



**BIRDS AND OTHER
CREATURES IN
RENAISSANCE LITERATURE**

Shakespeare, Descartes, and Animal Studies

REBECCA ANN BACH

Birds and Other Creatures in Renaissance Literature

This book explores how humans in the Renaissance lived with, attended to, and considered the minds, feelings, and sociality of other creatures. It examines how Renaissance literature and natural history display an unequal creaturely world: all creatures were categorized hierarchically. However, post-Cartesian readings of Shakespeare and other Renaissance literature have misunderstood Renaissance hierarchical creaturely relations, including human relations. Using critical animal studies work and new materialist theory, Bach argues that attending closely to creatures and objects in texts by Shakespeare and other writers exposes this unequal world and the use and abuse of creatures, including people. The book also adds significantly to animal studies by showing how central bird sociality and voices were to Renaissance human culture, with many believing that birds were superior to some humans in song, caregiving, and companionship. Bach shows how Descartes, a central figure in the transition to modern ideas about creatures, lived isolated from humans and other creatures and denied ancient knowledge about other creatures' minds, especially bird minds. As significantly, Bach shows how and why Descartes' ideas appealed to human grandiosity. Asking how Renaissance categorizations of creatures differ so much from modern classifications, and why those modern classifications have shaped so much animal studies work, this book offers significant new readings of Shakespeare's and other Renaissance texts. It will contribute to a range of fields, including Renaissance literature, history, animal studies, new materialism, and the environmental humanities.

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A Note on the Texts

Throughout this book, I have transcribed Renaissance English texts without modernizing spelling, punctuation, italics, or capitalization. This is a deliberate choice that, unfortunately, may cause slight difficulties in reading. One compensation for these potential difficulties is that we can see how English Renaissance writers used flexible spelling and punctuation to poetic and semantic effects. I call attention to these kinds of usages in the book. In addition, modernizing Renaissance texts can encourage us to see them as belonging fully to our world. My argument is that these texts do not, in fact, share all of our assumptions about creatures. Preserving their bibliographic features can help us to see them as a little strange.

Introduction

Inequality for All

“[T]here has been a *history* both of the thinking of the subject and of its deconstruction.”

(Jean-Luc Nancy¹)

“[I]f one defines language in such a way that it is reserved for what we call man, what is there to say?”

(Jacques Derrida²)

“Herding animals across the gap between subjects and nonsubjects . . . was no simple task.”

(Laurie Shannon³)

In her call for the “Left-handed Blow” entailed in “Writing a History of Animals,” Erica Fudge makes the crucial point that “animals are present in most Western cultures for practical use.”⁴ In Shakespeare’s world (but not only in Shakespeare’s world), this was true of most humans as well. Montaigne observes of his social group that the “men that serve us do so more cheaply, and for a treatment less careful and favorable than the one we give our birds, horses, and dogs.”⁵ And it does not really change the point to know that the humans in question—most children, manual workers, “natural fools,” ethnic others, and women—may not have thought about themselves as being present only “for practical use.” Other kinds of creatures also may not have conceived of themselves in that way. To phrase that point this way could seem implausible today, since that phrasing entails the idea that creatures other than humans can conceive of themselves. That idea is only implausible, however, in a worldview that in Derrida’s words has “a distinction between the *human* relation to self, that is to say, that of an entity capable of conscience, of language, of a relation to death . . . and a *nonhuman* relation to self.”⁶

The English Renaissance did not share this worldview.⁷ Edward Topsell, in his 1607 history of creatures that walk on four legs, says “[t]here is not any creature so capable of vnderstanding as an Elephant,” and he tells his readers that elephants “have a wonderfull loue to their own

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Country.” Topsell’s Renaissance elephants “are so louing to their fellowes, that they will not eat their meat alone . . . they go and inuite the residue to their feastes and cheere, more like to reasonable ciuill men, then vnreasonable brute beasts.” As well as being intelligent, sociable, and patriotic, they are moral beings: “They are most chast.” “They are modest and shamefast” about sex.⁸ These ideas about elephant intelligence, morals, and sociability were widespread and came from a range of classical sources;⁹ thus, they were truly Renaissance ideas. In the English translation of Ambrose Paré’s famous anatomical “Works” (1634), Paré tells readers that, according to Pliny, “an Elephant commeth very neere to the understanding that men have, and that hee hath a rude kinde of knowledge of language.” Also, Paré, like Topsell, informs his readers that elephants “never gender but in private out of sight, an argument of their modestie.”¹⁰ Birds were also seen as moral creatures. In his natural history, Johannes Jonstonus (1657) says that rooks “do not inconsiderately couple; for when one dyeth, the other lives single always after.”¹¹ In early seventeenth-century England, elephants, birds, and some other creatures, like some humans, could know themselves even to the point of having self-consciousness about sex, and, therefore, could be seen as subjects. There was a longstanding Aristotelian counter-tradition that insisted that humans alone had self-knowledge, but that was only one strain of thought and perhaps not the dominant one.¹²

This capacity for self-knowledge, however, was not automatically accorded to all humans, as Topsell’s phrase “reasonable ciuill men” suggests. That capacity is strikingly absent, for example, in such Shakespearean characters as Slender in *Merry Wives of Windsor* and Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*. And stupid Sir Andrew is present in the play for Sir Toby’s use, as well as for the audience’s amusement. In contemporary America, stupidity’s power to mark humans as below the intellectual level of some beasts is denied, in the Freudian sense of denial; I would argue that we are not supposed to see what Shakespeare and other imaginative writers at the time understood fundamentally about the import of human intellectual and physical inequality. Likewise, Shakespeare might not have recognized the modern-day American preschool educational scene that Avital Ronell describes: “The little ones receive their first interdictory instruction when told that they musn’t call anyone ‘stupid’—the ur-curse, the renunciation of which primes socialization in this culture.”¹³ As Leah Marcus, Fudge, and other scholars have shown us, when Shakespeare was writing, many people in the Renaissance considered children not yet human, but creatures to be trained and sometimes beaten into humanity, just as other serviceable beasts were trained and were beaten if they did not obey. If, as Derrida asserts, “the subject is a fable,” but a fable that we must take “seriously,” in the English Renaissance that fable included only some people and also some beasts and birds, perhaps even some fishes.¹⁴ Thus, if, as Fudge rightly insists, we must include other creatures whenever we write about humans, we must also acknowledge

that some nonhuman creatures participated in the Renaissance fable of the subject and some human creatures were left out of that fable.

In this book, I will use the term “creaturely world” for the Renaissance cosmology that included that fable of the subject.¹⁵ This book will show how the creaturely world that Shakespeare lived in and the worlds he created in his plays linked the “practical use” of beasts to the “practical use” of people; it will also show how Cartesian ideas became as significant for the status of kinds of humans as they did for the status of other creatures. Those ideas would eventually help to “constrain animal difference to a human/animal divide.”¹⁶ They also helped to constrain some, but only some, human difference to that same divide. Using Shakespeare’s texts as its primary literary sources, but also John Donne’s “autobiographical” text, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, and other Renaissance literature, this book will show that those texts were written without that constraint. When Renaissance literature was read and interpreted later, however, it became part of a new fable that both constrains and expands the boundaries of “the subject,” and literary insights into birds and beasts as well as humans were largely forgotten. In this introduction’s extended discussion of Descartes, I hope to show how that forgetting began and even offer a theory about why it began. The chapters that follow point to how consequential that forgetting has been for interpretations of Renaissance literature and also for humans and other creatures.

Humans, like other living things that we too easily call “animals,” were called “creatures” in the English Renaissance, and so were beasts, birds, and fishes;¹⁷ everything in the world was God’s creation. In addition, many humans were identified as beasts, some humans were identified with birds, and a creature such as Shakespeare’s Caliban might be identified as a combination of a fish and a beast.¹⁸ As Gail Paster has shown us, the mortal body did not divide humans from other creatures, nor did it mean that bodily similarity connected certain kinds of mortals to one another. Partly in consequence, humans could be categorized as closer to birds than to beasts.¹⁹ As Laurie Shannon suggests,

before the cogito, there was no such thing as ‘the animal.’ There were creatures, there were brutes, and there were beasts. There were fish and fowl. There were living things. . . . [and] humans were measured as much in contradistinction to angels as to animals.²⁰

God and the angels were more different from everything mortal than mortal beings were from one another. Also, and very significantly, soaring and singing birds could be categorized as closer to angels than were many kinds of beasts, including beast-like people.²¹ One project, then, of this book is to read Shakespeare and other literary texts of the English Renaissance as they were first made, in a world in which there were different kinds of people and different kinds of beasts, birds, and fishes, and in which kinds of people and kinds of beasts and birds were “in use” and

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others were users. Indeed, the chapters that follow will show that reading Renaissance texts closely and taking their creaturely references seriously exposes the use of people and other creatures in perhaps uncomfortable ways. The creaturely references in these texts also challenge things that have been vigorously embraced in modernity, including human grandiosity and ideas about human nature.

I will be arguing throughout this book that humans in the Renaissance lived with, attended to, and considered the minds, feelings, and sociality of other creatures. Humans also lived their lives related to and thinking about a much larger range of other creatures, especially birds, than do most English and American humans today. I will also argue that writers may have been especially aware of, and concerned with, birds since writers produced their work using bird feathers as pens and conceived of writing as imaginative flight.²² This book looks at the work of many writers, including Donne, Francis Bacon, Robert Burton, Edmund Spenser, and Andrew Marvell, but the majority of its chapters are concerned with Shakespeare's texts in particular. I focus on Shakespeare not only because I love and teach his work but also because through the long history of Shakespeare criticism and appreciation, later misunderstandings of Renaissance creaturely relations become visible. Chapter one's look at a small section of *Romeo and Juliet*, chapter two's reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, chapter three's reading of *The Rape of Lucrece*, chapter four's interpretations of Falstaff in his plays, and chapter five's reading of the sheep-shearing scene in *The Winter's Tale* all show not only that critics have not paid enough attention to the myriad creatures and creaturely references in the plays but that, as a consequence of that lack of attention, critics have often misunderstood humans and human relations in the texts. These misunderstandings can be quite profound; for example, Bottom is promoted by moderns as the exemplary Man when *Midsummer* does everything it can to show him off as a donkey who cannot reason (see chapter two).

Human Nature

Humans in the Renaissance were not divided categorically from other creatures even by the concept of human nature, despite the contentions of critics who insist that that concept has always signified as it does today. These critics are correct in asserting that the English Renaissance world believed in "human nature," but that belief did not differentiate that nature from other kinds of creaturely nature. As Bruce Boehrer has shown, other creatures had characters. Their characters may have been stereotypical, but human character was also often stereotypical. This was particularly true of views of people who were othered by their ethnic and religious differences. Some humans' natures and specific creatures' natures were of a kind in the creaturely world.

Nonhuman creaturely character appears all over English Renaissance texts, even far from places in which it is the direct subject or in which it is elaborated fictionally. For example, in the preface to Peter Bales's 1590 instructional text, *The Writing Schoolemaster*, Bales assails people who will not attempt to use his shorthand system by saying that "*there are manie that borrowe insatiabile contempt from the Panther, foolish scoffing from the Ægyptian Asse, and unskilfull decept from the Camell;* enforcing their brutish imperfections beyond all expectation."²³ Bales is using the characteristics associated with certain beasts to attack the characters of scornful, inept men whom he says are "*not able to reache unto the capable industrie of a child.*" (Because Bales made his living as a writing master, he is deeply invested in the teachability of children.) Although Bales's beasts have stereotypical characters, the content of each creature's stereotype is remarkably complex: panthers are not only contemptuous, a relatively sophisticated mental attitude, but they are also stubbornly so.²⁴ Likewise, donkeys from Asia take a scornful attitude toward others but do so without good reason, and camels attempt to deceive others but fail in their attempts.

It is more than likely that Bales, a mildly famous London writing master and copyist, did not have any personal experience with panthers, Egyptian donkeys, or camels. He, like other Englishmen at the time, relied on classical sources for his creaturely information, the same body of classical sources that most of his contemporaries relied on for information about many humans. However, if one compares the characteristics Bales gives panthers, Asian asses, and camels with what Shakespeare says about Ethiopian people, for example, the difference is stark. Ethiopians figure in many of Shakespeare's plays, but solely as figures for degraded blackness; in chapter two and chapter five, I look at instances of this figuration. Some sorts of nonhuman creatures had more detailed characteristics in Renaissance texts than sorts of human creatures. Quite a lot of ethnic others were classified entirely among the nonhuman creatures. There were also part-human creatures, such as satyrs, that figure in Renaissance natural histories.²⁵

As Robin Headlam Wells suggests, the essence of "human nature" in the English Renaissance was a battle between reason and the passions.²⁶ However, the inherently hierarchical values of Renaissance culture entailed beliefs that particular humans could better control their passions and that others could be entirely mastered by them. Also, as Paster suggests, the fact that humans shared their passions with other creatures and that creatures had access to "understanding," a cognate of reason, makes the term "human nature" misleading when it is read from a later perspective. Most creatures, including humans, were beholden to their bodily conditions and their passions. How Renaissance "human nature" was expressed was determined by that bodily condition and the condition

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of the soul. Later in history, “embodiment could be beside the point” for humanity; “human nature” became only the “pure mind.”²⁷ Wells says that “[m]ajor and minor writers in this period were united in their belief in a transhistorical core of human nature. If history had a lesson for the modern world that’s because, as Samuel Daniel put it, ‘man is a creature of the same dimension he [always] was.’”²⁸ However, the difference between Daniel’s understanding of man as a creature and later understandings of humans is profound, and it is also signaled by his word “creature,” a word that, as we have seen, applied to all mortal beings.

People in the English Renaissance believed that human nature entailed a battle between reason and passion, but they were also sure that there were people who could not reason and, therefore, that “humans [could] fail to *be* human” and some “humans [were] not human at all.”²⁹ As Boehrer suggests, one thing that we see very clearly when we look at all the creatures in Shakespeare is that “the number of fully human human beings in the world [is] much smaller than the number of human beings whose status as such is somehow impaired.”³⁰ I believe with Donna Haraway that “[y]ou can’t do ‘human’ ahistorically . . . or as if ‘human’ were one thing . . . Humans, wherever you track them, are products of situated relationalities with organisms, tools, much else.”³¹ As I will show, humans in the Renaissance were related to other creatures in very different ways than they are today. As nonhuman creatures were, people were divided into very different kinds with different abilities to reason and to control their passions, and people of one kind were seen as like others of their kind. These ideas about people have continued historically, but in England and America and other places, they have continued in tension with a significant belief that humans are one true category, created potentially equal. As Fudge suggests, “the idea of the equality of all humans clearly emerges out of Descartes’s ideas.”³² Arguably, the construction of this belief was as consequential for other creatures as was Descartes’s ridiculous belief that bodies were machines.³³ The *bête-machine* has been the focal point for most animal studies work in the Renaissance, but I will argue that it is only one part of the Cartesian package and that other aspects were equally consequential. Crucially, this book will suggest why and how Descartes’s ideas about humans and creatures are all related to his solitude and his grandiosity, which in turn led to his discounting of the kinds of classical knowledge that could have kept alive truths about the intelligence and self-knowledge of birds and other creatures.

In “The Animal That Therefore I Am,” Derrida famously decries how idiotic it is to lump all living beings aside from people into the category “animal,” a category he describes as “this word *animal* that men have given themselves in order to identify themselves, in order to recognize themselves, with a view to being what they say they are, namely men, capable of replying and responding in the name of men.”³⁴ Prior to the reign of the category “animal” over all beasts, birds, and fishes, Shakespeare

could write about Ethiopians as figures for blackness because he had no personal knowledge of Ethiopians; therefore, he seems not to classify Ethiopians as people who could respond “in the name of men.” This dynamic was true of writers discussing both humans and other creatures. The more known any creature was to a writer, the more that writer could see the creature as differentiated, first by kind and then by specific characteristics within kind. In later times, and with massive exceptions, what Derrida describes is “true”: the fact that a person was human meant that there was an assumed essential difference between him or her and any another kind of creature. This was not generally assumed to be true when Shakespeare was writing, however.

Also, since humans had such close contact with other creatures, they would probably have been attuned to the individual differences among members of species. In the English Renaissance, as Jonathan Sawday suggests, “[t]hings were understood in terms of other things, and no two objects were ever exactly the same.”³⁵ The same was thought to be true of most creatures: individual creatures were understood to be slightly different. As Fudge shows, domestic pigs and cows were “recognized as individual beings”; this is still true in the minds of people who live in close quarters with these creatures.³⁶ Just as is true of human perception today, the further off people were from the creatures, including people, whom they were thinking and writing about, the less they could perceive them as individually different. It is easier to generalize and harder to be specific about what one does not see or know. In the Renaissance, however, more people and more creatures saw and knew one another.³⁷ As time has moved on, more English and American humans have become isolated from other creatures; as Akira Mizuta Lippit suggests, “everywhere one looks one is surrounded by the absence of animals.”³⁸ In certain ways, humans today who work very closely with other creatures, especially in training relationships, may understand those creatures more like most people did in the English Renaissance than some people do today.

In her classic text on “animal” training and “animal” natures, Vicki Hearne describes her frustration with philosophers and other academics who cannot understand that dogs and horses have moral behaviors and communicate with each other and with humans.³⁹ Hearne would not have been frustrated talking to most people in the English Renaissance because people then were not divided into trainers who understood such things on the one hand, and on the other hand people who did not. Many people, perhaps most, lived among working creatures, especially horses, and many more people worked with, raised, and could closely observe birds.⁴⁰ Hearne describes how trainers use words like “love” to talk about how dogs and horses feel, and other people try to restrict emotional and moral language to humans. Pet owners like me in contemporary America may describe their pets’ behaviors using emotional and moral language; however, these people may also feel as if they are not

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being “scientific” when they do that, and they have good reason to feel that way.⁴¹ As Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman explain, “[i]n the sciences, to impute human thoughts or emotions . . . even to other primates is to invite suspicions of sloppy thinking.”⁴² This view has been, and is being, challenged, but despite those challenges, it remains significant.⁴³

In the English Renaissance, in contrast, there was not yet a divide between people who attributed emotions and morals to “animals” and those who “knew better” than to do that. When one reads Topsell on nonhuman creatures one sees creatures with emotions and morals throughout. Likewise, Pierre de la Primaudaye, in his much published account of the world, says, for instance, that there is

Nothing more worthie of great admiration, then the care which [a hen] taketh to hatch and nourish her chickens: yea though they bee not of hir own kinde . . . And when these young duckes, according to their kinde, cast themselves into the water, it is a wonder to see the mourning of the hen, fearing least ill should betide them.⁴⁴

Primaudaye’s hens worry, mourn, and parent just like humans do. I am arguing that in the Renaissance it was customary, not novel or suspect, to regard most creatures as having morals, emotions, and even reason. These things belonged to various creaturely natures as much as they did to human nature. I will return to the problem with the idea of “human nature” as opposed to other creatures in chapter two.

Creaturely Kinds: Why Birds?

Although this book uses the term “creature” instead of “animal,” and although I will put the word “animal” in quotation marks throughout, this book is heavily indebted to previous work in what is called Renaissance animal studies, particularly the significant work by scholars such as Boehrer, Fudge, Raber, and Shannon. These scholars’ work and related work in Renaissance ecocriticism and environmental humanities is greatly advancing our understanding of Renaissance creatures, and it is also redressing the narrow focus on humans that has limited our interpretations of the Renaissance world and Renaissance texts. This book adds to the conversation by placing humans within the picture of Renaissance animal studies; this, I think, is where Renaissance humans belong, as creatures among other creatures. This book also adds to the conversation by turning the focus away from beasts in the nonhuman creaturely world. A lot of significant work in animal studies both within and outside the field of Renaissance/early modern literary and cultural studies has focused on mammals, but like the authors of natural histories in the Renaissance, this book does not share that mammalian focus.⁴⁵ Instead, directed by the evidence gleaned from the texts I have been reading, in chapter one I focus entirely on birds, and all of the other chapters treat birds as well as beasts.

In contrast, given the categories and practices of our world, most contemporary animal studies work concentrates on primates, dogs, horses, and cats.⁴⁶ Because the modern sciences have “tie[d] monkeys, apes, and people together in a Primate Order,” people can see other primates as like themselves, and so people write about them.⁴⁷ Theorists and critics also tend to write about the creatures they live with, mostly dogs and/or cats. Derrida, whose refusal of the term “animal” for all non-human creatures brings him much closer to premodern thinking than other theorists, writes about his cat for some of the same reasons Haraway now writes about her dogs—these writers live(d) with dogs and cats.⁴⁸ Similarly, although horses have lost primary significance in human transportation, people still ride them, and they also have a place in the sports world. When Richard Nash says that the bones he has been worrying lately “have tended to be canine and equine,” he is in good company.⁴⁹ One exception to this trend toward dogs, cats, and horses is Boehrer, who has written about turkeys and also extensively about parrots.⁵⁰ Building on Boehrer’s work, I will be writing about a number of birds who were perhaps more familiar than parrots and turkeys to people in Shakespeare’s England: chickens, cuckoos, doves (pigeons), eagles, falcons, geese, hawks, jackdaws (choughs), owls, ravens, songbirds (including nightingales and canaries), sparrows, swallows, and swans.

The current dominance in animal studies of creatures that would have been called beasts in the Renaissance should call our attention to how classification shapes our thinking about creatures. Another thing this book does is show how the Renaissance did not classify creatures the way we might. As Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star suggest, “The work of making, maintaining, and analyzing classification systems is . . . one of the central kinds of work of modernity, including science and medicine.”⁵¹ As they also show, “no classification system can reflect either the social or the natural world fully accurately.”⁵² Bowker and Star’s analysis points to a gap in Renaissance animal studies work that this book’s focus on birds is helping to fill. When we look at premodern natural histories and other premodern texts about creatures, we see them sorting creatures into categories, but not into the kind of “complete” and strictly maintained classifications so familiar to us today.⁵³ De la Primaudaye includes “serpents,” bees, and “silke-wormes” in his larger category “terrestrial beasts,” as well as creatures that we might expect to be grouped together under that term, such as lions, tigers, and panthers. His sub-groupings underneath his larger categories are equally strange to my eyes. Under the category “terrestrial beasts,” de la Primaudaye groups dogs and horses together “because of their admirable sense, as also because of the vtility, pleasure and commodity, which they bring to man.”⁵⁴ He puts wolves, bears, and apes together in another sub-grouping, a group formed because these beasts are all crafty characters. De la Primaudaye says, “concerning the subtlety and craft of wolues to intrap their preyes, it is well knowne by euery one.”⁵⁵ Of bears he says, “there is

no creature more subtle in his simplicity,” and he concludes the section on this set of creatures with a paragraph that begins, “[b]ut if we would speake of creakty beasts: subtle in al agility and sport, then must we haue respect to the Ape.”⁵⁶ This categorization has nothing to do with modern scientific classification. One group is classified in relation to human needs and the other in relation to how humans understand these creatures’ behaviors and minds. I will have more to say about Renaissance categorization of creatures in chapter three, where I show how *The Rape of Lucrece* sorts all of its creatures, including humans, into predators and prey, and in chapter five where I will show how some humans were categorized as pedestrian beasts and others as elite and soaring.

Today some, but only some, of de la Primaudaye’s “terrestrial beasts” are grouped as mammals who share quadrupedal motion. But unlike de la Primaudaye, a lot of us think of that group as naturally coherent, and, scientifically, we think of ourselves as mammals, closer to that group than to birds. But our system of classification has a relatively short history. According to Harriet Ritvo, people in the nineteenth century used other creatures to think about how “human dominance was divinely ordained.” She says that

The creatures closest to humanity in the order of nature made these points most satisfactorily. From a simply practical perspective, quadrupeds were relatively easy to observe and to interact with. Unlike birds, fish, reptiles, and insects, they occupied more or less the same space as did people, and, as one pragmatic author pointed out, ‘they cannot easily avoid us.’ Furthermore, according to another popularizer, ‘the similitude between their structure and our own’ made them both more interesting than and intrinsically superior to other animals.⁵⁷

None of this nineteenth-century logic, some of which we have inherited, appears to be present in Renaissance classification. In fact, in that classification, the similarity of appearance between apes and men seemed significant because it was misleading. De la Primaudaye says that apes “approach to the shape of” men, so much so that people who have not looked closely may have mistaken apes called Magots for men. De la Primaudaye is not all that interested in apes and certainly not interested in them because of what they could tell his readers about humans. Wolves seem more interesting than apes to de la Primaudaye, and birds come before beasts in his description of the world.

If English people in the nineteenth century and after “identif[y] more readily” with mammals, as I do, English people in earlier centuries may have identified more with particular birds.⁵⁸ Birds were intimately involved with humans when Shakespeare was writing. The table of contents for Gervase Markham’s manual for treating diseases in *all Beasts, and Birds*,

serviceable for MAN divides these creatures into twelve “point[s]” (sections). Horses get two points, one covering their “almost . . . 300 diseases,” and one discussing a rare medicine. Sheep, goats, swine, and dogs get one section each, as do two pairs: oxen and cattle, and hares and conies (rabbits). However, Markham’s main preoccupation is with birds. The last four sections of the manual cover birds, divided as follows:

9. Cocks, Hens, Capons, Chickens, Turkis, Peacocks, Phesants, Patridges, Quails, Cranes, House-doves, Stock-doves, Turtle-doves and the like.
10. Water-fowl, as Swans, Geese, Ducks, Tayls, Widgeons, Sheldrakes, Plovers, Herns, Puets, Bitters, Gulls and such-like.
11. All singing and whistleing birds, as Nightingale, Robbin, Bulfinch, Linnet, solitary Sparrow, Goldfinch, Miskin, Spink, Canary-bird, Celander, Black-bird, Throttle, Cordial, Lark and such-like.

