiority. Thomas Aquinas claimed that animals lacked intelligence and were not made in God's image, which also meant they would not partake in the afterlife: "in that renewal of the world no mixed body will remain except the human body."[29] The mark of passions that plague the anchoress is their apparent irrationality; if angry, a woman is a wolf, "wummon wrath is wulvene" (III.29), and if the anchoress even says her prayers with anger in her heart, "ne deth ha bute theoteth" (III.31) ("she does nothing but howl" [94]): her words are an incoherent imitation of exalted speech. Similarly, a magpie was known in bestiary lore for emulating human speech, but the act of imitation alone did not make its speech rational; indeed, even singing, understood as music, was not properly in the domain of birds, since in order for it to be considered more than a mere vocalization, it needed to be informed by intellect.[30] The anchoresses, who, like birds of heaven, sing merrily on the green boughs, do so because they "thencheth uppart of the blisse of heovene the neaver ne faleweth, ah is aa grene" (III. 164–65) ("think upward to the joy of heaven that ne ver fades but is ever green" [98]); they are joyful because they "resteth ham i thulli thoht, ant ase theo the singeth, habbeth murhthe of heorte" (III.166–67) ("they dwell in such thoughts, and, like those who sing, they have mirth in their hearts" [98]). The joy of singing is preceded by appropriate thought. The position of the female recluse is thus precarious in silence as well as in speech: silence cannot be considered a simple absence of speech, just as speech cannot rest on silence alone. What truly matters is the appropriate disposition of the mind *and* body.

III

"Of dumbe beastes leorne wisdom ant lare" (III.191) ("Learn wisdom and knowledge from the dumb beasts" [98]), urges Ancrene *Wisse*. Of course, what is meant here is that animals are dumb because they are incapable of rational speech. In this sense, it seems that all the animals in the text are silent. Rather than talking animals, the animals so described are perceived as voicing animals, a characterization that can be traced back to antiquity. Aristotle, for

instance, distinguishes between mute and vocal animals; however, even the vocal animals, such as birds, are confined to mere imitation of human speech. Though capable of conveying information, animals lack reason and are therefore unable to discuss ethical or political issues; human speech, which is based on reason, possesses an ethical dimension denied to animals.[31]

Interestingly, not all classical authors equate language with the capacity for moral awareness. Claudius Aelianus tells the story of an elephant that, out of its innate sense of justice, exposes a murderer by exhuming the victim's body with its tusks and thus "showing by its mere action what it could not express in words."[32] In considering animals as moral exemplars, Aelianus demonstrates that an animal's ethical or communicative powers need to be found in the totality of its embodiment and behavior, and not merely in its capacity for approximation to human speech. So while there is a whole category of animals in *Ancrene Wisse* that truly have no voice at all (silent animals that burrow, toil, nest, and fly), these animals, too—indeed, all of the animals in the text—speak, in at least two discrete ways. They speak because all animal exempla speak: the force of exempla lies in their immediacy; they function as "instant images" precisely because their meanings are predetermined.[33] Even though much attention is given to their careful clarification, the framework of interpretation is to a large extent fixed by the conventions of the genre. But animals speak with their bodies, too. The treatment of animals in exempla, including imaginary animals, should expand to consider their materiality, their role not merely as bearers of ethical characteristics but also as models of embodiment.

The codification of the body in *Ancrene Wisse* exceeds the setting out of a relatively limited number of ascetic principles. As Jean-Claude Schmitt has shown, the medieval Christian body was highly ritualized; the culture of the gesture preceded and developed alongside literacy, so the two of them coexisted and were ascribed different values and roles along the same continuum of expressivity. Because the body is the locus of ambivalence between the fallen and the risen body, gestures, too, have the capacity to either distance or bring closer to God.[34] Just as the anchoress's silence relates to two types of communication, limited in relation to the outside world but limitless in relation to God, the duality of the body warrants two types of discipline: a discipline of disembodiment, a "creopen ut of flesch" (II.727) ("creeping out of the flesh" [89]), and a concurrent discipline of embodiment. Accordingly, there are two types of animal exempla employed throughout the treatise, one dealing with the "earthly" body, and the other with the subtle, birdlike body.

The use of animal exempla positions the body in space and time. In terms of space, the already mentioned distinction between below and above is evident in the opposition between the earthbound animals and airborne birds, as seen in the discussion of the difference between a false and true anchoress:

> The gode ancre is Judith …. Ha is of the briddes thet ure Laverd speketh of efter the voxes, the with hare lustes ne holieth nawt dune-ward ase doth the voxes—thet beoth falseancres—ah habbeth on heh ase brid of heovene i-set hare nestes—thet is, hare reste. Treowe ancres beoth briddes i-cleopede, for ha leaveth the eorthe … (III.135–40)
>
> The good anchoress is Judith …. She is one of the birds that our Lord speaks of after the foxes, who do not burrow downward with their lusts, as do the foxes who are false anchoresses, but who have built their nests—that is, their rest—on high, like birds of heaven. True anchoresses are called birds because they leave the earth … (97)

The fox is an earthy animal, an animal of underground and deceit; it could not be further removed from the bird.[35] The distance between the elements of earth and air is further highlighted by the distinction made between birds that cannot fly, such as the ostrich,[36] and "lean" birds or birds of flight—for example, the pelican:

> Theo briddes fleoth wel the habbeth lutel flesch, as the pellican haveth, ant feole fitheren. The struc*io*n, for his muchele flesch, ant othre swucche fuheles, makieth a semblant to fleon, ant beateth the wengen, ah the vet eaver draheth to ther eorthe. Alswa fleschlich ancre … the hevinesse of hire flesch ant flesches untheawes bineometh hire hire fluht … (III.152–56)
>
> Those birds fly well who have little flesh and many feathers, as the pelican has. The ostrich, on account of its heavy flesh, and other birds like it, try to look as if they are flying and beat their wings; but their feet are constantly dragged to the earth. It is just the same with the fleshly anchoress … the heaviness of her flesh and fleshly vices deprive her of her flight. (97)

This orientation toward the above is already present from the very beginning of the text, in Part I, which describes in detail the proper way to pray: upon rising the anchoress should immediately start her prayers "with up ahevene ehnen ant honden toward heovene, buhinde o cneon forth-ward up-o the bedde" (I.4–5) ("with eyes and hands lifted toward heaven, bowing forward on your knees on the bed" [53]). When finishing the Hail Marys, the anchoress should kiss the earth, say them first "cneolinde up

ant dun" (I.333) ("kneeling up and down,"), then "cneolinde i-riht up stille" (I.333) ("kneeling upright and still,"), then "up-o the elbohen riht to ther eorthe" (I.334–35) ("with the elbows right on the ground" [64]), and so on. The various positions of the body during prayer were meant to engender humility, and even though kneeling or prostrated, the basic orientation still remains upward, since, as noted by Schmitt, "he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14). The direct comparison between a bird and the cross, in which "the treowe ancres … spreadeth hare wengen ant makieth creoiz of ham-seolf as brid deth hwen hit flith" (II.149–51) ("true anchoresses … spread their wings and make a cross of themselves as bird does when it flies" [97]), is similarly evocative of a widespread position in medieval prayer, where the supplicant stood upright with the arms outstretched in the form of the cross.[37]

Whereas the ascending birds are solitary and silent, such as the pelican and the sparrow, the chattering birds generally correspond to the anchoress's breaking the confines of the enclosure through one of the wits. This sense of violation is quite apparent in the figure of the peeping anchoress that "beaketh eaver ut-ward as untohe brid i cage" (II. 617–18) ("pecking outward like an unruly bird in a cage" [85]). The image of the caged anchoress is yet another example of constriction ultimately aimed at the vertical restructuring of the senses. In exchange for her glad acceptance of earthly confinement, the anchoress will be bestowed a subtle body: in heaven she will be awarded in greater measure the "two marriage gifts" of "swiftnesse" and "leome of briht sihthe" (II.542), or of swiftness and clarity (83). The "marriage gifts" refer to the four qualities traditionally ascribed to the resurrected body: impassability, subtlety, clarity and agility (swiftness).[38] The anchoresses are promised two of these qualities in particular, "swiftnes ayeines thet ha beoth nu swa bipinnet" and "leome of briht sihthe, ayeines thet ha her theostrith nu ham-seolven" (II.543–44) ("swiftness because they are now so constrained") and ("the light of clear sight because now they enclose themselves in darkness here" [83]). For each sense taken away here, the anchoress will in return receive a spiritual sense in the hereafter: "gastelich sihthe, gastelich herunge, and gastelich speche" (II.535) ("spiritual sight, spiritual hearing, and spiritual speech" [83]). The animal the anchoress needs to look up to now is, again, a bird, this time the eagle: it keeps in his nest a precious stone just as the anchoress should keep in her heart Jesus Christ (99), "Do him i thi nest—thet is, i thin heorte" (III.195). Traditionally, the eagle, a symbol of spiritual rejuvenation, was also thought to be able to look directly into the sun.[39]

Like the eagle withstanding the brilliance of the sun, the anchoress will have "the brihte sihthe of Godes neb" (II.538) ("clear sight of God's face" [83]), a promise pointing toward an eschatological future. The time of the exemplum functions on at least two levels here, the already discussed level of the immediate now and the level of the imminent then. In fact, Jacques Le Goff argues that the exemplum was "an instrument of [the listener's] conversion," which bridged three distinct time points: the historical time of the exemplum, the present time of conversion, and a future of eternity.[40] The dynamic use of animal exempla is aimed at transformation and spans the various types of embodiment that the anchoress needs to traverse, from earthbound heaviness to heavenly swiftness. The pervasive use of animal imagery points to the elements of desired change, but also to the space in between, for the anchoress moves between the elements of earth and heaven. Flight is thus important not only in terms of ascension, of pointing skyward, but also because of active movement through a different medium, one not usually accessible to humans. Movement is as important as the final destination, but much more elusive and difficult to pin in time and space—it cuts a line across both.

IV

Medieval bodies were fluid and malleable,[41] encompassing a range of metamorphic possibilities that needed to be kept in check. It seems that animals were ascribed the role of temple guardians: they could act as gateways into the realm of other incorporations, demonic and angelic alike. The anchoress could be *like* the fox or the eagle, *like* the wolf or *like* a singing bird. What is problematic, however—and this is where one enters the true domain of instability—is the process of transformation occurring in between these discrete points, between the full embodiments: the process of becoming. "Metamorphosis is the opposite of metaphor"[42]: it is its opposite because, unlike the simile, it does not keep the elements in place. Something is like something else, but only if it is different from it in the first place; something is like something else only if a distance has been traveled. Metamorphosis is the traveling of the distance.

Reading the animal exempla in *Ancrene Wisse* solely metaphorically obscures the range of movement between the human and the animal, which is parallel to the movement between the demonic and human, on the one hand, and the human and sublime, on the other. Animals could act as intermediaries between these different realms precisely because of

their dissimilar incorporations[43]: they inhabited different elements (the air, for instance) and they could be shown to move, to rest, to eat, to possess a dynamic intensity that cannot be fully conveyed by their metaphoric meaning alone. A simile is trapped in a binary logic: something is like something else. But what is more interesting is the process of movement in between, which is not so much concerned with arriving as it is with its own unfolding. As we have seen, animals can be read in space, as animals of the earth and birds of heaven, signposts of above and below. But they should also be read in time, as embodied vehicles of transformative potential, moving between these two extremes: an anchoress is or should be *like* them in more than an abstract sense.[44]

Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-animal" does not describe one becoming the stable ontological other, the human becoming the animal and vice versa, but, rather, a movement from "constant" to the "variable"; in it, the subject no longer occupies the domain of stability and identity but is instead "folded into a movement."[45] In his book on Francis Bacon, Deleuze describes becoming-animal as a "zone of indiscernibility" or "undecidability" between man and animal; man is becoming-animal but not without animal becoming-spirit in turn.[46] The animal in *Ancrene Wisse* disembodies the anchoress from her worldly incorporation, but at the same time the animal is transformed in the sense of becoming-spirit, an otherworldly incorporation. In the process of becoming, no body is left unchanged. One does not become form, however; one becomes a "trait." In describing Bacon's portraiture, Deleuze mentions his techniques of "local scrubbing and asignifying traits."[47] The scrubbed area in the portrait is the area of the face, which is the locus of oneness, identity, and separateness. This place is now "asignified" through scrubbing and the introduction of an animal trait, a quality or intensity that shifts the painting from representational to sensory—for example, a "quivering trait of a bird spiralling over the scrubbed area."[48] The body as an organized network of hierarchical relations "escapes"[49]—creeps out, as it were—and acquires a nonlocalized power.

One therefore cannot speak of the anchoress becoming-animal without the animal becoming-anchoress. They now occupy a space of hybridity; they form a rhizome. The angry anchoress *is* a wolf, the eagle looking directly at the sun *is* the subtle body of the anchoress; we are no longer dealing with discrete, individual entities, but are instead on a plane of shared states and affects, of "transversal traits that pass beneath assignable identities."[50] These traits are entirely relational. If this is so, however, we

are no longer in a world inhabited by strict hierarchies and rigid demarcations between human and animal ontologies, just as there is no longer a clear separation between now and then, or here and there. A radical Christian economy, such as anchoritism, might bring forth a completely open system, a flow bursting through *Jetzzeit*, in which animals and humans share a commonality and all partake in heaven and hell.[51] Grace Jantzen pointed out an imbalance of focus that prioritizes violent religious myths and cultural narratives that fixate on rigid hierarchies, destruction, and death[52]; as *Ancrene Wisse* is rather gentle to its readers, it behooves us to look for gentleness in turn. Of course, the text is steeped in contemporary gender and species hierarchies; at the same time, however, it provides fertile ground for a different type of reading, a revision, which may serve as an alternative "narrative resource" for returning to a more common ground for "dumb beasts" and people alike.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 11.
2. Described as a beginner's guide for female recluses, *Ancrene Wisse* was written in English in the first half of the thirteenth century by an anonymous author and originally intended for three sisters living as anchoresses; the later versions of the text were amended with other audiences in mind—i.e., male recluses and lay men and women. The author of the text may have been a Dominican friar (see Bella Millett, "The Origins of *Ancrene Wisse*: New Answers, New Questions," *Medium Ævum* 61, no. 2 (1992): 206–28); it has also been suggested that the work was a result of a collaborative process between the writer and the anchoresses. For more detail on authorship and later distribution of the text, see Yoko Wada, ed., *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), in particular Chaps. 1 and 3.
3. Robert Hasenfratz, ed., *Ancrene Wisse* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/hasenfratz-ancrene-wisse, accessed July 2017.
4. Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 108.
5. Mari Hughes-Edwards, "How Good It Is to Be Alone? Solitude, Sociability, and Medieval English Anchoritism," *Mystics Quarterly* 35, nos. 3–4 (2009): 31.
6. Hughes-Edwards, "How Good It Is to Be Alone," 31–61.
7. Cats were not considered domesticated animals and were seen as occupying the border between wild and domestic animals; nevertheless, they were

considered beneficial for catching rodents (see Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* [New York: Routledge, 2011], 11). Cats were often used to control rats and mice in medieval churches; Exeter Cathedral records from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries show monetary provision for the cathedral's cats, which was probably intended for food supplementing the cats' catch. Further evidence of the continuous presence of cathedral cats can be found in the door leading to the clock in the North Tower of Exeter Cathedral, which has a cat hole dating back to the seventeenth century (see Nicholas Orme, *The Cathedral Cat: Stories from Exeter Cathedral* [Kindle edition, Exeter: Impress Books, 2008]). It seems, however, that the very function of the cat could be used as a disguise for pet-keeping, so that cats were quite common among monastic orders (for more on pets in monastic settings see Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* [Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012], 67–72).

8. See n14 in Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality,* 404.
9. Salisbury argues that it is the property relationship that is ambiguous in the first place, as it connects the owner and the owned in binding ways and suggests that a close examination of even early medieval sources shows that the privileged human position was not always necessarily secure. See Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 29.
10. Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets*, 72. On the other hand, a fourteenth-century exemplum recounts the story of a little girl brought up as a nun who "begins by loving" the abbesses' dog and bird, but is later moved to love the image of Christ (Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets*, 71). Here the relationship between spiritual devotion and attachment to animals is not mutually exclusive but, rather, part of a continuum of love.
11. Hughes-Edwards, "How Good It Is to Be Alone," 33.
12. For various types of ascetic instruction in *Ancrene Wisse*, see Robert Hasenfratz, "'Efter hire euene': Lay Audiences and the Variable Asceticism of *Ancrene Wisse*," in *Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs Intersections of Gender and Enclosure in the Middle Ages*, ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy and Mari Hughes–Edwards (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), 145–60.
13. Apart from the scorpion, the animals used to represent the deadly sins were part of a traditional repertoire of bestiary tradition. For the particular use of scorpion, see Lucinda Rumsey, "The Scorpion o Lechery and *Ancrene Wisse*", *Medium Ævum* 61, no. 1 (1992): 48–58.
14. Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (New York: Continuum, 1978), 93.
15. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateus*, 239–40. "Becoming" is central to Deleuze's work; it stands for movement between particular events. It is not to be understood, however, as a discrete stage between two states but, rather, as the in between, dynamic process of change tending toward no determinable outcome. For a concise introduction of "becoming," see *The*

Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 25–27.

16. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateus*, 32.
17. As already indicated, Deleuze and Guattari give precedence to "becoming" over "being." A "line of flight" describes the path of transformation, "of mutation precipitated through the actualization of connections among bodies that were previously only implicit (or 'virtual') that releases new powers in the capacities of those bodies to act and respond." See Tamsin Lorraine, "Lines of Flight," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, 147. As opposed to "organism," Deleueze does not understand the body as a hierarchically organized entity but, rather, as a whole characterized by a set of relations between different parts. As such, the body is capable of being affected by other bodies and of mixing with other bodies in ways that may result in new, unexpected sets of relations.
18. For more on the trope of the unstable heart, see n2 in Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 347–48.
19. For more on the ideology of anchoritic life, see Mari Hughes-Edwards, *Reading Medieval Anchoritism: Ideology and Spiritual Practices* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).
20. Cate Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse: From Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 123.
21. For more on bestiary sources in *Ancrene Wisse*, see Lenora Marsh, "The Female Body, Animal Imagery, and Authoritarian Discourse in the *Ancrene Riwle*" (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 2000).
22. Wada, *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, 19.
23. The equation of senses with organs is in keeping with the penitential theory of the time; see Alexandra Barrat, "The Five Wits and their Structural Significance in Part II of *Ancrene Wisse*," *Medium Ævum* 56, no. 1 (1987): 12–24. For explanation of the comprehensive nature of touch or "felunge," see n84 in Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 358.
24. "St. Paul forbade women to preach: *Mulieres non permitto docere* (1 Timothy 2:12)," Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 75.
25. *Rikelot* has also been translated as a gossip or a chattering woman. See n485 at http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/hasenfrantz-ancrene-wisse-part-two#485.
26. Hughes-Edwards, *Reading Medieval Anchoritism*, 42.
27. Hughes-Edward, *Reading Medieval Anchoritism*, 42.
28. For a fuller explication on the variety of animals used in *Ancrene Wisse*, see Luuk A. J. R. Houwen, "'From Dumb Beasts Learn Wisdom and Knowledge': Animal Symbolism in the *Ancrene Wisse*," *Das Mittelalter* 12, no. 2 (2007): 97–118.
29. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. English Dominican Fathers, 1952, http://dhspriory.org/thomas/QDdePotentia5.htm#5:9, accessed October 2016.

30. On the various theories of medieval music in relation to bird song, see Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Sung Birds: Music, Nature, and Poetry in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).
31. Thorsten Fögen, "Animal Communication," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, ed. Gordon L. Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 220.
32. Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, trans. A. F. Scholfield, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 203. For Fögen's discussion of Aelianus, see Fögen, "Animal Communication," 226–27.
33. Houwen, "Animal Symbolism," 115.
34. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident medieval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 18.
35. Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56.
36. Because of its inability to fly, medieval bestiaries often classed the ostrich among the animals rather than the birds. Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human*, 20.
37. For a fuller explication of various gestures in prayer, see Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, 289–320. In his book on *lectio divina*, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh's* Didascalion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), Ivan Illich mentions Marcel Jousse's notion of *corporage*, which describes the "psychomotor techniques of fixing a spoken sequence in the flesh" (*In the Vineyard of the Text*, n39, 60). Illich claims that for Scripture to become part of the monk's "biography," they had to rely on what was essentially a Jewish tradition, the tradition of the book, which was "swallowed" and "digested" by focusing closely on the "psychomotor impulses" evoked by the text. In other words, the monks "embodied the lines" (*In the Vineyard of the Text*). Just as Schmitt claims that the culture of gesture and the culture of literacy were fundamentally intertwined and fed into each other, Illich shows comparable processes with regard to the history of monastic reading. The art historian Hans Belting has proposed what he calls a *Bildanthropologie*, which operates with the triad of terms *image, medium*, and *body*; to better understand an image one also has to take into consideration the medium and the body (see Hans Belting, "Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology, "*Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 2 [Winter 2005]: 302–19), where, of course, both are to be understood as subject to historical change. This opens up interesting avenues in the understanding of images as they relate to the materiality of the text (book) and the (reading, listening, praying) body. It also indicates that the full impact of the image cannot be reduced to its historically codified iconological meaning.

38. The four marriage gifts are already mentioned at the very beginning of *Ancrene Wisse*, in Part I. See n15 in Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 58.
39. Michael J. Curley, trans., *Physiologus: A Medieval Book of Natural Lore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 13.
40. Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 80.
41. Miri Rubin, "The Person in the Form: Medieval Challenges to Bodily 'Order,'" in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 101.
42. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 22.
43. Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human*, 34.
44. Deleuze and Guattari understand becoming-animal as a real process; according to James Urpeth, they give priority to "becoming over being, kinetic and verbal over static and nominal." James Urpeth, "Animal Becomings," in *Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calargo (London: Continuum, 2004), 102.
45. Gerald L. Bruns, "Becoming-Animal (Some Simple Ways)," *New Literary History* 38, no. 4 (2007): 703.
46. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (London: Continuum, 2004), 21.
47. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon,* 21.
48. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon,* 21.
49. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon,* 26.
50. Joshua Delpech-Ramey, "Deleuze, Guattari, and the 'Politics of Sorcery,'" *SubStance* 39, no. 121 (2010): 11.
51. For an interesting discussion on medieval ideas about animals in heaven, see Joyce E. Salisbury, "Do Animals Go to Heaven?: Medieval Philosophers Contemplate Heavenly Human Exceptionalism," *Athen Journal of Humanities and Arts*, January 2014, https://www.atiner.gr/journals/humanities/2014-1-1-7-SALISBURY.pdf, accessed July 2017.
52. Grace Jantzen, *Violence to Eternity: Death and the Displacement of Beauty* (London: Routledge, 2009), 35–55.

CHAPTER 3

"As faucon comen out of muwe": Female Agency and the Language of Falconry

Sara Petrosillo

The art of falconry required such keen observation of birds that human handlers learned to interpret the nonverbal communication of plumage, which directly reflects the birds' health, experience, and fidelity. Deciphering feathers in order to control birds' flight was the task of falconry manuals, which overlapped with other courtly literature in material and formal contexts, sometimes sharing manuscript space with lais and romance, and sometimes adopting verse form. Read alongside references to falcons in courtly texts, these manuals allow us to understand the language of falconry—that is, the communicative strategies of falcons and the interpretive strategies of the birds' handlers, the falconers. This visual communication between two species held implications not only for the practice of falconry but also for the translation of that practice into metaphors comparing training falcons to training lovers.

In Book III of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde,* at the pinnacle of the lovers' bliss, the narrator describes Criseyde "as fressh as faukoun comen out of muwe" (III.1783).[1] The falconry term "muwe" occurs again when things start to fall apart for the lovers: Criseyde insists she will "not so ben hid in muwe" in the Greek camp (IV.1310). Tracing the imagery of the mews

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shows us how the image of the falcon can both affirm and undermine criticism of the compromised woman. A "muwe" was a small structure meant to house falcons and hawks during their yearly molt when they shed old feathers and grow new ones. The trope of the "mewed falcon" appears in courtly literature that compares a falcon's changing feathers to an adulterous woman's changing heart. This trope is not so straightforwardly condemnatory when Chaucer uses it in *Troilus and Criseyde*, and in fact, the falconry image helps readers parse the difference between condemnatory "change" and ambivalent "renewal." This ambivalence, I shall show, is not unique to the *Troilus*, though Chaucer does use the mew image in a distinctively unsuspicious way. To show how he gets to this point, I offer an account of the history of the metaphor. The structural makeup of the mewed falcon metaphor and its repeated use from Chrétien to Chaucer portend ambivalence about adulterous women; the expression conveys both control over and defiance by female characters in adultery narratives, figuring a feminist resistance built into the adultery narrative's misogynous cast.

The metaphor of the mewed falcon seems to reinforce a standard antifeminist agenda: it appears to align a female beloved with a molting falcon in order to forewarn the male lover/falconer about the falcon's eventual inconstancy once she emerges from the mews. During their yearly molt, falcons and hawks alike are "ikept in mews þat þey may be discharged of olde federis and harde and be so renewed in fayrenesse of ȝouthe."[2] The changed feathers are not the anxious source of changeability in the bird; rather, it is their changed behavior that alarms falconers, for after such extended time in enclosure the birds "obliti sunt amorem quem habebant in loyrum, propter hoc non libenter veniunt ad loyrym" (forget the love that they had for the lure, and because of this they don't come willingly).[3] Thus, though a previously obedient falcon will emerge from the mews with a newly generated set of flight feathers, she might very well use those feathers to fly of her own accord rather than return to the lure of the falconer. The bird's desire to fly free after months of confinement is a source of anxiety for falconers, and this anxiety is translated into the narrative poetry that uses the mewed-falcon metaphor to depict adulterous women.

Yet this translation is not without internal contradictions. The trope's repetition throughout courtly adultery narratives betrays the oddity of its structure as a metaphor: a change in plumage signifies the process of mewing that causes a change in behavior. I argue that the falcon comparisons in courtly literature preceding and including *Troilus and Criseyde* complicate a straightforward, misogynist adultery narrative because the

structure of the metaphor can be separated into multiple components. The metaphor relies on slippage between a superficial/literal change of feathers and an internal/figurative change of heart, rendering the location of changeability a moving target. This repetition of the trope from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries exposes this slippage to allow for a new understanding of female agency that comes to the fore in the *Troilus*. For Robert Newlin, the comparison between Criseyde and a mewing falcon depicts her as "(dangerously) changeable" and serves to undercut Troilus's moment atop Fortune's wheel by alluding to the "essential and mutable nature" of women.[4] While such a reading helpfully demonstrates the availability of falconry terms to gloss romance narratives, it overlooks the history of the mewed-falcon trope prior to the fourteenth century, a history that I shall show troubles essentializing claims about women's "nature." Attending to these characters' responses to being metaphorized, this essay traces the trope from Chrétien de Troyes's twelfth-century romance *Cligès,* to the thirteenth-century fabliau *Guillaume au faucon,* to Guillaume de Machaut's fourteenth-century allegory *Le dit de l'alerion,* and finally to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

The mewed-falcon metaphor's travel across genres augments the destabilizing potential of female agency in the antifeminist narrative structure. *Guillaume au faucon* was the first to use the direct rhetorical comparison between a lady and a falcon "coming out of the mews." This fabliau uses the mewed falcon metaphor in order to invoke and parody romance, encouraging interpretations that free female bodies from patriarchal, paranoid structures. My turn to this genre participates in a critical discourse begun by Lesley Johnson over thirty years ago: far from simply "condemn[ing]" female characters' "performance," fabliaux position women "on top" precisely *because* of their ingenuity in navigating adultery narratives.[5] Holly Crocker builds on Johnson's work to observe that "fabliaux acknowledge the necessity for women to maintain agency in order [for men] to direct their desires."[6] And while scholars have recognized fabliau's parodic relationship to romance, specific shared tropes between the genres remain relatively unexplored. This text-hopping trope of the mewed falcon allows us to follow what Roberta Krueger names the "trace of women's resistance to their cultural appropriation"[7]; by positioning the female voice from the fabliau across texts and centuries, the mewed-falcon trope enables the "resistant doubled discourse" that E. Jane Burns terms "bodytalk."[8] Listening to these "women who 'talked back'" would have allowed female readers to "reject and undermine [the] misogynistic strategies" of the adultery narrative.[9]

Because of the fabliau's multi-layered engagement with falconry training and its revisionist relationship to romance, by the time readers came across an adulterous female figure, like Chaucer's Criseyde, compared to a mewed falcon, they could interpret her speech and body as resisting what Newlin calls the "mew-anxiety."[10] The revisionist approach I locate in the trope's literary history responds to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's proposal that "the richest reparative practices" might develop from "the most paranoid-tending" positions.[11] Adultery narratives fit this bill: they *seem* to form the paranoid practice of interpreting women as adulterous and adultery as essentially feminine, but their very intertextuality contains a common trope that offers a means for reparation. The mewing trope is germane because its falconry-specific kind of change can be divided into conflicting components: a changing external form of feathers and an unchanging form of bodily work beneath those feathers. Upon closer examination of this metaphor in operation, we shall see that mewing is not about change into something different but, rather, about a kind of fidelity in relation to oneself based on renewing what was always there. When external plumage renewal is employed to signify the nature of a woman's heart, the metaphor loses ground and the misogynous framework falls apart.

The courtly tradition of falconry-love metaphors reaches back to Chrétien de Troyes in the twelfth century. Chrétien's *Cligès* presents a conventional approach to the metaphor between women and falcons, signaled by Fenice's avian name and the multiple hawks that stand in for her body when she commits adultery. While Chrétien's romances do not use the phrase "a falcon coming out of the mews" to describe adulterous women, *Cligès* does use a mewing hawk to enable an adulterous lovers' tryst, as well as a deserter hawk to bring about an end to the lovers' secrecy.[12] Cligès places a molting goshawk in Fenice's tower, effectively rendering their shared space a mews, and uses the bird as an excuse to frequent the enclosure. Fenice's desire to emerge from her confinement into an orchard causes the lovers to be discovered when a fugitive sparrow hawk alights on a tree beside them. Following his hawk, an austringer (trainer of goshawks) discovers the naked lovers mid-embrace. Hawks, surrounded by men who attempt to control them, stand in for Fenice in this romance. Chrétien's foundational work establishes a relationship between the dangers of enclosing falcons and the dangers of enclosing women: the mews—a controlled space of enclosure—produces resistance to control in the birds once they exit that space. The symbolic function of the two hawks in this romance establishes how a metaphor between bird and woman operates.

The mewing hawk's placement alongside Fenice enables the adulterous union; the bird's changing feathers alert the reader to Fenice's faithlessness as a wife, and to her rebelliousness as a cooped-up lover. Fenice's desire to exit her enclosure follows the treatises' descriptions of a molted hawk's desire to leave the mews upon molting. Once she exits, a deserter sparrow hawk lands next to her, betraying Fenice as a deserter wife. These back-to-back hawk references create their own formal bind around the female figure in this romance, making it impossible for her to escape the adulterous signification of the molting-falcon metaphor.

The thirteenth-century anonymous *Guillaume au faucon* reworks Chrétien's falcon metaphor. This fabliau uses a mewed-falcon metaphor to describe its female protagonist and then concludes the tale with the lady's cunning use of the pun "faucon" ("falcon/false cunt"), unbinding the mewing metaphor tightly woven in *Cligès*. If *Cligès* enclosed its female protagonist between two determinate hawk metaphors, this fabliau slips outside of that structure by using two figurative falcons to concede rather than withhold female agency. Such concessions are not surprising in a genre that celebrates women's cunning more often than it condemns it.[13] But this fabliau divines a female agency beyond its own text and manuscript. It reappropriates the language of a blazon and symbolism of a mewed falcon from two of Chrétien's romances, prompting a reparative reading of female bodies and voices in adultery narratives beyond fabliaux. In other words, the fabliau's rewriting of Chrétien's romance models for readers how to interpret adulterous ladies in other texts invoking the mewed-falcon metaphor. The deployment of the pun "faucon" at the fabliau's conclusion suggests an alternate mode for reading romance, for the cross-generic literary history of the mewed-falcon trope and the untranslatability of the pun leave interpretation open in this tale and in intersecting adultery narratives.

Guillaume au faucon reproduces fifty lines from Chrétien's description of Blanchefleur in *Perceval* (c. 1190), but alters the blazon to include a mewed-falcon metaphor, a borrowing that engages the high style of romance to trouble essentializing claims such narratives make about adultery. Chrétien's description of Blanchefleur compares her to a hawk or parrot:

> Et la pucele vint plus cointe,
> Et plus acesmee et plus jointe
> Que espreviers ne papegaus.
>
> And the maiden was more cunning, and more elegant, and more attractive than sparrow hawks or parrots.[14]

The fabliau's blazon adds two lines to compare the lady's beauty to a falcon coming out of the mews:

> Que la dame estoit plus tres cointe,
> Plus tres acesmee et plus jointe,
> *Quant el est paree et vestue,*
> *Que n'est faucons qui ist de mue,*
> Ne espervier, ne papegaut.
>
> The lady was far more cunning, far more elegant, and more attractive, *when she is adorned and dressed, than is a falcon that comes out of the mews*, or a sparrow hawk, or a parrot.[15]

On the surface, the mewed-falcon addition seems purely contrastive: Blanchefleur was an unmarried virgin, bright and attractive (and impressionable) like a sparrow hawk or parrot; the lady of the fabliau has a matured and changeable body like a falcon that has shed and grown at least one set of feathers. Her changing feathers appear to signal her change of heart when she succumbs to Guillaume's pleas for sex. But the adverbial time clause qualifying the falcon metaphor reveals the comparison's multilayered components: she is more cunning, et cetera "*when she is adorned and dressed* than is a falcon that comes out of the mews." The clause qualifies the comparison: she is not an essentially changeable woman; her aspect when *adorned* is like a falcon of changing feathers. This qualification reconfigures the essentializing comparison between changeable birds and adulterous women, undermining what it means for a woman to *be* adulterous. In coining this phrase for future adultery narratives, the fabliau sends a kind of Trojan Horse into the apparently antifeminist texts that adopt the metaphor. It *appears* to usher in the antifeminist joke that women are by nature changeable, but its qualifier about the superficiality of molted feathers belies the joke's apparent essentialism. Beneath the changing feathers, the work of the bird's body is constant. The rest of the fabliau defines what that work is: using language to stay outside of misogynous structures of control.

Speaking as a falcon is just how the lady of the fabliau negotiates between her husband's control and her own control over how her body is represented. The invocation of a mewed falcon in the fabliau's initial description of the lady sets the stage for the wordplay on "faucon" later in the fabliau when the lady must trick her husband into granting her permission to sleep with a lovesick and hunger-striking squire, Guillaume. The lady of the fabliau relies on the undecidability of language to negotiate

from an "impossible position," like so many of the female fabliau characters who induce sympathy from readers.[16] A sympathetic response to the woman's cunning provides an alternative to a misogynous interpretation of the lady, despite the adulterous outcome of the narrative. Forced to choose between starving Guillaume or cuckolding her husband, the lady sidesteps the moral dilemma through the homophonic pun *faucon/faux con*, "falcon" or "false cunt." She tells her lord that Guillaume has fallen ill because he desires her lord's "faucon." The lord grants the starving squire his falcon, and by virtue of the pun to which he is not privy, he also grants the squire access to his wife's genitalia. But more broadly, the blazon's addition of the mewed-falcon metaphor invites readers to reassess female characters likened to falcons with a similar sympathy for what work they are able to do to overcome antifeminist structures.

While the lady spends most of the fabliau attempting to persuade Guillaume to abandon his pursuit because she does not reciprocate his love, she nevertheless appears to welcome his sexual service once he is granted the "faucon." I suggest that this apparent change of heart is not a change at all; her voicing of the pun is consistent with her steadfast speech in maintaining control over her body—a control she demonstrates for the sake of the audience. Her own ability to create excess meaning with the word "faucon" signifies beyond the question of faithfulness to her husband and instead puts her in direct conversation with the reader. Her speech registers on a meta-narrative level together with the fabliau's intertextual conversation with Chrétien's romances. This paronomastic feat extends to the audience, who is invited to admire, rather than chastise, her cunning. She uses the pun to escape a double bind in the narrative, but her pun also demonstrates an alternative to misogynistic interpretation:

> Sire, Guillaumes que vez ci
> Si me requist vostre faucon,
> Et ge ne l'en voil faire don,
> Si voz dirai par quel maniere
> Qu'en voz oiseax n'ai ge que faire. (562–66)
>
> Lord, Guillaume, whom you see there, requested of me your falcon, and I did not want to make him a gift of it, and I will tell you why: I have nothing to do with your birds.

Rather than fulfilling an antifeminist prophecy, her voicing of this pun resists singular interpretation, absolving her of a totalizing blame. Those

who interpret the pun turn her into an adulteress, but their interpretation does not erase the undecidability of the pun or of her self-representation. While, on the one hand, the fabliau's narrative does not completely liberate the lady's body—she remains an object of exchange lusted after by two men who lay claim to her—on the other hand, her voicing of the pun does grant the lady control over how her body is represented in speech and metaphor, therefore creating a multiplicity of potential interpretations. The pun's excess of meaning not only permeates the description of the lady's body as a "faucons qui ist de mue," it also prompts a rereading of narratives that appear to use the trope of the mewed falcon to designate and denigrate adulterous women.

Guillaume de Machaut's mid-fourteenth-century allegory *Le dit de l'alerion* is just such a narrative: its 4814 lines of allegorical verse use falconry conventions to instruct lovers on the pitfalls and successes of training women in love like falcons in flight. The poem's allegorical presentation of a mewed falcon as a changeable lover appears to create a more conservative parallel between bird and woman, but the fabliau's complication of this metaphor suggests a different approach to the allegory. The fabliau dismantled the comparison between women and birds by separating feathers' superficial quality from the body beneath adornments. *Le dit de l'alerion* further disaggregates the mewed-falcon metaphor by comparing a bird's molting feathers to a woman's molting heart, an external/internal dichotomy elaborated on by other falconry treatises. Read on one level, *Le dit de l'alerion* is itself a falconry treatise: it describes the phases of training birds of prey to hunt and return to man. It shares terminology and observations with such manuals, and it relies on a readership familiar with the intricacies of falconry as a practice. But beneath the falconry treatise is a commentary on women's nature that, despite initial appearances, produces more and not less opportunity for female agency and interpretive choice. The poem's use of falconry comparisons actually supports evasion of control, rather than subjugation to a faithful training of female obedience. The untidy loose ends we saw in the fabliau and shall see here help shape a reading practice in which falcon comparisons incite cross-generic unravelings and rereadings because of the network of relationships falconry evokes.

Le dit de l'alerion is a narrative about training birds and training women, about testing methods of control until one proves successful; at the same time, it uses the mewing concept of "adornment" to comment on the unreliability of comparison as a method of representation. The dual-layered

problem of mewing helps reveal problems in the dual-layered form of allegory. Because Machaut's poem is simultaneously a falconry manual and a guide to courtly love, it draws from and contributes to representations of control in both genres. Thus the narrative of training and losing falcons and hawks speaks to the narrator's message about testing and rejecting types of behavior in women. In the course of the poem, the narrator-falconer trains and loses four birds: a sparrow hawk, which he loses after she emerges from the mews; an alerion, which he loses while flying her too high, but will eventually regain in the conclusion; an eagle, which he also loses while flying; and a gyrfalcon, which he abandons because she shamefully sets upon a loathsome owl and refuses to relinquish the unworthy prey. The very fact of the narrator's changeability (he moves quickly from one bird to another) seems slyly unquestioned, even as he expresses fear about his molting hawk's change of heart. He explicitly addresses the dual-layered form of his poem and uses the adjective "paré" ("adorned") to describe the mewing falcon trope's relationship to the entire allegory:

> Or ay je bien ce fait paré,
> Quant j'ay a dame comparé
> L'esprivier …. (1197–99)
>
> Now I have adorned this [the poem] well when to the lady I've compared the sparrow hawk.[17]

He speaks of the comparison itself as an adornment, in the same terms that our fabliau described the lady's likeness to a falcon "quant el est. paree" (69; "when she is adorned"). But in the next few lines he elaborates on the bird's need to shed her feathers, her adornment, causing readers to reassess the allegorical reach of a comparison that is merely an "adornment" on the poem. The poem depicts the mewing phase of falconry as a weak point in the falconer's ability to predict or control the bird's body, potentiating agency for the woman represented under the allegorical surface layer.

The mewed-falcon metaphor oddly uses an external change in the hawk to describe an internal change in the lady's heart, and this structural misalignment helps redefine female changeability. The narrator notices "son plumage" (1215; "her plumage") and must reluctantly "ce gent espriveir mettre en mue" (1217; "put my sparrow hawk, that noble creature, in the

mew"). His reluctance derives from fear of what might result *internally* from the bird's *external* change:

> Je pensay en secret recoy,
> Selonc contrainte oubeïssance,
> Entremeslee de doubtance,
> Que s'il muoit de son plumage,
> *Qu'il ne muast de son corage*
> Et qu'il ne fust plus dongereus
> Que devant, et meins amoureus. (1238–44, emphasis added)

> I quietly thought about this secret, according to constrained obedience, itself mixed with doubt: *that if she would molt her feathers, she might molt her heart*, and that she would be more resistant than before, and less loving.[18]

The masculine pronouns referring to the female bird/lover might give pause and require a bit of ornithological context: "l'esprivier," the sparrow hawk, always referred to a female bird, though the noun itself is masculine. In medieval bird nomenclature "specific, different names were reserved for the male of each species," so a male sparrow hawk was always referred to by a specific name, "mouschet" ("musket").[19] This gendered naming paradox nevertheless points to the unreliability between the allegorical shroud and the supposed "truth" of women's nature. And when read alongside the narrator's description of his own "contrainte oubeïssance" ("constrained obedience")—a description we would expect to see applied to the bird/lady—it makes it difficult to distinguish who is controlling whom in the relationship between bird and human, woman and man.

The motive for the narrator's "doubtance," the description of what happens when a bird molts, further expands this structural misalignment. This schema recasts changeability as renewal: the mewed falcon's molted heart depicts fidelity to the work of its own body rather than a fidelity to a falconer's control. Lines 1241–42 set up a causal relationship between molting feathers and molting heart, which the two lines' parallel syntax and end-rhyme of "plumage" and "corage" reinforce. Rather than use "changer," Machaut keeps the verb "muer" consistent across his description of what a bird's feathers do and what her heart does. Different from "changing" the heart, "molting" evokes shedding weathered adornments for the purpose of renewal, not so much exchanging for something different as regenerating what was there before. New feathers grow back stronger, so a heart renewed of its prior strength and quality might reveal

that the bird was from the outset not under the falconer's or lover's control. This schema resets changeability and relativity: the mewed falcon's molted heart depicts fidelity to the work of her own body rather than fidelity to a falconer's control.

This section of the poem separates what the hawk has been trained to desire (to remain under her master's control) from what her body needs (to molt her feathers in isolation), introducing the question of the bird's agency in the poem; other falconry treatises reveal that the bird's adherence to her own bodily needs might overcome and even be more prized than fidelity to the falconer. To flesh out this phenomenon, it is helpful to turn to the language of such treatises. The thirteenth-century falconry treatise *De arte venandi cum avibus* uses the plumage of birds as a heuristic device for interpreting the trainability of their nature and the success of their flight, which are not always compatible categories. The treatise draws a distinction between the falcon's form and her plumage, and indicates that more beautiful plumage, though signifying loyalty, is not preferable to fine form of limbs beneath the plumage:

> De illis qui sunt bone forme et turpis plumagii et male forme et pulcri plumagii, *preeligendi sunt illi qui sunt bone forme*. Ex bona namque forma velociores sunt et plus possunt operari, quamvis non sint constantes ut illi qui sunt pulcri plumagii. Ex pulcro autem plumagio, quamvis sint constantes ad quod docentur, deberent esse meliores propter pulcritudinem plumagii, set propter non bonam formam non poterunt operari quod deberent.[20]
>
> Regarding those that are of a good form and ugly plumage, or bad form and beautiful plumage, *those that are of good form are to be preferred*. For, because of their good form, they are faster and can do more work, although they may not be as faithful as those that are of beautiful plumage. On the other hand, although due to their beautiful plumage the others may be faithful to what they are taught, they should be better because of their beautiful plumage, because they are not of good form they will not be able to do the work that they should.

Here the treatise reveals a subtle duality in the exterior appearance of falcons: there are those who appear ugly because of their plumage but are actually beautifully formed beneath their feathers, and those who appear beautiful because of their plumage but are ill-formed beneath. The treatise does not dichotomize between inner and outer beauty here—both form and plumage are external features. Beautiful plumage signifies faithfulness to the falconer, but beautiful form signifies faithfulness to the work of the falcon's body—

flight. So while those of beautiful feathers are more likely to remain faithful to the falconer, they are less likely to perform their task of flying and stooping at prey, and therefore less preferable for the falconer to possess.

This confession constructs an alternative kind of constancy that does not necessarily rest on a relationship between falcon and falconer but, rather, between the form of the falcon and the work of the falcon's body. The beautifully plumed *ought* to be better because they are more faithful, but they are *not* better because they cannot do the work that they *ought* to do. In other words, falconers' preference for good form over beautiful plumage creates the possibility of a kind of fidelity that frightens even as it dazzles the falconer: the faithfulness between the form of the bird and the execution of her craft, which is to fly high and dive forcefully at her prey, and not necessarily to return to the arm of the falconer.

And indeed, this post-mewing fate is sealed when *Le dit de l'alerion*'s sparrow hawk emerges from the mews and refuses the falconer's control; however, the description of the lover's loss displaces blame from the beloved to her position relative to him. The poem reveals her captivity as the structure against which her fidelity is conventionally measured. The mewing metaphor, then, does not depict women as inconstant. It shifts the blame from the falcon herself to the circumstances of molting in captivity, suggesting not that women are of a mutable nature but that they are subject to a structural double bind:

> Dont moult bien et moult bel *mua*,
> Et la *mue* continua
> Jusqu'a tant qu'il fu tous *muëz*,
> De sa vieil plume *desmuëz*
> Et de nouvelle revistis.
> Mais il en fu si parvertis
> Qu'arrier de moy fu transportez
> S'en fu forment desconfortez,
> Quant par la *mue* le perdi. (1253–61)
>
> Therefore, she *molted* very well and very properly, and the *molting* continued until she was completely *molted*, with her old plumage *molted off* and with new [plumage] redressed. But she was so corrupted by this that afterwards she was carried off from me; I was so very disconsolate by this, since I lost her through the *molt*.[21]

This passage's obsessive repetition of various forms of "muer" in four consecutive lines (1253–56) suggests that the narrator blames the hawk's

need to molt rather than the hawk herself. "Et la mue continua," "and the mewing continued," he says, apparently blaming the course of time required for the feathers to replenish. But the personal pronouns in the second half of this lament betray the real problem behind the hawk's abandonment: the narrator's attempt to control another body. The hawk was carried away "from *me*" (de *moy*,) the narrator admits, "*I* lost her" ("perdi"), he confesses. She was not lost to herself, she was not changed or "parvertis" ("corrupted") in relation to her own nature, but only in relation to the falconer's attempt to control and retain her. As with the lady in the fabliau, those who interpret the hawk's molt turn her into a traitor; she is only lost in relation to those who would try to possess her. On the allegorical level, which casts this hawk as a lady who turns away from her lover, the mewing section does not grant insight into women's "essential and mutable nature"[22]; rather, it conveys a failed attempt to adorn women with a metaphor whose loose ends and composite structure come unraveled so easily.

In the *Troilus*, when the narrator describes Criseyde "as fressh as faukoun comen out of muwe" (III.1783), the metaphor appears to enclose her in the same double bind; the invocation of the pun "faucon" combined with falconry's anxiety about a mewed falcon's resistance to control appears to condone a judgment of Criseyde as unfaithful even before she changes lovers. But falconry's privileging of form over superficial beauty and endurance over faithfulness complicates metaphors that compare women to falcons, and this complication will pave the way for a reparative reading of Criseyde. This reparation does not arise from a singular moment in the poem; the *Troilus* narrator often equivocates on condemning Criseyde, despite delivering a narrative that nevertheless results in her adultery.[23] But the exposition of falconry training and the literary history of the mews metaphor make clear a culturally historicized channel for this ambivalence.

The lady's equivocating voice in the fabliau and the mewed-falcon metaphor recast Criseyde's infidelity as a problem of interpretation for Troilus and for the reader. The fabliau's and allegory's resistance to univocal interpretation of female bodies urges readers to reassess fidelity as a stable concept in poetry. Machaut's allegory depicts fidelity as a concept entirely relative to the interpreter; the narrator who is to blame for his own loss cannot judge his sparrow hawk unfaithful by nature, but only unfaithful to his control. These texts use the mewed-falcon metaphor to foreground the tension between control over representation of female fidelity and

built-in resistance to that control. In the *Troilus*, this tension mounts in the narrator's metaphor comparing Criseyde to a mewed falcon in Book III and, in a cunning invocation of the fabliau female voice, in Criseyde's invocation of the metaphor in Book IV, a last attempt to reclaim control over how her body will be interpreted, if not by Troilus, then at least by the reader. Elizabeth Allen argues that Criseyde's speech participates in Chaucer's resistance to the poem's ending, a process that discourages readers from interpreting Criseyde backwards from her betrayal at the end of the poem.[24]

If Criseyde's promises employ a resistance to linear temporality, the mewed-falcon trope offers an alternative mode of interpreting both her resistance and her figurative flight from Troilus. In fact, Chaucer's inclusion of the mewed-falcon metaphor demonstrates how Troilus's tragedy is in his *mis*reading of Criseyde, and it suggests an alternative way for an audience to *re*read her:

> In tyme of trewe, on haukyng wolde he ride,
> Or elles honte boor, beer, or lyoun;
> The smale bestes leet he gone biside.
> And whan that he com ridyng into town,
> Ful ofte his lady from hire wyndow down,
> As fressh as faukoun comen out of muwe,
> Ful redy was hym goodly to saluwe. (III.1779–85)

Troilus fails here to recognize Criseyde's attempts at fidelity, but the history of the trope that I've been tracing provides the reader with interpretive tools to discern her through the mews metaphor. The second half of the stanza describes Criseyde's movement in terms of agency: she is not a hawk under Troilus's control but, rather, a mewed falcon who chooses to greet him rather than flee. The pivotal fourth line of the stanza, however, demonstrates how Troilus misunderstands his role in relation to Criseyde's agency. In the first line of the stanza, Troilus would "ride" "on haukyng" and in line four he comes "rydinge into toun": the repetition at the turning point of the stanza of a word associated in the first line with hawking reiterates Troilus's status as a falconer when he comes "into toun." And the last three lines cast Criseyde as a falcon, but importantly, not one under his control. Criseyde's movement in this passage, downwards from her literal window, or figurative mews, in order to greet Troilus suggests that she returns to him of her own volition, and not because she has been

trained to do so. That she does so during a time when, according to the prescripts of falconry, she should be most independent and rebellious, demonstrates her freedom to *choose* faithfulness. Crocker points out that "chastity and fidelity" are not "necessarily repressive" virtues per se, but they become so when they "are treated as cultural forces beyond women's control."[25] This is a moment in which readers can choose to read the mewed-falcon metaphor in terms of "mew anxiety," as a foreboding premonition of Criseyde's adultery beyond her control, or as a representation of Criseyde's predicament: despite the possible negative implications of a metaphor adorning her, she uses her freedom to assert her sovereignty and fidelity simultaneously.

Machaut's allegory helps gloss what it means here for Criseyde to "comen out of muwe," but it is also easily misinterpreted as reinforcing anxiety about her freedom and her eventual betrayal, rather than attention to what she actually *does* in the lines following her emergence from the mews. Her readiness to greet Troilus suggests the alternative meaning in the comparison between a molting plumage and a molting heart: a renewal of vigor and regrowth of what was there before. Criseyde comes down from her window "as *fressh* as faukon comen out of muwe." The focus in this comparison has less to do with the falcon's inner change and desire to flee than it does with the falcon's physical need to regrow feathers and renew strength. "Fressh" evokes the immediate present and not the predicted future, confounding interpretations of foreboding nature. Criseyde here "saluwes," or greets, and pays obeisance to Troilus; she does so often and "goodly," when by all falconry accounts she should be eager to bypass greeting him at all.

Criseyde overcomes the inauspicious cast of the mewed-falcon metaphor at this moment to demonstrate that her actions are not manipulable by others; her movements are tactically based on fidelity. Foregrounding the fidelity of her movements in Book III, the mews moment establishes a frame for interpreting her movements away from Troilus in Book V. It is her persistence in this passage that the temporal diction finally emphasizes (she greets him "ful ofte"), and this persistence resonates more with the industriousness of the well-formed falcon than with the fidelity of the beautifully plumed one. The Frederican falconry treatise's surprising preference for the well-formed bird over the faithful beautiful bird redefines the concept of fidelity in the *Troilus*. Criseyde is not described as beautifully adorned; she is "fressh"—renewed from her time alone in the mews, regenerating her feathers. And this change of feathers does not signify a

change of heart but, rather, a renewal of the agency to *choose* to greet Troilus. That she holds on to this "individual power" and "self-sovereignty" even as she pays obeisance demonstrates how she "controls her excellence" for the reader's benefit.[26] Like Frederick II's well-formed and industrious falcons, she is faithful to her own decisions, her own forms of movement, which seem to bypass her role as "a narrative agent" and speak directly to the audience.[27] Her flight toward Troilus supports Carolynn Van Dyke's explanation of how "Criseyde heightens her subjectivity by limiting it."[28] Just as with the lady of the fabliau, Criseyde's ultimate "subjectivity lies outside the plot," aiming for readerly consideration instead.[29] The history of the mewed-falcon trope illuminates how her "ful ofte" greeting and the freshness of her body resist interpretation of her as predictably adulterous and even redefine what the reader expects or wants from her character.

In Book IV, Criseyde speaks as a falcon herself, pausing readers' interpretation at the moment of emergence from the mews, before they have had a chance to determine that she has flown the coop. Chaucer grants Criseyde access to representation on a meta-narrative level: she invokes the same metaphor that was used to describe her. In doing so, Chaucer taps into the literary history of the mewed-falcon metaphor, putting that figurative language in Criseyde's own voice. Such a move does not curb the excess meaning of her words, but it does grant her agency through first-person narration, as with the lady in the fabliau. During her numerous attempts to assuage Troilus's grief about her "exchange" for Antenor, she insists that her proximity to Troilus will be "no ferther out of Troie/than [she] may ride ayeyn on half a morwe" and she won't be out of his reach:

> So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
> That day by day, myn owne herte deere—
> Syn wel ye woot that it is now a trewe—
> Ye shal ful wel al myn estat yheere. (IV.1310–13)

Her voicing of the word "mews" here aligns her with the lady of the fabliau—the tension between Criseyde's control over her body and her resistance to others' control over it places the responsibility of ethical judgment with the reader, who, as Allen has suggested "already judged her to be false," *a priori*.[30] Reading Criseyde through the fabliau thus complicates the blame of her betrayal and the control of her body. Criseyde, like the lady from the fabliau, is caught in a situation that requires her

careful deployment of speech to navigate a double bind. And, like the lady in the fabliau, she is given a voice that further complicates an antifeminist reading of the description of her as a mewed falcon. Allen writes that Criseyde "has available only the language of change (metamorphosis, impossibility, reversal) to speak about perpetuity" and I believe this "language of change" interacts with the mews metaphor in Book III.[31] By voicing the mews as a place—and even a metaphor—in which she refuses to be enclosed, she evokes the antifeminist history of the mews trope in order to reject it. She joins instead the alternative history enacted by the lady from the fabliau, reconfiguring the mews metaphor in order to resist control over how she is interpreted.

Like the lady's voicing of "faucon" in the fabliau, Criseyde's utterance of "muwe" in *Troilus* passes representation from the perspective of a male narrator to that of a female subject, suggesting an inversion of control over representation and judgment. Her freshness upon emerging from the mews and her subsequent flight *toward* Troilus reimagines Machaut's allegory from the perspective of the object allegorized. Machaut presents an inner monologue of masculine fear driven by loss of control over female bird and lover. Machaut's reference to the mewed-falcon metaphor itself as an adornment, however, allows readers to interpret the entire allegory in those terms: as changing feathers that adorn a body. The feathers are not in control of the body any more than his allegorical shroud can control the women beneath the surface layer of the allegory. Chaucer takes this discrepancy and experiments with applying the metaphor to Criseyde, and then he gives her the reins to guide readers' interpretation of the metaphor and of her fidelity. Despite himself, he cannot give preference to a loyal bird with perfectly legible feathers; he too conveys his simultaneous fear and awe of a bird that is loyal to the work of her own body—self-preservation in the narrative and in her legacy.

By granting their female characters a voice, and by using that voice to reconfigure metaphors that implicate female bodies, these adultery narratives embed ambivalence into their very structure for the benefit of the reader. For, once readers know they are entering into an adultery narrative, on some level—and despite Chaucer's attempts to stall the inevitable—they cannot help but read backwards from betrayal. But, if they read betrayal backwards through the mewed-falcon metaphor, they can choose to interpret misogynistic valences as adornments and free-range flight as its own kind of fidelity.