The twelfth point covers “all sorts of Hawks.”⁵⁹ Birds’ wings, voices, hunting prowess, and delicious bodies made them, not quadrupeds, “more interesting than and intrinsically superior to other” creatures. As Markham’s manual indicates, lots of people in the English Renaissance lived in households that kept birds, especially chickens and geese. Noble men and women trained hawks to fly from their hands to hunt and kept them in their houses. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton says, “he is no body that in the Season hath not a Hauke on his fist.”⁶⁰ Songbirds were also often kept in houses.⁶¹

Birds were very familiar to all kinds of people, and humans divided them hierarchically like they divided people into kinds.⁶² In *Richard II*, Shakespeare has Bolingbroke compare his brave battle readiness to that of a hunting hawk: “As confident, as is the Falcons flight / Against a bird, do I with *Mowbray* fight.”⁶³ This familiarity and identification with the hunting hawk is one way that Shakespeare creates his noble characters; they are recognizable as nobles because of their associations with noble birds. Markham explains that birds of prey divide into the most gallant—“the Eagle, the Vulture, the Gerfaulcon, Faulcon” and “the valiant Hawk”—and the least. Less valiant hawks, according to him, build their nests in trees rather than on cliffs, and “base and cowardly Kestrils” (small hawks) harbor in walls and the “ruins of old houses.”⁶⁴ In *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser introduces the cowardly Bragadocchio with the description “[o]ne that to bountie neuer cast his mind, / Ne thought of honour euer did assay / His baser brest, but in his kestrell kind / A pleasing vaine of glory vaine did find.”⁶⁵ Bragadochchio is a type of man who corresponds to other men the way kestrels correspond to other hawks; both kestrels and Bragadochio are without honor and ignorantly proud. Bragadochio is of smaller moral stature, just as kestrels are smaller, nest lower, and were thought of as morally inferior to other hawks.

Birds also denoted human hierarchies. Among writers, the eagle's preeminence was widely acknowledged, and eagles abound in Shakespeare's plays and poetry, frequently, but not exclusively, invoked as figures for noblemen.⁶⁶ Also in *Richard II*, the mournful York describes King Richard's gaze: "Behold his Eye / (As bright as is the Eagles) lightens forth / Controlling Maiestie."⁶⁷ In the next act, York characterizes the about-to-be-deposed King as "plume-pluckt Richard."⁶⁸ Eagles, hawks, nests built by birds, and cages built by men were integral parts of the English Renaissance creaturely world. The forceful resonance of the eagle's nest, the eyrie, is clear in its usages in the history plays by Richard III and Queen Margaret, and also by the Bastard in *King John*.⁶⁹ In chapter one, I will discuss Shakespeare's usage of the eyrie in *Hamlet*. A mew is a cage for hawks, and when nobles are imprisoned in the history plays, they are often spoken of as mewed. Eagles and the higher-level hawks were associated with nobility, and, likewise, commoners were associated with domestic geese and chickens, birds that they lived with.

Birds also signified across social status groups in the Renaissance: roosters (cocks) were central to telling time and regulating human activity, as were geese. De la Primaudaye calls the cock a "lofty birde [that] seemeth to resemble a Sentinell, which nature hath appointed to interrupt mens sleepe and call them to worke."⁷⁰ A cock features almost as a character in the first scene of *Hamlet*. That cock's crow causes the Ghost to flee, and Barnardo, Marcellus, and Horatio then discuss the relationship between cocks, the day, Christ, and spirits. Horatio calls the cock "the Trumpet to the day," and Marcellus names him "the Bird of Dawning."⁷¹ This conversation comes within a scene in which a clock strikes at midnight, and Barnardo begins a story about the previous night when the clock struck one. Although the clock's sounds have meaning in the scene, the cock is far more meaningful, affecting the superhuman as well as the human world. In Marcellus's story, cocks summon the "God of Day." Marcellus says that cocks are aware of the season of Christ's birth: "Some sayes, that euer 'gainst that Season comes / Wherein our Saviours Birth is celebrated, / The Bird of Dawning singeth all night long."⁷² Markham calls the cock "the sentinel and watch of the house" and says "[i]t is written of them, that they are Astronomers, and know the course of the Stars: certain it is, that they keep a true distance in their times."⁷³ Chickens and geese enabled humans to mark the hours and calculate the seasons. King Lear's fool knows that spring is yet to come because of the way the wild geese are flying.⁷⁴ To use Fudge's apt terminology about other creatures, cocks, geese, and other birds were "active participants in the making of worlds."⁷⁵

In her *Companion Species Manifesto*, Haraway tells an early twenty-first-century story about "co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species sociality" with dogs.⁷⁶ In relation to Renaissance England, those kinds of stories should also be told about birds and bird voices, and

I will be telling those stories in the chapters that follow. In chapter three, this book will explore “cross-species sociality” between falcons and men. Birds were working creatures and entertainers. They were also important food sources (which made them unlike dogs), but even when used for food, their flying abilities might be pointed to. Geese, swans, hawks, eagles, ravens, hens, and other birds had multiple significances and significant differences from one another in the world they shared with humans. In addition, one thing they all shared in the human understanding of them was specific qualities of voice, something to which Shakespeare and other writers were very alive.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, when Portia and Nerissa return to Belmont and hear music playing, Portia uses birds’ voices to muse philosophically on the importance of context; she says,

The Crow doth sing as sweetly as the Larke
When nether is attended: and I thinke
The Nightingale if she should sing by day
When euery Goose is cackling, would be thought
No better Musitian then the Wren.⁷⁷

If we agree with John Russell Brown (1955 Arden edition) that the phrase “when neither is attended” means “when both are alone,” we could hear Portia speculating on meaning outside of human understanding.⁷⁸ Crows may find crow voices sweet just as humans appreciate the qualities of lark voices. As many other editors believe, Portia may mean that crow and lark voices are of equal quality when they are not listened to, in which case every bird voice in this speech is being evaluated in terms of its effect on human ears. In either case, the speech refers to the specificities of bird voice in a way typical of Renaissance writers. Crows caw, larks and nightingales sing, wrens chirp, and geese hiss and cackle.⁷⁹ Although we may know this abstractly, and may even have heard all of these bird voices, it seems likely that Shakespeare assumed that those specific voices were easily called to mind by everyone in his audience; that is not likely to be true today even after the late nineteenth-century growth of popular birdwatching. To people in the English Renaissance, bird voices, appearances, and behaviors may even have been more familiar than, or as familiar as, the details of dogs and dog behavior.

It is also possible that Portia’s phrase “euery Goose is cackling” refers to the noises common people make by day, noises that might drown out the superior musicality of the nightingale. Geese often stand in metaphorically for degraded people in Shakespeare’s plays, and the noises geese make stand in for those people’s voices; this may be because geese were central to human life in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In Roger Ascham’s 1545 text on shooting, his eponymous speaker, Toxophilus, calls the goose “mans comfote in war and in peace slepyng

and wakyng”: humans fletched their arrows with domestic goose feathers and slept on domestic goose-feather-filled beds. But Ascham also calls the goose “sely” and “gentle,” meaning foolish and tame.⁸⁰ His geese are not powerful birds in themselves; they are essential to human life and are characterized as dominated. This is the common sense about domesticated geese, who are familiar enough to stand in as men and women. Thus, Shakespeare’s Coriolanus curses retreating Romans as “soules of Geese, / That beare the shapes of men.”⁸¹ Likewise, in *King Lear* the infuriated Kent calls the Steward (Oswald) a goose whom he would “drive . . . cackling home to *Camelot*.”⁸² At the end of *Troilus and Cressida*, Pandarus refers to an imagined prostitute as a hissing goose.⁸³ It seems likely to me that prostitutes were called geese because men had sex with them on beds made of goose feathers. Geese, like other birds, are both used symbolically, as these characters and Portia may be doing, and figure in the plays as they did in the world. “Real” geese also play their parts in Shakespeare’s plays, in Slender’s father’s practical joke, Falstaff’s imagined childhood pastimes (*Merry Wives of Windsor*), and Launce’s dog, Crab’s, misdeeds (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*).⁸⁴

As important as today’s animal studies theory is for those of us trying to write about creatures and creaturely relations in the Renaissance, founded as this theory is in nineteenth- and twentieth-century conceptions of “animals,” it very easily misses the bird/human relations that are arguably more central to Renaissance texts and lives than any other “animal”/human relation. Some birds were seen as closer kin to some humans than some humans were to other humans. I think that is it difficult for people like me to understand what flying meant to people before there were hang gliders, airplanes, helicopters, drones, etc. and in a time and space when different birds lived among and around people all the time.⁸⁵ Birds, angels, and insects flew when people could not, but birds and angels were more like people than insects, and angels flew with bird wings in Renaissance art.⁸⁶ Further, not many people could sing like birds. Chapter one, especially, will show how paying close attention to birds can show us so much about texts and about human and bird identities and interactions in English Renaissance texts.

Descartes Alone

At the beginning of the aborted dinner party scene in Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens*, one of his unfaithful guests avers that “[t]he Swallow follows not Summer more willing, then we your Lordship.” Perhaps under his breath, Timon replies, “Nor more willingly leaues Winter, such Summer Birds are men.”⁸⁷ Timon’s reply is apparently based on “the proverb ‘Swallows, like false friends, fly away upon the approach of winter.’”⁸⁸ Shakespeare embroiders upon the proverb: Timon’s false friends compare their desire for him to the swallows’ unflinching desire for

summer's warmth. Timon is as convinced about those birds' desire as he is about his "friends'" desire for his wealth. The proverb and Shakespeare's embroidery upon it point to ways that swallows functioned in the Renaissance: as weathermen, as figures for swift flight, and as birds with wills. Shakespeare alludes to all of these functions, as do natural histories from his time. John Maplet, in his natural history *A Greene Forest*, uses the swallow as an example of birds who can see the future: "some [have] foreknowledge and skill to prognosticate what shall afterwards happen by storme and tempest: as is the Swallow by his departure, when colde and Winter begin to come in."⁸⁹

In 1646, twenty-three years after *Timon* first appeared in print, René Descartes wrote to William Cavendish about swallows: "Doubtless when the swallows come in spring, they operate like clocks."⁹⁰ Swallows have no wills for Descartes; they are only machines. Although there was no sudden change or complete paradigm shift, Descartes's thinking was a turning point for the entire creaturely world, for thinking about humans as well as other creatures. Crucially, as Fudge points out, as well as arguing that "animals" were like machines, Descartes "argued that full human status was already possessed by all humans."⁹¹ This "insistently egalitarian" thinking pervades his writing.⁹² In part five of his *Discourse on the Method*, Descartes imagines a machine that could respond verbally but says that "it is not conceivable that such a machine should produce different arrangements of words so as to give an appropriately meaningful answer to whatever is said in its presence, as the dullest of men can do."⁹³ In that text, he argues that beasts, like machines, have no intelligence when compared to "the dullest of men" and also to "madmen," "men born deaf and dumb," the "stupidest child," and "a child with a defective brain."⁹⁴ Not only are all kinds of people fully human, humans cannot descend to the level of beasts even given the "passions" such as fear, hope, and joy that they share with beasts.⁹⁵ Unlike Shakespeare and other writers in the Renaissance, Descartes is sure that "[e]ven those [people] who have the weakest souls could acquire absolute mastery over all their passions."⁹⁶ He also believes that "No soul, however base, is so strongly attached to objects of the senses that it does not sometimes turn aside and desire some other, greater good . . . wisdom."⁹⁷

As well as constituting the category "animal," Descartes constituted the human as a category that includes all people regardless of their mental or spiritual condition. Shannon describes this monumental philosophical move: "Granting the free agency of thought to all humans and classifying the entire balance of creatures, from the oyster to the ape, as uniformly hardwired, René Descartes extracted people and animals alike from a longer cosmic inventory to face them off in an either/or metric of just two categories, or kinds."⁹⁸ For critics fundamentally interested in all kinds of creatures, it is the idea that nonhuman creatures are machines, the *bête-machine*, that has had the most tragic consequences, ultimately

helping to enable such horrific practices as factory farming. Second to this, as Fudge laments, Descartes's focus on the human mind has led us to ignore the presence and significance of all the other creatures in the world when we look at texts. Perhaps, also, we have not paid enough attention to how Descartes's consolidation of the human has deformed our picture of the creaturely world, including humans, which came before him and, particularly, in terms of this book's goals, how it has deformed our picture of Shakespeare and other Renaissance writers.

I will be making the case throughout this book that looking at birds and beasts in Shakespeare and other Renaissance texts shows us a creaturely world of acknowledged inequality, human and otherwise, that many of us have largely denied, as the Ronell quotation I cited earlier suggests. Arguably, that denial began with Descartes, and "denial" seems like the correct term for what we see in Descartes's texts. It is not that Descartes was unaware of unequal abilities in all creatures. In the *Discourse*, he states that "as much inequality can be observed among the animals of a given species as among human beings, and some animals are more easily trained than others."⁹⁹ Critics often cite his argument that all nonhuman creatures must be machines because if we believe that some, such as cranes and apes, have souls, we would have to believe the same about "imperfect" creatures "such as oysters and sponges."¹⁰⁰ Putting aside for the moment that argument's appalling implications for elephants, primates, and other very sentient creatures, his argument depends on Descartes's acknowledging a visible and serious inequality among creaturely kinds.¹⁰¹ He is clearly able to see unequal abilities, but he denies the import of such difference and, instead, insists upon only one distinction: the distinction between all bodies, human and otherwise, which for him act like machines, and intellect, which for him belongs only to those with human form. Descartes turns his face away from inequality deliberately. If, in other words, Descartes took seriously the reality that oysters display nothing that would imply cognition, whereas apes, as de la Primaudaye suggests, display behavior that could easily be interpreted as crafty, he would not have been able to group oysters and apes together in a world which did not customarily do so. Likewise, if Descartes took seriously the variety of human behavior and cognitive abilities, he might have been able to admit the significance of the facts that some people have lesser cognitive abilities than some other creatures and that passions are not easily mastered.¹⁰² These truths about humanity and human variety were easily acknowledged by the humans around Descartes, but Descartes turned his face away from them and founded his theories on denial of them.

This turning away is intimately related to his consolidation of the category "animal." Haraway says of that consolidation, "'animal' is . . . a universal, an empty, a misplaced concreteness issue, but it's worse than that. It's stripped of all particularity and reality and most of all . . . stripped of

relationality.”¹⁰³ Although Descartes’s intellectual life cannot be reduced to his biography, I will argue that his biography sheds crucial light on his ideas. It is hardly surprising that a man living Descartes’s life would produce a theory of both humans and “animals” “stripped of particularity,” “reality,” and “relationality.” For a human in the early seventeenth century, except in matters of the intellect, Descartes was remarkably isolated from other people, and, it seems, from other creatures, and even in intellectual matters he had difficulty maintaining personal relations.¹⁰⁴ That difficulty was likely founded in his early life. The basic facts of Descartes’s childhood appear to be as follows: He was born on March 31, 1596. His mother died giving birth to another son on May 13, 1597. The new baby died three days later. His father sent Descartes to live with his grandmother, Jeanne Sain, and when his father remarried, three years or so later, Descartes stayed with his grandmother.¹⁰⁵ Sain, in turn, died either late in 1609 or early in 1610, three or so years after Descartes was sent to Jesuit school, the *collège* of La Flèche, at the age of ten. La Flèche was a project of Henri IV, who was assassinated on May 14, 1610, the same year that Descartes’s grandmother died. Since Henri had endowed the *collège*, its buildings were draped in black, and the king’s heart was taken there and buried in a ceremony in which Descartes participated.¹⁰⁶ Descartes was sick throughout his childhood, and because of his illness, he entered the *collège* six months late and stayed “in bed late in the mornings.”¹⁰⁷ He did not stay in touch with any of his classmates. Stephen Gaukroger, Descartes’s intellectual biographer, asserts that this childhood “was not at all exceptional or unusual” given the high mortality and remarriage rates in early seventeenth-century France.¹⁰⁸

However, it is also clear that the sickly child Descartes became a melancholy man, his behavior “characterized by moodiness, misanthropy,” and even “paranoia”; he sold his family land and title, lived in other countries for most of his life, guarded his privacy intensely, and moved incessantly.¹⁰⁹ Gaukroger points out that “Descartes took the unusual step of working outside the patronage system.”¹¹⁰ He also created a life alienated from his father and his father’s values, and his father appears to have completely rejected Descartes’s way of life.¹¹¹ Karl Stern says of the *cogito*: “If we encountered such thoughts, not as a philosophical system, but as a mode of everyday experience of an ‘ordinary man,’ merely *in its psychology*, as it were—we would find that the ideal of the *cogito*, of the *mathesis universalis*, means *denial*, a defense against the flesh because the flesh is synonymous with anguish.”¹¹² The *cogito* may not be wholly derived from defenses against loss and mortality, but the reality that such blows influenced Descartes’s life seems clear.

Interpreting Descartes’s manifest refusal as a young adult to conform to his father’s ambitions for him and his career, John Cole says, “Descartes defied the moral wisdom of his culture when he effectively denied origin from, dependence on, or obligation to his ‘parents,’ for which we

may read ‘father.’”¹¹³ In the third Meditation, Descartes asserts that his parents could not have produced him: “as regards my parents, even if everything I have ever believed about them is true, it is certainly not they who preserve me; and in so far as I am a thinking thing, they did not even make me; they merely placed certain dispositions in the matter which I have always regarded as containing me, or rather my mind, for that is all I now take myself to be.”¹¹⁴ This comment appears to have confused his friend and publisher Claude Clerselier. In a letter dated April 23, 1649, Descartes responds to Clerselier’s question about his meaning:

As regards my parents . . . even though everything we are accustomed to believe of them is perhaps true, that is, that they begat our bodies, still I cannot imagine that they made me, in so far as I consider myself only as a thing which thinks, because I see no relation between the physical act by which I am accustomed to believe they begat me, and the production of a substance which thinks.¹¹⁵

Descartes’s clarification distances himself even further from his parents than his original statement in the *Meditations*, a statement that seems already to deny relationship. In the original statement, Descartes admits to “dispositions” that his parents might have given him. In the clarification, he is not sure that he was produced by a “physical act” between them, and he cannot even imagine a connection with them. After Descartes’s mother died only fourteen months after his birth, Descartes seems never to have lived with his father; in his *Meditations*, Descartes effectively turned a situation of virtual orphanage into a theoretical position that removes human identity from the parent-child relation.

What seems most indicative of Descartes’s denial of the particularity and reality of the creaturely world is how he understood, or at least narrated, his own transcendence of his mother’s death. Writing in 1645 to the exiled Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia (King James’s granddaughter), he laments her dry cough and fever, and tells her that “[t]he most common cause of a low-grade fever is sadness.”¹¹⁶ In his next letter, he says that there is “but one remedy” for her sadness (caused by trouble—“domestic enemies”—that in turn causes ill health): “which is to divert one’s imagination and one’s sense as much as possible and to employ only the understanding alone to consider them when one is obliged to by prudence.” By “understanding,” Descartes means dispassionate intellect. He says,

I have experienced in myself an illness nearly similar and even more dangerous, which was cured by the remedy I just outlined. For being born of a mother who died just a few days after my birth of a disease of the lungs caused by some unhappiness, I inherited from her a dry cough and a pale color which stayed with me until I was more than twenty years old and which led all the doctors who saw me up to that point to condemn me to an early death.

He explains that his tendency “to regard things which present themselves . . . from the most favorable perspective” and his “inclination . . . to make [his] principal contentment depend on [himself] alone” “caused this indisposition, which was almost natural” to him “to pass away little by little.”¹¹⁷ Descartes’s story eliminates the baby sibling, another son, who actually died with his mother, and instead connects his dead mother to himself on the level of their illnesses “caused by . . . unhappiness.”¹¹⁸ As Gaukroger suggests, the idea that Descartes took a “favorable perspective” on things in his life is inaccurate, but from an infantile wish perspective, Descartes’s story is surely more favorable than the facts.¹¹⁹ In the story he tells Princess Elisabeth, his mother did not leave him, betray him, by trying to have another baby and dying in the attempt. Rather, she died directly following his own birth and bequeathed him her death sentence, a death sentence that he then commuted by means of his attitude, his intellect, and his transcendent independence. In his story, his only identification with the mother who (in psychic reality) abandoned him is a sickness that seemed “almost natural” but over which he could triumph through strength of mind.¹²⁰ The origin story as a whole nods to a pattern that, by the time of its epistolary narration five years before his own death in 1650, Descartes had repeated in his life, establishing a personal relation only on his own terms and then totally rejecting that relation.

Although Descartes led a largely solitary life, he had a great scientific mentor whom he chose, Isaac Beeckman.¹²¹ He wrote letters to Beeckman in terms that suggest filial affection; however, that relation turned to dust and ashes when it seemed to him to threaten his immaculate self.¹²² In 1619, he tells Beeckman that if the exigencies of war allow, he will dedicate his forthcoming work to him: “If I should stop somewhere, as I hope I shall, I promise to see that my *Mechanics* or *Geometry* is put in order, and I will salute you as the promoter and prime author of my studies.”¹²³ When Beeckman suggested eleven years later that Descartes had learned something from him, however, Descartes writes in a fury, “[W]ho is it who has anything to teach me, or indeed anyone who loves wisdom?” In that same letter, he says that all he has gotten from Beeckman are “idle fancies” and advises him not to flatter himself, “for it occasionally happens that even when the most incompetent person discusses philosophy, he says many things which by sheer chance coincide with the truth.” The rage behind these lines is evident. Descartes’s wounded ego turned Beeckman from a “promoter and prime author” to “the most incompetent person,” a fall that is hard to attribute to Descartes’s reason.¹²⁴ That paragraph of the letter also includes a general claim about knowledge that rejects intellectual filiation entirely: “If you know something, it is completely yours, even if you have learnt it from someone else.”¹²⁵ Even in intellectual matters, then, Descartes refuses relation.¹²⁶

In this account of his relationship with and rejection of Beeckman, we might seem to have travelled far from what Descartes’s thought has

meant to the creaturely world and the history of the subject, but I would argue that Descartes's denial of affiliation and, indeed, his sickness and solitude are crucial to that history. Although a few biographers want to take the fact that he spent his childhood in the French countryside as an indication that he cared about what we call "the natural world," it seems as if Descartes lived his life turned away from creatures in general. Charles Adam says that in the college "on le laissa se réveiller tout seul et se lever à son heure: il ne couchait pas au dortoir commun, mais il avait sa chambre, étant de ces élèves appelés 'chambristes'"¹²⁷ ["They let him wake up by himself and get up whenever he wanted: he did not sleep in the dormitory, but he had his own room; for that reason the other students called him a *chambriste*."] His sickness at the *collège* quarantined him from other children and kept him inside. This also suggests that he stayed inside as a sick smaller child living with his grandmother. Writing to Balzac to try to persuade him to come to Amsterdam, Descartes says, "I take a walk each day amid the bustle of the crowd with as much freedom and repose as you could obtain in your leafy groves, and I pay no more attention to the people I meet than I would to the trees in your woods or the animals that browse there."¹²⁸ Just as crowds of people are essentially wallpaper to Descartes, so "animals" (seen as an undifferentiated group) and trees do not register. Fourteen years later, in his letter to Princess Elisabeth, Descartes recommends that she improve her health by diverting her mind:

In this regard, I judge the waters of Spa very appropriate, especially if your Highness in taking them observes what the doctors usually recommend, and clears her mind entirely of all sorts of unhappy thoughts, and even also of all sorts of serious meditations concerning the sciences. She should occupy herself by imitating those who convince themselves they think of nothing in looking at the greenery of a wood, the colors of a flower, the flight of a bird, and such things that require no attention.¹²⁹

Descartes pays no attention to trees, flowers, birds, and "animals"; all are essentially undifferentiated environment, resting places for his mind, not subjects in themselves. His written commentary about other creatures also suggests that he did not care about or interact with them enough to look at them carefully. He says, "Their [apes?] instinct to bury their dead is no stranger than that of dogs and cats which scratch the earth for the purpose of burying their excrement; they hardly ever actually bury it, which shows that they act only by instinct and without thinking."¹³⁰ Most modern Americans know that cats do bury their excrement. Dogs and cats act in dissimilar ways in relation to what they excrete, and Descartes's ignorance about that is an indication that he spent no time actually observing and interacting with dogs and cats.¹³¹ His dissections

of live dogs (and also rabbits) late in his career may also testify to his lack of feelings for them, although such dissections were common at the time.¹³² In addition, since Descartes, along with his fellow early scientists, explicitly rejected creaturely knowledge from classical sources, he would have no information about apes derived from people who might have observed or interacted with them.

The numerous contemporary objections to Descartes's positions on other creatures from people who did live connected to horses and other creatures might cause us to wonder how Descartes's ignorant ideas about creatures gained any credence at all. Stephen Toulmin explains the triumph of "the 17th-century rationalists, starting with Descartes" by looking at the chaos in the world that surrounded people in Europe at the time. He argues that Descartes and the rationalists who followed him "reacted to times of economic crisis—when toleration seemed a failure and religion took up the sword—by giving up the modest skepticism of the humanists [such as Montaigne], and looking for 'rational' proofs to underpin our beliefs with a certainty neutral as between all religious positions."¹³³ A belief in the primacy of the intellect may have been comforting in the face of the brutal religious wars that dominated Europe at the time. Toulmin points out that Descartes's "whole mature life was spent under" the "shadow" of the Thirty Years' War. For people living in such conditions, the ideas of the past had certainly not averted crisis; why not look to a new world based in reason and the hope that all humans could transcend the base passions?

We should also remember that Descartes's ideas about reason were linked explicitly and inextricably to ideas about human equality, and that those are ideas that most of us accept unquestionably even when they violate our actual perceptions. As Fudge suggests,

While the notion of the animal as automaton . . . did not achieve dominance in the later seventeenth century, Descartes's mechanical philosophy and . . . his notion of the reasonable nature of *all* human beings did gain power. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated at the end of the eighteenth century, with the emergence of the discourse of rights in Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* (1776) and in Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1792). Here the idea of the equality of all humans clearly emerges out of Descartes's ideas.¹³⁴

The equality of people, at least in terms of their categorical superiority to all other creatures, is an idea that appeals to the human ego, even when, in general, humans fail to live up to the ideals implied in the idea. The idea that humans could reach truth was appealing, and the idea that they could reach truth without the baggage of classical knowledge was also appealing. Ancient ideas about the creaturely world that had been repeated over the centuries were gradually supplanted by the primacy of the human

intellect in a modern world. None of Descartes's ideas were universally accepted, and none gained credence quickly, but human equality and the "animal" as categorically inferior marched hand in hand into history, and they marched together with their backs to classical natural history. This march, I would argue, has been largely forgotten, and that forgetting has had consequences, including the misinterpretation of what Shakespeare and other writers were saying about humans and other creatures.

Shannon points out that "the Cartesian beast-machine doctrine served human convenience and desires for certitude well—though it failed to serve 'science' in the neutral sense of an inquiry into horizons for truth concerning nonhuman mental phenomena."¹³⁵ Perhaps as damaging as that doctrine was Descartes's and other early scientists' rejection of classical knowledge and thus all natural history before them. Although that natural history included things that are inarguably false, such as the worldly existence of dragons, unicorns, and satyrs, it was also full of what are turning out to be "truth[s] concerning nonhuman mental phenomena." Shannon observes that "[a] random glance at any Science Times section of *The New York Times* shows that emerging research continually resets the horizon of our suppositions about animal faculties."¹³⁶ Sadly, it is also true that this "emerging research" about "animal" minds is now rediscovering, without acknowledgement, truths about creatures that featured in Renaissance natural histories, truths derived from reiterated classical knowledge. In a 2006 interview, Haraway says, "Think of all that is going on now in the study of bird cognition and bird behavior. It turns out that birds do tools way more deeply than we ever thought."¹³⁷ What escapes these accounts is that modern scientific studies of birds are also *rediscovering* what was known relatively customarily about birds in the Renaissance. De la Primaudaye summarizes this knowledge in his discourse on birds, which he divides into sections called "Of the foules of the aire," "Of singing birdes," and "Of sundry foules":

But since we are lighted vpon a discourse concerning a kind of towardnes and facility to learne, which is found in many birds; we may not passe ouer in silence the maruellous industry of their architecture, in the building of their nests: for all of them, and especially the small ones doe vse a wonderful dexterity therin.¹³⁸

Renaissance humans knew that birds were intelligent architects. Following Descartes, moderns like me have generally forgotten this.

Along with helping to found "our suppositions" about the lack of mind in "animals," Descartes was a vociferous contributor to the tenet of the New Science that old knowledge should be discarded in the face of the new experimental regime.¹³⁹ He is sure that he is the most successful philosopher, far surpassing Aristotle.¹⁴⁰ In the preface to his *Principles of Philosophy*, he says, "[i]ndeed the best way of proving the falsity of Aristotle's

principles is to point out that they have not enabled any progress to be made in all the many centuries in which they have been followed.”¹⁴¹ Although Descartes is specifically speaking here about the superiority of his method of reasoning, the sustained critique of Aristotle in that preface and, indeed, Descartes’s Method itself are aspects of the larger scientific project in which “[c]onservation of traditional knowledge is being discarded in the interests of a new *functional* realization of natural history which demands that *legenda*—things worth reading—be supplanted by materials which will form the basis of a thoroughgoing attempt to improve the material conditions of the human race.”¹⁴² Again, like the positive value of human equality, improvements in the material conditions of humans due to the experimental method are very real, but they were, and are, also accompanied by serious costs. In this case, the discarding of ancient natural history entailed loss of knowledge about other creatures’ minds.

Fundamentally, what Cartesian ideas enabled was not equality but enhanced human grandiosity. In Shakespeare’s world the body was considered lesser than the most elevated aspect of the soul, and the body linked the human to other creatures. Most people understood that they shared passions with other creatures; even Descartes understood this. But most people also understood that they themselves were very influenced by their passions and might even be mastered by them. (More and more scientific evidence as well as psychoanalytic theory supports this pre-modern insight.) Descartes distinctly did not believe that about himself, and he at least affected not to believe that about all other humans. He discounted everything but the intellect, but he did more than that. The *bête-machine* proposed a different angle on the similarities among creaturely bodies. In the Cartesian system, the body still linked humans and other creatures, but not because the body’s passions mastered humans as well as other creatures. Instead, bodies were machines, things that could, theoretically, be created by humans.

If bodies are machines, like machines that humans make, humans become fundamental creators, closer to God and the angels than ever before. Descartes’s grandiosity accounts for his belief that people, under his direction, are rational creators, capable of making almost anything and understanding anything. This, I think, is what caused Beekman to say that Descartes saw himself as equal to the angels. Descartes responds, “You reproach me, without any reason or basis, for having put myself on a level with angels. I still cannot convince myself that you are so out of your mind as to believe this.”¹⁴³ Descartes’s vociferous rebuttal is telling: Beekman must be crazy “to believe this”; his charge is absolutely unreasonable. But Beekman appears to have seen a truth about Descartes. As much as Descartes seems to defer to God’s power, and he does this often, his idea that “animals” and bodies are machines can put god-like power in the hands of men.

In addition, if all bodies are machines, then the commonalities between humans and other creatures become much less significant. Humans are

minds, not machines; they make machines. Everything humans make, all technology, makes them unlike and better than all other beings. Nothing that other beings make or have that is wonderful means anything anymore: that other beings can fly, can hear better, can see farther, can see in the dark; that other creatures can tell time, predict the weather, can sing beautifully, can make honey and silk and wool; that other creatures are bigger and stronger, can run faster, can tolerate extreme conditions, can swim faster, can breathe under water, can pick up vibrations (have more and different senses than humans have), can tolerate water depth; that they can heal themselves, that their bodies and digestions are more adaptable, that they care for each other and for their children better than many humans.¹⁴⁴ These and more abilities and traits of other creatures were admired and widely understood in the English Renaissance, even taken for granted. As I will show, other creatures' singing abilities are meaningful in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and their abilities to heal themselves were meaningful to Donne in his sickness. Birds' abilities to fly and tell time had meaning to all humans in the Renaissance.

But over the course of the centuries since Descartes, many Western humans, in addition to feeling categorically superior toward other creatures, largely forgot about these creaturely abilities. Over that time, humans who worked with particular creatures retained the knowledge of those creatures' abilities, and humans who studied particular creatures rediscovered and added to that knowledge. Today, however, knowledge about "animal" abilities has been cordoned off into groups of specialists rather than being common and repeated pan-human knowledge. Specialists include farmers, scientists, trainers, hunters, bird-watchers, some pet owners, and others, but often the knowledge in each group is divided from the knowledge possessed by members of other groups. Creaturely abilities that were generally well and broadly known in the past are now scientific news and still not common sense.

Additionally, in consequence, over the same span of time and in the face of much resistance technology has become a good in itself, evidence of human creator-status, contributing to human grandiosity. This may account for the pursuit of technology at any cost to human and nonhuman life. Human grandiosity in America appears to be at an all-time high, at least in my lifetime. Humans currently believe that they can create human life through science, not through sex, and that they can and should create other creatures. They (we) seem to be becoming more and more convinced that they can live on earth forever, not beholden to the natural demise of the body or to the ongoing human destruction of the earth, or that they can build technology that will enable humans to live on, without the other creatures on the ark, on other planets. This belief is enabled by and also lives in tension with the current emerging belief that machines can be human. There is a growing suspicion in the early twenty-first century that humans can build a machine that acts, thinks,

feels, and talks like a human, or that we can become machines and, therefore, immortal. This is what Haraway denounces when she says that she “can’t believe the blissed-out techno-idiocy of people who talk about downloading human consciousness onto a chip.”¹⁴⁵ This “techno-idiocy” began with a Cartesian dream of human transcendence. It even goes beyond Descartes, who could not conceive of a meaning-making machine. The body does not matter; the human mind is superior to everything on the earth.

This dream of disembodied humanity has reemerged in the form of consciousness on a chip four hundred years after Descartes imagined the disembodied mind. Human grandiosity enables this dismissive attitude toward the body, but it does not require it. In chapter four I will show how twentieth-century critics devoted to the body, its pleasures, and its preservation (as I am) could mistakenly believe that Shakespeare adored Falstaff, a grandiose character who might be regarded as a beast in the Renaissance. After Descartes, humans reclaimed the body and its passions, at least in theory, while they more easily accepted and acted on two other parts of the Cartesian package: the category “animal” and the irrelevance of classical natural history. It should probably not be a surprise that these two features of Descartes’s beliefs were so much more easily accepted than the other three features: the equality of people, the body as machine, and the transcendent human mind. The jettisoning of classical natural history and the establishment of the category “animal” are related to one another. Renaissance natural histories did not embrace that category, and their detailed accounts of the differences among creatures, the specific abilities of kinds of creatures, and even individuality within kinds would mitigate against the acceptance of it. Disregarding those natural histories as sources of knowledge about creatures helped in the cause of constructing and maintaining the category “animal.” The increasing urbanization and industrialization of Western cultures also helped people to accept a category that is still only absurd to most of us when we stop to think about the oddity of the oyster and the elephant belonging to one group as opposed to people. Sadly, the category may not even be absurd to many among us. The category “animal” appealed to human grandiosity. All humans could feel superior to all “animals” no matter how oppressed most humans were/are.

The category “animal” depends partly on the ever-increasing absence of visible creatures from many peoples’ lives. The specific characters and sociability of other creatures could become less thought about because they could be imagined as being less present. The absence of other creatures in human life is wholly imaginary, however. Michel Serres’s work on the idea of the parasite and Karen Raber’s work (specifically on parasites and bodily interactions in the English Renaissance) show us that thinking of humans apart from other creatures is fantasy and not reality; as Raber says, “in the material sense . . . there is no such thing as human identity,

history, *culture*, without the prior cooperation, collaboration, habitation, ideological appropriation, consumption of animals, without animals as the ‘always already’ of both materiality and culture itself.”¹⁴⁶ However, the fantasy of a purely human society became very powerful for many urban humans, and that fantasy has been reinforced by hygiene, medicine, and extermination. It is easier for humans to believe that they are not always infiltrated by and coexisting with other creatures when many humans in a society do not have worms emerging from their orifices.

The other three features of the Cartesian package, however—the equality of humans, the body as machine, and the transcendent human mind—involve human life, something that is much less difficult to imagine as and/or to render invisible to humans; humans are at once the most complicated, the most mysterious, and the most familiar of creatures. The equality of humans rubs up against both human realities and desires: there are real physical, intellectual, and maturational inequalities among people. There are real societal inequalities that no human societies have been able to level. Also, humans, especially the more grandiose among us, fundamentally desire control and oppression of other humans; there are also humans, perhaps formed in oppression, who desire to be oppressed. All of these inequalities and desires are ever present to people even in cultures that subscribe ideologically to equality. Likewise, although the body as machine was not accepted immediately, it was much more easily accepted in relation to other creatures than to human bodies. Essentially, as the people in the Renaissance did not deny, we are all governed by our bodies throughout our lives and especially in the end. This is the essence of Hamlet’s misery, his disgust with lust, the body, and its desires. The denial of death is a feature of modern human thinking, but it is hard to maintain in the face of the evidence. Also, the pleasures of the body are manifest, and people do not want to deny those pleasures and their influence on the mind, especially after secularism has made those pleasures less demonized. Finally, since Descartes’s transcendent human mind requires its complete separation from the body, the concept has been less pervasively accepted than the category “animal,” although the “mind-in-a-vat” has largely reigned in the sciences and philosophy.¹⁴⁷

Human grandiosity is a perpetual problem for humans and the world, but it has not always had the same shape and size. At the end of his eighteenth Introductory Lecture, Sigmund Freud speculates on human grandiosity as the cause of the nasty criticism psychoanalysis faced in its early days:

In the course of centuries the naïve self-love of men has had to submit to two major blows at the hands of science. The first was when they learnt that our earth was not the centre of the universe but only a tiny fragment of a cosmic system of scarcely imaginable vastness. . . . The second blow fell when biological research destroyed man’s

supposedly privileged place in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature. . . . human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from [psychoanalysis] . . . which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind.¹⁴⁸

Freud is surely right that Copernicus, and then Darwin and his contemporaries, challenged human grandiosity, and that Freud's ideas would also challenge that grandiosity. People in the English Renaissance were absorbing the Copernican blow to earth-centered astronomy. But unlike later Western humans, people like Shakespeare and Donne did not think of themselves as living on that earth isolated from other creatures. The earth that moved from being the "centre of the universe" to orbiting the sun was an earth where people lived in concert with other creatures, the creaturely world. Likewise, Freud's second and third "wounding blow[s]," had they come earlier, would have looked very different to Renaissance humans. They did not think about themselves as descending from other creatures, but many believed that humans had an "ineradicable" beastly nature. In addition, translated into their terms, the idea that "the ego . . . is not even master in its own house" would not have been news to them. They understood completely that the soul had great trouble mastering humans' sinful propensities, and they understood that that trouble stemmed from human grandiosity.

The chapters that follow explore the contours of the unequal creaturely world. Chapters two and four of this book will demonstrate the consequences of that taking-for-granted for interpretations of the beloved characters Bottom and Falstaff. Specifically, I will show that when close attention is paid to all the creatures and creaturely references in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the plays that feature Falstaff, we can also see the serious inequalities in the human worlds depicted in those plays. Chapter four shows that the body as machine has had a less continuous history than the category "animal." In that chapter, Bruno Latour's ideas about "the modern constitution" will help us to see how later ideas about creatures also depend on what Latour calls "the crossed-out God." Chapter five points us to human inequality and creaturely life in Shakespeare's world both inside and outside of texts. In that chapter, I advance an interpretation of the sheep-shearing scene in *The Winter's Tale* that considers what the creaturely world meant to Robert Armin, a principal clown in Shakespeare's company, and also to the other fools and clowns who played in Shakespeare's company and who lived in noble households. Armin, I argue, responded to that world by attempting to elevate himself because of his intellect while consigning "stupid" fools to their "proper" beastly status. Because of his small, and possibly unusual, stature and because of his profession, the creaturely world classified Armin as

like a beast; he responded to that classification by studying and describing other fools and clowns, subdividing a category of people, fools and clowns, into those who belonged with the intelligent, classifying humans and those who belonged with the beasts. In the afterword, I will return to where I started, with Sir Andrew Aguecheek and the use of humans and other creatures in the creaturely world. When more of the creatures and creaturely discourse in Renaissance plays are considered, the use and denigration of humans by other humans that becomes visible can make modern readers squirm. Frankly, what this book shows about the use and denigration of fools, Jews, and working men makes me squirm. For example, as I will show in the Afterword, in *Twelfth Night* Sir Toby quite cruelly uses and despises Sir Andrew because he is what the Renaissance called a “natural fool,” a lowly beast, not a real human. I wrote the section of the afterword on Sir Andrew after years of watching, reading, and teaching *Twelfth Night*, years in which I did not see what I see now, and I surprised myself. Interestingly, my squeamish surprise, I think, derives from Cartesian thought. I squirm partly, I think, because I believe in a whole-cloth human equality that categorically separates humans from all other beings and things in the world. The world Shakespeare lived in, in which “natural fools” slept with the dogs, did not have this categorical separation.

The fundamentally Cartesian idea of human equality seems to differ markedly from ideas about human equality that existed in England well before Descartes. For example, the Leveller thinkers who brought ideas about economic and political equality to the fore during the English Civil War phrased their ideas in the same scriptural creaturely terms that Donne uses (see chapter one). The Leveller John Lilburne understands his persecution through the lens of Revelation’s creatures and other scriptural sources. For Lilburne, as scripture teaches, the poor, the weak, and the babes may embrace spiritual truth, but those people who reject his theology are insects and “peece[s] of durt.” He answers a woman worried that he may starve, “for victuals, I told her I did not doubt but that God that fed the Prophet *Elijah* by a *Raven*, would preserve me.”¹⁴⁹ As I will show in chapter one, scriptural birds interact with actual birds in Renaissance culture in fascinating and surprising ways. The more extreme Leveller author Gerard Winstanley rejected all traditional Christianity, including Lilburne’s Protestantism, but he was also wedded to the creaturely world. Winstanley argued that reason “dwells in every creature, but supremely in man,” but he experienced a world in which not all people used their reason. He says, “[e]very man subject to Reason’s law becomes a Son of God. He no longer ‘looks upon a God and ruler without him, as the beast of the field does.’”¹⁵⁰ Winstanley’s phrase “beast of the field” comes from the book of Daniel, in which God has given Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom which consists of “the children of men,” “the beasts of the field,” and “the fowls of the heaven.”¹⁵¹ Winstanley, like scripture, does not believe

in the “animal” as a category. He sees humans who refuse reason as like domesticated beasts, categorically different than those birds who are not controlled by humans and who are only beholden, as humans are, to God. The whole-cloth human equality to which I subscribe only gained strength historically (and partially) as Cartesian ideas and the secular state advanced in tandem. Renaissance authors and audiences were probably not squirming at the denigration of a fool delighting in sin.

In addition, since Renaissance beasts and birds were not seen as mindless and without character or personality, characterizing people with human bodies as beasts or birds did not signify as harshly as it might today. The creatures to whom Bottom and the *Winter's Tale* shepherds are compared, for example, were seen as sentient and caring. Topsell tells readers that asses are “slow” and “vulgar” and have “vnpleasant voyce[s],” but he also reminds his readers that female asses “loue their yong ones very tenderly” and that asses “in their sleepe conceiue manie forceable dreames.”¹⁵² Moles, Topsell says, are endowed by God with “a natural and mutuall loue to one another.” He also tells his readers that moles seem to have “an vnderstanding of mens speech when they heare them talke of them.”¹⁵³ When Autolycus calls the shepherds in *The Winter's Tale* “Moles” (see chapter five), although he is degrading them in relation to himself, he is not divesting them entirely of good qualities or even of fundamental intelligence. Again, Cartesian ideas about “animals” can affect my understanding of creaturely references even with all the work I have done on this book. It is hard, I think to hold on to an understanding of creatures in the world that is so different than my own, but I will be making the case throughout this book that it is a worthwhile pursuit.

Notes

- 1 Jean-Luc Nancy. “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.” *Who Comes After the Subject*. Eds. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy. New York: Routledge, 1991. 96–119.
- 2 Jacques Derrida. “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.” 96–119.
- 3 Laurie Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. 225.
- 4 Erica Fudge. “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals.” *Representing Animals*. Ed. Nigel Rothfels. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002. 3–18.
- 5 Michel de Montaigne. “Apology for Raymond Sebond.” *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Trans. Donald M. Frame. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965. 338.
- 6 Jean-Luc Nancy. “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.” 96–119.
- 7 Scientists are becoming more aware that “animals” can conceive of themselves. See Karen Raber. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. Philadelphia,

- PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 4. Also see Frans de Waal. *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* New York: Norton, 2016.
- 8 Edward Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. London, 1607. 196, 197. In Topsell's history, elephants compare favorably with many women and men: "They are most chaste, and keepe true vnto their males without all inconstant loue or separation, admitting no adulteries amongst them, and like men which tast of *Venus* not for any corporall lust, but for desire of heires and successors in their families, so do Elephants, without all vnchaste and vnlawfull lust, take their venereal complements, for the continuation of their kind, and neuer aboute thrice in all their daies, either make or female suffer carnall copulation (but the female onely twice)" (197).
 - 9 Thomas Johnson says, "Of all foure footed beastes the Elephant is the greatest, gentlest, and most tractable, and of most vnderstanding . . . and that if they meete with a man in the wilderness being out of anie waie, they will gently goe before him and bring him to the plaine way. To this Solinus seemeth to agree" (*Cornucopiae*. London, 1596. D2v-D3). Pierre de la Primaudaye explains, "It seemeth that there is no beast, which approacheth nearer to the sense of man then the Elephant. For hee is endued with so excellent witte, discretion, and memory, that hee surpasseth in these gifts of other beastes; as he doth in strength also" (*The French Academie*. London, 1618. 827). See also Brian Cummings. "Pliny's Literate Elephant and the Idea of Animal Language in Renaissance Thought." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 164–85.
 - 10 Ambrose Paré. *The Workes of That Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Pare*. Trans. Thomas Johnson. London, 1634. 62, 63.
 - 11 Johannes Jonstonus. *An History of the Wonderful Things of Nature: Set Forth in Ten Severall Classes*. London, 1657. 176. Jonstonus also tells his readers about hawks who bury human corpses and storks who bring gifts to hosts and punish human and stork adulterers (168, 178).
 - 12 See Erica Fudge. "Self-Knowledge" in the chapter "Being Human," *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. Fudge says, "The difference between the human and the animal is the difference between ignorance and self-knowledge, and that knowledge has important implications for the capacity of the human" (28). In the texts Fudge is reading so carefully, dogs and horses are not allowed have self-knowledge. However, natural histories allowed other kinds of beasts, like elephants, self-knowledge. See also Fudge. "The Human Face of Early Modern England." *Angelaki* 16.1 (2011): 97–110.
 - 13 Avital Ronell. *Stupidity*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002. 10.
 - 14 Jacques Derrida. "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida." 96–119.
 - 15 Laurie Shannon has described that cosmology as "relatively ecosystemic," as always having "animality (and divinity and plants and elements) in or with it ("The Eight Animals in Shakespeare, or, Before the Human." *PMLA* 124.2 (2009): 472–9). See Julia Reinhard Lupton's related term, "*creaturely life*, a term I use in this book to indicate the way in which the Jewish and Christian traditions of the Middle Ages and Renaissance saw the needs of life as capturing humanity within an animal and indeed vegetable continuum that linked all of existence to both the whims and standards of a sublime Maker" (*Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. 41).
 - 16 Laurie Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 225.
 - 17 In this book, I will not be writing about fish or any other sea creatures. This is not meant to discount the significance of those creatures in Shakespeare's

- texts. For a brilliant look at the sea and sea creatures in Shakespeare, see Dan Brayton. *Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012. See also Stephen Mentz. *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*. New York: Continuum, 2009.
- 18 On Caliban's identity, see Julia Reinhard Lupton. "Creature Caliban." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50.1 (2000): 1–23. See also Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan. *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
 - 19 Gail Kern Paster. *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.
 - 20 Shannon. "Eight Animals." 474. See for example, John Donne's comment, "I know, O Lord, that when thou hadst created *Angels*, and they saw thee produce *fowle*, and *fish*, and *beasts*, and *wormes*, they did not importune thee, and say, shall wee haue no better *Creatures* than these, no better *companions* then these; but staid thy *leisure*, and then had *man* deliuered ouer to them, no much inferiour in *nature* to themselves" (*Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, and Severall Steps in My Sicknes*. London, 1624. Prayer 21, 566–7). All of the quotations from *Devotions* are to this text, by page number, followed by page numbers from John Donne. *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. Ed. with Commentary. Anthony Raspa. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975. 115.
 - 21 See Laurie Shannon for a beautiful exposition of this point. *The Accommodated Animal*. 9–10.
 - 22 See Patrick Cheney. *Spenser's Famous Flight: A Renaissance Idea of a Literary Career*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993, for a brilliant reading of Spenser's poetic career in relation to ideas about flight.
 - 23 Peter Bales. *The Writing Schoolemaster*. London, 1590. B2v.
 - 24 Perhaps Bales was reading Pliny. Pliny tells a story of a panther (actually from the description a leopard) who acts very kindly to a lost man. But he also says that panthers have "hideous looke[s] and crabbed countenance[s]." Also, Pliny says that panthers are "too untoward for to be killed, and so long as it is ere he will die, that when he is paunched, and his very guts come forth of his bellie, he will live still, and fight" (Pliny, the Elder. *The Historie of the World Commonly Called, the Naturall Historie of C. Plinius Secundus*. Trans. Philemon Holland. London, 1601. 1: 204, 211).
 - 25 See Edward Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. London, 1607. 15–16.
 - 26 Robin Headlam Wells. *Shakespeare's Humanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 13 and ff. See also Kent Cartwright. *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 9–17.
 - 27 Laurie Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 1.
 - 28 Robin Headlam Wells. *Shakespeare's Humanism*. 149.
 - 29 Erica Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 48, 50.
 - 30 Bruce Boehrer. *Shakespeare Among the Animals: Nature and Society in the Drama of Early Modern England*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 18.
 - 31 Donna Haraway and Nicholas Gane. "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done? Interview with Donna Haraway." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 (2006): 135–58.
 - 32 Erica Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 174.
 - 33 For some insight into the upsetting consequences for humans of the doctrine of human equality, see Marc Shell. *Children of the Earth: Literature, Politics, and Nationhood*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. For what making people into "animals" in modernity looks like, see Mark S. Roberts. *The Mark of the Beast: Animality and Human Oppression*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008.