The mewed-falcon trope uses the nonhuman communication of birds' plumage to figure a feminist resistance, and in doing so, contributes to an

increasingly nuanced understanding of gendered zoomorphic metaphors. When texts characterize female characters in zoomorphic terms, they produce two kinds of animal languages to unpack. On the one hand, they present the textual language of the metaphor—that is, the way that animals are appropriated to apparently reinforce patriarchal power structures. But on the other hand, beneath the textual reference lies a dynamic cultural context—that is, the way that readers might have actually interacted with animals and learned to interpret diverse animal languages. In the case of birds' plumage, an ever-changing form of communication that escapes complete visual-to-verbal exactitude, readers are presented with an opportunity to dismantle the gendered power structures surrounding the literary appropriation.

Notes

1. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 471–585, III.1783. Subsequent in-text references are cited by book and line number.
2. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' De Proprietatibus Rerum*, vol. 1, ed. M. C. Seymour et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 608.
3. Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, *De Arte Venandi Cum Avibus: L'Arte di Cacciare con gli Uccelli*, ed. Anna Laura Trombetti Budriesi (Rome: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, 2000), 972.15–16. My translation.
4. Robert Newlin, "Moult and Mastery: Falconry in Troilus and Criseyde," *Journal of British and American Studies* 16 (2007): 40–41.
5. Lesley Johnson, "Women on Top: Antifeminism in the Fabliaux?" *The Modern Language Review* 78, no. 2 (1983): 298–99.
6. Holly Crocker, "Disfiguring Gender: Masculine Desire in the Old French Fabliau," *Exemplaria* 23, no. 4 (2011): 349.
7. Roberta Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 13.
8. Burns uses this term to explain how a female character constructed by a male author is nevertheless "filtered through the female character's anatomy" allowing for a reparative reading of seemingly appropriated female bodies (18). Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 7.
9. Krueger, *Women Readers*, 13.
10. Newlin, "Moult and Mastery," 39.
11. Eve Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You," in *Touching*

Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity, ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 150.

12. Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès* in *Arthurian Studies xxviii,* ed. Claude Luttrell and Stewart Gregory (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993).
13. See Johnson, 199, and Tracy Adams, "The Cunningly Intelligent Characters of BNffr 19,152," *MLN* 120, no. 4 (2005): 896–924.
14. Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Roman de Perceval*, 2nd ed., ed. William Roach (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1959), 2987–89. My translation.
15. *Guillaume au Faucon,* in *Cuckolds, Clerics, & Countrymen,* ed. Raymond Eichmann and trans. John DuVal, 75–92 (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1982), 67–71. My translation and emphasis. Subsequent references are cited in text by line number.
16. Adams, "Cunningly Intelligent Characters of BNffr 19,152," 914.
17. Guillaume de Machaut, *La dit de l'alerion*, vol. 2, *Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. Ernest Hoepffner (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1906). Except where otherwise noted, translations are from Minnette Gaudet and Constance B. Hieatt, *The Tale of the Alerion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 1197–99. Subsequent references are cited in text by line number.
18. I have elected to offer my own translation of this passage in order to highlight its unusual and difficult grammatical features.
19. Grunmann-Gaudet and Hieatt, 25. The translators of the edition to which I refer make explicit note of their election to always refer to the birds as female, despite the male pronoun, because of the consistent medieval usage of different names for male and female species of birds of prey. They note the difficulty for those writing in languages that must "take grammatical gender into consideration" (25): "while [Machaut] must have known that the birds preferred in falconry were female, his language required that the appropriate pronoun describe the gender of the noun, not that of the bird, so he did not have to choose between dramatic and grammatical correctness, as we did" (26).
20. Hohenstaufen, 962.23–29; emphasis added.
21. My translation.
22. Newlin, "Moult and Mastery," 40–41.
23. On the topic of the narrator's ambivalence in condemning Criseyde, see Elaine Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), and Catherine Cox, *Gender and Language in Chaucer* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997).
24. Elizabeth Allen, "Flowing Backward to the Source: Criseyde's Promises and the Ethics of Allusion," *Speculum* 88, no. 3 (2013): 683–85.
25. Holly Crocker, "'As false as Cressid': Virtue Trouble from Chaucer to Shakespeare," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2013): 305.

26. Crocker, "'As false as Cressid,'" 314.
27. Carolynn Van Dyke, *Chaucer's Agents: Cause and Representation in Chaucerian Narrative* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 204.
28. Van Dyke, *Chaucer's Agents,* 200.
29. Van Dyke, *Chaucer's Agents,* 204.
30. Allen, "Flowing Backward," 707.
31. Allen, "Flowing Backward," 699.

CHAPTER 4

Saints and Holy Beasts: Pious Animals in Early-Medieval Insular Saints' *Vitae*

Sally Shockro

Animals are essential characters in early-medieval Insular saints' *vitae*. Because of their connection to nature and their ability to convey the will of God, animals hold an esteemed and unique position in the *vitae* as the verifiers of the divine source of a saint's power, revealing the sanctity of the saint without guile or objective. In some episodes they act as conduits of truth and messengers of the divine will, but in others they take on more complex roles as the peers and companions of saints. As colleagues in God's creation, animals are able to participate in productive relationships with saints that result in mutual growth and spiritual development. In these narratives in which animals are the rational and aware peers of saints, they are capable of the full range of spiritual states traditionally associated with human spiritual growth, allowing them to become, in the fullest versions of these narratives, active participants in the Christian cycle of sin and redemption. Throughout the corpus of early-medieval Insular *vitae* there is a pattern of animal interactions that suggests various levels of connection to the natural world. But within an individual saint's *vita* there is also at times a pattern of progression from the more basic levels of interaction (dominance and commands) to more complex and interactive

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communications (the exchange of ideas and spiritual guidance). Within the *vitae* of Sts. Guthlac and Cuthbert, each saint undergoes a progression in which his interaction with animals evolves from a lower to a higher level that parallels the saint's transformation from a simpler to a more complex form of sanctity. These interactions speak to a vision of the Christian world in which animals are the collaborators with and companions of saints as they assist each other toward spiritual growth.

The connection between the comprehension of the animal world and the understanding of God's plan was a fundamental one for the medieval reader.[1] The perceived connection between God and his untainted creation is such that the messages about a saint that animals convey to the audience (either the witnesses in the text or the readers outside of it) are clearly true, even when the saint himself wishes they were obscured. In their role as undisputed divine messengers, animals are able to convince even the most skeptical recipients of the heavenly source of their information. In the simplest of these interactions the animals are passive communicators—neither the authors nor the interpreters of the messages they carry. For example, in the anonymous *vita* of Gregory the Great, Gregory and his companions have started on their mission to evangelize the English, but Gregory soon realizes that the Roman mob has become alarmed at his absence and has convinced the pope of the necessity of recalling him.[2] Gregory knows that the pope's men are in pursuit of him, but he still attempts to escape so that he may continue his short-lived mission to the English. While he is briefly resting in the woods, a locust lands on him. Observing that the name of the insect that has alighted on him evokes the phrase "sta in loco" ("stay in place") is enough to convince Gregory that this creature has been heaven-sent to give him a message, and it is one that he therefore cannot refuse.[3] Although he would passively defy the pope, Gregory knew that the locust was conveying the will of God and in a manner that could not be feigned. After receiving the message from the locust, Gregory tells his companions to continue, but he himself turns back to face the fate that God has chosen for him.

Instances such as Gregory's interpretation of the locust's presence represent the most rudimentary version of communication between animals and humans in these *vitae*. In more sophisticated interactions, the animal's message is more clearly and actively communicated. Bede's prose *vita* of Cuthbert presents a story in which the behavior of animals conveys both the agency of the animal participants and the sanctity of the saint to the human audience. Cuthbert has been invited to Coldingham to preach to

the brothers and sisters there, and during this trip he continues his habit of praying alone at night.[4] Observed by a curious brother, Cuthbert goes down to the sea, immerses himself up to the neck, and prays through the night. At dawn Cuthbert removes himself from the water and prays on the shore for awhile. During this time two otters come out of the sea and "prostrate before him on the sand, began to warm his feet with their breath and sought to dry him with their fur, and when they had finished their ministrations they received his blessing and slipped away into their native waters."[5] The spying brother realizes the magnitude of what he has seen and eventually begs for, and receives, Cuthbert's forgiveness on a condition: that he not reveal what he has seen until after Cuthbert is dead. Unlike the superficial animal interaction exemplified in the story of Gregory and the locust, in this example the animals engage in active communication with the human characters. Gregory's locust behaved normally and passively, requiring Gregory to attest to the communication and provide the interpretation of the locust's message. In this story, the otters behave in an uncharacteristic way to convey a message to Cuthbert (and the spying monk), but notably it is one that does not rely on a unique human interpreter. Unlike Gregory's locust, whose actions would have appeared insignificant and meaningless to anyone but Gregory, the otters' actions possessed a meaning that immediately could be understood by both Cuthbert and the spying brother. The degree of animal interaction in this story has escalated to active, broadly comprehensible communication.

Susan Crane has described Cuthbert's interactions with the otters in the anonymous *vita* of Cuthbert as exemplifying a relationship of hospitality between saint and animal.[6] In their "modes of mutual accommodation," saints and animals recreate the process of human hospitality, and thus weave together a society that creates "a coherence in all creation."[7] The essence of the relationship of hospitality is reciprocal interaction in which both parties comprehend and attempt to fulfill the needs of the other; these parties need not be equals, but they must be peers in a paradigm of meaning for their exchange to have significance. Yet for a relationship of hospitality such as Crane describes to function successfully between animals and humans in saints' *vitae*, there must be productive communication in which both groups are consciously and sensibly engaging with the other through the medium of their mutual value system to provide each other with the requirements for spiritual growth. That such a system functions in Cuthbert's and Guthlac's *vitae* demonstrates the authors'

view that saints and animals are partners in the Christian world, establishing a pattern of articulated spiritual affinity in these texts.

The presentation of animals in medieval texts was neither uniform nor simplistic, and the extent to which they possessed agency was debated throughout the Middle Ages. Jan M. Ziolkowski has studied the ways in which animals were described in medieval literature and found that most depictions fit into one of two molds: either an approach that is "theocentric or anthropocentric and dismissive of animals," or one that is "anthropomorphic and inclined to humanize animals."[8] The anthropocentric view is consistent throughout the Bible, in which animals figure only to serve God's will and expose his power.[9] It would be overreaching to describe these animals as unwilling, as they seem to possess no sense of reason and no ability to craft conscious desire. They exist as utterly unlike the human actors in the story, and are no more active participants in the spiritual world of Christianity than any inanimate object in the narrative.[10]

In the episodes from early-medieval Insular saints' *vitae* in which authors follow the anthropocentric biblical model, the interactions between saints and animals center on the communication of dominance and obedience. At the starkest level of interaction, the animals both present the reader with incontrovertible proof of the sanctity of the saint (the expression of God's power through his representative) and establish themselves as beings subject to God's will. When Columba encounters a wild boar in the woods, he wants the boar to come no nearer to him and, indeed, wants the boar to die.[11] The boar, through his instant death, attests to the divinely given power that Columba had over the natural world. The ability to exercise genuine control over the natural world is the test of genuine Christian sanctity, a test in which animals are of value specifically because of their affinity with God's creation.

Though these most basic interactions between saints and animals function as a display of power, they do not lead to the creation of social relationships, nor do they result in growth for either of the participants. Unlike the relationships of mutual recognition and accommodation in Crane's theory of human–animal hospitality, the beneficiaries of these displays of power are seemingly only the human participant, such as Columba in his killing of the boar.[12] But even though there is no reciprocal communication between the saint and the animal, contemporary readers and listeners still may have seen the animals in these stories as possessing agency in the Christian world. Laura Hobgood-Oster describes four categories of animal interactions in saints' *vitae* throughout the Middle Ages. One of

these patterns of behavior is of animals acting as martyrs, willingly sacrificing themselves either as a sign of their obedience to Christian leaders or for the benefit of the Christian community.[13] So although animals such as Columba's boar did not actively communicate with humans, a medieval reader might have understood his death as an act of acceptance of the dominant power of Christianity or a statement of participation in the Christian community.

Relationships of dominance and control between saints and animals exist at varying levels of complexity in early-medieval Insular saints' *vitae*, and in more sophisticated examples the animals communicate an acceptance of the Christian paradigm in which the saint has power. In Adomnán's *vita* of Columba, both Columba and one of his assistant brothers, Baithene, showcase their piety by controlling an animal with their Christian speech.[14] Baithene avoids attack from a whale by blessing it, an approach that Columba knew would keep Baithene and his crew safe. When the whale hears the blessing, he loses his aggression toward Baithene and the sailors, the implication being that he then recognizes them as God's genuine representatives. Columba suggests this as well when he relents in his objection to sailing in the whale-infested waters after Baithene reveals he will be safe because both he and the whale are under God's power. The animal is able to attest to the piety of the brother in question because he remains thoroughly animal and uncontrolled by humanity, a state that confirms the whale's integral place in the Christian world. As Ziolkowski explains, medieval readers acknowledged the special relationship between God and animals, regardless of their views on the rationality of animals themselves. To a medieval audience, "animals are vocabulary in the language of creation by which God communicates in material form what exists immaterially."[15] As an integral element of the expression of God's message in the natural world, the judgment and reactions of animals acquire greater gravity. Upon receiving Baithene's blessing, the whale acknowledges that Baithene truly was a man of God, a quality that the whale was able to judge because of his uncontested place in the Christian world.

But for all that the episode with the whale is revealing of the purity and divine approval bestowed on Columba and his followers, it also presents a progression in terms of the response of the animal in the story. This whale does not fit neatly into either of the categories Ziolkowski described, being neither an automaton doing God's will unaware nor an independent, rational being able to experience or communicate complex thoughts. As

we learn in Columba's *vita*, the whale could have been struck dead by the power of the holy men, or he could have been forced to respond physically in a specific way, but the whale's body is not what is altered, and it is not the force of the men that makes the change. The element that changes is the whale's aggression, and the agent of change is the voice of the priest. A vocal communication altered the spiritual state of the animal, convincing it of the correctness of the message and resulting in a change in the animal's behavior. The whale's response mirrors the reaction a human subject might experience in a pastoral relationship. Although the whale does not communicate explicitly with Baithene, he does establish himself as an active agent and partner in the creation of a Christian society. In her analysis of the role of animals in the stories of medieval saints, Joyce E. Salisbury has argued that the place of animals in medieval saints' *vitae* is to show how the saint, as an extraordinary human, can raise animals up from their bestial selves.[16] The achievement of making an animal un-animal-like is such that it establishes the superhuman qualities of the saint. Yet this would render the animal's reaction to the saint less valuable if the animal is to be understood as merely a divinely manipulated prop for the saint's public display of holiness. Were the animal to become less of an animal in the course of the story, its initial miraculous response would become less of a miracle.

Although biblical stories were unquestionably the ultimate model for many genres of medieval literature, medieval texts frequently treat animals in a startlingly different way, recognizing them as beings who possessed not only reason but also a sense of morality. This, as Ziolkowski notes, could be detrimental to medieval animals, as they were held accountable for misdeeds, put on trial, and punished when found guilty, sometimes with death.[17] But this recognition of the mental and emotional awareness of animals could also produce narratives in which animals are treated as peers, friends, and most significantly, fellow Christians. In these texts saints preach to animals, convince them of the correctness of Christian practice, and witness their own acts of piety. The animals become not only the saints' colleagues on the path to salvation but also the partners or friends of the saints, and their choice for companionship.[18] Ziolkowski notes that many saints are so closely linked with their animal companions that they are symbolized by this association, with the depiction of the animal being sufficient to recall both saint and animal companion.[19] This is reminiscent of Hobgood-Oster's designation of one category of animal interaction in *vitae* of the animal as "the primary other," the most personal associate of

the saint himself.[20] Although these animal companions do not necessarily communicate directly with the saint, they do, as part of their daily lives, participate in the advancement of Christian life. They comprehend the spiritual messages and actions of the saint and respond accordingly, meaning that while they do not all communicate with the saint with the intention of reciprocal conversation, they do comprehend his message, attesting to their possession of reason.

The anthropomorphic view of animals that Ziolkowski describes was one that medieval Europeans contemplated both in their daily lives and in their visualization of the afterlife. Karl Steel examines the ways in which medieval Europeans actively included animals, both domestic and wild, into their conceptions of a Christian community in this world and the next. Steel describes the ways that animals were included as integral elements in portrayals and depictions of the afterlife from the second century to the fifteenth century.[21] For these writers and artists, the Christian afterlife would be enjoyed by both humans and animals, with both groups intermingling as they partake of the benefits of paradise. In many of these depictions, paradise itself is presented as a heightened and perfected version of a floral woodland in which humans and animals mix naturally, suggesting that the afterlife is a location in which both beings can exist and participate as fully as in the earthly world on which this paradise is modeled. For all that these depictions of the afterlife suggest that both humans and animals will have a place in the Christian hereafter, the existence and state of the souls of the animals are left vague. If animals are participating in the Christian afterlife, they presumably have achieved whatever standard is required of them for salvation, as have the human inhabitants of paradise.

However vague these texts may be on the topic of the spiritual state of animals' souls, the approach of medieval Europeans was much clearer. Steel concludes that "[s]everal early Christian documents more overtly advocate for the abandonment of an anthropocentric soteriology, and, more importantly, imagine the present world, and not only the future one, as one in which both humans and animals belong to the community of the faithful."[22] The evidence that supports Steel's conclusion includes animals who are incorporated into the defining events of Christian life: a goat and leopard who are baptized, a baptized lion who faces martyrdom for his faith, a dog buried in a church cemetery, and a horse for whom others are asked to pray.[23] Some of these stories come from literature that is clearly separated from the daily experiences of medieval Europeans (such as the

baptized lion contemplating his possible martyrdom), while others (such as the priest burying his dog in the cemetery) must have stirred familiar emotions. But for all the differences in circumstance in these stories, there is an element of spiritual kinship between humans and animals that exists in all the narratives. Even when the animal can no longer "speak" for himself, the human closest to him acts in such a way that the animal remains both an individual and a member of the Christian community with a soul that requires attention.

In instances of robust communication in the *vitae,* the piety of the saint allows for the productive and fully realized exchange of ideas between himself and the animal. Felix opens the section of Guthlac's *vita* featuring animal stories by mentioning the jackdaws—the "shameless robbers" of his wilderness home.[24] The mischief of the jackdaws does not fuel anger in Guthlac but, rather, provides him with the opportunity to exhibit his patience, an example that Felix tells us "was not only shown among men but was clear even among birds and wild beasts."[25] The clarity of his example influenced human perceptions of Guthlac's sanctity, but more important, it served as inspiration for the animals themselves. In a subsequent passage, Felix explains that Guthlac developed a relationship with the neighboring animals so close that they would come when he called them and they would take food from his hand—Guthlac's example of patience and hospitality extended to and in turn inspired the animals who lived in proximity to him. Guthlac exhibits a trait in the hopes that it will be emulated, and in response the animals around him mirror that trait in their dealings with him. Guthlac understood their need to learn obedience and restraint, and in return the animals comprehended Guthlac's intentions and followed his lessons. Although nonverbal, this is authentic interaction.

Emphasizing this point, Guthlac's next contact with an animal is witnessed by another monk, Wilfrid. Wilfrid sees a pair of swallows enter Guthlac's home and perch on his lap and chest.[26] Wilfrid is amazed at the swallows' comfort with Guthlac, but Guthlac knows that there is a message that the swallows are trying to convey. Wilfrid, a man who is holy but has not achieved Guthlac's level of piety, can recognize that the swallows are behaving with meaning, but he does not have the ability to interpret the message. Wilfrid's inability to comprehend the swallows' communication does not suggest their message is less comprehensible but, rather, that Wilfrid is less spiritually fluent than his friend. Guthlac, having reached a stage of sanctity that allows him to understand the intentions of the

swallows, knows that the birds are requesting permission to build a nest in his home. Felix makes clear that both men see and hear the actions of the swallows, but only Guthlac understands their meaning. Guthlac grants the swallows' request, and in the second stage of this conversation that attests to the swallows' ability to communicate, the swallows can understand his answer. To Wilfrid's even greater amazement, Guthlac starts a nest for the birds as his sign that they are welcome in his home, and the birds then complete the nest themselves. Although this communication is nonverbal and creates no spiritual growth in either party, Guthlac and the birds recognize each other as peers in an interaction of mutual respect.

In the most advanced stories of human communication with animals in these *vitae*, saints and animals interact as fellow participants in the Christian world. In these episodes, the saints can persuade the animals to change their behavior based on their shared Christian beliefs, recreating the essential interactions of a pastoral relationship. When Cuthbert wanted to become self-sufficient on the island of Farne, he attempted to grow his own wheat.[27] After that attempt failed, he tried to grow barley, although by the time he started his crop it was past the planting season. Despite his poor timing, the crop began to grow and soon was eaten by birds. Cuthbert hoped to salvage the crop, but at the same time was aware that the intense closeness of animals and the divine world meant that the birds eating his barley could possess knowledge that he did not have. Despite his personal sanctity, Cuthbert acknowledged that God could have imparted knowledge to the birds that had been kept secret from him. When Cuthbert speaks to the birds he tells them only to stop eating his crop of barley if they do not need it more than he does and if they have not been charged by heaven to do this. The birds not only comprehend his speech but also respect his message. They had neither a greater need nor a spiritual charge to eat the barley, and recognizing the wrong they were doing in taking that which was not their own, the birds ceased to eat the crop. Cuthbert had convinced the birds to abandon his crop by appealing to their reason and moral nature—by communicating a moral argument and relying on their innate, shared values to persuade them.

Another interaction in which saints and animals both understand verbal communication and express a desire for or evidence of spiritual growth occurs when two of the jackdaws living near Guthlac steal a visitor's gloves. Guthlac knows of the birds' thievery through foresight, and indeed soon finds one of the birds on the roof tearing a glove apart. Guthlac speaks to the bird about its poor behavior, and the bird responds, "as if conscious of

its ill-doing," by dropping the glove and flying away.[28] Guthlac predicts the quick return of the second glove, and that too comes to pass. The glove-stealing jackdaw understood Guthlac's admonition concerning the return of the gloves, appears to suffer remorse, and then returns the gloves as he wished. This is a level of communication that supposes full understanding on both sides of the conversation, but also one in which there is a mutual recognition of moral standards. The jackdaw needed no explanation as to why theft was wrong, nor did he return the glove because he was frightened or threatened. The jackdaw not only comprehends Guthlac's speech but, in his recognition of and acquiescence to Guthlac's request, he also has established himself as a fellow member in a society of Christian values.

Beyond the validation and support of the particular saint at hand, these stories establish Christianity as the sole true narrative and animals as full and voluntary participants in it. Animals innately recognize the correctness of Christian morals (even when they do not live up to them), and hold themselves to the same standards as their human peers. The animals of these stories are able to communicate within the paradigm of Christianity, and when chastised for poor behavior, they readily acknowledge their wrongdoing and express guilt. There is no separation between the Christian saint and animals—they both clearly acknowledge the same beliefs and are able to communicate as mutually supportive partners.

Although the connection between the animal world and Christianity is clear, both Bede and Felix convey the theological basis of this connection in their *vitae*. Felix initially explains the misbehavior of jackdaws as being caused by their moral failings. The birds break and steal because they are "without any respect" and take items from homes "like shameless robbers."[29] The suggestion is that the birds are aware of their moral failings, as they possess intentionality. They do not simply inconvenience others through innocent theft; they are in fact robbers who knowingly take that which belongs to others but then are persuaded to stop. It is not only humans who are capable of moral growth but animals as well. In these *vitae*, animals already know that the standards of Christian morality are correct, but now with the exemplar of the saint to lead them they are able to improve themselves. In the *vitae* of both Guthlac and Cuthbert, there are animals who achieve spiritual growth as a result of the preaching and guidance of the saint with whom they can communicate.

In his prose *vita* of Cuthbert, Bede describes the high moral qualities of birds—specifically, their "obedience and humility" as contrasted with

the low moral qualities of humans, yet the birds' virtues are realized through growth.[30] The ravens of the island of Farne took some of the straw from the roof of the guesthouse to use in their nests. When Cuthbert saw this, he waved his hand at them and told them to stop removing the thatch as it was hurting the brothers (presumably because they would be the ones using the ill-thatched guesthouse). The ravens ignored Cuthbert's gesture, but Cuthbert then spoke to them using the name of Christ and telling them to leave the place they were ruining. After Cuthbert said this, the ravens "flew dismally away."[31] After three days, one of the ravens came back and "[w]ith its feathers sadly ruffled and its head drooping to its feet, and with humble cries it prayed for pardon, using such signs as it could; and the venerable father, understanding what it meant, gave it permission to return."[32] The raven left and then returned with its mate, and they brought a gift of lard with them, for Cuthbert and his guests to use on their shoes. The ravens stayed on the island, and they were "an example of reformation" to humans.[33]

This is perhaps the most explicit example thus far in which clear communication occurs between Cuthbert and animals, and also in which it is unambiguous that the animals in question adhere to the moral standards and conduct of Christian society. The ravens are rebuked for poor behavior, plainly communicate to Cuthbert their repentance and desire for forgiveness, receive forgiveness, and finally bring a token of their gratitude. The birds serve as a moral example for humans, but only because they have embodied the Christian ethos without the need of instruction. Cuthbert does not have to explain to the birds the Christian message and convert them, or worry that they are ignorant of the tenets or standards of Christianity. He can assume because they are part of the natural world that they have a thorough understanding and agreement with the Christian message and expectations of behavior, and it is through this shared value structure that they can communicate productively with the saint.

Cuthbert's interactions with animals not only serve to create mutually enriching relationships in which both parties behave as members of a Christian society; these interactions also provide the benchmarks for Cuthbert's own spiritual growth in the *vita*. Cuthbert's first communicative encounter with an animal comes when he is spontaneously tended by the otters after his night of prayer in the water. Cuthbert does nothing to prompt the otters' behavior, and other than blessing them at the time of their departure, does not exchange any ideas or speech with them. Yet the otters have communicated the extent and depth of Cuthbert's undeniable

sanctity to the spying brother who witnessed the entirety of the events. At this point in the *vita* Cuthbert, although certainly a saint of great personal piety, has not come into the fullness of his powers. To be sure, before these interactions with animals began, Cuthbert had already spoken with an angel, been fed by God's command, and seen Aidan's soul ascend to heaven. But in the immediate aftermath of his first extraordinary animal encounter, when the otters revealed the natural world's recognition that Cuthbert was in sync with God's plan, the quality and type of his miracles changed. After this attention from the otters, Cuthbert's abilities are magnified.

The change in Cuthbert's abilities following the interaction with the otters is subtle, but Bede draws his readers' attention to it in the line that opens the following chapter of the *vita*, noting that "the man of God began to grow strong in the spirit of prophecy also, to foretell the future and to describe to those with him events that were happening elsewhere."[34] In this chapter, Cuthbert is able to make a prediction about some unexpectedly stormy weather, a situation notably similar to one at the beginning of the *vita* before he had his first revelatory encounter with an animal. In the pre-otter story of poor weather on the seas, Cuthbert (already pious and accustomed to look to God for assistance, Bede tells us)[35] chastises pagan locals who mock monks caught on flimsy rafts in the midst of an unexpected storm. Distressed both at the predicament of his brothers and at the lack of charity from the locals who scorned Christianity, Cuthbert began to pray. The storm soon subsided, and in the aftermath it became clear that the amazed locals' souls had been saved along with the monks' lives. This is without doubt miraculous, but the miracle is subtle and Cuthbert's own actions are without leadership or bravado—he quietly prays for the safety of all. In the chapter after his contact with the otters reveals his sanctity, Cuthbert encounters another storm, but his response is both public and active. In the second storm story, Cuthbert and his companions have sought out a pagan audience for their preaching. When a storm arises unexpectedly, preventing their return, Cuthbert and his brothers remain calm, pray, and keep their holy days, not allowing themselves to be shaken by the weather. When hungry, Cuthbert reminds his brothers of the power of God as shown through the miracles he performed for Moses and the Israelites, and reveals to them that God will feed them soon. The brothers find that God has indeed provided food for them, and that Cuthbert was able to correctly predict the length of their remaining stay before the weather cleared.[36] Although unquestionably special at all

points throughout his life, Cuthbert has grown from a pious and quietly chosen monk to a saint and a leader, and part of the narrative markers that signaled this transformation to the reader was the revelation of the natural world's recognition and validation of his piety in the story of the attendant otters.

With each subsequent animal story in the remainder of the *vita*, Cuthbert moves forward in his spiritual progression. After waiting out the storm with his brothers, Cuthbert and a boy were next fed by an eagle, an animal encounter of increasing communication. Although Cuthbert and the eagle did not communicate directly, Cuthbert initiated the idea of the eagle feeding the pair, and the eagle knew to wait for the half of the fish Cuthbert thought he was due. After this encounter with the eagle, Cuthbert's miracles become increasingly powerful and public. Immediately after being fed by the eagle, Cuthbert could identify and defeat illusions sent by the devil, thwart fire in a village, drive out demons even while absent, and, in the final chapter before his next animal encounter, draw water from a rock in imitation of a miracle of Moses. After having grown to this degree of holiness, Cuthbert then engages with animals in the most detailed and personal way yet. In the next two chapters, Cuthbert requests the birds on Farne spare his barley unless they have been divinely allowed to eat it, and then in the subsequent chapter Cuthbert preaches to and accepts the repentance of the ravens.

After this encounter with the barley-eating birds and the ravens, both incidents in which he exhibits in a public fashion his absolute sympathy with nature through productive animal communication, Cuthbert then resumes his healing and prophesying. But the objects of his ministrations now are abbesses and royalty, and his miraculous works are completed entirely in public. He then brings a plague-stricken child back from the edge of death and gives water the taste of wine, both events that mirror the miracles of Christ. For Cuthbert, for whom his relationship with the natural world was so essential throughout his life, the progression of his contact with animals marks and predicts his growth as a figure of power. After Cuthbert's final significant encounter with the animal world, when he has chastised and forgiven the ravens, Bede explains the importance of both Cuthbert's ability to communicate with animals and the animals' willingness to listen to him. That he could reach such an intimate and respected level of communication with God's creation is, Bede reminds us, a sign of Cuthbert's absolute harmony with God himself.[37]

This is not to say that the animal encounters fundamentally altered Cuthbert; rather, they served as markers to expose the extent to which the saint has grown, evolved, or gained power. Because the assessment of human purity by animals is without flaw, the reaction of animals is a reliable gauge by which to measure the saint's progression toward absolute unity with God. The same pattern emerges in Felix's *vita* of Guthlac. In Guthlac's *vita*, he begins life as a soldier but realizes the error of his ways and joins a monastery. His personal zeal is soon apparent, and after two years he decides to become a hermit in the wilderness. There he is tempted, deceived, and taken to hell by the Devil and his minion demons, but throughout, Guthlac's resolve is absolute that he will not be compelled to leave his wilderness retreat. By the end of the last episode of Satan's torment of Guthlac, the monk is able to cast the demonic illusions away in the name of Christ. Guthlac has matured from a young, ambitious monk who wished to be a servant of the Lord, to an accomplished soldier of Christ able to face the demons of hell. After this transformation, Guthlac begins to encounter the animals of his fenland retreat, and they respond to him increasingly as a fellow member of God's creation.

In the next four chapters, Felix presents stories in which Guthlac communicates, with growing clarity and specificity, with the animals around him. His animal encounters themselves were characterized both by increasingly complex communication and by increasingly personalized pastoral attention, with the glove-stealing jackdaws finally realizing the error of their ways and abandoning the stolen property. These animal encounters are indicators of the extent and magnitude of Guthlac's own transformation during the preceding chapters. Guthlac has gone from a moral but worldly soldier to a true servant of God, a change verified and proven by his ability to interact meaningfully and reciprocally with the creatures and elements of the natural world. After the period of animal interactions, Felix describes the events of Guthlac's life that follow, and the scale and strength of the miracles that he performs change. In the succeeding chapters, Guthlac exorcises demons, heals, has knowledge of events he has not yet seen or that have not yet occurred, and after his death is, like Cuthbert, found to be bodily incorrupt. Felix wanted to make sure that his readers understood the significance of Guthlac's ability to communicate fruitfully with the animal world. He frames Guthlac's animal encounters with the same sentiment, expressed largely in the same words, that Bede used to explain the ultimate meaning of Cuthbert's ability to interact with animals in this way. Felix reiterates the point, quoting Bede's text to explain that

communication with the animals (or indeed, the elements) of the natural world should be read as a sign of the saint's affinity and kinship with God's creation.[38]

At one point in each of the *vitae* of Cuthbert and Guthlac, Bede and Felix respectively explain the unnecessary and breachable distance between man and nature (as exemplified by animals) at the current stage of creation. The affinity between man and nature was ruptured by Adam's fall, but it was not eternally broken. Men who have achieved affinity with God are able to reclaim unity with nature (as proven through their dealings with animals), as Cuthbert and Guthlac have done. Felix draws heavily from Bede's *vita* of Cuthbert in his thoughts on this topic, remarking that all the elements of the natural world "obeyed the true servant of the true God," quoting Bede's *vita* of Cuthbert that "if a man faithfully and wholeheartedly serves the Maker of all created things, it is no wonder though all creation should minister to his commands and wishes."[39] Through piety and purity, Cuthbert and Guthlac have repaired the breach, in themselves, between man and nature, and therefore are able to take their rightful place within the natural world. For those who doubt the role of sin in the separation from the natural world, and therefore do not understand the role of animals in verifying who among men has regained the necessary purity to be in sympathy with nature, Felix is more explicit, again using Bede's words: "[b]ut for the most part we lose dominion over the creation which was made subject to us, because we ourselves neglect to serve the Lord and Creator of all things."[40] For Bede and Felix, this point was the essential lesson of Cuthbert's and Guthlac's extraordinary relationships with the natural world: that such a connection with animals could be reestablished was proof of the reparable nature of man's relationship with God. In the story of the swallows who ask and receive permission to nest in Guthlac's home, Wilfrid, the brother who witnesses this interaction, is amazed. Guthlac answers Wilfrid by reminding him, "Have you not read how if a man is joined to God in purity of spirit, all things are united to him in God?"[41] Guthlac continues his explanation to Wilfrid with a discussion of the idea that those who make themselves close to God in their hearts then become joined to all of his creation, the highest and most expressive form of which are animals.

It would be easy to see this as a desire to return to a prelapsarian existence, and the natural unity of Eden is certainly evoked.[42] But these stories perhaps present a more complicated statement on the advancement of Christian history than a simple desire to return to a time before the Fall.

Susan Crane and others have persuasively argued that the animal interactions in the early-medieval Insular *vitae* are persistently "forward-looking," both in their narrative structures and in their biblical allusions.[43] Bede and Felix both explicitly state that men, however saintly, have once again achieved unity with the natural world, this time through their wholehearted adherence to the Christian message. To a pious contemporary reader this might be a heartening sign of the imminent completion of Christian history, in which creation is once again unified under the Creator.

Notes

1. Pieter Beullens remarks that a more complete comprehension of the divine plan was the incentive for acquiring knowledge about the animal world generally in the European Middle Ages: "Zoological knowledge was not pursued as an aim in itself. Knowledge of the animal world was seen as part of a more important goal. The better understanding of the animal world was valued as a means toward a deeper insight into the divine plan governing the sensitive world, God's creation." Pieter Beullens, "Like a Book Written by God's Finger: Animals Showing the Path Toward God," in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brigitte Resl, vol. 2: *A Cultural History of Animals* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 128.
2. Bertram Colgrave, trans., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chap. 10, 93.
3. Colgrave, *Earliest Life*, chap. 10, 92–93.
4. Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), chap. X, 189–191.
5. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. X, 191.
6. Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 26–38.
7. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 27–28.
8. Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750–1150* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 32. This debate continued in the later Middle Ages, as scholarly authorities believed animals incapable of reason and morality, and popular literature portrayed animals as aware and communicative members of a society; see Wendy A. Matlock, "Talking Animals, Debating Beasts," in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
9. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 33.
10. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 33.

11. Adomnán, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, trans. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), ii.26, 131–33.
12. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 32.
13. Laura Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses: Animals in the Christian Tradition* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 64, 71–73.
14. Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, i.19, 45.
15. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 34.
16. Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 146–53.
17. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 33.
18. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 33.
19. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 34.
20. Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses*, 64, 73–76.
21. Karl Steel, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 92–94.
22. Steel, *How to Make a Human*, 94.
23. Steel, *How to Make a Human*, 94–96.
24. Felix, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, trans. Bertram Colgrave (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chap. XXXVIII, 121.
25. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXVIII, 121. Interestingly, for both Guthlac and Cuthbert, the most extensive animal communications they experience occur in places that are intentionally set apart from normal human habitation, and often are characterized as places of spiritual struggle. See Thomas J. T. Williams, "'For the Sake of Bravado in the Wilderness': Confronting the Bestial in Anglo-Saxon Warfare," in *Representing Beasts in Early Medieval England and Scandinavia*, ed. Michael D. J. Bintley and Thomas J. T. Williams (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2015), 194–97.
26. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXIX, 123.
27. Dominic Alexander notes a vibrant tradition in which the holy locality of Farne is tied both to the presence of Cuthbert (and other holy figures) and to the presence of animals. Alexander also examines Cuthbert's two bird-related miracles on Farne (the barley-eating birds and the penitent ravens) in the context both of patristic tradition and Jonas's description of Columbanus's miraculous encounters with animals in his *vita* of the saint. Dominic Alexander, *Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2008), 132–51, 46–47.
28. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XL, 125.
29. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXVIII, 121.
30. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XX, 223.
31. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XX, 225.

32. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XX, 225.
33. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XX, 225. Alexander discusses this example in the context of an examination of animals as human exemplars, and also remarks on Bede's addition of the barley-eating birds to highlight the obligation of nature to obey the saint. Alexander, *Saints and Animals*, 46–47.
34. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XI, 193.
35. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. III, 161.
36. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XI, 195.
37. Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XXI, 225.
38. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXIX, 123.
39. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXVIII, 121, quoting Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XXI, 225. This topic is hardly unique to the *vitae* of Guthlac and Cuthbert, and would be a major theme in later medieval *vitae*, most notably that of St. Francis. For a discussion of the ways in which the animal participants in Francis's *vita*, especially the avian audience of his sermon, reflect biblical tenets, see David Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 39–52.
40. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXVIII, 121, quoting Bede, *Two Lives*, chap. XXI, 225.
41. Felix, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, chap. XXXIX, 123.
42. Salisbury characterizes the obedience of animals to medieval saints and the recognition of animals as the co-heirs of creation as part of a return to an Edenic state. But the examples that Salisbury calls upon to support this stance are from later centuries, such as St. Francis. In earlier medieval *vitae* Salisbury sees animals largely as a means to define what it means to be a saint, an extraordinary human. Salisbury, *Beast Within*, 154.
43. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 31.

CHAPTER 5

The Speech of Strangers: The Tale of the Andalusi Phoenix

Michelle M. Hamilton

In the early twelfth-century "*Maqāmā* of the Phoenix" (*Maqāma*) of Ibn al-Saraqusṭī (d. 1143), the narrator encounters the protagonist in front of a crowd in China claiming to have made part of the journey from al-Andalus (medieval Muslim Iberia) on the back of a phoenix.[1] The protagonist tells of meeting an ascetic who explained to him how he discovered the phoenix (*'anqā'*) as an orphaned chick and how he raised the chick as if he were his child, until as an adult the phoenix became the ascetic's caretaker. The ascetic's account humanizes the wondrous creature, claiming that the phoenix's mother, like men, had a soul: "I found it on this island, when it was completely covered with down, when its hunger was extreme … for it used to have a mother to nourish and fetch food for it, until … Death ensnared her in its coils, and she was eliminated from the sea … for everyone who has a soul will perish."[2]

Given the special relationship between the ascetic and the phoenix, the former has the ability to summon him and is capable of understanding his speech. That the protagonist endows the phoenix of his tale with a soul and speech forces the readers of the tale (and presumably the protagonist's

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audience to whom this tale is being told within the narrative) into what critics such as Randy Malamud describe as an ethical consideration of the nonhuman.[3] Malamud argues that literature and the plastic arts are particularly apt vehicles for reassessing the privileging of the human in human–animal relations and asserting the value of animals as subjects.[4]

In this study I look at how the phoenix serves to locate this fictional Ibero-Arabic narrative in Arabic and Persian literary traditions featuring debates and philosophical inquiry into the importance of speech (of both animals and humans) as indicative of their "proper" role in the universe. This includes the Arabic genre of '*ajā'ib wa-gharā'ib* (tales of wonder and marvels) that, despite their inexplicable nature, are often located in the observable world and engage in the most advanced scientific and philosophical theories of the period.[5] In the case of the "*Maqāma* of the Phoenix," the author makes sense of the phoenix and his ability to communicate and to care for the needs of the ascetic by mentioning that, like humans, his mother had a soul. By flattening the distinctions between humans and other creatures, al-Saraqusṭī further invites his audience to question the role of animals in the Aristotelian universe. This tale reveals that authors like al-Saraqusṭī were familiar with Aristotelian works on natural philosophy in vogue among Arabic-speaking scholars in al-Andalus, but also with Arabo-Persian popular and philosophic traditions originating in the cultural milieu of the East, as evident in the *Case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn* (*Case*) by the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, an anonymous group of mostly Persian intellectuals in tenth-century Basra.[6] This work was translated into Hebrew some 200 years later by the Judeo-Provençal intellectual Ben Meir Kalomymous ben Kalonymous, as well as adapted 300 years later into Catalan by Anselm Turmeda in his *Disputa de l'Ase* (*Disputa*). Central to the animals' argument in the *Case* and its Iberian adaptations is disproving the belief that man alone is endowed with speech and the ability to communicate—both abilities that the phoenix manifests in the *maqāma*.[7]

The "*Maqāma* of the Phoenix" is part of a collection of fifty *maqāmāt*, the *Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah*, that brought the wildly popular rhymed prose narrative form popularized in the East by Persianized intellectuals such as al-Hamadhānī (Herat) and al-Ḥarīrī (Basra) to al-Andalus. This series of short narratives in classical Arabic is recounted within a narrative frame in the first-person voice of al-Sā'ib, who tells of his encounters with the trickster and (anti-)hero Abū Ḥabīb. The "*Maqāma* of the Phoenix" begins with al-Sā'ib telling us of a young but wise traveling companion

with whom al-Sā'ib is staying in China (370). The youth appears one day and tells al-Sā'ib of a wise man he has encountered in the city's square—a man with "a bewitching mind" and "an outspoken tongue" (371). As we find out at the end of the tale, this wise old man is none other than Abū Ḥabīb, the trickster. The narrator, al-Sā'ib, joins his traveling companion in the square to listen to Abū Ḥabīb both abuse and entertain his Chinese audience. After telling them they lack scientific knowledge, effectively calling them unsophisticated rubes, he offers to tell them of his marvelous adventures if they are generous in compensating him when he finishes, which they prove to be, showering him with gifts and donations (379). Al-Sā'ib tells us he finds the man roaring loudly, with a crowd several people deep surrounding him. He is "swooping down in his delivery as does the falcon or the sparrowhawk" (371). It is at this point that we become, with al-Sā'ib and his companion, Abū Ḥabīb's audience for the tale of the phoenix.

Abū Habīb was traveling in the Maghrib (the West) when a section of the desert in which he and his traveling companions had stopped suddenly elevated, moved with great speed to the sea, and then raced through the water until submerging, leaving Abū Ḥabīb and his companions in the middle of the sea and grasping for life. Luckily they washed up on the beach of an island. As they were recovering, an immense shadow passed over them and they looked up to see a huge bird. They ran to escape and came upon an old ascetic. He explained to them how he too came to the island, finding the baby phoenix whose mother had just died. He raised the chick, and once the chick became big enough, he began to bring the old man water from faraway lands, as well as other delicacies.[8] The ascetic then tells Abū Ḥabīb and his companions how he communicates with the phoenix and of the wonder of the latter's speech:

> Indeed, the chick's story is most remarkable: I summon it and it responds; I chide it and it is driven away; I scold it and it hides and turbans its head in its feathers. Then the ascetic declared: "Come, O offspring of the phoenix, O you who resemble a dove; rather, you who resemble a human being and are a superior in beauty and excellence! O you who possess a gifted tongue and an ample wing, what do you have to report? What do you have to say for yourself? Intellects are baffled when you speak; your melodies are worthy of being played on the lute, and your tunes, of being sung by David; you sadden and enrapture, your meaning is at times easy to grasp and at times difficult to follow; on how many a distant journey have travelers taken news

> about you to foreign parts, and how much pride has the west taken in you; you alone boast four wings and an extra claw lacking in all other birds; your silence informs, your speech edifies, and your condition is impressive. (375–76)

Here al-Saraqusṭī crafts an original account of the phoenix and the power of his speech that has a basis in the Persian and Arabic traditions. In this *maqāma* as in the others in the collection, Abū Ḥabīb, as the learned, aristocratic Arab who is also, nevertheless, a scoundrel and unreliable narrator, traffics in the discourses of power and science debated in contemporary intellectual circles across the Islamicate world to his own benefit. The phoenix (*'anqā'*) was long associated in the Arab tradition with mythical bird creatures of the East, including the Persian *Sīmurgh* (discussed in detail later) and the *rukh* that Ibn Battuta would locate hovering over the open sea between China and Sumatra some 200 years after al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāmā*.[9] Abū Ḥabīb's tale of the phoenix in this narrative asks the reader to evaluate not (only) the truth claims of such discourses but also the claims of the characters that use them and for what reasons; as such, the tale of the phoenix and his speech is as much about the potential duplicity of human language as it is about animal language.[10]

In al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāma*, the phoenix is endowed with speech: he is said to "possess a gifted tongue." The phoenix's speech makes him comparable to humans, and the ascetic claims he "resemble[s] a human being" in beauty and excellence. That another creature on earth can rival men particularly through the power of speech (and the capacity for rational thought) challenges the Aristotelian notions of the natural world just coming into vogue among Arabic-speaking Andalusi intellectuals, according to which humans are at the top of the hierarchy of (earthly) being. The ascetic's statement that human "intellects are baffled" when the phoenix speaks alludes to the fact that, according to Aristotelian thought, humans alone are endowed with the rational faculty that allows them to reason, apprehend, and speculate, and perhaps most importantly for this essay on animal speech, to speak.[11] The phoenix's power of speech and his communication with the ascetic reveal further his possession of reason and free will, for he must decide based on the ascetic's reasoning and on travelers' behavior toward him whether he will assist them or not. The ascetic calls the phoenix, who then comes to him: "it halted humbly before the ascetic, raised the wing of a humble traveler, revealed itself and cried out" (376). The ascetic tells the travelers to "come forward now to honor it, lining up before it, for it can understand the slightest hint and unspoken thought"

(377). It is up to the phoenix to decide whether or not to help the travelers return home, based on their attitudes. This decision is founded upon his ability "to see what moral virtue calls for in a particular situation," which Aristotle defines as a uniquely human capacity.[12] The phoenix's speech with the ascetic and his interactions with the travelers involve manifestations of rational decision making and speech. Aristotle claims the power to converse is unique to humans: "this power, or language, is peculiar to man."[13] The great Judeo-Iberian thinker Maimonides, writing only some twenty to thirty years after al-Saraqusṭī, and basing himself in Aristotle (via Arab commentaries), articulates the concept of the "rational soul" literally as the "speaking soul" (*nefesh medabberet*), a faculty that distinguishes men from all other creatures and that has its origin in the divine.[14] For Maimonides, "the rational soul [*nefesh medabbert*], I mean the form of man [is]… the thing that remains of man after death."[15] The rational faculty (realized via the intellect)—precisely the faculty that Aristotle and his subsequent Andalusi commentators identify as that which makes speech possible—endows man alone with the "perception of good and bad and right and wrong" and ties him to the divine.[16] These beliefs, dominant among Arabic-speaking intellectuals in Iberia from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, passed into Western Christian Europe in the works of thinkers such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.[17] By having the speech of the phoenix be a marvel that defies the rational faculty of the human intellect (*ʿaql*), Abū Ḥabīb (the narrator telling us of this wonder) is disrupting the Aristotelian science of the soul that his contemporaries Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Rushd were elaborating in their philosophical works and that would become the basis for later Western European thought.[18]

In his description of the phoenix, with his wings and claws, as well as his ability to sing and speak, the ascetic characterizes him as a bird. Before summoning the phoenix in the passage just given, the ascetic tells the shipwrecked men, "As for the bird you see before you, it is the chick of the phoenix" (375). On the basis of Surah 27 of the Quran, the language of the birds had long been accepted in the Arabic-speaking world. King Solomon (of the Judeo-Christian tradition) is depicted in the Quran as marshaling armies of birds and jinn, as well as having been endowed with the ability to understand the speech of the birds.[19] The acceptance of the speech of birds and other creatures such as ants and bees as depicted in the Quran troubled the Aristotelian models of such thinkers as the tenth-century Abbasid philosophers al-Razī and al-Kindī. As Sarra Tlili points out, al-Razī does not doubt that God could endow birds and insects with reason and speech.[20] Al-Razī notes, though, that

there are heretics who deny this because, in Tlili's words, "once this [nonhuman animals' possession of linguistic and rational faculties] is conceded, one might also have to concede that nonhuman animals can (or do) replicate the human model in all possible respects."[21] In Abū Habīb's account of the phoenix and its speech, Al-Saraqusṭī seems to be doing precisely this—leading his readers to consider the potential linguistic and rational faculties of the nonhuman.

While early Aristotelian thinkers such as al-Farabī and al-Kindī struggled with the apparent contradiction between Quranic accounts of animal thought and speech and the Aristotelian view of rational thought (and its manifestation as speech) as unique to humans and as establishing a clear boundary that distinguishes humans and the divine from animals in the chain of being, other traditional and literary models existed in the Persian and Arabic traditions that used fiction to explore animal speech, particularly instances of cross-species speech and communication (human–animal) as we find in al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāma*. In several Arabic works based on Persian antecedents, the phoenix in particular is given voice as the most noble of the birds. As mentioned, the Arabic *'anqā'* (phoenix) is used to translate the Persian term for a mythical, quasi-divine creature known as the Sīmurgh.[22] The Sīmurgh passes into the Arabic tradition via translations of Persian works such as *Kalīla wa Dimna*, Firdawsī's *Shahnameh,* and the Persianate *Epistles of the Brethern of Purity.*[23]

In this Arabo-Persian tradition, characteristics of the mythical Sīmurgh, including its power of speech and its role as protector and tutor of humans, are conflated with the figure of the phoenix. The frame tale known as *Kalīla wa Dimna*, in which two animals discuss the merits of political life and exchange a series of fables, including that of the Sīmurgh, has Indian origins. It was translated first from Sanskrit into Pahlevi and then in the sixth century into old Syriac. The tenth-century intellectual Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ used the old Syriac version for his Arabic translation, which became one of the most widely read works of the Middle Ages. In his translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, Ibn Al-Muqaffaʿ uses the term *'anqā'* to translate the Pahlevi term "Sīmurgh" used to refer to the king of the birds in the story of the strandbirds.[24] The mythical Sīmurgh also has a role in the epic of Persian kings, the *Shahnameh*, which was translated into Arabic by several tenth-century intellectuals.[25] In Firdawsī's (d. 1020) verse adaptation of the *Shahnameh*, he tells of how the Sīmurgh rescued the Persian king Zāl, who was abandoned as a boy by his father Sam. The Sīmurgh protects the exposed child, takes him to her nest and later returns him to his father. Like al-Saraqusṭī's phoenix, "The Sīmurgh has the gift of speech, like men,

and teaches the young Zāl to speak while he is with her."[26] The episode of Zāl and the Sīmurgh seems to be an adaptation of a popular tradition widespread in early central Asian folklore (in Iranian, Kurdish, and Azerbeijani traditions), in which the Sīmurgh both saves and is saved by human heroes (Fig. 5.1).

Fig. 5.1 Zal rescued by the Sīmurgh. *Book of Kings. Shahnameh.* Attributed to Sadiqi Bek. Late 16th Century, Iran. CBL Per 277.12. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

We find an echo of this tradition in al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāma*. In an inversion of the Zāl tale, the ascetic in Firdawsī's tale tells the shipwrecked group that he raised the orphaned phoenix chick after arriving on the island:

> I found it on this island, when it was completely covered with down, when its hunger was extreme and its exhaustion had reached the limit, for it used to have a mother to nourish and fetch food for it, until the calamity of calamities snatched her away, Death ensnared her in its coils, and she was eliminated from the sea, at a time when no one was able to protect her from her appointed hour of death, for everyone who has a soul will perish … So I fed the chick with my very own hand and raised it until it grew up. It visits me every month and causes me to take pleasure in every garden and flower of its good qualities. Blessed be that obtainer and provider, for how much water from the Nile has it fetched me; how much fresh and sweet water from the Tigris and Euphrates has it devoted to me; how much pleasant food. (375)

In this flashback the ascetic narrates finding the phoenix as an orphaned baby, and tells of the tragic death of the phoenix's mother and of how the ascetic saved and raised the chick, just as the Sīmurgh saved and raised Zāl in her nest when he was cast out by his father Sam. The phoenix in the *maqāma* became old enough to bring the ascetic fresh water and food from places around the globe.

The phoenix's relationship with the ascetic, modeled on mutual trust and dependency, further reveals how al-Saraqusṭī frames the phoenix's speech as part of what his reader would recognize as a Persian/non-Aristotelian tradition. The old man on the island is described by Abū Ḥabīb as a chaste ascetic (*ābdu al-zāhid*) who serves as a wise intercessor that assuages the new arrivals' fear of the phoenix, much like the king in the Marie de France's lai of Bisclavert who, as Alison Langdon points out elsewhere in this collection, chooses not to use violence against Bisclavert in dog form and instead acts as his protector and brings him back to court.[27] Ascetics such as that in the *maqāma* were associated with and transmitters of Eastern mystical traditions, in which tales of the Sīmurgh (in the *Epistles* and, later, the *Conference of the Birds*) were transmitted, as were Neoplatonic beliefs in the transmigration of the souls, including those of the animals.[28] In the former, the Sīmurgh saves and nurtures humans, protecting them from the violence of their own kind, and in the

latter categorical differences between humans and animals are replaced by the notion that the humans and animals share a common spiritual force.

But it is not only holy men or kings like Zāl who interact with the phoenix or Sīmurgh in the Persian tradition. In the tales of Sindbad and in the *Case* (as in the *maqāma*), we find less than holy men or noble kings—namely, shipwrecked traders and merchants brought in contact with mythological birds like the Sīmurgh or phoenix and with various speaking animals. In the *maqāma*, the phoenix's tale is told to us not directly by the ascetic but, rather, second-hand by the protagonist and trickster, Abū Habīb, who claims to have been shipwrecked with several other fellow travelers and merchants: "Then the land we were on sank into the sea and we found ourselves helpless in the water. So we swam for a long time … until we emerged onto a broad island with fertile meadows" (373). Abū Ḥabīb's tale of shipwreck recalls many wonder tales of the Persian tradition, including the Sindbad tales later incorporated into the *1001 Nights*.[29] His journey on the back of a sea creature that passes at first as a hill in the desert and later submerges in the ocean, as well as his subsequent encounter with and flight on the back of the phoenix, reflects in both content and form the well-known first, second, and fifth voyages of Sindbad, who similarly recounts adventures on the seas and salvation attained by attaching himself to a large flying bird.[30] Sindbad's tales belong to the '*ajā'ib* genre—the very genre that Abū Habīb uses to refer to his own tale of the phoenix within in the *maqāma,* a point to which I will return.

While Abū Ḥabīb's encounter with both the creature/island and the flight/escape on the back of the phoenix may be straight out of Sindbad, the ascetic's account of the phoenix's speech evokes both the Persian epic just discussed and the philosophical tradition of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, an anonymous group of Persian intellectuals working in tenth-century Basra. This group of intellectuals published a multi-volume encyclopedia of wisdom, *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, in Basra in the tenth century. In the *Epistles*, beliefs from various philosophic and religious traditions are presented, guided by the principles that there is "veracity in every religion" and the pursuit of knowledge is "pure nourishment for the soul."[31]

The twenty-second epistle, the *Case*, offers animals as models of piety, behavior, and thought in contrast to men, who are selfish and harmful to themselves and the world around them. The *Case* begins, like Abū Ḥabīb's tale of the phoenix, with a shipwreck. In this tale it is seventy men (representing all creeds and races) who shipwreck on the island Sā'un, "lying near the equator in the midst of Green Sea."[32] On the island they find

animals of all types who, anticipating Darwin's account of the Galápagos, have no fear of man and live peaceful happy lives: "They saw all sorts of animals—beasts cattle, birds, and carnivores—all living in peace and harmony with one another, secure and unafraid" (101). The humans, "convinced that the animals were their runaway and rebellious slaves," hunted some of the animals and enslaved the others to use them for farming and domestic chores (102). Lamenting their loss of freedom and harsh treatment, the animals then go before the king of the jinn, Biwarāsp the Wise, and tell him how the humans have mistreated them (102). Biwarāsp consults his advisors who present various options, from paying the humans to free the animals to freeing the animals at night so they can flee. While the court feels the last option is the best, a jinni sage notes that the king has missed an important fact: "you miss the greatest, gravest advantage. Don't you know that although the sons of Adam have gross, earthly bodies, they also have heavenly spirits and angel-like rational souls, that set them above us?" (131). He advises that the king hold a public debate. His advisors think it would be fairest to have the animals choose representatives, "for every kind has its special virtues, its insights and discernment, its own kind of eloquence, argument, thought and explanation" (150) and is best suited to make their case in a lawsuit to decide if humans have a right to dominate and use animals as they claim.