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- 34 Jacques Derrida. "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)." Trans. David Wills. *Critical Inquiry* 28 (2002): 369–418.
- 35 Jonathan Sawday. *Engines of the Imagination: Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machine*. New York: Routledge, 2007. 72.
- 36 Erica Fudge. "The Animal Face of Early Modern England." *Theory, Culture & Society* 30.7/8 (2013): 177–98.
- 37 See Keith Thomas. *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. 93–9. As Fudge suggests, "Recognition leads to friendliness, which in turn leads to interaction, which reinforces individualization" (Erica Fudge. "Milking Other Men's Beasts." *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 52 (December 2013): 13–28).
- 38 Akira Mizuta Lippit. *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 1. See also John Berger. "Why Look at Animals?" *About Looking*. New York: Vintage, 1991. 3–28.
- 39 Vicki Hearne. *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name*. New York: Knopf, 1987. 6.
- 40 For an excellent introduction to the ubiquity of horses in the English Renaissance and also to the expense of horses and, therefore, the exclusivity of horse ownership, see Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker, eds. *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World*. New York: Palgrave, 2005. See also Karen Raber. *Animal Bodies/Renaissance Culture*. 75–101. Also see Elspeth Graham. "Reading, Writing, and Riding Horses in Early Modern England: James Shirley's 'Hyde Park' (1632) and Gervase Markham's 'Cavelarice' (1607)." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 116–37, and the essays in the collection *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*. Eds. Peter Edwards, Karl A. E. Enekel, and Elspeth Graham. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- 41 See Nickie Charles and Charlotte Aull Davies. "My Family and Other Animals: Pets and Kin." *Human and Other Animals: Critical Perspectives*. Eds. Bob Carter and Nickie Charles. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 69–92. 88–9, for an interesting discussion of people's ambivalence about their attribution of social and familial roles to their pets. Also see Erica Fudge. *Pets*. Stocksfield: Acuman, 2008.
- 42 Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman. "Introduction: The How and Why of Thinking with Animals." *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*. Eds. Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. 3.
- 43 See, for example, Marc Bekoff's work, including *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow and Empathy—and Why They Matter*. Novato: New World Library, 2007.
- 44 Pierre de la Primaudaye. *The French Academie*. London, 1618. 763.
- 45 See Paul Yachnin. "Sheepishness in *The Winter's Tale*." *How to Do Things with Animals: New Approaches, New Essays*. Ed. Laurie Maguire. London: Blackwell, 2008. 210–29. Also see Julian Yates. "Counting Sheep: Dolly Does Utopia (Again)." *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 8 (2004). Web. Raber's wonderful book, *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*, includes "horses, sheep, dogs, cats, moles, rats, [and] worms" (27). See also Bruce Thomas Boehrer. *Animal Characters: Nonhuman Beings in Early Modern Literature*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- 46 But see Giovanni Aloï. "Beyond the Pain Principle." *Beyond Human: From Animality to Transhumanism*. Eds. Charlie Blake, Claire Molloy, and Steven Shakespeare. London: Continuum, 2012. 50–73, for a critique of this focus.
- 47 Donna Haraway. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge, 1989. 1–2. Also, see Vinciane Despret.

- “Sheep Do Have Opinions.” *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*. Eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. 360–9. On page 363, Despret provides a list of reasons why primate research is so dominant in scientific studies of “animals.”
- 48 But see Haraway’s comment: “I go to companion species, although it has been over-coded as meaning dogs and cats. I set myself up by writing about dogs first” (“When We Have Never Been Human, What is to Be Done? Interview with Donna Haraway.” 140).
- 49 Richard Nash. “Speciesism, Identity Politics, and Ecocriticism: A Conversation with Humanists and Posthumanists.” *The Eighteenth Century* 52.1 (2011): 87–106.
- 50 Bruce Thomas Boehrer. *Shakespeare Among the Animals: Parrot Culture: Our 2,500-Year-Long Fascination with the World’s Most Talkative Bird*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. *Animal Characters*.
- 51 Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999. 13.
- 52 Bowker and Star. 323.
- 53 Bowker and Star. 11.
- 54 Pierre de la Primaudaye. *The French Academie*. London, 1618. 825.
- 55 de la Primaudaye. 832.
- 56 de la Primaudaye. 833.
- 57 Harriet Ritvo. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- 58 Ritvo. 4.
- 59 Gervase Markham. *Markham’s Method of Epitome: Wherein Is Shewed the Cure of All Beasts, and Birds, Serviceable for Man*. London, 1672. A4, A4v.
- 60 Democritvs Iunior [Robert Burton]. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Oxford, 1621. 342. 2.2.4.
- 61 See Gervase Markham. *Markham’s Method of Epitome: Wherein Is Shewed the Cure of All Beasts, and Birds, Serviceable for Man*. London, 1672. F2.
- 62 See Keith Thomas. *Man and the Natural World*. 60.
- 63 All references to Shakespeare plays will be to through line numbers from William Shakespeare. *The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile*. Prep. Charlton Hinman. New York: Norton, 1968, followed by act, scene, and line numbers from *The Norton Shakespeare*. Gen. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: Norton, 2008. TLN 358–9, 3.61–62.
- 64 Gervase Markham. *Markham’s Method of Epitome*. 76.
- 65 Edmund Spenser. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. New York: Penguin Books, 1978. II.iii.4.
- 66 But see also Shakespeare’s usage of the eagle as a figure for the debased, hungry Venus in *Venus and Adonis* II. 55–60. For a cogent reading of this passage, see Richard Halpern. “‘Pining Their Maws’: Female Readers and the Erotic Ontology of the Text in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.” *Venus and Adonis: Critical Essays*. Ed. Philip Kolin. New York: Garland, 1997. 377–88.
- 67 TLN 1655–7, 3.3.67–9.
- 68 TLN 2028, 4.1.99.
- 69 *Richard III*. TLN 736, 742. 1.3.262, 268; *King John*. TLN 2403, 5.2.149.
- 70 Pierre de la Primaudaye. *The French Academie*. 762.
- 71 TLN 146–63, 1.1.128–45.
- 72 Horatio says, “So I haue heard, and do in part beleeeue it.” TLN 164, 1.1.164; TLN 157–9, 139–41.
- 73 Gervase Markham. *Markham’s Method of Epitome*. 63. Markham is repeating the wisdom he found in Pliny: “Next to Peacocks, these [cocks] about our house which are our sentinels by night, and whom Nature hath created to breake men of their sleepe, to awaken them and call them up to their worke,

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- have also a sense and understanding of glorie: they love (I say) to be praised, and are proud in their kind. Moreover, they are Astonomers, and know the course of the starres: they devide the day by their crowing, from three houres to three houres: when the sunne goeth to rest, they go to roost: and like sentinels that keepe the reliefe of the fourth watch in the camp, they call men up to their carefull labour and travaile: they will not suffer the sunne to rise and steale upon us, but they give us warning beforehand: by their crowing, they tell us that the day is comming: and they fortell their crowing likewise, by clapping their sides with their wings” (Pliny, the Elder. *The Historie of the World*. 1: 279).
- 74 TLN 1322, 2.4.45.
- 75 Erica Fudge. “Milking Other Men’s Beasts.” 21.
- 76 Donna Haraway. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003. 4.
- 77 *The Merchant of Venice*. TLN 2516–2520, 5.1.101–104.
- 78 William Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. John Russell Brown. (1955). Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997. 131n.103.
- 79 Dogs and sheep also cry, as do crickets and owls. In the English Renaissance geese also cawed. That was a name for the sound that we call “honk.”
- 80 Roger Ascham. *Toxophilus the Schole of Shooting Contayned in Two Books*. London, 1545. Rii.
- 81 TLN 529–530, 1.5.5–6.
- 82 *King Lear*. TLN1156–7, 2.2.75–6.
- 83 TLN 3590, 5.10.55. Ascham says, “What prayse so euer is given to shootyng the gouse maye challenge the beste parte in it. Howe well dothe she make a man fare at his table. Howe easely dothe she make a man lye in hys bed; How fit euen as her fethers by onelye for shootyng, so be her quylls fytted onely for wrytyng” (*Toxophilus*. Rii).
- 84 Slender’s father has stolen two geese (*Merry Wives*. TLN 1608, 3.4.39). In the same play, Falstaff remembers his childhood as a time when he was beaten, played with tops, skipped school, and plucked geese (TLN 2424, 5.1.22). In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Launce has taken the punishment when his dog killed some geese (TLN 1849–50, 4.4.27–8).
- 85 The most important work on human limitations vis-à-vis other creatures is Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*.
- 86 On insects in the Renaissance see Raber. *Animal Bodies/Renaissance Culture*. On insects today, see Aloï. “Beyond the Pain Principle.”
- 87 TLN 1412–15, 3.726–9.
- 88 William Shakespeare. *Timon of Athens*. Ed. H. J. Oliver. (1959). London: Methuen, 1986. 78n.30–1.
- 89 John Maplet. *A Greene Forest, or a Naturall Historie*. London, 1567. 68. Montaigne says, “Cranes, swallows, and other birds of passage, changing their residence according to the seasons of the year, show well enough the knowledge they have of their faculty of divination, and put it to use” (“Apology for Raymond Sebond.” 345). On the swiftness of swallows, see Falstaff’s comment in *HIV II*: “Doe you thinke me a Swallow, an Arrow, or a Bullet?” (TLN 2268–9, 4.2.30). See also Aaron’s address to himself in *Titus Andronicus*: “Now to the Gothes, as swift as Swallow flies” (TLN1856, 4.2.171). Titus says about himself, “I have horse will follow where the game /Makes way, and runnes likes Swallowes ore the plaine” (TLN 729–30, 2.2.23–4). On the seasons, see also Perdita’s meditation on “Daffadils, That come before the Swallow dares, and take / The windes of March with beauty” (*The Winter’s Tale* TLN 1932–4, 4.4.118–20). Scarus can predict Antony and Cleopatra’s defeat in battle because “Swallowes have built / In *Cleopatra’s* Sailes their nests” (TLN 2758, 4.13.3–4). This comes from North’s translation of Plutarch.

- 90 *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoof, Dugald Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny. 3 Vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–1991. From to the Marquess of Newcastle, 23 November 1646. 3: 304. In this book as a whole, I will be citing Descartes in translation except in the cases where I am citing French texts. In those cases, the translations are my own. Further quotations from this edition will be cited in the form that follows: *PWD*. 3: 304.
- 91 Erica Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 151.
- 92 Susan Bordo. “Introduction.” *Feminist Interpretations of René Descartes*. Ed. Susan Bordo. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. 5.
- 93 *PWD*. 1:140. See also Descartes’s comment in response to Henry More’s point that infants’ behavior could be explained in the mechanical way that Descartes explains “animal” behavior: “Infants are in a different case from animals: I should not judge that infants were endowed with minds unless I saw that they were of the same nature as adults; but animals never develop to a point where any certain sign of thought can be detected in them” (To More, 15 April 1649. *PWD*. 3: 374).
- 94 *PWD*. 1: 140.
- 95 This list of “passions” comes from Descartes’s letter to the Marquess of Newcastle, 23 November 1646. *PWD*. 3: 303.
- 96 “The Passions of the Soul.” *PWD*. 1: 348. Compare Montaigne: “Have [the privileges given to humans in their own minds] been granted in favor of the wise only? Then they do not touch many people. Are the fools and the wicked worthy of such extraordinary favor, and, being the worst part of the world, of being preferred to all the rest?” (“Apology for Raymond Sebond.” 329.
- 97 “Principles of Philosophy: Preface.” *PWD*. 1: 180–1).
- 98 Laurie Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 1. See Shannon. 129 also. See also Erica Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*: “the binary opposition of human and animal that was first produced in these terms by Descartes” (177).
- 99 “Principles of Philosophy: Preface.” *PWD*. 1: 140. See also Descartes’s restatement of this point in a 1649 letter responding to Henry More’s objections to the “animal” as machine: “Within a single species some of them are more perfect than others, as humans are too. This can be seen in horses and dogs, some of which learn what they are taught much better than others” (*PWD*. 3: 366).
- 100 See Laurie Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 100, for a fascinating argument about Descartes’s purpose in making this point.
- 101 “Principles of Philosophy: Preface.” *PWD*. 1: 140. Descartes restates this point using insects in the letter to More: “One is that it is more probable that worms, flies, caterpillars and other animals move like machines than that they all have immortal souls” (*PWD*. 3: 366).
- 102 Again, it is not as if Descartes does not see the distinctions that were so clear to those around him. He writes to Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, “it seems to me that the difference between the greatest souls and the base and vulgar souls consists principally in that the vulgar souls give themselves over to their passions and are happy or sad only according to whether those things that happen to them are agreeable or unpleasant; whereas the others have reasoning so strong and so powerful that, even though they too have passions and often even more violent than most do, their reason nevertheless remains mistress and makes it such that even afflictions serve them and contribute to the perfect felicity which they can enjoy already in this life” (*The Correspondence Between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*. Trans. Lisa Shapiro. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Descartes to Elisabeth, Egmond, 18 May 1645. 87).

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- 103 Donna Haraway. "When We Have Never Been Human, What is to Be Done?" 140.
- 104 Geneviève Rodis-Lewis. *Descartes: His Life and Thought*. Trans. Jane Marie-Todd. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999: "All his life he alternated among an openness to numerous friends—from domestic, bourgeois, or princely backgrounds—brutal breakups, and occasional reconciliations" (xvi).
- 105 As a baby, Descartes was fed by a wet nurse. Rodis-Lewis says, "We do not know whether the child was totally entrusted to this nurse until he was three or four years old, as often happened, or whether she came to live with the grandmother . . . The nurse survived Descartes, who gave her a pension; shortly before his death, he dictated a letter to Chanut, asking his two brothers 'to provide for the needs of his nurse, whom he had always taken care of during his life'" (4).
- 106 Stephen Gaukroger. *Descartes: An Intellectual Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 43. For a suggestive reading of the effects of Henri's assassination on the young Descartes, see Stephen Toulmin. *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. 56–62.
- 107 Gaukroger. 38.
- 108 Gaukroger. 23.
- 109 Gaukroger. 18. Descartes was famously secretive. In 1630, he writes to his friend Mersenne, "I will always tell you my address, provided, please, that you tell no one else" (To Mersenne, 15 April 1630. PWD. 3: 20).
- 110 Gaukroger. *Descartes*. 189.
- 111 See John R. Cole. *The Olympian Dreams and Youthful Rebellion of René Descartes*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 91–113 and 257n. 66.
- 112 Karl Stern. "Descartes." *Feminist Interpretations of René Descartes*. Ed. Susan Bordo. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1999. 29–47.
- 113 Cole. *The Olympian Dreams and Youthful Rebellion of René Descartes*. 112.
- 114 PWD. 2: 35.
- 115 To Clerselier, 23 April 1649. PWD. 3: 378.
- 116 *The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and Rene Descartes*. Descartes to Elisabeth, Egmond, 18 May 1645. 86.
- 117 *The Correspondence Between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and Rene Descartes*. Descartes to Elisabeth, Egmond, May or June 1645. 91, 92.
- 118 Biographers disagree about what Descartes knew about the facts surrounding his mother's death. Rodis-Lewis exclaims, "But René never knew of that dead little brother. How could they have let him believe that he cost his mother her life?" (4). Charles Adam remarks about the story, Descartes tells Princess Elisabeth, "en quoi il se trompe: ce fut l'année suivante, et peu de jours après la naissance d'un autre enfant; mais il ignora sans doute cette circonstance." ["about this, he is mistaken: it happened the next year, and a few days after the birth of another child; but without a doubt, he was ignorant of this fact."] (Charles Adam. *Vie & Oeuvres de Descartes*. Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1910. 15). Gaukroger says, and I agree, that "it is most unlikely that he would never have known the real date of his mother's death, and still less likely that he had simply forgotten it or made a mistake" (*Descartes: An Intellectual Biography*. 16). Desmond M. Clarke introduces the story with the comment, "Descartes was evidently confused or not accurately informed about the details of his mother's death-" (*Descartes: A Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 9).
- 119 Gaukroger. 18.

- 120 See Gaukroger, 15–20, for his interpretation of this story.
- 121 Descartes never married. He fathered a child with a serving woman. When the girl was two years old, Descartes offered her mother a job serving in the house he was living in. The child died of plague when she was five. Timothy J. Reiss makes a strong and interesting argument about what he sees as Descartes's search for community. He says, "Descartes himself seems to have hoped to reconstruct a community based on love and friendship" (*Mirages of the Self: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003. 490). Although I find Reiss quite persuasive in relation to Descartes's commitment to peace and political amity, it is hard to see Descartes as personally invested in community. Reiss takes the set of Objections and Replies that Descartes participated in as evidence of this commitment (Reiss 473), but when I read Descartes's replies, I never see him acknowledge an error or compromise in the face of an objection. His replies seem to deny utterly the relevance of the commentary. If his interlocutors are in a community with him, he stands alone within it. Samantha Frost explains that in Hobbes's account of reasoning "the most important thing is to be cognizant of the possibility of error and to acquiesce when another discovers an error in one's own thinking." (*Lessons from a Materialist Thinker: Hobbesian Reflections on Ethics and Politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008. 63). This is precisely what Descartes seems unable to do.
- 122 See Gaukroger's comments in his biographical note on Beekman. Stephen Gaukroger. *Descartes: An Intellectual Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 473. See also Cole. *The Olympian Dreams and Youthful Rebellion of René Descartes*. 114–28.
- 123 To Beekman, 23 April 1619. *PWD*. 3: 4.
- 124 Gaukroger says, "Descartes showed himself to have been quite unmoved by Beekman's death in 1637" (224).
- 125 To Beekman, 17 October 1630. *PWD*. 3: 27. See also Descartes's comment to Marin Mersenne about Beekman's theories involving air resistance and falling bodies: "Thus it is demonstrated mathematically that what Beekman wrote is false. If you write to him, I shall not mind if you tell him this, so that he will learn not to deck himself out in someone else's feathers-" (To Mersenne, January 1630. *PWD*. 3: 16–17).
- 126 As Rodis-Lewis suggests, this advance toward collaborators and then rejection of them was a pattern, a compulsive repetition. For example, Descartes writes on the warmest terms to an optician, Mr. Ferrier, in 1629, inviting him to come to live with him and conduct experiments: "bref vous ne seriez en rien plus mal que moy, & nous viurions comme freres; car ie m'oblige de vous defrayer de tout aussi long-temps qu'il vous plaira de demeurer avec moy, & de vous remettre dans Paris lors que vous aurez enuie d'y retourner." ["in short, you will live as well as me and we will live like brothers; because I promise to entertain you as long as you would like to live with me and to send you back to Paris whenever you desire to return."] (Charles Adam and Paul Tannery. *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1987. Descartes à Ferrier, 18 Juin 1629. I.14). Later, Descartes rejected Ferrier and treated him "rather shabbily on a number of occasions" (Gaukroger. 188). In a letter to Mersenne, Descartes calls Ferrier "mon petit laquais" [my little lackey].
- 127 Charles Adam. *Vie & Oeuvres de Descartes*. Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1910. 20.
- 128 From To Balzac, 5 May 1631. *PWD*. 3: 31.
- 129 Descartes to Elisabeth, Egmond, May or June 1645. *The Correspondence Between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*. 92.

- 130 From To the Marquess of Newcastle, 23 November 1646. *PWD*. 3: 304.
- 131 See also his comment in response to the Atomist Pierre Gassendi's objections to the Meditations: "I do not see what argument you are relying on when you lay it down as certain that a dog makes discriminating judgements in the same way as we do. Seeing that a dog is made of flesh you perhaps think that everything which is in you also exists in the dog. But I observe no mind at all in the dog, and hence believe there is nothing to be found in a dog that resembles the things I recognize in a mind" (*PWD*. 2: 248).
- 132 "Il avoit toute commodité pour disséquer, et rein ne lui manquait pour cela: anguilles qu'on lui apportait toutes vives, et poissons de mer, comme le cabillaud et la morue, et même des animaux vivants, comme des chiens et des lapins." ["He had every convenience for dissection, and he lacked nothing for it: live eels that people brought him and fish from the sea, such as fresh cod and salt cod? and even live animals, like dogs and rabbits."] (Charles Adam. *Vie & Oeuvres de Descartes*. Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1910. 233).
- 133 Toulmin. *Cosmopolis*. 81.
- 134 Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 174. Of course there were serious inequities embedded in these understandings of equality, most notably, in Jefferson's case, his participation in the slave system. One of Descartes's comments makes him sound more politically egalitarian than the founding fathers: On the importance of retaining some pride and some shame, he says, "[f]or although the common people are very bad judges, yet because we cannot live without them and it is important for us to be an object of their esteem, we should often follow their opinions rather than our own regarding the outward appearance of our actions" (*The Passions of the Soul*. *PWD*. 1: 401).
- 135 Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 186.
- 136 189n.16. See also Cary Wolfe. "Introduction." *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*. Ed. Cary Wolfe. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. ix-xxiii.
- 137 Haraway. "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?" 147.
- 138 de la Primaudaye. *The French Academie*. 761.
- 139 See Susan Bordo. "Introduction." *Feminist Interpretations of René Descartes*. 18.
- 140 Descartes's grandiosity is sometimes astonishing. Writing to Mersenne in 1630, he says, "Please look after yourself, at least until I know whether it is possible to discover a system of medicine which is founded on infallible demonstrations, which is what I am investigating at present" (*PWD*. 3: 17).
- 141 *PWD*. 1: 189.
- 142 Graham Rees. "Introduction." *The Oxford Francis Bacon: The Instauratio magna: Part II Novum organum*. Ed. Graham Rees. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. xi. xlii.
- 143 To Beeckman, 17 October 1630. *PWD*. 3: 27.
- 144 See Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 127–73, for an account of the discussions of human and other creatures' abilities and disabilities in the Renaissance.
- 145 Donna Haraway. "When We Have Never Been Human, What is to Be Done?" 146.
- 146 Raber. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. 28.
- 147 On the problem in the sciences, see Bruno Latour. *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. 4–8. See also Isabelle Stengers. *The Invention of Modern Science*. Trans. Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- 148 Sigmund Freud. "Lecture XVIII Fixation to Traumas—The Unconscious." *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Part III General Theory of the

- Neuroses. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 24 Vols. Trans. James Strachey. 16: 284–5. To Freud's three wounds, Donna Haraway proposes "to add a fourth wound, the informatics or cyborgian, which infolds organic and technological flesh—" (*When Species Meet*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. 12).
- 149 John Lilburne. *A Worke of the Beast*. London, 1638. Cv, C2, D3.
- 150 Christopher Hill. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*. London: Penguin, 1988. 139, 148, 142.
- 151 KJV Daniel 2.38. See also 4.12, 4.21, 4.23, 4.32, 4.33.
- 152 Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. 20, 22, 23.
- 153 Topsell. 501.

1 Feathers, Wings, and Souls

If happinesse be in the *season*, or in the *Clymate*, how much happier then are *Birdes* then *Men*, who can change the *Climate*, and accompanie, and enjoy the same season ever.

(John Donne¹)

Oh that I had wings like a dove!
For then I would fly away, and be at rest

(Psalms 55.⁶²)

Birds were ubiquitous in the English Renaissance creaturely world. As I have shown, they feature often in Renaissance descriptions of life, of people, and of people's behavior, and Renaissance bird references tend to be specific about particular kinds of birds, parts of birds, bird behaviors, and human/bird relations. Symbolic and metaphorical references to birds in English Renaissance writing assume this specific knowledge, and those references reveal how deeply embedded such knowledge was in human discourses. Francis Bacon begins his 1613 essay "Of Followers and Friends" with the sentence, "Costly followers are not to be liked, lest while a man maketh his traine longer, hee make his Wings shorter."³ Unlike today, the word "train" had multiple bird-related meanings from falconry and other bird keeping. The word could signify "[a] live bird attached to a line, or a lame and disabled bird, given as an enticement to a young hawk during its training" or "the tail or tail feathers of a bird, esp. when long and trailing, as the elongated tail coverts of a peacock".⁴ In Falconry discourse, "train" could mean "the tail of a hawk."⁵ Bacon seems to be referring to a peacock's tail feathers. This meaning of "train" might have been obvious to Bacon's readers since it appears without explanation in his and other texts. For example, in Shakespeare's *1Henry VI*, Joan compares the English Lord Talbot to a "Peacock" and declares that the French will "pull his Plumes, and take away his Trayne."⁶ Bacon's essay "Of Wisdome for a Mans selfe" begins with the wisdom of "an ant." When Bacon revised it, he added a new paragraph, full of references to many creatures, including rats, a badger, and crocodiles. Bacon ends the revised

essay by describing the foolishness of self-loving men who “become in the end *Themselves* sacrifices to the inconstancy of Fortune, whose wings they thought by their *Self-Wisdome* to have pinioned.”⁷ The symbolic Fortune invoked by Bacon here is a winged goddess, and Bacon can assume that most readers understand that wings have different kinds of feathers, including the pinion, or primary, feathers.⁸ Men, he claims, are deeply mistaken when they believe that they, rather than God, can control the flight of Fortune. Bacon’s assumptions about readers’ bird-related knowledge resemble Shakespeare’s and, I would argue, most people’s in the Renaissance.

The ubiquity of bird reference in Shakespeare was noted in the mid-nineteenth century in a series of articles published by James Edmund Harting in a journal he edited, *The Zoologist*; Harting later revised and collected those articles in *The Ornithology of Shakespeare* (1871). In that book, Harting claims for Shakespeare a “special knowledge of Ornithology” and says,

The use which he has made of this knowledge, throughout his works, in depicting virtue and vice in their true colours, in pointing out lessons of industry, patience, and mercy, and in showing the profit to be derived from a study of natural objects, is everywhere apparent.⁹

Harting writes as a post-Cartesian scientist, reading what he sees in Shakespeare as empirical observation; he assumes that Shakespeare lived, as he lives, in what Bruno Latour calls “a society gazing out at . . . a natural world.”¹⁰ Sixty or so years after Harting published his book, Caroline F. E. Spurgeon published her famous monograph *Shakespeare’s Imagery and what it tells us*. In that volume, Spurgeon observes that “[o]f the large animal group, the outstanding point is the great number drawn from birds. If we except the human body, its parts, movements, and senses, Shakespeare’s images from birds form by far the largest section drawn from any single class of objects.”¹¹ Harting (1841–1928) was a solicitor turned naturalist who authored such books as *The Birds of Middlesex* and worked to revive falconry and to preserve wild birds in England;¹² Spurgeon (1869–1942), a Chaucerian primarily, was the first female English professor in Great Britain. Although Spurgeon’s and Harting’s overall projects differ markedly, for both writers, birds are “objects”: for Harting, part of a set of “natural objects” to be studied and preserved, and for Spurgeon, members of a “single class of objects” that Shakespeare draws his imagery from. Both, I would argue, were mistaken about Shakespeare’s relationship to birds. Shakespeare did not have “a special knowledge of Ornithology,” a science born in the late eighteenth century. Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not live with birds as objects; instead they lived intimately related to birds and identifying with birds, thinking of their own imaginations, voices, and souls in terms of birds.

Tellingly, I think, more contemporary scholars have been most comfortable paying close attention to the pervasive bird references in Shakespeare

when women are compared to birds.¹³ Perhaps the unmistakable falconry imagery in *The Taming of the Shrew* accounts for this, but that comfort might also come from living in a world in which birds and women are still associated at times, at least in the realm of dead metaphors such as “chick” and “bird.” And the word “chicken” still functions, again as a dead metaphor, to describe cowardly, and therefore effeminate, men. These terms derived originally from an older world in which chickens were part of most households, but in our world they barely conjure actual bird bodies.¹⁴ In the Renaissance, “chick” was a diminutive endearment, the pet name that Prospero calls Ariel when he bids him farewell.¹⁵ This usage makes the word more akin to today’s pan-gender usage of the word “baby,” and the functional kinship of “chick” to “baby” suggests the intimacy between chickens and people in Renaissance households. “Chicken” and “chick” were used as names for loved children, as we see in *Macbeth* when Macduff mourns the killings of all his “pretty Chickens, and their Damme / At one fell swoope.”¹⁶ Writing about the numerous dead metaphors related to the human body that Spurgeon took note of, Francis Barker says, “The proliferation in the dramatic, philosophical and political texts of the period of corporeal images which have become dead metaphors for us—by a structured forgetting rather than by innocent historical wastage—are the indices of a social order in which the body ha[d] a central and irreducible place”¹⁷ Today’s dead metaphors relating to birds can be read in a similar manner; they can point us to the related “structured forgetting” of the “central and irreducible place” of birds in England’s “social order.”

Today’s dead metaphors generally compare women, not masculine men, to birds.¹⁸ Renaissance English, however, does not limit bird terms to women and effeminate men. Instead, men were as likely to describe themselves and other men as types of birds that denoted masculinity and power, birds such as elite hawks, eagles, and wild geese. In the world in which Prospero first called Ariel “chick,” birds were essential to human life and human identity, and we can learn about human life and texts by attending to birds and the specificity of bird reference in Renaissance texts. This chapter will consider, first, one of what were a number of material bird-human connections in the Renaissance: the quill in hand. Quills were part of a culture of writing that related writing and the imagination to flight, and when writing with quills, humans consciously took on the powers they attributed to creatures who could actually fly. Quills were most commonly made of goose feathers, and as we have seen and will see, geese signify multiply in Shakespeare. In this chapter’s second section a close reading of a dialogue in *Romeo and Juliet* in which geese are prominent actors demonstrates the fruitfulness of attention to geese. Attention to the geese in that dialogue also shows how the distinctions between wild and domestic geese mattered in the Renaissance, and how wild geese could figure elite masculinity. Finally, in this chapter, material bird bodies will reappear in a consideration of the spiritual and medical

use of pigeons in John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. Donne's autobiographical text demonstrates the identification of birds and humans in a particularly striking material way.

"Their Conceits Have Wings" or Quills Make Humans Fly¹⁹

In Renaissance England and Europe, writing practices connected writing with birds, specifically with bird wings and beaks. The links are both material and metaphorical, and they point in many directions: to the ubiquity of birds in early seventeenth-century England, to the easy distinctions humans made between kinds of birds, and to the powers of birds that humans wished to emulate: voice, flight, vision, and aerial attack. The bird-identity of Renaissance pens is also an instance of how fundamental geese were in the English Renaissance. Writing involved humans' use of many kinds of birds, and writing practices and ideas about writing invoke distinctions between kinds of birds and also kinds of people. Moreover, these distinctions were related to one another. Writing with a quill was a feature of a world where some people and some birds flew higher and killed more effectively.

In the Renaissance, pens were fashioned from the particular feathers of particular birds, most often of geese. Juan Luis Vives's *School Dialogues* (1539) feature a writing teacher who begins his instruction with the bird-identity of the writing instrument: "We write with goose quills, though some use hen's quills."²⁰ The Venetian writing-master Giovannantonio Tagliente (1524) is more specific about the quill:

A good quill should have five qualities. It should: (a) be large of its kind, (b) be hard, (c) be round, (d) be narrow, (e) be taken from the right wing, so that it does not bend in the wrong direction when you hold it in your hand. Feathers taken from the wild goose are very good, but those of the domestic goose are much better than all the rest, especially if you want to write letters with their correct measure and proportion. Many use the feather of the swan because of its size and hardness.²¹

In a 1540 Roman manual, Giovambattista Palatino agrees with Tagliente about the type of goose, but disagrees about the particular wing. Palatino says, "*Quills* for writing the chancery hand should be from the domestic goose," but "[i]t does not matter from which wing they are taken, though some writers draw a great distinction here."²² Another Venetian writing master Vespasiano Amphiareo is more fastidious about the bird wing, although he is realistic about availability:

See that the pen is cut from a quill taken from the bird's right wing, as this leads to better writing. When the quill comes from the left

wing, it will point in the opposite direction, but let your hand grasp it in such a way that, if it were straight, it would point to the tip of your shoulder; for it is not always possible to have quills taken from the right wing.²³

In 1581, the author of *Il Secretario*, Marcello Scalzini, specifies the feather for writing on “thin paper,” called “chancery paper.” Such paper “requires a rather thin, clear, dry, transparent quill from an Italian or Dutch goose: it should be taken from the left wing so that its end will curve away to the right.”²⁴ This may be the only text that specifies the nationality of the goose and prefers a feather from the left wing.

Presumably, domestic goose feathers were preferred to those from wild geese because domestic geese are fed more regularly and are more protected from the elements. Tagliente points to the size-regularizing effects of domestication on the bodies of geese. This reasoning would also apply to hen and, perhaps, swan feathers, but not to raven feathers, which were also used for quills. The lack of detail provided in these texts about where to locate and how to kill and pluck specific types of birds points to a pan-European world in which such knowledge is assumed. People who hunt or keep birds today have this knowledge, but this knowledge is not assumed for all people who write, as it was in the earlier world. Tagliente’s stricture, that the use of a domestic goose feather will ensure letters of the “correct measure and proportion,” shows even more about bird-human relations, indicating a system in which humans construct rules for writing from the bodies of birds shaped in “species interdependence.”²⁵ Renaissance humans fed and protected geese for human food purposes and for the human use of goose feathers. Humans plucked the geese, then shaved and cut the feathers to make quills, but the particular writing system these humans developed was also shaped by the diameters of goose feather shafts. Unlike a later machine culture in which pens are made of metal and plastic, materials molded by humans to fit their hands, in Renaissance machine culture the shapes of the bird wing and its component feathers shape both the human hand, “subjecting the hand to its demands,” and the letters that convey human thoughts.²⁶

Publishing seven years after Scalzini, the London writing master Francis Clement says that in choosing a quill, “the fairest, whitest, and roundest are best, the third and fourth of the wing of goose, or raven: but where these are not, the pinnion quill hath no fellow.”²⁷ “Rvles for Children to write by,” published in London in 1571, offers this instruction in verse, presumably to aid the children’s memories:

Take quill of a goose, that is some what rownde,
The Third or fourth in wyng to be fownde:
And if at sometime of those ye do wante,
Take pynyon as next, when Ravens quille is skante.²⁸

The instruction to use pinion feathers, feathers designed for flight, can be read as the materialization of an idea associated with writing. One uses the quill to write, perhaps works of the imagination, certainly words that relay ideas; the material practice of writing is accomplished by handling a piece of the body part that enabled the bird to fly. The bird's flight is thus translated into the flight of ideas, words which travel from writers to readers.

Michael Polanyi explains tool use as essential to human identity: "Every time we assimilate a tool to our body our identity undergoes some change; our person expands into new modes of being."²⁹ The quill is a specific creaturely manifestation of this process. The expansion in this case is a melding of the powers ascribed to different kinds of bodies; the quill joins the powers of material and mental flight, the powers of killing with beaks and words, the powers to see from material and imaginative heights. Renaissance writers with quill in hand were very conscious of their transformations into flying creatures, envisioning "the inventing mind as a ranging hawk," as Donne does in a letter to Sir Henry Wotten.³⁰ Writing in 1621, Robert Burton also figures one part of his task in these terms:

As a long-winged Hawke when he is first whistled off the fist, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth a many circuits in the Aire, still soaring higher and higher till he be come to his full pitch, and in the end when the game is sprung, comes down amaine, and stoupes vpon a sudden: so will I, hauing now come at last into these spatious fields of Aire, wherein I may freely expatiate and exercise my selfe, for my recreation a while roue, and wander round about the world, and mount aloft to those ætheriall orbes and celestiall spheres, and so descend to my former elements againe.³¹

Presumably writing these words with a goose feather, Burton figures himself as soaring in the air like a hawk. The hawk's abilities to spy his game and swoop in upon it, and to fly "freely in space," to reach the heavens, and to circle the globe, are all "modes of being" that Burton can share or wishes to share in his prose when he says he will "expatiate" himself.³²

In Burton's hand, the quill enables him to take on the hawk's range and vision in order to penetrate the world's mysteries. This analogy introduces a section of his text entitled "Air rectified. With a digression of the Air." In the digression, as in its introductory analogy, birds figure symbolically, imaginatively, and materially. Burton writes about the material mysteries that he could solve were he able to see the world from the air as a bird does: these include the configurations of continents and stars; planetary motion; human, beastly, and bird diversity across the world; and, that perpetual mystery, weather. As well as being interested in avian diversity, Burton is also very curious about avian lives. He says that he

would, if he could, find out where birds—“swallows, storkes, cranes, cuckowes, nightingales, redstarts, and many other kind of singing-birds, water-fowles, hawkes, &c.”—go when they disappear seasonally.³³ The first creature that he mentions that his “exercise” will help him to discover is a prodigious bird: “I would see that great birde *Rucke* that can carry a man and horse, or an Elephant.”³⁴ In 1538, he adds more exotic birds to this sentence: “with that *Arabian Phoenix* described by *Adricomius*; see the Pellicanes of *Ægypt*.”³⁵ Burton also entertains the more fantastic idea that birds may live on the moon.³⁶ Burton may or may not actually believe that birds populate the moon, and he feels that he does not know enough about even the real birds that live with him on the earth, but he is confident about birds’ powers: they can fly, and thus they can see far more than he can. His opening analogy also allows the hawk whom he emulates his own subjective “pleasure”: “He” may be a hawk trained to fly from a human hand, but he is also soaring, circling, and seeing for himself. Burton likens his mind’s imaginative flight to that of the hawk, who also has a mind. Burton writes figuratively, but it has not escaped him that he is holding a feather in his hand, the feather that enables his flight.

The writing culture that Burton, Donne, Bacon, and Shakespeare inhabited was fully aware of its dependence on and alliance with birds, including the powers of birds and the fact that humans used parts of bird bodies to craft their writing tools. Jonathan Golberg writes eloquently about the violence that writing with a quill entails and can enable. In his 1590 text *The Writing Schoolemaster*, Peter Bales instructs those who will follow his lead toward shorthand, spelling, and writing, to “[c]hoose the second or third quill of eurie wing, being round and hard.”³⁷ Golberg comments,

First, a goose (preferably, although other winged creatures can be substituted) is deprived of the second or third feather from its left wing, or so Bales prescribes, so that its curvature will fit best the right-handed writer. “*Penna*” in Latin means wing, of course, and the scene of writing does not obscure that etymological connection or the violence against the winged creature that produces the plume, an appropriation of nature that will, in the conceptual trajectory that we are following here (as writing ‘civilizes’ nature and founds the human) dislocate and relocate human nature within the domains of scriptive instrumentality.³⁸

Not only does the “scene of writing” not hide the “etymological connection” between the wing and the pen, it stresses that connection and, I am arguing, depends on the connection. The human hand holding the quill is transformed, absorbing the power of the wing, the words the hand creates flying like the bird whose flight has been ended. In this passage

and in the rest of his brilliant book *Writing Matter*, Goldberg attentively describes all of the violence associated with the “scene of writing”—the killing of the birds, the writing of instructions for violence against humans—and he locates the scene on the “civilizing” trajectory outlined in humanists’ texts and analyzed by Norbert Elias. In those texts, writing raises some men and women above what the humanists said was a more brutal life, a life devoted to the bodily pursuits of warfare and hunting instead of to the more lofty pursuits of the mind, scholarship, and ancient texts; at the same time writing trains the human hand to be an instrument scripting violence. Goldberg is particularly concerned with colonial violence scripted in documents. The only tweak this analysis may call for is that in these texts, writing with a quill does not separate the human hand from nature. Instead, in the Renaissance, as Raber and Wendy Wall have shown, the human body is visibly made of the other creaturely bodies it ingests and which inhabit it, and, therefore, writing with a quill is part of that mundane world in which the powers of other creatures, maybe especially birds, are acknowledged and even emulated.³⁹ Thus at the same time that writing manuals help to construct the “gendered, classed, socialized, ‘individualized’” and “lethal” “so-called human,” they envision that human as empowered on the model of, and in concert with, the powerful bodies of birds.⁴⁰

The human hand wrote with a quill made of a feather; that instrument was called a “wing” in Latin, the humanist language, and the point of a quill was called a “neb,” a word with many meanings in the English Renaissance. Although the *Oxford English Dictionary* finds its first instance of this particular usage of “neb” in 1574 and does not record many others in the sixteenth century, the word “neb” appears often in writing manuals.⁴¹ “Rvles for Children” instructs young writers to cut the end of the quill with “the nebb not to[o] shorte.”⁴² Bales and Clement also use “neb” to signify the point of the pen.⁴³ Primarily, however, according to the *OED* a “neb” was used to mean “the beak or bill of a bird”; the word could also signify the human mouth, nose, or face, or the noses or snouts of other creatures. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Leontes comments on Hermione talking to Polixenes—“How she holds up the Neb: the Byll to him”—visualizing her mouth as a bird’s beak.⁴⁴ His reference may be part of the multi-creaturely discourse that pours from his mouth as soon as Hermione calls Polixenes her “Friend.”⁴⁵ It is also one of many instances across Renaissance texts of “neb” signifying the human mouth. The apparent category confusion here would not have been confusing in the Renaissance since humans very frequently thought of the voice that comes from the human mouth in terms of birds. I will explore that understanding more fully in relation to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in the next chapter.

Regarding the material practices of making and writing with a quill, the quill having a “neb” through which the pen draws up ink and the ink

reaches the paper is another indication of humans taking on the power of birds, in this case the power of their voices, conceiving of their own writing as expression on the model of bird voice. Christopher Plantin (1585) in *La première et la seconde partie des dialogues François pour les jeunes enfants* has his character Grevin tell his companion, “the penknife is one of your most important tools. To express it more neatly, it acts like a schoolmaster to your quills and so often makes them talk.” In a footnote, A. S. Osley comments, “[t]here is a play on words which cannot be reproduced in English: the word *bec* means both ‘nib’ and ‘mouth.’”⁴⁶ However, Osley is not thinking of how nib or “neb” signified in English when Plantin was writing in French. Then, just as in French, the penknife cut the quill into a mouth, a beak, that spoke.

The “neb” of the pen not only shared the name of a bird beak, it could also be fashioned, at least in the Italian texts, after particular kinds of beaks. In a Venetian text from 1514, “the trimming of the quill should be varied according to the kind of script envisaged. For example, the mercantile hand demands the second cut shall be like an eagle’s beak.”⁴⁷ A later Italian writer says to shape the point “like the beak of a sparrowhawk.”⁴⁸ Nineteen years after that text, Palatino agrees, directing his readers to give the nib “an elegant and pleasing shape after the fashion of a sparrowhawk’s beak”⁴⁹ The 1514 text was written by a nobleman, Sigismondo Fanti, whom A. S. Osley characterizes as “a self-confessed elitist.”⁵⁰ This may explain the instruction to cut the quill’s point in the shape of an eagle beak. The shape of an eagle’s beak refers to the power eagles have to fly toward the heavens and to signify human nobility. These Italian texts may nod to those powers.

The use of eagle and hawk beak-shapes as templates for nebs also nods to the easy associations people made between writing with a quill and the use of weapons. As Goldberg suggests, “the writer’s weapons of quill and quillcase” come, in humanist writing manuals, to replace “arrows and sheaths” and are likened to “shield[s] and spear[s].”⁵¹ In his Preface, Bales uses an embedded metaphor that compares his writing task to the archer’s practice, saying, “let mee a little drawe my shaft, and hit, not aime, at their follies.”⁵² Although this common metaphorical constellation extends to weapons not crafted from bird bodies, like spears, the use of feathers to fletch arrows and the fact that quills and arrows look similar—feathers on the end of a stalk or shaft—subtends those metaphors. In Ascham’s text, Toxophilus’s dialogue partner Philologvs says that Hercules “had hys [arrow] shaftes fethered with Egles fethers.”⁵³ When Rosencrantz informs Hamlet about the success of the children’s acting companies, he says that “many wearing Rapiers, are affraide of Goose-quills,” and he also characterizes the boys in the companies as “an ayrie of Children, little Yases”: a nest of children, like little hawks.⁵⁴ The metaphorical constellation that compares quills to weapons is the base of Rosencrantz’s commentary.

Rosencrantz's bird-laden commentary points to the ways that the differentiated bird world was related to the differentiated human world. Shakespeare has Rosencrantz lauding the power of writing as the humanist writers do. Rosencrantz says that writing with a quill can hurt people as badly or worse than can stabbing them with a small, sharp metal sword. Rosencrantz is also making a joke, I think, by specifying a goose-quill. Domestic geese, as we have seen, are relatively degraded birds, birds with big beautiful wings, but silly characters and voices. The fear caused by using their feathers is thus degrading to the fearful "many." In contrast, the boys in the company have powerful elite bird-identities: they are vulnerable at the moment because they are in their nest, but they are strong hunters, hunting hawks *in potentia*. Tiffany Stern suggests that the comment is an envious competitive slur: "the boy players are birds of prey consuming the scavenged remains of others' business."⁵⁵ If it is a slur, it is also a commentary on the boys' bird-like power. Eagles and hawks have eyries, and, as Goldberg suggests, nebs shaped like eagle and hawk beaks, when wielded by nobles and rulers, may shape words that can kill.

The specific material differences between types of birds were important to people in the Renaissance, and attentiveness to those differences extended to the details of bird feathers, beaks, and behavior. As we see in Rosencrantz's lines and in the strictures for preparing nebs, the hierarchical differences between birds also mattered in texts in both symbolic and material ways. Humans still rank birds hierarchically in symbolic use. The Philadelphia Eagles football team would not have been named the Philadelphia Sparrows. However, I would argue that today's symbolic usage of the eagle works differently from the symbolic usage of the eagle feather in Ascham's text. Both refer to the ancient idea that eagles are the noblest of birds, and both refer to a very long history of biblical reference, Roman imperialism, mythology, and heraldry; however, in the Renaissance those symbolic usages were intimately linked to the reality of bird behaviors: the realities of flight, of sociality, of nests, of hunting, and of being eaten. Renaissance symbolic usages of eagles were also linked to a visceral respect for large birds of prey whose powers exceeded those of men. In contrast, the Philadelphia Eagles were named just as the tide was turning away from an American campaign to eradicate eagles as vermin. The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 responded to the successes of that campaign, and eagles might have been exterminated completely were it not for the coalescence of the emerging ecology movement, the rise of bird watching, and the patriotic revival of the eagle as symbol in the face of World War II.⁵⁶ Another significant difference is that in the Renaissance, the symbolic usages of birds were related to a visibly and acceptably hierarchical human social structure. Francis Bacon refers to this structure when he says, "It is a poor Center of a Mans Actions, *himself*. It is right Earth; for that onely stands fast upon his own Center,

whereas all things that have Affinity with the *Heavens*, move upon the Center of another which they benefit.”⁵⁷ In that world, birds like eagles and hawks who fly in the heavens reach toward God, unlike some men who look downwards into themselves. Some hawks can be tamed by people, but people can only dream of what hawks can see. Eagles fly even higher and live basically untamed. Only royalty and Angels could match their status.

Mercutio and Romeo’s Wild and Domestic Geese

As well as raising our awareness about the material presence of birds in the shared creaturely world, close attention to bird reference in Shakespeare and other writers can thicken our understanding of both Shakespearean language and Renaissance human relations. One section of the dialogue between Mercutio and Romeo in the second act of *Romeo and Juliet* is a case in point. After some opening quips, the men engage in a rhetorical contest centering on the two men’s wits:

Mercutio: Sure wit, follow me this ieast, now till thou hast worne out thy Pump, that when the single sole of it is worne, the ieast may remaine after the wearing, sole-singular.

Romeo: O single soled ieast,
Soley singular for the singlenesse.

Mercutio: Come betweene vs good Benuolio, my wits faints.

Romeo: Swits and spurs,
Swits and spurs, or Ile crie a match.

Mercutio: Nay, if our wits run the Wild-Goose chase, I am done: For thou hast more of the Wild-Goose in one of thy wits, than I am sure I haue in my whole fue. Was I with you there for the Goose?

Romeo: Thou wast neuer with mee for any thing, when thou wast not there for the Goose.

Mercutio: I will bite thee by the eare for that iest.

Romeo: Nay, good Goose bite not.

Mercutio: Thy wit is a very Bitter-sweeting,
It is a most sharp sawce.

Romeo: And is it not well seru’d into a Sweet-Goose?

Mercutio: Oh here’s a wit of Cheuerell, that stretches from an ynch narrow to an ell broad.

Romeo: I stretch it out for that word, broad, which added to the Goose, proues thee farre and wide, a broad Goose.

Mercutio: Why is not this better now, then groning for Loue.⁵⁸

Like so much Shakespearean language, this section of dialogue is saturated with creaturely references, beginning, implicitly, with the leather

from which dancing pumps were frequently made. Romeo and Mercutio's references to kinds of geese in these lines illustrate again how specific the field of bird reference was when Shakespeare was writing, although the specificity has not been acknowledged in the commentary on these references. Today, bird hunters and small farmers might easily understand the distinctions between wild and domestic geese that are central to the dialogue, but that knowledge does not appear in the history of the commentary on the geese references in these lines. This section of dialogue also shows us how much Shakespeare's language refers to his original audience's world, in which humans, geese, and chickens were daily co-participants. In that world, birds signified gender and other material and ideological concerns in ways that may be lost to later audiences.

Arguably, birds first enter this section of dialogue when Romeo cries, "Swits and spurs," in response to Mercutio's request that Benvolio would "come between" the two men because his, Mercutio's, wits are failing. Mercutio is losing the verbal contest because of Romeo's superior rhetorical skills. Prior to Romeo's cry, Mercutio starts a complex sentence with the phrase "Sure wit" and ends it with the compound word "sole-singular." Romeo parries Mercutio's complex sentence with some pithy poetry. In it, Romeo transforms Mercutio's compound word "sole-singular" into a chiasmus—"single soled" "soley singular"—that elaborates the compound word rhetorically, all the while playing with Mercutio's word forms.⁵⁹ Responding to this powerful thrust, Mercutio summons Benvolio to help. When Romeo replies "Swits and spurs," he may, as all the editors think, be calling for the instruments of discipline—switches and spurs—which riders use to abrade or stimulate the bodies of horses. A switch is a small whip used in riding, but the only evidence the *OED* provides for "swits" as a spelling of "switch" is Romeo's line. Despite this evidentiary lack, I can't find any editor who does not believe that "swits" means only "switch" and does not, therefore, interpret the line to mean "get faster," i.e. "whip up your wits, spur them on"; most editors even "amend" the word's spelling to "switch." Nonetheless, "Swits" may be a way of saying both "it's wits" and "switch," a case of what Peter Stallybrass and Margreta de Grazia call "semantic slipping and sliding."⁶⁰ If Romeo is saying "it's wits and spurs," he could be likening his battle with Mercutio to a cockfight. Their wits are fighting with spurs, as cocks fight with spurs. He could be saying, "fight on with your spurs." Either, or both, way, Romeo's teasing threat, "or Ile crie a match," seems to mean that if Mercutio retires his wits, Romeo will declare that he has won the fight, the cockfight and/or their battle of wits.

Desiring to continue the contest, all the while declaring his subordination, Mercutio hears another meaning: he says that Romeo has called for a match rather than declaring the match is won. Mercutio proposes that Romeo has called for the men to play "the Wild-Goose chase." He may also be reinterpreting Romeo's cock's spurs as riding spurs. Editors want

to make Romeo's spurs and Mercutio's spurs mean the same thing—metal spurs on men's boots that are used to prod horses—but the entire dialogue, as has long been noted, uses a punning logic in which the partners continually transform the meanings of significant nouns: "case," "pink," "pump," "goose," etc. A transformation from cock spurs to metal spurs on boots would fit well into this logic. The "Wild-Goose chase" may be the first or second invocation of both birds and aristocratic men's games in the dialogue. It denoted a horse race in which people on horseback imitate the speed and following pattern of wild geese in flight.⁶¹ Burton lists "wilde-geese chases" as one of a group of games on horseback that include tilts and horse-races, and says that those activities "are the disports of greater men, and [are] good in themselves."⁶² When he says "I am done," Mercutio is telling Romeo that if the game of wits turns into the kind of a horse race in which men imitate wild geese, Mercutio is lost. Romeo is the better flier: as Romeo has just demonstrated, one of his wits can fly faster than all five of Mercutio's could ever fly. When Mercutio says that Romeo "hast more of the Wild-Goose" in one of his wits than Mercutio has in all of his, he seems to be complimenting Romeo's speed and quickness.