As Lenn E. Goodman, the *Case*'s modern editor notes, the work shows that "animals, as the Neoplatonists long argued, are made not for human exploitation but, in the first instance, for their own sakes. They have needs and interests of their own."[33] According to Goodman, "part of what the Ikhwān gain by giving speaking parts to animals is what postmodernists insist is impossible: they find a way of getting outside oneself, beyond the constructs and constrictions of the familiar culture and even the shared biases of humanity."[34] In the *Case*, the speech of animals is juxtaposed with that of humankind to explore notions of good and evil, of truth and lies, just as Al-Saraqusṭī does in the *maqāma* with the tale of the phoenix. The *Epistles*, of which the *Case* is the twenty-second book, were widely disseminated in the Arabic-speaking world, including on the Iberian Peninsula, where the *Epistles* of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ were known since being introduced in the tenth century during the reign of Abd al-Rahmān III.[35] The importance of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ and the *Case* as a source on ethics, and as a thought experiment in which animal speech becomes a vehicle for questioning not only human abuse of animals but also the premise of human superiority underlying the Aristotelian cosmology (foundational in

medieval European religious belief), continues in subsequent versions of the tale penned by authors associated with Iberia. The Arabic original of the *Case* was adapted and translated by Kalonymous ben Kalonymous, a Jewish intellectual from Provençe who lived in and was familiar with the intellectuals of Barcelona, Naples, and Rome. Kalonymous's Hebrew translation of 1316 is entitled the *Iggeret Ba'al Hayyim*.[36] A century later, Anslem Turmeda (d. 1423), a Majorcan Franciscan who moved to Tunis, converted to Islam and worked as a diplomat and port official for the Hafsid rulers, penned a now-lost Catalan translation/adaptation of the *Case* that has survived in a fifteenth-century French translation.[37]

The phoenix (*'anqa'*) and the Sīmurgh are characterized as different types of birds in the *Case*.[38] In this work, all the birds on the island are divided into songbirds and birds of prey, each group having its own domain and king. The Sīmurgh, the king of the songbirds, is consulted in order to find a representative of the songbirds to speak before the king of the jinn.[39] The Sīmurgh asks the peacock, his vizier, "Which of the eloquent, talking birds is best suited for us to dispatch as our delegate in the dispute?" (162–63). The peacock brings forth several possibilities, including the hoopoe, "friend of Solomon son of David," and the cock, who is nature's muezzin and who "wakes the neighborhood to remind them tunefully that dawn has come" and it is time to pray. The peacock states that the nightingale is the best choice as representative of the songbirds: "Any one of them would do," said the peacock. "All are eloquent speakers and songsters, but the nightingale is the most eloquent and expressive, the finest and most tuneful singer" (172). In the *Case*, poetry is associated with birdsong, and the inclusion of poems attributed to various birds is reminiscent of the ascetic in al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāma*, who claims that the phoenix is a master of poetry and melodies comparable to the biblical David ("your melodies are worthy of being played on the lute, and your tunes, of being sung by David" (375–76).

The birds of prey in the *Case* have as king the phoenix (*'anqā'*, translated by Goodman as the griffin), who summons all the birds "with talons and a hooked beak, all that eat meat" (175).[40] His vizier, the rhinoceros—Goodman explains that the rhinoceros and griffin/*'anqā'* are depicted as hunting partners in *'ajā'ib* literature, as evident in the second voyage of Sindbad—suggests that the owl act as their representative in the lawsuit.[41] The owl claims he cannot go because of humans' hatred of him as a precursor or symbol of evil. This prompts the phoenix's own story of fleeing humans and their cruelty:

> You see, fellow raptors," he said, "how pervasive is man's oppression and how widespread are his trespasses against animals, if their repercussions have come all the way to our habitations, even though we avoid humans and shun their abodes. I myself, despite my great strength, my massive frame, and swift flight, left the realm of men and fled to mountain-tops and islands in the sea …." The griffin [*ʿanqāʾ*] concluded, "How many ships tossed by the tempest on the fathomless deep have I led back on course! How many shipwrecked and drowning men have I brought safe to islands or shores, only to please my Lord and give thanks for the blessing of my massive frame and huge body, to show due gratitude for His bounty toward me. (182)

The phoenix's description of his abode on isolated islands and his activities, saving shipwrecked men as a show of gratitude for God his creator, recalls the activities of the phoenix in al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāma*. In the latter, Abū Habīb and his traveling companions are rescued by the phoenix, who allows them to ride on his back from the island on which they were marooned to reach safety in Egypt (378). This final act on the part of al-Saraqusṭī's phoenix reinforces the fact that the ascetic's account of the phoenix's life and linguistic abilities are allusions to the Persian traditions of the phoenix and Sīmurgh manifest in such works as the *Case*.

However, Abū Ḥabīb's entire narrative—his Persian-style encounter with the king of birds—is called into question by the narrator al-Sā'ib's revelation at the end of the *maqāma* that Abū Ḥabīb ends his tale by hustling his Chinese audience for money and cynically asking them, "When have the likes of you Chinese ever experienced such astonishing marvels (*ʿajāʾib*), dazzling wonders (*ġharāʾib*)?" (378). According to James Monroe, "This is a cynical view of travelers' tales in general, and suggests, once again, that nothing in this text should be accepted at face value."[42] Al-Sā'ib asks him in closing why he has treated the Chinese like naïve children, instead of telling them about real remarkable animals such as the giraffe or elephant. Abū Ḥabīb tells him in verse, "Never inform any group of people about an elephant or a giraffe, /But always tell tall tales (*ʿajāʾib*) whenever you narrate fables" (380). While al-Sā'ib admonishes Abū Habīb for not using the *ʿajāʾib* tales in the vein of Sindbad to impress upon his Chinese audience the wondrous nature of creation, Abū Ḥabīb is clear that he has used the story and lore of the phoenix in bad faith—that is, without believing in what he is telling—and that he has done so for personal gain, to get money from his audience. Thus this twelfth-century tale in which the mythical phoenix's speech and rhetorical skills are described

and praised asks the reader to question not only the speech of animals but particularly that of humans, who use their speech and even exploit the speech of animals for their own gain.

Animal speech continued, though, in both Kalonymous ben Kalonymous and Turmeda's adaptations of the Arabo-Persian work, the *Case*, which presented philosophic and theological models that troubled the Aristotelian (and later scholastic) privileging of the intellect (and its manifestation, speech) as uniquely human. Al-Saraqusṭī's *maqāma* of the phoenix is a skeptical early precursor of this tradition. Turmeda's Catalan version of the *Case* involved several changes to the Arabo-Persian treatise, notably having all of mankind represented by Turmeda himself, and the animals by the lowly ass. Given the associations of the ass in the Western tradition with precedents such as Barlaam's ass in the Bible (Num. 22:21–39), as well as the picaresque narrator of Lucius's *Golden Ass*, Turmeda's choice of animal spokesperson reveals the process of cultural adaptation concomitant to the act of translation. The ass counters the character Frere Anselme's scholastically based argument that the faculty of speech distinguishes animals from humans: "He, frere! Penser auant que parler c'est sagesse, et vous faictes le contraire qui parlez deuant que penser, et cela est grande et haultaine follie" ("Friar! Thinking before speaking is a sign of wisdom, yet you do the opposite, you speak before thinking, and that is a great and haughty folly").[43] This is, in fact, as Lourdes Alvarez points out, the most significant difference between the earlier version of the *Case* and Turmeda's adaptation. Unlike the *Case* of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, here "Turmeda's Ass charges man with the *verbal* crime of unfounded boasting of his superiority."[44] The ass further makes clear to Turmeda that animals have both common sense and the "intellective soul," or the active intellect/rational soul that served as the lynchpin for distinguishing man from animals in the Aristotelian cosmology adopted by many European intellectuals: "nous animaulx auons sens naturel et ame intellectiue aussi bien et mieulx que vous" ("We animals have common sense and an intellective soul as good or better than yours").[45] The ass affirms that animals have both common sense and the rational soul that so many medieval theorists in Iberia and later in Christian Europe denied them. While in the *maqāma*, al-Saraqusṭī invoked the image of the phoenix endowed with speech to trouble the Aristotelian cosmology popular among contemporary twelfth-century Andalusi intellectuals, Turmeda similarly adopts the notion of animal speech to question the Christianized arguments (including the Aristotelian *cum* scholastic notion of the rational soul) in favor of human superiority that would have been familiar to Turmeda's Romance-language-speaking readers.

Turmeda's *Disputa* is the last of the Iberian works explored in which the authors have imagined worlds where animals not only speak but also are ethical actors who dispute the claim that mankind is inherently superior to animals. Al-Saraqusṭī and Turmeda (and one could argue Kalonymous ben Kalonymous) chose imaginative fiction as the critical space in which to bring together various, sometimes competing, currents of thought regarding not only the possibility of animal speech but also the larger issues of which it was a by-product—namely, the difference/s between animals and humans, and the role of each in the created universe. Al-Saraqusṭī chose the phoenix as the vehicle by which to bring a series of Persian and Islamic religious and popular traditions into dialogue with varying philosophic notions of the nature of animals and men in the material world. The twenty-second epistle of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, which circulated among the Arabic speakers of the Peninsula from at least the tenth century and served as the basis for Kalonymous ben Kalonymous's Hebrew translation/adaptation, as well as that of Anselm Turmeda's fifteenth-century Catalan adaptation, is fundamental in this process. The authors of these works explicitly examine speech as an index of animal otherness. Like Al-Saraqusṭī's phoenix, the *Sīmurgh* in the *Case* eloquently exposes the hypocrisy of humans' attitudes toward animals, showing the rationalization that underlies all forms of science and civilization that men claim as proof texts of their natural superiority. In these narratives we witness as the phoenix bridges the human and the animal worlds via language, and also how the authors of these narratives—Andalusi, Judeo-Iberian, and Spanish Aragonese—similarly use the fictional tale of the phoenix as a vehicle for bridging what we have come to think of as East and West—namely, the philosophic traditions of Peria and Arabic and those of Latin Christendom.

Notes

1. Abū l-Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Tamīmī al-Saraqusṭī ibn al-Aštarkūwī (Al-Saraqusṭī) was born in Zaragoza, and met and studied with various Andalusi thinkers (including Ibn `Arabī) throughout the Peninsula. On his biography, see James T. Monroe, introduction to Al-Saraqusṭī, *Al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah*: *Ta'lif Abū l-Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Tamīmī al-Saraqusṭī*, trans. James T. Monroe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 18–27.
2. Al-Saraqusṭī, *Al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah*, 375. All subsequent citations are from this edition. When relevant, I have included the original Arabic

terms, based on Ḥasan al-Warāglī's Arabic edition, *Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah* (Rabat: Mansurat 'Ukaz, 1995).

3. Randy Malamud, *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 6–7.
4. Malamud, *Poetic Animals*, 62.
5. See C. E. Dubler, "'Adjā'ib," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, (hereafter cited as *EI)*, Brill Online, 2016, accessed May 21, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adjaib-SIM_0319.
6. On Aristotelian and other late Hellenic philosophic works (such as those of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius) among Muslim philosophers, see Alfred Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic Psychology and Philosophy of Mind," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, (hereafter cited as *SEP*), Summer 2012, accessed May 16, 2016, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/arabic-islamic-mind/. On Aristotelian thought in al-Andalus, see Josép Puig Montada, "Ibn Bâjja," *SEP* Spring 2012, accessed May 21, 2016, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/ibn-bajja/; R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Rushd," in *EI*, accessed May 15, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-rushd-COM_0340.
7. The *Disputa* was put on the Inquisition's index of prohibited books in Spain and the Catalan original was lost. It survives in print copies of the French translation of 1544. See María Lourdes Alvarez, "Beastly Colloquies: Of Plagiarism and Pluralism in Two Medieval Disputations between Animals and Men Author(s)," *Comparative Literature Studies* 39, no. 3 (2002): 179, accessed May 5, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40247345.
8. The ascetic's relationship with the baby phoenix, the fact that he finds it in Death's clutches starving to death and then tells us, "I fed the chick with very my own hand and raised it until it grew up" (375), echoes that of Madonna Beritola and the baby fawns she finds and nurses on the island on which she finds herself alone in *Decameron* 2.6. Peggy McCracken characterizes this relationship as one of "becoming-animal." "Nursing Animals and Cross Species Intimacy," in *From Beasts to Souls*, ed. E. Jane Burns and Peggy McCracken (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2013), 39–64, 51.
9. Christa A. Tuczay, "Motifs in *The Arabian Nights* and in Ancient and Medieval European Literature: A Comparison," *Folklore* 116 (2005): 276–81, accessed December 12, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30035296; Charles Pellat, "Anḳā'," in *EI*, accessed May 25, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/anka-SIM_0672; ʾAbū ʿAbd al-Lāh Muḥammad Ibn Battuta,

Rihla. A través del Islam, trans. Serafin Fanjul and Federico Arbós (Madrid: Alianza, 2006), 773. The Arabic tradition also inherited traditions and lore associated with the phoenix from the classical (Greek and Roman) culture. See F. C. De Blois, "Sīmurgh," in *EI*, accessed May 21, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/simurgh-SIM_7039; see also Pellat, "Anḳā'," in *EI.*

10. The theme of duplicitous language is central in the collection of *maqāmāt* as a whole. The author, al-Saraqusṭī, instructs the readers in a colophone to a manuscript copy of the *Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah* to read the work according to *ta'wiil,* or allegorical interpretation. According to James T. Monroe, *ta'wīl* necessarily "implies a certain duplicity of language; it implies that nothing is, in reality, what it seems to be on the surface." Monroe, introduction to *Al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah*, 45. The theme of duplicitous human language is also addressed in Alison Langdon's chapter in this volume.
11. Aristotle states, "But of all animals man alone is capable of deliberation." *The History of Animals,* trans. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910); Daniel C. Stevenson, *The Internet Classics Archive*, Web Atomics, 1994–2000, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/history_anim.1.i.html. Book 1, part 1. In Book 4, he further clarifies that various types of birds "utter vocal sounds." Birds may "utter vocal sounds of different kinds, but they have no power of converse." Book 4, part 9.
12. See Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1993), 13.
13. *History of Animals,* Book 4, part 9. In the *Politics* (1.1253a), Aristotle further specifies: "man alone of the animals possesses speech … speech is designed to indicate … the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right." *Politics,* in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, vol. 21, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, 1944); in Gregory R. Crane, *Perseus Digital Library Project*, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0086,035:1:1253a.
14. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, ed. and trans. Shlomo Pines, I.41, 91; II.10, 271 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
15. Maimonides, *Guide*, I.41, 91.
16. Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1253a; Ivry. According to al-Razī, one of the earliest thinkers to introduce Aristotelian thought into the Arabic-speaking tradition, the rational soul is superior to that of animals: "the rational or divine one [soul] enlisting the higher passions of the animal soul to control the base appetites of the vegetative soul." For al-Razī "the rational soul … is non-physical and immortal." "Arabic and Islamic Psychology."

17. On the nature of medieval Aristotelianism in the Arabic-speaking world, see note 5. On medieval Christian Aristotelianism, see Peter G. Sobol, "The Shadow of Reason: Explanations of Intelligent Animal Behavior in the Thirteenth Century," in *The Medieval World of Nature: A Book of Essays*, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury (New York: Garland, 1993), 109–28.
18. Al-Saraqusṭī was a contemporary of some of the greatest minds of medieval philosophy and science, who were part of the generation that introduced Aristotle into the Arabic tradition of Iberia. Ibn Bajjah (d. 1139), known in the West as Avempace, was familiar with the Aristotelian corpus, including those works on natural philosophy (on the subject of which he composed the *Book of Animals*). On Ibn Rushd (d. 1198)'s approach to the soul, see Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic Psychology."
19. J. Walker and P. Fenton. "Sulaymān b. Dāwūd,"in *EI*, accessed May 25, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sulayman-b-dawud-SIM_7158.
20. *Animals in the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 184.
21. *Animals in the Qur'an*, 184–85.
22. On the origins of the term (in Sanskrit, Pahlevi, and Middle Persian), see De Blois, "Sīmurgh," and V. F. Büchner, "Sīmurgh," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed. (1913–36), ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T. W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann, Brill Online, 2016, accessed May 21, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/simurgh-SIM_5430. Büchner notes that the Sīmurgh/*'anqā'* in Arabic was also identified in the tradition with a guardian jinn who protected worthy humans (such as Zāl). In Al-Tabarī's and Al-Thaʿālibī's tenth-century Arabic accounts of the pre-Islamic kings, the Sīmurgh is translated as the *'anqā'*.
23. The language of the birds was also the basis of a well-known Sufi allegory in Persian: Al-Attar's *Conference of the Birds Manṭiq-uṭ-Ṭayr* (1177), in which the most regal of all birds is the Sīmurgh, but this narrative postdates our Iberian author by some 30 years. See De Blois, "Sīmurgh."
24. C. Brockelmann, "Kalīla Wa-Dimna," in *EI*, accessed May 31, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/kalila-wa-dimna-COM_0427; De Blois, "Sīmurgh."
25. Both al-Bundārī and al-Thaʿālibī translated sections of the *Shahnameh*. See Cl. Huart and H. Massé, "Firdawsī," in *EI*, accessed May 15, 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/firdawsi-SIM_2376.
26. Büchner, "Sīmurgh."
27. See Christopher Melchert, "Ascetics and Asceticism," in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: A-K, index. Volume 1 of Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri and Jere L. Bacharach (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 71.

28. In the Platonic tradition, based in part on Plato's *Myths* and the *Republic* (a work translated into Arabic by Ibn Rushd), the soul was envisioned as a spark of the divine with which created beings are animated and, in the case of animals, these small sparks of the divine could transmigrate to other forms in a process of metempsychosis. According to Stefan Dolgert, Plato's account of the myth of Er, "who died and returned from death," "reflects Pythagorian notions of trans-species metempsychosis." Stefan Dolgert, "Animal Republics: Plato, Representation, and the Politics of Nature," *Politics and Animals* 1, no. 1 (2015), accessed May 15, 2016, http://journals.lub.lu.se/index.php/pa/article/view/15046/13622. In the ancient Christian and Greco-Roman traditions, the phoenix is similarly identified with ascetics and is even thought to embody asceticism in its way of life. Door Roelof Van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix According to Classical and Early Christian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 379–81.
29. The tales of Sindbad's voyages, including his encounters with the island fish/turtle and the *rukh*, are of Persian origins and were incorporated into the larger frame of the *1001 Nights* by Antoine Galland in the seventeenth century. Dwight Reynolds, *Arab Folklore: A Handbook* (London and Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 78. However, the tales of Sindbad circulated independently in the Middle Ages. See Mia I. Gerhardt, *The Art of Storytelling: A Literary Study of the* Thousand and One Nights (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 238–39; Ulrich Marzolph, "Sindbād," in *EI*, accessed December 25, 2012, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sindbad-SIM_7046.
30. *The Arabian Nights*, ed. Daniel Heller-Roazen, trans. Muhsin Mahdi (New York: Norton, 2010), 303–16, 332–38.
31. Nader El-Bizri, foreword to *The Case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn*, by Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), xii.
32. Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ, *The Case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn*, trans. Lenn E. Goodman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 101. Subsequent citations are also to Goodman's English translation. In some cases, as noted, I compare the Hebrew terms used in Kalonymous's Hebrew translation, *Iggeret Ba'al Hayyim,* ed. Israel Toporovsky and Abraham Meir Habermann (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-rav Kuk, 1949).
33. Goodman, introduction to *The Case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn*, by Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.
34. Goodman, introduction, 7.
35. Toufic Fahd, "Sciences naturelles et magie dans'Gayat al-Hakim du pseudo-Mayriti," in *Ciencias de la naturaleza en al-Andalus*, ed. Expiración

García Sánchez (Granada: CSIC Escuela de Estudios Árabes, 1990), 11. According to Alvarez, the eleventh-century mathematician al-Majriti and al-Kirmani actively "promoted and disseminated" the *Epistles*; Alvarez, "Beastly Colloquies," 183.

36. On Kalonymous ben Kalonymous, who also worked as a translator in the court of Robert of Anjou in Naples, see Umberto Cassuto and Angel Sáenz-Badillos, "Kalonymus ben Kalonymus," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., vol. 11 (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), 749–50, accessed May 27, 2016, http://login.ezproxy.lib.umn.edu/login?url=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587510656&v=2.1&u=umn_wilson&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=bdec0aff48bb44208933178827dc9fb4. The work was published in 1557 in Mantua (Cassuto and Sáenz-Badillos, "Kalonymus ben Kalonymus," 749–50). Anson Laytner and Dan Bridge published an English translation/adaptation for a popular, nonscholarly audience as *The Animals' Lawsuit Against Humanity* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2005).
37. Anslem Turmeda, "*La disputation de l'Asne* (Anselm Turmeda)," ed. R. Foulché-Delbosc, *Review Hispanique* 24 (1911): 358–479.
38. As Bruce B. Lawrence notes, the conflation of Indian, Persian, and other traditions in the medieval Islamicate world gave rise to semantic overlap in the use of several Arabic terms, including *nasr*, *'uqāb*, *'anqā'*, and *sīmurgh*—the latter, as mentioned, being a loan word from Persian. The translation of Sanskrit and Persian works into Arabic gave rise to several terms being used for mythological birds like the phoenix, Sīmurgh, and griffin. *Shahrastānī and the Indian Religions* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 128.
39. Kalonymous, like the Arabic translators, maintained the Persian term Sīmurgh סימורג for the king of the nonpredatory birds.
40. Kalonymous translates the Arabic *'anqā'* as a "fabulous eagle" (as mentioned in Lev. 11.13)—the עזניה—whose vizier is the שלך or osprey, which Kalonymous tells us is known in the vernacular as the *papagay* (פפגאי). Kalonymous, *Iggeret* 72.
41. Goodman, *Case*, 176n200.
42. Al-Saraqusṭī, *Al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmīyah*, 378n19.
43. I cite the 1554 French version on which modern reconstructions of the Catalan original are based. Turmeda, "*La disputation de l'Asne*," 386.
44. Alvarez, "Beastly Colloquies," 191.
45. Turmeda, "*La disputation de l'Asne*," 458.

PART II

Recovering Animal Languages

CHAPTER 6

Bark Like a Man: Performance, Identity, and Boundary in Old English Animal Voice Catalogues

Robert Stanton

Just as we cannot know precisely what Anglo-Saxon people sounded like when they spoke, neither can we recover exactly what noises animals made in the same period. For human language, we have a toolkit for educated guessing: spelling changes, present-day accents, sound changes across related languages, the treatment of loanwords, descriptions of grammarians and spelling reformers, and so on. Imagining the sounds made by nonhuman animals involves grappling with extinction, species development, domestication, and breeding practices over the course of a thousand to fifteen hundred years; it is an open question whether a domesticated pig in the year 900 sounded more like a present-day pig than any English speech from 900 resembles any English spoken today. The representation in human language of the sounds made by animals approaches but does not resolve this issue: the verbs of animal sounds in ancient tongues such as Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, or ancient Chinese will differ noticeably from the verbs in the modern equivalents of those languages, and animal sounds today differ significantly in various languages.[1]

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A small but significant genre of catalogues, often known as the *voces animantium* ("voices of animate things"), lists animal sounds—a dog barks, an owl hoots, etc.—with various degrees of comprehensiveness, organized either alphabetically or by species group; these texts circulated in Greek, Latin, and many vernaculars from antiquity to the eighteenth century, and were contained in grammatical treatises, encyclopedias, glossaries, and works on poetry and the structure of language.[2] This chapter examines the complex relationship between animal sounds and their representations in human language, focusing on the *voces animantium* tradition in Anglo-Saxon England as it existed in one long noise list from a metrical treatise, one Old English gloss, one poetic riddle, and a serious yet playful passage in the earliest grammar in English. As I will show, the noises of animals constituted a sonic database of relatively stable natural phenomena whose contours both inspired and followed the boundaries and categories of grammatical theory, biblical exegesis, and poetic form. While everything else just mentioned sounds right, here a theoretical component comes into play that does not seem appropriate and that will not be discussed in this essay. But such lists, carefully placed in works about how language functions and the way it signifies, reveal that representing onomatopoeic animal noises in specific human languages does more than simply mimic sounds in the "natural world": it explores and tests the putative differences and boundaries between rational, articulated human speech and instinctive, inarticulate nonhuman noise. The *voces animantium* based their taxonomical schemes either implicitly or explicitly on ideas of voice derived from late classical grammarians; but as we shall see, the semantic and semiotic workings out of the lists themselves produced considerable complexity and doubt about the relationships between articulation and confusion and between the categories of inanimate, animate, and animal.

The catalogue genre—or rather subgenre, since the catalogues generally appear as insets within other works—dates back to the earliest Greek literature, as in the famous example of the ship catalogue from the *Iliad*. Catalogues of animal sounds are attested from the first and second centuries CE, but it is clear that they were being prepared as far back as the early Alexandrian period (third century BCE), and were afterwards assimilated and nourished by the encyclopedic tradition.[3] By far the most influential animal list in the medieval tradition circulated under the name of the early second-century Roman historian Suetonius.[4] Suetonius arranged the animals and their sounds roughly according to size, but more precisely

according to their relationship to humans. The first group consists of animals that are savage, fierce, or dangerous to people (mostly large felines such as lions and tigers, but also including bears, boars, and serpents). It continues with large, less dangerous quadrupeds, many of them useful to humans as food or working animals (deer, oxen, horses, asses, pigs, sheep, dogs), then much smaller mammals such as rabbits, mice, and weasels, followed by an interlude with the odd combination of elephants and frogs, then twenty-one types of birds, and finally two insects (bees and cicadas). As Maurizio Bettini has noted, Suetonius's model presents a carefully ordered construction of much of the animal world, grouping the beasts not by their zoological characteristics but according to cultural categories, organized primarily on their relationship—inimical, useful, or otherwise—with the human world.[5] Even the noises made by Suetonius's animals sort them into humanized categories, a practice followed by the Anglo-Saxon listers, as we shall see.

Late antique and early-medieval Latin animal-noise lists occurred in glosses, glossaries, and other types of lexicographical compilations, and their migration into poetic and prose works in Old English and Anglo-Latin literature is a prime example of what Patrizia Lendinara calls "contextualized lexicography," in which organized sets of words were consciously used to build a "lexical continuum" providing a repertoire for genres such as the schoolroom colloquy, master–pupil dialogues, boastful expositions of poetic vocabulary such as the seventh-century *Hisperica Famina*, urbane poetic parodies of historical narrative, lyric poetry, and treatises on poetic meter and grammar.[6] A few early-medieval Latin poems incorporated lists of the names of quadrupeds, fish, or birds, as did schoolroom colloquies like the famous *Colloquy* of Ælfric: "Quales pisces capis?" ("Which fish do you catch?"): "Anguillas et lucio, menas et capitones, tructas et murenas et qualescumque in amne natant" ("Eels and pikes, tiddlers and mullets, trouts and lampreys and all sorts of fish that swim in the river.")[7] As Lendinara notes, this list, like Suetonius's, reveals its glossarial origin: the supposed fisherman in the dialogue unconvincingly reports catching, in one day, five species of freshwater fish along with one ocean fish (*maena*). Such a lack of empirical knowledge is not a major problem for a text like the *Colloquy*, which is a Latin learning tool rather than a natural history.[8]

The most important *voces animantium* in Anglo-Saxon England survive in three places. First, several influential glossaries contain some animal/noise pairs: the late tenth- or early eleventh-century Harley Glossary,

for example, contains the entry "coax .i. cra vox ranarum vel corvorum" ("croaking, that is crowing/croaking, the voice of frogs or crows"). Here, a sonic field, in two languages, is distributed across two different species: the Latin *coax* and the English *cra* both represent a range of croaking or crowing sounds that could be made by either frogs or crows.[9] As noted, glossaries were fruitful sources of vocabulary building for other genres, and multiple glosses (two, three, or more glosses on the same word) would have encouraged semantic broad-mindedness for any users of glossarial sources; the animal-noise catalogues, including the important one by Aldhelm discussed later, also provide frequent double and triple noises for the same animal.

The second and most important list is contained in *De pedum regulis* ("On the Rules of Feet"), a treatise on varieties of metrical feet, dated 685–695 CE and written by the prodigious and influential scholar Aldhelm of Sherborne. As this text has been little studied, it is worth quoting at length (M represents *magister*, "master"):

> **M** Ionico minori huiuscemodi pauxillula sufficiant exempla ut sapientes, populares, seniores, furibundi, rubicundi, verecundi, moribundi, rudibundi id est rudentes et boantes; nam ruditus proprie asellorum est, ut poeta:
>
> linguaque rudenti
> Edidit humanas animal pecuale loquelas.
>
> Et quia apta se vocis occasio praebuit, non modo propter structuram pedum et rationem metrorum,verum etiam ob differentiam vocum et discretionem sonorum non absurdum arbitror quadripedum et volucrum et reptilium voces cum generalitate pluralitatis et specialitate singularitatis subtiliter dirimere, siquidem vocis qualitatem quadripertitam, tam philosophorum quam grammaticorum auctoritas propalavit: articulatam, inarticulatam, litteratam, illitteratam, quamvis alii duas esse vocis species attestentur, hoc est articulatam et confusam; nam articulata hominum tantummodo dicta est, quod articulo scribenti comprehendi possit, confusa est, quae scribi non potest.[10]

> **Master:** For the ionic minor, let a very small number of examples of this sort suffice, such as: wise ones, popular, furious, rosy, modest, mortal, braying, that is braying and bellowing; for braying is properly of asses, as the poet says:
>
> And with braying tongue,
> the brutish animal uttered human speech.
>
> And since a fitting opportunity for voice presents itself, not only because of the structure of feet and the explanation of meters, but also because of the

> differentiation of voices and the distinction of sounds, I judge it not absurd to distinguish minutely the voices of quadrupeds and birds and reptiles with the generality of multiplicity and the particularity of individuality; indeed, the authority of both philosophers and grammarians has described the fourfold quality of voice: articulate, inarticulate, writeable, not writeable, although others attest that there are two types of voice, namely articulate and confused; for an articulate voice is said to be proper only to people, because it can be understood as a writing joint, and a confused voice is one that cannot be written.

The animal-noise catalogue in this text pops up abruptly and unexpectedly, and unfolds in a series of fascinating associations between words and sources. Aldhelm is in the midst of discussing the ionic minor foot (two short, two long syllables) and giving example words. When he gets to *rudibundi* ("braying"), he lingers on the word, first giving the plural present participial form of its root verb *rudere,* then the same form of a much less common verb *boare,* "to boom, bellow."[11] He immediately follows this up with a transitional comment, "nam ruditus proprie asellorum est" ("for braying is properly of asses"), a formulation that may reveal his indebtedness to earlier animal-noise material: all of the extant Latin lists prior to Aldhelm, beginning with the early list of Suetonius, list the animals in the genitive plural, and the twelfth-century compiler of Suetonius introduces his list by saying "latrare … est proprie canum" ("barking is properly of dogs"), using similar words to Aldhelm's.[12]

Following up with a quotation from Caelius Sedulius's *Carmen Paschale* concerning Balaam's Ass, "and with braying tongue, the brutish animal uttered human speech,"[13] Aldhelm effects a fascinating transition from the specific noise of braying to the broader question of voice and its composition. By focusing on the biblical miracle of the ass who speaks with a human voice, he implicitly opens up the complex question of what differentiates human from nonhuman animal speech, a contentious question that featured prominently in the ancient debate about the relative standing of humans and other animals with respect to the possession of language and reason.[14] In another smooth but not necessarily obvious segue, having quietly posed the twin questions of what makes braying specific to the ass and what makes all such noises specific to nonhuman animals, Aldhelm says that a "fitting opportunity" to discuss voice presents itself. Leaving aside for the moment the distinguishing characteristics of poetic feet, he feels prompted to pursue the question through the "differentiation of voices and the distinctions of

sounds"; slightly defensively, he says he judges it "not absurd" to "distinguish minutely the voices of quadrupeds and birds and reptiles with the generality of multiplicity and the particularity of individuality."

Such taxonomic language seems to promise an investigation of a language problem as philosophers and grammarians might have approached it, and indeed Aldhelm follows up his proposal by citing two basic and well-known classification systems for distinguishing different kinds of voice. The first scheme is fourfold and comes from the sixth-century grammarian Priscian, who distinguishes four combinations of two binaries: articulate and inarticulate, writeable and not writeable.[15] According to Priscian, voices could be articulate and writeable (*arma virumque cano*), articulate and not writeable (whistles and moans intended to convey a meaning), inarticulate and writeable (the noises of frogs croaking or crows chattering), or inarticulate and not writeable (crackling fire, blustering wind). The second scheme is twofold and older than Priscian's, and can be found, among other places, in the influential fourth-century grammarian Donatus, who distinguished articulate and inarticulate (or confused) voice. Donatus and many of his followers applied this binary rigidly to the human–animal boundary: human voices were by definition articulate, and animal voices were confused.[16] Aldhelm ingeniously joins these two systems by saying that an articulate voice is understood by a writing joint; he thus takes the traditional idea of articulation as a series of changeable parts that fit together in a signifying way, and maps it onto the human technology of writing, performed by specific joints within the hand and, implicitly, between the hand and the stylus it grasps.[17]

Unlike the grammarians, however, Aldhelm does not provide example words and phrases in the service of a sustained argument about voice. Instead, he presents a long list of animals that he draws partially from the Greek and Roman encyclopedic traditions of late antiquity and supplements with many others.[18] In effect, Aldhelm has baited and switched on his readers twice: first, by shifting from a discussion of poetic feet to a broader consideration of the nature of voice; and second, by quickly moving from an analysis of this question to an encyclopedic list that is all example and no argument. This abrupt but deft leap into the glossarial and encyclopedic tradition somewhat clarifies what Aldhelm means by "the generality of multiplicity and the particularity of individuality": in the fashion of the encyclopedists, he will present a huge range of voices that function in very different ways with respect to the various producing animals, the hearers and readers of those voices, their mode of signifying, and their relationship to human cultural categories.

The list of animal voices is preceded by a request from a student (D = *discipulus*) for examples of confused voice, which the master introduces by reiterating that they are indeed confused voices. But by tapping into the glossarial and encyclopedic traditions, which aimed for completeness and fine distinctions, rather than selecting examples to prove points about articulate and inarticulate voices, Aldhelm dissects the dismissively general category of "confused voices" by locating and onomatopoeically illustrating the highly specific qualities, and hence the signifying force, of each animal voice; he thus, in effect, reopens the questions of how articulation and semantic variation produce signifying voices, and how articulation and signification are distributed along and across species boundaries and human cultural categories.

D: Pande exempla vocis confusae de diversis rerum naturis congesta!

M: Haec sunt species vocis confusae, ut maiorum auctoritas tradidit. Nam apes ambizant vel bombizant, aquilae clangunt, anseres crinciunt vel trinsiunt, aves minuriunt vel vernant vel vernicant, accipitres pipant vel plipiant, anates teritisant, arietes crissitant vel blaterant, asini oncant vel rudunt, apri frendunt, arma crepant, aes tinnit, amfora profusa bilibit, boves mugiunt vel reboant, cornices butant, cicni desistant, cicadae fretinniunt, ciconiae gratulant vel glottorant vel critalant, corvi crociunt vel crocant, caprae micciunt, canes baubantur vel latrant vel ganniunt, catuli glattilant, cervi rugiunt, citharae sonant, canis venatica nictit, elefanti barriunt vel stridunt, equi hinniunt, ferae mussitant, grues gruddant vel gruunt vel grugulant, gallinae cacillant, galli cantant vel cucurriunt, galuae fringilliunt, graculi grinciunt; hirundines trutissant vel trissant, hienae hirriunt, haedi balant vel bebant, Iuppiter tonat, ut fabulae fingunt, infantes vagiunt, leones fremunt, linces hircant, lepores vagitant, lupi ululant, litora murmurant, milvi iugiunt vel iugilant vel luriunt, meruli zinzitant, mustelae dindrant, mures mintriunt vel muniunt, noctuae cucubiunt, olores drensitant, oves balant, onagri vagillant, palumbes raucitant, passeres titiant, parri tinnipant, pavi paululant, perdices cacabant, pulli et pueri pipant, pantherae cauriunt, pardi feliunt, porcelli grunniunt, porci grundiunt, ranae coaxant, sturni parsitant, sorices denticant, serpentes sibilant, silvae strepunt, turdi soccitant vel faccilant, tigrides raccant, tubae clangiunt, tauri mugiunt, vultures pionpant, venti flant vel tremunt vel sibilant, ursi urgant vel saeviunt, vulpes eiulant, verres quiritant; item homines loquuntur, rustici iubilant et reliqua similia. Haec genera vocum non ad ionicum pertinebunt, sed discretionis gratia prolata sunt.

Student: Reveal examples of confused voice assembled from the diverse natures of things!

Master: These are the types of confused voice, as the authority of the elders has passed down. For bees buzz or buzz, eagles sound, geese hiss or honk, birds chirp or make noise or twitter, hawks screech or cry, ducks quack, rams bleat or squeak, asses bray or bray, boars roar, arms rattle, bronze clangs, a pouring flask gurgles, cattle low or bellow back, crows caw, swans cry, crickets chirp, storks cry or rattle or make a stork noise, ravens croak or crow, goats bleat, dogs bay or bark or yelp, puppies howl, stags roar, harps resound, a hunting dog whines, elephants trumpet or scream, horses whinny, wild beasts growl, cranes grue or crunkle,[19] hens cackle, cocks sing or crow, orioles twitter, jays caw, swallows twitter or twitter, hyenas snarl, young goats bleat or bleat, Jupiter thunders, as tales pretend, infants wail, lions roar, lynxes screech, hares wail, wolves howl, shores murmur, kites make kite noises or make kite noises or cry like a kite, blackbirds make blackbird noises, weasels cry, mice squeak or squeak, night-owls hoot, swans cry, sheep bleat, wild asses bray, doves make a hoarse sound, sparrows chirp, ill-omened birds chirp, peacocks screech, partridges cackle, chicks and children peep, panthers cry, leopards snarl, piglets squeal, pigs grunt, frogs croak, starlings make starling noises, mice squeak, snakes hiss, woods resound, thrushes make thrush noises or coo, tigers roar, trumpets sound, bulls low, vultures cry, winds blow or tremble or hiss, bears growl or rage, foxes howl, boars grunt; also people speak, rustics exult, and the rest are similar. These types of voices will not pertain to the ionic, but for the sake of classification they have been mentioned.

The list contains seventy-seven items, followed by the coda "and the rest are similar." Those seventy-seven include thirty-two quadrupeds, twenty-eight birds, two reptiles or amphibians (frogs and snakes), and two insects (bees and crickets). Numerous entries use more than one verb: sixteen items use two verbs and five use three verbs (this is also a common feature of glosses, glossaries, and encyclopedic lists). Anyone who translates this list quickly becomes aware that Aldhelm's Latin animal-sound lexicon contains many more words than modern English. Whereas only three

Latin verbs repeat, both dictionaries (in this case, *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*) and translators (in this case, I) are forced to reuse a number of English verbs for different animals: in my own translation, I count eight occurrences of *cry*; four each of *twitter, roar, squeak,* and *chirp*; three each of *sound, bleat,* and *howl*; two each of *resound, low, caw, croak, growl,* and *grunt*; and several very vague and unsatisfying formulations such as "make a noise" or "make a hoarse sound." In some instances, I have had to use the same word more than once to translate multiple Latin verbs, as in "mice squeak or squeak" and "bees buzz or buzz." In a few cases, the noise that a particular animal makes has no English word close enough to be used sensibly, so I have been reduced to saying things like "storks make stork noises." A large number of verbs occur either uniquely here or only here and in similar catalogues, often themselves drawn from Aldhelm's.

A closer examination of the different modes of signification of these verbs will reveal the complex, multi-layered processes of meaning and effect intervening between real-world animal noises and their appearance and interpretation in an encyclopedic list. Onomatopoeia is a fundamental principle in a large number of verbs: excellent examples of deeply onomatopoeic words are "apes bombizant" ("bees buzz"), "asini oncant" ("asses bray"), "equi hinniunt" ("horses whinny"), "oves balant" ("sheep bleat"), "passeres titiant" ("sparrows chirp"), and "porci grundiunt" ("pigs grunt"). Of all the modes of signifying voice, onomatopoeic imitation has the best claim, if not to universality then at least to a generality across languages and centuries: bee sounds usually contain a voiced sibilant */z/*, wolf sounds a rounded high back vowel */u/*, pigs a liquid */n/* and frequently a voiced velar consonant */g/*, and bird sounds contain a preponderance of high front vowels such as */i/*. As Maurizio Bettini has pointed out, however, in inflected languages, even onomatopoeic verbs are a curious mix of the imitated sound (the base, e.g., *onc-*) and a suffix (here, a plural ending, such as *-ant*) that grounds the word firmly in the human world of inflected grammar.[20]

Other verbs are relatively common or generalized, representing noises that can be made by a number of things, but usually with specific sonic qualities. A prime example is *clangere,* used of eagles, which can mean "sound, make a noise," but is often used of brass instruments, especially the trumpet[21]; it is possible that the royal and imperial associations of the eagle are metonymically associated with a trumpet blast. *Fremere* represents a rumbling, roaring, or growling sound, and Aldhelm uses it here of

lions and elsewhere of waves. *Sibilare* ("hiss"), the expected verb for snakes, has only a single onomatopoeic */s/*, which had long been assimilated into the word's meaning without registering as an obtrusively imitative element. The *galli* ("roosters") receive two verbs: one very onomatopoeic (*cucurriunt*, "crow") and the other conforming to a cultural metaphor (*cantant*, "sing"), which gestures to the traditional morning singing of the rooster and associates it with human singers. This could be viewed as a metaphor that works in the opposite direction to the application of an animal sound to a human: if an angry person howls "like a wolf," for example, the word, on the literal level, remains proper to the beast.

A number of verbs, although their sonic quality may summon up a range of culturally determined emotional responses, have shifted their semantic center from naturalized imitation to the representation of actions, aspects, or general characteristics. The best example is "ursi urgant vel saeviunt" ("bears growl or rage"); while *urgare* is proper to bears alone, *saevire* is a much more common and evocative verb that since the classical period has been applied to both humans and nonhuman animals[22]; the specific quality of the animal's voice has given way to an emotionally laden word that constructs wild animals, especially bears, boars, and large felines, as capable of rage and, by implication, danger to humans.[23] The same is true of *apri* (boars) *frendunt*. *Frendere*, in classical Latin, meant "to gnash the teeth; crush, bruise, grind," but from at least the time of Suetonius, it was used of boars in the animal lists; it later came to mean "rage, roar, growl," but Aldhelm was apparently the first British writer to nudge it in this direction. Even after it achieved an acoustical meaning, *frendere* retained its association with a particular behavior—gnashing the teeth—that was marked as dangerous and threatening.

In other instances, the sharing of characteristics between humans and animals is seamless and thoroughgoing, as in Aldhelm's only use of two nouns for one verb: "pulli et pueri pipant" ("chicks and children peep"). One should of course account for the temptation the notoriously alliterative Aldhelm must have felt to pull out such a thoroughly Aldhelmian line; but the double subject with a single verb indicates that the sound made by chicks and children is alike enough to inhabit the semantic field of a single word. The word *pueri* is notably distinct from *infans* ("infant"), which etymologically means a "nonspeaker," and for which Aldhelm has a separate entry, "infantes vagiunt" ("infants wail"). In early-medieval English usage, *puer* means a child below the age of puberty, and I suspect that

Aldhelm's *pipant* may refer to the higher voices of girls and prepubescent boys; in either case, it still applies to articulate, rational speech.[24]

The verb *fremere*, used here of lions, also appears in a number of human contexts, still clearly within the realm of articulate human speech. An excellent example is in Aldhelm's own poem *De Virginitate*, which retells the biblical story of the prophet Elijah setting two she-bears on a group of forty-two children who had mocked him: "bombosa voce frementes" ("raging with a booming voice"); the unfortunate children had not just been roaring or shrieking, but had abused him in rational human speech: in the Vulgate, "ascende calve"; in the King James Version, "go up, thou bald head"; and in the always colloquial New International Version, "get out of here, baldy!"[25]

Aldhelm's catalogue also includes eight inanimate subjects that make noise—namely, "arms rattle," "bronze clangs," "a pouring flask gurgles," "harps resound," "shores murmur," "woods resound," "trumpets sound," and "winds blow." At the other end of the animacy scale, the list even includes a god—namely Jupiter, who thunders (*tonnat),* "as stories pretend." Pondering the inclusion of inanimate objects and a noisy god might encourage us to think differently about the relationship of the medieval soundscape to notions of subjectivity and agency; as Jonathan Hsy has noted, the inclusion of such items in animal-sound lists "often trouble[s] our (modern, Western) ideas of what exactly constitutes an 'animate' nonhuman agent."[26] The inclusion of Jupiter's traditional thundering implicitly links the divine world with the sonic landscape not only of natural phenomena such as winds and water but also of human-made articles, from the epic clashing of arms, to the musically articulated harp, to the homely gurgling of a flask pouring liquid. Arms are said to *crepare*, which can mean "to make a loud noise" in general, but is often used more specifically to mean a harsh cracking or grating sound, as shown by the Old English glosses *cracian* ("to make a harsh noise"), *brastlian* ("to crackle, roar"), and *cearcian* ("to make a harsh or grating sound," often used of gnashing teeth).[27]

Although Aldhelm introduced his catalogue under the rubric of "confused voices," he ends it with two items that continue to illustrate the complexity of articulation and rationality within the concept of voice. The penultimate entry in this seventy-seven-item list will take any reader aback: "homines loquuntur" ("people speak"). This could be viewed as an expectable statement in terms of the decorum of a taxonomic list: *loquuntur,* as an implicitly articulate and rational action is proper to human beings

and only human beings, just as *critalant*, the noise that storks make, is proper only to storks. But its inclusion can mean only one of two things: either Aldhelm has violated his own promise to list only confused voices, which seems extremely unlikely for such a meticulous scholar, or his list has demonstrated that the question of articulation is not as simple as his grammatical sources have made it out to be. *Loquuntur* comprehends a world of utterances conveying different meaning, force, and intention, and even the most anthropocentric of grammarians and natural historians acknowledged that animals inflect their voices for different purposes, moods, and situations.

The final entry, "rustici iubilant" ("rustics exult"), draws on a tradition reaching back at least to Varro (116–26 BCE), which associated the verb *iubilare* with country dwellers. Varro noted that just as the verb *quiritare* (made by people in Varro's example, but by boars in Aldhelm's list) seems to have had a decidedly urban cast, so *iubilare* characterized rural utterances in general, and the inciting of animals in particular: the first-century CE poet Calpurnius Siculus says that a noise called *iubila* was used to control wild bulls, and the second-century CE prose writer Apuleius says that the guardians of a rural district used a *iubila* to set a pack of ferocious dogs on unfortunate travelers. At least in the eyes of the urban writers who characterized *iubilare*, the word was highly characteristic of rustics, and its festive, unarticulated nature made it easy to repeat as a stereotypical sound emanating from rural districts.[28] Aldhelm seems to have been the first to insert it into an animal-voice list, although several others followed him.[29] The proximity of this sonic set piece to the more general *homines loquuntur* indicates that the articulation and inflection that Aldhelm is most concerned with, the fine distinguishing he promised us at the beginning of this long digression, concerns above all the adaptation of sound to situation. In this respect, the communicative potential of nonhuman animals and inanimate objects is both highly complex and, crucially, prior to the distinction between articulate and confused.

Aldhelm's influence in Anglo-Saxon England was pervasive, and it is not unlikely that the author(s) of the Old English riddles in the Exeter Book, of uncertain date but possibly from the eighth century, knew of the tradition of animal-noise cataloguing. One riddle in the collection contains a brief but performative version of such a list; it takes the form "say what I am called," and its narrator/solution is something that imitates animals. This impressive creature deploys some common verbs in a bravura repertoire of show-stopping impressions:

Ic eom wunderlicu wiht - wræsne mine stefne:
hwilum beorce swa hund, hwilum blæte swa gat,
hwilum græde swa gos, hwilum gielle swa hafoc.
Hwilum ic onhyrge þone haswan earn,
guðfugles hleoþor; hwilum glidan reorde
muþe gemæne, hwilum mæwes song,
þær ic glado sitte. ᚷ. (giefu) mec nemnað,
swylce ᚫ. (æsc) ond ᚱ. (rad) ᛟ. (os) fullesteð,
ᚾ. (hægl) ond ᛁ. (is) Nu ic haten eom
swa þa siex stafas sweotule becnaþ.[30]

I am a wondrous creature—I vary my voice;
sometimes I bark like a dog, sometimes I bleat like a goat,
sometimes I cry like a goose, sometimes I shriek like a hawk.
Sometimes I imitate the grey eagle,
the sound of the war-bird; sometimes the kite's voice
I speak with my mouth, sometimes the seagull's song,
where I sit cheerful. *G* name me,
also *Æ* and *R*. *O* helps,
H and *I*. Now I am named
as the six letters clearly signify.[30]

This riddle is unusual in providing two sets of clues, one auditory and one visual (the runes, when rearranged, spell out *higoræ*, the female form of a jay or magpie). The bird's mimicry is vividly reenacted in the aural effects of the poem, especially lines 2 and 3: in addition to the anaphora of *hwilum*, *beorce* and *blæte* alliterate, *blæde* and *græde* assonate, and all four verbs are heavily onomatopoeic. The poem's sound verbs quickly complicate their seemingly straightforward onomatopoeic force: the highly conventionalized sound patterns of Old English verse, especially alliteration, assonance, and stress, gesture toward natural systems, not only of human speech but also of animal noises and the rhythms of the natural world, but do so in highly structured human poetic language. Thus, the avian narrator of the jay riddle performs on two related levels. First, her behavior is based on animal ethology: being a jay, she instinctively imitates other animals through habit and inclination. Second, being a narrator, she presents her mimicry in and through a virtuoso poetic number performed for a dutifully marveling audience, and the lines swell with nouns and verbs for sounds, voices, and performances. Thus the observable sounds of

the bird, in themselves and as imitations of other animals, become one with their representation in an institutionalized, fully human system of signification.[31]

The riddle's onomatopoeia is further complicated by the semantic and semiotic complexity of each of the four Old English verbs describing the jay's mimicry. *Beorcan* can refer straightforwardly to the barking of dogs and foxes, but can also designate imitative or figurative barking: in the *Old English Martyrology*, devils appear "swa beorcende fox" ("like a barking fox"); pagans or infidels are often said to bark like dogs; and the tenth-century homilist Ælfric, in an exegesis of Isaiah 56:10, "canes muti non possunt latrare" ("mute dogs cannot bark") and enjoins the clergy to "beorcan and bodigan þam læwedum" ("bark and preach to the unlearned").[32] *Blætan* is usually just the sheep noise, but it is transferred to swine in another Aldhelm gloss when it translates *grunnire* "to grunt," emphasizing the stereotypically porcine grunting of pagans.[33]

Like *beorcan*, *grædan* crosses species boundaries by means of metaphor: in the translation of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, a teacher must *grædan* ("cry" or "crow") like a rooster in the night to awaken his hearers from spiritual sleep.[34] The metaphorical usages of *beorcan* and *grædan* situates them in the realm of articulate, salvific speech, even though they can at other times remain inarticulate and cursed: in a saint's life, a man possessed by an evil spirit cries out (*grædan*) a senseless noise ("heu! heu!" in Latin and "walawa! walawa!" in Old English).[35] *Giellan* (in this poem, the shrieking of a hawk) covers an even broader semantic range, straddling not only human and nonhuman animals but also animate and inanimate noisemakers: it is used of birds, wolves, dogs, a ship scraping against gravel, a flying spear, and a resounding harp string.[36] Whereas the modern etymon "yell" usually refers to humans, and very often to verbal speech (yelling intelligible words), Old English *giellan* is used only once of humans: in the poem *Exodus*, Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea scream "gyllende gryre" ("with shrieking terror"); their unrighteousness and the depth of their terror produce an inarticulate, perhaps animalistic noise. The question of articulation is central in the work of most writers discussing or listing animal voices; they were preoccupied by constituted articulation, its semiotic status, the crucial dichotomy of inarticulate animal sounds versus articulate human sounds, and the dangers of straddling that distinction. All these issues found expressive urgency in the homiletic, exegetical, and poetic settings in which the sounds were deployed.

The final, much shorter, surviving Anglo-Saxon animal voice list occurs in the popular *Grammar* by the tenth-century abbot and homilist Ælfric, in the context of a discussion of the three persons of verbs:

> manega word synd, þe ne magon habban þa twegen forman hadas, ac habbað þone þriddan: *tinnit* swegð, *pluit* hit rinþ, *tonat* hit *ðunraþ*, *fulminat* hit liht, *ningit* hit sniwð, *grandinat* hit hagelað, *gelat* hit fryst. ealswa be nytenum: *canis latrat* hund byrcð, *lupus ululat* wulf ðytt, *equus hinnit* hors hnægð, *bos mugit* oxa hlewð, *ouis balat* scep blæt, *sus grunnit* swin grunað ET SIMILIA. þas word and ðyllice man mæg cweðan, gif man wyle, ongean gecynde on eallum þrim hadum, ac hit byð swiðe dyslic, þæt se man beorce oððe blæte.[37]
>
> There are many words that cannot have the first two persons, but have the third: it makes a sound, it is raining, it is thundering, there is lightning, it is snowing, it is hailing, it is freezing. Likewise for animals: the dog barks, the wolf howls, the horse neighs, the ox lows, the sheep bleats, the swine grunts, and the like. A man can say these words and ones like them, if a man wants to, in all three persons against nature, but it is very foolish that a man should bark or bleat.

Ælfric's first group contains impersonal verbs—that is, verbs with no grammatical subject; the second group is a six-item list of animal noises in Latin and Old English. Ælfric's equation of the third-person animal-voice verbs with impersonal verbs such as "it is raining" and "it is thundering" effectively makes the animal subjects implicit within the sonic verbs themselves, thus assigning them a semantic status approaching the nonexistent subject of impersonal verbs. On the one hand, Ælfric's grammatical sorting here is continuous with Aldhelm's careful matching of each animal to its sound. On the other hand, as I have shown, Aldhelm illustrated the highly articulated nature of animal sound by using arcane onomatopoeic verbs; doubling and tripling verbs for a single animal; using verbs that are also used of people and inanimate objects; sharing a verb between chicks and children; adding human, divine, and inanimate subjects; and ultimately emphasizing the primacy of the specific setting, the "particularity of individuality" as he puts it, which includes both the uniqueness of individual species and shared characteristics within and between species.

Aldhelm's use of sound verbs that figuratively posit shared qualities between humans and animals might remind us of Ælfric's exhortation to the clergy to "bark and preach to the unlearned. His insistence in the *Grammar* that it is very foolish for a man to bark makes clear his exegetical

precision, which is faithful to the figure of the biblical text ("mute dogs cannot bark"), but Ælfric must also mean either that it would be very silly for a man to actually bark or that it would be foolish to think that he can: a man can say "woof-woof," but barking, properly defined, is characteristic only of dogs.

What accounts for the difference between the playful treatment of grammatical theory in Aldhelm and the reactionary conservatism of Ælfric three hundred years later? The answer lies in the nature of Ælfric's grammatical project and its relationship to vernacular writing. After the *Grammar*'s two prefaces (one in Latin, one in English), Ælfric mingles two descriptions of sound found in his two principal source writers, Priscian and Donatus:

> SECVNDVM DONATVM OMNIS VOX AVT ARTICVLATA EST AVT CONFVSA. ARTICVLATA EST, QVAE LITTERIS CONPREHENDI POTEST; CONFVSA, QVAE SCRIBI NON POTEST. … ælc stemn is oððe andgytfullic oððe gemenged. andgytfullic stemn is, þe mid andgyte bið geclypod, swaswa ys *arma uirumque cano* ic herige þa wæpnu and ðone wer. gemenged stemn is, þe bið butan andgyte, swylc swa is hryðera gehlow and horsa hnægung, hunda gebeorc, treowa brastlung ET CETERA.[38]

> According to Donatus, every sound is either articulate or confused. An articulate sound is one that can be understood in letters; a confused sound is one which cannot be written. … Every sound is either intelligible or confused. An intelligible sound is one that is said with understanding, as *arma uirumque cano*, I praise the arms and the man. A confused sound is one that is without understanding, as the lowing of oxen and the neighing of horses, the barking of dogs, the rustling of trees, etc.

Ælfric is clearly aware of the more complex fourfold scheme of Priscian (articulate/inarticulate; writeable/not writeable), as shown by his example quote from Virgil, "arma virumque cano." But Ælfric, in his opening Latin quotation, settles on Donatus's binary of articulate (= writeable) versus inarticulate (= not writeable) sound. When he translates Donatus into English, though, Ælfric makes a major change: the dichotomy becomes not *articulate/confusa* but *andgytfullic/gemenged*, "intelligible/confused (or mixed)." As Melinda Menzer has pointed out, Ælfric's redefinition valorizes not only written English (by putting it into a category with a prestige Latin quotation) but also spoken English (by eliminating the category of writeability altogether), with the sound of English clearly on the articulate side of the line.[39]

Significantly, the categories of Priscian avoided by Ælfric blur the status of animal noises: his examples of inarticulate, unwriteable sounds include *crepitus*, which has a wide semantic range, including rattling, creaking, clattering, clashing, and rustling; and *mugitus*, the mooing or lowing of bovines. On the one hand, there is a problem of internal coherence in this scheme: Why are the sounds of frogs and crows transcribable in alphabetic letters, but the bellowing of oxen is not? Donatus's binary scheme, on the other hand, tracked with a fairly rigid enforcement of the human/animal boundary in terms of rationality and articulation. Ælfric here provides exactly 50 percent of the animal-voice catalogue he will later cite in his discussion of impersonal verbs: lowing of oxen (also given by Priscian as *mugitus*), neighing of horses, and barking of dogs.

Ælfric's taxonomy of human, animal, and inanimate sounds, recast in the context of authorizing the study and writing of English, perfectly reveals his trademark combination of nagging fear and hopeful ambition with regard to the interpretive possibilities of English.[40] But the stakes of his vernacular projects made him very cautious in his handling of grammatic and semantic categories, and especially vigilant about choosing taxonomies and definitions that dealt cautiously with articulate and inarticulate voices across the human/nonhuman boundary. In a literary landscape in which a female English jay could bark in verse, Ælfric's fears about the rhetorical and hermeneutic potential of English take the form of anxiety about disrupting semantic and semiotic categories that long proved inadequate to policing strict human/animal boundaries. A barking man may, in the end, be even more dangerous than a mute dog.

Notes

1. See Derek Abbot's "Animal Sounds," which is one of the largest available online lists of animal sounds in different linguistic traditions. I am indebted for this reference to Jonathan Hsy, "Between Species: Animal-Human Bilingualism and Medieval Texts," in "*Booldly bot meekly*": *Essays on the Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages in Honour of Roger Ellis*,The Medieval Translator 14, ed. Catherine Batt and René Tixier (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).
2. For the fullest treatments of the *voces animantium*, see Wilhelm Wackernagel, *Voces variae animantium: Ein Beitrag zur Naturkunde und zur Geschichte der Sprache*, 2nd ed. (Basel: Bahnmaier, 1869); Karl-Ernst Klenner, "Der Tierstimmen-Katalog als literarisches Phänomen" (PhD diss., Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität zu Münster, 1958); Maurizio

Bettini, *Voci: Antropologia sonora del mondo antico* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 2008); Hsy, "Between Species."

3. Klenner, "Der Tierstimmen-Katalog," 6.
4. Suetonius, *C. Svetoni Tranqvilli Praeter Caesarvm Libros Reliqviae,* ed. August Reifferscheid (Leipzig: Teubner, 1860), 247–54, 436–40, 448–50; Klenner, "Der Tierstimmen-Katalog," 21–22. Suetonius's list survives only in the later catalogues that depend upon it, foremost among them that of Huguccio of Pisa, who claims to quote it from a lost work of "Sydonius" (presumed to be an error for Suetonius) entitled *Liber de naturis rerum*; for a detailed explanation of the complex textual tradition of the animal catalogues, see M. Marcovich, "Voces Animantium and Suetonius," *Živa Antika/Antiquité Vivante* 21 (1971): 399–416, and Bettini, *Voci*, 265–66.
5. Bettini, *Voci*, 12.
6. Patrizia Lendinara, "Contextualized Lexicography," in *Latin Learning and English Lore*, Vol. 2, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 108–31.
7. George N. Garmonsway, *Ælfric's Colloquy*, rev. ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1978), 27–28. Quoted by Lendinara, "Contextualized Lexicography," 110.
8. It is clear, in fact, that Ælfric took a relatively sophisticated attitude towards animals, handling their symbolic qualities with some care, and taking pains not to equate non-English animals with magic or superstition. See Emily Thornbury, "Ælfric's Zoology," *Neophilologus* 92 (2008): 141–53.
9. Robert T. Oliphant, *The Harley Latin-Old English Glossary Edited from British Museum,* MS Harley 3376, Janua linguarum, Series practica 20 (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), C1385. Lendinara, "Contextualized Lexicography," 118, notes also the following: "In Cambridge, Trinity College O.1.18, 1v, there is a list of terms for the sounds made by various kinds of animals and birds 'Ovis balat …' Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 730, has an interesting group of animals' sounds on 144v. One late example of *uoces animantium,* 'Accipter pipat,' occurs in a pair of manuscripts dating from the early thirteenth century: Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College 75 (45ra–45rb), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 186 (S.C. 2088), at 96ra–96va. Another late example of such compositions is CUL, Ll.1.14, 46r–46v, which has 'Aquila clangit, accipiter pipilat.'"
10. Aldhelm, *De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Auctores Antiquissimi 15, ed. Rudolf Ehwald (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919), 179. For a brief introduction to this work, see Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, trans., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Ipswich: D.S. Brewer, 1979), 31–33. Lapidge and Herren do not translate *De pedum regulis*; unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

11. R. E. Latham, D. R. Howlett, and R. K. Ashdowne, eds., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford: British Academy, 1975–2013), s.v., "rudibundus, boare." [Subsequent definitions, unless otherwise noted, are drawn from this dictionary.] *Boare* in its present participial form (*boans/boantis*) was occasionally used as a divine epithet, "the Booming One", for the Christian God. (Aldhelm and others frequently used *Tonans*, "the Thunderer," in the same way.) In fact, *Boantis* is used in a charter from 680 CE in which the Mercian nobleman Cenfrith grants land to Aldhelm himself, in very Aldhelmian prose that is "a confection of phrases from Aldhelm's other works carefully stitched together" (Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm's Prose Works*, 173). For the charter and four others from the tenth century using the same epithet, see "The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters," http://www.esawyer.org.uk/search-files/do_charter_search.html?q=text:boantis%20AND%20NOT%20id:MS*&start=0&rows=20&hl=on&hl.requireFieldMatch=true&hl.fl=text&hl.snippets=10&sort=sawyer_num%20asc.
12. Huguccio of Pisa (Reifferscheid 247n), Klenner, "Der Tierstimmen-Katalog," 22–26. It may be that the infinitive plus genitive plural form favored by the early Latin listmakers occurred because of an assumed "proprie est" picked up by Aldhelm; alternatively, Aldhelm's formulation may have influenced Huguccio of Pisa and other later listmakers. It may also be that the infinitive plus genitive plural form reflects an assumed phrase such as "[the voice] of lions is to roar," etc.
13. Caelius Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, I.161–62; Johann Huemer, ed., *Sedvlii opera Omnia*, Corpvs Scriptorvm Ecclesiastocorvm Latinorvm 10 (Vienna: Gerold, 1885), 27.
14. See Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
15. Priscian, *Prisciani grammatici Caesariensis institutionum grammaticarum libri XVIII*, Grammatici Latini 2, ed. Martin Hertz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1855; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1961), I.1; 5.9–6.2, https://archive.org/details/priscianigramma00hertgoog.
16. *Omnis vox aut articulata est aut confusa. Articulata est quae litteris conprehendi potest; confusa quae scribi non potest* ("Every voice is either articulated or confused. Articulated is what can be comprehended in letters; confused is what cannot be written"). Donatus, *Probati Donati Servii Qui Feruntur De Arte Grammatica Libri*, Grammatici Latini 4, ed. Heinrich Keil (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864), 367, https://archive.org/details/grammaticilatini04keil.
17. Andrea Tabarroni, "On Articulation and Animal Language in Ancient Linguistic Theory," in *Signs of Antiquity/Antiquity of Signs,* ed. Giovanni Manetti, *Versus* 50/51 (1988): 103–21. Tabarroni explains the fourfold and twofold systems at 104–108. In mapping theoretical articulation onto

the physical articulation of hand and stylus, Aldhelm seems to align less with Priscian than with Ammonius, whose rival theory of voice understands articulation "not as a principle of intelligibility, but rather a principle of distinction" (Tabarroni, "On Articulation," 105).

18. On the sources of Aldhelm's animal catalogue, see Max Manitius, "Zu Aldhelm und Baeda," *Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien* 112 (1886): 535–634, at 606–10, https://archive.org/details/zualdhelmundbae00manigoog.
19. "† grue, v.2," "† crunkle, v.2," *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, March 2016). These obsolete words, which are exclusively used of cranes, are both contained in the *OED* on the strength of some seventeenth-century lists in a similar genre.
20. Bettini, *Voci*, 62.
21. Latham et al., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin,* s.v. "clangere."
22. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (New York: Harpers, 1879), s.v. *saevire*. Perseus Project, Tufts University, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.04.0059.
23. Bettini, *Voci*, 79, 82–84.
24. Latham et al., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin*, s.v. "puer."
25. Aldhelm, *De Virginitate (Carmen),* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Auctores Antiquissimi 15, ed. Rudolf Ehwald (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919), 365. For all Bible versions, see Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/.
26. Hsy, "Between Species."
27. *Cearcian* occurs in a gloss to Aldhelm's *De laude virginitatis*, *brastlian* in the Harley Glossary, and *cracian* in both places, all glossing *crepare*. Antonette diPaolo Healey et al., *Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1986–), s.v. *cracian, brastlian*.
28. Bettini, *Voci*, 94–100.
29. Monte Cassino MS 439.1 (11th century), f. 83v; Klenner, "Der Tierstimmen-Katalog," 32.
30. Craig Williamson, ed., *The Old English Riddles of the* Exeter Book (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), no. 23, 82 (Williamson numbers the riddles differently from the older edition of Krapp and Dobbie in the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, but the latter's numbering [here, Riddle 24] is the standard).
31. Robert Stanton, "Mimicry, Subjectivity, and the Embodied Voice in Anglo-Saxon Bird Riddles," in *Voice and Voicelessness in Medieval Europe, The New Middle Ages*, ed. Irit Ruth Kleiman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 31–33.
32. *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *beorcan*.
33. *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *blætan*.

34. *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *grædan*.
35. E. M. Treharne, ed., *The Old English Life of St. Nicholas with the Old English Life of St. Giles*, Leeds Texts and Monographs New Series 15 (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1997), 143, l. 419.
36. *Dictionary of Old English*, s.v. *giellan*.
37. Ælfric, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar,* ed. Julius Zupitza (Berlin: Weidmann, 1880), 128–29, https://archive.org/details/aelfricsgrammat00aelfgoog.
38. Ælfric, *Ælfrics Grammatik,* 4.
39. Melinda Menzer, "Ælfric's English *Grammar,*" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 103 (2004): 115–16.
40. See Robert Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), chap. 4 ("Ælfric and the Rhetoric of Translation"), 144–71.

CHAPTER 7

In Briddes Wise: Chaucer's Avian Poetics

Angela Jane Weisl

In the "Nun's Priest's Tale," Chaucer writes:

> For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
> Beestes and briddes koude speake and synge.[1]

Although Chaucer refers to the fictional past of the beast fable in these lines, his poetry is filled with beasts and birds that speak and sing in the present, narrating stories and singing tales. Chaucer's oeuvre is a virtual aviary. Birds, in particular, do not just "maken melodye" as they do at the beginning of the General Prologue (I.9). While some birds function primarily as symbols, many of Chaucer's birds engage in active discourse, speaking to humans or to each other. In addition to serving as the main actors in a story as they do in the *Parliament of Fowls* and the "Manciple's Tale," birds sing Mars's complaint, the swallow Procne and a nightingale sing lays to Pandarus and Criseyde in Book II of *Troilus and Criseyde*, the peregrine falcon sings her own complaint to Canacee in "The Squire's Tale," and notably (if briefly) the eagle in the *House of Fame* speaks to Chaucer. Birds are narrators of lyrics or lyric elements or parts of longer poems; they are commonly personified; and they stand frequently as

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symbols of poetry, poetics, and poets themselves. They do this, Chaucer reminds us repeatedly, "in briddes wise" (*TC*, II.922), a highly articulate and expressive speech. Chaucer's use of "briddes wise" is more than simply representational; it stands alongside human speech as a fully articulate language, albeit a language that humans can experience only through translation. Chaucer thus endows the avian world with a series of communicative strategies as diverse as—and profoundly linked to—his own poetic strategies; however, its meaning can be derived only through anthrosemiotic representation.

The recent animal turn in literary studies challenges notions of the animal/human boundary in a variety of ways, suggesting a much wider set of connections between species than defined conventional notions and ideologies, often focusing on the essential principle that animals have agency and that they are neither soulless nor driven solely by instinct—assumptions which seem nearly foreign in the contemporary world of environmental awareness and animal-rights concerns. Reading Chaucer's birds, however, it becomes apparent that this is nothing new. Although in recent decades "researchers have also challenged the supposedly unique ability of humans to use language" and "studies of non-human primates threaten to compromise the long-held assumption that only humans possess self-awareness,"[2] a primary distinction that informed traditional notions of the human/animal boundary was that of speech—in short, what Susan Crane calls, "the orthodox view that language, a deployment of signs that carry meaning by convention, is exclusive to humanity."[3] Medieval ideas of human/animal difference are articulated by philosophers and theologians, who insist that animals' lack of reason or intellect, as much as their physical differences, distinguish them from humans, a claim made by Ambrose in the fourth century and subsequently echoed by both Augustine and Aquinas.[4] Since language depends on intellect and reason, this distinction lies at the heart of the medieval understanding of human/animal difference, as does the biblical narrative of Adam giving names to the animals, which also provides a hierarchy echoed by the days of creation.

The most popular medieval sources of animal lore, the *Physiologus* and the bestiary tradition, build on biblical and classical traditions as well as more indigenous folklore and oral tradition, rather than on anything like scientific observation, thus shaping their material to conform to a variety of preconceived notions.[5] The bestiary, developed in the late twelfth century and persisting well into the fourteenth, is "a compilation of accumulated folklore, legend, pseudoscience, and rudimentary scientific observation of

an assortment of real and imaginary animals," at the heart of which lies "the *sensus moralis*, the interpretation of animals as symbols of moral and metaphysical truths."[6] This is not without nuance, as even the bestiaries offer an engagement with the natural world beyond simple religious or moral allegory; that said, animals are effectively used symbolically to illustrate ideas and concepts beyond their living existence. At the center of this tradition is the sense that animals and humans are distinguished by their access to language. Commenting on the bestiary's assertion that "every animal that lacks human speech therefore we call a beast,"[7] Crane adds that "'humana lingua,' the human tongue or language, expresses *ratio*; speaking is the tangible expression of Adam's fundamental difference from the animals he names."[8] Yet, while the medieval view of animals often seemed to deny them rational, articulate speech (that is, speech of the kind that humans access), it did not deny them representation, and that representation, particularly for birds, often plays out vocally because of their singing. As Nona Flores notes, "animals were used to convey meaning—whether religious or profane—in medieval culture."[9] As symbol, as allegory, animals forged connections to the human world. Salisbury comments that "animals of the imagination were more influential in breaking down the barriers between the species than animals of manors and villages of the medieval world."[10] The creative use of animals has a long poetic tradition, as Brigitte Resl notes in her *Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age,* in which animals, often domestic animals, perform in multiple ways, conveying moral messages, speaking, and reasoning while inhabiting an authentic animal form.[11] While Resl and Salisbury would seem on the surface to contradict each other, what unites their observations is the sense that animals often conveyed meanings that went beyond their simple, physical use. If a bird could mean and speak in literature, then perhaps birds were more than just potential meals (or hunters or sources of feathers), perhaps even fully embodied and articulating species whose similarities to humans were much greater than either the bestiaries or the practice of animal husbandry would suggest.

Resl's understanding of the complex use of animals anticipates Chaucer, for whom animals are not simply either "real" (and therefore completely different from humans) or "symbolic" (and therefore purely representational of humans or human ideas). As Crane notes, "Chaucer's interest in animals exceeds his interest in their capacity to figure the human."[12] While Chaucer will use animals in allegorical ways, more often the cited animals exist as animals but also engage with the human world in ways beyond the

functional—Chaunticleer and Pertelote, in the "Nun's Priest's Tale," for instance, are both allegorized humans engaging in a debate about the value of women's speech and real chickens. In creating them thus, Chaucer suggests an animal universe in which chickens themselves might engage in their own conversations, in their own discourse. By understanding both animals' symbolic value and their embodied animality, Chaucer moves toward (if never entirely) breaking the cycle by which animals exist entirely to symbolize something about humanity, and instead offer a potentially different kind of engagement.

For Chaucer, this understanding seems particularly rooted in language. While there are many animals in his works that function primarily as physical animals, and others that seem primarily allegorical, once they start speaking, the relationship between humans and animals fundamentally changes. Because he seems to be suggesting that this language can only be translated partially, however, and what of it is primarily available to humans is a kind of emotional understanding, Chaucer's particular fascination with bird speech does emerge especially strongly within love stories. This tradition would seem to offer a representational model to which Chaucer gives more complex life. Susan Crane notes that in romance, "birds were broadly conceived … as making up a society with metaphoric relation to human society, in which birdsong fills the function of human language."[13] While Crane suggests a kind of substitution—bird speech for human speech, which ultimately has birds speaking "human"—she suggests other examples of animal sound being understood more fully as language. In a discussion of Gaston Phébus's *Livre de la Chasse*, she observes that:

> Gaston has a contrary habit of asserting that animal natures are on a continuum with human natures—not identical to be sure, but somehow mutually illuminating. Of the belling of stags in rut, Gaston writes that stags "sing in their language, as does a man deep in love" ("chantant en leur langaige, einsi comme fet un homme bien amoureus").[14]

Like Gaston, Chaucer seems to connect animal articulation and love, suggesting that one linguistic similarity—and a similarity which can be understood between the species—is an ability to express emotion.

If these two discourses inform and parallel each other, Chaucer adds a third term—poetics—to his investigation of "briddes wise." When birds speak in Chaucer's work, they may speak of love fulfilled, unrequited, or tragic, but in the act of doing so, they are also articulating the act of poetic

creation itself. This zoopoetics, to borrow Aaron Moe's term, suggests Chaucer's rejection of the notion of language as that which separates the human from the animal, replacing it instead with a more potentially modern notion: that "poetry is not a monospecies event."[15] Moe quotes George A. Kennedy's 1992 essay "A Hoot in the Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric," in which "Kennedy argues that 'we'—that is, humans and animals—'share a deep universal rhetoric.'" Moe notes that Kennedy establishes an evolutionary and taxonomic framework to support this claim, adding that "the various species of speech emerged out of a common genus shared by many animals characterized by the energy of gestures, inflections, bodily movement, and gesticulations."[16] Chaucer is not particularly interested in the methodology of animal speech, but the "deep shared universal rhetoric" certainly informs Chaucer's sense of bird poetics. Moe notes,

> Zoopoetics names the process through which a poet creates a multispecies event by discovering innovative breakthroughs in form through an attentiveness toward animals. Such poems open up possibilities as they become rich borderlands of energy exchanges between poet and animal, animal and poem, poem and reader, animal and reader, and many more interactions.[17]

Whether Chaucer's birds produce innovative breakthroughs in form per se is a matter of debate, but his attentiveness to animals beyond the symbolic causes him to recognize the richness of their communicative strategies and provides an "innovative breakthrough" different from many of his contemporaries' more allegorical use of birds and animals; for Chaucer, even when he is using animals symbolically, reminds readers of their animalness, often calling attention to their particular behaviors, such as the swallow's "Cheterynge" (*TC*, II.68) or the quacking, clucking, and crowing of different birds in the *Parliament of Fowls*, "Manciple's Tale," and "Nun's Priests' Tale." The balance between animals as symbols and animals as animals who articulate creates the potential to understand their language as meaningful beyond simply being representations of the poet's voice. Conversations between birds and humans are articulate, but because there is always a sense of mediation—of a necessary translation taking place between "briddes wise" and human speech—they are different from exchanges between humans, suggesting two languages at work. The exchanges between bird poet and narrator, bird poet and character within the work are certainly "rich borderlands of energy exchanges"; Chaucer's avian speakers clearly

share something vital with their human listeners, even if that is not complete mutual intelligibility.

Moe's terminology and understanding help to untangle Chaucer's multivalent use of avian speech in order to explore his understanding of the animal/human boundary and how the interactions between animal and human speech serve to interrogate the meaning of language as a tool of making itself. Chaucer—the "grand translateur," as Machaut would have it—recognizes that "briddes wise" must be translated into human language to allow meaning to emerge, yet in the *Parliament* he represents bird speech directly: "The goos, the cokkow, and the doke also/So creyede, 'kek kek! Kokkow! quek quek!' hye" (*PF*, 498–99). Thus while Chaucer imposes human meaning on bird speech, he also suggests that it is, at its essence, language. Chaucer credits "briddes wise" with meaningful ability to articulate while suggesting that human access to this speech is always a translation, influenced by human concerns and human interpretations, which he shows in a variety of places, perhaps most pointedly in Canacee's interaction with the Falcon in the "Squire's Tale." Connecting affectively—bird poetics invoke significant emotional response in their human listeners—leads to Chaucer's translations of "briddes wise" into human language, often in courtly terms, perhaps because of the romance's potential to see animals less rigidly than other genres, as well as its own engagement with affectivity and emotion through love service, as Gaston does in the *Livre de la Chasse*. While no essay can encompass all of Chaucer's talking birds, a focus on three textual encounters shows the particular way he connects these articulate speakers to the act of poetic creation.

The association of birds and poetic speech is nothing new. In *The Change of Philomel*, Wendy Pfeffer notes that "in lyric poetry, medieval poets tend to identify with songbirds, notably the nightingale,"[18] and that the "troubadours used the nightingale to represent the poet or object of the poet's love, and/or as inspiration for the troubadour."[19] Indeed, birds sing *in lor lati* (in their own Latin)[20] in troubadour poetry as often as they sing in "briddes wise" in Chaucer's work, although Chaucer uses his catchphrase to a somewhat broader effect. Pfeffer, and indeed the troubadours, do not understand "lor lati" to be a distinct language but, rather, a symbolic version of their own poetic use of the vernacular. Yet this articulation, perhaps unwittingly, creates the potential for the singing of birds to be an articulate language—a potential, I argue, that Chaucer exploits in his interactions between speaking birds and human listeners. The troubadours'

interests in bird's *lati* is motivated by their own exploration of the function of the vernacular as a mode of poetic expression, but it draws together a series of impulses about love poetry, language, and articulation in which birds both represent and *are* poets.[21] By the fourteenth century, Chaucer is not taxed with justifying the use of the vernacular, and yet the tension between the two languages remains, even in engagements between birds, as we see in the "Nun's Priest's Tale."[22] However, Chaucer's own anxiety about linguistic diversity, which he expresses so eloquently at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*, reveals his sense that language itself is multiple and that even within a single language, translation may be necessary. For Chaucer, singing birds are both poetic symbols and poetic speakers. As speakers, Chaucer's birds don't just symbolize but also embody all the roles that Pfeffer suggests, particularly the lyric poet, which emphasizes the emotional power of their speech. Since these bird poets speak within longer narrative poems, the interactions between bird *poiesis* and human *poiesis* comes to the fore; these avian lyric poets contrast and interact with other narrators and poetic figures, acting both as singers of their own tales—suggesting a potential for self-articulation—and as inspiration for their human poetic counterparts, who then create in their own poetic language.

An early example can be seen in the *Complaint of Mars*, where the birds interact with the narrator who begins the poem, taking over as tellers of the story as they overheard it, just as the poet-narrator overhears them. Here Mars, the birds, and the narrator are all lyric poets, the second two adding on to Mars's original, which the audience receives third-hand in a double translation. If the birds understand Mars's human speech and turn it into "briddes wise," the narrator is then tasked with translation from bird to human. He begins the poem with "Gladeth, ye foules, of the morwe gray!" (*CM*, 1) and starts to recite the alba, but the audience quickly learns that this is not his story, but instead is a representation of someone else's: "A foul thus herde I synge/Upon that day, er sonne gan up-sprynge" (13–14). The narrator's interaction with the birds—the cross-understanding of each other's speech—reveals that this is not the bird's story either, but that of "woful Mars" (25). The bird speaks, "yet wol I, in my briddes wise synge/the sentence of the compleynt, at the leste" (23–24) and goes on to tell the framing story of Venus and Mars before singing the complaint that has been anticipated from the first line of the proem.

By singing in "briddes wise," the bird seems to be telling the story in his own voice. Moreover, the bird is a self-conscious narrator, telling readers that he will sing "the sentence of the compleynt, at the lest" (24). The emphasis of "sentence," with its double sense of linguistic phrase and essential meaning, underlines the fully developed linguistics of "briddes wise," suggesting that it has both a *langue* and *parole*. The bird's concern that "therefore, in this lusty morwenynge/As best I can, I wol hit seyn and synge,/And after that I wol my leve take" (151–53) suggests an evaluative desire within this speech; it echoes Chaucer's concern in the General Prologue to "Reherce as ny, as evere he kan/Everich a word" (I.731–32) when telling tales, as well as Chaucer the Pilgrim's later defense of the "Tale of Sir Thopas" as "the beste rhyme I kan" (VII.928). The bird's statement "and after that I wol my leve take" (153) also reflects the poetic convention of the poet taking leave of his or her poem, as Chaucer does at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde* and in the Retraction to the *Canterbury Tales*. The bird's language nearly echoes the manuscript rubric in Ellesmere which reads, "Here taketh the makere of this book his leve."[23]

The first stanza of the *Complaint*'s poem also shows the narrator's concern with himself as a poet. The lyric begins with theories of poetry, how and why a complaint should be made:

> The ordre of compelynt requireth skylfylly
> That yf a wight shal pleyne pitously,
> Ther mot be cause wherefore that men pleyne:
> Or men may deme he pleyneth folily
> And causeless. (155–59)

The poets of bird speech and human speech become mixed here, to the point where the two speakers are nearly confused; when the bird begins to tell the story, he notes "Sojourned had this Mars, of which I rede" (78). If birds speaking and singing is hardly unique to Chaucer, a bird reading implies that because of his ability to articulate, the bird's "birdness" has slipped away and he becomes a human poet, a reader of stories. This also suggests some kind of intelligibility between bird and human speech; the bird understands Mars not just from hearing him complain but also from reading about him, presumably in human books, and the poet-narrator understands the bird's speech, returning the story to the page from which it began.

Finally, the birds end the first section of the poem with the line "and God yeve every wyght joy of his make" (154). On first reading, this line also echoes one from *Parliament of Fowls*, in which the birds (also in "briddes wise") choose their "makes," or mates. However, "make" is also the noun form of "maken," as several examples in the *Middle English Dictionary* show.[24] As such, "make" becomes "creation" or "product," the bird's poem. The two readings of the line enforce the partnership of love and poetry present with the *Complaint* and the *Parliament*; "make" as a poem and "make" as lover are tightly intertwined. But more vitally, this line joins birds and "briddes wise" with love and poetry, so that the birds become lover-poet figures and their speech becomes the poetic text. What seems to take this beyond basic metaphor is this repeated emphasis on the birds' distinct speech.

In Book II of *Troilus and Criseyde*, birds continue to speak and continue to interact with human poets in ways that suggest that, while they speak different languages, they still engage in Moe's "energy exchanges." The book opens with the sleeping Pandarus, a somewhat ambiguous poet figure and avid speaker. He is awakened and called to action by "the swalowe Progne," who, "with a sorrowful lay/when morwen com, gan make her waymentynge/why she forshapen was" (II.64–66). Procne's speech isn't represented directly, however; it is filtered through human interpretation. She awakens Pandarus with her "cheteryng" (II.68), but Chaucer interprets its meaning as: "how Tereus gan forth her suster take" (II.69). Pandarus's awakening is motivated by the sorrowful lay; Procne's lyric suspension is what moves him to action, as at the end of the scene finds Pandarus bustling off to Criseyde's to convince her to love Troilus. The swallow "cheters" in "briddes wise": Procne, the mythological human turned bird, tells a human story; therefore, the necessary filtering required for humans to make meaning of bird speech is shown in process here. Multiple operations seem to be at work; the speech sounds ("cheteryng"), it conveys a feeling ("sorrowful"), and that gets translated into a story, a process which echoes the movement from lyric emotion to romance narrative. A similar translation happens later in the book when the nightingale—echoing Philomela from Procne's "sorrowful lay" but also an actual bird—recites a "lay of loue" which makes Criseyde's "herte fresh and gay" (II.922). While Pandarus is awakened by one kind of bird speech, Criseyde is put to sleep by the nightingale's song. That said, in neither case is the bird's song functional only as sound; like the "sentence" of the birds in the *Complaint*, it operates at the levels of both language and meaning.

The disjunction between the bird's song and the human action that follows may be a salient point in Chaucer's bird thesis; animal speech and interiority are never fully understood by human listeners, who cannot separate what they hear from their own assumptions. Procne's "cheterynge," showing as it does the darkest, most dangerous side of human lust, should keep Pandarus from pushing Troilus on Criseyde, yet it does the opposite, just as Criseyde seems to get the "love" but not "pain" message from her bird-dream. Pandarus's motivations and Criseyde's desires lead to an understanding so partial that it ends up recreating—in its sorrow if not its specific detail—Procne's song. Chaucer both acknowledges birds' ability to speak and humans' ability to misunderstand that speech, connecting only, one might say, with the subject and not its import. Pandarus hears the "sorrow" but associates it with Troilus's unrequited despair instead of hearing it as a tragic outcome of desire; Criseyde dreams the "love" but does not also hear the pain it causes.

The swallow's song about violence, pain, and shape-changing has a poetic function. The lay serves both to remind readers of what is to come and its inevitability. The sorrowful lay doesn't make Pandarus stop; instead, like the opening of the entire poem, it makes clear the inevitable painful outcome of the love affair while simultaneously suggesting that it cannot change its course. The poet and Procne both undertake the same work: to remind readers that things will go ill just when they begin to go well. Procne's lay makes Pandarus act—one *makere's* speech creates another *makere's* action—and he goes on to build the love affair that has been prefigured as a poem in Book I in the famous housebuilding stanza.[25] That it is the wrong action and countermands what one would assume the message of the sorrowful lay to be just shows the difficulties of translating bird into human. Bird speech here functions as a poetic strategy delivered by avian speakers simultaneously as symbols and subjects.

Criseyde's nightingale's speech is also affective; it produces emotion, but also, because Philomela is another trans-avian, she embodies a series of meanings that allow her sound to be translated into human terms. Those meanings ascribed to the nightingale are, of course, determined by human context; even Chaucer's attempts to let the bird represent itself cannot be connected from human stories about the nightingale's ostensible histories, both mythological and poetic. These meanings are varied, as Beryl Rowland, the compiler of bird details, explains:

> As a symbol the nightingale is complex. The love with which it is traditionally identified may be happy or unhappy. Associated with an ancient story of rape and revenge, the bird sings a lament; associated with the spring and the May morning, the nightingale sings simply of happy love; associated with the poet, it can express either personal ecstasy or pain.[26]

Wendy Pfeffer adds that the nightingale is also associated with "the poet's love, the poet's song, and sexual metaphors."[27] The nightingale that sings to Criseyde that is and is not Philomela embodies this wide range of ideas, and in singing a "lay of love," puts forward one of the poem's main ideas: that love is both desirable and dangerous, salutary and destructive. As Joseph Gallagher points out, "When the nightingale does occur later outside Criseyde's window, elements of the myth are being continued and transformed in the deepest structure of the poem. Chaucer changes the female nightingale of myth into a male singer of love songs."[28] The nightingale's "lay of loue" is not an articulated text but a meaningful emotion that creates a human text, audible and meaningful to Criseyde. It exists in an unarticulated inner space, like that of the dream. Here, "briddes wise" is a personal, self-referential language, which tells the bird's inner story, a trope Chaucer uses again in the "Squire's Tale." Criseyde's dream exists only within herself, in her own interior language, so again Chaucer proposes that bird and human language parallel each other. These texts—bird and human—can be articulated, or paraphrased, or stand alone and unanalyzed.

However, by suggesting that the dream and the lay are essentially the same, Chaucer also shows the depth of content that "briddes wise" can express. A. C. Spearing suggests of the dream that "in many medieval dream-poems there is a deliberate link between what the narrator has been thinking or reading before falling asleep and what he dreams afterward."[29] He then cites the *Parliament of Fowls* as an example, showing Chaucer's use of the *somnium animale*. Although animal dreams might fit under the general category of animal symbolism, the focus on the bird's song brings this dream into the realm of language as well. Spearing's reading of the dream as reflecting Criseyde's emotional state, and his suggestion that reading influences dream, lends support to the nightingale's lay affecting the dream, since it is the text that Criseyde hears before she sleeps.

Birds figure prominently in the central section of *Troilus and Crisedye*. They represent the lyric and epic versions of Troilus, appearing both in the dream and in the consummation scene; at the moment of consummation,

Chaucer notes "What myghte or may the sely larke seye,/Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?" (III.1191–92), casting Troilus as the sparrowhawk (a symbol of war and predation) and Criseyde as the lark (a songbird much like a nightingale). While they work symbolically here, after their sexual moment, Criseyde herself becomes a bird poet:

> And as the newe abaysed nygtyngale,
> That stynteth first whan she bygynneth to synge,
> Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
> Or in the hegges any wyght stirynge,
> And after siker doth hire vois out rynge,
> Right so Criseyde, whan hire drede stente,
> Opned her herte and told hym hire entente. (III.1233–39)

Criseyde's lay of love, her alba (III.1421–42), is cast here as parallel to bird speech. Once again, Chaucer suggests that people can sing like birds and birds can sing like people, that there are two parallel poetic languages that inform each other and can be partially comprehended, even if they are not fully intelligible to each other. Since Criseyde's alba and the nightingale's lay of love are both bound to mitigated accounts of violent sexuality, as is Procne's sorrowful lay in Book II, "briddes wise" becomes the language in which they can tell their own stories.

The joining of all these lays framing Criseyde's position in the love affair, place the cross-understanding of languages in the realm of emotion. Joy and pain are "twinned" (to use one of Chaucer's own words) in this love affair, which moves from "wo to wele and after out of joie" (I.4). The pairing of "wo" and "wele" and the inclusion of the positive ("joie") in the expression of its loss equal the paring of the sorrowful lay and the lay of love; these feelings are "twinned" even if the specific words that express them are in two distinct "wises." The sorrowful lay creates a foreboding that informs the lay of love, creating a dream of joy and violence; the two songs interact missing "wo" and "wele" the way the poet must constantly remind the reader of the tragic ending of the poem and its inevitability, even as the love affair, with all its joy, takes place. That the two lays are bird texts shows the potential complexity of bird speech, as well as its vital connection to poetic activity. Representing the lyric poet-lover and lyric situation that exists within the framework of the narrative poem, the bird then works in "briddes wise," a language not understandable to everyone, and its song is not told, but told about. This untranslatability echoes Chaucer's

concerns for the poem at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*, which he fears will be misunderstood, miswritten, or misread. Writing in "poet's wise," in a language in which there is "so great diuersite/In Englissh and in writyng of our tonge" (V.1793–94), is like singing in "briddes wise," songs which are possible only to paraphrase and sometimes impossible to recreate.

Perhaps Chaucer's most articulated examinations of "briddes wise" and its translatability comes in the "Squire's Tale." One of the knight's gifts to Cambuskan's daughter Canacee is a ring:

> The vertu of the ryng, if ye wol heere,
> Is this: that if hire lust it for to were
> Upon hir thombe or in hir purs it bere,
> There is no fowel that fleeth under the hevene
> That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
> And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn,
> And answere hym in his langage ageyn. (V.146–52)

This section again suggests the presence of a fully articulated bird language, a language that humans can understand by virtue of a magic ring (a fourteenth-century universal translator) that also allows the human to participate in the conversation, to speak "briddes wise," as it were. Chaucer echoes this intelligibility later in the poem when Canacee actually puts the ring on and goes forth, "for the foweles that she herde synge/For right anon she wiste what they mente/Right by hir song, and knew al hire entente" (V.398–400); indeed, he repeats that she "understood wel every thyng/that any fowel may in his leden seyn,/and koude answeren hym in his ledene ageyn" (V.433–36). This repetition is important in understanding the currency of the birds' speech and Canacee's sudden ability to understand it in its underscoring of the distinct linguistics of "briddes wise." "Ledene" can mean both language and Latin, echoing "lor lati" of the troubadour bird song tradition. Crane notes that "the reference to Latin ('haukes ledene'; V.478) strikes an analogy between birdsong and human speech on the one hand, and Latin and vernaculars on the other. 'Hawk Latin' gets its plausibility from the differences among human languages: why not an animal language that is similarly obscure to humans, but similarly functional for its own speakers? The communicative, resourceful animals of romance express, in highly imaginative terms, a widespread conviction that humans and animals share contiguities beyond their mere physicality."[30]

The peregrine falcon's words are intelligible to the audience only because readers are wearing the magic ring along with Canacee; however, the speech is still translated, not reproduced (as in the *Parliament*). The falcon's words are also intelligible owing to Crane's "shared contiguities beyond their mere physicality," which allows a shared cognition, although the very courtly nature of the reading of the falcon's situation suggests that bird speech can only be understood through a human lens. Canacee's (and the reader's) translation of the falcon's story into courtly terms suggests a parallel but not an equivalent, an attempt to understand the intricacies of hawk society through a translation into something familiar, recognizable. This both points to difference and similarity; "briddes wise" must be translated for true human cognition, but in so doing, it shares greatly with translations between human languages and cultures—for instance, the Morgan Library's Crusader Bible illustrations show the Israelites looking like medieval knights building the Tower of Babel,[31] and Chaucer's Greeks and Trojans in *Troilus and Criseyde* look and behave remarkably like the fourteenth-century English.

This falcon, like the other aforementioned birds, is singing a lyric, private lay. Canacee asks:

> Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of love?
> For, as I trowe, this ben causes two
> That causen moost a gentil herte wo;
> Of oother harm it nedeth nat to speke. (V.450–53)

Sorrow of death and loss of love are the subjects of lyric, at least as humans understand them; the "oother harm" are not, and do not produce song in "pitous voys." With her lay, the falcon makes others weep, and her lyric affects Canacee so strongly that "wel neigh fro the routhe almost she deyde" (V.438). It may be the emotion that is shared as much as the specific content here; the affectivity of the falcon's words creates Canacee's understanding, because of her "gentil herte." By speaking in her "leyden" (V.435) the falcon becomes another avian lyric poet, singing of the world of emotion, dreams, love gardens, secluded forests, and other private places; her "briddes wise" becomes poetic language, heard, understood, or interpreted only by a select few.

Canacee perceives the falcon's lay by means of poetic convention, drawing on both her own experience and external authorities to understand the falcon's story, much as Chaucer's other narrators do. The bird's faithless lover is placed with the literary tradition of false lovers such as Jason, Paris,

and Lameth (V.548–50); she also uses the Boethian image of the bird in the cage,[32] which Chaucer uses elsewhere to "elucidate the speaker's (be it narrator or character) attitude towards the behavior or character of a human being," as George Economou notes.[33] The humor comes in by comparing a bird to a bird, especially a bird who has "texts" in mind, but it also points to the human qualities of Cancee's (and our) interpretation of it, as a free bird in the woods probably hasn't been reading Ovid nor contemplating the pleasure of staying in cages. The "I trowe" calls forward the acts of human interpretation at work here. The vitality of bird language allows human listeners to incorporate texts, metaphors, and analogies, essentially to create a comprehensible context, to do the work of translation to make the hawk's lay resonate in a human context.

The falcon's opening lines show an engagement with poetics: "Whyl that I have a leyser and a space/My harm wol I confessen er I pace" (V.493–94). This, of course, sounds a great deal like Chaucer's statement in the General Prologue, "But natheless whil I have tyme and space,/Er that I ferther in this tale pace" (I.35–36), which sets out his textual program. For Chaucer, "tyme and space" are the stuff of fiction—as it collapses and jumps across time and space, but also exists on the "space" of the page itself. By choosing "leyser and a space" in which to sing her lay, the falcon again creates a text that conforms to human poetic terms, although one might suggest that "leyser" is more the province of the lyric, as it exists outside of time, while "tyme," as chronology or temporal order, is more the province of the narrative poet whose concerns are tied to the pilgrimage itself. When Chaucer speaks of "space" in the Prologue he refers to physical geography and to the space of the page; the falcon's "space" is a *locus poeticus* (if not *amoenus*) in which to "confessen" her harm. Confession is essentially a private act (*pace* Foucault), told to one person, while telling tales is a public act, at least in the context of the *Canterbury Tales*. Both Chaucer and the peregrine falcon are poets, but of different kinds of poetry, using different "wises."

The falcon's song moves Canacee to pity at first, but it also moves her to her own form of artistic creation. Here again, bird speech is reconstituted in human terms. Canacee does not sing a song or create a poem, but instead tells her story through visual avian imagery:

> By her beddes heed she made a mewe,
> And covered it with velvettes blewe,
> In signe of trothe that is in women sene.

> And al withoute, the mewe is peynted grene,
> In which were peynted al this false fowles.
> As ben thise tidyves, tercelettes, and owles;
> Right for despit were peynted hem bisyde,
> Pyes, on hem for to crie and chyde. (V.643–50)

Canacee's "mewe" is a visual *Legend of Good Women*, and it is very much like the poetic figure that manifests itself as the walled garden in the *Parliament of Fowls* and the *Roman de la Rose*, the temple in the *House of Fame*, and Christine de Pisan's *Cité des Dames.* Like these figures, the "mewe" is "made" and "peynted"—a piece of created artifice. This image may also echo Geoffrey of Vinsauf's image of house building that Pandarus describes. Canacee and Pandarus build very different things with different outcomes, but both are moved to their building by the inspirational speech of birds, the falcon's song and Procne's sorrowful lay being the motivations for these creations, as is the poet's writing down of the *Complaint of Mars* after hearing it being sung by the birds. The private songs of these avian lyric poets are thus the cause of public creation and action. While Criseyde's dream does not exactly fit this formula, the telling of her dream in detail allows public participation from the audience, if not the other characters in the poem, much as the audience "hears" the falcon's lay that is told privately to Canacee. Her articulated dream takes place in her subconscious, inspired by the nightingale's unarticulated lay. Chaucer may say that animals and birds "no longer "speke and synge" publicly, as they did in the mythical past of the "Nun's Priest's Tale" of Chantecleer and Pertelote, but that only seems to mean that most people have lost the ability to make meaning from what they hear them say. This loss may be at the center of the essentially partial nature of human–bird communication; through his constant reminders of the "birdness" of the birds, and the need to put bird speech into terms that humans can understand, Chaucer informs readers that they (and he) can never *be* a female falcon or hawk or nightingale, and that human concerns and cultural experience will always drive their translation and understanding of "briddes wise."[34] Canacee may understand and even respond in "briddes wise," but once the story finds its way to the page, it is firmly in "people's wise," translated into a discourse (meaning language and context) that humans can understand. It also suggests an inevitable inability to understand the language fully because of the rift between these two worlds, a rift potentially opened by the assumption that animals and birds do not really speak that emerges

from the *Physiologus* and bestiary traditions, which imply that the only functional communication between humans and animals is representational and symbolic. However, the partialness of human understanding suggests the potential fullness of "briddes wise" as a language fully able to investigate, critique, and explore bird society, and implies that through the exchange of emotive experience, these two "wises," each with its own *poiesis*, can still exchange energies. "Briddes wise" is thus an inherently poetic language that informs, influences, and awakens creative ability and desire in those privileged enough to hear and interpret it.

Chaucer's suggestion of an animal language partially intelligible to humans, but seen only through their own interpretive lens, offers a complex notion of the animal/human boundary. The interspecies communication he offers is certainly not—at least not without the intervention of magical rings—a full correspondence; humans (apart from Canacee) don't suddenly start speaking "bird." Yet something is articulated in this bird speech beyond the kind of symbolic interchange seen in earlier medieval lyric and romance examples, and this articulation can be communicated between people and birds in some way, allowing the potential for self-articulation. If self-articulation is what is supposed to make humans human, a reflection of the human quality of reason, what happens when another species speaks its own language, a language that also self-articulates, and also seems capable of reason, poetics, and metaphor? While still relying on animals symbolic and metaphoric potential, Chaucer nevertheless seems to anticipate Aaron Moe's contention that:

> Zoopoetics opens a space within the poetic tradition, this space, though, is not exclusively human. Rather it is a sphere where the old lines dividing humans and animals dissolve into fluid borderlands as one species discovers innovative breakthroughs in form through an attentiveness toward other species' bodily *poiesis*. Gesture dissolves the supposed divide between human *poiesis* and animal *poiesis*; between gestures of speech, the gestures of the poetic page, and the gestures of the body.[35]

Moe observes that "Animals are not some nicety or some metaphorical convenience in poetry; rather, poetic intelligence is 'bound to animals' profoundly, and necessarily so."[36] While Chaucer might not go that far, he certainly suggests that animals occupy a dual place, both metaphorically and subjectively important. Birds certainly can function as poetic symbols, but by letting birds speak in "briddes wise," Chaucer may also begin the

animal turn, recognizing not just a possible animal agency but also the potential for a relationship that is not merely symbolic but also a deeply communicative, poetic exchange.

Notes

1. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale" (VII.2879–80), in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Quotations from the *Canterbury Tales* follow the Ellesmere MS fragment order and numbering. All quotations from Chaucer are from this edition.
2. Angela N. H. Creager and William Chester Jordan, introduction to *The Animal Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Angela N. H. Creager and William Chester Jordan (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2002), x.
3. Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 59. In *The Animal that Therefore I Am,* often cited as the originary text of animal studies, Jacques Derrida concurs, citing the long philosophical tradition of *logocentrism*, about which he says: "*logocentrism* is first of all a thesis regarding the animal, the animal deprived of the *logos*, deprived of the can-have of the *logos*, the aptitude for the *logos*" (27).
4. Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994), 5.
5. Nona Flores, introduction to *Animals in the Middle Ages,* ed. Nona C. Flores (New York: Garland, 1996), xi.
6. Flores, *Animals in the Middle Ages,* x.
7. Willene B. Clark, ed. and trans., *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second Family Bestiary. Commentary, Art, Text, and Translation* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006); quoted in Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 94.
8. Crane, *Animal Encounters,* 94.
9. Flores, *Animals in the Middle Ages,* xi.
10. Salisbury, *The Beast Within,* 9.
11. Resl notes an extended literary tradition that moves away from the fantastic to the more domestic in its use and exploration of the potential for animals as characters, symbols, and exempla. While she suggests that some animals, such as lions, maintained their primarily allegorical function, more domestic examples began to take on larger, more varied roles, which allowed them to behave more like animals and less like the human qualities they were said to embody. Brigitte Resl, *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 16–17.

12. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 122.
13. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 121.
14. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 110–11.
15. Aaron M. Moe, *Zoopoetics: Animals and the Making of Poetry* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 24.
16. Moe, *Zoopoetics*, 8.
17. Moe, *Zoopoetics*, 24.
18. Wendy Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 156.
19. Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel,* 3.
20. See, for example, Guillaume IX, "Ab la dochor del temps novel" ("In the sweetness of this new season"): "e li aucel/chanton, chascus in lor lati" (the birts/sing, each it its own latin"), ll.2–3. Translation my own. Provençal text from Frederick Goldin, *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères: An Anthology and History* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1983), 46.
21. See Carolynn Van Dyke's essay in this volume and Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters,* for a discussion of bird Latin and its concomitant relationship to human vernacular.
22. For a pointed discussion of the interaction between vernacular and Latin in the "Nun's Priest's Tale," and in particular its association with gender, see John M. Fyler, "Language Barriers," *Studies in Philology* 112, no. 3 (2015): 415–52, who reads the discussion of *mulier est hominis confusio* and its glossing in this context, although less in the context of avian poetics, despite his acknowledgments that "birds have different standards of morality and beauty from normal human ones" (428).
23. Benson, *Riverside Chaucer*, 328.
24. "Maken," *Middle English Dictionary,* Vol. 6, M–Muche, 53.
25. In I.1065–71, Pandarus aligns housebuilding with the building of a love affair, but this passage is a loose translation of Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*, in which he compares the building of a house to the writing of a poem.
26. Beryl Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1955), 106.
27. Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel,* 3–4.
28. Joseph E. Gallagher, "Criseyde's Dream of the Eagle: Love and War in *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 36 (1975), 122.
29. A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 143.
30. Crane, *Animal Encounters,* 122.
31. MS M.638, fol. 23v, det., "The Crusader Bible," Morgan Library and Museum. And online exhibition of this extraordinary manuscript can be found at http://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/Crusader-Bible.

32. I trowe he hadde thilke text in mynde,
That alle thing, repeirynge to his kynde,
Gladeth himself; thus seyn men, as I gesse.
Men loven of propre kynde newefangelnesse,
As briddes doon that men in cages fede.
For tho thou nyght and ay take of hem hede,
And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk;
And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
Yet right anon as that his dore is uppe
He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
And to the wode he wole and wormes ete
So newefangel been they of hire mete … (V.607–18)

33. George D. Economou, "Chaucer's Use of the Bird in the Cage Imagery in the *Canterbury Tales,*" *Philological Quarterly* 54 (1975), 682.
34. I would like to thank Alison Langdon for this key observation, and for her thoughtful and helpful reading of the piece; translating her "wise" into my own has helped this essay immeasurably.
35. Moe, *Zoopoetics,* 27.
36. Moe, *Zoopoetics,* 27.

CHAPTER 8

Understanding Hawk-Latin: Animal Language and Universal Rhetoric

Carolynn Van Dyke

If one reinscribes language in a network of possibilities that do not merely encompass it but mark it irreducibly from the inside, everything changes. I am thinking in particular of the mark in general, of the trace, of iterability, of *différance*. These possibilities or necessities, without which there would be no language, *are themselves not only human*.

—Jacques Derrida, "Eating Well"

e càntine gli auselli
ciascuno in suo latino…
(And let the birds sing about it, each in its Latin)

—Guido Cavalcanti, "Fresca rosa novella"

Historical dictionaries show that even as Latin gave rise to various vernacular languages, the meaning of "Latin" itself diversified. Sometime in the twelfth century, the word continued to refer to the ancient language but was also used as a count noun for "speech" or "manner of expression."

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It might also denote any foreign tongue, as in an Anglo-Norman reference to "Latimiers … Que de plusurs latins sunt escolé e sage" ("Translators … who were learned in several *latins*").[1] And a particularly surprising variant appears in imaginative literature, as exemplified in my second epigraph. Susan Crane, who calls attention to Cavalcanti's lines, also mentions other Italian and Provençal lyrics that refer to birds' vocalizations as versions of Latin.[2] Perhaps influenced by those texts, a well-known English poet also refers to avian self-expression with a word that originally meant "Latin." The narrator of Geoffrey Chaucer's "Squire's Tale" describes a magic ring that lets its wearer understand "every thyng/That any fowel may in his leden seyn" and "answeren hym in his ledene ageyn." The Squire then devotes much of his tale to a narrative spoken, he tells us, "right in hir [a falcon's] haukes ledene."[3]

One wonders how medieval readers responded to the notion of bird-Latin. Some would probably have taken the juxtaposition as parody, an extension *ad absurdum* of the illusion that birds have language at all. Alternatively, readers might assume that the literate songsters were meant to stand in for human poets.[4] Crane suggests a more balanced approach: perhaps the collocation acquired "plausibility from the differences among human languages." Maybe, that is, avian vocalizations were thought to relate to human language as the vernaculars and Latin relate to each other, each being "functional for its own speakers."[5]

But the English text that gave us "hawk's Latin" supports none of those responses. Critics disagree widely about the falcon's narrative in the "Squire's Tale," but no one, to my knowledge, regards it as a send-up of the notion that birds can talk. Nor have modern critics taken up W. W. Skeat's suggestion that the loquacious bird is really a human being, perhaps a royal changeling.[6] And the paradigm that Crane suggests does not work well for this bird, whose learned and courtly speech is itself too fully human to stand in the same relationship to human speech as Middle English does to Latin. I cannot imagine, for instance, the hawkish origin of the falcon's references to Jason, Paris, and Lamech, or of her invective against a suitor who utters sophisms and can wear sandals (V.547–57). If the speaking falcon is neither an oxymoron nor a poet in allegorical disguise, she is hardly a natural bird with a good translator.

The falcon's monologue differs in crucial ways from the hawk-Latin in other medieval texts, as I will argue presently, but it is typical in yielding to no obvious hermeneutic strategy. In other texts as well, animal speech cannot usefully be understood as a manifest absurdity, a fabulation, or a form of communication parallel to human language. Indeed, in most medieval

narratives about talking animals, the animal and its *leden* cannot be assigned to distinct realms of being. Instead, human and nonhuman self-expression overlap in varying and unstable configurations that prefigure the change Jacques Derrida calls for in my first epigraph: a "reinscrip[tion]" of language in a wider network of "possibilities or necessities."

An Unstable Boundary

It might seem improbable that a Derridean vision of language should emerge in an era widely known for precisely the conception that Derrida hopes to displace. At least two currents of medieval thought deny language to animals. First, Scholastic philosophers follow Aristotle in equating humanity's monopoly on *logos* with our unique ability to "make plain what is advantageous and harmful and so also what is just and unjust."[7] Thus Thomas Aquinas represents speech as "the outward expression of his [man's] inner rationality,"[8] and Dante writes that "only humans have the ability to speak, because only they possess free will and reason."[9] The thirteenth-century Bartholomaeus Anglicus, as translated by John Trevisa, is more succinct: "Spekynge is aproprid ('proper') to mankinde."[10] Second, such distinctions could be ascribed to divine fiat: in Genesis, human beings are created separately from all other animals, and Adam's first act of dominion is to name the others. Early Christian expositors state that the knowledge of one's native language—even a vernacular tongue—elevates humans above "brute beasts."[11] Medieval readers might, then, have been induced to regard bird-Latin as parodic or broadly metaphoric.

But astute medieval readers may have discovered that writers who affirm the distinction between avian and human *leden* also blur it. Bartholomaeus, again via Trevisa, declares that only the voice of a man can signify "at wille" rather than just "by kynde," but he writes elsewhere that some beasts call out to each other based on their recognition of individuals' voices—surely a voluntary act.[12] When Aquinas declares that only humans possess speech (*locutionem* as opposed to mere *uocem*), context shows that he refers specifically to speech about ethical concepts, as does his Aristotelian exemplar.[13] In distinguishing speech itself from nonhuman vocalization, Aquinas is not consistent. Umberto Eco, Roberto Lambertini, Constantino Marmo, and Andrea Tabarroni write that Aquinas and many medieval thinkers often consider how to classify a paradigmatic animal sound, the dog's bark, but place it "each time, in a different position" between natural signification and willed speech.[14]

More fundamentally, equivocations about the boundary between speech and animal vocalizations inhabit the very lexicon used to establish it. Not only do medieval writers differentiate inconsistently among the terms for audible signals (*sonus, vox, sermo*; *leden, tonge, voys, langage*); the semantic fields of the terms themselves also shift from one side of the boundary to the other. Like its Romance cognates, the Middle English *leden* (from Old English for "Latin") broadened by the twelfth century to mean "a language" or "speech, utterance; also song." The *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*) indicates that by the early fourteenth century, *leden* could also refer more narrowly to sounds other than literate speech: "birdsong, the cry of a bird; also, the language of birds," and "a sound, noise; animal cry, whine, etc."[15] In listing "birdsong" and "animal cry" as definitions, the editors of the *MED* might be accused of mistaking metaphor for direct naming. By the early fifteenth century, however, some uses of *leden* for bird song are too specific to be metaphoric: from the *Chester Mystery Cycle* in MS Harley 2124, the *MED* cites a reference to "doves, diggs [ducks], drakes … and each fowle that ledden makes." Here, late in its lexical career, *leden* designates the kind of vocalization appropriate not to people but to birds.

Similar fluidity of reference characterizes other terms for human semiosis. "Chatter" moved in a direction opposite to that of *leden*—from "of birds: to chatter, twitter," to "of persons: … to jabber, talk idly, gossip" (*MED*, s.v. "chateren"). *Language* itself was not used to mean "the method of human communication" until about 1525, according to data collected in the *Oxford English Dictionary*; earlier, it could designate a particular human language or "the vocal sounds by which mammals and birds communicate" (s.v. "language" [*n.*]). The sequential framework in which I have presented those changes might suggest separate stages; in fact, however, citations show that newer meanings overlapped with predecessors, rendering the terms fundamentally and habitually ambiguous. Our words for language have always moved in a "network of possibilities" that are not only human. In what follows, I hope to demonstrate that the same is true of the words in which some poets represent nonhuman vocalization.

To preface my exploration of those texts, I now return briefly to one that clarifies others by contrast. Wearing her magic ring, the heroine of the "Squire's Tale" opens her dialogue with a wounded and shrieking falcon by placing the bird into an aristocratic human framework. Given the falcon's "gentil herte," Canacee declares, its distress must result from either

"sorwe of deeth or los of love" (V.447–52). Little wonder, then, that the falcon responds with phrases favored in the more courtly works of one Geoffrey Chaucer ("pitee renneth soone in gentil herte"; "verray wommanly benignytee"; V.479, 486) or that she attributes hands, knees, and acquaintance with the Pentateuch to her fickle mate. The conspicuous physiological and cultural anomalies register the immense gap between the falcon's speech and what Canacee might have heard without her ring. Of course, gaps have two endpoints, even if one remains unseen. As Lesley Kordecki points out, whereas the magic ring "enables a human, Canacee, to speak a nonhuman's language," it is the narrator and poet who "translate the bird's chirps into human language."[16] We have no direct access to that language, only to its effects in engaging Canacee's empathy. But the narrative that arouses her compassion is a projection of European aristocratic culture, remote in both content and style from what Chaucer would have known about the behavior and vocalizations of peregrine falcons. That remoteness may be Chaucer's tacit acknowledgment that his attempts to render bird-speech—like, presumably, all human art—will inevitably reflect a human cultural framework. Here, however, hawk-*leden* is especially remote from nonhuman vocalizations.

In what remains of this chapter, I discuss three strategies by which Chaucer and other writers bridge that gap—that is, alternatives to romantic fantasy for rendering nonhuman expression in human language. I call the three methods existential, onomatopoeic, and catachrestic.