The copious commentary on the question that follows Mercutio's references to "the Wild-Goose chase," however, points, for the most part, in a different direction. Most editors have taken Mercutio's "was I with you there for the Goose?" as an act of self-assertion that insults Romeo. David Bevington suggests that it means "did I score a point in calling you a goose."⁶³ A number of other editors agree that Mercutio is somehow scoring off Romeo by mentioning the word "goose": Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine gloss the line as "have I scored a victory over you by talking of the goose."⁶⁴ The first Riverside edition's note reads, "did I score off you with that word goose."⁶⁵ John E. Hankins thinks that Mercutio is checking his interpretation of Romeo's words: "was I accurate in calling you a goose?"⁶⁶ However, Mercutio may not be calling Romeo a domestic goose, the kind of goose that would make his question an insult. At least, he also seems to be complimenting Romeo on his quick wittedness. When he asks, "Was I with you there for the Goose?" he may be saying that since Romeo flies faster in the game of wits, as Romeo might in the "Wild-Goose chase," Mercutio is hoping to stay with him. "Was I with you there for the Goose?" could then mean something like "am I keeping up, since when you cried a match we could be running a Wild-Goose Chase."

The customary interpretations of Mercutio's question depend on a belief that a wild goose and a domestic goose are the same in Shakespeare's eyes. Yet wild and domestic geese signify differently in Shakespeare's texts, as they do in all Renaissance texts and as they do today for bird hunters and farmers who keep geese. The singular "wild goose" appears in another Shakespeare play, during one of Jacques's misanthropic

rants in *As You Like It*: Jacques says that if any man is free of sin, “why then [his] taxing like a wild-geese flies / Vnclain’d of any man.”⁶⁷ In his simile, Jacques’s “wild-geese” stands for criticism that flies freely, unattached to any man. In contrast to this abstract usage, the always-mundane Falstaff enjoys comparing people to wild geese. In *1Henry IV*, Falstaff threatens to “driue” Hal’s subjects out of the kingdom “like a flocke of Wilde-geese,”⁶⁸ and in *2Henry IV*, Falstaff uses a congregation of wild geese as a trope for the close association of Shallow and his serving men.⁶⁹ Likewise, Puck in *Midsummer* describes the workmen as flying from the sight of Bottom’s ass-head the way wild geese fly when they see a man hunting fowl.⁷⁰ Although Falstaff, characteristically, empowers himself in relation to other men—here when he describes the King’s subjects and the foolish Justice Shallow and his men—the wild geese he employs in his tropes figure, as they do in relation to actual wild goose behavior, their flying speed and sociality. Puck’s reference denigrates the workmen for their misrecognition of Bottom, their fellow, but Puck simultaneously compliments wild geese for their wily perception and evasion of fowlers.

As Renaissance humans understood, wild geese accurately perceive danger, fly fast and out of range, and fly together. They were related to, but not the same as, ubiquitous domestic geese who, in contrast, were used as figures for silly men and prostitutes and whose body parts were used for pens, food, medicine, and bedding.⁷¹ Although the distinction between wild and domestic geese is still salient for humans who hunt and keep birds, it arguably had a different character in a world in which humans did not have guns that could accurately bring down many wild geese and in which vastly more humans lived in close proximity to domestic geese and used their body parts daily. In that world, wild geese were more powerful in relation to humans, and domestic geese were more intimately linked to human lives. The dialogue’s use of geese may hang on this essential contrast and the ways that humans identified themselves and exerted power over others with different kinds of geese in mind and in hand.

The contrast in the dialogue between Mercutio’s wild geese and Romeo’s domestic geese follows the dialogue’s logic in that it makes Romeo’s reuse of Mercutio’s phrase “there for the Goose” into another occasion for a pun. When Romeo answers Mercutio’s question, “Was I with you there for the Goose?” with “Thou was neuer with mee for any thing, when thou wast not there for the Goose,” Romeo transforms Mercutio’s field of reference from a game that aristocratic men play together to the more homely ways that we have seen domestic geese signified: as food and as tropes for prostitutes and stupid people; he may also be calling Mercutio a goose, but a domestic goose, not wild. Mercutio, Romeo is saying, only accompanies men to look for food or whores, and he may also be saying, “you were never there when you were not acting like a goose,” a simpleton.⁷² Mercutio tries to engage Romeo with the prospect

of a game in which men on horseback compete with other men to race in formations and at speeds that wild geese can achieve (without the assistance of other creatures). Romeo counters with a vision of Mercutio engaged with grounded birds ready to be eaten, stupid men who some believed to have behaved and thought on the level of domesticated birds, and women used sexually by men.

These slurs on Mercutio's masculinity invite a teasing threat from Mercutio: "I will bite thee by the eare for that iest." Again, although most editors think that he is saying that he will bite Romeo affectionately, another meaning is also possible, and perhaps even more likely. "Bite" could mean the action of a sword on flesh or armor.⁷³ Shakespeare employs this usage often. When Troilus threatens to kill Diomedes in *Troilus and Cressida*, he says that his sword will "bite" Diomedes's helmet.⁷⁴ In *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes, similarly, uses the word "bite" to describe what his "Dagger" could have done to his thigh as a young boy were it not "muzzel'd."⁷⁵ Since the fundamental aristocratic young men's game in *Romeo and Juliet* is sword fighting, it would make sense that Mercutio could be using "bite" to mean the wounding capacity of a dagger. We do not have to go as far afield as these other Shakespeare plays to see that Mercutio habitually associates ears with stabbing. Before Romeo's entrance, Mercutio suggests to Benvolio that Romeo has been "runne through the eare with a Loue song."⁷⁶ Mercutio links ears and swords less metaphorically when he pulls out his rapier and tells Tibalt to draw his own: "Will you pluck your Sword out of his Pilcher by the eares? Make hast[e], least mine be about your eares ere it be out."⁷⁷ Thus, Mercutio's offer to bite Romeo "by the eare" can be read as another attempt to bring him back to the world of aristocratic men's games, the elite masculine world that can be signified by comparison with wild geese and fighting cocks, but not with domestic geese.

If so, Romeo will have none of it. He transforms Mercutio from a swordsman into a domestic goose whom he can tame by telling him to "bite not." As Joseph Porter suggests, Mercutio cares only that "Romeo should stay with, or come back to, the world of male comradeship."⁷⁸ Romeo's domestic-geese-laden retorts in this scene are another instance of his tenuous rejection of that world in favor of Juliet. "Good Goose bite not" was a proverb in the sixteenth century. We know it was proverbial because Nicholas, a character in the 1598 play *A Pleasant Comedie of the Two Angry Women of Abington* who speaks only in proverbs, uses it. The proverb stems from the actual behavior of, and human relations with, domestic geese. Geese bite, and domesticated geese may have been rewarded for desisting. The rest of the goose references in the dialogue also refer to domestic geese and to the large field of references associated with domestic geese, all from the homely realms of sex and food. Geese were familiar fare in Renaissance kitchens: a "goose-pan" was the name for a pan large enough to stew a goose.⁷⁹ Romeo turns Mercutio's commentary

on his “Bitter-sweeting” “sharp sawce[d]” wit into something that will serve to sweeten a goose for consumption (and also, perhaps, into a penis that can penetrate a “Sweet-Goose,” presumably a tasty human who will not bite). When Mercutio counters by comparing Romeo’s wit to goat leather—Cheuerell—, Romeo calls him “a broad Goose.” The punning possibilities for the word “broad” are plentiful. Broad can mean “loose, gross, indecent,” “unrestrained,” “plainspoken,” or “ample.”⁸⁰ It is also possible, as Howard Staunton has suggested, that Romeo is calling Mercutio a brood-goose.⁸¹

Romeo’s transformation of the goose field of reference to womanly concerns may account for why Mercutio avoids talking directly about geese after he asks his question: “Was I with you there for the Goose?” However, goose-reference may still subtend the speech in which he compares Romeo’s wit to a “sawce”: “Thy wit is a very Bitter-sweeting, / It is a most sharp sawce.” According to the Variorum *Romeo and Juliet*, in 1871 R. G. White suggested that Mercutio refers to “goose and applesauce”—“Bitter-sweeting” was the name for a type of apple.⁸² Mercutio may also be playing with Romeo’s word “bite” when he calls Romeo’s “wit” a “Bitter-sweeting.” “Sweeting” was commonly used to mean “sweetheart” or “beloved,” and as well as signifying food, a “sawce” could mean an “impudent person.”⁸³ Mercutio could thus be saying that his sweetheart, Romeo, has a bitter or biting wit that is also sharp and impudent. As a gloss on Romeo’s response—“And is it not well seru’d into a Sweet-Goose”—G. Blakemore Evans suggests a reference to the proverb “sweet meat must have sour sauce.”⁸⁴ Another proverb that might have suggested sauce to Shakespeare is “That that’s good sawce for a goose, is good for a gander,” which appears in John Ray’s 1670 collection of proverbs with the note, “This is a womans Proverb.”⁸⁵ If that proverb is somewhere behind Mercutio’s invocation of “sawce,” it could reinforce Mercutio’s gendered discourse, his continual attempts to make Romeo’s concerns the concerns of the gander.

In response, Romeo directly calls him a “Sweet-Goose” and a “broad Goose.” If Staunton is right in suggesting that Romeo is comparing Mercutio to a brood-goose sitting on her eggs, it is interesting that Shakespeare has Mercutio stop the contest at that point, as if the idea that Mercutio is nesting satisfies him. This could be interpreted in relation to Mercutio’s opening commentary on his first pun (on the word “slip”) when Romeo enters the scene: “can you not conceiue?”⁸⁶ Perhaps Mercutio enjoys the vision of the two as a productive male-male goose couple, and this couple is what Mercutio is comparing to Romeo’s coupling with a woman, a coupling which looks to Mercutio like an idiot human playing with a toy: “a great Naturall, that runs lolling vp and downe to hid his bable in a hole.”⁸⁷ The nesting brood goose could be a figure for what Mercutio sees as the paradoxical amity of the two men engaged in witty battle, producing golden eggs (witty puns), another possible proverbial

reference invoked in the contest.⁸⁸ Regardless, the contest between these two men ends with a sweet goose and a broad goose as features of discourse that make a “sociable” Romeo, according to Mercutio. This “sociable” Romeo may also look like a cock or a wild goose. In contrast, Mercutio sees Romeo in love with a woman as more like a creature without intellect.⁸⁹

I am arguing that our understanding of the intricacies of this section of dialogue depends on our understanding of the shared creaturely world that conceived these characters. The birds in that world were literally at Shakespeare’s fingertips as he was inventing these humans. Holding a goose quill in his hand, he wrote his texts in a world in which the bodies of geese signified multiply and specifically, reconstituting human bodies when they were ingested, enabling sleep and, in texts and the conversation, figuring gender, sexual practices, intellectual capacity (or incapacity), speed, and sociality. The commentary on the geese references in these lines has been alive to insults that depend on identifications between geese and prostitutes and idiots. It has missed, however, the ways that the dialogue points to aristocratic men’s identifications with wild geese who figured power because they could fly out of human range. Along with missing some of the jokes in the dialogue, it has also missed the ways in which human life was deeply inflected with geese bodies and practices and the lore around geese that came from daily living in their company. As we will see next, geese were not alone in their influence: in the creaturely world, the bodies of pigeons also signified multiply, in this case as food, medicine, and spiritual inspiration.

Donne Among the Doves

As do Shakespeare’s texts, other significant literary works born in the early seventeenth century continually reference the ubiquity and significance of birds. John Donne’s 1624 *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* is a case in point, and it will also help us to see the spiritual significance of bird bodies in the creaturely world. In the twelfth section of that text, John Donne writes on the occasion of his doctor’s application of pigeons to his “lower parts” to “draw the vapors” from his head.⁹⁰ Each of the twenty-three sections of *Devotions* is divided into a Meditation, an Expostulation, and a Prayer, and the whole text has a rambling, associative structure. Characteristically, this particular section of *Devotions* moves between two associative clusters: Donne’s associations to the concept of vapors and his associations to the concept of the pigeon or dove. (These bird names are fairly interchangeable in this text as they appear to be also in Shakespeare’s texts.⁹¹) In Donne’s associative musings, the pigeon is both material and immaterial, body and spirit, and the same is true of Donne as a person. But where Donne’s bodily self is a source of his “self-destruction”—he says that he has generated the vapors that

are killing him—the pigeon’s body is potentially his salvation.⁹² Likewise, the pigeon’s immaterial self, the qualities of spirit that God has given it, seem in the text to tend toward salvation, whereas Donne’s immaterial self, his thoughts and his soul, seem spotted, sinful, and destructive. The medical practice to which Donne’s text refers requires the pigeon(s) to die in the service of human health. However, Donne’s associations point us again to a shared creation in the English Renaissance that is interactive rather than thoroughly anthropomorphic. More specifically, Donne’s associations and the very diverse creaturely world these associations construct offer a window into a perhaps surprising order of that world, an order in which the pigeons appear with Donne as primary creatures.

It is true that Donne sees a man as an exceptional creature, and at times in *Devotions* he appears to separate humans categorically from all other creatures on the basis of the Aristotelian theory that only humans have a rational soul.⁹³ In the eighteenth Meditation, Donne associates to the ringing bell that announces a stranger’s death and the passage of a soul from a human body. He considers and rejects a strain of classical thinking that dismisses the idea that people have a special, rational soul that other creatures do not share:

If I will aske meere *Philosophers*, what the *soule* is, I shall finde amongst them, that will tell me, it is nothing . . . They see the *soule* is nothing else in other *Creatures*, and they affect an *impious humilitie*, to think as *low* of *Man*. But if my *soule* were no more than the soule of a *beast*, I could not thinke so; that *soule* that can *reflect* upon it selfe, *consider* it selfe, is *more* than so.⁹⁴

Donne seems here to be evoking the rational soul as proof of human exceptionalism, even anticipating Descartes’s cogito. However, Donne’s terminology is specific and telling: by “Man” he does not mean all creatures with a human body as Descartes did, only those humans with higher order intelligence. It is not even completely clear that by “Man” Donne includes women. As Boehrer explains, early in his writing career, Donne was a principal author in a discourse that claimed that women were more like beasts than they were like men. Famously, in a 1630 Easter sermon, Donne revisited this question, and by exploring examples of good, devout, and intelligent women, he sets out to prove that “woman [sic.] were created in the Image of God.”⁹⁵ However, in the three sections of *Devotions* that concern the passing of a soul signified by the ringing of a bell, Donne assumes categorically that the soul in question must be a man’s soul.⁹⁶ In addition, and most significantly, Donne’s human exceptionalism is limited by the ability of the person in question to reason in specific ways, to think, to reflect, and to consider. As we have seen, Descartes attributes these abilities to all people; Donne did not.

Although Donne's self-reflective higher human resembles the Cartesian cogito, throughout his text Donne invokes a shared creaturely vision. *Devotions* depends on "the close connection between the body and the soul" that was "so central to discussions about the immorality of ill health," the connection "severed by Descartes."⁹⁷ He is never a party to what Shannon calls "the fundamentally modern sense of the animal or animals as humanity's persistent, solitary opposite." He is also not really a party to the conventional modern division of human and "animal," "where humanity is characterized by a positive attribute, however slippery (language, a soul, existential possibility, tool use, etc.), and animality by a corresponding deficit or privation."⁹⁸ Instead, as my Donne epigraph suggests, in *Devotions* it is often other kinds of creatures who are better endowed by God for life in the world. Birds can fly away from seasonal, weather-related discomfort, whereas Renaissance humans are beholden to the seasons. In the third Meditation, as Donne "*takes [to] his bed*," he says that "[w]ee attribute but one priuiledge, and aduantage to Mans body, above other mouing creatures, that he is not as others, groueling, but of an erect, of an vpright form, naturally built, & disposed to the contemplation of *Heaven*."⁹⁹ Specifically comparing people only to creatures that walk on the ground, those whom Plato's *Timaeus* calls "pedestrian beasts," he points to the human body's relative privation, what Shannon calls "human negative exceptionalism";¹⁰⁰ although humans, at least those who will eventually find their "*home*" in "*Heaven*," can transcend their bodies in their journey to Heaven, on earth they are the lesser creatures, with only one advantage over other creatures.

Reflecting in the fourth Meditation on the doctors' being called in to treat him, Donne becomes even less convinced of human superiority in the world:

Heere we shrinke in our proportion, sink in our diginitie, in respect of verie meane creatures, who are *Phisicians* to themselues. The *Hart* that is pursued and wounded, they say, knowes an Herbe, which being eaten, throwes off the arrow: A strange kind of *vomit*. The *dog* that pursues it, though hee bee subject to sicknes, eyen *proverbially*, knows his *grasse* that recovers him. . . . Man hath not that *innate instinct*, to apply those naturall medicines to his present danger, as those inferior creatures have; he is not his owne *Apothecary*, his owne *Phisician*, as they are.¹⁰¹

Although Donne calls varieties of other creatures "meane" and "inferior," he is thoroughly conscious of such creatures' superiority in relation to health. Unlike him, deer and dogs can self-diagnose and self-treat. People, in contrast, he says, cannot even name all of the grievous diseases that afflict them and are nowhere close to finding "*remedies* for euerie disease."¹⁰² In *Devotions* as a whole, Donne's concern is his bodily health,

but that bodily health for him is intimately connected to his spiritual condition. His belief in the essentially Aristotelian universe affords him the possibility of his own superiority in relation to a future in Heaven, but his physical challenges and his Christian conscience continually provoke him to worry that his sins have compromised that future. In his third Expostulation, he asks, “*Lord*, dost thou not accuse me, dost thou not reproach to mee, my former sinns, when thou layest mee vpon this bed?”¹⁰³ Meanwhile, his misery in the world continually demonstrates his bodily inferiority to even grounded creatures.

In the text, both pigeons and the writer are potential carriers of God’s spirit, but, continuing this theme of “human negative exceptionalism,” the pigeons appear to be more successful at that task. Donne considers several reasons for his vaporous condition, including his “*Melancholy*,” “*thoughtfulness*,” and his “*study*”;¹⁰⁴ however, because he believes that God has ordained both his intellect and his profession, he settles on blaming the fallen condition proper to people, the sin that “takes away our sight, and disables vs from seeing our danger.”¹⁰⁵ The end of the twelfth Expostulation first generally names the vapors that afflict Donne as “[t]he smoke of *sin*, and of [God’s] *wrath*” and then names them more particularly as “the vapors of our own *pride*, our own *wits*, our own *wils*” and “our own *inventions*.”¹⁰⁶ Even though he uses the plural possessive pronoun, Donne seems to be blaming, along with the common human sin of pride, his personal arsenal of sinful mental capacities and predilections: his “wits” in the *OED* sense of “liveliness of fancy, with capacity of apt expression . . . Formerly sometimes opp[osed] to wisdom or judgment”;¹⁰⁷ his desires (“wils”); and his “inventions” in the negative sense that the *OED* phrases as “The action of devising, contriving, or making up; contrivance, fabrication.”¹⁰⁸ In contrast, doves are carriers of God’s uncomplicated spirit.

In the third section of the twelfth Devotion, Donne prays that the pigeon will not only save his body but will purify his soul:

And as thou hast caried this thy *creature* the *Doie*, through al thy wayes, through *Nature*, and made it naturally proper to conduce medicinally to our *bodily health*, Through the *law*, and made it a *sacrifice* for *sinne* there, and through the *Gospel*, and made it, & thy spirit in it, a witnes of thy *sonnes baptisme* there, so carry it, and the qualities of it home to my *soule*, and imprint there that *simplicity*, that *mildnesse*, that *harmelessnesse*, which thou hast imprinted by *Nature* in this *Creature*.¹⁰⁹

When Donne calls pigeons simple, mild, and harmless, he is echoing scripture. Matthew 10:16 says that Jesus sent his apostles as “sheep in the midst of wolves,” telling them to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” Donne takes Jesus’s symbolic words as also literal and physical. What

doves have as creatures, their mild character, makes them better than sinful humans, less potentially self-destructive. Unlike people, pigeons carry God's spirit essentially, not only in scriptural accounts but in their character as creatures.¹¹⁰ As Donne understands the world, "*Nature . . . is Gods immediate Commissioner*";¹¹¹ Nature has given the pigeon its mild character, and God can make the pigeon replace Donne's harmful character with its mildness. The pigeon's sacrifice will improve Donne materially and immaterially. No species barrier separates Donne and the pigeon essentially; both are God's creatures, and God can cause one to perfect the other.

In an unusual move in *Devotions* as a whole, Donne asks for the pigeon's help in the twelfth Meditation as well as in its Prayer. The twelfth Meditation, like the rest of the text, rambles from one subject to another but ends with a plea to the pigeon that refers also to two other creatures that more habitually interact bodily with humans but whose interaction is predatory or defensive rather than sacrificial:

For, as they that write of *Poysons*, and of creatures naturally disposed to the ruine of Man, do as well mention the *Flea*, and the *Viper*, because the *Flea*, though hee kill none, hee does all the harme hee can, so euen these libellous and licentious *Iesters*, vtter the *venim* they haue, though sometimes *vertue*, and alwaies *power*, be a good *Pigeon* to draw this *vapor* from the *Head*, and from doing any deadly harme there.¹¹²

Earlier in this Meditation, Donne has compared the vapors in his body to the infectious rumors that can bring down Nations. He calls the men who carry those rumors "*Detracter[s]*," "*Libeller[s]*," and "*Jester[s]*."¹¹³ Thinking about such men leads him to think of a noxious insect—the flea—and a snake—the viper—and then leads him back to thoughts of corrupting men. Those men and the power they wield, for bad and sometimes for good, lead Donne back to the pigeon and its power; and so he prays that the bird will take away his self-destructive vapor and keep him from its fatal effects.

This plea seems out of place in a Meditation, but it points to the pigeon's primary place as a creature among creatures in *Devotions*. All but one other of the twenty-three Meditations ends in a meditative statement or question. The eleventh, for example, ends, "O who, if before hee had a beeing, he could have sense of this miserie, would buy a being here vpon these conditions?"¹¹⁴ The thirteenth Meditation, on the appearance of spots on Donne's body, ends with the thought "O poore stepp toward being well, when these *spots* do only tell vs, that we are worse, then we were sure of before."¹¹⁵ The sole exception to this pattern of Meditations ending in a meditative statement, besides the plea to the pigeon in the twelfth, appears in the seventh Meditation, which ends, "O my *soule*, when thou art not enough awake, to blesse thy *God* enough for his plentifull mercy, in affoording thee many *Helpers*, remember how many lacke

them, and helpe them to them, or to those other things, which they lacke as much as them."¹¹⁶ In this plea at the end of the seventh Meditation, Donne appeals to his soul to remember the poor people who have no access to health care, to physicians and physic, access that his privilege affords him. His soul must be appealed to because it sometimes sleeps and does not remember to be thankful to God and to help the poor. Inside the complete *Devotions*, pigeons and soul occupy a similarly anomalous structural position. However, when Donne addresses the pigeon in the same structural position in which he has addressed his soul, he asks the pigeon to be "good" but does not need to consider its potential forgetfulness; he does, however, see it as an entity to appeal to, just as he sees his sleepy soul. In addition, these addresses align the pigeon's material body with the most immaterial and most treasured part of Donne's self.¹¹⁷

As the hart and the dog in the fourth and the flea and the viper in the twelfth Meditations indicate, pigeons and humans are hardly alone among the creatures in this Devotion. Derrida says about *Hamlet* that the "play is an extraordinary zoology: its animal figures are innumerable, which is somewhat the case all through Shakespeare."¹¹⁸ Like Shakespeare's plays, *Devotions* is heavily populated with non-human creatures, those who existed in the world in which it was written and those Donne finds in scripture—both canonical and apocryphal; these include as-yet-uncreated beasts, and a dragon, an imaginary creature whose existence is not limited to scripture since in Renaissance natural histories, they appear as creatures in the world. In the twelfth Meditation's second sentence, Donne uses a mouse who killed an elephant as an analogy for a vapor that will kill a man.¹¹⁹ When Donne reaches for figures for what is small and insignificant and what is big and important, it is nonhuman creatures that he finds. Likewise, his stock of characters pernicious to men contains insects and snakes as well as pestilent libelers. When Donne considers his vapor as just punishment from God for his vapor-like sin, he pulls from the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon the possibility that, having punished the Egyptians with frogs and lice because they worshiped snakes and other animals, God may create vapor-breathing deadly beasts.¹²⁰ And this thought leads Donne to the prophecies in Revelations, from which he extracts the "*bottomlesse pit*" out of which in this vision of the future "*came Locusts*" as strong and deadly as "*Scorpions*."¹²¹ Donne also says that when God has imprinted him with the pigeon's mildness, he will be able to "tread victoriously vpon [his own] *graue*, and trample vpon the *Lyon*, and *Dragon*, that lye vnder it to deuoure" him.¹²² These beasts come from Psalms 91.13: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." All of these creatures are productions or witnesses of God's power. Like the pigeons in *Devotions*, they invoke and are invoked by the Divine, but unlike the pigeons, they are the opposite of salvific.

In addition to the creatures who serve the text's figurative needs or who come from scriptural sources, Donne's twelfth Devotion supplies evidence

that he consciously lived his physical life surrounded on all sides not only by myriad live creatures but also by the traces of the creaturely bodies that sustained him. He asks in the Meditation, “What ill *ayre*, that I could haue met in the street, what *channell*, what *shambles*, what *dunghill*, what *vault*, could haue hurt mee so much, as these home-bredd *vapours*?”¹²³ This list of possibilities points us to a world of bodies. It seems likely that by “channel” Donne is referring to a gutter on the side of a street.¹²⁴ A “shamble” is either a meat-market or a slaughterhouse, and given its company in the sentence, a slaughterhouse seems most likely.¹²⁵ A “dunghill” could signify a pile of excrement or of rubbish, but again, in the company of its immediate predecessor, “shambles,” it seems plausible that Donne is writing of a literal pile of dung. The final word in Donne’s list, “vault,” can signify any enclosed space or tomb, but here it may well mean a sewer.¹²⁶ In the list, all of these material features of the street, as well as the “ill ayre” he could breathe there, serve as possible sources of his sickness, and all are rejected, since his own sin is the true wellspring. What these possible sources show us, however, is how all sorts of bodies were always present in Donne’s premodern “nature-culture.”¹²⁷ In Donne’s “nature-culture,” other creatures not only served as food and medicine and for clothes and shoes, but they were always and everywhere displayed whole and/or in recognizable parts; creaturely death was visible in ways that never fostered denial of its truth (in the ways that today’s American food system commonly denies that truth), and other creatures’ excrement and urine mingled with human excrement and urine in the spaces where all these creatures walked and flew. This mingle-mangle of bodies and bodily fluids characterized the “nature-culture” in which all humans walked in Donne’s time, and this passage in *Devotions* may serve as a reminder of how Donne saw himself as a body among other bodies.

The pigeon, however, whose bodily fluids and flesh will interact with Donne’s in his treatment, seems separated in this text from other kinds of creatures. That separation is surely partly due to how central doves and other birds are in the scriptures Donne was steeped in. The chapter of Psalms from which Donne takes his image of treading on a lion and a dragon is a natural chapter to which a sick reader might turn, and it also exemplifies this centrality. To the godly, Psalm 91 offers divine protection from “the noisome pestilence,” and the “pestilence *that* walketh in darkness,” and “any plague” that might “come nigh [their] dwelling.” Because of these particular promises, in his sickness Donne may have turned to it for comfort. The psalm also figures both the godly and the Lord as bird-like:

3. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
4. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust . . .

In the twelfth Devotion, immediately after Donne refers to this psalm, he prays, “Thou O Lord, by the *Prophet* callest the *Doue*, the *Doue of the Valleys* but promisest that *the Doue of the Valleyes shall bee vpon the Mountaine*.”¹²⁸ He draws his image from Ezekiel 7, a passage in which sinners are figured as doves. In Psalm 91, men who live with God are safe from “the fowler,” literally a man who catches birds and figuratively the devil or his earthly manifestations, and God has wings and feathers to shelter the godly. These birds and bird characteristics are figures of speech, not literal descriptions, but I am arguing that for Donne the line that would divide these figures from the actual bird whose body will interact with him does not exist in a way that would render them essentially different. They are all manifestations of God. Donne is at risk from “the fowler,” and he prays for the doves to save him, just as God, with wings and feathers, promises to save godly men.

This lack of a division between literal and figurative birds appears also when Donne takes to his bed early in *Devotions*. His physical discomfort leads him to write about the feathers that he rests upon: “As thou hast made these *feathers, thornes*, in the sharpnes of this sicknes, so, *Lord*, make these *thornes, feathers*, againe, *feathers* of thy *Doue*, in the peace of Conscience, and in a holy recourse to thine *Arke*, to the Instruments of true comfort, in thy Institutions, and in the Ordinances of thy *Church*.”¹²⁹ From his sickbed, Donne understands his world as fully dependent on God’s desires for him and his relation to God. God has created his bed out of goose feathers, but Donne’s sins have made him experience that feather bed as a bed of thorns. He prays that God will transform that thorny pain into feathery “comfort.” Donne’s bed or bedding was made of material goose feathers, and the feathery comfort he asks of God is spiritual comfort. However, Donne does not distinguish between the material and the spiritual. Latour explains that “[a]ll collectives [another word Latour uses for “nature-cultures”] are different from each other in the way they divide up beings, in the properties they attribute to them, in the mobilization [movement between these things] they consider acceptable.” He reminds us that it is “our [modern] Constitution” that “attributes the role of nonhumans to one set of entities, the role of citizens to another, the function of an arbitrary and powerless God to a third.”¹³⁰ In chapter four, I will show how critics reading plays through the lens of that constitution have often misread Falstaff. *Devotions*, also, does not belong to a world that divides up beings in this manner. The medical practice that Donne underwent and the ways in which he appears to understand that practice show how much his text predates modernity’s distinctly policed lines between such categories as nature, humans, animals, and God.

A further elaboration of this point requires me to revisit sections of the text. In *Devotions*, modernity’s policed lines are nonexistent. When

Donne asks God to imprint him with the dove's mildness, he addresses the "ways" in which pigeons have served God:

[T]hou hast caried this thy *creature* the *Doue*, through all thy wayes, through *Nature*, and made it naturally proper to conduce medicinally to our *bodily health*, Through the *law*, and made it a *sacrifice* for *sinne* there, and through the *Gospel*, and made it, & thy spirit in it, a witnes of thy *sonnes baptisme* there.¹³¹

Pigeons are multiply significant: They can serve as medicine; this may be because they were seen as "hot and moist" and could counteract "melancholic and phlegmatic humours."¹³² They are also the creatures that in Leviticus, "the *law*," should be offered to God as a sacrifice for sin (5:7, 12:6, 12:8, 14:22).¹³³ And doves have both seen Christ's baptism and carried God's spirit to that scene. For all of these reasons, they can cure Donne of his illness. These ways of God—medicine, scripture, God's presence in the world—are multiple facets of the same thing. Nature, Leviticus, and the Gospels are all God's ways; all manifest in or recommend doves, and all can minister to Donne. Donne explains,

So that though our last act be an ascending to glory, (we shall ascend to the place of *Angels*) yet our first act is to goe the way of thy *Sonn*, *descending*, and the way of thy blessed *spirit* too, who *descended in the Doue*. Therefore has thou bin pleased to afford vs this remedy in *Nature*, by this application of a *Doue*, to our lower parts, to make these *vapors* in our *bodies*, to descend, and to make that a *type* to vs, that by the visitation of thy *Spirit*, the *vapors* of sin shall descend, & we tread them under our feet. At the baptisme of thy *Son*, the *Dove* descended & at the exalting of thine *Apostles* to preach, the same spirit descended. Let us draw down the *vapors* of our own *pride*, our own *wits*, our own *wils*, our own *inventions*, to the *simplicitie* of thy *Sacraments*, & the obedience of thy word, and these *Doves*, thus applied, shall make us live.¹³⁴

The material pigeon applied to Donne's feet is a type for God's descent into the world as spirit in the form of the Dove. Jesus descended and died for human sins. God's Nature provides the pigeon to serve an analogical function, to descend under Donne's feet and absorb his sins. By means of the dove's body and its physical effects on his bodily vapors, Donne will rise because, by means of the dove's simplicity, his sin, his vapors, will disappear. The dove's simplicity, however, is a material manifestation of the simplicity of God's sacraments. Both are superior to Donne's human sinful complications, and it is the dove's simplicity that can cure Donne of those complications. The mortal dove will die, as will Donne's mortal body. Donne cannot live separate from God, and neither can the pigeon.

The salient difference is that the pigeon must die so that Donne can live. The pigeon was also alive, and its life should have value and not be disposable because Donne wants to live; it never chose to live under Donne's theology. This is a perspective that I treasure and believe in, a perspective that prevents me from eating birds and other creatures. There were vegetarians in Donne's world.¹³⁵ But my vegetarian perspective, even as minor as it is in America today, belongs most fully to a collective that essentially values life in this world, a collective in which people are separated from "nonhumans" and both are separated from "an arbitrary and powerless God."¹³⁶ Donne's phrasing, "these *Doves*, thus applied, shall make us live," is not a party to those separations. When Donne uses the word "live" here, it signifies his spiritual life with God before and after death and his creaturely life. If he can partake of the mildness of the pigeon and its medical effects, both gifts of God, he will be alive with God. That vision of life is one aspect of the difference between Donne's collective, the creaturely world, and my own.

In addition, Donne's collective saw all bodies differently than mine does. His collective used pigeons' bodies for medicine, and it also used human bodies this way.¹³⁷ Wendy Wall shows us that "[l]ike butchered animals, human bodies could occasionally provide flesh and bone to be parceled, cut, beaten, and dissected for their use in a sometimes violent domestic praxis."¹³⁸ In *Devotions*, Donne refers to such practice: "[M]y *body* may have any *Physicke*, any *Medicine* from another *body*, one *Man* from the flesh of another *Man* (as by Mummy, or any such *composition*)."¹³⁹ Louise Noble points out that the "pharmacological preserving and eating of human bodies is conceptually situated within a culture of public displays of violent executions and bloody anatomies."¹⁴⁰ In Donne's London, human bodies were tortured, hanged, and displayed whole and in parts on the streets, the same streets that manifested the mingle-mangle of bodily fluids that Donne saw as one possible cause of his illness. Those bloody, creaturely London streets were full of birds, and Donne's mingle-mangle was written with a hand holding pieces of bird wings.¹⁴¹

Writing copiously about his illness with a quill in hand, Donne shows us the medical/spiritual significance of bird bodies. Sleeping on feathers that feel like thorns, reading about the feathers that will save him from the fowler, Donne anticipates a life everlasting with angels that, in his culture's imagination, fly with the anatomical wings of birds that people saw on earth. Those birds, people understood, could see better and further than them and could fly closer to Heaven than some people might ever be able. Humans like Donne might fly to Heaven, but only if they were not weighted down by their submission to bodily desires. And just as the shape and size of bird feathers determined the shape and size of human script, the figuration of heavenly angels was determined by the human experience of watching and catching birds. In addition, not all humans could write

with a quill. The hierarchy of birds evident in the distinctions humans made among them was in some sense a mirror of the hierarchy of people that enabled people like Donne to sleep on feathers and people like Bottom the Weaver to sleep on the ground, like beasts. In chapter two, I turn to Bottom and the imagined world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a world that some post-Cartesians may have read without sufficient attention to its creaturely bodies and voices.

Notes

- 1 John Donne. *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, and Severall Steps in My Sicknes*. London, 1624. Meditation 14, 375–6; 72. All of the quotations from *Devotions* are to this text, by page number, followed by page numbers from John Donne. *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. Ed. with Commentary. Anthony Raspa. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975.
- 2 All of the Bible quotations except the one from the Apochrypha are from the King James Version. I am not sure what Bible Donne is using; some of his phrasing echoes this one.
- 3 *The Essaies of Sr Francis Bacon*. London, 1613. Hv.
- 4 OED “train” n.1. 4., n.2.c.
- 5 See OED “train” n. 2. c.
- 6 TLN 1592, 3.7.7.
- 7 Sir Francis Bacon. *Essayes and Counsels, Civil and Moral*. London, 1664. 134.
- 8 See the OED: “the terminal segment of a bird’s wing, bearing the primary flight feathers” (OED “pinion” n2. 1a) or “any of the flight feathers of a bird’s wing, *spec.* a primary feather” (2a.).
- 9 James Edmund Harting, F. L. S., F. Z. S. *The Birds of Shakespeare: Or the Ornithology of Shakespeare Critically Examined, Explained and Illustrated*. (1871). Chicago: Argonaut Inc., Publishers, 1965. xxiv, 20–1.
- 10 Bruno Latour. *Pandora’s Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. 174.
- 11 Caroline F. E. Spurgeon. *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It Tells Us*. (1935). Boston: Beacon Press, 1958. 48.
- 12 On the movement to revive falconry in America, see Mark V. Barrow, Jr. “Science, Sentiment, and the Specter of Extinction: Reconsidering Birds of Prey During America’s Interwar Years.” *Environmental History* 7.1 (2002): 69–98.
- 13 See Sean Benson. “‘If I Do Prove Her Haggard’: Shakespeare’s Application of Hawking Tropes to Marriage.” *Studies in Philology* 103.2 (2006): 186–207. See also other readings of Kate as a falcon in *Taming of the Shrew*: Edward Berry. *Shakespeare and the Hunt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Julia Reinhard Lupton. *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, and the short essay that accompanies the falconry texts in the Bedford Texts and Contexts edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Ed. Frances E. Dolan. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996. 304–9.
- 14 See Keith Thomas. *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. 98–9.
- 15 TLN 2316, 5.1.320.
- 16 TLN 2067–68, 4.3.219–20.

- 17 Francis Barker. *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*. London: Methuen, 1984. 23. On the consequences of Barker's neglect of the subjectivity of "animals," see Erica Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 179.
- 18 Male sports teams in America might be a significant exception: Baseball has the Cardinals, the Blue Jays, the Orioles; Football: the Eagles, the Seahawks, the Falcons; Ice Hockey: the Penguins, the Ducks; Basketball: the Hawks.
- 19 William Shakespeare. *Love's Labour's Lost*. TLN 2176, 5.2.260.
- 20 Juan Luis Vives. *Tudor School-Boy Life: The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives*. Trans. Foster Watson. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1970. 71.
- 21 A. S. Osley. *Scribes and Sources: Handbooks of the Chancery Hand in the Sixteenth Century*. Boston: David R. Godine, 1980. 61.
- 22 Osley. 93.
- 23 1548 Osley. 101.
- 24 Osley. 248.
- 25 See Donna J. Haraway. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. 218. Haraway is quoting Anna Tsing.
- 26 The quotation is from Jonathan Goldberg. *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991. 82. On machine cultures, see Jonathan Sawday. *Engines of the Imagination; Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machine*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- 27 Francis Clement. *The Petit Schole*. London, 1587. 53.
- 28 John de Bauvchsne and John Baildon. *A Booke Containing Divers Sortes of Hands*. London, 1571. image 4 EEBO.
- 29 Michael Polanyi. *The Study of Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. 31.
- 30 Piers Brown. "Donne's Hawkings." *SEL* 49.1 (2009): 67–86.
- 31 Robert Burton. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Oxford, 1621. 317–18.
- 32 OED "expatiate" 1a.
- 33 Robert Burton. *The Anatomy of Melancholy: The Second Edition, Corrected and Augmented by the Author*. Oxford, 1624. 210.
- 34 1621. 318–19. According to Marco Polo, the great bird Ruck is reported by the people of Madagascar. It picks up elephants and drops them on the ground to kill them. *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Ed. Manuel Komroff. (1930). New York: Liveright, 2003. 313.
- 35 Robert Burton. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Oxford, 1638. 242.
- 36 Robert Burton. *The Anatomy of Melancholy: The Second Edition, Corrected and Augmented by the Author*. Oxford, 1624. 214.
- 37 Peter Bales. *The Writing Schoolemaster*. London, 1590. D2v.
- 38 Goldberg. *Writing Matter*. 80.
- 39 On the many creatures that were acknowledged to inhabit human bodies, see Raber. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. Wendy Wall gives an important account of how people understood butchering and ingesting other creatures: *Staging Domesticity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- 40 Jonathan Goldberg. *Writing Matter*. 12.
- 41 The word still in usage for the point of a fountain pen, "nib," is apparently a variant form of "neb."
- 42 John de Bauvchsne and John Baildon. Image 5.
- 43 Peter Bales. *The Writing Schoolemaster*. D3; Francis Clement. D2v.
- 44 TLN 265, 1.2.184.
- 45 TLN 180, 1.2.109.
- 46 Osley. 223.
- 47 Osley. 49.
- 48 Vicentino [Arrighi] in Osley. 80.

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- 49 Osley. 94. See also Vespasiano Amphiareo in Osley. 99.
- 50 Osley. 47.
- 51 Goldberg. 63.
- 52 Peter Bales. D3; Francis Clement. Bb.
- 53 Roger Ascham. *Toxophilus the Schole of Shooting Contayned in Two Books*. London, 1545. Toxophilus counters that Hercules saw himself as above the world and also, “as for Egles they flye so hye and builde so far of, [that] they be very hard to come by” (Rii).
- 54 TLN 1391, 2.2.329–30; TLN 1386–7, 2.2.326.
- 55 Tiffany Stern. *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page*. London: Routledge, 2004. 18.
- 56 Mark V. Barrow, Jr.
- 57 Sir Francis Bacon. 1664. 131–2.
- 58 TLN 1171–90, 2.3.55–76.
- 59 The folio may render Romeo’s linguistic feat more spectacular than the quarto does. In the 1597 quarto, Mercutio introduces “solie” as a form of “sole” before Romeo does (E2).
- 60 Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass. “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44.3 (1993): 255–83.
- 61 *Romeo and Juliet*’s quarto and folio disagree about what kind of goose Mercutio is invoking in the next clause. In the quarto, Mercutio says that Romeo has more of the “goose” in one of his wits than Mercutio has in all of his. In the folio, as we have seen, Mercutio says more of the “Wild-Goose.”
- 62 Robert Burton. 1621. 2.2.4, 342.
- 63 David Bevington, ed. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. 6th edn. New York: Pearson Education, 2009. 1025n.73.
- 64 Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, eds. *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. 94.
- 65 The Riverside Shakespeare. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974. Textual Editor G. Blakemore Evans. 1072n. 74. H.R. Hope suggests that the line means “Did I even things up with the pun on goose” (*Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. H.R. Hope. New York: Appleton-Century, 1947. 45n. 70).
- 66 *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. T. J. B. Spencer. New York: Penguin Books, 1970. 74n.70–1.
- 67 TLN 1060–1, 2.7.86–7.
- 68 TLN 1098, 2.5.124–5.
- 69 TLN 2860, 5.1.60.
- 70 TLN 1042–6, 3.2.20–4.
- 71 For the use of goose dung in medicine, see Raber. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. 107.
- 72 See G. Blakemore Evans, ed. *Romeo and Juliet*. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984. 109n.63.
- 73 OED “bite” 8a.
- 74 TLN 3168, 5.2.171.
- 75 TLN 235, 1.2.158–9.
- 76 TLN 1119–20, 2.3.13–14.
- 77 TLN 1511–12, 3.1.74–6. For usages of “by the ears” involving violence, see also *Coriolanus* TLN 254, 1.1.224 and *All’s Well That Ends Well*. TLN 240, 1.2.1. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio hits Grumio, and his action is described in a stage direction: “*He Rings Him by the Eares*” (TLN 584, 1.2.17).
- 78 Joseph A. Porter. *Shakespeare’s Mercutio: His History and Drama*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988. 107. See also William N. West. “Mercutio’s Bad Language.” *Rematerializing Shakespeare: Authority and Representation on the Early Modern Stage*. Eds. Bryan Reynolds and William N. West. New York: Palgrave, 2005. 115–29.

- 79 OED “goose” n. C2. See also Harting, who calls the domesticated goose “[a] much more notable bird for the table” than the pigeon (198). For “goose-pan” see also Morris Palmer Tilley. *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1950. G372.
- 80 OED “broad” adj. 6c., 8, 6a., 2a.
- 81 *The Globe Illustrated Shakespeare*. Ed. Howard Staunton. (1857). New York: Crown, 1983. 180f.
- 82 *Romeo and Juliet: A New Variorum Edition*. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. (1871). New York: Dover, 1963. 128.
- 83 OED “sweeting” n.1; “sauce” 6a.
- 84 G. Blakemore Evans, ed. *Romeo and Juliet*. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984. 109n.67. See also J. A. Bryant Jr., ed. *Romeo and Juliet*. New York: Penguin, 1964. 88n.85–6.
- 85 John Ray. *A Collection of English Proverbs*. Cambridge, 1670. 98, Hv.
- 86 TLN 1153, 2.3.43.
- 87 TLN 1192–3, 2.3.79–80.
- 88 See Tilley. G363.
- 89 OED “natural” n. 7.
- 90 *Devotions*. 284, 305. 65, 62.
- 91 One division between the two is that a pigeon is sometimes a domesticated bird and a dove a wild bird, but this division seems not to have been observed in any consistent way in the Renaissance.
- 92 *Devotions*. 289, 62.
- 93 On this theory, see Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 8–13.
- 94 *Devotions*. 437–8, 91.
- 95 See Boehrer. *Shakespeare Among the Animals*. 58–64. John Donne. *The Sermons of John Donne*. Eds. Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter. 10 Vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962. 9: 190. See also George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson. “Introduction.” 20–4. It is interesting that when Donne considers the women who are the primary subjects of the sermon, the women who appear in the Gospels to care for the body of Jesus, he asks his listeners to think of them as they would think about Ants and Bees. Actually what he says is that we can understand the varied stories of the women’s sedulity in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John by observing ants and bees.
- 96 Although he has no idea who has died, Donne says, “In that Contemplation I make account that I heare this dead brother of ours, who is now carried out to his *buriall*, to speake to mee, and to *preach* my *funerall Sermon*, in the voice of these *Bells*” (*Devotions*. 408, 85).
- 97 Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 150.
- 98 Shannon. “The Eight Animals in Shakespeare, or, Before the Human.” 474.
- 99 *Devotions*. 40–1, 14–15.
- 100 Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 7.
- 101 *Devotions*. 70–2, 20.
- 102 *Devotions*. 70, 20.
- 103 *Devotions*. 49, 16.
- 104 *Devotions*. 291, 63.
- 105 *Devotions*. 301, 65.
- 106 *Devotions*. 303, 306; 65–6.
- 107 OED. “wit.” 7.
- 108 OED. “invention.” 2.
- 109 *Devotions*. 308–9, 66.
- 110 Donne’s understanding of doves appears to be widely shared at the time. Thomas Dekker published a collection of prayers that he called *Foure Birds*

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of *Noahs Arke*. London, 1609. The birds are the dove, the eagle, the pelican, and the phoenix. The first section consists of prayers of “comfort” in the voice of the dove. In his dedication to Sir Thomas Smith, Dekker says, “The badge which a Doue weares is innocence” (A3). And in his introduction to the section of dove prayers, he says, “The Doue is said to be without gall” (B2).

111 *Devotions*. 286, 62.

112 *Devotions*. 296–7, 64.

113 *Devotions*. 296–7, 64.

114 *Devotions*. 264–5, 58.

115 *Devotions*. 319, 68.

116 *Devotions*. 156–7, 37.

117 It is an arguable point to say that Donne treasured his soul more than his body. See this point disputed in Ramie Targoff. *John Donne: Body and Soul*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008 and in Elaine Scarry. “Donne: ‘But Yet the Body Is His Booke.’” *Literature and the Body*. Ed. Elaine Scarry. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. 70–105. For more on this point, see Rebecca Ann Bach. “(Re)placing John Donne in the History of Sexuality.” *ELH* 72 (2005): 259–89.

118 Derrida. “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).” 413.

119 Donne appears to be fascinated with this story of a mouse who crawls through an elephant’s trunk and into its brain and kills the elephant. The commentary in Raspa’s edition of *Devotions* says that W. Milgate has traced it to Garcia de Orta’s medical text (159). Donne tells the story in *The Progress of the Soul* and also in *Paradoxes and Problems*.

120 The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha. Revised Standard Version. Oxford, 1977. 11.18. The Wisdom calls them “irrational serpents and worthless animals.”

121 *Devotions*. 303, 65.

122 *Devotions*. 309, 66.

123 *Devotions*. 295–6, 64.

124 See the *OED*’s noun 1. 3. definition and especially the first three usages it records.

125 *OED*. “shamble.” n.1.

126 See the *OED*’s noun 1.4. Compare Raspa’s note on these words (162).

127 Bruno Latour’s term for the combined world I am describing here is “nature/culture.” See Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. 104 and ff.

128 *Devotions*. 309–10, 66.

129 *Devotions*. 18, 61.

130 Bruno Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. 107.

131 *Devotions*. 308, 66.

132 See Raspa’s commentary on page 162.

133 From the commentary on Donne’s pigeon treatment in Raspa’s edition of *Devotions*, it seems as if no one has been able to find evidence of pigeons being applied to bodies in the way that they appear to be in the text. However, the practice is referred to in *The Duchess of Malfi*. In that play, Bosola says to the Old Lady he is insulting, “I would sooner eat a dead pigeon, taken from the soles of the feet of one sick of the plague, than kiss one of you fasting” (John Webster. *The Duchess of Malfi*. Ed. Elizaeth M. Brennan. London: A&C Black, 1993. 2.1.41–3). Gervase Markham has a recipe in which a “liue Pidgeon cut in two parts” is applied to a plague sore. *The English House-wife*. London, 1631.10. The texts Raspa refers to mention eating

- pigeons to adjust humors (162). In the nineteenth Expostulation, Donne writes about the spiritual conditions of his doctors. He assures himself that they are all members of God's "true religion" (469–70, 102). Perhaps, then, they applied the pigeons' bodies to Donne's feet to invoke pigeons' sacrificial function in Leviticus.
- 134 *Devotions*. 305–6, 65–6.
- 135 For a fascinating exploration of some of the history and theoretical implications of vegetarianism and meat eating, see Fudge. "Why It's Easy Being a Vegetarian." *Textual Practice* 24.1 (2010): 149–66 and Fudge. "Saying Nothing Concerning the Same: On Dominion, Purity, and Meat in Early Modern England." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 70–86. See also Simon C. Estok. "Theory from the Fringes: Animals, Ecocriticism, Shakespeare." *Mosaic* 40.1 (2007): 61–78.
- 136 Bruno Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. 107.
- 137 My collective also uses animal bodies for testing medicine and in medicine. But just as my collective mostly hides its slaughterhouses, it also hides its animal testing and the animal presences in its medicine. And the use of human body parts in medicine is a massively fraught ethical issue in my collective.
- 138 Wendy Wall. "Household 'Writing': or the Joys of Carving." *Feminism and Early Modern Texts: Essays for Phyllis Rackin*. Eds. Rebecca Ann Bach and Gwynne Kennedy. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010. 25–42. 30.
- 139 *Devotions*. 577, 117.
- 140 Louise Noble. "'And Make Two Pasties of Your Shameful Heads': Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in *Titus Andronicus*." *ELH* 30 (2003): 677–708.
- 141 See Shannon's similar claim: "And, indeed, for early modernity, hardly an urban, rural, or domestic scene could be drawn without nonhuman creatures" (*The Accommodated Animal*. 22).