Presence Speaks

My chief instance of the first category stands in many ways at the other end of the British Middle Ages from the "Squire's Tale." Well into a branch of the *Mabinogion* known as *Culhwch and Olwen* (c. 1100) comes an episode whose origin clearly predates the composition of the Middle Welsh text.[17] When Arthur sends some followers to find a quasi-divine hero named Mabon, he advises them to take along a man who "know[s] all tongues, and can translate the language of birds and animals."[18] Indeed, the search takes them through what Jon Kenneth Williams calls "a submerged, chthonic realm unknown to the humans of Arthur's world but recalled by the Oldest Animals."[19]

The translator, Gwrhyr, corresponds structurally to Canacee's magic ring, but his output is very different. When he asks the Blackbird of Cilgwri (Wirral) about Mabon, she speaks primarily of herself:

> When I first came here, … a smith's anvil was here, and I was a young bird. No work was done on it except while my beak rested upon it each evening; today there is not so much as a nut-sized piece that isn't worn away.[20]

The Blackbird knows nothing of Mabon but directs Arthur's men to "a species of animal that God shaped before me"—the Stag of Rhedynfre (Farndon). There they receive a similar answer to their question:

> When I first came here, … there was only one antler on either side of my head, and the only tree here was an oak sapling. That grew into an oak of a hundred branches, and finally tumbled down, so that today nothing of it remains but a red stump. From that time to this I have been here, and I have heard nothing of the one you want.

The Stag guides the seekers to the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd, who has seen three successive races of men lay waste to three forests that formerly overspread the *cwm* (stony valley) where she now lives. Not having heard of Mabon, the Owl guides the men to the Eagle of Gwernabwy, "the oldest animal in this world," who declares that he once could "peck the stars each night" from the top of a certain stone; "now it is but the size of a fist in height."[21] At length the translator and a companion reach Mabon's prison by riding on a giant salmon that predates even the Eagle.

The episode reverses the Squire's projection of courtly formation onto an injured falcon. Rather than advancing a human narrative, the creatures manifest an extradiegetic fact: that their species have inhabited wilderness, forest, glen, mountain, and waterway far longer than their interrogators. If the falcon's *leden* obscures the biological hawk, the speech of the Oldest Animals manifests their material existence. They borrow human language to say what is also expressed by their nonhuman presence.

Perhaps the closest approach to such discourse in the English tradition is the self-declarations in Anglo-Saxon riddles. Here, for instance, is an excerpt from a riddle in the Exeter manuscript:

> Sæ mec fedde, sundhelm þeahte,
> ond mec yþa wrugon eorþan getenge,
> feþelease; oft ic flode ongean
> muð ontynde. Nu wile monna sum
> min flæsc fretan.[22]

> The sea fed me, the sea-guard covered me, and waves covered me, resting on the earth, immobile; often toward the waves I opened my mouth. Now will some man devour my flesh.

Things and creatures reveal what they are and do; readers grope toward the names with which we fix them (here, presumably, "oyster"). Somewhat like the long-lived blackbird of *Culhwch and Olwen*, the speaker of riddle 6 identifies itself as an "eald æfensceop"—old evening-singer—dwelling apart from men. Elsewhere in this volume, Robert Stanton observes that the formal conventions of Anglo-Saxon verse, "especially alliteration, assonance, and stress," imitate natural sounds and rhythms.[23] In a fundamental way, the old evening-singer (probably a nightingale) embodies countless conspecifics, projecting their prelinguistic music through our words.

Significant Squawks

As Stanton also points out, medieval texts evoke natural sounds not just with paralinguistic effects but also through lexical onomatopoeia, my second category of represented animal speech.[24] The verbs predicated of the jay (or magpie), for instance, sound like the noises they represent.[25] Similarly, when Burnellus the ass says "hy ha," or when Chauntecleer voices alarm with "Cok! cok!", the animal both speaks and brays or cackles.[26] Of course, onomatopoeias are not transparently mimetic; they are mediated by the sound systems and historical changes of human languages. If an English rooster says /kɔk kɔk/, Greek and Japanese ones drop the syllable-ending consonant, and many languages supply different tense vowels in place of /ɔ/.[27] Still, even as the specific phonemes vary, shared phonetic features suggest a common nonhuman referent. Beneath the phonotactic filters, *kok*, *queck*, and *hy ha* establish continuity between real hawk-Latin and human language.

Admittedly, the overlap is limited. Most obviously, the onomatopoeic utterances of Burnellus and Chauntecleer lack the syntactic and semantic properties of the surrounding discourse. Onomatopoeic words are sometimes dismissed as nonsense syllables, outside the system of *différance* and irrelevant to a trans-species "reinscription" of language.[28] Their continuity with language demotes language, however briefly, to sublinguistic insignificance. Indeed, it might be argued that accurate onomatopoeia impugns the validity of other representations of animal speech: if birds really just say *kok* and *cuccu*, maybe all hawk-Latin is hogwash.

My counterargument begins with the referents of onomatopoeia, the vocalizations studied by animal ethologists. It is worth noting that scientists who record and quantify animal calls do not treat them as nonsense. For one thing, they represent the calls alphabetically: onomatopoeia is

functionally mimetic. More important, what it represents is operationally meaningful. Pairing animal onomatopoeias with associated behaviors, the biologist Eugene S. Morton and various colleagues regard the observable responses of recipients (or "assessors") as the meanings of the calls. Nor are the meanings so narrow as to be negligible; rather, they vary with several of the calls' acoustical gradients, particularly loudness and tonality.[29] E. Font and P. Carazo contend "that all animal signals must, by design, have meaning": in "trading … information (about the sender or the environment) for effects (receiver responses)," they are adaptive for both communicating parties. Taking what humanists can recognize as a reader-oriented approach to zoosemiosis, Font and Carazo cite with approval studies of animal signaling that "gave receivers centre stage" and "revealed that receivers can and indeed do obtain other types of information about the sender, not just its intentions." In fact, the so-called receivers do not so much receive information as extract it, in accordance with their own needs and interests.[30]

If that happens when conspecifics communicate, it is no less likely when signals cross species lines—when, for instance, predators eavesdrop on the territorial calls of their prey or when human poets listen to birds. A second component of my argument for the mimetic value of animal onomatopoeias is that they do not contrast with linguistically coherent animal speech; paradoxically, they deepen its meanings.

A paradigmatic instance for medievalists is the range of meanings that European poets extracted from a two-syllable call of the nightingale, spelled *oc(c)i* or *oc(c)y*. Several scholars write that *oci* originated as simple onomatopoeia (miming, presumably, the rising frequency of a common two-note phrase in the bird's song), but that poets soon exploited the lexical overlay of *oci* with Latinate verbs such as *occidere* and *occir*, "to kill."[31] Various poets expanded that lexical association in several ways. In Huon de Mery's *Tournament of the Antichrist* (1234–40), *oci, oci* is the nightingale's command to slay the enemy; for a thirteenth-century Christian poet, the call commemorates the crucifixion; in a fourteenth-century troubadour lyric, the bird predicts that a lady's indifference has nearly "kill-kill-killed me."[32] John Lydgate threads those meanings together in "A Seying of the Nightingale," a 377-line dream vision that casts *oci* first as a real bird's song, then as its plea that Venus slay false and indifferent lovers, then as its outcry against ingratitude for Christ's death, and finally as the voice of the Bridegroom, or Christ, summoning the soul to the slaying of Satan. Like the pseudo-translation attributed to Canacee's magic

ring, the elaborations of *oci* impose human language and culture onto avian vocalizations. Here, however, the bird also speaks for itself. Like other onomatopoeias voiced by animals, *oci* proposes a juncture of nonhuman sound with language, a bridge from human discourse into nonhuman agency and experience.

The extent of that opening varies, as does its ontological orientation. Lydgate's "oci" echoes across discursive realms, drawing courtly discourse and biblical allusion into affective realities that are more than human. The "hy ha" in Nigel of Longchamp's *Speculum Stultorum* exerts a simpler pull in the opposite direction: it deflates the protagonist's ambitions and mocks the English scholars who have taught him for seven years. Because Burnellus also speaks coherent Latin both before and after his lapse into *hee-haw*, braying is not the anthromorph's only genuine vocalization but the simpler instinctual sound to which ill-advised pedagogy reduces him. Falling somewhere between those texts' transcendent and bathetic interventions, Chaucer's best-known onomatopoeia brings discursive realms together. Impatient at an inconclusive debate among three male eagles, the goose, cuckoo, and duck in the *Parliament of Fowls* cry "'Kek kek! kokkow! quek! quek!' hye" (491–500). Like Burnellus, these birds can utter more than onomatopoeias; as Melissa Ridley Elmes points out, "the goose and cuckoo then turn around and speak perfectly comprehensible English."[33] Thus their outburst signals neither the inarticulateness of lower-class creatures nor a descent into nonhuman meaninglessness. Rather, the sounds are what the ethologists whose work I cited earlier call "barks"—short, repeated atonal calls, chevron-shaped in frequency (rise and fall or fall and rise), serving primarily to announce the sender's presence and its interest in something.[34] The sounds break the courtly stalemate, leading Nature to invite more extended self-presentations from the full range of species—a genuine speaking-together (501–616). Onomatopoeic utterances move the diegesis back toward material reality.[35]

The same thing happens in another Chaucerian text, the "Manciple's Tale," but with disruptive effects: the three *cokkow*s of a previously eloquent crow open Phebus's eyes to the "likerous appetit" that the tale's narrator regards as fundamental to human and animal life.[36] In the "Nun's Priest's Tale," it is the producer of onomatopoeia whose eyes are opened. Chauntecleer proudly cites Latin wisdom-literature and Scripture to interpret his dream of a treacherous red-and-yellow beast. When the actual fox appears, however, he flies up with just "Cok! cok!"—"For," the narrator explains, "natureelly a beest desireth flee/Fro his contrarie, if he may it

see" (VII.3273–81). His bare syllables are meaningful in having no lexical meaning: imitating the sound of actual roosters, they reproduce as well the experience of any creature surprised into acting like the animal it is.

Derek Attridge argues that "successful … lexical onomatopoeia" establishes a "momentary and surprising reciprocal relationship … between phonetic and semantic properties, a mutual reinforcement that intensifies *both* aspects of language."[37] I would add that successful animal onomatopoeia intensifies the surprising reciprocity between the phonetic and semantic properties of nonhuman expression and language, of beastly life and human thought.

Necessary Misapplication

> How does a rooster (not) sing like a human? How does a rooster (not) have a wife?
>
> —Travis, *Disseminal Chaucer*

> Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
>
> —Pertelote, "Nun's Priest's Tale"

The onomatopoeic moment in the "Nun's Priest's Tale" is exceptionally brief. In unctuous Middle English, the self-proclaimed friend of Chauntecleer's late father convinces the son to ignore the laws of predation; Chauntecleer obliges by closing his eyes to the material reality that grabs him by the neck. After he turns the tables by goading the fox to issue a boast more articulate than the human pursuers' shouts, each animal uses human discourse to formulate his own errors (3405–17, 3421–35). According to some leading scholars, human discourse is what Chaucer wishes us ultimately to consider. For Peter Travis, the tale turns on "the potentially self-paralyzing linguistic modalities at work in any literary text"; for Jill Mann, it leaves us with "the knowledge that human rhetoric is both supremely important and supremely irrelevant."[38]

Those are profound and satisfying conclusions, but in representing the tale as primarily meta-textual, concerned with human rhetoric, they sell it short. Mann is right that Chaucer's overlay between rooster and human does not produce "a sense of the *seamless* 'connaturality' between the two," but absent any sense of connaturality, the tale would merit the label that its narrator disavows, "a folye" (3438).[39] In fact, the behavior of Chauntecleer and Daun Russel—including their verbal behavior—coincides with medieval

observations about their biological conspecifics. John Trevisa, translating Bartholomaeus Anglicus, writes that roosters are proud and uxorious and that the fox, "a fals beste and deceyuable," "feyneþ him tame in tyme of nede."[40] And Chauntecleer's onomatopoeic *cok*s connect smoothly with his anthrosemiotic utterances; the instinctively flighty bird is the same speaker who has just saluted "Madame Pertelote" and will presently respond to the appellation "Gentil sire" (3200, 3284). Somehow, the disparity between squawk and politesse does not silence interspecies resonance. I hope to show in the remaining section of this chapter that the "Nun's Priest's Tale" exemplifies the most powerful means to represent hawk-Latin, a strategy that I call catachrestic. Here and in at least three other Middle English texts, animal speech earns our credence partly because it is ostentatiously human while remaining manifestly nonhuman.

Etymologically, catachresis is "misuse, misapplication," according to Richard Lanham's *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*. Its Latin synonym, *abusio*, is commonly specified as "an abuse of metaphor."[41] Lanham offers two hardly distinguishable definitions: catachresis is either "implied metaphor, using words wrenched from common usage," or "an extravagant, unexpected, farfetched metaphor." But Patricia Parker points to the discrepancy between those modern formulations and a seminal exposition by Quintilian. In the *Institutio Oratoria,* Quintilian defines catachresis as "the practice of adapting the nearest available term to describe something for which no actual [i.e., proper] term exists" (*non habentibus nomen suum*). In contrast, Quintilian explains, metaphor or *translatio* is "a transfer or substitution employed when a proper term does already exist and is displaced by a term transferred from another place to a place not its own."[42] This positions catachresis as a necessary neologism that precedes metaphor. Admittedly, as Parker also observes, Quintilian himself is not altogether consistent. In another part of the *Institutio*, he implicitly authorizes the definitions of Lanham and others by grouping catachresis with metaphor among figures that "substitut[e] … one word for another."[43] Perhaps catachresis is, like metaphor, gratuitous renaming.

The inconsistency may not be accidental. In a study of metaphor in Tudor-Stuart England, Judith Anderson points to a passage in which Quintilian explicitly marks catachresis as both improper and essential. Immediately before his first mention of catachresis, he expresses approval of "*onomatopoea*, that is to say, the creation of a word." Greeks embraced that practice, he continues, but his own compatriots avoid even derivatives of existing roots. "These facts," Quintilian concludes, "make *catachresis*

(of which *abuse* is a correct translation) all the more necessary."[44] The significance of that main clause—"Eo magis necessaria catachresis"—depends on the embedded clause, "quam recte dicimus abusionem." Correctly, that is, we recognize a transfer of the "nearest available term" as an abuse or misuse even when it is necessitated by the lack of a proper term. The same paradox pertains to Quintilian's other version of catachresis, as a figure structured like metaphor: any "transfer or substitution" for "a proper term"—even a metaphor deemed "extravagant, unexpected, [or] farfetched" (Lanham's differentiae for catachresis) and thus abusive—may strike some readers as uniquely apt.

We might therefore propose that "catachresis" be deaccessioned, with its former referents assigned to "neologism" and "metaphor."[45] More useful, I think, is to reserve the term for both coinages and metaphors that abuse the presumption of likeness in some discernible way while honoring it otherwise. To follow Quintilian, "catachresis" flags this conjunction of aptness with misuse at two stages of naming: first, inevitably improper neologism; second, justifiable displacement of a proper term. And nowhere are those conjunctions more apparent than in representing hawk-Latin.

Most of the examples with which Quintilian defends catachresis turn on nonhuman speech. In the passage linking catachresis with "*onomatopoea*," he cites, with approbation, "*mugitus*, lowing, *sibilus*, a hiss, and murmur." Those terms may once have been fresh coinages, but Quintilian suggests that they are residually catachrestic, still necessary but intrinsically improper. The same holds for his next instance, Virgil's use, a century earlier, of *aedificare* 'to build' for constructing a horse.[46] All those transfers are appropriate in some way, Virgil's for thematic reasons and *mugitus* and *sibilus* as imitations. But they also seem misapplied or abusive, and for a structural reason: they cross ontological boundaries. The passage from the *Aeneid* mixes organic and artificial creation, as Pallas is enabling the Trojans to do; the onomatopoeias turn nonhuman sounds into language. Ontological boundary-crossing also structures Richard Lanham's illustrations of catachresis: Hamlet's "I will speak daggers to her" merges weapons with words; a line in which "a weeping woman's eyes become Niagara Falls" equates human and inorganic effluent; and Alexander Pope's "Mow the Beard, / Shave the Grass" parodies anthropomorphic transfer.

For Paul de Man, transfers between human and nonhuman are paradigmatically catachrestic. De Man identifies catachresis with the compounded "ordering[s] of substances" that John Locke calls "mixed [linguistic] modes," which "[pair] man with woman or human being with beast in the

most unnatural shapes. Something monstrous lurks in the most innocent of catachreses," de Man continues, as "when one speaks of the legs of the table or the face of the mountain…."[47] De Man associates catachrestic prosopopoeia with anthropomorphism, "an identification on the level of substance."[48] For de Man as for Quintilian, catachresis is ineluctably abusive—in a certain sense, "monstrous." But for de Man as for Quintilian, the ontological miscegenation of catachresis is also inevitable. "Catachresis" names "[t]he abuse of language," but the use and abuse of language "cannot be separated from each other."[49]

Extending de Man's argument, Marjorie Garber observes that catachresis challenges "the binary of use and abuse."[50] Simultaneously, given its semantic structure, catachresis challenges ontological binaries. Historically and synchronically, catachrestic words express both the unity and the disparity of human and nonhuman, inanimate and animate. Thus the faces of mountains (*facies* "outward appearances," derivable from proto-Indo-European **dhē-* "to set, put") are not only monstrous. Tables, like bipeds, stand on nonmetaphoric legs. Peter Travis's perfectly pivoting conundrums, my first epigraph to this section, have etymological warrant: medieval naturalists referred to female animals and even plants as wives, and "hen" (if not "rooster") derives from proto-Indo-European **kan-* "to sing." As for my second epigraph to this section, *berd* is a proper term for wattles or neck feathers in both Middle and Modern English, but when coupled with a "*mannes* herte," the term is comically incongruous.[51] On Chauntecleer's beard, as on all catachrestic words, orders of being converge and split.

As incongruities go, of course, Pertelote's reference to a beard is trivial in comparison with its utterance by a chicken. The challenges to linguistic and ontological binaries that crystallize in catachrestic words and figures play out in what I would call the catachrestic mode. The animal speech in the "Nun's Priest's Tale" exemplifies Quintilian's first definition of catachresis: "the practice of adapting the nearest available term to describe something for which no actual [i.e., proper] term exists." In this case, the unsigned "something" is nonhuman self-expression. To represent intentions and perceptions that lack *nomina propria*, Chaucer supplies the "nearest available term"—or terms—from human language. That is, well-crafted hawk-Latin is apt but improper neologism.

I do not mean to classify all animal dialogue as neologism. Quintilian's second reference to catachresis, in which he groups it with gratuitous metaphoric substitution, is more applicable to the Squire's rendition of falcon

discourse. In contrast, representations of animal speech that function like necessary neologism use "the nearest available" language. They may imitate nonhuman sounds phonetically, as in *mugitus* and *sibilus*, and they may express perceptions appropriate to the nonhuman speaker. Chaucer's hen-speech is appropriate in both those ways. Pertelote sometimes mimics the staccato impatience of hen clucks ("Pekke hem up right as they growe and ete hem yn"; NPT, VII.2967). All her material references suit her anatomy and circumstances; she imagines no sandals on her paramour's azure legs. Indeed, like the tale's other animals, she acts in conformity with her species. She voices the pharmaceutical acumen proper to successful herbivores and expresses a plausible disinclination to analyze the dreams of her conspecific.[52] Admittedly, Pertelote derives the latter competency not just from natural selection but also from "Catoun, which that was so wys a man" (VII.2941). But even her erudition does not violate catachrestic approximation. Instead, it makes Chaucer's neologism appropriate to a form of inappropriateness: pretentiousness. Like her mate—albeit less completely—Pertelote anthropomorphizes herself. These are birds that strut.

The zenith of the rooster's self-anthropomorphizing is the coda of his long, anthrosemiotic lecture to Pertelote. Preparing to descend from the rhetorical heights to the connubial pleasures of the barnyard, Chauntecleer cites the Vulgate: "For al so siker as *In principio*, / *Mulier est hominis confusio*" (VII.3157–64). He is about to undergo an ontological fall, from literate anthromorph to potential fox food; first, however, he classes himself as "man" not only explicitly but also in Latin. In fact, Chauntecleer is one of several medieval animals that break into Latin at points of crisis. The swallow in a fable by Robert Henryson quotes "clerkis" in her vain plea that smaller birds exercise foresight: "Nam leuius laedit quicquid praeuidimus ante" ("for whatever we foresee does less harm"). In another Henryson fable, a mouse fortifies her mistrust of a toad with an "auld proverb," "Distortum vultum sequitur distortio morum" ("distortion of character follows a distorted visage").[53] And in John Lydgate's "Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep," the Ram opens his advocacy for the sheep with an "exordie / in latyn" that merges Old and New Testaments: "Veste purpurea, O Egle, & thou leoun,/Induti sunt Arietes Ouium" ("With a purple robe … the rams of the flock are clothed").[54]

Animal Latin is the catachrestic limit-case of hawk-Latin. Bilingual beasts might well invite the first kind of response to animal speech I originally itemized: dismissal as parody. Like all good catachreses, however, these excessively anthrosemiotic passages are necessary and proper. Their overt extravagance acknowledges, first, that all hawk-Latin is humanly contrived,

distant from the nonhuman agents that it purports to represent: Chaucer, Henryson, and Lydgate do not propose to collapse orders of being altogether. More important, though, the stylistic overreach is itself meaningful in its very incongruity with the speakers' material circumstances. In Chaucer's and Henryson's texts, the Latin aphorisms register a dangerous negligence: rooster, swallow, and mouse formulate pedantic generalizations instead of attending to imminent threats from predators.[55] Recent ethological work on deception among nonhuman animals supports a view of trickster fables as apt neologisms on a large scale. To cite a few examples, female insects attract males by "chemical deception," birds falsely signal the presence of a predator to distract a competitor from a food source, and a fox was recorded feigning death to lure a crow within reach. In nature as in fable, plots turn on the distracting of potential prey.[56] And a victim's self-anthropomorphizing just when he is most clearly positioned as nonhuman is analogous to a rooster's (or rodent's) "wynk[ing] whan he sholde see," or a fox's (or bird's) "jangl[ing] whan he sholde holde his pees."[57]

In Lydgate's "Debate," the Latin is equally incongruous with animal reality but with opposite implications. Shifting the register beyond metaphor to transfiguration, the Ram explains that Jesus, lamb of grace, took on "the meeke clothyng of our humanyte" but inherited the "purpil red" royal clothing of David and washed away venom "with his pure blood / purpurat & red." The Ram's conclusion—"Was euyr founde/afore this in scripture,/Off hors or goos/so solempne a Figure?/This lamb was Crist"—affirms an ontological elevation while distancing it from the debating beasts. But the Ram then reverses the elevation by praising the sheep as the most profitable of "worldly comoditees," not just for marketable fleece and writable skin but also for the ointment produced by "his hed/boilèd holle, with wolle & all." The stark physicality makes the "gostly fayr Figure" of the earlier biblical phrases seem catachrestic—as indeed, it is: a sacred, redemptive misapplication of slaughter and sacrifice.[58]

Conclusion: Possibilities and Necessities

Catachresis is fundamental to "language," if not to language. As I suggested earlier, *leden* and its synonyms have moved back and forth across species lines through centuries of usage, as have "leg," "face," *berd*, and *wif*. The title of this volume, *Animal Languages*, is therefore a necessary abuse, a metaphoric formation with no nonmetaphoric alternative. Some medieval texts cut the catachrestic link between "animal" and "language" by obviating the shared material basis of self-expression; I have argued that

the Squire's courtly narrative represents a falcon's vocalizations not with the "nearest available term[s]" but with the mechanism of romance. But medieval writers were well acquainted with a "network of possibilities" connecting the *différance* of "Cok! cok!" with a mistranslation of *confusio*. When an animal's behavior and bodily references accord with creaturely reality, its vocalizations in the inevitably improper medium of human language function as appropriate poetic neologisms. But that is a poet's creation. Indeed, the neologism can be doubly apt, for the unstable overlay of linguistic competence with animal embodiment resonates at both ends of the interspecies continuum. In that sense, "hawk-Latin" is a name for our native tongue.

Notes

1. Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley, and Brian J. Levy, *Old French-English Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), s.v. "latin," (sm); *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* s.v. "latin" (with citation from *The Romance of Horm* by Thomas).
2. Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 121 and 220n7. I cite Cavalcanti's lyric from *Rime*, ed. Letterio Cassata (Anzo: De Rubeis, 1993), 44–7.
3. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Dean Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), V.434–6 and 478. Future references to Chaucer's works are to this edition and are documented in text by line number.
4. That is the approach taken by Patrizia Grimaldi Pizzorno, "Matelda's Dance and the Smile of the Poets," *Dante Studies* 112 (1994): 121 and 131.
5. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 121–2.
6. W. W. Skeat, ed., *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1894), 3:477; here, Skeat endorses an argument of Leigh Hunt.
7. *The Politics of Aristotle*, trans. Peter Simpson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 1273a7, (58).
8. Peter Koritansky, "Thomas Aquinas: Political Philosophy," *Internet Eyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/aqui-pol/. On the use by Aquinas of the Aristotelian distinction, see also Mary M. Keys, *Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 80.
9. *Dante, De Vulgari Eloquentia*, trans. Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), I.ii.2.

10. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum*, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 5.xxiii, (212).
11. Isidore, *Etymologies*, trans. Stephen Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.i.10; according to his translators and editors, Isidore draws this book mainly from Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Servius, Pliny, and Solinus (15).
12. Bartholomaeus, *On the Properties*, 19.cxxxi (1387), and 18.i (1101). Umberto Eco et al. point to a similar equivocation that Boethius produces in translating Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*, "On Animal Language in the Medieval Classification of Signs," in *On the Medieval Theory of Signs*, ed. Eco and Constantino Marmo (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989), 5–8.
13. Aquinas, *Sententia libri Politicorum*, I, chap. 1/b, cited in Eco et al., "On Animal Language," 33–4n30; compare with Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a.
14. Eco et al., "On Animal Language," 4.
15. *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. "lĕden" (n.). In the latest quotations in both the *MED* and the *OED*, *leden* refers to nonhuman utterance or to generalized noise or chatter.
16. Lesley Kordecki, *Ecofeminist Subjectivities: Chaucer's Talking Birds* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 93. A fuller version of my reading of the "Squire's Tale" appears in Carolynn Van Dyke, *Chaucer's Agents: Cause and Representation in Chaucerian Narrative* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 81–7.
17. My discussion of this episode is indebted to Jon Kenneth Williams, "Sleeping with an Elephant: Wales and England in the *Mabinogion*," in *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), especially 176–80.
18. Patrick K. Ford, trans., *The Mabinogi, and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 147.
19. Williams, "Sleeping with an Elephant," 177.
20. Ford, *Mabinogi,* 147. I take the creatures' grammatical gender from Mark H. Nodine, *English to Welsh Lexicon*, http://www.cs.cf.ac.uk/fun/welsh/LexiconEW.html.
21. Ford, *Mabinogi*, 147–8.
22. Craig Williamson, ed., *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), riddle 74 (110).
23. Robert Stanton, "Bark Like a Man," chap. 6, this volume.
24. Following Derek Attridge, I use "lexical onomatopoeia" for linguistic units that can be pronounced and inflected as English words (*Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* [London: Routledge, 2004], 136–7).
25. "Bark Like a Man," especially section on riddles. See also Stanton's "Mimicry, Subjectivity, and the Embodied Voice in Anglo-Saxon Bird

Riddles," in *Voice and Voicelessness in Medieval Europe*, ed. Irit Ruth Kleiman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 29–43.

26. John Henry Mozley and Robert R. Raymo, eds., *Nigel de Longchamps, Speculum Stultorum* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 65; Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, VII.3277.
27. Stanton makes a similar point in "Bark Like a Man." Like his, my examples come from Derek Abbot's table of animal sounds at http://www.eleceng.adelaide.edu.au/Personal/dabbott/animal.html.
28. Here I allude again to the statement from Derrida in my first epigraph.
29. See Donald H. Owings and Eugene S. Morton, *Animal Vocal Communication: A New Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially 105–14; and Morton and Bridget J. M. Stutchbury, "Vocal Communication in Androgynous Territorial Defense by Migratory Birds," *ISRN Zoology* (2012): 2 and 5–6. The acoustical gradients are frequency (pitch), tonality (harsh or tonal), and loudness. High tonal sounds are usually appeasing, whereas low tonal ones are aggressive, but "most communication events lie between these endpoints and most vocalizations do too"; for instance, loud "barks"—that is, sounds with mixed harshness and chevron-shaped pitch changes—are often used in ranging (Morton and Stutchbury, "Vocal Communication," 2).
30. E. Font and P. Carazo, "Animals in Translation: Why There Is Meaning (But Probably No Message) in Animal Communication," *Animal Behaviour* 80, no. 2 (August 2010): e2–3.
31. Otto Glauning, ed., *Lydgate's Minor Poems: The Nightingale Poems* (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1900), 35–6n5, 90; Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 232.
32. My first example of *ocy* is from Huon de Mery, *Le tornoiement de l'antechrist* (Reims: P. Regnier, 1851), http://archive.org/details/bub_gb_OzpOAAAAcAAJ, p. 98. The second pertains to many Passion poems; particularly influential was John Pecham's lyric "Philomena praevia." The troubadour lyric, attributed to Trebor, is in Paul Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 222.
33. Melissa Ridley Elmes, "Species or Specious? Authorial Choices in the *Parliament of Fowls*," in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 241.
34. Owings and Morton, *Animal Vocal Communication*, 116.
35. In an excellent forthcoming article in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Michael Warren reads the onomatopoeic passage in *Parliament of Fowls* as a kind of translation and connects it with the poem's allegory.
36. *Canterbury Tales*, IX.243 and following. *Cokkow* rather than *cok* is conventionally the cuckoo's call, but before Phebus deprives the crow of its song, it can "countrefete" the speech of any man and the singing of at least one bird (IX.133–8).

37. Attridge, *Peculiar Language*, 151.
38. Peter Travis, *Disseminal Chaucer: Reading the Nun's Priest's Tale* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 143; Jill Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard: Beast Literature in Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 261.
39. Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard*, 254; emphasis mine. Mann borrows "connaturality" from Peter Dronke, *Intellectuals and Poets in Medieval Europe* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1992), 193 et passim.
40. Bartholomaeus, *On the Properties*, 12.xvii (627) and 18.cxiv (1263–4).
41. Lanham, *Handlist*, 31; Patricia Parker, "Metaphor and Catachresis," in *The Ends of Rhetoric: History, Theory, Practice*, ed. John Bender and David E. Wellbery (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 61.
42. Parker, "Metaphor and Catachresis," 60; *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, ed. and trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler (London: W. Heinemann, 1921), 3:8.vi.34–46. The insertion in square brackets is Butler's.
43. Parker, "Metaphor and Catachresis," 62–3; see Butler, *Institutio*, 3:9.i.4–5.
44. Judith H. Anderson, *Translating Investments: Metaphor and the Dynamic of Cultural Change in Tudor-Stuart England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 146; Butler, *Institutio*, 3:8.vi.34. As Anderson acknowledges, the referents of *eo* remain uncertain because the sentence is preceded by "a passage of three to four lines that, according to Butler, is 'too corrupt to admit of emendation or translation'" (Anderson, *Translating Investments*, 146, citing Butler, *Institutio*, 320n1).
45. Alternatively, César Dumarsais and Jacques Derrida argue that catachresis subsumes metaphor; see Parker, "Metaphor and Catachresis," 65, and Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philology," *NLH* 6 (1974): 59.
46. Butler, *Institutio*, 3:8.31–6, and 320n2.
47. Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 21. I draw my periphrasis for Locke's "modes" from William Uzgalis, "John Locke," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016), ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/locke/.
48. Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 241.
49. de Man, "Epistemology," 21.
50. Marjorie Garber, *The Use and Abuse of Literature* (New York: Knopf, 2011), 242.
51. Chaucer, "Nun's Priest's Tale," *Canterbury Tales*, VII.2920. *American Heritage Dictionary Indo-European Roots Appendix*, s.vv. "*dhē-*" and "*-kan*"; *Middle English Dictionary*, s.vv. "*wīf*," 3.a and 3.b, and "*bērd*."

52. On medieval thinking about animals' dreams, see Trevisa, *On the Properties,* 6.xxvii, and Stephen Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 86.
53. Robert Henryson, "The Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian," in *Poems*, ed. Charles Elliott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 1754 and 2832.
54. Frederick James Furnivall, ed., "Lydgate's Horse, Goose, and Sheep," in *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1866), 292–4. The Latin is from John 19:2 and Psalms 64:14.
55. Large toads can eat small mice, though they usually don't. In the first Henryson fable that I discuss, the inappropriately pedantic Latin comes not from the victims of predation but from the swallow, whose Latinate "preiching" to the farmer's prey is ineffective.
56. My examples of animal deception are from K. L. Barry, "Sexual Deception in a Cannibalistic Mating System? Testing the Femme Fatale Hypothesis," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 282, no. 1800 (December 17, 2014): 2014–28; William A. Searcy and Stephen Nowicki, *The Evolution of Animal Communication: Reliability and Deception in Signaling Systems* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 220; and Desmond Morris, *Animalwatching: A Field Guide to Animal Behaviour* (London: Arrow, 1991), 82.
57. "Nun's Priest's Tale," VII.3431–5.
58. Furnivall, "Lydgate's Horse, Goose, and Sheep," 308–15, 321–3, 330, 384–5, and 297.

CHAPTER 9

"Dites le mei, si ferez bien": Fallen Language and Animal Communication in *Bisclavret*

Alison Langdon

Taking their cue from their classical and patristic forebears, medieval writers frequently identified the capacity for language as one of the primary distinctions between humans and other animals.[1] While some nonhuman animals were understood to possess rudimentary communication, only humans were believed capable of language that is both articulate and generative, and thus far superior. Yet human language can be unreliable, subject to interpretive difficulties and used to obscure or distort truth rather than to communicate it transparently—a problem Marie de France highlights in her twelfth-century lai of *Bisclavret*. For Kathryn Holten, "the hermeneutic key to understanding [this lai] lies in its crisis of language,"[2] a crisis she links to the question of feudal loyalty and specifically the issue of upholding or violating oaths. I would argue, however, that the crisis of language in *Bisclavret* could be defined more broadly, for here human language and its ability to convey truth is itself a fundamental problem. Ultimately the lai reveals the fallibility of human language and calls into question its status as the privileged form of communication.

Marie's lai hinges on a betrayal that traps its eponymous werewolf knight in canine form. Bisclavret's wife, distressed by her husband's

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repeated, mysterious disappearances each week and fearing he loves another, cajoles her husband with promises of her continued love into his reluctant confession that during his absences he enters the forest and becomes a wolf. The lady then pressures Bisclavret into revealing the process of his transformation: he must have his human clothing in order to resume human form. Still more pressure draws out the secret location where Bisclavret hides his clothing while in wolf form. After these revelations, Bisclavret's horrified wife promptly turns to another knight who has long sought her love and offers herself to him; she then persuades the knight to steal Bisclavret's clothing while he is transformed. A year passes, until one day the king encounters the wolf in the forest while hunting and is struck by his noble and courteous behavior. The wolf returns with the king to court, where all are amazed at the animal's gentle manners. Thus when the knight who assisted the lady's treachery appears at court and the wolf repeatedly tries to attack him, the court assumes that the knight must have harmed the wolf in some way. The lady's appearance provokes an even more violent response from the wolf, who fiercely bites off her nose. Advice from a wise counselor convinces the king that there must be a reason for the beast's hatred, and so the wife is tortured until she confesses her treachery and reveals where she has hidden her erstwhile husband's clothing. Bisclavret is restored to human form, the wife and her lover are punished with exile, and the wife's disfiguration is passed down through many of her female descendants.

Many have read Bisclavret's entrapment in wolf form as a problematic descent into animality that must later be overcome. Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante, for example, describe the lai as a whole as "a parable about the forces of bestiality that exist within human nature" that is "concerned with the human capacity to manifest nobility even under the most trying conditions, and thus to transcend the animal part of our nature and garner the hard-won benefits of civilization."[3] Similarly, Joyce Salisbury argues that Bisclavret gives in to his carnal animal nature by allowing his wife's blandishments to sway his better judgment, and it is only because he retains rational human thought that he is able to be restored to human form.[4] But one might observe that it is Bisclavret's participation in the peculiarly human phenomenon of verbal language that leads to his predicament in the first place.

Marie alludes to the slipperiness of language from the very beginning of her tale, where she introduces a number of indeterminancies revolving around the term *bisclavret*. The etymology of the word itself is unclear.

The most generally accepted hypothesis is "wolf-sick," though, as Matthieu Boyd notes, this may connote either a wolf that is ill (i.e., a rabid wolf) or one who is suffering from a wolf disease (lycanthropy).[5] Other suggestions have included "rational wolf"[6] or "wolf in pants."[7] *Bisclavret* is complicated by its ambiguous referent: in the opening lines the term may be read as referring to the name of the lai itself, to the translation of the Anglo-Norman word *garwuf*, to the category of creature that is werewolf, and to the lai's protagonist.[8] Initially Marie appears to offer *bisclavret* as the Breton equivalent of the Anglo-Norman *garwuf*: "Garwuf, c[eo] est beste salvage /Tant cum il est en cele rage,/Hummes devure, grant mal fait" ("The *garwuf* is a wild beast:/So much that when he is in that madness,/ He devours people, does great harm").[9] Yet as others have noted Marie immediately seems to distance herself from that characterization as it relates to her protagonist: "Cest afere les ore ester;/Del bisclaveret [vus] voil cunter" ("Now let this matter be;/I want to tell you of the *bisclavret*")] (13–14). Marie's ambiguous use here of the Breton and Anglo-Norman words for "werewolf" confuses our expectations of the werewolf in her tale, and indeed as the lai unfolds it becomes harder and harder to see the two terms as interchangeable; *garwaf* does not neatly translate into *bisclavret*. Within fourteen short lines, *bisclavret* has become hopelessly overdetermined, creating a surplus that undoes meaning rather than stabilizes it.

Marie's diction in her description of the wife and the way she brings Bisclavret to confess his secret is similarly ambiguous. Unlike her husband, who is described in unequivocally positive terms as a "beaus chevalers e bons esteit" ("fine, handsome knight") who "noblement se cunteneit"[10] ("behaved nobly") (17–18), Bisclavret's wife is described as "mut vailant" ("very worthy") (21). First, although "noble" and "vailant" are often read as synonymous in their reference to worth, given that Marie has just given us an example of the ways that two terms appearing to refer to the same thing are not in fact equivalent we should be careful not to conflate the two here. We might note instead that the knight's worthiness is rooted in behavior, whereas his wife's worthiness is referred to with a term that largely connotes social standing.[11] In other words, Bisclavret is described in terms of character, his wife in terms of status or appearances. More problematic is the wife's description as one who "feseit beu semblant" (22). Translations of the poem typically render this phrase as referring to the wife's physical beauty, but the most literal translation is "made a fair appearance."[12] Given the wife's duplicitous behavior throughout the lai,

I would argue that the emphasis here should fall on *semblant*, which carries its own range of ambiguities. Though it may be translated as a reference to physical appearance, *semblant* also connotes "pretense," "show" or "disguise."[13] In other words, then, Marie's diction here in the exposition of her tale already suggests that her audience should be open to a potential disconnect between appearance and reality, particularly as manifested through language.

Duplicity and deceit are embedded in the language Marie uses to refer to the wife's attempts to wheedle the truth out of her husband. Bisclavret is reluctant to reveal his secret, but his wife is persistent:

> Suventefeiz li demanda;
> Tant le blandi e losenga
> Que s'aventure li cunta;
> Nule chose ne li cela. (59–62)
>
> Often she questioned him,
> cajoled and flattered/deceived/beguiled him so much,
> that he told her what happened to him—
> he hid nothing from her.

Again, translation obscures the ambiguity of Marie's language.[14] *Losenga* means not merely to flatter but to deceive or beguile.[15] Later, when Bisclavret's wife tries to discover the means of her husband's transformation, Marie writes that she "tant l'anguissa, tant le suzprist,/Ne pout el faire, si li dist" (87–88). Paired with *l'anguissa* ("torment"), most translations render *suzprist* as something akin to "nagged,"[16] but here, too, possible definitions include "to deceive or take in."[17] Though love for his wife may be a motivating factor in Bisclavret's acquiescence, that acquiescence is secured through the wife's verbal persuasion. What entraps Bisclavret is not so much a descent into animality as entanglement in human language, allowing his wife's words to overcome his misgivings.

Having destabilized our reliance on verbal language through carefully ambiguous diction, Marie's tale suggests that we should look to other means of communicating truth. Jean Jorgensen argues that Bisclavret's loss of language silences him and reduces him to mute animal gesture, but Bisclavret "speaks" quite clearly in his canine form, if not through verbal language.[18] As Carolynn Van Dyke observes earlier in this volume, "creatures reveal what they do and are."[19] Throughout Marie's lai, the animal

behavioral register communicates far more clearly than does human language, and in attending to that register we may begin to discover that the linguistic indeterminacy of *bisclavret* no longer matters, for we are able to determine what this bisclavret is based on what he communicates nonverbally. From his first appearance in canine form, Bisclavret confounds Marie's earlier description of werewolves by behaving not like a marauding wolf but like a dog.[20] One of the most striking instances is his initial approach to the king, when he rears up to place his paws on the king's stirrup and kisses his leg and foot: "Vers lui curut quere merci./Il l'aveit pris par sun estrié,/La jambe li baise e le pié"("he ran to him beseeching mercy./He took hold of the king's stirrup,/Kissed his leg and foot") (146–48). Scholars have noted the ways in which Bisclavret's approach mimics the act of homage, and this is usually the primary instance presented as evidence of the man trapped inside the wolf.[21] However, while we may indeed read this moment as a human demonstration of fealty evoking the rites of homage, Susan Crane reminds us that it is equally evocative of dog behavior, for "it seems as plausible that one of the king's dogs might lick his foot as that one of his huntsman might kiss it. To the extent that the werewolf's gestures recall a dog's, they are not evidently due to the 'mind of a man.'"[22] Though the behavior may be read two ways—as a human knight doing homage to his lord, or as a dog fawning on his master—the signification is the same: it functions as a declaration of submission and affection, a declaration that is clearly perceived and understood by the king.

This encounter effectively defines both the terms by which the king reads the wolf and the nature of the relationship that develops between them, which despite outward appearances is more that of man and dog than man and wolf.[23] Marie's language invites us to compare the wife's and king's responses to Bisclavret-as-wolf. After she hears the "merveille" ("marvel") (97) of her husband's lycanthropy, Bisclavret's wife "de poür fu tute vermeille" ("reddened with fear") and immediately begins to plot her betrayal.[24] In contrast, though the king also initially "grant poür ad" ("felt great fear") (149) when he sees the "merveille" (152) of the docile wolf in the forest, he carefully reads Bisclavret's eloquent canine behavior and just as immediately responds appropriately by calling off his hunters and extending his protection. Bisclavret continues to communicate in a doggish register, exhibiting the famed devotion we find in descriptions of dogs in bestiaries, zoological treatises, and hunting manuals. Echoing Bartholomaeus Anglicus's assertion that dogs "loueþ company of men

and moue nouȝte be wiþouten men,"[25] Bisclavret will not be separated from the king: "Le bisclavret li vet siwant;/Mut se tint pres, n'en vout partir,/Il n'ad cure de lui guerpir" ("The bisclavret went along following him;/He kept himself very close, he would not leave,/He had no desire to forsake him") (162–64). Bisclavret's behavior elicits a corresponding response from the king, who takes the wolf with him wherever he goes:

> U ke li reis deüst errer,
> Il n'out cure de desevrer;
> Ensemble od li tuz jurs alout:
> Bien s'aparceit quë il l'amout. (181–84)
>
> Wherever the king must go,
> He had no desire to part from him;
> He went together with him always:
> He could see well that he loved him.

The king's behavior is described in terms that clearly echo that of the wolf. Moreover, the mutual loyalty fostered between them is reinforced by the ambiguous use of pronouns in these lines that obscure who is subject and who is object. Nonverbal communication here has created harmony and unity, whereas the wife's verbal language had led to misunderstanding and division.

As Carl Grey Martin observes, the king serves as a model of perception and good judgment by hesitating to use violence against a creature categorically assumed to be inimical to humans. Instead, he carefully evaluates what is communicated by the wolf's individual behavior.[26] Unlike Bisclavret's wife, the king considers this particular wolf's behavior, weighing it against what he knows about lupine behavior and marking this wolf's deviation from that pattern in favor of another. The king's model is then followed by the court, which imitates the precedent of mutual trust and loyalty between human and wolf: "N'i ad celui que ne l'ad chier;/Tant esteit franc e deboniere,/Unques ne volt a rien mesfeire" ("There was no one who did not hold him dear;/He was so noble and gentle,/He never wished to do wrong in any way") (179–80). This precedent is supported and reinforced by medieval generalizations concerning dog behavior, which acknowledge the canine capacity for discernment and good judgment. We may trace parallels here with dog behavior as described in Edward, Duke of York's *The Master of the Game:* "He shuld be curtaise and nouȝt to felle, wel folowyng his maistere and doyng whateuere he

hym comaundeþ he shuld be good and kindly and clene, glad and ioyful and playeng, wel willyng and goodly to all maner folkes." At court, surrounded by those who uphold the bond of mutual loyalty, Bisclavret-as-wolf responds in kind. The only exception to the dog's gentle behavior that Edward finds is against "wilde beestis vpon whom he shuld be felle spitous and egre,"[27] and when Bisclavret does break out in uncharacteristic violence, the court does not immediately conclude that he has become rabid or reverted to a feral state. Dogs are allowed aggression against appropriate targets; given the behavioral precedent Bisclavret has already established, the court generally allows the wolf the benefit of the doubt when he attacks first his wife's new husband and later the wife herself.[28]

The specific nature of Bisclavret's attack on his wife clarifies the true meaning of her earlier description as "beu semblant"; now her fair appearance has been revealed as false seeming, her disfiguration as emblematic of her "beastly" inner nature and the falseness of her speech.[29] Bisclavret's mute canine judgment of his wife is meaningful enough to prompt the wife's inquisition by the court and thereby enable his restoration to human form.[30] As Crane has shown, there is a longstanding precedent in medieval texts for dogs as arbiters of justice—most famously the dog of Antioch, who identifies his master's murderer and persuades the human community of the man's guilt.[31] This popular story with origins in Ambrose's *Hexameron* is taken up by Gerald of Wales and is included in multiple versions of descriptions of dogs in the bestiary tradition. Notably, the human capacity for and susceptibility to deception and false seeming is a key element in this tale: "It happened that the man who had committed the crime, acting confidently in order to convince people of his innocence—such is the cunning way in which men think—joined the circle of onlookers and, feigning grief, approached the corpse. Then the dog, briefly abandoning its doleful lament, took up the arms of vengeance, seized the man and held him."[32] In this instance the truth communicated by the dog's behavior is trusted over the murderer's dissembling, perhaps in a parallel to Bisclavret's wife.

Bisclavret's attack similarly communicates guilt, the nature of which is understood by the humans in the story, as well as by many modern readers to be sexual infidelity. The standard explanation is that cutting off the nose was a punishment for a number of crimes, but typically adultery.[33] Though Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner questions whether this was true outside of folklore, finding no mention of such punishment in medieval feudal or canon law,[34] Cnut's second law code mandates removal of an unfaithful

wife's nose and ears in addition to loss of property and public humiliation ("woruldsceame"),[35] and Valentin Groebner cites frequent mention of nose-cutting as private vengeance for sexual infidelity in the judicial records of Nuremberg from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[36] However, I would argue that viewing the wife's noselessness as a symbol of her adulterous nature imposes a specifically human meaning that somewhat misses the mark. For all that Groebner's brief synopsis of the lai asserts that Bisclavret's "unfaithful wife maliciously bans him to his animal form in order to live with her lover,"[37] Marie makes it quite clear that the wife had no interest in the knight who sought her love: "Ele ne l'aveit unc amé/Ne de s'amur aseüré" ("She'd never loved him at all/Nor assured him of her love") (107–108). Only *after* she has decided to take advantage of the knight's devotion to her as a means of getting rid of her husband does she accept his advances. Moreover, Bisclavret's wife does not merely abandon her husband for another but, rather, betrays her husband's deepest trust.

To approach the significance of noselessness from a canine perspective may deepen our understanding of the poem's central concerns. While medieval people would not have known the physiology of animal cognition and communication, they were nevertheless aware of the seemingly preternatural ability of dogs to judge correctly emotions and intentions that are invisible to human senses. Among all animals, domestic or wild, in the Middle Ages dogs were particularly noted for their intelligence, and that intelligence manifests in part through their extraordinary powers of olfaction. Closely following his source in Gaston Phébus's *Le Livre de chasse,* Edward of Norwich describes the dog as a creature "of greet vndirstondynge and of greet knowynge" and specifically implies a connection between the dog's intelligence and sense of smell: "an hounde hath greet mynde and greet smelling."[38] Drawing on a passage in Ambrose's *Hexameron*, the bestiary tradition also links scent and cognition:

> Cani vero ubi vestigium leporis cervive reppererit, atque ad diverti culum semite venerit, et quoddam viarum compitum, quod partes in plurimas scinditur, obiciens singularum semitarum exordia tacitus secum ipse pertractat, velud sillogisticam vocem, saga citatem colligendi odoris emittens. Aut in hanc partem, inquid deflexit aut in illam, aut certe in hunc se anfractum contulit.[39]
>
> When a dog picks up the track of a hare or a deer and comes to a place where the trail divides or to a junction splitting into several directions, it goes to the beginning of each path and silently reasons with itself, as if by syllogism, on the basis of its keen sense of smell. "Either the animal went off in this direction," it says, "or that, or certainly it took this turning."

In one last example, Gerald of Wales notes the way that dogs depend more on their noses than on their eyes and will use scent to confirm what they see, "as if nature had placed all the powers of infallibility in that feature."[40]

Modern science confirms that, in contrast with humans, the dog's nose is a primary tool for communication. Dogs not only have multiple sensory systems devoted to olfaction but also have 220 million to 2 billion olfactory neurons in comparison to a paltry 12 to 40 million in humans.[41] A dog's nose dominates not only his face but also his brain, which is predominately shaped and structured to process information it receives from scents.[42] Certainly many today are aware of the dog's remarkable ability not only to sniff out drugs and explosives but also to detect subtle changes in biochemistry that presage epileptic seizures or dangerously low blood sugar, or even the presence of cancer. It is difficult to overemphasize the degree to which dogs rely on scent for social communication. Among the most important scents are pheromones, which convey information not only about sexual readiness but a host of other kinds of information as well, including state of mind. As neuropsychologist and dog behavior expert Stanley Coren explains, "Reading pheromone scents is, for the dog, the equivalent of reading a written message about the status and feelings of another animal," a faculty that may serve an important evolutionary purpose: "for social animals like dogs … knowing the emotional state of his companions might increase the chances of survival of the whole pack."[43] This is equally true in domestic environments, for "dogs that live in the same household will sniff each other frequently to get a quick update on how their housemate is feeling today and advance warning of any negative or aggressive feelings."[44] The nose is thus an important means by which the dog knows who is friend and who is foe.

Though humans have evolved to have a greater reliance on sight than on scent, the persistence of the nose as a metaphor for knowing (to sniff out the truth, plain as the nose on one's face) suggests our continuing, implicit recognition of the significance of scent and the insights the nose can provide. This may at least partially account for Gregory the Great's explication of the nose in his *Book of Pastoral Rule* as a symbol of discernment "whereby we elect virtue and reject sin."[45] Thinking of the nose as an instrument of knowing is the key to understanding its significance in *Bisclavret*. Leslie Dunton-Downer makes the tantalizing suggestion that Marie is playing on the Old French idiom "n'avoir point du nez," which means to be unreasonable or to lack good sense. For Dunton-Downer, the idiomatic connection she notes is evidence that the wife's punishment is

poetic and thus inherently human: "The poetic nature of the act (i.e., its ipseity, that no other act or body part would mean as much or as well as the nose) is the supreme sign of the wolf's humanness and of his possession of a self, a linguistic interiority."[46] Poetic, yes—but also supremely canine, for in depriving his wife of her nose, Bisclavret has rendered his wife dependent solely upon sight and sound—those senses most vulnerable to deception by others. Bisclaveret's wife can now only rely on more fallible human means of discerning truth. This is a *contrapasso* of which Dante would be proud, in which the figurative nature of the wife's sin—her failure to perceive and act on truth correctly—is made concrete and literal. The wife's noselessness thus marks her outwardly as evil at the same time that it deprives her of the instrument—metaphorical for humans, literal for canines—that would allow her to recognize evil intent in others. Moreover, the strange heritability of her disfiguration might be understood as her inability to foster accurate social communication in many of her daughters.[47]

So far I have focused on the role of the nose in olfactory communication, but the nose as part of the muzzle plays an important role in canine visual communication as well. Even in humans, for whom the nose is far less visually expressive than the mouth, the nose still may convey a small range of emotional responses: wrinkling in disgust, flaring in anger or fear, crinkling with laughter. Integrating the nose and mouth, the canine muzzle is similarly expressive. One particularly relevant example is the variety of emotional states indicated by the grin. While it is true, despite what many dog enthusiasts claim, that dogs do not smile in the same way that humans do,[48] the dog's repertoire of facial expressions includes both submissive and agonistic grins (also known as the agonistic pucker). Most humans readily recognize the latter, which manifests as the classic aggressive snarl: lips drawn back to expose the canine and incisor teeth, nose wrinkled, corners of the mouth drawn forward.[49] It is a clear expression of aggression and hostility, a warning signal indicating threat (Fig. 9.1). Humans who are unfamiliar with the submissive grin often misread it for a sign of aggression as well, but in fact it is a gesture of appeasement indicating lack of threat. While the teeth are bared and the nose wrinkled, the corners of the mouth are pulled back horizontally rather than forward (Fig. 9.2).

In combination with other meta-signals such as body posture, these facial expressions convey much about a dog's inner state of mind.[50] Like the king in Marie's lai, it requires a careful reader of canine behavior to judge character and intent.

The consequences of modern dog breeding provide some illustration of the importance of facial morphology in canine communication. The

Fig. 9.1 Agonistic pucker. Image courtesy Micah Kraus

Fig. 9.2 Submissive grin. Image courtesy Micah Kraus

explosion of human-selected breeding in the nineteenth century and onward has led to the creation of hundreds of dog breeds with a tremendous variety of morphological characteristics, many of which may profoundly impact communication. Some breeds, like pugs and bulldogs, are severely brachycephalic, with foreshortened skulls and extremely flat snouts and no muzzle to speak of—characteristics that have become even more exaggerated in recent decades.[51] In such breeds the nose area is always wrinkled and teeth-baring may be impossible because of prominent

overhanging lips. In brachycephalic breeds, "this diminishment of social signaling capacity is noteworthy because communication, as well as interpretation of communicative signals, is integral to modulating social interactions."[52] Brachycephaly makes it difficult for such a dog to communicate precisely through facial expressions, obscuring, for example, whether he is curling his lips in a grimace of appeasement or as an indication of aggression and hostility.[53] One can only imagine the suspicion with which a medieval canine might regard a modern brachycephalic pug, mutilated through human intervention as much as Bisclavret's wife is mutilated by the vengeful wolf, both rendered illegible.[54]

It is significant that after his wife's betrayal Bisclavet never speaks in the lai again, even after he is restored to human form; nor, indeed, does the king, whose nonlinguistic embrace with his beloved knight suggests he has learned something from Bisclavret's way of communicating. Curiously, moreover, when Bisclavret's clothing is returned to him he shows little interest in it, only resuming human form after some time in privacy. For some readers of the lai, this is further evidence that Bisclavret's werewolf state is something to be shunned, even a fate worse than death.[55] Though the wise councilor who helps uncover the truth of the matter supposes that Bisclavret is ashamed to change his beastly appearance before the king, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen points out that it makes little sense that Bisclavret would feel shame in returning to the supposedly superior state of human being.[56] Little sense, that is, unless the unequivocal superiority of that state is called into question. In other words, Bisclavret's shame is not of his nudity or of his canine body; as Crane argues, the shame Bisclavret expresses at assuming the clothing that marks his return to humanity is representative of our postlapsarian lack.[57] One aspect of this lack, I would suggest, is our overdependency on verbal means of communication as the means of conveying truth. Paradoxically, the very capacity that medieval people believed set humans apart from other animals—the possession of reason, with the concomitant ability to signify—also increases our capacity to deceive and be deceived through language.

Medieval bestiaries provide ample evidence of the ways in which humans inscribe animal bodies with human symbolic meaning. The wolf, for instance, becomes a multi-layered representation of the devil, not only in behavior but also in his lupine physiognomy: "[T]hat the wolf's strength is in his front end and not in his hindquarters signifies that the same Devil was first an angel of light in Heaven, but is now cast down apostate. The wolf's eyes shine in the light like lanterns, because certain of the Devil's works

appear beautiful and wholesome to blind and foolish men…. That the wolf can never turn his neck around without having to turn his whole body signifies that the Devil is never turned toward the reproof of repentance."[58] It is commonplace for humans to impose their own symbolic meaning on animal bodies, to interpret them in human terms, a habit perpetuated by traditional humanist scholars such as Beryl Rowland, who insisted that medieval writers found "animals interesting not as creatures in themselves but as types illustrative of humanity."[59] In *Bisclavret*, however, the wolf literally enfigures the human body with animal meaning via a sign—noselessness—that communicates ambiguity and distrust. Such a reading of Marie's lai provides us with the tools to read not only as humans but also as animals, acknowledging nonhuman experience as part of meaning-making. Soliciting the truth of her husband's condition, Bisclavret's wife demands of him, "Dites le me, si ferez bien" ("Tell me, if you would do well") (85). We would do well, indeed, if we listen to what animals tell us.

Notes

1. In his overview of Greco-Roman views on language and animals, Thorsten Fögen explains that "ancient theories on the origin of culture often single out verbal communication among the special talents of humans." "Animal Communication," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life,* ed. Gordon L. Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 216. Echoing Aristotle, Isocrates, and Quintilian, Augustine implicitly connects language with reason, which humans alone possess and which allows them to ask questions of the created world through which God is made manifest. *Confessions*, vol. 2: Books 9–13, ed. and trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 10.10. Medieval philosophers continue in this vein. Odo of Tournai, for example, reiterates the view that only the human soul is capable of producing speech that is evidence of its rational power: "Reason … has the property of speech, so that only that which has reason has speech." Odo of Tournai, *On Original Sin,* Book II, in *On Original Sin and a Disputation with the Jew, Leo, on the Advent of Christ, the Son of God*, trans. Irven M. Resnick (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 52. In *De animalibus*, IV.2.2, Albertus Magnus differentiates the natural, instinctive language of animals—the ability to produce sounds (*sonus*) and to communicate emotion (*vox*)—from conventional human language that allowed expression of abstract concepts (*sermo*). For a detailed analysis of

Albertus's views on the distinctions between animal and human languages, see Irven M. Resnick and Kenneth F. Kitchell, Jr., "Albert the Great on the 'Language' of Animals," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1996): 41–61.

2. Kathryn Holten, "Metamorphosis and Language in the Lay of *Bisclavret*," in *In Quest of Marie de France, a Twelfth-Century Poet,* ed. Chantal A. Maréchal (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 202.
3. Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante, ed. and trans., *The Lais of Marie de France* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1978), 101.
4. Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 145.
5. Matthieu Boyd, "The Ancients' Savage Obscurity: The Etymology of *Bisclavret*," *Notes and Queries* 60, no. 2 (2013): 199.
6. H. W. Bailey, "I in Marie de France," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 1 (1981): 95–7.
7. Joseph Loth, "Le Lai du Bisclavret: le sens de ce nom et son importance," *Revue Celtique* 44 (1927): 300–7.
8. Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 169–71. See also Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, "Of Men and Beasts in *Bisclavret,*" *Romanic Review* 81, no. 3 (1991): 253–4.
9. Marie de France, "Bisclavret,"in *Lais*, ed. Alfred Ewert (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1995), 9–11. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Marie's lai are from Hanning and Ferrante, *Lais of Marie de France*, 92–100. Subsequent references are made by line number within the text.
10. The past participle of *contenir* can also function as an adjective meaning "reliable" or "trustworthy." *Anglo-Norman Dictionary,* def. 1, http://www.anglo-norman.net/.
11. "Vaillant," *Anglo-Norman Dictionary,* def. a.1, s.1, s.3.
12. Hanning and Ferrante render "beu semblant" as "of lovely appearance," while in their prose translation, Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby offer "attractive in appearance"; *The Lais of Marie de France* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 68. Note, however, that Claire Waters translates this as "made [Bisclavret] good cheer"; *Bisclavret*, in *The Broadview Anthology of English Literature, Vol. 1: The Medieval Period*, 2nd ed., ed. Joseph Black et al. (Peterborough, NH: Broadview Press, 2009), 183.
13. "Semblant," *Anglo-Norman Dictionary,* def. 4; def. 5. Though postdating Marie's lai by half a century or more, the figure of Faux Semblant in *Le Roman de la Rose* reinforces the semantic emphasis on deceit here.
14. Burgess and Busby's translation eliminates the verb entirely: "coaxed him so persuasively"; Burgess and Busby, *Lais of Marie de France*, 69.
15. "Losenger[2]," *Anglo-Norman Dictionary.* Intriguingly, in "Melion," a close analogue to Marie's lai, the narrator uses precisely the same phrase,

"tant les blandi e losenga" (270), to refer to the way that the titular character (also trapped in wolf form by a duplicitous wife) persuades a company of natural wolves to join him in marauding the surrounding countryside. The phrase is used again in the dénouement of "Melion," when the wife's father persuades her to return the ring that will restore Melion's human form (530). In both cases the phrase is used in a context in which the auditors are essentially persuaded to incriminate themselves. "Melion," in *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werewolf Lays*, ed. and trans. Amanda Hopkins (Liverpool Online Series, 2005), http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/cultures-languages-and-area-studies/liverpoolonline/Werwolf.pdf.

16. Burgess and Busby render *suzprist* here as "harried"; Burgess and Busby, *Lais of Marie de France*, 69.
17. "Suzprendre," *Anglo-Norman Dictionary,* def. 7. Hanning and Ferrante's translation perhaps nears this sense: "She harassed and bedeviled him so"; Hanning and Ferrante, *Lais of Marie de France*.
18. "It is language that betrays and eventually silences him as he is reduced to gesture in the animal state to which he will shortly be condemned." Jean Jorgenson, "The Lycanthropy Metaphor in Marie de France's *Bisclavret*," *Selecta* 15 (1994): 26.
19. See Van Dyke, "Understanding Hawk-Latin: Animal Language and Universal Rhetoric," Chap. 8, this volume.
20. For extended discussion of Bisclavret's doggishness, see Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 60–3; and Alison Langdon, "The Nose Knows: Encountering the Canine in *Bisclavret*," *Enarratio* 18 (2013): 52–6.
21. Leslie Sconduto, *Metamorphosis of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 45.
22. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 59.
23. The relationship between the king and the wolf echoes current theories of dog domestication. Counter to previous views which held that domestication was an entirely human-initiated event, perhaps through raising stolen or orphaned cubs, scientists now generally believe that the process may have been initiated by wolves who had carved out an ecological niche for themselves on the periphery of human settlements, naturally selecting those individuals with greater tolerance of humans. See Raymond Coppinger and Lorna Coppinger, *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Origin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Darcy Morey, *Dogs: Domestication and Development of a Social Bond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
24. That Bisclavret's wife should turn red with fear, rather than pale, has always struck me as curious. An uncharitable conclusion might be that

Marie simply needed a rhyme with *merveille* but the effect is to create further ambiguity concerning the wife's motivations.

25. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of De propietatubus rerum: A Critical Text,* ed. M. C. Seymour et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2:1165.
26. Carl Grey Martin, "*Bisclavret* and the Subject of Torture," *Romanic Review* 104, nos. 1–2 (2013): 29.
27. Edward of Norwich, *Master of the Game, by Edward, Second Duke of York,* ed. William A. Baillie-Groham and Florence Baillie-Groham (London: Ballantyne, Hanson, 1904), 63 (115). As the Middle English edition is difficult to find, I provide page numbers in parentheses for the modernized 1909 edition as well.
28. Mut s'esmerveillent li plusur;
    Kar unkes tel semblant ne fist
    Vers nul hume kë il veïst.
    Ceo dïent tut par la meisun
    Ke il nel fet mie sanze reisun:
    Mesfait li ad, coment que seit;
    Kar volenters se vengereit.

    Everyone was quite amazed,
    for he had never seemed or behaved thus
    toward any man he had seen.
    Throughout the palace they said
    that he would not do so without reason:
    this knight had mistreated him, however it might be;
    for this he would avenge himself. (204–10)

29. For example, Michelle Freeman concludes that the werewolf's wife "devour[s] the human being who was her husband, having made him, as well as her lover, prey to her own ambitions and pride. In this sense, the *bisclavret's* Lady turns out to be the real werewolf, or *garvalf*, of the story"; her noselessness is thus highly appropriate as it makes her "outward appearance fit her inner reality at last and her speech match her looks"; see Michelle Freeman, "Dual Natures and Subverted Glosses: Marie de France's *Bisclavret*," *Romance Notes* 25 (1985): 294, 298. In Emma Campbell's analysis, "the threatening animality associated with the werewolf is … displaced from Bisclavret to the duplicitous wife"; see Emma Campbell, "Political Animals: Human/Animal Life in *Bisclavret* and *Yonec*," *Exemplaria* 25, no. 2 (2013): 98.
30. For more on Bisclavret's canine eloquence, see Susan Crane, "How to Translate a Werewolf," in *The Medieval Translator/Traduire au Moyen Âge,* ed. Jacqueline Jenkins and Olivier Bertrand (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 368.

31. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 61–2.
32. *The Aberdeen Bestiary,* University of Aberdeen, 19r–19v, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/19r.hti.
33. See Glyn S. Burgess, *The Lais of Marie de France: Text and Context* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 104; and Judith Rice Rothschild, *Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France: Themes and Variations,* vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), 135n115.
34. Bruckner, "Of Men and Beasts," 262.
35. Gif be cwicum ceorle
    wif hi be oþrum were forlicge, hit open weorþe,
    geweoþe heo to woruldsceame syþþan hyre sylfre,
    hæbbe se rihtwer eall flæt heo ahte; heo flolige
    nasa earena.

    In Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen,* 3 vols. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903–16), 1:348.
36. Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages,* trans. Pamela Selwyn (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 72.
37. Groebner, *Defaced,* 75.
38. Edward, *Master of the Game,* 44; Gaston Phébus, *Le Livre de chasse,* ed. Gunnar Tilander, Cynegetica 18 (Kalrlshamn: Johanssons, 1971), 109.
39. *Aberdeen Bestiary,* fol. 18v, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/18v.hti.
40. Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales and The Description of Wales,* trans. Lewis Thorpe (New York: Penguin, 1978), 130.
41. Ádám Miklósi, *Dog Behavior, Evolution, and Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 144.
42. Stanley Coren, *How Dogs Think: What the World Looks Like to Them and Why They Act the Way They Do* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 50.
43. Coren, *How Dogs Think,* 60, 61.
44. Coren, *How Dogs Think,* 62.
45. Gregory the Great, *The Book of Pastoral Rule,* trans. George Demacopoulos (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 45.
46. Leslie Dunton-Downer, "Wolf Man," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages,* ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), 209.
47. I am indebted to Carolynn Van Dyke for this observation.
48. Some dogs exhibit a "greeting grin" that resembles a human smile, with the corners of the mouth pulled back but no baring of teeth. This behavior may in fact be a mimicry of the human smile, for it is only seen in human–dog interactions, not among conspecifics; see Michael W. Fox, "Inter-Species Interaction Differences in Play Actions in Canids," *Applied Animal Ethology* 2, no. 2 (1976): 185. Many dogs also exhibit a "play-face" with lips retracted horizontally and jaw slightly open; see Barbara Handelman,

Canine Behavior: A Photo Illustrated Handbook (Norwich, VT: Woof and Word Press, 2008), 197. One may find multiple examples of this sort of expression in *Bark Magazine's* "Smiling Dogs" gallery, http://smiling-dogs.thebark.com.

49. Handelman, *Canine Behavior,* 13.
50. Handelman, *Canine Behavior,* 165.
51. For a dramatic image of changes in skull structure of the British bulldog over the last 50 years that illustrates the extreme foreshortening of the nasal cavity indicative of brachycephaly, see Aidan McAlinden, "What Is a Brachycephalic Dog?" *The Veterinary Expert,* accessed 14 March 2017, http://www.the-veterinaryexpert.com/nose-and-throat/brachycephalic-dog/.
52. Julie Hecht and Alexandra Horowitz, "Introduction to Dog Behavior," in *Animal Behavior for Shelter Veterinarians and Staff*, ed. Emily Weiss, Heather Mohan-Gibbs, and Stephen Zawistowski (Ames, IA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 14.
53. Andrew Luescher, "Canine Behavior and Development," in *Canine and Feline Behavior for Veterinary Technicians and Nurses,* ed. Julie Shaw and Debbie Martin (Ames, IA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 34.
54. Though some might object to my reference to human-induced brachycephalic features as mutilation, veterinary studies repeatedly demonstrate the negative effects of these artificially-selected traits, not only on communication but also on physical health. Brachycephaly is a significant factor in a chronic, debilitating respiratory condition known as brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome, and in corneal ulceration due to severe flattening of the skull. See Rowena M. A. Packer, Anke Hendricks, Michael S. Tivers, and Charlotte C. Burn, "Impact of Facial Conformation on Canine Health: Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome," *PLoS One* 10, no. 10 (2015): 1–21; Rowena M. A. Packer, Anke Hendricks, and Charlotte Burn, "Impact of Facial Conformation on Canine Health: Corneal Ulceration," *PLoS One* 10, no. 5 (2015): 1–16; and Kathryn Pratschke, "Current Thinking About Brachycephalic Syndrome: More Than Just Airways," *Companion Animal* 19, no. 2 (2014): 70–8.
55. See, for instance, Tovi Bibring commenting on the nature of the wife's crime: "Elle est criminelle parce qu'elle veut le vouer à une existence pire que la mort" ("She is a criminal because she would condemn him to an existence worse than death"); "Sexualité Douteuse et Bestialité Trompeuse dans *Bisclavret* de Marie de France," *French Studies* 63, no. 1 (2009): 5; see also François Suard, who describes Bisclavret's entrapment in werewolf form as "un véritable meurtre" ("a veritable murder"); "*Bisclavret* et les Contes du Loup-Garou: Essai d'Interprétation," *Marche Romane* 30 (1980): 274.

56. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "The Werewolf's Indifference," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 34 (2012): 355.
57. Of the scene in which Bisclavret recovers human form by covering his nakedness, Crane notes that "for many readers, [Bisclavret] ascends here to the hard-won superiority of human status. I see also a dissonant implication in which the odd spectacle of a werewolf expressing shame when presented with clothing represents man's fallen condition—his knowledge of good and evil, his sinfulness. The bisclavret inflicts a mark of shame on his wife, but shame also marks him as he leaves his animal body to take a man's naked form. Here it is not the other animals but their fallen human counterparts who exist in lack." Crane, *Animal Encounters,* 66.
58. *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary,* ed. Willene B. Clark (London: Boydell, 2006), 143–4.
59. Beryl Rowland, *Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal* World (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1971), 17.

PART III

Embodied Language and Interspecies Dependence

CHAPTER 10

On Equine Language: Jordanus Rufus and Thirteenth-Century Communicative Horsemanship

Elizabeth S. Leet

As manager and head trainer at the imperial stables of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, the objective of Sicilian horseman Jordanus Rufus was to develop superlative methods of horse training. The crucial role of horses in Frederick's itinerant imperial court rendered Rufus an integral figure.[1] Exorbitantly expensive, physically delicate, and emotionally volatile, horses constituted a risky investment.[2] While under Frederick's patronage, Rufus brought real, concrete solutions for this risk, which he recorded in the first new horsemanship text of the Middle Ages. Although Rufus's original *De medicina equorum* has been lost, an Old French translation from the same period remains to illustrate his influential methods for ensuring the health, well-being, and obedience of the emperor's chivalric mounts.

Entitled *La marechaucie des chevaux* (*The Healing and Care of Horses*),[3] Rufus's manual directly addresses the situations in which handlers and riders encounter difficulties with their mounts. Especially when discussing the initiation of each horse to work with people, the use and abuse of violent equipment, and the management of nervous temperaments,

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Rufus's manual anticipates the gentleness and circumspection of modern horsemanship manuals. Moreover, Rufus demonstrates both the emotional sensitivity of horses and humans' predisposition to punish as a means to establish dominance and control. Rufus demands that riders avoid a descent into abuse by instead adapting to the language and needs of the horse. Each individual horse should dictate the language, timing, and equipment during training. The determinacy of the horse during Rufusian training challenges any understanding of medieval chivalry as characterized by knightly dominance and the use of potentially violent tools. In particular, Rufus's approach to horse training contradicts recent analyses of medieval horse–human relationships that highlight the centrality of masculine embodiment, socioeconomic status, military prowess, and human exceptionalism within chivalric horse–human relationships. Particular studies by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Joyce E. Salisbury, and Susan Crane situate such horse–human interactions in the context of value-added capital, of feudal identity, and of the multiple materials (man-horse-spurs-sword-armor) that intersect to form a proto-posthuman identity.[4] These theories, however, do not fully incorporate Rufus's influential communicative approach. For Rufus, horses were more than servants to their riders. His introduction to *La marechaucie des chevaux* elucidates his respect and love for horses and also situates them in relation to an economy of property and social status:

> Come ce soit chose que entre toutes les bestes qui soient crées de Dieu et qui soient subjetes a humain lignage, nule beste soit plus noble d'un cheval, car par celui li roy, li prince sont conneüz des austres povres gens. (Prévot, 31)
>
> Of all the beasts created by God and subjected to human beings, no beast is more noble than a horse, for by this kings and princes are distinguished from humble people.[5]

Unlike the swords wielded, the armor worn, and the quests undertaken by medieval knights, only the horse makes a man noble.

Although horses were central to both the praxis and the identity of the *milite* (mounted warriors) of medieval Europe, Rufus diverges from his contemporaries by declaring their nobility to be their most defining quality. For example, in his seventh-century *Etymologies,*[6] Isidore of Seville describes the horse as a being defined by form, function, and temperament:

> In generosis equis, ut aiunt veteres, quattuor spectantur: forma, pulchritudo, meritum atque color. Forma, ut sit validum corpus et solidum, robori conveniens altitudo, latus longum, substrictus maxime et rotundi clunis, pectus late patens, corpus omne musculorum densitate nodosum, pes siccus et cornu concavo solidatus. Pulchritudo, ut sit exiguum caput et siccum, pelle prope ossibus adhaerente, aures breves et argutae, oculi magni, nares patulae, erecta cervix, coma densa et cauda, ungularum soliditatis fixa rotunditas. Meritum, ut sit animo audax, pedibus alacer, trementibus membris, quod est fortitudinis indicium: quique ex summa quiete facile concitetur, vel excitata festinatione non difficile teneatur. Motus autem equi in auribus intellegitur, virtus in membris trementibus. (XII.i.45–47)
>
> In well-bred horses, so the ancients said, four things were considered: form, beauty, quality, and color. Form, that the body should be strong and solid, the height appropriate to the strength, the flank long, very lean, with well-rounded haunches, broad in the chest, the entire body knotted with dense musculature, the foot firm and solid with a concave hoof. Beauty, that the head should be small and firm, the skin clinging close to the bones, the ears short and expressive, the eyes large, the nostrils flaring out, the neck upright, the mane and tail thick, the hooves of a firm roundness and solidity. Quality, that it should be daring in spirit, swift of foot, with quivering limbs, which is a sign of strength, and easily roused from the deepest repose and controlled without difficulty when urged to speed. Indeed, the alertness of a horse is made known by its ears, and its valor by its quivering limbs. (XII.i.45–47)

Isidore does depict the horse as a willing partner and enthusiastic battlefield warrior, and the well-bred horses described here seem designed for combat. The horse's nobility, however, is never more than implied. Five hundred years after Isidore's death, Rufus's contemporary Albertus Magnus espouses a similar perspective. In his treatise *De animalibus,* Albertus situates the value of horses in their "form, beauty, worth, and color," continuing to elaborate the same straight legs, large, bright eyes, and short ears mentioned by Isidore.[7] Albertus goes on to link equine physiognomy to an aptitude for battle: characterized by "a firm solidness to its whole body," the horse is a turgid organism whose tense muscle fibers are suited to reactivity and aggressivity.[8] Indeed, this boldness echoes Isidore's evocation of a horse's stamping feet and trembling limbs as signs of his virility, bravery, and strength:

> As for worth, it is thought that the horse should be very bold, pawing and stamping the ground with its feet, whinnying and trembling in its limbs, for this is an indication of strength. It is also thought that it should be easily aroused from the greatest quiet and should easily grow calm and at rest from the greatest state of excitement… War-horses are not castrated because they are rendered timid by castration. It is a trait of these horses to delight in musical sounds, to be excited by the sounds of arms, and to gather together with other chargers. They also leap and burst into battle lines by biting and striking with their hooves. They sometimes care so much about their masters and grooms that, if they are killed, they grow sad and pine away, even to the point of death. In sadness they sometimes cry and from this there are those who forecast concerning a future victory or defeat. The palfreys are used in that type of conveyance called equestrianship [*equitatio*]. These too should not be castrated lest they become effeminate.[9]

The temperament of these horses predestines them for glory on the battlefield just as their physique reduces the likelihood of injury or illness. Their portrayal here also identifies an emotional capacity that is less developed in Isidore's *Etymologies.* Despite the anthropomorphized expressions of equine sadness, grief, or elation in Isidore's and Albertus's treatises, their horses remain separate from the realm of dignity and nobility.

Unlike Isidore and Albertus, however, Rufus finds nobility in the horse's service. His understanding of equine partnership with humans exceeds the realm of servitude: just as the chivalric knight epitomizes masculine military acumen, the warhorse possesses an intrinsic nobility that differentiates him from lesser equines. Rufus exhibits deference to the warhorse as an equine exemplum, protecting his sovereignty by prohibiting coercive riding practices. Indeed, the aforementioned contingency of chivalric bonds on equine obedience mirrors the dependency of knights on the nobility conferred on them by their warhorses. Most important, interspecies partnerships based on fair, equitable communication between rider and horse and free from coercion will protect the horse and ensure his willing submission.

La marechaucie des chevaux establishes the horseman's interspecies communication as the key to his stewardship of the horse's well-being. Rather than exerting dominance over his mount by force, the rider must learn to communicate with his horse according to the tactile language inherent to relationships between horses.[10] As Donna Haraway argues about interspecies interactions, verbal "[l]anguage cannot engineer this delicate matter; rather, language relies on this other semiotic process, on

this gestural, never literal, always implicit, corporeal invitation to risk copresence, to risk another level of communication."[11] This communication between horse and human requires trust: both parties depend on the good-will of their counterpart, a fact that implies a significant risk taken by each that his interlocutor will be fair and reasonable in both his or her commands and the means by which they are delivered. Equine extra-verbal communication, like that between rider and horse, is characterized by the intentional transmission of a signal from a sender to a receiver, who then interprets and responds to it.

Just as Jack W. Bradbury and Susan L. Vehrencamp explain animal language in terms of the exchange of information it effectuates, horse–rider communication serves to share information.[12] Moreover, in these Rufusian chivalric exchanges, both parties make themselves heard. Despite the potentially divergent objectives of rider and horse, the parties continue to interact, due largely to what Bradbury and Vehrencamp dub "honesty guarantees":

> When sender and receiver experience conflicts of interest, it would seem that the optimal level of signal accuracy might degenerate over evolutionary time until it did not pay to communicate. Despite this, animals continue to communicate across the entire spectrum of conflicts of interest. The answer to this puzzle is that receivers facing a conflict of interest often limit responses to those signals that have some honesty guarantee.[13]

Honesty guarantees are central to what I call authentic communication: the receiver is only inclined to respond when he perceives the authenticity of his interlocutor. The Rufusian trainer shows his authenticity, for example, by risking proximity to the untrained young horse, risking his own bodily injury if communication fails. He eschews equipment or abuse and makes the first step, unarmed and vulnerable, toward communication with his horse. On the one hand, such authentic communication both satisfies the objectives of each participant (forge a bond; avoid pain) and is more likely to establish mutual trust. Deceit, on the other hand, which arises when one party (typically the rider) dominates the conversation in order to satisfy only his own objectives while ignoring the needs of the listener (most often the horse), undermines trust.[14] In a chivalric interspecies context, coercive training methods like abusive spurring, whipping, and use of harsh bits exemplify this deceitful communication, one by which the rider-sender dominates his mount who, in turn, loses trust in his rider. These

tools help the rider realize his own objectives while ignoring those of the horse.

In addition to the distinct objectives of humans and horses within their interspecies partnerships, the divergent means by which humans and equines acquire the ability to communicate complicate their interaction. The *acquired* human language is incompatible with *innate* tactile language of horses and undermines their ability to establish communicative interspecies exchanges:

> For communication to be effective, there must be some degree of concordance between the coding rules used by senders and those expected by receivers. There are several factors that can limit this concordance. One factor is the means by which each party acquires its coding rules. Species in which coding rules for both parties are largely heritable generally show a good match between sender and receiver coding. In contrast, species in which one or both parties largely acquire their coding rules by learning are prone to making mistakes.[15]

Indeed, interactions between humans, who acquire language from experience, and horses, who are born with an inherent ability to communicate, most notably through touch, are fraught with communicative difference. The fallibility of human language plagues the knights who strive to command horses and, in turn, the horses who struggle to interpret and respond appropriately to such commands. The communicative difficulties germane to medieval chivalric partnerships—and to all interspecies exchanges—ultimately result in Rufus's horsemanship method in which he provides techniques of communication to bridge these gaps in linguistic comprehension and, by extension, to encourage interspecies cooperation.

The wide diffusion of *La marechaucie des chevaux* confirms its importance throughout Europe as a source of communicative methods of horse training and horsemanship. In addition to the earliest extant Old French copy—*La marechaucie des chevaux* (BNF fr. 23451, circa 1256–1300 CE)[16]—over fifty extant copies in Latin, French, Italian, Sicilian, Catalan, Provençal, and German from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries bear witness to Rufus's extraordinary breadth of influence.[17] This extensive copying and translation reflects the centrality of Rufus's doctrine of gentle communication as a means to establish partnerships with horses. In particular, the Rufus system requires horsemen to adapt to horses by assuming a language of touch-based cues. Moreover,

Rufus heavily restricts tack and equipment—especially the spurs, harsh bits, and whips often used to intimidate a horse—owing to his belief that fear and pain corrupt any horse–human partnership. The Rufus method expands our understanding of medieval interactions between humans and horses by incorporating and prioritizing the emotional well-being of the horse as a central factor in performance during training. *La marechaucie des chevaux* thus resonates with modern theories of the posthuman and of humane horse training by shifting focus away from the human and identifying the horse as the determining participant.

Communicative exchanges between animals and humans are bidirectional; insomuch as both parties influence and are influenced, speak and listen, teach and learn, Rufus evokes what Karen Barad later calls intra-activity,[18] a concept that evokes Andrew Pickering's "significant parallels and intertwinings between the intentional structure of human action and material agency," which he calls a mangle.[19] Like the mangle, intra-active chivalric bonds place human beings, horses, and equipment in close proximity, intermingling as a hybrid amalgamation. These interspecies mangles operate based on communication adopted by the rider who integrates physical touch with particular equipment tailored to reinforce his commands. Rufus's horsemanship treatise presents the imbrication of equine languages with knightly equipment and objectives. By adopting an equine language, a knight confirms the horse's centrality to equestrian partnerships, honors his subjectivity and irreplaceability, and engages the horse mentally in the process of training for chivalric service.

Adopting Equine Language: Communication as Consideration

Beyond an affective connection between handlers and horses, Rufus recognizes mindful training as the first and most effective way to foster a horse's trust in humans. Trust in the rider—the most important quality for a brave and loyal warhorse—originates in the respect shown by the trainer to the young horse, whose inherently nervous disposition demands the trainer's attention and consideration. Namely, the trainer must use touch to reassure the equine trainee, imitating the strategies by which horses soothe or express friendship with other members of their herd or band. In particular, equines soothe each other through allogrooming, by which horses reinforce social and emotional bonds through mutual grooming.

As a type of equine "appeasement signal," the practice of allogrooming reduces tension among groups of horses.[20] The adoption of this nonverbal language system by riders shows consideration for the horse's inherently tactile communication. Though medieval, Rufus's thirteenth-century *Marechaucie* takes a surprisingly contemporary, ethological approach to interspecies communication that attempts to bridge the linguistic and species differences between rider and horse.

In the *Marechaucie*, when Rufus introduces his strategies for horse training as "comment l'an doit prendre et donter le poulein" ("how one must start and tame the young horse"), he implies a dual objective that both inaugurates a working relationship with each horse (*prendre*) and also tames or subdues (*donter*). His particular methods for habituating a young horse to work, however, minimize the coercion implied by the verb *donter* and instead attempt to introduce the horse to interspecies interaction by taking into consideration the stress of this process. Indeed, the environmental changes introduced by training often significantly undermine the horse's emotional well-being, perhaps by reducing the time during which a horse may forage for grass or socialize with his herd. To assuage the stress that can provoke misbehavior and undermine training, the handler should train a horse with compassion:

> Nus hons ne se doit courroucier contre le poulein, especialment au commencement, car il en pourroit prendre aucun mauvés vice ou aucune mauvese tache non convenable. Et tourjours soit acoustumez de lui touchier son cors et touz les membres simplement, juques tant qu'il soit simples et humbles et dontez en tele maniere que l'en le puisse touchier seurement par tout le cors, especiaument les piez en maniere de lui ferrer. (Prévot, 34)
>
> No man should get angry with a young horse, especially at the beginning, because the horse could take from this bad vices or qualities that aren't suitable. And one should always be accustomed to touching him simply on his body and legs, until he is steady, submissive, and tamed in such a manner that one can touch his body easily all over, especially the hooves as though shoeing him.

Rufus explains the importance of touch as the key to habituating the horse to cues from his handler, *especialment au commencement* of training. Just as the horse encounters new situations and learns new skills during training, the trainer must use a new system of communication, to become *acoustumez de lui touchier*. Tactile messages in this initial phase communicate an honesty guarantee by demonstrating to the horse that the trainer

will not harm him, a guarantee that constitutes the first step to establishing a trusting partnership with the horse.

As the building block of any honesty guarantee, the rider's gentle touch communicates his good intentions to the horse. By extension, touch becomes the main ingredient in the composite language used by riders to communicate with and reassure horses. Rufus underscores this definition of interspecies communication when he states above that the handler must *touchier* the horse to reassure and calm him during training. The handler has the ability, through reassuring touch, to invite the horse to reflect on the cues delivered and subsequently to choose to respond with cooperation instead of resistance. Vicki Hearne describes this dialogue as one in which the rider must read the movement of the horse through his or her own skin, as well as make his or her own body "kinesthetically legible" to the horse.[21] The challenges of developing interspecies communication resonate, therefore, with both the human cue-giver and the equine command-receiver.

While horses communicate with each other through a system of tactile signals, Rufus believed trainers could master a version of this language. As animal behaviorists and ethologists now know, communication achieved through variable touch and pressure is central to any interaction between humans and horses. Training a horse occurs through a three-step process: the sequence of request, response, release permits the rider to isolate each tactile command and correlate it negatively with the removal of the cue (the "release" of the aid) to reward the horse for his obedience.[22] However, the rider's version of this equine language often poses interpretive challenges for the horses who receive these tactile messages. Highlighting the confusion caused by meaningless cues, Vicki Hearne cites the difference between human and equine perceptions of touch as a contributing factor to communicative failures between rider and mount. Namely, horses are extremely sensitive to touch, analyzing each incidence of tactile interaction as a means to identify an interlocutor's emotion and the intent of his or her communication. Moreover, this sensitivity varies widely from horse to horse, so the rider must adapt his or her nonverbal communication to suit each mount. Hearne explains, "Every muscle twitch of the rider will be like a loud symphony to the horse, but it will be a newfangled sort of symphony, one that calls into question the whole idea of symphonies, and the horse will not only not know what it means, s/he will be unable to know whether it has meaning or not."[23] For the horse, meaning is not immanent in a rider's gestures or commands merely because they are

designed to approximate tactile equine language. The translation by which humans adapt their commands and equipment to ensure interspecies understanding often falls short of clear signification. Along with fair treatment of each horse, clearly signifying interspecies language is the most important aspect of equestrian partnerships.

Rufus proposes signification not as the meaning which the human comes to identify within and transmit with this equine language but, rather, as the *sens* (meaning)—one simultaneously sensory, signifying, and significant—made manifest for the horse through the rider's communication. The horse's understanding of and correct response to rider commands are the only factors that indicate the success of such interspecies exchanges; riders and trainers must continuously look to the horse to determine if their methods have been successful, making Rufusian training utterly dependent on the horse as opposed to on the rider. As Olympic champion and famous horse trainer William Steinkraus explains over seven hundred years later, "we must never deny the horse his final authority as to the appropriateness of our methods, and we must never cease examining his response as the verification of our success or our failure."[24]

To achieve these correct responses from each horse, the trainer must acquire and then master his mount's language. Through the gesture of good faith implicit in the trainer's newly tactile language, Rufus's ideal horseman acts as a steward, initiating and maintaining the trust of his mount. This stewardship troubles Salisbury's argument situating the medieval concept of human dominion over animals at the intersection of ownership, mastery, and control.[25] Rufus, on the contrary, devises a system in which the rider exchanges his own language for an equine communication that persuades the horse to submit to his rider's control. Submission and control thus cross the species line: human submission to equine language begets equine submission to human control. But while Salisbury focuses on mature horses who are controlled by their riders, Rufus studies the development of working chivalric relationships. He prescribes a gradual habituation for two-year-olds horses as they begin their training regime, a stage at which the central concern of the trainer is to effectuate the transition from unhandled yearling to trained knightly mount as smoothly as possible. Rufus nuances Salisbury's socioeconomic understanding of horses to include the emotional and mental training required to produce a mature warhorse.

Rufus places emotionality at the heart of his communicative training system and of his understanding of horses themselves. For Rufus, the

reassuring touch of a trainer during the early training helps smooth the transition from green young horse to mature equine partner. Simple physical touch serves as an indication of the trainer's honesty and good intentions. Habituation begets trust in the rider and, once the horse acts *simples et humbles*, so that one *le puisse touchier seurement par tout le cors*, he will be ready to learn to be led and to carry a rider. At this stage, Rufus describes a horse whose disposition is one of readiness and relaxation around his handler, as he has never experienced violence at the hand of a human:

> Aprés ces choses, … l'an le doit conduire a la main, le matin et le soir, de ça et de la, par aucuns jours, juques tant que li poulains aille tres bien aprés celui qui le maine. Aprés ce, soit cheveuchez sanz nule noise et sanz selle et sanz esperons le plus legerement et le plus soef que l'an puet. (Prévot, 37)
>
> After these things, … one must lead him around by hand, both morning and evening, for a number of days, until the young horse goes very well after the person who leads him. After this, he should be ridden without any noise, without a saddle, and without spurs in the gentlest and safest way possible.

By avoiding literal and figurative noise—medieval towns bustling with activities from trade to metallurgy the distracting and confusing use of spurs or a saddle and any disturbances in the environment which might upset startle or frighten him—the young horse may focus on the skills he is being taught and not on the potential threats of his surroundings. The horse will then quietly follow his handler demonstrating a budding trust in humans one encouraged by the absence of saddle or spurs, both of which might intimidate the horse and undermine his confidence. Not only is the horse exempted from mediating equipment in order to permit interaction exclusively with the rider but abstention from the use of potentially violent equipment also constitutes an honesty guarantee. By accepting this vulnerability the rider communicates his desire to partner with the horse not to coerce his mount's submission to establish a position of dominance. Vulnerability contradicts the deceit posited by Bradbury and Vehrencamp as the communicative antithesis of an honesty guarantee. Rufus, in contrast, implies a dialectical relationship between a rider's equipment and his identity as a horseman: the use and misuse of equipment determine the extent to which a rider may be considered the partner or abuser of his horse, just as in turn the rider's abuse is compounded by the equipment he chooses to heighten the painful or intimidating effect of his commands.

Rufus, however, teaches that every interaction or piece of equipment between horse and human contributes to—or detracts from—a rapport of trust. In addition to the influence of each piece of equipment on the horse's perception of his trainer's honest communication, the rate of progression through the phases of training reveals the human either to be attentive to or ignorant of the horse's understanding of each new skill. Namely, human time must stop and the horse's understanding of the task must determine when an activity is complete. To underline the necessary adjustments the trainer must make to accommodate the horse, Rufus places temporality squarely within the horse's control. Instead of prescribing a certain number of hours for an activity—or weeks for a stage of training—this phase will continue *puis que le poulein* (individual) *receit voulentiers le fraig et sanz nule force*. Rufus specifies *par aucuns jours*, which is to say, for some days or as soon as each horse masters the task. The handler's possible boredom and frustration with these monotonous activities are subordinated to the horse's readiness to progress to increasingly difficult tasks. Rufus puts into place here a system whose value and application remains today: only once each pupil responds positively may the trainer advance.

Throughout *La marechaucie*, Rufus establishes a clear method of interspecies communication characterized by tactile rider commands designed to encourage the mental engagement of horses with the training process. Rufus insists that the active mind of *le poulain* remain at the forefront while executing training exercises:

> Aprés ce que le poulain sera acoustumé de bien troter par l'espace de tens et de torner a destre et a senestre, le chevaucheor se doit lever bien matin, et le doit fere galoper a petit pas par les jacheres devant dites; mes ne le doit mie moust ennuier, pour ce qu'il en seroit plus pereceus une autre foiz ou, par aventure, il pourroit devenir retis legerement. (Prévot, 38)
>
> After the young horse has become accustomed to trotting well for an extended period and to turning right and left, the rider must wake early in the morning and must gallop the horse easily on the aforementioned fallow fields; but he must not let the young horse grow bored or he will become lazier in the future or, by this mistake, he will become increasingly unruly.

Because the horse's mind is as important as his body, Rufus takes care to provide the horse with mentally stimulating work to encourage his willing participation. Namely, the rider *ne le doit mie moust ennuier* to prevent the

horse from becoming *plus pereceus* or *retis legerement*. Rufus identifies the need to engage the mind of each young horse.

Rufus also highlights the contingency of his method upon each horse's needs, as well as its adaptability for each horse. Even Rufus's syntax establishes the primacy of each horse's needs. The perennially singular expression *le poulain* or *li poulains* highlights a plan focused on one horse at a time. Once an individual young horse becomes accustomed to continuous trotting and turning right and left, the onus is on the rider to maintain his mount's interest in training. Rufus devises a system in which the rider must adjust to encourage the horse to share his innate gifts willingly and, perhaps, even to enjoy his chivalric career.

Rufus proposes that the rider has the ability—if not also the obligation—to encourage this enjoyment by keeping a horse mentally engaged with diverse mounted and unmounted exercises and drills. The best way to raise a well-behaved horse is to pique interest in his work. By considering each horse's skills and adapting work to suit them, the trainer shows respect and appreciation for the horse, a respect which, in turn, begets a lifetime of willing service as a knightly mount.

Still, a horse's eagerness to obey his rider and to serve faithfully is only part of his preparedness for his chivalric career. The trainer must also teach the horse to accept the equipment to which he will be subjected as a warhorse. Saddles, spurs, and elaborate bits, among other items, were ubiquitous to hybrid chivalric assemblages, to the man-horse-tack-armor-weapons that defined medieval knighthood. The experience of training, however, remains distinct from these scenarios faced by mature horses. The first time the young horse carries a rider, for example, nothing interrupts the contact between their bodies: Rufus specifies that this initial riding phase will occur "without saddle or spurs," without the added security provided by the former or the added violence introduced by the latter. The rider then sits astride "as lightly and as safely as possible," depending solely on his own balance and tact to avoid being thrown. The man–horse bond, therefore, begins with the rider's vulnerability to an unpredictable young horse. Despite the equipment required during a chivalric career, the crux of training remains this equalizing contact, the equilibrium between seat bones and dorsal muscles.

Rufus's methodologies and his approach to tacking and equipping young horses contradict our understanding of chivalric embodiment as a hybrid assemblage, as a man-horse-armor-lance-sword-spurs mobilized to win battles and the hearts of damsels. For Cohen, the knight, his horse,

and the equipment and weapons they wear form an "amalgam of force, materiality, and motion."[26] His interspecies amalgamations evoke the bonds shared between battle-ready knights and chargers—those that Crane calls "an embodied performance, a mastering of techniques and technologies that produce the *chevalier*, the *ritter*, the *cavallero* as one who undertakes adventures and combats mounted on a horse."[27] Still, the bonds at the core of this performance rely upon corporeal connections and not upon the increasing use of equipment. On the contrary, as chivalric careers demand the introduction of spurs, whips, and harsh bits, riders and trainers must integrate them into the original system of tactile interspecies communication designed to respect horses rather than coerce them.

Between Abuse and Communication: Adding Human Tools to Horse Language

For Rufus, interspecies communication is characterized by an organic, tactile foundation surrounded by a periphery of metal human tools. Trainers, he explains, must always ensure that use of equipment doesn't undermine tactile communication with horses. In addition to passive buffers (saddles, cloths under saddles) and communication aids (bridles), potentially violent aids (spurs, whips, harsh bits) are often used to admonish horses and reinforce rider dominance. These "artificial aids"—a term that designates the implements carried or worn by riders to enhance the effect of their leg or hand commands, namely spurs, harsh bits, and whips—rely upon some combination of intimidation, fear, and pain to coerce obedience to be effective. These tools skew the composite organism of man-horse-equipment in clear favor of the human component and of human communication: their coercion is incompatible with the honesty guarantees horses use to justify the trust their riders ask of them. According to Rufus, all three betray the trust the trainer hopes to cultivate in his pupil while also impugning the rider's attempts to ensure the horse's obedience.

Natural horsemanship experts today echo Rufus's concern about the tendency to punish. Although the pressure to produce good behavior from the horse increases during and after training, the handler must still resist the urge to punish the horse for a failure to understand commands. Natural horsemanship coach Kelly Marks establishes that punishment can only teach a horse what not to do; it can never introduce and reinforce

positive behavior and, thus, it weakens the trust between horse and rider.[28] Hearne, too, opposes punishment, suggesting that any response to an undesirable behavior be instead conceived of and administered like a consequence. The correction should be fleeting, cause little or no discomfort, and should not be repeated unless the disobedience (or incorrect response) is also repeated.[29] Like both of these horsewomen, the nineteenth-century horseman Edward L. Anderson highlighted the punitive potential inherent in artificial aids, stating "neither whip nor spur should be used in punishment."[30] Anderson was particularly interested in the possibility that improper use could corrupt a communication tool and turn it into an agent of coercion. Likewise, Marks counsels the use of whips only as a signaling system and never as an object through which a rider may express his or her anger and frustration with a horse's lack of progress through the stages of training.[31] The echoes of Rufus's warning—*nus hons ne se doit courroucier contre le poulein* (no man should get angry with a young horse)—pervade the arguments of natural horsemanship practitioners today.

Once a young horse has completed his training, however, he and his knightly rider may pursue "versions of the self embedded in performance and open to integration with other species of being, both organic and mechanical."[32] The fully realized bonds between trained knights and adult horses, unlike those of trainers and young horses envisioned by Rufus, are receptive to additional tools. Young horses, however, are not only vulnerable to spurs and whips but also to harsh bits. Bits, as the contact zone[33] by which the reins transmit cues from rider to horse, are central to interspecies chivalric language. Indeed, these zones are as linguistic as they are tactile. Once bridles and bits become necessary to achieve control in battle and to permit subtle communication between rider and horse, Rufus counsels the gentlest options to avoid intimidating the horse:

> Ci commence de la garde et dou fraig et d'anseignier le poulain. Ci commence a enseigner le poulain. Il est convenable chose et naturele, et reson le requiert, que l'an ait .I. fraig foible et le plus leger que l'an puet avoir. Aprés soit oins le mors dou fraig d'un poi de miel, ou d'aucune austre chose douce. Et, si comme j'ai dit, le fraig doit estre dous et legiers et faibles, pour ce que, quant le fraig fet mains moleste au cheval et a la bouche dou cheval, tant le prendra il plus voulantiers des en avant, et plus legeremant, et pour la douçour qu'il aura santue, siques il le retendra plus voulantiers une autre foiz. (Prévot, 37)

> Here begins the section on the care, bridling, and training of the young horse. Here begins the training of the young horse. It is both useful and natural, as well as required by reason, that one have the gentlest and lightest bridle possible. Afterwards, one must coat its bit with a small amount of honey or something equally sweet. And, as I said, the bridle must be light and gentle so that it does less harm to the horse and to his mouth, so that the horse will take the bridle more willingly and easily in the future due to the gentleness he will have felt.

By preparing the young horse mentally and emotionally to accept the bit, Rufus hopes to avoid the often violent evasions of horses who associate the bit—and, by extension, *any* training—with pain and stress.

Limitations on equipment that may emotionally antagonize or physically injure horses continue in a later Old French version of Rufus, the fourteenth-century manuscript *R* entitled *le livre de la cure et garde des chevaux*. This version expands upon its thirteenth-century predecessor, describing and condemning the use of many inappropriate and painful bits as a substitute for adequate training. Complementing the initial honey-coated bit introduction, manuscript *R* states:

> (*R*. fol. 56 v.) Mais por ce que ce que j'ay dit est de la teste, tout la plus grant part appartient au frain, et por ce convient il que je die la maniere a cellui qui l'afreinne, la forme et la maniere du frain. Il est doncques une maniere de frain qui est appelé a barre, pour ce qu'elle est faite de deuz barres, une du lonc et l'autre du travers. Il est ainsi composé et fait pour ce qu'il est plus legier et plus able que les autres. … Il est encores une autre maniere de frain qui a nom caralde, et dedenz a beaucoup de falles dedenz le mors, lequel frain est plus fort et plus cruel de touz ceulz dessus diz. Encores il y a unes autres manieres de fourmes de freim, desquelles usent aucuns provençaux, qui sont horribles et aspres sanz raison, que je laisseray a dire pour leur cruaulté. (Prévot, 38–39)

> As I was discussing the horse's head, the most important part relates to the bit and, as such, it is necessary that I explain the form and use of the bit to those who bridle the horse. The first type of bit is called barred for it is made of two bars, one along (the bit) and one across. It is thus composed in order to be lighter and more suitable than others. … There is another type of bit called "caralde" whose mouthpiece has many components; this bit is therefore stronger and more severe than the aforementioned bits. Again, there are some other types of bits, which some people from the country use, that are terrible and cruel beyond reason and that I will refrain from discussing because of their cruelty.

Like the earlier *Marechaucie*, manuscript *R* highlights Rufus's preoccupation with the trauma caused by harsh bits, even stating that some bits in common usage are too barbaric to mention. In particular, the *falles*—round disks placed on the mouthpiece of the bit either near the joint or beside each shank, known as *falli* to the sixteenth-century Neapolitan horseman Federico Grisone[34]—were designed to make the bit more painful for the horse and posed a distinct threat to the trust he was developing in his rider. On the contrary, the Old French *able* identifies only the simplest bits as well adapted or suitable, and the Latin manuscript *S* uses *debilius* to confirm the importance that the ideal bit should be as weak or soft as possible. Rufusian gentle horsemanship clearly demands gentle bitting. By recommending a bit called *a barre*, which resembles a modern single-jointed snaffle, over the *caralde*, Rufus demonstrates an understanding that less is more, and that a harsh bit will sour the horse to being bridled and ridden. As the most sensitive parts of the horse,[35] the mouth and tongue are vulnerable to the elaborate mouthpieces of bits designed to gain control through discomfort. The sensitivity of the horse's mouth and the role of the bit in many rider aids make this issue central to the physical and emotional well-being of the horse.

Although he disapproves of harsh bits, Rufus indicates their possible utility if aligned with the specific needs of individual horses. The relative hardness of a horse's mouth might, for example, make a harsh bit necessary to slow him down:

> (*R.*) Adonc on doit considerer la mollesse et la duresse de la bouce du cheval. Et selon la qualité de la bouce, on li doit mettre le frein, que le chevaucheur soit content et qu'il li satisface le frein. Et comme j'ay dit dessus, il doit chevauchier sanz violence, et tout doulcement courre le cheval continuelment. (Prévot, 39)
>
> Therefore, one must consider the softness or hardness of the horse's mouth. One should bit the horse according to the characteristics of the mouth so that the rider is content and the bit satisfies him. As I said above, he must ride without violence and run the horse softly and steadily.

The hardness and softness of the mouth refers not to the density of oral tissue, but to the sensation perceived only by the rider of the way the horse holds the bit in his mouth when he is being ridden. Tension born in the horse's jaw renders his mouth hard, whereas a soft-mouthed horse produces a delicate feel on the reins for his rider. In this way, the bit exemplifies

bidirectional communication between horse and rider. The horse may lean on or evade the bit, and the rider must use this information to select the most suitable equipment for each horse.

Rufus identified the harm of an ill-suited bit, much as American Olympic equestrian James C. Wofford cites the rider's selection and use of the bit as "the most important part of riding."[36] Prefiguring Wofford's idea that "substitutes will always let you down" and that harsh bits are no replacement for proper training, Rufus places simplicity at the heart of his system. Rufus would argue that such a conglomerate of man, horse, and metal predestines the rider's failure to consider the psychological and emotional needs of the horse. The impassive violence of metal inherently betrays the horse and persistently alienates him from his role as the determiner of knightly partnerships.

Harmonious Horsemanship: Mutual Understanding as a Path to Partnership

When performed with accuracy and grace, horsemanship becomes a harmonious partnership in which rider and horse communicate with and understand each other. The trust between them cements their cooperation and collaboration, both of which are facilitated by the interspecies communication they share, however fraught with misunderstanding it may be. Hearne puts it best when she describes a horse's bewilderment at his rider's commands, which he views as "a newfangled sort of symphony," one seemingly devoid of meaning and impervious to interpretation.[37] The initial discord between a rider's commands and a horse's understanding of tactile language must be overcome to reach a state of concordance between horse and rider, to achieve harmony and balance between the distinct components of hybrid horsemanship.

Indeed, the legacy of comparison between music and horsemanship is almost as long as the tradition of writing about horsemanship. The first known instance comes around 350 BCE when Xenophon compares horses to dancers, "For what the horse does under compulsion, … is done without understanding; and there is no beauty in it either, any more than if one should whip and spur a dancer. There would be a great deal more ungracefulness than beauty in either a horse or a man that was so treated."[38] Xenophon sets compulsion and violence in direct opposition to the inherent grace and power of a horse's movements. Rufus, like his late antique predecessor,

describes the ideal equestrian bond as one based on the principles of unison, of harmony between different but complementary participants. Such cooperation between rider and horse leads to the entanglement of flesh and equipment, to the accomplishment of feats of prowess, and to the establishment of hybrid chivalric identities. Much as Haraway writes:

> individual animals, human and nonhuman, are themselves entangled assemblages of relatings knotted at many scales and times with other assemblages, organic and not. Individuated critters matter; they are mortal and fleshly knottings, not ultimate units of being. Kinds matter; they are also mortal and fleshly knottings, not typological units of being. Individuals and kinds at whatever scale of time and space are not autopoietic wholes; they are sticky dynamic openings and closures in finite, mortal, world-making, ontological play.[39]

Throughout recorded history, the entangled assemblages of beings and equipment intrinsic to horsemanship have inspired reflection on the relationship between a human being and a horse. In his attempt to discern the nature of interspecies chivalric partnerships, the most well-known of medieval horsemen, Jordanus Rufus, identifies mutual understanding between human and horse as the fundamental fiber of these fleshly knottings. Only through the rider's mastery of an extra-verbal equine communication were the interspecies chivalric partnerships of medieval Europe made harmonious and their world-making potential realized.

Notes

1. Salvatore Tramontana, *Il regno di Sicilia: uomo e natura dall'XI al XIII secolo* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1999), 277. For a more detailed study of Rufus's family connection to the imperial stables, see the introduction of Pasquino Crupi's edition, *Giordano Ruffo—Libro della Mascalcia* (Soveria Mannelli, Italy: Rubbettino Editore, 2002), 7–10.
2. R. H. C. Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse: Origin, Development and Redevelopment* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 107–8.
3. See Brigitte Prévot's edition of Rufus in *La science du cheval au Moyen Âge: le traité d'hippiatrie de Jordanus Rufus* (Paris: Collège Sapience/Klincksieck, 1992).
4. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Chevalerie," *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994); Susan Crane, "Chivalry and the Pre/Postmodern," *Postmedieval* 2, no. 1 (2011): 69–87.

5. All translations of Rufus's text are mine and are based on Prévot's edition.
6. See the Latin in *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originvm*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press) and the English translation in "Book XII—Animals (*De animalibus*)," *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 247–70.
7. Albertus Magnus, *On Animals: A Medieval Summa Zoologica, Vol. 2, Book XXII*, trans. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr. and Irven Michael Resnick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), XXII.38.1477.
8. Albertus, *On Animals,* XXII.38.1478.
9. Albertus, *On Animals*, XXII.38.1478.
10. Allogrooming—or mutual grooming—exemplifies the practice of tactile communication between horses. The use of their teeth and muzzles to massage and clean each other reinforces social and emotional bonds. Horses also bite and kick each other to establish and enforce the limits of their personal space and to punish those who transgress those limits. Quotidian equine language, thus, ranges from gentle to extremely violent.
11. Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 239.
12. Jack W. Bradbury and Susan L. Vehrencamp, *Principles of Animal Communication*, 2nd ed. (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, 2011), 4.
13. Bradbury and Vehrencamp, *Principles of Animal Communication*, 8.
14. Bradbury and Vehrencamp, *Principle of Animal Communication*, 5.
15. Bradbury and Vehrencamp, *Principles of Animal Communication*, 13.
16. Prévot, *La Science*, 11.
17. Prévot, *La Science*, 12–4.
18. Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of how Matter Comes to Matter," in *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 120–54.
19. Andrew Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 18.
20. Bradbury and Vehrencamp, *Principles of Animal Communication*, 544–51; Kelly Marks, *Perfect Manners: How You Should Behave So Your Horse Does Too* (London: Ebury Press, 2002), 20, 129.
21. Vicki Hearne, *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 110.
22. Marks, *Perfect Manners*, 60, 61, 124.
23. Hearne, *Adam's Task*, 108.

24. Steinkraus's preface to d'Endrödy's *Give Your Horse a Chance* (London: J. A. Allen, 1959), 2.
25. Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 16.
26. Cohen, "Chevalerie," 37–8.
27. Crane, "Chivalry and the Pre/Postmodern," 69.
28. Marks, *Perfect Manners*, 203.
29. Hearne, *Adam's Task*, 44–7.
30. Edward L. Anderson, *Curb, Snaffle, and Spur: A Method of Training Young Horses for the Cavalry Service and For General Use under the Saddle* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1894), 15–6.
31. Marks, *Perfect Manners*, 46.
32. Crane, "Chivalry and the Pre/Postmodern," 84.
33. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 4, 88, 205, 218–9, 225, 227.
34. Elizabeth MacKenzie Tobey, ed., *Federico Grisone's* The Rules of Riding*: An Edited Translation of the First Renaissance Treatise on Classical Horsemanship*, trans. Elizabeth MacKenzie Tobey and Federica Brunori Deigan (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), 529, 424, 426–7, 430–1.
35. Marks, *Perfect Manners*, 37.
36. James C. Wofford, *Training the Three-Day Event Horse and Rider* (New York: Bantam Doubleday, 1995), 25.
37. Hearne, *Adam's Task*, 108.
38. Xenophon, *The Art of Horsemanship*, trans. Morris H. Morgan (Boston: Little, Brown, 1893), 2.
39. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 88.

CHAPTER 11

No Hoof, No Horse: Hoof Care, Veterinary Manuals, and Cross-Species Communication in Late Medieval England

Francine McGregor

When the narrator of Geoffrey Chaucer's General Prologue famously describes the Prioress's "conscience and tendre herte" (GP, 150), he refers, of course, to her exquisite compassion for animals.[1] As is well known among Chaucer readers, the Prioress.

> …was so charitable and so pitous
> She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
> Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. (143–45)

And perhaps more to the point, she feels devastated if one of her own spoiled and indulged dogs receives harsh treatment. How interesting, then, that the sensitive Prioress apparently spares not a thought for the horse carrying her on pilgrimage. This indispensable creature, integral to the Prioress's daily life as she undertakes her journey, looms so large as to disappear in such a moment of conspicuous and even comical compassion,

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the sort of invisible ubiquity that leads Beryl Rowland to compare the medieval horse with the contemporary car: often admired and a source of social status, but just as easily taken for granted.[2] Chaucer offers a rather more complicated scene, though, in that the living creature does lurk in the shadows, glimpsed obliquely in Madame Eglentyne's purported oath, "by Seinte Loy" (120); known in other contexts as Eligius or Loi, this saint offers horses and their caretakers special protection. His name, though rarely extant in vernacular English literature, appears again in Chaucer, when the carter of "The Friar's Tale" praises one of his cart-horses to St. Loy once the team pulls his wagon from the mud (III.1564). The figure of Eligius, as patron saint of horses, farriers, and metalworkers, encapsulates an ongoing conversation about the horse's ontological status and role in late medieval England. With its economic and social value to humans long secured, the horse becomes an object of affinity and curiosity in addition to utility, attentions made manifest in human investigations of the animal's physical being. The Prioress's and carter's invocations of St. Loy, a saint dedicated to horses and farriers alike, aptly, if surprisingly, suggest these explorations' localization in the horse's hoof, in all of that appendage's temporal, earthly, well-trodden mundanity.

For obvious practical and economic reasons, the horse's foot was an object of concern to the medieval horse owner or caretaker. The adage "no hoof, no horse" applied as well to the late medieval period as it did to the eighteenth century, when the phrase was coined, as a footsore or lame horse was of limited help to its owner.[3] Then as so often now, preserving the hoof was understood to entail orthotics, making it the source of considerable shoeing expense, and thus providing economic support to the metal workers who fashioned and applied its shoes, as well as to the marshals who oversaw the hoof's health and management.[4] Visual representations of the medieval horse almost invariably depict it shod, encapsulating this economic relationship along with the apparent necessity of the human to the horse's physical well-being. An invocation to St. Loy elicits just such a relationship, as it singles out the horse, farrier, or metalworker for particular protection. This Mobius strip of dependence between species and economy, enacted via the hoof, perhaps offers one explanation for its regular appearance in the literature of that era.

Yet as much as the hoof's shod representations gesture to human intervention, the hoof itself refers exclusively to the horse. For such a pervasive if understated cultural object, the hoof shows surprising resistance to representation in metaphor, unlike the horse as a whole, which often explicitly conveys its owner's status. The hoof lingers at the periphery of the literal and figurative, never quite fully deployed as metaphor in the service of human status-building and amenable to figuration only in metonymy, in the perception that

the hoof *is* the horse. Simultaneously peripheral and essential to the equine as to the caretaker, this fragment of anatomy materializes a medieval attention to equine otherness and encourages a reimagining of the medieval equine–human relationship. The hoof—site of observation, conversation, and identification, as well as exploitation—invites an imaginative attention to itself as a mode of expression. We need not assume extraordinary gentleness from handler to horse to appreciate the communication I posit here. Nor need it preclude the domination suggested by representations of the shod hoof. Rather, the hoof and its expressive capacities offer a way into another species.

This inquiry responds in part to medieval animal studies that often see nonhuman beings as victims of violence, of human demands, of figuration, of the desire to realize human exceptionalism and to project it into nature. Thus work such as Joyce Salisbury's early argument for medievals' more identificatory relations with animals has experienced considerable resistance, in part for the apparent anthropocentrism such identification smuggles in.[5] Karl Steel, for example, pushes back against Salisbury and that identificatory impulse, demonstrating the centrality of violence against animals in demarcating human reason and therefore election in medieval Christianity, addressing the often literal modes of abuse licensed by such human exceptionalism.[6] More concerned with the violence inflicted through figurative representation, scholars like Susan McHugh see the modern reader as essential to reconceiving medieval metaphor and thereby extracting the animal from its servitude to human identity-building.[7] Both assertions are apt in their sense of the ways in which human apprehensions of the animal are riven with processes of effacement, but neither encompasses enough of the quotidian medieval experience with animals. A collection such as Carolynn Van Dyke's *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts* significantly shifts the conversation in its quest to find the "animal real" inhabiting Chaucer's works,[8] though these essays attend to concerns other than everyday animal husbandry and narrative practices in their exploration of Chaucer. Broadening this conversation about medieval representations of the non-human animal to include another range of experience allows consideration of practical interaction with and care of horses as represented by the late medieval veterinary manual. These experiences, born of medievals' close acquaintance with and keen understanding of an animal's needs, invite us to a new consideration of equine representations in vernacular literature.

* * *

Perhaps unglamorous, the hoof holds profound literal significance for medieval England. Not until the sixteenth century would the hoof really flourish in idiom, as, for example, in its budding capacity to designate an

entire herd of hooved beasts. It becomes possible then to assert that "There shal not one hooffe be left behynde."[9] In our period, though, that collectivity is reserved for the human foot, as in the fifteenth-century *Merlin* when the lord of Salerne "slough hem alle, that neuer foot ascaped"[10] or the late thirteenth-century *Havelok*, when the Danish king's men attack Godard's knights "and everilk fot of hem he slowe."[11] Even though from the fifteenth century onward the human foot is used metaphorically to denote masses of humankind, still the period refrains from using the horse's hoof to generalize a herd and obfuscate individual animals. The pervasive medieval idiom "on foot" that identifies unfortunate horseless humans who must labor, travel, or fight on their own appendages marks the closest we come to generalizing from hooves to herd (being on foot presumably indicating what happens when one cannot be on hooves, or a horse's back). By the seventeenth century, we might "beat" or "bang" the hoof (walk), and by the nineteenth we can find ourselves decidedly "under the hoof" (oppressed) or even "hoofed out" (expelled).[12] But for the late Middle Ages in Britain, hooves were more often literal than not, and to be under them unfortunate, indeed. Consider, for example, Lucas the Butler in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* who "lay lyke a dede man undir the horse feete."[13] Or the Mirmidones whom Troylus dispatches "At gret meschef at his horse fet" in Lydgate's *Troy Book*,[14] or when, in the same work, Troylus himself, threatened by Duke Meneste, "stood and felte ful unswete,/In poynt of deth amonge the horse fete."[15] The devastation described in such scenes is the more obvious when we recognize the kinetic power of hooves: they smite, strike, and make sparks fly. They are even the one receptacle secure enough to contain the poison intended for Alexander, all other vessels overwhelmed by the "strengthe and the malice of this venym" that "was so grym and so grisliche that no bras, ne iren, ne non manere metaille myghte it holde." Only in "the hoo of an hors foot" can it safely be transported.[16] In these late medieval narratives, the hoof is an all-too-real object and its location a tangible place.

So significant are hooves to the culture that a trade dispute between smiths and farriers fulminated around them. The London ordinances of 1356 showed the Master Farriers carefully distinguishing between the domain of smiths, whose metalwork and shoeing should exclude veterinary matters, and farriers (marshals), whose shoeing and veterinary treatments should exclude metalwork.[17] Only in application of shoe to

hoof should the professions coincide. These ordinances were prompted, on the one hand, by the complaint that some Londoners "kept forges in the said city, and intermeddled with works of farriery, which they did not understand how to bring to good end; by reason whereof, many horses had been lost, to the great damage of the people." The appointment of and consequent investigations by two Master Farriers revealed that "the said folks, not wise therein, were found making false work, such as shoes and nails, and of false metal" and were subsequently punished, eliciting an official catalogue of financial penalties.[18] One point of concern here seems to be that people of no real qualifications whatsoever, farrier or smith, were shoeing and treating horses. And yet the ordinances, on the other hand, also depict significant tension between the trades themselves as these directives circle back to the insistence that no farrier will take over a smith's apprentice and no smith a farrier's.

So too in the *York Memorandum Book* of 1409: "a lang stryfe and debate was moeved and hadde betwix the marsshals and smyths of the cite of York," with both sides claiming the other was trespassing on their craft and owed restitution.[19] Lasting many years, the debate spilled across the town, as each "crafte trubild other, and yerely tuke and held distresse of other so ferr furth that many yerys mairs and the chambre was hugely vexed wyth tham." In a period during which trade names, as well as trades, were in flux—the veterinarian interchangeably called marshal, farrier, horse-leech; the farrier sometimes expected to shoe like a smith, sometimes only to trim—such disputes sought to clarify murky realms in lay, as well as professional practice. The ambiguity surfaces even in England's most popular veterinary manual, *The Boke of Marshalsi*.[20] Aspiring marshals, to whom the work is directed, should "do a ferrowre to sekyn the fot" if the horse is lame without a visible cause, and the marshal should see that the farrier "pare it noghte to thinne."[21] About ten folios later, in a treatment for cracked heels, the marshal should "do hym to be shod wyth a sho," presumably by a farrier, but should himself "pare awey the fote."[22] By the end of the manuscript, the marshal is doing both himself; if a foundered horse doesn't respond to herbs, the marshal should "pare hys fete," bleed him, and "afterward shoye hym with a scho wit out cankes" (57r).[23] Perhaps such responsibilities are divvied up according to the ailment at hand, but it seems more likely that *The Boke* simply reflects the cultural muddle around hoof care.[24]

As important as shoeing was to a horse's serviceability, the period maintained an at least theoretical distinction between the practice of hammering a shoe onto a hoof (that is, external application of a prosthetic device) and caring for the animal's larger health. *The Boke* itself devotes its last ten folios largely to equine lameness, with an attention to the hands-on practicalities of recognition and treatment that moves well beyond what we might expect even from such a detail-oriented manual as this one. The "fot" becomes in this section an essential site of identification for lamenesses, for those originating in the hoof itself (via thorns, nails, rocks) or further up, in the muscles of the shoulder, say, or in "soros" (splints) near the knees. The hoof's appearance can further distinguish between lameness occurring from physical insult and that coming of poor conformation, so that the hoof speaks not just for itself and its own experiences but for the qualities of the body. The hoof mediates between soundness and lameness, between shoe and body, between farrier and smith, between part and whole, between horse and handler, marking itself as a crucial designator of the horse's well-being and its interpreters as a privileged site of understanding and worth.

But a modicum of empathy seems already encoded in equine podiatry, even as the hoof remains a contested site. Fifteenth-century manuscripts containing equine medical recipes invariably include treatments for the hoof, and particularly for a condition known as "peyne" (painful) that afflicts the horse's heel, perhaps in the form of severe cracks. So common and apparently intractable is this ailment that generally numerous treatments are recorded, such as in the medical miscellany Sloane 2584 that ends as a fragment in the peyne ("peyens") section, but has time to include four treatments.[25] It will come as no surprise that concern with animal pain otherwise appears seldom in these manuals. Treatises on human medicine do investigate pain, however—on the one hand, theorizing its humanizing potential and spiritual significance, but on the other hand, also prescribing strategies for its alleviation.[26] Most relevant to our purposes here, maladies of the human foot received substantial attention for pain relief. Indeed, gout, particularly its manifestation in the foot, was a pervasive, much discussed ailment, the alleviation of which preoccupied thirteenth-century physician Gilbertus Anglicus. As Henry Handerson, an early editor of his works, elaborates:

> In Gilbert's chapter entitled "*De arthretica passione et ejus speciebus*," we are introduced to the earliest discussion by an English physician of that preeminently English disease—gout. We may infer, too, from the length of the discussion (thirty or more pages) that this was a disease with which Gilbert was not only familiar, but upon the knowledge of which he prided himself greatly.[27]

Handerson goes on to point out that Gilbert, whose medical compendium was reprinted into the seventeenth century, identifies and locates pain to help him diagnose the ailment, and considers the alleviation of pain as necessary to healing, rather than a by-product. Suffering in such a fundamental area must have been familiar to medieval people, perhaps captured in the stock phrase "from head to heel" (rather than the modern "head to toe") with which medieval physicians encapsulated their domain of care, hierarchizing body parts but also singling out the heel for particular attention as a site of suffering.[28] That respected popular English medicine fervently addresses pains of the foot indicates its ubiquity and, I would suggest, authorizes an etymological slippage in the equine foot ailment "peyne."[29] The appellation registers mutual human–equine suffering, the former linguistically recognizing in and projecting on the other its own relentless discomfort. As Elaine Scarry has shown us, through severe pain, "the content of one's world disintegrates," as does language; "that which would express and project the self is robbed of its source and its subject."[30] In a gesture of shared memory and shared suffering the sensation itself—pure pain—displaces naming of the disease in these manuals and renders species differences at least momentarily irrelevant. Through its pervasiveness, "peyne" recurrently marks the hoof's privileged status as object of affinity and medium for cross-species identification; if it licenses the projection of one being's sensation on another, it does so as an expression of empathy rather than appropriation.

We might also hear in this designator a certain apology, more fully articulated in *The Boke of Marshalsi*'s explanation for the very existence of veterinary manuals. Well-attuned to the inadvertent cruelty sometimes caused by the unnatural environment of domestication, *The Boke* points out that, "for that thei haue nowt her own kepyng in wildernesse by kynde at her owne wyl, but at mannys wyl vnkyndeliche, therfor [horses] reseyuen many diuerse maladijs, wych may ben holpin be diuers medisynis" (14a). In fact, "It is no merwayle thow hors han dyuers maladijs, for thei ben many time done out of her owne kynde, with mys-keping" (13b). Left

"sauage as wylde bestis," which is what "her nature wold that ware" (13b), horses manage many of the physical threats to their well-being; they know, for example, what to eat to cure themselves of worms; they know how to bleed themselves when necessary; they know how to marshal the herd to protect themselves from their natural predators, all of which fear the "stroke" of a horse's hoof. In human keeping, however, they're vulnerable to human misjudgment if not deliberate cruelty, and at the very least to misunderstanding about what living conditions horses actually need. It is thus that *The Boke* arrives at the story of St. Hippolyte who, threatened by Herod, lives among wild horses for almost fifteen years. In gratitude for their nurturance and protection, "prayd he God that he mighte haue kunnyng of kepyng of hors, that he might lerne odyr men to kepe hem and saue hem from maladijs for the helpe and socour that thei dedyn hym wyl that he was among hem" (14b). Rather than putting horses to human use, Hippolyte imagines humankind serving the horse, reciprocating care. An obscure patron saint of horses and, according to *The Boke*, father of veterinary medicine, Hippolyte is so far invisible to critical animal studies, yet he allows us a striking new perception of domestication through this medical manual. For *The Boke* domestication—"kepyng of hors"—is envisioned as an act of understanding, of listening to and becoming versed in a horse's needs, rather than as a violation of "kynde."

As Lise Leet has shown in an essay in this collection, Italian horse training practices such as Jordanus Rufus advocates in *De medicina equorum* emphasize treating the horse with gentleness and communicating in a language adapted to the horse's own means of expression.[31] Though there is little evidence of Rufus' manual in England, the English tradition, as represented by *The Boke*, is concerned with similar issues of empathy, but reflects on them from an opposing angle; to understand domestication, *The Boke* considers how a human might fare in horses' keeping. *The Boke* shows Hippolyte blending into the herd of wild horses where "no man ne dorst come" (14a) and the animals accommodating his needs into the herd's practices: feeding him, resting when he rests, lying close together so he can lie on their manes and tales. Yet he also adjusts to the horses' natural lifestyle. That they "resten wan he restyd" suggests they are on the move, as wild herds inevitably are, from one food source to another; when the mares let him "sokyn of her milk," they allow him to behave with them as foals do (14b); when he sleeps in the midst of them, he is protected as horses protect their offspring and one another. As much as Hippolyte praises God for the horses' help, he also makes decisions about

how to behave with the herd, adapting to their environment and patterns of behavior, living according to their kynde. If we have the obligatory assertion that they were behaving "at hys will," we should also notice that this happens in the context of his complete acceptance of and accommodation to their lifestyle. We might also notice that what is figured as their submission might as easily be figured as compassion: "al the haras was at hys will, for ferther than he went wold thei not go, but resten wan he restyd" (14b). These lovely animals refuse to leave him behind.[32]

Hippolyte is, of course, on his way to sainthood, and his holiness (God's grace) narratively accounts for his willingness to enter the dangerous space of a wild herd, and for the fact that the horses "cam a-geynys hym and madyn hym gret ioye" (14b). But his saintliness also provides a means for the story to experiment without degrading or dehumanizing its protagonist. More to the point, such species boundary crossing marks his sanctity while inviting the audience to suspend disbelief and imagine these animals anew: acceptance by a herd is a miracle; mutual acceptance of the human's leadership is a miracle; many normal forms of human intervention are brutal and "unkyndliche." Herod exemplifies this latter point, blazing in to capture four of the wild horses, and trying to force a particular behavior on them (drawing Hippolyte to his death). Prior to this moment, the horses use their entire bodies, "from head to heel" in their own and Hippolyte's protection, treating him as one of their young:

> For thei ben pray to wylde bestys that leuyn be her pray, that is to wetyn to the bere, to the lyoune, to the tygre, to the griffon, for that is the best that most harm doth hem, nameliche while that thei ben yonge, of to yer hold or of thre. For thei haue ageyn hem non defens. And therfor thei herden hem to-gedere, and the holde kep the yonge, so that he may nowt come to hem. For wane that thei ben in herde to-gedre the gryffoun dar not prochen hem, so mekyl he dowtyth the bytyng of hem. And also of the bere ne of the lyon ne haue he non reward, for ther ne is non of hem that dar abydyn the stroke of an hors. (13b–14a)

The only threat they can't protect him from is human. Whereas Hippolyte interacts with the animals according to their kynde and meets with joyful cooperation, Herod uses force to bend the animals to his will and is met with flat refusal despite the bloody wounds his riders gouge into the horses' ribs.

Longing for real empathy and affinity between human and non-human animal, along with possibilities for humans to actually help horses, permeates the remarkable conclusion to this scene. Though Herod's men

attempt to goad the wild horses into quartering Hippolyte through spurrring bleeding gashes in the animals' sides, the animals transform their wounds into self-healing with Hippolyte's assistance. The saint's response upon seeing the wounds is to pray that "her blodyng shold do hem non harm, but it shold stand hem in stede of medisyn, and that thei sholdyn eueremor blodyn j-now wan thei had myster, and all tho that cam of hem" (15b). The horses absorb the spur wounds into their *kynde*, into their very biology, and now the offspring of these horses still nip themselves when they need to bleed, by means of which self-therapy "tho hors shul neuermor haue the farsine ne afoundyng" (15b). The sense here that nothing can be inflicted on the horse that the horse cannot negotiate to its own good inserts a principle of domestication into the natural world, wherein the human practice of bloodletting becomes part of the horse's being, and enacts the fantasy that horses can survive and transcend human abuse. Attributing this transcendence to the transformative power of God's grace provides a venue in which to reimagine the human/nonhuman animal divide beyond one of dominance and subservience. How fitting that one of the two debilitating maladies the horses' self-bleeding prevents is founder—an excruciating hoof ailment.

Such an egalitarian fantasy infuses the iconography of St. Eligius, to whom the Prioress brought our attention at this chapter's opening. As images across Europe attest, Eligius the farrier severs and removes a horse's leg in order to apply a shoe and then restores the animal to wholeness upon completion of his task. In England, this story flourished in images rather than text, but the few remaining church wall paintings offer remarkably similar versions of the story.[33] Representations of the miracle usually show the saint at his forge, holding the leg vertically as though ready to reapply it to the horse's shoulder, and with the hoof's sole pointing upward in preparation for shoeing. Eligius always attends deeply to the hoof despite its extrication from the horse, whereas the horses' reactions vary, sometimes pure placidity, sometimes fear and stress, though the horse always stands head-on to Eligius no matter how pronounced its anxiety. In these scenes, Eligius is accompanied by a helper, perhaps an apprentice, who raises his hands in surprise or assists at the anvil. In the earliest extant depiction of the story in England (late fourteenth-century), the horse stands quite calmly, its weight shifted lightly back to its haunches for balance (Fig. 11.1).[34] The frame in the image may be a partial travis or trave, incompletely containing the horse, unlike the working farrier's fully encompassing restraint. Later known as a "travail," this piece of equipment

Fig. 11.1 Miracle of St. Eligius, late fourteenth-century wall painting. Church of St. Botolph, Slapton, Northhampton. Personal photograph, 2015

carries in its etymology the strife it must so often have absorbed. Yet here, its partial representation suggests its inconsequence.

At least five wall paintings of the mircle survive in England, the most intriguing of which is preserved in a nineteenth-century tracing but is partially covered by a Victorian plaque obscuring the heads of horse and helper (Fig. 11.2).[35] Though Eligius and his workshop occupy most of the scene, in the bottom center of the frame is the handler's lower body, bent over the horse's leg and reaching down to the hoof. Eligius stands with his back to the scene, tending to his farrier work while the nameless handler lends his body to the horse, seeming to support the animal in its vulnerability.[36]

Fig. 11.2 Miracle of St. Eligius, nineteenth-century tracing of a fifteenth-century wall painting. Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Highworth, Wiltshire. Photograph courtesy of Jo Hutchings and Sam Hutchings, 2011

Is it an accident of nineteenth-century tracing or medieval commentary that the handlers's foot so closely resembles the appendage he seeks to replace (Figs. 11.3 and 11.4[37])?

Such imaginings of the human-horse relation as extensions of the natural, as intimacy and cooperation, certainly acknowledge the miracle's aggression, but they as readily defuse the violence. Surely it is no accident that the severed limb is always in front, so that not only can the horse face the saint, but can effectively proffer the leg as much as suffer its detachment. The entire scene is of course depicting a miracle, and no doubt many a farrier longed to work on the hoof separate from a fractious and

Fig. 11.3 Detail from Fig. 11.1

Fig. 11.4 Detail from a fifteenth-century wallpainting depicting St. Eligius and his farriery tools. St. Lawrence's Church, Broughton, Buckinghamshire. Personal photograph, 2015

dangerous horse. But the images' real profundity emanates from the fantasy of interchangable bodies, the handler as willing if temporary appendage, stepping his body toward and almost beneath the horse to replace the missing part.

These images suggest that *longing*, not just domination, infuses much medieval horse handling—longing for dominion to be perceived not as coercion but as reciprocity. Such yearning may well come from what Aranye Fradenburg describes as a late-medieval, post-plague melancholy:

> One of late-medieval England's foremost (post) traumatic symptoms is the acceleration and expansion of preparedness: newly Englished almanacs and divination guides, astrological and medical treatises, and herbals, herbals, herbals …. We see attempts to manage anxiety by means of improved foresight, and to take talismanic action against abandonment: read it yourself, do it yourself, because *cura*, care, has fled the land …. How can we feel companionated by other minds under these circumstances, and if we can't, what on earth happens to the common weal? If no one cares for the commons, the commons must care for itself.[38]

And equally, the commons must care for its animals. Perhaps a late medieval anxiety about the self, loneliness, a need for connection, expresses itself not only in the increasing need to help oneself, but also in this increasing interest in and desire to connect with horses. *The Boke*, arguably the most learned and sensitive equine veterinary manual in medieval England, seems directed to the non-specialist, teaching everything from healing maladies, to identifying good conformation, to raising and training the young horse. As we learn on the opening page, the manual addresses "ye that wil wyth craft ony honour wynne" (1a), offering to train the aspiring marshal from the ground up. In these veterinary manuals we find one more means for late medievals to "feel companionated by other minds."

* * *

Our awareness of this medieval attention to the equine body, and particularly to the modes of expression localized in the hoof, invites a reconsideration of horse imagery across medieval culture, but perhaps especially in popular romance, a corpus in which horses often merit only token visibility (as with the infinitely replaceable horses in battle "rehorsing" scenes) or

utter figuration. Another mode exists for animal representation, the one described so powerfully in veterinary manuals and echoed across medieval society—the horse as desired other and fellow sentient. I would like to turn briefly to a scene from Malory's version of the *Knight of the Cart* that entails Lancelot riding "on a grete walop" in the infamous cart and arriving at Gorre, dragging behind him his horse—the miserable beast bearing "mo than fourty arowys brode and rough in hym."[39] It is a wonder the horse arrives at all, and indeed, in Caxton's edition, his chapter description tries to put the beast out of its misery: "How Sir Launcelot's horse was slain, and how Sir Launcelot rode in a cart for to rescue the queen."[40] But the horse is not dead, and we have the most remarkable scene in which Guenevere, first seeing Lancelot's shield, then "ware where cam hys horse after the charyottte, and ever he trode hys guttis and hys paunche undir hys feete." We see Guenevere see the horse, and her response is striking: "Alas," seyde the Quene, "now I may preve and se that well ys that creature that hath a trusty frynde. A-ha! … I se well that ye were harde bestad whan ye ryde in a charryote."[41] Here, then, is the very enactment of figuration—we are asked to *watch* that process happen, bringing into relief that figuration is a deliberate, not an essential, act of medieval representation and interpretation. Throughout the *Morte* Malory shows indifference to horses—in his work they are as infinitely replaceable as in a John Ford movie. But he knows a good narrative tool when he sees one, and the horse works in this scene precisely because it is so much more than a narrative tool. This disemboweled horse, which we observe transformed into a figure of Lancelot's devotion, uncovers the ruthlessness of these lovers' intimacy, a ruthlessness exposed in their willingness to use a sentient fellow sufferer to convey their solipsistic message. The scene loses its power if it does not play upon another way of seeing this animal: as a fellow creature and comrade in pain. It is perhaps too much to attribute to Malory the brutal irony that Lancelot's horse tortures itself with its own hooves.

What I have sketched here may seem the message in a bottle returned to its sender, late medieval England's longing for connection and understanding mapped onto a horse's body via the practical and sentience-free hoof. Critical animal studies does get frustrated by the return to the human of animal analysis, and at most levels this inquiry may similarly frustrate, positing as it does that so much of what we see in animals and expect from our treatment of them is about us. But I might also suggest that exploring affinity in the daily lives of human and non-human animals,

whether or not that affinity is expressed in kindness, can help us elide the tension between uncovering an animal real and a human one. Perhaps what we discover when we explore the human desires informing our perceptions of animal being is a space of communication that allows real expression to human and non-human animal alike.

Notes

1. All quotations from Chaucer's works are taken from Larry D. Benson, gen. ed., *The Riverside Chaucer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), and are noted in the text parenthetically.
2. Beryl Rowland, "The Horse and Rider Figure in Chaucer's Works," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (1966): 246–59. My thanks to Carolynn Van Dyke for referring me to this source.
3. *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*, s.v. "no foot, no horse," accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199539536.001.0001/acref-9780199539536-e-1556?rskey=eSEFRd&result=1534. According to the *ODP*, the English proverb is "No foot, no horse" as in the title of the 1751 essay by J. Bridges on the anatomy of the horse hoof, whereas the alliterative "no hoof, no horse" seems to be a North American innovation.
4. For examples of shoeing costs, see John Clark, *The Medieval Horse and Its Equipment: c. 1150–c. 1450* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 76.
5. Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2011).
6. Karl Steel, *How to Make a Human: Animals & Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011).
7. Susan McHugh, "Literary Animal Agents," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (2009): 487–95.
8. Carolynn Van Dyke, ed., *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
9. Myles Coverdale, *Biblia: The Bible. The Coverdale Bible, 1535*, Internet Archive, Exod. X. 26, https://archive.org/details/CoverdaleBible1535_838.
10. Henry B. Wheatley, ed., *Merlin; or, the Early History of King Arthur: A Prose Romance*, *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Humanities Text Initiative, 1997), XVII.274, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/Merlin.
11. Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., *Havelok the Dane* in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications,

1997), 2432. http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-four-romances-of-england-havelok-the-dane.

12. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "hoof," accessed January 12, 2015, http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/view/Entry/88273?rskey=zFpMHm&result=1#eid.
13. Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur,* ed. P. J. C. Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 23.16.
14. John Lydgate, *Troy Book: Selections,* ed., Robert R. Edwards (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), 4.2732.
15. Lydgate, *Troy Book,* 3.1021–22.
16. John Trevisa, trans. *Polychronicon* in *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century,* ed. Rev. Joseph Lawson Rumby (London: Longman, 1872), Internet Archive, 4.11, https://archive.org/stream/polychroniconran04higd#page/n7/mode/2up.
17. "Memorials: 1356," in *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries*, ed. H. T. Riley (London: Longmans, Green, 1868), 280–94. British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life/pp280-294.
18. "Memorials," np.
19. Maud Sellers, ed., *York Memorandum Book Part II (1388–1493),* Internet Archive (York: Publications of the Surtees Society, 1915), 7, https://archive.org/stream/yorkmemorandum200surtuoft/yorkmemorandum200surtuoft_djvu.txt.
20. Bengt Odenstedt, ed., "The Boke of Marshalsi: A 15th Century Treatise on Horsebreeding and Veterinary Medicine" (PhD. Diss., Stockholm University, 1973). Odenstedt has edited most of the manuscript through folio 38. All quotations from Odenstedt's edition will be cited parenthetically in the text.
21. *The Boke of Marshalsi*, British Library, MS Harley 6398, 42r.
22. *Boke*, British Library, MS Harley 6398, 53r.
23. *Boke*, British Library, MS Harley 6398, 57r.
24. Even contemporary scholarship engages the debate. In his 1929 article "Notes on the Early History of the Veterinary Surgeon in England," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 22, no. 5 (1929): 627–33, Fred Bullock laments what he sees as the mistranslation of the Anglo-Norman word "marshal" as "farrier" in H. T. Riley's rendition of the 1356 London ordinances. At stake is Bullock's claim that equine veterinary work was a distinct profession by the mid fourteenth century, and he therefore objects to the conflation of veterinary medicine and hoof shoeing, the latter entailing metal work and its application to a static form, whereas the former addressed the entire physical body.

25. Anne Charlotte Svinhufvud, ed., "A Late Middle English Treatise on Horses Edited from British Library MS. Sloane 2584 ff.102–117b" (PhD. Diss., Stockholm University, 1978).
26. Fernando Salmon, "Pain and Medieval Medicine," *Pain: Passion, compassion, sensibility.* Exhibition of the Wellcome Trust. February–June, 2004.
27. Henry Ebenezer Handerson, *Gilbertus Anglicus: Medicine of the Thirteenth Century*, Internet Archive (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Medical Library Association, 1918), 43–4.
28. For a full discussion of this phrase in medieval medicine, see Luke Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, from Head to Toe* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 1–4.
29. Svinhufyud suggests that the name comes from linguistic slippage: "the reason that all these ailments in the feet of the horse … are expressly described as 'painful', is the existence of a folk etymology in which the original word for them (derived from Latin pes, pedis 'foot') was mistakenly connected with the phonetically identical derivative of OF peine 'pain'"; Svinhufvud, "A Late Middle English Treatise," 172.
30. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 35.
31. Lise Leet, "On Equine Language: Jordanus Rufus and Thirteenth-Century Communicative Horsemanship," Chap. 10, this volume.
32. Iva Jevtič, in her essay in this collection, emphasizes communication between human and animal bodies in *Ancrene Wisse,* and in doing so summarizes classical writer Claudius Aelianus's interest in animals' bodily expression. She writes, "In considering animals as moral exemplars, Aelianus demonstrates that an animal's ethical or communicative powers need to be found in the totality of its embodiment and behavior and not merely in its capacity for approximation to human speech"; "Becoming Birds: The Destabilizing Use of Gendred Animal Imagery in *Ancrene Wisse*," Chap. 2, this volume. The story of the wild horses and St. Hippolyte adds an additional dimension to this ethics of animal embodiment, in that the story insists on the ethical dimension of animals' natural behavior, an ethics "of kynde."
33. For an excellent overview of Eligius imagery in English churches, see Ellie Pridgeon and Roger Rosewell, "The Miracle of the Horseshoe: A 15th-Century Wall Painting at Highworth Church, Wiltshire," *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* 105 (2012): 157–67.
34. I'm grateful to Caroline Coke, Churchwarden at St. Botolph's, for permission to use this image.
35. I'm grateful to Heather Ault at the Wiltshire Museum for providing me with this image.

36. The latter scene will more famously be taken up in Italy, by Botticelli for the San Marco altarpiece and Nanni di Banco for the Church of Orsanmichele in Florence.
37. I'm grateful to The Churches Conservation Trust for permission to use this image.
38. Aranye Fradenburg, "Among all Beasts: Affective Naturalism in Late Medieval England," in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 22.
39. Malory, *Morte*, ed. Field, 848.12–14.
40. Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, ed. Elizabeth Bryan (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 843.
41. Malory, *Morte,* ed. Field, 848.22–23, 24–27.

CHAPTER 12

Medieval Dog Whisperers: The Poetics of Rehabilitation

Jamie C. Fumo

> [W]hat is "language" if it is not the wagging of a tail, and "ethics" if it is not the ability to greet one [an]other and to dwell together *as* others?
> —David Clark, "On Being 'The Last Kantian in Nazi Germany'"[1]

It may seem unusual to begin a study of the interaction between a lost dog and an outcast human in an early Chaucerian dream-vision with reference to reality television. The title of this essay alludes, of course, to the popular National Geographic Channel's reality series starring self-taught animal behaviorist Cesar Millan, which concluded its nine-season run in 2012. Each episode began with the voiceover mantra: "No dog is too much for me to handle. I rehabilitate dogs, I train people. I am the dog whisperer." Aficionados of Millan's show will be quick to acknowledge that its entertainment value lay perhaps less in dog behavior than in human dysfunction. In the early days of the reality TV frenzy, it offered a pleasurably voyeuristic peek into the daily lives of wealthy Southern Californian households, one coddled, unhousebroken, and poorly socialized canine after another giving the lie to the picture-perfect lifestyle of Hollywood's movers and shakers. Insisting that "dogs are dogs, not people," Millan

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advocated the controversial view that humans living with dogs should play the part not of "pet parents" but of "pack leaders"—that is, humans should learn to think like dogs, to become the alpha, in order to communicate effectively with their animal charges.[2] What Millan propounded, and what the show dramatized, was really a process of *human* transformation framed against a luridly entertaining canvas of posh society, cross-hatched with the amusing irony that the ad exec who can strike fear and trembling in a boardroom cannot get a Shih Tzu to heel. Millan's own biography, given prominence as a backdrop, supported the show's argument for human enhancement vis-à-vis the canine: having immigrated illegally from Mexico as a young man with no resources except a talent for working with dogs, Millan exemplified the rags-to-riches American dream, succeeding in marketing his skill in "thinking dog."

I want to use this slice of popular anthrozoology as an entrée into medieval literary narratives featuring dysfunctional human beings, and the dogs who love them. What follows is an attempt to isolate one sub-motif in medieval thinking on animals by which, in a twist on Cesar Millan, medieval dogs are seen to rehabilitate *people*. My central case study is Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, an elegiac dream-vision in which a stray whelp makes an enigmatic but powerful cameo appearance. In treating the *Duchess*, I depart from previous readings that have viewed the dog as a simple plot device or an allegorical prompt. Instead, I situate the Chaucerian dog within the growing field of scholarly discourse on medieval animalities, with its equalizing emphasis on animals as "humanity's formative others,"[3] supplemented by sociological evidence from modern correctional programs that incorporate canine training. At the same time, my reading places the *Duchess* within a broader literary matrix that includes, by way of counterpoint, the anonymous Middle English romance *Sir Gowther* and Béroul's Norman French *Roman de Tristan*, along with medieval zoological traditions and hunting lore. In arguing that the *Book of the Duchess* exemplifies how an encounter with the canine other has the potential to reform, and reformulate, the human, I insist upon a reading of the poem as centrally preoccupied with questions of identity ("what me is," as the narrator puts it)[4] and problems of communication, both radically framed by the *aporia* that is death. The seemingly dispensable, yet resonant vignette of the Chaucerian dreamer and the whelp is in fact crucial to the poem's recalibration of an identity in flux. It traces a motion away from subhuman singularity and toward humane community—away, indeed, from expressive confinement and toward a new English courtly idiom.

The *Book of the Duchess* begins with a crisis of the human. An unnamed, rootless narrator speaks to us in an as yet inscrutable language: a mixed register that interweaves French prosody (the first eight lines being a fairly close translation of the beginning of Jean Froissart's *Paradys d'Amours*) with a consciously Germanic English diction.[5] This linguistically porous, insistently ahistorical narrator expresses wonder that he exists, having no reason or will to do so:

> I have gret wonder, be this lyght,
> How that I lyve, for day ne nyght
> I may nat slepe wel nygh noght…
> For I have felynge in nothyng. (*BD*, 1–3, 11)

Speaking as one who is emotionally dead, indifferent to whatever "cometh or gooth" (7), utterly solipsistic in his responses to external stimuli, the narrator declares himself a "thyng" rather than a person, a monstrosity outcast from nature's order (12; cf. 16–17). Somewhat derisively, he imagines what "men" might think about him (30), only to dismiss such speculation as futile, for he himself cannot say "what me is" (31). This odd phrase, routinely glossed as "what is wrong with me" or "what is the matter," most literally denotes "what I am." Like Boethius in the first book of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, whom Philosophy diagnoses as having forgotten or become disassociated from who he is ("quid ipse sis nosse desisti"),[6] in a fundamental sense the Chaucerian narrator is not cognizant of his humanity—and worse than was the case with his Boethian forebear, *his* physician is nowhere to be found (lines 39–40). This sense of lostness, which drifts from a dislocation of language and a rejection of communication toward a more existential angst, establishes the narrator as an outsider on the "boundaries of the human" (to echo Dorothy Yamamoto's book by that title). Lostness, too, defines the paratactic structure of the ensuing narrative as it proceeds from aimless book reading, to dream-hunt, to an encounter with a grieving stranger that consumes the better part of the poem.

In moving from the narrator's uncommunicative expression of his sub- or extra-humanity to a representation of hunting within the dream frame—and Chaucer threads this delicately through the central action, literal and emotional[7]—the poem's thematic preoccupation with communication intensifies. Dogs figure actively in this hunt: with the men and horses, "houndes" make a commotion (*BD*, 349); as "relayes" and "lymeres"

they pursue the game (362); and eventually they lose the scent (380–84). The development of networks of communication between humans and canines, both in the form of hunting cries and in the hounds' own repertoire of vocalizations during the chase, informed medieval hunting as a "social ritual" in which aristocratic identity was defined by prowess in "knowing and managing nature."[8] Indeed, the hunt scene in the *Duchess* contrasts with the foregoing narrative not only in its raucous motion but also in its frenzied portrayal of communicative acts, perceived as if in a tableau by the dreamer: the sounding of the horn "for to knowe/Whether hyt were clere or hors of soun" (346–47), the overheard talk among the hunting party (348–50), the inquiry into the leader of the hunt (366–71), the second horn signal to release the hounds (375–76), and finally the "forloyn" (386) to signify the loss of scent. This stylized evocation of verbal and vocal intercourse regulating the mutual operations of nature and the social order ends only in dispersal, and the dreamer is again alone.

Wandering off, the dreamer is greeted by a whelp—a puppy or small dog—who appears lost, perhaps separated from the hunting party. Framed against the ritual sonorities of the hunt, the ten lines devoted to the silent, two-way attempt at communication between man and dog are all the more striking. The dreamer intricately details the pup's submissive body language, conveyed as a sign system that ensconces potential meanings: his "faun[ing]" and following of the dreamer suggests that he "koude no good" ("did not know what to do") (389–90); his meek approach conveys trust, "[r]yght as hyt hadde me knowe" (392); his physical posture and smoothed hair hint at affection (393–94). If we recall that the dreamer, by his own admission, does not *himself* know "what me is" (31), the whelp's seeming to know him, his uncanny ability to intuit him, enunciates a "shared and mobile being together"[9]—a coupling that importantly revises the narrator's anonymous solitude, his human singularity, at the beginning of the poem. Wordlessly, the dreamer expresses his own intention: he "wolde have kaught hyt"—the verb "kaught" suggesting anything from "pick up" to "seize" to "catch" (as of an animal in a chase)—but it "fledde" (395–96). Just as suddenly as it had appeared, the whelp "was fro me goon" (396). Following it vainly, the dreamer is led—the whelp acting as an unassuming guide—as if through Alice's rabbit hole into the main environment of the dream, a flowery meadow adjoining a wood teeming with wildlife, within which dwells the mourning knight with whom he will converse for the remainder of the poem. The knight grieves for a lady who, similarly, is "fro me ded and ys agoon" (479). The

interstitial relationship between dreamer and knight is, in effect, emotionally established by the dreamer's communion with, and privation of, an "intimate alien."[10]

The significance of the whelp episode lies in the fact that the dreamer, who earlier had struggled to feel *anything*, is inclined toward empathy—indeed, is newly humanized—by virtue of his echoic, interspecial experience. The critical discourse of animal studies can help us excavate the relevance of this scene to larger issues of human development and communication in the *Book of the Duchess*.[11] Like several other medieval writers studied in this volume, perhaps especially Chrétien de Troyes in Monica Ehrlich's reading of *Yvain*, Chaucer was sensitive to how human and nonhuman animals, incomplete in and of themselves, emerge as "unsettled categories coming into definition through relationship."[12] As Susan Crane and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen have argued in different contexts, medieval anthropocentrism, derived from the Judeo-Christian principle of human dominance over animals, was shadowed by a fascination with animals as "humanity's formative others."[13] In medieval literary texts, the strangeness of animals can manifest itself as an "inner alterity" within humans.[14] Animals, according to Cohen, offer "possible bodies … through which might be dreamt alternate and even inhuman worlds" (and we should not forget that our narrator in *Book of the Duchess* is a dreamer).[15] Indeed, Christopher Roman discerns in the dream-vision form itself a structuring attention to the liminality between human and nonhuman, arguing that in the *Duchess* the vision immerses the dreamer in a series of animal spaces in order to accentuate a lesson about death.[16] For these reasons, the whelp episode commands attention as a crucial juncture in a narrative about identity formation, one which from the beginning critiques human self-narratives as constrictive. Until the puppy notices him—acts upon him and prompts action in response—the dreamer is an inchoate self. Not only does the intersubjective exchange between dog and man advance the plot, it also primes the dreamer for an even more challenging communicative interaction: one that will involve class rather than species difference, and the added complication of human language.

Although the field of animal studies contends with the full spectrum of species difference, canine–human relationships have proved to be an especially supple—and to an extent unique—representational field. Dogs' keen powers of intelligence (even sensitivity to human language), their instinctive urge to please in return for benefit, and their sociability within and across species lines—all qualities honed by evolution—have made them

"more adept at playing affectionate and emotionally supportive roles than other animals."[17] The searching attempt at communication, at once intimate and incommensurable, between dreamer and whelp in the *Duchess* resonates with the lyrical complexity that theorist Donna Haraway identifies in her relationship with her dog: "We have had forbidden conversation; we have had oral intercourse; we are bound in telling story upon story with nothing but the facts. We are training each other in acts of communication we barely understand."[18] Interestingly, one study of pet–human relationships found that although dogs interact actively with their human companions in a much greater degree than cats, "owners told an average of 1.87 stories about their cats but only 1.32 stories about dogs."[19] Although human–feline relationships can indeed be rich and intense, it appears that the less transparent and fluently reciprocal the bond of communication, the more it invites "writing over" as human narrative. Inscrutability incites storytelling; gaps in discourse demand filling. Paradoxically, the experiential quality of canine–human communication—the fullness of embodied comprehension that it entails, despite the persistence of strangeness[20]—diminishes the after-the-fact impulse to reconstruct through narrative. After all, as the passive-aggressively confessional narrator at the beginning of the *Book of the Duchess* reveals, and as the man in black later demonstrates as well, storytelling is often an act of loneliness.

It must be emphasized that dogs are social animals. In Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus, dogs "loueþ company of men and mowe nouȝt be wiþouten men,"[21] and the "socializing effects of dog companionship" noted in ethnobiological studies[22] are key to the importance of the whelp episode in the *Duchess*. Studies have shown that cohabitation with dogs increases human extraversion and promotes social interactions.[23] A heightened sense of mutuality and empathetic involvement with other humans is cited frequently as an outcome of close human–canine relationships.[24] This, of course, is precisely what occurs in the *Duchess*, in which the whelp's vulnerability, strayness, and liminality (not full-grown; associated with the hunt but like a domestic lapdog in behavior)[25] establish him not only as guide but also as a *semblable* of the lost and still dysfunctional dreamer. The significance of the dog *qua* dog in this scene is all the more pronounced when we consider that, apart from a minor precedent in Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*—a *petit chien* belonging to the female protagonist—the most direct antecedents of Chaucer's whelp are, from the same *dit*, a bird and, from Machaut's *Dit dou Lyon*, a lion, both of whom act as guides and share various physical attributes with the

Duchess pup.[26] In rendering these narrative precedents canine, and in affiliating the whelp so closely with the dreamer's own process of self-formation and communicative discovery, in a poem that simultaneously traces these processes on an authorial level, Chaucer crafted his first major narrative experiment: a rehabilitation of English, in part by "thinking dog."

This point may seem unremarkable in light of modern perspectives on man's best friend. It is commonplace today to speak of the co-evolution of humans and dogs from as long ago as the Upper Paleolithic period, during which, it has been argued, the domestication of dogs occurred reciprocally with our own process of humanization.[27] We live in a society that entrusts to trained dogs the responsibilities of detective work, crime enforcement, military operations, medical assistance, victims' advocacy, even literacy building. Particularly relevant to our present interest is the recent popularity of canine prison-rehabilitation programs, in which "problem dogs" rescued from high-kill shelters are paired with high-security prison inmates who receive instruction in how to train and socialize the canines to become service animals or adoptable family pets. To qualify for these programs, inmates must meet strict benchmarks of good behavior, and there is typically stiff competition. One finds moving accounts of prisoners serving life sentences for murder and other heinous felonies who break down in tears upon seeing a dog for the first time in decades, reminded of their own childhood pets and life before bad decisions. The positive effects of prisoners' contact with animals are widely noted in the literature: a marked decrease in jailhouse violence, improved self-discipline and emotional expression, job skills for those who return to the outside—in short, the prisoners and the dogs are socialized through a process of mutual becoming. The "mutual self-transformation of dogs and people" that structures these programs, in Haraway's view, establishes the dogs as proxies for the prisoners, working back toward life on the outside, and as beneficiaries of their "act of surrendering [something precious] for the sake of another."[28] One prisoner in Ohio notes, "These dogs didn't fit into society or they failed to meet the standards of somebody out there…. They're just like us. By working with the dogs, we're giving them a chance to get back to a life that some of us might never see."[29] A man incarcerated in California quips, "Hey, who could better identify with a locked up pound dog than us?"[30]

The modernity of these statements, which assume a kind of democratic relationship between man and beast, loses some of its historical footing when we consider the origin narrative of these rehabilitation programs, which reads strikingly like a medieval saint's life—indeed, it strongly

resembles the medieval penitential romance *Sir Gowther*, as we shall see. A young woman named Kathy Quinn, fleeing from a rough childhood marked by physical and sexual abuse in 1950s California, bouncing from institution to institution and living a hard life on the streets, one day prayed to God for help changing her life. Soon she encountered a stray German Shepherd, with whom she bonded closely. Her self-esteem renewed, Kathy Quinn became Sister Pauline Quinn, a Dominican nun, and initiated the Prison Pet Partnership Program for the rehabilitation of female prisoners; it would become the model for similar programs nationwide.[31] Invoking a fanciful medieval etymology rooted in a legend of St. Dominic in which the saint's mother, while pregnant, dreamed she conceived a dog who held a lighted torch in his mouth, Quinn asserts that the name of her order derives from *domini* + *canes*, making the Dominicans dogs of God—vigilant guardians of the flock.[32]

Mainstream medieval views of dogs were considerably less generous, however, and it is necessary to review these in order to recognize the value of the literary responses assembled in this essay. In the ancient world, partly by virtue of the astronomical significance of Sirius, the dog star, and the canicular days it ushers in, dogs were strongly associated with the realm of death and the unclean.[33] The three great monotheistic religions share a deep suspicion of dogs: as Sophia Menache illustrates, these faith traditions view dogs as "embodiments of the impure and the profane."[34] At the same time, the dog was appropriated symbolically as a marker of religious difference, surfacing often in the Middle Ages (and beyond) as an anti-Semitic slur.[35] Rendered further suspect by their susceptibility to rabies and the incoherence of their vocal expression (barking), dogs were, in moral terms, an image of the debased natural world and a reflection of the inner savagery that fallen man must reform. The proximity of dogs to human structures of order makes them especially threatening: as David Gordon White puts it, dogs are "the animal pivot of the human universe, lurking at the threshold between wildness and domestication."[36]

When we look for the dog in the dogma, however, complications emerge. The bestiary highlights the intelligence and loyalty of dogs, their special connection with humans, and their value for medical therapy—for example, the licking of a dog heals wounds.[37] Also at play here is the ancient belief, recorded by Plutarch and Pliny, that a live puppy applied to an abdominal or pulmonary ailment could absorb the disease into itself, relieving the human and dying in his stead.[38] In manuscript marginalia premised on the *inversus mundi* topos, dogs frequently parodied human

physicians; although this served to critique abuses of the physician–patient relationship, the satire rested on the legibility of dogs as healing agents.[39] Even as the bestiary registers certain negative biblical views of the dog (for example, Proverbs 26:11, the dog returning to its vomit), it asserts a positive moralization that equates dogs with priests surveilling against wrongdoing and imagines confession as a curative process of wound-licking that soothes the "secreta cordis" ("heart's secrets").[40] Medieval hunting manuals praise dogs even more elaborately. For example, the popular early fifteenth-century treatise *Master of Game* by Edward of Norwich, second duke of York, which is based on Gaston Phebus's *Livre de Chasse*, stresses the nobility and rational powers of dogs, presenting them not only as fitting companions but also as ethical models: their loyalty and goodness *exceeds* that found in humans today, as several embedded narratives about canine fidelity prove. "The greatest fault of hounds," writes Edward, "is that they live not long enough."[41] For all the practicality of this statement in context, its emotional truth is undeniable and surely real. Similarly, John Trevisa's Middle English translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* extols hounds as the most "busy and witty" and "most gracious" of beasts, even as an adjoining chapter decries the same species as "coueytous," "glotoun," and "enuyous."[42] Such extremes may well testify to a deeper, cross-cultural ambivalence about the domestic dog as a creature whose "friendship threatens to dissolve or undermine the psychological barrier that distinguishes human from animal."[43] In all, a spectrum of opinion existed regarding dogs, who were "the medieval pet *par excellence*," as well as hunting associates.[44] Alternatively savage and noble, admonitory and aspirational, dogs framed and delimited the medieval self, even as their own meaning playfully resisted enclosure.

Returning to the whelp in the *Book of the Duchess* from this vantage point, we find a series of attempts at interpretive kenneling. Critical analyses of the whelp have tended toward the symbolic or allegorical, resulting in such varied possibilities for the dog as the evocation of loyalty as a marital ideal appropriate to the larger context of the elegy, guidance toward philosophical wisdom or salvation, association with the medical category of canine melancholy (lycanthropy) as faced by the dreamer and the knight, and in an outlying reading *in malo* by Beryl Rowland, infernal associations relating to greed, lechery, and ferocity.[45] More promising, because less binding and narrowly anthropocentric, are interpretations of the wandering puppy as evocative of what one critic calls "the eager connective imagination of the poet" as he sniffs out his sources and what

another critic identifies with the searching process of consolation in action.[46]

What has not been adequately emphasized is the productively disorienting effect this "proximate stranger" (Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's term in another context) has on the dreamer.[47] As we have already noted, contact with the whelp brings the narrator out of himself, makes him care and wonder in a way that he has not yet done, and this socializes him for further contact with the other. The dreamer's early self-absorption, as Ryan R. Judkins astutely observes, manifests itself as an imbalanced anthropomorphism within the sphere of nature, until the whelp, perceived as an "agent" in his own right, "challenges [the dreamer's] subjectivity."[48] Losing grasp of the whelp readies him to respond to another man's loss of something precious; here too is the lesson of the prison rehabilitation programs. Paradoxically, tracking the lost puppy who had found him, the dreamer finds an all but lost soul: the grieving knight who initially suffers from a similar kind of solipsism as has recently been overcome by the dreamer, whose presence he overlooks at first. Indeed, the whelp's function in leading the dreamer to the grove where the Black Knight leans against an oak tree is more than mechanical: in responding to the whelp's implicit invitation to an intersubjective experience, in which a two-way act of communication is attempted (the dog by behaving submissively, the man by attempting to catch him), the dreamer sharpens his powers of perception and, within a panorama of flowers, trees, and woodland creatures that seems larger than life, does not simply see but also *becomes aware of* a man in black (445).[49] Looking for the puppy compels him to notice the man. Or perhaps, in dream logic, they are one and the same.

The man in black, of course, is another *semblable* of the dreamer: a fractured, uncommunicative self who sings without song (471–72), argues with "his owne thoght" (504), and appears dispossessed of human identity ("For y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y" [597]). Upon encountering the knight, the dreamer examines his body language with a similar perspicacity—and a similarly imperfect comprehension—as he had brought to the whelp.[50] Observing his lowered head, his pale countenance, and the turbulent motion of his vital spirits (461–70, 487–99), the dreamer reacts with an extroversion and empathy newly honed by the whelp encounter. He makes contact with the knight, initiating a conversation that will continue, at times awkwardly and finally with devastating clarity, for the rest of the dream. If at first we might suppose that the canine other, simultaneously familiar and inscrutable, has now "become" the knight, however, we

find instead the whelp's subject position enunciated primarily by the dreamer. As a stray, an outsider, a companion, and potentially a healer (at line 553 he resolves to "make [the man in black] hool"), the dreamer, like the whelp, "koude no good" (390) in his sometimes faltering attempts at comforting the knight. The communication across species lines in the whelp scene is thus replayed in the incommensurability of social station in the dialogue between the knight and the presumably lower-born dreamer. Finally, much as the vaunted "nobility" of hounds—emphasized especially in hunting manuals such as the *Master of Game*—reinforced the nobility of those with whom they ritually cooperated, so do the dreamer's attempts to "feel with" the knight allow the latter to perform aristocratic emotion.[51]

In the symbiotic doubling (whelp and dreamer, dreamer and man in black) that supplants the dysfunctional oneness evinced by each human character separately, Chaucer stages a rehabilitative embrace of canine animality. The enigma of the whelp makes possible this interplay of subjectivities and in so doing validates communication, despite inherent difficulties, as a prerequisite of wholeness. Without this newfound commitment to communication, the question of "what me is" (31) could not have been answered, if only provisionally, as "I, that made this book" (97). That is to say, the passive, inchoate reader of the beginning of the poem could not have become the active writer we see after the dream, having awakened as an "I" authorized by the book itself as a communicative transaction in which readers are implicated. In becoming an author, Chaucer (or, more precisely, his narrative persona) claims and asserts a newly integrated humanity. To buttress this conclusion, I consider two other medieval literary texts that draw, with differing results, on related spheres of thought about the animal's place in constituting the human: *Sir Gowther* and Béroul's *Tristan*.

The anonymous Middle English romance *Sir Gowther*, which survives in two late fifteenth-century manuscripts and is loosely based on the twelfth-century *Robert le Diable*, concerns the moral rehabilitation of the half-demonic Gowther, who as a youth savagely inflicted mass destruction. Finally confronting the question of his own identity ("Who was my fadur"?),[52] Gowther repents and accepts a penance in which he must keep silent and accept food only from the mouth of dogs. What occurs in this part of the romance is, on the one hand, a potentially subversive hybridization of the human and nonhuman animal,[53] and on the other, a process of domestication and submission modeled from the canine to the human.[54]

While performing his canine penance, Gowther becomes attached to a Christian emperor's household, where he defeats the army of the Saracen sultan who wished to wed the emperor's daughter. A divine signal communicated through the daughter declares Gowther's penance completed, they marry, and Gowther is eventually revered as a saint. In a recent article, Emily Rebekah Huber has convincingly demonstrated the coherence of the romance as a meditation on the "animal instinct in the human," which in Gowther's case is exercised and refined against three tiers of canine signification: the hellhound the young Gowther figuratively was, the hunting dogs from whom he humbly learns discipline and loyalty when he eats alongside them, and finally the hound of God who rightly directs his aggression against what the poem depicts as the pagan cur.[55] As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen suggests, Gowther is a kind of latter-day St. Christopher, the giant portrayed in several medieval accounts as cynocephalic, or dog-headed.[56] Like Gowther, Christopher experiences a conversion and a humbling, and rechannels his ferocity toward evangelism culminating in martyrdom. In all major accounts, after his conversion Christopher retains his dog head, and in some versions even his barking vocalization[57]; in a similar way, Gowther's challenge is not to exterminate but to internalize, to domesticate, the dog he (figuratively) is in order to become a faithful man of God. Doggedness is an essential quality of godliness for these Christian heroes. As was the case in the *Book of the Duchess*, in *Sir Gowther* a dysfunctional human self is recomposed—here in moral and spiritual, rather than purely social terms—through an intimate communicative act across the line of species. In both cases, dogs help humans answer the question: Who (or what) am I?

To conclude, I suggest that dogs are shown to rehabilitate men into the *habitus* of ethical behavior precisely because such behavior is, for them, a matter of instinct: as the *Master of Game* has it, "A hound is true to his lord and his master, and of good love and true."[58] Nothing better exemplifies this observation than the various medieval versions of the Tristan story, in which two famous canines feature: a lapdog, Petitcru, given by Tristan to Isolde as a gift, and functioning as an emotional surrogate for her lover when he is away; and a hunting dog, Husdent, who in the Middle English *Sir Tristrem* drinks the love potion along with the star-crossed lovers, in a clever etiology of a dog's unconditional love.[59] Béroul's Norman French *Tristan*, which represents the primitive or "common" iteration of the legend, offers an instructive counterpoint to—and a final perspective on—the rehabilitative model of canine encounter we have

discerned in *Book of the Duchess* and *Sir Gowther*.[60] Béroul memorably portrays Husdent descending into anorexic depression after Tristan absconds with Isolde into the forest, where they hide from persecution. The dog is freed, then tracks his master's every step through the town to the chapel, following his route out a back window and over a towering cliff, until he reunites with Tristan deep in the woods. Tristan's self-centered response, however, is to prepare to kill Husdent, whose barking he fears will reveal their location. Isolde convinces him to try instead to train Husdent not to bark while hunting, and with some effort, Tristan succeeds in this; the dog then becomes a partner in their hard life of basic subsistence. This occurs in the section of the text in which the potion is beginning to wear off, yet the lovers remain miserably and compulsively attached to one another. The convergence of these plot elements raises the question: If a dog can be taught, against instinct, not to bark, can a lover—even one under a spell—not learn to modulate his desire?

In training the dog, Béroul's lovers fail to discern their own trajectory of discipline—*pace* Cesar Millan—and so their rehabilitation is shallow: they are restored to their former privileges when they tire of exile, but their (so to speak) "animal need" to be together continues, even without the potion. They remain dysfunctional, focused on primal urges. The lack of true development here indicates a deficiency within anthropocentrism that the other two texts embrace by allowing their plots to go, so to speak, to the dogs. To grow, to become more fully human, and potentially to recognize the image of God inside themselves, Chaucer's dreamer, Sir Gowther, and—if they wished to do it—Tristan and Isolde need first, as if in a mirror darkly, to apprehend the image of dog within.

Notes

1. David Clark, "On Being 'The Last Kantian in Nazi Germany': Dwelling with Animals After Levinas," in *Animal Acts: Configuring the Human in Western History*, ed. Jennifer Ham and Matthew Senior (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 190–91.
2. This oft-repeated pronouncement is more fully represented in Cesar Millan with Melissa Jo Peltier, *Cesar's Way: The Natural, Everyday Guide to Understanding and Correcting Common Dog Problems* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006).
3. Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 2.

4. All Chaucer quotations are from *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd ed., gen. ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), here line 31. Line numbers subsequently are indicated parenthetically in the text.
5. Steve Guthrie, "Dialogics and Prosody in Chaucer," in *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, ed. Thomas J. Farrell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 103.
6. Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii, *Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. Ludovicus Bieler, CCSL XVIV (Turnholt: Brepols, 1984), 1.pr6.
7. Sandra Pierson Prior, "*Routhe* and *Hert-Huntyng* in the *Book of the Duchess*," *JEGP* 85 (1986): 3–19.
8. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 115; cf. Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 116–18.
9. Karl Steel, speaking of human–animal encounters more generally, in *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 244.
10. The phrase is that of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Inventing with Animals in the Middle Ages," in *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 40.
11. The broader thematic dimensions of (mis)communication in the *Duchess* are treated in Jamie C. Fumo, *Making Chaucer's* Book of the Duchess*: Textuality and Reception* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), 50–55.
12. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 169.
13. Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 2.
14. Cohen, "Inventing with Animals," 53.
15. Cohen, "Inventing with Animals," 40.
16. Christopher Roman, "Contemplating Finitude: Animals in *The Book of the Duchess*," in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 143–55.
17. Lynette A. Hart, "Dogs as Human Companions: A Review of the Relationship," in *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behaviour, and Interactions with People*, ed. James Serpell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 162.
18. Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 2.
19. M. Miller and D. Lago, "Observed Pet-Owner In-Home Interactions: Species Differences and Association with the Pet Relationship Scale," *Anthrozoös* 4 (1990): 49–54, cited in Hart, "Dogs as Human Companions," 162–63.
20. On the abiding queerness of animals, despite human attempts at constructing meaning, see Cohen, "Inventing with Animals," 57.

21. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus* De proprietatibus rerum*: A Critical Text*, ed. M. C. Seymour and Gabriel M. Liegey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 18.25 (1165).
22. Hart, "Dogs as Human Companions," 168.
23. Hart, "Dogs as Human Companions," 166–67.
24. Hart, "Dogs as Human Companions," 168–69.
25. As Helen Phillips suggests, Chaucer's whelp is drawn from both traditions: see Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, ed. Helen Phillips (Durham: Durham and St. Andrews Medieval Texts, 1982), 152 n.389.
26. For analysis of these precedents, see James Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love Poets: The Literary Background of the* Book of the Duchess (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 78–80.
27. See David Gordon White, *Myths of the Dog-Man* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 11–12.
28. Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 65.
29. "Prison Dog Programs," Rebecca L. Rhoades, accessed November 16, 2016, https://www.petfinder.com/animal-shelters-and-rescues/volunteering-with-dogs/prison-dog-programs/.
30. "Who Rescued Whom?: Shelter Dogs and Prison Inmates Give Each Other a New 'Leash' on Life," Patricia Fitzgerald, accessed November 16, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-patricia-fitzgerald/who-rescued-who-shelter-dogs-and-prison-inmates-give-each-other-a-new-leash-on-life_b_5760042.html. As Haraway notes, a well-established rhetoric associates "categories of the oppressed" (e.g., prisoners, strays, animals, and so on) (*When Species Meet*, 65). With this, compare the therapeutic and clarifying role of "Bobby," the dog who wandered into the labor camp in which Emmanuel Levinas was imprisoned by the Nazis, discussed in Clark, "On Being 'The Last Kantian in Nazi Germany,'" 165–98.
31. "Sister Is on a Mission to Help Prisoners Help Others," *The Compass,* accessed November 16, 2016, http://www.thecompassnews.org/2013/03/sister-is-on-a-mission-to-help-prisoners-help-others/; "Washington State Correctional Center for Women Prison Pet Partnership Program," accessed November 16, 2016, http://prisonp.tripod.com/.
32. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 2:113. For further evidence of this medieval attestation, see Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), 63; and Irven M. Resnick, "Good Dog/Bad Dog: Dogs in Medieval Religious Polemics," *Enarratio* 18 (2013): 75.
33. White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 38–39; Susan McHugh, *Dog* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 39–43.

34. Sophia Menache, "Dogs: God's Worst Enemies?," *Society and Animals* 5, no. 1 (1997): 37.
35. Resnick, "Good Dog/Bad Dog," 70–97.
36. White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 15.
37. Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006), 145–48. Also see the excellent discussion of this motif, with further examples, in Albrecht Classen, "Introduction," in *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 29, e-book.
38. Eli Edward Burriss, "The Place of the Dog in Superstition as Revealed in Latin Literature," *Classical Philology* 30, no. 1 (1935): 33; Menache, "Dogs," 27; Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2012), 6–7.
39. David A. Sprunger, "Parodic Animal Physicians from the Margins of Medieval Manuscripts," in *Animals in the Middle Ages*, ed. Nona C. Flores (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 67–81. Further evidence of dogs' association with healing includes their legendary connection with Aesculapius; according to one ancient opinion cited by Rowland, "to dream of a dog signified the cure of the suppliant" (Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces*, 63).
40. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, 148.
41. Edward of Norwich, *The Master of Game*, ed. William A. Baillie-Grohman and F. N. Baillie-Grohman (1909; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 75–84; quote at 84.
42. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things*, 18.25 (1165), 18.27 (1170).
43. James Serpell, "From Paragon to Pariah: Some Reflections on Human Attitudes to Dogs," in *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behaviour, and Interactions with People*, ed. James Serpell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 254.
44. Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets*, 10.
45. In order of publication date: John M. Steadman, "Chaucer's 'Whelp': A Symbol of Marital Fidelity?," *N&Q* 3 (1956): 374–75; John Block Friedman, "The Dreamer, the Whelp, and Consolation in the *Book of the Duchess*," *Chaucer Review* 3, no. 3 (1969): 145–62; Carol Falvo Heffernan, "That Dog Again: *Melancholia Canina* and Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*," *Modern Philology* 84, no. 2 (1986): 185–90; Beryl Rowland, "The Whelp in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*," *NM* 66 (1965): 148–60; R. A. Shoaf, "Stalking the Sorrowful H(e)art: Penitential Lore and the Hunt Scene in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*," *JEGP* 78 (1979): 313–24.

46. Colin Wilcockson, "The Puppy in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*," *PASE Papers in Literature and Culture: Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Conference of the Polish Association for the Study of English, Gdańsk, 26–28 April 2000*, ed. Joanna Burzyńska and Danuta Stanulewicz (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2003), 435; Teresa Hooper, "Chaucer's Whelp: Consolation and the Limits of Reason in the *Book of the Duchess*," *Medieval Perspectives* 21 (2005): 58–75.
47. Cohen, "Inventing with Animals," 41.
48. Ryan R. Judkins, "Animal Agency, the Black Knight, and the Hart in the *Book of the Duchess*," in *Rethinking Chaucerian Beasts*, ed. Carolynn Van Dyke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 165.
49. On Chaucer's evocation in this phrase of an existential sense of discovery, or "experiencing a new mode of perception," see Raymond P. Tripp Jr., "The Loss of Suddenness in Lydgate's *A Complaynt of a Loveres Lyfe*," *Fifteenth Century Studies* 6 (1983): 253–69, quote at 255. On dogs as crossroads creatures, see McHugh, *Dog*, 47–48.
50. Here I disagree with Judkins's claim that the dreamer's "intense observation of the puppy's body language … is the most closely observed account of any creature's behavior in the poem" (164–65). Whereas Judkins proceeds to read the knight as a function of the hart metaphor, I argue for the continued resonance of the canine perspective in the dreamer as interlocutor.
51. See Edward of Norwich, *The Master of Game*, 75–84; and for a helpful treatment of dogs and aristocratic status, Sophia Menache, "Dogs and Human Beings: A Story of Friendship," *Society and Animals* 6, no. 1 (1998): 79–80.
52. "Sir Gowther," in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), line 221.
53. Steel, *How to Make a Human*, 240.
54. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Gowther Among the Dogs: Becoming Inhuman c. 1400," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York and London: Garland, 2000), 231; Alison Langdon, "Fit For a Dog?: Food Sharing and the Medieval Human/Animal Divide," *Society & Animals*, forthcoming.
55. Emily Rebekah Huber, "Redeeming the Dog: *Sir Gowther,*" *Chaucer Review* 50, nos. 3–4 (2015): 284–314; see also Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 119–41.
56. Cohen, *Of Giants*, 135.

57. On this point, see David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 286–97.
58. Edward of Norwich, *The Master of Game*, 79.
59. For further discussion of the "erotic currency" of these dogs in the romance tradition of Tristan, see Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human*, 120–23.
60. I dwell here on the French Tristan tradition, rather than later German and Italian versions, because of its closer affiliation with the Middle English texts that are the concern of this essay. Furthermore, the emphasis relating to Husdent and the lovers' situation is best exemplified by Béroul's "primitive" iteration: Gottfried von Strassburg, for example, does not portray the same degree of debasement (read: animality) in the lovers' exile in the forest.

CHAPTER 13

Embodied Emotion as Animal Language in *Le Chevalier au Lion*

Monica Antoinette Ehrlich

Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au lion*, or *Yvain* (c. 1177), tells the story of a prideful young knight who becomes a better husband and king by learning compassion and humility in completing a series of adventures with the help of a friendly and faithful lion from whom Yvain derives his eponymous title. There is a long history of scholarship on the figure of the lion in Chrétien's *Yvain*, but the anthropocentrism of some of this scholarship underemphasizes Chrétien's nuanced portrayal of human–animal communication through embodied emotions. Early scholarship on the figure of the lion in Chrétien's *Yvain* discusses the sources and inspiration for the grateful lion, but in doing so, treats the lion as a symbol rather than as a transformative character of equal importance to the human characters in the text.[1] These scholars are right in pointing out how the lion symbolizes Yvain's evolving character traits from his early pride and ferocity—which he must learn to temper and control—to his later compassion and mercy, reminiscent of the portrayal of lions as symbols of Christ in bestiaries. However, an alternate reading of this text that examines the transformative power of human–animal companionship in helping humans to become more empathetic is not incompatible with this earlier branch of

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scholarship that sees the lion for its symbolic value. Rather, recent research in the field of animal-assisted therapy (AAT) shows how companion animals help humans to combat loneliness and depression, and serve as models teaching individuals about unconditional love and nurturing.[2] Most scholars agree that the lion plays a pivotal role in helping Yvain to become more altruistic, but they focus more on how the lion helps Yvain than they do on the bi-directional nature of the pair's communication.[3] Recent scholars have been paying increasing attention to the ways in which Yvain and his lion communicate with one another through emotions,[4] or the way this text blurs the boundary between human and animal,[5] but in describing Yvain's transformation as animalistic or the lion's sentience as human, they fail to acknowledge a significant innovation in Chrétien's representation of sentience as a trait common to both humans and animals. Embodied emotions function as a *lingua franca*, allowing animals and humans to communicate across species lines. Chrétien's text is revolutionary in that it presents emotional cognition as an animal instinct. In becoming civilized, Yvain must, seemingly paradoxically, channel his inner animal mind. Indeed, as scientific research has shown, emotional cognition takes place in a phylogenetically ancient part of the brain and developed in animals well before the evolution of *Homo sapiens*.[6]

Chrétien's portrayal of cross-species communication parallels recent work in animal, affect, and cognitive studies, showing just how attuned twelfth-century readers were to the natural world and its transformative power in shaping human relationships and societies. This chapter revisits the role of the lion in *Yvain* in text and image, analyzing how the pair communicates with one another through embodied emotions—that is, through facial expressions and gestures that express their emotional states—in order to demonstrate the role of human–animal relationships in teaching humans emotional literacy and in helping them to strengthen communities. Using contemporary affective theory, I show how phenomena such as emotional mirroring and emotional contagion play out in *Yvain*, discussing how Yvain's experience with the lion helps him to become emotionally literate and empathetic, skills he lacks early in the text, transforming him into an ideal monarch and helping him to strengthen his bonds with his community.

Recent research in the fields of cognitive science, biology, and animal-assisted therapy explain further the mechanics of cross-species emotional communication, showing how human beings become more empathetic through their relationships with companion animals. For many years,

efforts to maintain scientific objectivity prevented scientists from even researching the subject of animal emotion, but the tide has since turned and scientists are increasingly recognizing the foundational role played by emotion in the evolution of species, showing how it ensures survival.[7] Scholars use terms such as "tactile empathy" and "emotional contagion" to show how emotions are transferred between individuals through mirror neurons, demonstrating how the sharing of emotions helps to build communities through empathy.[8] Research has revealed that human beings who have companion animals become more empathetic with other humans. One study showed that pet owners are "more skilled at decoding human, nonverbal facial expressions," which leads to "greater social acceptance" and helps pet owners to be "selected more frequently by others to be confidants, companions and partners."[9] Scholarship in the field of AAT has likewise shown how companion animals can help to fill a void in a human's life following loss of a loved one and mirror positive emotional communication, helping humans to improve their relationships with other humans. June McNicholas and Glyn M. Collis argue that animals can function as a social support, replacing "lacked human support," "initiat[ing] social contacts in a particularly 'normalizing' way," and "provid[ing] 'refuge' from the strains of human interactions."[10] These authors cite one study that has shown how researchers used friendly dogs to help improve communication between autistic children and their teachers.[11] Katherine A. Kruger and James A. Serpell describe the role played by companion animals as "transitional objects" that "act as a bridge to a higher or more socially acceptable level of functioning."[12] As they explain, the "notions that companion animals are 'empathetic,' i.e. able to respond to people's feelings and emotions, and unconditionally loving … have acquired the status of clichés" in the field of AAT" and thus many programs make use of animal training and caretaking to mirror positive emotional communication to individuals needing therapy.[13] As my analysis of *Yvain* shows, the lion similarly functions as a transitional object who mirrors positive behavior—namely, self-sacrifice, compassion, gratitude, and fidelity—and provides emotional support to Yvain as he begins his quest and masters his communication skills to become a better leader.

Contemporary cognitive science has inspired the affective turn in the humanities, and in recent years, a whole group of historians and literary scholars have turned their focus to the role played by emotions in shaping ethics. Much of this groundbreaking work has taken place in the field of medieval studies.[14] Arthurian scholars, in particular, have recognized the

foundational importance of emotions in the genre of romance.[15] Bringing cognitive theory of mirror neurons to bear on his study of romance, Frank Brandsma has elaborated a theory of the "mirror character," often a secondary character who, by displaying his or her emotional reaction to events in the narrative, projects the author's intended emotional reaction upon the audience.[16] Among other examples, he discusses the character of the lion in *Yvain*, arguing that he projects his own eagerness to join in battles with Yvain upon listeners.[17] Brandsma's theory helps to explain how literature elicits empathy in listeners, yet he misses some other potential implications for our understanding of the mechanics of emotional cognition between characters within a text, the ethical dimensions of cross-species communication, and the visual representation of embodied emotions in manuscript illuminations.

The significance of animal emotion and body language is demonstrated not only through the written text of *Yvain* but also through evocative illuminations in the manuscript tradition. Of the twelve extant manuscripts or fragments of the text,[18] two are richly illuminated: Princeton University Library, Garrett 125 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale ms. fr. 1433 (henceforth BN 1433).[19] Of these two illuminated manuscripts, BN 1433 provides the most nuanced portrayal of the role played by the lion in teaching Yvain about emotions.[20] As my analysis will show, the illumination program of this manuscript emphasizes the lion's pivotal role in helping Yvain acquire the emotional literacy necessary to improve his human relationships and reunite with his community. In the nine miniatures and one historiated initial of *Yvain* in BN 1433, many of which are divided into several compartments, six feature the lion on Yvain's armor (fol. 67v, 69v, 80v, 90r, 104r, and 118r), four show the lion as a character (fol. 89r, 90r, 104r, and 118r), and one presents the lion as a decoration on Yvain's and Laudine's marital bed (fol. 118r). The extent of the lion's presence already attests to his significance as a primary character in this text. Closer analysis of these illuminations in conjunction with the text further demonstrates how Yvain becomes emotionally literate through his partnership with the lion.

In the beginning of the text, Yvain is prideful, inconsiderate of others' feelings, and has difficulty reading emotions. The knights listen to Calogrenant as he narrates a tale about a magical fountain where he was defeated in a humiliating battle. When Arthur decides to convene a group of knights to avenge Calogrenant, Yvain alienates himself from the rest of his community through his affective response:

De che que li rois devisa,
Toute la cours miex l'em prisa,
Car mout y voloient aler
Li baron et li bacheler.
Mais qui qu'en soit liés et joians,
Mesire Yvains en fu dolans,
Qu'il en quidoit aler tous seus,
S'en fu dolans et angousseus
Du roi qui aler y devoit.
Pour che seulement li grevoit
Qu'il savoit bien que la bataille
Aroit mesire Keus sans faille,
Ains quë il, … (671–83)[21]

And everything the king had decided delighted the entire court, for every knight and every squire was desperate to go. But in spite of their joy and their pleasure my lord Yvain was miserable, for he'd meant to go alone, and so he was sad and upset at the king for planning his visit. And what bothered him most of all was knowing that the right of combat would surely fall to Sir Kay rather than himself.… (673–85)

In this passage, Yvain sets himself apart from his peers through his emotional discord; he does not experience the same emotional contagion as his peers. Although everyone is happy ("liés et joians") with Arthur's decision, Yvain is sad and anguished ("dolans et angousseus") by it because he wants to be able to fight alone. This scene shows how Yvain's selfishness and inconsideration of others' feelings set him apart from others in his society as he values his own pride over the common good.[22]

Yvain famously demonstrates his emotional illiteracy yet again when he falls in love with the grieving widow Laudine while she mourns her husband whom he killed. Yvain voyeuristically watches the widow from a nearby window as she cries out, faints, rips out her hair, and tears her clothes during her husband's funeral (1148–65). She then proceeds to angrily accuse her husband's murderer of cowardice while Yvain listens from nearby (1206–42). Rather than inciting Yvain's empathy, Laudine's expressions of grief make him fall in love with her. When he sees the dead husband's corpse, Yvain's only regret is that he cannot brag to his compatriots about having defeated him:

Du cors qu'il voit quë on enfuet
Li poise, quant avoir ne puet
Aucune cose qu'il en port
Tesmoing qu'i l'a conquis et mort (1345–48)

> [He is sad, seeing the body that they are about to bury because] he's had no chance to snatch some trophy for himself, something to prove beyond doubt that he'd conquered and killed the man. (1341–45)

Several scholars have discussed the role of grief in this text, pointing out the impropriety of Yvain's falling in love with the widow of the man he killed during his funeral,[23] further emphasizing Yvain's difficulties in reading emotions and expressing compassion. Theories of emotional contagion dictate that those with normative understandings of emotion would experience sympathetic grief upon witnessing others in distress. Yvain demonstrates that he is not yet emotionally mature when he shows little remorse for having killed a man, falls in love with a woman who obviously despises him at such an inappropriate time, and needs counseling from another woman to win the lady's heart.

Yvain further reveals his inconsideration early in the couple's marriage in an episode that sets the stage for his emotional rehabilitation in the wild. When Arthur and his retinue arrive at Laudine's court, the men ask Yvain to join them for tournaments. Laudine grants her husband one year of leave, but he later forgets about his promise. Laudine then sends Lunette to retrieve his ring in a scene of public humiliation that plunges Yvain into a state of enraged insanity ("Lors li monta .i. troubeillons/El chief, si grant quë il forsenne" [2805–06]) that causes him to act like an animal. Losing his most important human relationship makes him want to undo other aspects of his human culture. He tears his clothing and lives in the forest hunting wild animals and eating raw meat. Initially, Yvain's primal animal emotion manifests itself as unbridled anger and ferocious violence, reflecting perhaps the pride, anger, and inconsideration that made it difficult for him to be a part of human society in the beginning of the text. His anger soon subsides, however, and transforms into gratitude when he encounters a charitable hermit who provides him with bread and water. In recompense, Yvain, much like a hunting dog, brings venison to the hermit's doorstep daily and the hermit cooks the meat for him and sells the animal skins to buy bread. The pair's symbiotic relationship—which puts Yvain in the position of the animal—teaches Yvain humility, helps him to control his anger, and teaches him the value of expressing gratitude to others. Being dependent upon someone else to take care of him reduces his pride to humility and softens his anger into gratitude. As we shall see, learning these skills not only prepares Yvain for his companionship with the lion but also sets the stage for his process of rehabilitation whereby he

learns how to read emotions and develops compassion for others which helps him to win back Laudine.

Scholars tend to read Yvain's bout of folly as a stage during which he reflects upon his misdeeds before learning to negotiate between competing priorities in his efforts to win back Laudine.[24] While it may be tempting to see this civilized Yvain as rehabilitated, it is important to note that Yvain is not yet entirely recovered. When the ointment-covered Yvain awakes ashamed of his nudity, Chrétien writes that Yvain would be even more ashamed if he knew what had happened to him ("et plus grant eüst,/ Së il s'aventure seüst" [3021–22]), highlighting the fact that Yvain has repressed his memory of his crime against Laudine. We are further reminded of this later when Yvain recovers his repressed memories at the fountain and faints out of grief. Yvain's emotional repression and his need to undergo a series of quests to win back Laudine prove that this carnivorous, clean-cut and clothed Yvain is not entirely rehabilitated emotionally. Yvain does not fully master his feelings until he gets in touch with his primal animal emotional side through his companionship with the lion. As we shall see, in the course of his adventures to win back Laudine, there are still moments when Yvain has difficulty in reading emotions. Furthermore, several scenes in text and image highlight the pivotal role played by the lion in teaching Yvain humility, mercy, and compassion—the very emotional skills he lacked in the beginning of the text.

Spending time with his lion companion gives Yvain the compassion necessary to be an ideal husband and king. The first thing that draws Yvain to the lion is his cry of pain (3344). Yvain follows the cry and discovers a lion whose tail is caught in the jaws of a fire-breathing serpent that is burning his flanks (3348–51). Yvain, not sure which beast to help, contemplates the scene ("A lui meïsmes se conseille" [3354]), but ultimately the lion's cries and gestures of pain push Yvain to see the serpent as evil and cruel ("enuious et a felon" [3357]) and elicit his pity and compassion for the lion:

> Mais quoi qu'i l'en aviengne aprés,
> Aidier li vaurra il adés,
> Que pités l'en semont et prie.
> Qu'il faiche secours et aÿe
> A la beste gentil et franche. (3371–75)
>
> But whatever happened, he'd made up his mind to help the lion, for pity urged him on, begging him to rescue that noble, highborn beast. (3371–75)

Though the narrator mentions that Yvain considers the need to protect himself against the lion (3369–70), he is moved to help the ferocious beast because of his emotional gestures.

The lion communicates his gratitude and humility through yet another emotional gesture that becomes a significant and recurring leitmotif in the text. Chrétien writes:

> Oyés que fist li leons donques:
> Il fist que frans et debonaire,
> Quë il li commencha a faire
> Samblant quë a lui se rendroit;
> Et ses piés joins li estendoit,
> Puis se va vers tere fichier,
> Si s'estuet seur .ii. piés derrier,
> Et puis si se ragenoulloit
> Et toute se faiche moulloit
> De lermes, par humilité.
> Mesire Yvains par verité
> Set que li leons l'en merchie
> *Et que devant lui s'umilie* (3392–404; my emphasis)
>
> Now hear what that lion did! Showing his nobility and goodness, he began to make it clear that he surrendered himself to Yvain: placing his front feet together, he stood erect on his hind legs and bowed his face toward the earth. And then he knelt again, and his face was wet all over with humble tears. And my lord Yvain knew without doubt that the lion was offering him thanks *and humbling himself before [him]*. (3392–404; my emphasis)

The lion's posture and tears communicate his gratitude and humility to his savior. The final line of this passage ("Et que devant lui s'umilie" [3404]) is the exact midpoint of the version of the poem found in BN 1433, thus further emphasizing the significance of the lion in teaching Yvain humility. This moment marks a turning point in the text where Yvain will set out to win back Laudine through a series of adventures with his lion companion who never leaves his side (3412–15), a gesture reminding us of his fidelity.

The illumination cycle of BN 1433 further emphasizes the significance of animal body language in helping Yvain to improve his relationships with his fellow humans. The lion rescue scene (Fig. 13.1) depicts the lion and Yvain both before and after the rescue.

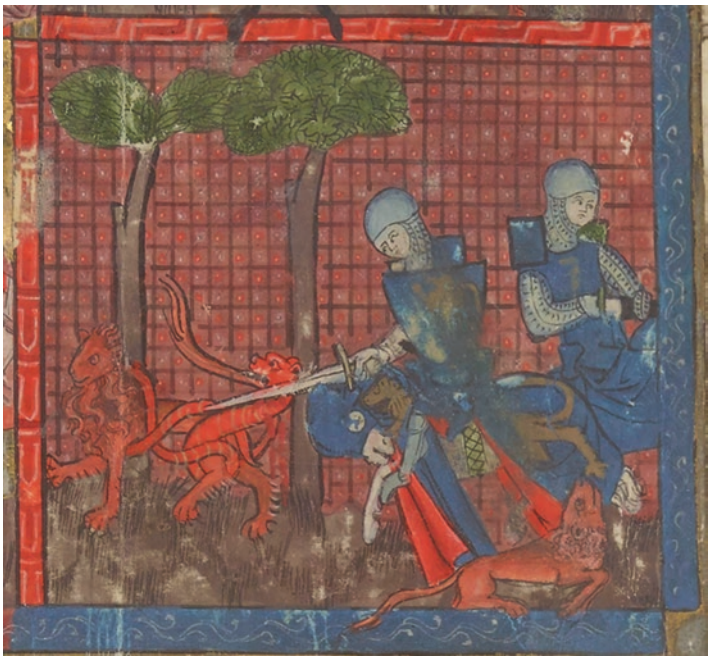

Fig. 13.1 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. fr. 1433 fol. 85r. Yvain rescues the lion who is being attacked by the serpent and the lion expresses his gratitude by kneeling before him

On the left, we see the lion in the serpent's clutches with an expression of pain on his face. Both the lion and the serpent are painted in a brownish-orange color, further emphasizing Yvain's initial difficulty in discerning which animal to help. Yvain bows his head, a gesture emphasizing his contemplation of the lion's gestures. On the right-hand side, the lion bows humbly before Yvain with a smile on his face to express his relief following the rescue. We also see Yvain sheathing his sword, demonstrating that he understands the significance of the lion's expression and realizes that it will not be necessary to defend himself against him. Yvain is looking off in the distance toward the right, prepared to set off on his quest to win back Laudine with his faithful lion at his side and armed with the humility and gratitude he will need to earn her back.

Following the lion's rescue, Yvain and the lion live together for some time in the wilderness honing their skills at reading emotions. Chrétien provides an anecdote about their hunting practices that harkens back to the earlier scene when the beastly Yvain hunts and shares his game with the hermit, only now, the roles are reversed. Chrétien's portrait of the cross-species hunting practice resembles Donna Haraway's description of human-animal communication as a gestural dance whereby the pair each use their bodies to give clues to one another[25]:

> Un petit s'est mis en la trache,
> Tant qu'a son seigneur a moustré
> Qu'il a senti et encontré
> Vent et flair de sauvage beste.
> Lors le regarde et si s'areste,
> Car il le veut servir a gré,
> …
> Et chil aperchoit son esgart,
> Qu'il li moustre quë i l'atent.
> Bien l'aprechoit et bien l'entent
> Que, s'il remaint, il ramaurra,
> Et, s'i li siet, quë il prendra
> La venison qu'il a sentie.
> Lors le semont et si l'escrie
> Aussi comme .i. brachet feïst.
> Et li leons maintenant mist
> Le nes au vent qu'il ot senti,
> Ne ne li ot riens menti (3424–42)

> He'd begin to follow a trail, as if to show his master that he'd found the scent of some wild animal, met it on the wind. Then, watching Yvain, he would stop, wanting to please him.… And Yvain noted the look on his face, which showed him that the lion was waiting. He saw it, and knew what it meant: If he stayed where he was, the lion would stay; if he followed, the lion would catch the game he had scented. And Yvain urged him on, shouting as he'd shout to a pack of hounds. And the lion immediately sniffed out the trail, and followed it, knowing exactly what it meant. (3424–42)

Chrétien emphasizes the reciprocity of the pair's gestures using parallel language for the lion's gaze ("Lors le regarde" [3428]) and Yvain's ("Et chil aperchoit son esgart" [3432]). The communication between Yvain and his lion is bi-directional. Each one makes a gesture and waits to ensure

that the other understands its significance. The lion points his nose in the air to indicate he smells game. Yvain uses his posture and shouts to tell the lion when to attack.[26] When the lion carries the venison on his back to Yvain, Chrétien writes about Yvain's and the lion's great love ("grant amor" [3453]) and affection ("grant chierté" [3452]) for one another. As Susan Crane has pointed out recently, because of the close proximity of humans and animals in animal husbandry and the emphasis on embodiment, sensory response, and emotion in human–animal communication human beings are "always affected, as well as affecting."[27] The bodily cannot be separated from the affective just as the human cannot be seen as separate from other species.

Shortly after the hunting scene, Yvain rediscovers the magical fountain which reminds him of his lost love, causing him to faint (3486–501). When the lion witnesses Yvain's sword piercing his neck, he believes him to be dead and expresses his own grief through a parallel gesture:

> Il se detort et grate et crie,
> Et s'a talant quë il s'ochie
> De l'espee dont est maris,
> Qui a son boin seigneur ochis.
> A ses dens l'espee li oste,
> Et sor un fust jesant l'acoste;
> Et puis derrier .i. fust l'apuie,
> Qu'ele ne guenchisse ne fuie
> Quant il y hurtera du pis. (3507–15)
>
> He rolled on the ground, and roared, and decided to kill himself with the sword he thought had killed his loving master. And taking the sword in his teeth he propped it erect on a fallen tree, and steadied its hilt on another tree, so it could not slip when he ran his chest against it. (3511–19)

Not only does the lion correctly interpret Yvain's grief but he also mirrors it with his own parallel gesture of grief. Yvain thus transfers his sadness to the empathetic lion through emotional contagion. Affect scholars, both within the humanities and the sciences, have discussed the psychological phenomenon of emotional contagion, showing how mirror neurons make animals yawn or mimic other gestures they witness and discussing its implications for our understanding the role played by emotions in evolution and community building. Marek Špinka uses the term "emotional contagion" to describe "the situation or process when one person is emotionally moved by perceiving the emotional state of another person"[28] and

argues that species may have initially developed this trait to respond to their crying young.[29] He elaborates upon this idea further by suggesting that this empathetic response facilitated coordination of groups and led to "stonger interindividual bonding."[30] Laura K. Guerrero and Kory Floyd similarly emphasize the significance of emotional contagion, encoding, and decoding emotions for providing support for a distressed partner.[31] Reading each other's emotions not only helps Yvain and his lion to form a stronger bond but also prepares Yvain to be a better partner to Laudine and a better king to his people. Indeed, witnessing the lion's suicide attempt pushes Yvain to reflect upon his relationship with Laudine:

> Dont n'ai je chest leon veü
> Qui pour moi a si grant duel fait
> Qu'il se veut m'espee entresait
> Par mi le pis el cors bouter? (3544–47)
>
> And haven't I seen this lion, who felt such grief for me that he was ready to set my sword against his chest and thrust it in? (3548–52)

Seeing the lion's great devotion makes him question his own lack of devotion (3548–58). Yvain thus begins to learn about compassion and fidelity from his lion companion.

In the following series of adventures, we see Yvain become more selfless and develop an empathetic concern for the plight of others. While Yvain is lamenting, he encounters a prisoner in a worse state than himself. At first, he is too distracted by his own sadness to help her, but then he realizes that the prisoner is Lunette and that she is being imprisoned because of him, so he promises to defend her. Along the way, he encounters a kingdom being terrorized by the giant Harpin of the Mountain. The people express a mixture of joy and pain because, on the one hand, they are happy to be welcoming a guest, but on the other, they fear their fate with the giant. Upon witnessing these polar emotions, Yvain is perplexed ("s'esbahissoit" [3826]), demonstrating his difficulty in understanding others' emotions. When they explain their situation to him, he becomes empathetic, affirming to his host, "de vostre anui/Mout iriés et mout dolens sui." (3899–900) ("Your troubles distress me, and make me exceedingly angry" [3903–904]). Once he learns that this is the family of his best friend Gauvain, he is finally moved by pity to help ("la pitié … l'em prent" [3938]). We see here how compassion begins to become a motivating force for Yvain the more time that he spends with the lion,

especially when it comes to his loved ones, but his personal connection to Gauvain shows that his compassion is still not entirely selfless.

During the battle, Yvain, his horse, and his lion fight together as a sort of chivalric triad or "machinic assemblage" reminiscent of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's work on *chevalerie*.[32] As in previous scenes, the battles are choreographed by various emotive gestural clues. The lion demonstrates his anger by cresting his mane ("li leons se creste" [4213]) and uses his teeth and claws as weapons to help Yvain defeat the giant. The pair complements each other so well in the battle that Yvain is named henceforth "the Knight of the Lion" ("li chevaliers au leon" [4285]). Yvain and his lion each make use of their anatomical differences to defeat their enemies efficiently here and during other battle scenes in the text. Yvain's height advantage—thanks to his position atop the horse—puts him in a good location to attack the upper half of his foes while the lion's stance close to ground puts him closer to their bottom half. Furthermore, Yvain begins to acquire some of the traits of his noble beast: ferocity, compassion, and fidelity.

When Yvain defends Lunette against her accusers we see a bit of improvement in his ability to respond to the emotions of others even if he is motivated by his own guilt. Seeing Lunette on a pyre bothers Yvain ("anuier" [4322]), but it is not until he sees Laudine and the ladies of the court crying that he is truly moved to pity ("Et de che grant pité li prent"[4351]). We notice a marked contrast in Yvain here; this is the first time he experiences pity for Laudine's grief. The accusers ask Yvain to control his lion, but Yvain makes no promises (4446–52). At the beginning of the battle, Yvain commands his lion to lie down (4466). The lion obeys until he senses that Yvain needs his help. When Yvain is thrust to the ground by the accusers, the lion tears off one accuser's shoulder from his body. Chrétien emphasizes Yvain's and the lion's emotional literacy in battle and the way it contributes to their love for one another:

> Mais li leons sans doute set
> Que ses sires mie ne het
> S'aÿe, anchois l'en aime plus (4537–39)
>
> [But] the lion [knew without a doubt] that his master did not truly dislike his help, but loved him better for it. (4542–46)

Seeing the lion in pain moves Yvain with anger ("mout est courouchié" [4544]) to seek revenge. After the battle, when both Yvain and the lion

are covered with wounds, Yvain worries more for the lion than he does for himself ("Mais de tout che tant ne s'esmaie/Com de sen leon qui se deut" [4558–59]). Yvain then departs, worried and sad ("pensis et destrois" [4646]) for his injured lion. Yvain demonstrates that he is able to selflessly care for a loved one when he proceeds to make a bed of litter for the lion and carries him on his shield (4646–57). Yvain becomes more compassionate the more time he spends with the lion and this is key to understanding his eventual reconciliation with Laudine.

In the *Pesme Aventure* episode we see Yvain selflessly help women in need purely out of compassion and not guilt. Yvain must fight two demons keeping three hundred girls as prisoners in sweatshop conditions to weave silk. Yvain can tell from their torn, threadbare, and soiled garments, their sallow faces, their bowed heads, and their tears that they are impoverished, sad, and in need of his help. Yvain demonstrates his increasing empathy when he affirms to his guide:

> Mais che me desabelist mout
> Qu'eles sont de cors et de voult
> Maigres et pales et dolentes. (5227–29)
>
> But it makes me distinctly unhappy to see how their faces and their bodies are so thin and pale and wretched. (5231–33)

This is the first time in the text where Yvain is motivated purely by empathy and not by personal connections, guilt, or pride. One is reminded both of the previous scene during which Yvain nurses his lion back to health after the battle against Lunette's accusers in that seeing someone in pain causes him to experience empathy; caring for an animal helps Yvain to become better at decoding emotions and makes him more compassionate. When he sees all of the girls crying, he tells them he wants to turn their sorrow into joy (5243–45).

Despite the admonishments of his guide, Yvain decides to fight the two demons. During the battle, Yvain and the lion read each other's emotional gestures to form an effective team. When the lion first sees the demons, he uses body language to demonstrate his anger:

> Li lions commenche a fremir
> …
> Si se heriche et creste ensemble,

> De hardement et d'ire tramble
> Et bat la terre de sa coue. (5522–29)
>
> And then the lion began to quiver… His hair stood up, his mane bristled, and he shook with anger and beat the ground with his tail, ready and eager to save his master, before they could kill him. (5526–35)

Upon seeing this gesture that the demons interpret as a threat ("Vostre leon … nous manache" [5534]), the demons ask Yvain to lock up the lion. During the battle, when Yvain is hot with shame and terror ("De honte et de crieme escaufés" [5584]), the lion becomes sad and agitated ("Or a son cuer dolent et trouble" [5590]). Remembering Yvain's generosity, he begins to demonstrate a sadness ("grant duel" [5604]) that turns into a furious rage ("il esrage vis et forsenne" [5605]) that enables him to dig himself out from under the doorway to rescue his master. Yet again, the pair manage to defeat their enemies through their ability to read each other's emotions and to respond using their complementary strengths in battle.

BN 1433 depicts this scene as a series of actions that emphasize the role played by emotional cognition in helping the pair to work well as a team (Fig. 13.2). To the far left, we see the lion locked in the tower as he watches the battle. His tilted head, reminiscent of a common gesture displayed by dogs, suggests he is trying to read Yvain's emotions.[33]

A recent article by Stanley Coren, a psychologist working on dogs and social cues, suggests that dogs, because of their drooping ears and obstructive muzzles, tilt their heads to both see and hear better. He believes that they do this especially to be able to read their masters' facial expressions and emotions.[34] Given the fact that scholars often liken Chrétien's lion to a dog, it is not surprising that the illuminator of this text chose such a canine pose to show the lion reading Yvain's emotions during the battle scene. BN 1433 also demonstrates how Yvain and the lion make use of their anatomical differences to form the perfect chivalric pair. As Yvain aims the sword at his head, the lion gnaws on his flank. This image reminds us that the lion's teeth and paws function in the same way as Yvain's sword and that their heights allow them to attack enemies from different angles, making them an ideal duo.

Though this is the last battle in which Yvain fights with the help of his lion, the lion remains a key figure in the conclusion of the text. For the

Fig. 13.2 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. fr. 1433 fol. 104r. Yvain fights the two demons while the lion watches from a nearby tower

final battle of the text, Yvain returns to Arthur's court incognito to defend a young girl mired in an inheritance dispute with her sister. Gauvain, unbeknownst to Yvain, defends the other. Chrétien writes that Yvain sneaks out without his lion for this battle, leaving him where they had spent the night ("Car du leon emblé se furent,/Si fu remés la ou il jurent" [5919–20]). The narrator provides little explanation as to why Yvain had left the lion. Perhaps Yvain was afraid that the lion would be too ferocious and deemed this ferocity unnecessary in this instance for an inheritance dispute in his home kingdom. If the tamed lion, as Norris Lacy contends, symbolizes Yvain's ability to put his "courage and strength … to use in the service of one who needs aid,"[35] then part of Yvain's growth as a human being comes from knowing when and when not to unleash the lion's fury, and this knowledge is key to his becoming an ideal monarch.

Yvain concludes with a series of reunions and reconciliations that highlight the pivotal role played by the lion in helping Yvain to attain the

emotional literacy and compassion necessary to become a better member of his community. During Yvain's battle with Gauvain when the pair reach an impasse, they decide to take a break for the night and realize each other's identities. Then, they throw down their arms and embrace. This forces Arthur to intervene in the inheritance dispute between the sisters. As soon as Yvain and Gauvain disarm, the lion comes running toward Yvain making signs of his joy ("Si commenche grant joie a faire" [6449]). When the fearful crowd recoils, Yvain reassures them that he and the lion are friends ("Si soumes compaignon andui" [6458]). When they allow the lion to approach, Chrétien describes the lion's expression thus:

> Et li leons ne vint pas lent
> Vers son seignour la ou il sist.
> Quant devant li fu, si li fist
> Grant joie comme beste mue. (6484–87)
>
> And the lion came hurrying up toward his master, seated there, and [when he was] in front of him, [made signs of great joy to him like a mute beast]. (6494–97)

Here, Chrétien summarizes his portrait of Yvain's and the lion's embodied emotional language. Even though the lion is a "mute beast," he can still, nevertheless, communicate his feelings to Yvain with gestures.

The final reconciliation of the text is that between Yvain and Laudine. Following his reunion with the lion, Chrétien writes that Yvain would die of love if Laudine did not have mercy on him ("Mais pour amors enfin morroit/Se sa dame n'avoit merchi/De li…" [6505–506]). Once Yvain has fully recovered, he steals away to win back Laudine with his lion who "onques en toute sa vie/Ne vaut laissier sa compaingnie" (6521–22) ("meant for the rest of his life never to leave his companion's side" [6530–32]). The fact that the lion—portrayed here as eternally faithful—accompanies Yvain on his final journey to win back Laudine emphasizes his role in teaching Yvain the various traits necessary to become an ideal husband and ruler. In the same way that the lion never wants to leave Yvain's side, Yvain, who previously failed to return to his wife at the appropriate time, must also learn true fidelity, and the lion serves as a perfect role model for this. Lunette then helps Yvain to win over Laudine through a cunning ruse whereby Yvain sets off the tempestuous fountain and Lunette convinces Laudine to marry the Knight of the Lion to become the fountain's new defender. Once she agrees, Yvain, still followed by the

lion ("Et li leons tous jours aprés" [6708]), enters the castle to prove to his lady that he has finally learned true humility from his lion. In a gesture that harkens back to the lion's initial gratitude after Yvain's rescue at the midpoint of the text, Yvain bows humbly before the queen: "A ses piés se laissa cheoir/Mesire Yvains trestous armés" (6720–21) ("And my lord Yvain, dressed in full armor … fell at her feet" [6729–31]). The mention of Yvain's gesture of humility in conjunction with that of his arms further emphasizes the fact that he must learn when not to fight. Laudine becomes upset when she realizes that the Knight of the Lion is in fact her estranged husband. To assure her of his emotional growth, he proceeds to apologize to her, saying,

> Dame, misericorde
> Doit on de pechaour avoir.
> Comperé ai mon mal savoir
> Et je le doi bien comperer.
> Folie me fist demourer,
> Si me rent coupable et fourfait.
> Et mout grant hardement ai fait
> Quant devant vous osai venir.
> Mais s'or me volés retenir,
> Jammais ne vous fourferai rien. (6770–79)

> Lady! We ought to show pity to sinners. I've had to suffer for my folly, and I ought to have suffered, it was only right. It was folly that kept me away; I was guilty, you were right to punish me. It's taken courage to come and stand before you. I've risked it. But now, if you'll take me back, I shall never injure you again. (6780–89)

This apology elaborates upon his previous bow of humility, using human language, now, to expound upon the sense of the animal gesture while also reiterating the emotional progress Yvain has made during the course of his adventures with his humble, grateful, and caring lion.

BN 1433 highlights the multiple reunions concluding *Yvain* while using gestures to signify the various emotions invoked at the close of the text. In fol. 104r, in the bottom right quadrant following the scene in which the lion escapes from the tower to be reunited with Yvain (Fig. 13.2), Yvain is shown embracing his best friend Gauvain after their battle. The final full-page miniature illustrates Yvain's reunion with Laudine (Fig. 13.3).

In the upper half, we see Yvain and his lion kneeling before the queen in a gesture of humility that parallels that of the lion after his rescue (Fig. 13.1).

Fig. 13.3 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. fr. 1433 fol. 118r. Above: Yvain and lion kneel before Laudine. Below: Yvain and Laudine in bed with lion decorating the bottom

Although the text does not state that the lion kneels with Yvain, the various mentions of the lion toward the end of the text which we previously saw emphasize the fact that the lion never leaves Yvain's side. The illuminator, by drawing them in this parallel pose, further highlights the pair's emotional contagion and the extent to which Yvain learns about faith,

humility, and mercy from the lion and how this helps him to win back the love of Laudine. The bottom half of the closing miniature (Fig. 13.3) shows Yvain and Laudine embracing in a bed decorated by a lion on the bottom.[36]

Both the text of *Yvain* and the illuminations of BN 1433 demonstrate how embodied emotion functions as a *lingua franca* that helps Yvain and his lion to communicate across species lines. Initially, Yvain suffers from pride, selfishness, and inconsideration. He alienates himself from his community because of his inability to understand emotions. He engages in unnecessary battles out of pride, selfishly neglects his wife, and does not respond to others' emotions appropriately. He falls in love with a grieving widow and is often too wrapped up in his own feelings to express empathy for others. Upon meeting the lion at the midpoint of the text, however, Yvain embarks on a quest to win back Laudine. Because of his companionship with the lion, he becomes more emotionally literate and empathetic and learns how to control his anger, only unleashing his fury when it is necessary to care for his loved ones, his community, and victims of abuses of power. As affect theorists, cognitive scientists, psychologists, and biologists have shown, empathy and emotional contagion help strengthen interpersonal bonds and build strong communities. Furthermore, companionship with animals helps humans to develop empathy. For these reasons, we see how Yvain's time with the lion gives him the necessary skills to be a better husband, ruler, and community member. Learning to read his lion's emotions and caring for his lion make Yvain more compassionate, and we see how Yvain improves his emotional cognition and affective responses to the plight of others after meeting the lion.

The illumination cycle of BN 1433 further emphasizes how Yvain learns about faith, humility, mercy, compassion, and empathy through his relationship with his faithful companion. By painting Yvain and the lion in parallel gestures of humility, the illuminator presents the lion as a significant figure in teaching Yvain humility. Placing the lion in a series of illuminations depicting various reunions shows the lion's role in helping Yvain to reunite with his community. Finally, by decorating the couple's conjugal bed with the faithful lion, the illuminator presents the lion as a symbol of Yvain's newfound fidelity to his lady. *Yvain* and BN 1433 show that the ideal leader is ferocious on the battlefield, compassionate at court, humble with ladies, and faithful in the bedroom.

In *Le Chevalier au lion*, Chrétien offers us a complex portrayal of human–animal communication that challenges many assumptions about

emotional cognition, language, and human superiority. Chrétien shows us not only the mechanisms of human–animal communication—vocalizations and emotional gestures—but, at times, places animals in a position superior to humans, showing how they contribute to building strong communities. While many past critics of *Yvain* have read this text through binaries that present the human as superior—human vs. animal, emotion vs. reason, savage vs. domesticated, nature vs. culture—these readings miss the extent to which Chrétien presents emotional body language as a primal instinct common to humans and animals and as something which humans can learn more about from animals. Chrétien portrays animal body language as a linguistic system that expresses emotions with more economy and more accuracy than verbal language and as a linguistic system in which nonhuman animals sometimes have a greater level of expertise than humans.

Notes

1. See Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, "The Grateful Lion," *PMLA* 39, no. 3 (1924): 485–524; Helen C. R. Laurie, "Beasts and Saints: A Key to the Lion in Chrétien's *Yvain*," *Bibliographic Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 39 (1987): 297–306; Jean Dufournet, "Le lion d'Yvain," in Le Chevalier au lion *de Chrétien de Troyes: Approches d'un chef-d'œuvre*, ed. Jean Dufornet (Paris: Champion, 1988), 77–104; Grace Armstrong, "Rescuing the Lion: From *Le Chevalier au lion* to *La Queste del Saint Graal*," *Medium Aevum* 61 (January 1992): 17–34; Kajsa Meyer, "Pourquoi un chevalier au lion? Remarques sur l'actualité du thème choisi par Chrestien de Troyes," *Bibliographic Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 44 (1992): 241–44; Richard Trachsler, "Si le gita/sor son dos, et si l'en porta (*Yvain*, vv. 3445–46) ou: comment porter un cerf si vous êtes un lion," *Reinardus* 7 (1994): 183–93; and Paule Le Rider, "Lions et dragons dans la littérature, de Pierre Damien à Chrétien de Troyes," *Le Moyen Age* 104, no. 1 (1998): 9–52. Brodeur argues that *Yvain* derives from a now lost intermediary text inspired by the Androcles legend. Laurie discusses the hagiographic resonances. Dufournet connects the lion to menageries (77), heraldry (78), *chansons de geste*, fables, the *Renard* tales, and bestiaries (78–9). His most compelling reference is to the *Bestiaire* of Philippe de Thaon, which was likely inspired by the *Physiologus* (79). Armstrong compares the lion in *Yvain* to that of the prose *Perceval*. Meyer discusses the significance of the lion as a heraldic symbol for Philippe d'Alsace, Chrétien's future patron. Traschler connects

Yvain to the *Renard* tradition. Le Rider compares the *topos* of the battle between a lion and a serpent as it appears in crusade tales (17–24) and natural history (32–3).

2. Two articles in particular, both found in the *Handbook on Animal Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice,* 2nd ed., ed. Aubrey H. Fine (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2006), show the role played by animal companions in modeling emotions and serving as emotional supports. See Katherine A. Kruger and James A. Serpell, "Animal-Assisted Interventions in Mental Health: Definitions and Theoretical Foundations" on pp. 21–38 and June McNicholas and Glyn M. Collis, "Animals as Social Supports: Insights for Understanding Animal-Assisted Therapy" on pp. 49–71.
3. See Julian Harris, "The Rôle of the Lion in Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain*," *PMLA* 64, no. 5 (1949): 1143–63; Tony Hunt, "The Lion and Yvain," in *The Legend of Arthur in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to A.H. Diverres by Colleagues, Pupils and Friends,* ed. P. B. Grout and A. H. Diverres (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983), 86–98; and Norris Lacy, "Yvain's Evolution and the Role of the Lion," *Romance Notes* 12, no. 1 (1970): 198–202. Harris describes the lion is a symbol of Christ that characterizes the virtues that Yvain must acquire: courage, faith, altruism, and pity (1147). Hunt argues that the lion serves as a mirror character who "reflects … the … compassion of its master" ("The Lion and Yvain," 94). Lacy suggests that the tamed lion represents Yvain who masters the ideal character traits of "responsibility, devotion, and service" (201–02). Dufournet sees the lion as a key figure in Yvain's rehabilitation (79), arguing that Yvain becomes more selfless thanks to his contact with the lion (100).
4. See Tony Hunt, "Le Chevalier au Lion: *Yvain* Lionheart," in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 156–68. Dufournet attributes feelings to the lion (86, 89, 93), but borders on anthropocentrism when he says that the lion becomes more human in his contact with Yvain (83). Armstrong argues that Chrétien's humanized lion and the animalized Yvain manage to communicate across species lines (21). Hunt discusses how the lion shares emotions with Yvain (159), likening their friendship to other human friendships in the text ("Yvain Lionheart," 165).
5. Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, "The Lady and the Dragon in Chrétien's *Chevalier au lion*," in *From Beasts to Souls: Gender and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*, ed. E. Jane Burns and Peggy McCracken (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 65–86.
6. Masson and McCarthy show that the same part of the brain thought to mediate emotions, the limbic system, is such a phylogenetically ancient part of the brain that it is often called "the reptile brain" (*When Elephants Weep*, 16).

7. For more on animal emotions, see Marc Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2007); Robert Plutchik, "The Nature of Emotions," *American Scientist* 89 (2001): 344–50; and Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy, *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals* (New York: Delta, 1995).
8. For cognitive studies of "tactile empathy" and mirror neurons, see Giacomo Rizzolatti and Laila Craighero, "Mirror Neuron: A Neurological Approach to Empathy," in *Neurobiology of Human Values*, ed. Jean-Pierre Changeux et al. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2005), 107–23; and Christian Keysers, Bruno Wicker, Valeria Gazzola, Jean-Luc Anton, Leonardo Fogassi, and Vittorio Gallese, "A Touching Sight: SII/PV Activation during the Observation and Experience of Touch," *Neuron* 42 (2004): 335–46. For a discussion of how "emotional contagion" plays out in mice, see Marek Špinka, "Social Dimension of Emotions and its Implications for Animal Welfare," *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 138 (2012): 170–81.
9. Lynette A. Hart, "Dogs as Human Companions: A Review of the Relationship," in *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behavior, and Interactions with People*, ed. James Serpell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 161–78, esp. 167.
10. McNicholas and Collis, "Animals as Social Supports," 58.
11. McNicholas and Collis, "Animals as Social Supports," 69.
12. Kruger and Serpell, "Animal-Assisted Interventions in Mental Health," 30.
13. Kruger and Serpell, "Animal-Assisted Interventions in Mental Health," 31.
14. See Stephanie Trigg, "Introduction: Emotional Histories—Beyond the Personalization of the Past and the Abstraction of Affect Theory," *Exemplaria* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 3–15; and Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
15. The bibliography on the subject of affect in romance is too extensive to cite in its entirety here. For a general overview of the subject, see Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington, and Corinne Saunders, eds., *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), JSTOR edition.
16. See Frank Brandsma, "Arthurian Emotions," in *22nd Congress of the International Arthurian Society, Rennes 2008*, ed. Denis Hüe, Anne Delamaire and Christine Ferlampin-Archer, www.uhb.fr/alc/ias/actes/index.htm, accessed February 20, 2016.
17. Brandsma, "Arthurian Emotions," 8–9.
18. For more information on the manuscript tradition of *Yvain* and Chrétien's other romances, see Keith Busby, Terry Nixon, Alison Stones, and Lori

Walters, eds., *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de* Troyes (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993); and Keith Busby, "The Manuscripts of Chrétien's Romances," in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 64–75.

19. Digital facsimiles of these two manuscripts are currently available through the Princeton University Library website and *Gallica*. See *Le Chevalier au lion*. MS 125, Princeton University Library, accessed September 9, 2016, http://pudl.princeton.edu/objects/pz50gx50b; *and Le Chevalier au lion*. MS français 1433, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France, accessed September 9, 2016, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105096493/f1.item.r=francais%201433.
20. Several scholars have examined the significance of love and relationships in BN 1433, but they largely ignore the role of the lion, treating him as a symbol rather than as a transformative character. See Nancy Black, "The Language of the Illustrations of Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*," *Studies in Iconography* 15 (1993): 45–75; and Sandra Hindman, *Sealed in Parchment: Rereadings of Knighthood in the Illuminated Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
21. All French quotations come from Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au lion*, ed. and trans. David Hult (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1994). All English quotations come from Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain: The Knight of the Lion,* trans. Burton Raffel (Hartford, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), Kindle edition. Hult's edition is based on Paris, BN MS français 1433; and Raffel's is based on Foerster's *Yvain*, which is a synthesis of Vatican, Regina Latina (Christina of Sweden) 1725 and Paris BN MS français 1433. My changes to the translations are indicated in square brackets.
22. C. R. B. Combellack, "Yvain's Guilt," *Studies in Philology* 66, no. 1 (1971): 10–25, esp. 10.
23. See Virginie Greene, "Le Deuil, mode d'emploi, dans deux romans de Chrétien de Troyes," *French Studies* 52, no. 3 (1998): 257–78; and Megan Moore, "Chrétien's Romances of Grief: Widows and their Erotic Bodies in *Yvain*," in *Masculinities and Femininities in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Frederick Kiefer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 101–15.
24. See Saul Brody, "Reflections of Yvain's Inner Life," *Romance Philology* 54 (Spring 2001): 277–98, esp. 277; Anne Hunsaker Hawkins, "Yvain's Madness," *Philological Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (1992): 377–97; Marc M. Pelen, "Madness in Yvain Reconsidered," *Neophilologus* 87, no. 3 (2003): 361–69, esp. 361; and Monique Santucci, "La Folie dans le *Chevalier au lion*," in Le Chevalier au lion *de Chrétien de Troyes: Approches d'un chef-d'œuvre*, ed. Jean Dufournet (Paris: Chamption, 1988), 153–72, esp. 170. Whereas Hawkins emphasizes the tension between prowess and courtliness, Brody and Pelen focus on the conflict between Yvain's inner

feelings and public duties. Santucci likens Yvain's time in the wilderness to a purgatory in which he expiates his sins against Laudine.

25. See Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 26.
26. Yvain and the lion's gestural communication here echoes Susan Crane's observations of how hunting dogs in Gaston Phébus's *Le Livre de la Chasse* "will associate a certain sequence of hunting cries, threats, and placements of hunters and then 'will realize in their animal way ('s'aviseront en leur bestece') what is expected of them." Susan Crane, "Medieval Animal Studies: Dogs at Work," *Oxford Handbooks Online*, accessed December 5, 2016, http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-103.
27. Crane, "Dogs at Work," n.p.
28. Špinka, "Social Dimension," 171.
29. Špinka, "Social Dimension," 174.
30. Špinka, "Social Dimension," 173.
31. See Laura K. Guerrero and Kory Floyd, "Nonverbal Expression of Emotion," in *Nonverbal Communication in Close Relationships* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 107–32.
32. Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 35–77.
33. Several scholars have likened Chrétien's lion to a dog. See Armstrong, "Rescuing the Lion," 23; and Bruckner, "The Lady and the Dragon," 80. Dufournet sees the hunting scene in particular as doglike ("Le lion d'Yvain," 81). Indeed, Chrétien would have had more ready access to dogs than lions in Anglo-Norman France and England, but it also seems likely that he chose doglike traits to emphasize the lion's fidelity and companionship.
34. Stanley Coren, "Why Do Some Dogs Tilt Their Heads?" *Psychology Today*, accessed September 9, 2016, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/201312/why-do-some-dogs-tilt-their-heads-when-we-talk-them.
35. Lacy, "Yvain's Evolution," 201.
36. See Lori Walters, "The Creation of a 'Super Romance': Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français, MS 1433," *Arthurian Yearbook* 1 (1991): 17–18, for a discussion of the formulaic illumination of couples embracing common in manuscript illuminations of *Le Roman de Troie*.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

A. Langdon (ed.), *Animal Languages in the Middle Ages*,
The New Middle Ages, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71897-2