2 The Creaturely Continuum in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The presence of nonhuman creatures everywhere in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has already been acknowledged in the play's centrality in Boehrer's work and in Jeanne Addison Roberts' feminist work on the Shakespearean wild.¹ Both of these critics are interested in moments in plays where humans become or are characterized as "animals"; they both also say that the plays "assume that human nature is in constant danger of corruption from the bestial and/or female other, and that it must therefore be continuously and rigorously policed."² In this chapter, I show what happens when we abandon this assumption, when we abandon our beliefs that Shakespeare's plays display any sort of undifferentiated human subject ("human nature" that could be corrupted) or display that subject as categorically different from any sort of undifferentiated "animal." Abandoning that assumption, we can see that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* instead displays a world with many categories of mortals: some with wings, some that crawl, some that swim, some that prey, some that hunt, some that sing, some from places far from England, some that have non-Christian religious identities, some with hair and four legs, and some imaginary. This list does not exhaust the possible categories of mortals that the play displays. What the list also does not do, however, is to categorize all humans as possessors of a non-creaturely "human nature." *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does not seem to believe in a singular "human nature" that belongs to mortals with human bodies. While the play might assert that fairies are categorically different than mortals because fairies do not die, it envisions a world with a creaturely continuum, a world in which a distinction between such mortals as a lion and a crow might be as significant as a distinction between kinds of "humane mortals" such as aristocratic patriarchs and ploughmen and more significant than any distinction between "the human" as a general category and "the animal."³

The contours of the creaturely world and its continuum are especially visible in *Midsummer* due to the profusion of creatures in the play and also due to the play's focus on music and musicality, a focus reflected in *Midsummer's* operatic history.⁴ Perhaps oddly to modern eyes, the

pervasive musicality in *Midsummer* will point us straight to the creaturely Renaissance. However, the critical history of the play, the history of its editing, of commentary on its characters, and even, in the twentieth century, of its presentation in the theater, can be read as a miniature history of the instantiation of the “animal”/human distinction as primary. Paradoxically, over the course of its history *Midsummer* has come to be seen as a play that celebrates human nature particularly in its portrayal of Bottom and his fellow workmen. This is a paradox because in the play, Bottom and his fellows are often characterized as beasts. As the line between humans and other creatures has become what Derrida calls an “abyssal rupture,” the Renaissance beast characteristics of the workmen, especially Bottom’s, have been misrecognized as signs of essential humanity.⁵ This misrecognition has occurred both in critical discourse about the play and in twentieth-century productions of the play, the most famous of which is Peter Brook’s 1970 Royal Shakespeare Company *Midsummer*. A contemporary commentator says about Brook’s company rehearsing the play, “As Brook had intended, the actors now become all animal impulse, the beast in man the spur to renewal.”⁶ In Shakespeare’s play, however, there is no essential man who contains a beast that can renew his nature.

Workmen as Beasts

Midsummer takes what are intended to be amusing pains to indicate just how significant the distinctions are between its aristocrats and its workers and, at the same time that it emphasizes those distinctions, the play often specifically aligns its workmen with beasts.⁷ We see this particularly when the play’s aristocrats and workmen interact. For example, when Snug assures his audience that he will not endanger the “Ladies” with “gentle hearts” because he is not really a lion but rather “*Snug* the Ioyner,” Theseus responds, “A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.”⁸ Theseus is joking, but his joke has many layers. Both Snug and Theseus use the word “gentle” in this interaction. Snug calls the ladies’ hearts “gentle,” signifying both the women’s feminine timidity and their nobility, their social status. Theseus, in contrast, calls Snug “gentle” to indicate, ironically, Snug’s lack of gentility.⁹ Like the “Ladies,” Snug is timid, but unlike the “Ladies,” he is far from “gentle” in status terms; instead, in the play’s terms, he seems to be one of its “beast[s].” He defers to his betters, but he lacks their gentility. We may miss one of the layers in Theseus’s joke because, like the meaning of the word “gentle,” the meaning of the word “conscience” has changed since Theseus used it. I think it is likely that the “conscience” Theseus is granting Snug here is one of the obsolete meanings of the word: “Conscientious observance or reverence of, or regard to.”¹⁰ Thus, rather than granting Snug a distinctly human rationality, Theseus may be calling him a dutiful beast.

Snug's social distance from gentility shows in the speech conditions that the play stages at this moment. Snug talks to his "gentle" audience, but Theseus does not address Snug. Though he sits near Snug, Theseus speaks only to the embedded audience of aristocratic men and women around him. In this social relation, Snug may not reply to Theseus's discourse, but not because Snug understands the conventions of acting in front of an audience. The play makes copious humor out of Snug and his cohorts' misunderstanding of those conventions. Rather, Snug does not respond because in the situation he is "beneath social notice altogether."¹¹ But Theseus may freely respond to Snug; indeed Theseus can comment on him as if he were the beast his costume represents. The scene likens him to a beast both in his lack of capacity to verbally respond and in his inability to comprehend the multi-layered social situation in which he is placed.¹² In his inability to respond to ironic humor, Snug appears more like a beast than he is like Theseus in this scene. Many brilliant critics, such as Kenneth Burke and Annabel Patterson, have eloquently advocated for the workmen's point of view; however, *Midsummer* frequently refuses to grant its workmen the capacity to respond articulately.¹³ Nothing in the play indicates that Snug is prevented from responding, or that he is suffocating a response; instead the play positions him as if he were a grounded beast.

In its imagery and descriptive language, as well, *Midsummer* aligns workmen and grounded beasts. We can see this particularly when the play's fairies speak of the mortal world. Titania tells Oberon that their quarrel has caused torrential rains with agricultural consequences: "The Oxe hath therefore stretcht his yoake in vaine, / The Ploughman lost his sweat."¹⁴ As she illustrates these consequences, Titania does not differentiate categorically between ox and ploughman; both are embodied workers, and each is essentially related to his labor's results.¹⁵ Both are mortals who have worked their bodies fruitlessly. Likewise, the ploughman appears among grounded creatures in Robin's list of night noises: "Now the hungry Lyons roares, / And the wolfe beholds the Moone, / Whilst the heauie Ploughman snores, / All with weary taske foredoone."¹⁶ Both the lion and the ploughman are grounded creatures who make noise at night.¹⁷ Like the other creatures that these speeches associate with the ploughman, this kind of human is remarkable to the fairies because of his bodily labor and his body's productions.

In both *Midsummer* and in *Troilus and Cressida*, the only other Shakespeare play to mention the proverbial ploughman, the ploughman stands for the quintessential embodied workman. In that later play, Troilus uses the ploughman's hand as a figure for the hardest creaturely substance: compared to Cressida's grasp, he says, "The Cignets Downe is harsh, and spirit of Sense / Hard as the palme of Plough-man."¹⁸ Troilus's comparison places Cressida's grasp on a continuum of substances: her grasp is the softest; the swan's down is comparatively hard; and even the bodily

“spirit” that carries “Sense” messages is as hard as the hardest substance: the ploughman’s “palme.” *Midsummer* as a whole suggests that this material creaturely continuum is not an idiosyncratic characteristic of Troilus’s imagination. Whereas Troilus places Cressida far above the ploughman, as Boehrer and Roberts suggest, *Midsummer* often categorizes women as like beasts. And the play also presents men who work with their hands, whose work marks their bodies, as even further away than some women from a noble humanity that could be categorically separable from beasts. Like the ploughman in both *Midsummer* and *Troilus*, the “handy-craft” men are, as Egeus terms them, “Hard handed men.”¹⁹ And Puck (Robin) calls Bottom the “shallowest thickskinne, of that barraine sort.”²⁰

Midsummer displays this type of man as distinctively different from an aristocratic human, as different from that kind of man as a lark is from a lion, for example, or as a lion is from an aristocrat. The difference between aristocrats and workmen is one purport of the dialogue between Theseus and Hippolyta that precedes Snug’s entrance in Act Five:

Hippolyta: This is the silliest stuffe that euer I heard.

Theseus: The best, in this kinde, are but shadowes: and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hippolyta: It must be your imagination, then; & not theirs.

Theseus: If we imagine no worse of them, than they of themselues, they may passe for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a Lyon.²¹

As the footnotes in twentieth-century editions of the play indicate, the bulk of recent commentary on these lines concentrates on their metadramatic implications, on the way that they reference the play the audience is watching. But if Hippolyta and Theseus speak about the power of the dramatic contract between audience, players, and playwrights, they speak as well about Snug’s and Starveling’s beastly status. As aristocrats, Theseus and Hippolyta possess imaginations that can amend the worst dramatic production. Their imaginations can transcend and transform sensual reality. In contrast, the workmen’s imaginations, Theseus says, make them believe they can “passe for excellent men” when in reality they are “noble beasts.”

The footnotes in today’s editions make it seem as if these lines have always been discussed in relation to dramatic craftsmanship, but the critical apparatus in Horace Howard Furness’s New Variorum Edition of the play (1895) suggests that this discussion began in the nineteenth century. Furness’s note on the dialogue cites William Maginn’s (1860), Edward Dowden’s (1875), and G. G. Gervinus’s (1849) commentary on Shakespeare’s dramatic art in relation to Theseus’s and Hippolyta’s lines.²² In contrast, the discussion of these lines prior to the nineteenth century looks more like an embarrassed contention over Shakespeare’s

classification of the workmen as beasts. Furness's other note, attached specifically to "in a man," records an eighteenth-century discussion of "beasts."²³ Perhaps in an attempt to deny altogether that Theseus is classifying the workmen as beasts, Lewis Theobald (1726) speculated that Shakespeare really wrote, "here come two noble beasts in a *moon* and a lion." Theobald comments about the entrance, "The one having a crescent and a lanthorn before him, and representing the man in the moon; and the other in a lion's hide." Presumably, then, Theobald could countenance the spectacle of Starveling in costume being called a "beast" but not Starveling himself having that designation (according to Furness's collation, many editors adopted Theobald's reading). In 1767, Richard Farmer concurred essentially with Theobald, seeing "man" as a misreading of "moon-calf." Edmond Malone countered in 1790 that "Theseus only means to say that the 'man' who represented the moon, and came in at the same time, with a lanthorn in his hand and a bush of thorns at his back, was as much a beast as he who performed the part of the lion." Furness comments on the critical controversy, "Possibly the choice between 'man' and *moon* will lie in the degree of absurdity which strikes us in calling either the one or the other a beast." As Furness's own evidence suggests, however, Malone did not see this as absurd.

What the commentary as a whole seems to suggest is that in Shakespeare's play, as Malone argues, Snug and Starveling are like beasts, and that the status of these men as like beasts became difficult for many people to swallow in the eighteenth century and even absurd in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The trajectory of the criticism is a Shakespearean illustration of Fudge's claim that during the course of the eighteenth century, Descartes's "notion of the reasonable nature of *all* human beings did gain power."²⁴ It may also be that the history of punctuating Theseus's line—"Here come two noble beasts in: a man and a lion"—would contribute to this miniature history of creaturely identity and the emerging human/"animal" distinction. In the previous sentence, I have reproduced the line as the *Norton Shakespeare* punctuates it. Other twentieth-century editions—the Pelican edition, copyright 1959; the fourth edition of David Bevington's *Complete Works*; and both the first and second editions of *The Riverside Shakespeare*—put a comma instead of a colon between "in" and "a man." However all of the seventeenth-century quarto and folio editions of the play punctuate the line differently, placing a comma after "beasts" and before "in": "Here come two noble beasts, in a man and a Lyon." Arguments about deliberate punctuation in Shakespeare are difficult to support, but it seems reasonable to believe that the punctuation in this scene was authorial, given that the jokes directed at Quince a bit earlier in the scene depend on his inability to properly punctuate his prologue.²⁵ One way to read the original punctuation—"Here come two noble beasts, in a man and a Lyon"—is that both beasts are in costume, one as a man and one as a lion. This is the reading that the modern

punctuation of the line forecloses. The later commentary on these lines and their punctuation over time has worked together to produce a firm distinction between humans and beasts that the play in its early seventeenth-century forms may not support.

Vile and Juvenile Things

In the scene's discussion of Quince's poor punctuation, punctuation that makes him say the opposite of what he means to say, Lysander compares Quince to "a rough Colte," and Hippolyta compares him to "a child" who plays an instrument and produces ungoverned noise.²⁶ As Paster suggests, the workmen "seem to represent an early stage of psychosocial development, the patriarchal Theseus its maturity."²⁷ *Midsummer's* tendency to associate children with beasts is another aspect of the play that challenges the idea that it displays any singular "human" that is categorically opposed to any singular "animal." When Lysander speaks of childhood, he describes it as a category of mortal life without access to reason.²⁸ Explaining his newly born love to Helena, Lysander says, "So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason. / And touching now, the point of humane skill, / Reason becomes the Marshall to my will."²⁹ At this moment in the play, Lysander is acting under the spell of the love juice, not under the auspices of reason, but his argument takes for granted that young men cannot access reason. Lysander's phrase, "the point of humane skill," seems in most editions to be glossed in order to rule out the possibility that he is saying that he has now reached the age of human reason. But what could justify glossing "point" as "summit"³⁰ or as "highest point"³¹ (*Norton Shakespeare*) except for the difficulty modern people might have with Lysander using "point" to mean "A location in time; a moment, juncture, or stage"?³² It is equally likely that Lysander means that children are more like "rough Colte[s]" than they are like adult aristocratic men.³³

Peter Quince's hilariously ludicrous script as read by Flute also connects horses and youth. Speaking as Thisbe, Flute praises her lover:

Most radiant *Pyramus*, most lillie white of hewe,
Of colour like the redrose, on triumphant bryer;
Most brisky Iuvenall, and eeke most louely Iewe,
As true as truest horse, that yet would neuer tyre.³⁴

Flute compliments *Pyramus's* beauty and calls him a sharp youth and a good-looking Jew, and Flute also compares *Pyramus* to a reliable horse. The humor of this speech depends on the ways Quince's script misuses conventions of poetry, gender, and beauty. Petrarchan poems praise white skin and red lips, but Flute praises *Pyramus* as having simultaneously white and red skin. The comparison of *Pyramus* to a "truest horse" is

a confusion of convention that might also have gender implications: women, like boys, were conventionally compared to uncontrollable horses.³⁵ Likewise, the speech invokes the cultural oxymoron, a “louely Iewe.” Pyramus is a pretty Jew and a tame, dependable horse, culturally improbable mortals, both comparably distant from proper aristocratic men. As it displays Quince’s scripts’ laughable confusions, Shakespeare’s script reinforces the consonance of youths and beasts.

The racial/religious slur on Jews embedded in Flute’s speech anticipates the series of slurs that Lysander uses to dismiss Hermia: “Away, you *Ethiop*”; “Hang of[f], thou cat, thou bur: vile thing, let loose; / Or I will shake thee from mee like a serpent.”; “Out, tawny *Tartar*, out.”³⁶ That series of slurs, like Flute’s speech, connects dark skinned humans with beasts: When Hermia is undesirable she is a dark-skinned foreigner, and she is also a cat and a “vile thing.” Commenting on Lysander’s slurs, Kim Hall suggests that in *Midsummer*, “blackness is associated with femaleness, foreignness, political upheaval, and chaos.”³⁷ In order to demonstrate the similar ways that women and Africans became objects on display “to express European luxury, wealth, and beauty,” Hall invokes a historical incident when a “blackmoor” was substituted for a tamed lion in an entertainment for King James’s son Henry. As Hall suggests, “the entertainment demonstrates the ‘aesthetic’ uses of enslaved black people.”³⁸ It also shows us how culturally pervasive the association was between racialized others and beasts. In the English court, a “blackmoor” can stand in for a lion. In the play and in the court, in the eyes of aristocratic observers, the dark-skinned human is a beast.

The phrase “vile thing” appears for the first time in *Midsummer* in Oberon’s speech when he drops the love juice on Titania’s eyes:

Be it Ounce, or Catte, or Beare,
Pard, or Boare with bristled haire,
In thy eye that shall appeare,
When thou wak’st, it is thy deare:
Wake, when some vile thing is neere.³⁹

The “vile thing” that does come near is the ass/man Bottom. Before he transforms into the bodily manifestation of his name’s synonym, Bottom advises Snug to say to his audience, “I am a man as other men are.”⁴⁰ The play, however, invites us to see Bottom’s belief in an essential man as just as big a mistake as his other asinine beliefs, as a misunderstanding of the world. Just as Bottom thinks that a lamentable story of death is a “merry” work and that their tragic play is a “comedy,” he believes that all men are the same. But the play suggests that Bottom, one of its grounded mortals, is as different from Theseus as the “Ounce” (leopard) and “Catte” and “Beare” of Oberon’s fantasy are from “the clamorous Owle, that nightly hootes and wonders” and the nightingale that sings

with Titania's fairies.⁴¹ Ounces, cats, and bears, women, and workmen are "vile things," like beasts, whereas nightingales fly and sing. Bottom cannot sing like a lark, nor can he fly, and, the play says, he cannot think or speak like an aristocratic man.

Creaturely Language

When Bottom's friends run away from his "translated" self, he interprets their flight as an attempt to "make [him] an asse."⁴² To show them that he is not afraid, he sings a song filled with birds, including a "Woosell cock" (possibly a blackbird), "Throstle" (thrush), "Wren," "Finch," "Sparrow," and "Larke." That song's final lines provoke him to comment on the interactions between birds and men:

The plainsong Cuckow gray:
Whose note, full many a man doth marke,
And dares not answere, nay.
For indeede, who would set his wit to so foolish a birde? Who
would giue a bird the ly, though hee cry Cuckow neuer so?⁴³

Bottom sings a song about men who are both cuckolds and afraid that the noise made by birds who "cry cuckow" applies to them. Men, the song says, can misinterpret bird noise as personal commentary in human language. Bird song signifies in the human perceptual world much as misinterpreted or misspoken language does in that world; both are heard, and both imperfectly convey meaning. Bottom also misinterprets the song he sings: The song describes men who are afraid to respond because their response would implicate them, but Bottom interprets their lack of response as their refusal to engage a "foolish birde." In the song, birds are not without language; the plainsong cuckoo's language, however, doubly defeats men, provoking fear when they hear it as addressed to them, and precluding a response to that misinterpretation. But the plainsong cuckoo song triply defeats Bottom, provoking his misinterpretation of other men's responses. Bottom's acts of interpretation, as a self-described more-knowing human, are also deeply challenged when he sings. For the word that listening cuckolds "dare not" utter, "nay," is the homonym for the language produced by horses and asses, and Bottom, "translated," speaks ass as he speaks as an ass.⁴⁴ As Griffiths notes, "Bottom's 'nay' is an open invitation for the actor to elongate it into a neigh."⁴⁵ The horse and ass sound, "neigh," has already been heard on stage in Robin's line twenty lines earlier, but where Robin deliberately produces his "neigh," Bottom speaks this way naturally and inadvertently.⁴⁶ Bottom's friends are not trying to "make [him] an asse"; he speaks as the ass he is.

Unlike a donkey, Bottom speaks in words as well as neighs, and the ability of humans to speak in words, to use language, has historically

been a measure of the difference between humans and all other creatures.⁴⁷ However, that determination of difference limits language to its semantic properties, whereas *Midsummer* seems not to share the focus on the semantic properties of language that underlies that potential difference between “the human” and “the animal.”⁴⁸ Rather, *Midsummer* is a play invested in both the musicality of language and in music itself, although the script is probably a misleading account of how much music the play contained in its Renaissance staging.⁴⁹ Music and the extra- or anti-semantic properties of language, as Bruce Smith suggests, were substantial parts of what he terms the *Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, a world quite evident in the play, and that world did not consistently divide humans from other creatures on the basis of the sounds they make.⁵⁰ We can see this in Francis Bacon’s *Natural History*, a text in which Bacon describes his experiments regarding music and sound. Bacon classifies “the voice[s] of man or birds” as “articulate sounds.”⁵¹ Likewise, he classifies human “singing” and “singing-birds” with “musical sounds,” while “the voice in speaking . . . all voices of beasts and birds, (except they be singing-birds,)” belong with other “immusical sounds.”⁵² *Midsummer* presents a world of sound in which the panoply of creatures are grouped together and distinguished from one another not necessarily because one produces human language and another noise but rather on the basis of relative musicality.

The musicality of Hermia’s language is the focus of Helena’s despair when she laments that Demetrius loves Hermia:

Your eyes are loadstarres, and your tongues sweete aire
 More tunable than larke to sheepeheard eare . . .
 Sicknesse is catching: O, were fauour so,
 Your words I catch, faire *Hermia*, ere I goe,
 My eare should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
 My tongue should catch your tongues sweete melody.⁵³

Helena may be saying that if one could catch physical features as one catches illness, she could catch Hermia’s words (this is the meaning editors have heard when they change “I catch” to “Ide catch”).⁵⁴ She also seems to say that though she can repeat Hermia’s words, as one does when one sings a “catch,” she cannot reproduce Hermia’s “voice,” her “tongues sweete melody.”⁵⁵ The repetition of the word “catch” three times in three lines makes this second meaning likely, as a “catch” is a song for three or more voices, each singing the same melody as well as the same words. Unlike Bottom, Hermia sings like a lark, but Helena cannot replicate her melody.⁵⁶

Likewise, although much of the play’s humor depends on semantics, one joke in the initial interaction between Bottom and Titania may depend on the audience’s valuing musicality above semantic content. Bottom

sings his song full of birds, and Titania responds, "I pray thee, gentle mortall, sing againe. / Myne eare is much enamoured of thy note: / So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape."⁵⁷ The script here requires Bottom to have sung very poorly.⁵⁸ His singing must be as unlike the song produced by the birds he sings about as his "shape" is unlike that of a "gentle mortall." The joke contained in Titania's initial address to Bottom, the mistake about status, depends on semantics—the double resonance of the word "gentle." The play makes that same joke later when Titania enters with Bottom and offers to kiss him: "And kisse thy faire large eares, my gentle ioy."⁵⁹ But another joke depends on Bottom's poor singing voice. The audience should hear the difference between the beautiful, musical voices of wrens, throstles, and larks and the horrible grounded voice of Bottom the ass/man. Unlike the audience, Titania, blinded and deafened by the "juice" her husband has dropped in her eyes, cannot hear that difference when Bottom's song wakes her. She hears the "immusical" voice of the ass as if it were the musical voice of singing birds. Even the love juice may not be powerful enough to transform Bottom's voice for long, which could explain Titania's request that her fairies "Ty up [Bottom's] tongue" on the way to her bower.⁶⁰

The play also asks its audience to differentiate between voices of beasts. Just before the lovers awake, Theseus invites Hippolyta to hear the "musicke" of his "hounds." He asks her to "marke the[ir] musically confusion." When she replies that she has never heard "Such gallant chiding . . . So musical a discord, such sweete thunder" as she heard from "hounds of *Sparta*" once, Theseus replies that his hounds are bred from Spartan hounds and are "matcht in mouth like bells." "A cry more tunable," he says, "Was neuer hollowd to, nor cheerd with horne."⁶¹ This little set-piece description is framed by the sound of actual "wind horns," and it represents discord and concord rhetorically, as the former enemies, Theseus and Hippolyta, come to an agreement; it also introduces the newly born concord of the lovers. In addition, the play contrasts this set piece, a gorgeous auditory image, to the very immusical and rhetorically awkward production of the workmen's play. For their aristocratic audience, Theseus's hounds are better, more attractive, and more entrancing performers than the workmen, even though (and maybe even because) the hounds sing, whereas the workmen speak.

Midsommer often values the musical voice above the "immusical" speaking voice. In addition, the play does not value human language *per se*. That is, the ability to use words does not define a single group of mortals as equally human. Instead, rhetorical ability divides men who can speak well from men who are akin to beasts. The play's interest in musicality is deeply linked to its investment in rhetoric. Patricia Parker points to *Midsommer*'s "explicit allusions to the rhetorical tradition," and she quotes Thomas Wilson: "For a man were little better than a brute beast, if he could but onely apprehende seuerall woordes, hauyng

Even when the workmen produce pentameter such as this, their poetry is distinctly less musical. Bottom as Pyramus famously laments,

O grim lookt night, o night, with hue so blacke,
O night, which euer art, when day is not:
O night, O night, alacke, alacke, alacke,
I feare my *Thisbyes* promise is forgot.
And thou, ô wall, ô sweete, ô louely wall,
That standst betweene her fathers ground and mine,
Thou wall, ô wall, O sweete and louely wall,
Showe mee thy chinke, to blink through, with mine eyne.⁷²

Both of these characters produce rhymed verse, but Shakespeare has Bottom use egregiously “untrue orthography to wrench his words to help his rhyme” (“mine” “eyne”).⁷³ Lysander’s speech is arguably light in terms of content, and it employs mostly simple one-syllable words; however, it is written in a pattern of varied stresses, waking up the ear, and the speech uses complex rhetorical schemes, including parallelism, alliteration, anastrophe (“fallen am I”), and polyptoton (“fast,” “faster”). In evident contrast, Bottom’s speech is plodding and repetitive, boringly metrically regular; it emphasizes the eye- and ear-sore rhyme “mine” “eyne” by including two internal rhymes, one repetitive and one mouth-stopping (“chinke” “blink”). The workmen produce distinctly “immusical” verse, placing their voices on a scale below the singing birds and hounds that populate the play.

Parker does not want to argue that the play endorses a worldview that subordinates those men, and neither would I, but if we attend to the play’s presentation of a full spectrum of mortals that produce sound, and see that spectrum in light of how Shakespeare’s world understood sound, we can see that this play values some dogs over some men on the basis of musical ability.⁷⁴ And we can also see that the relative rhetorical beauty of language divides humans from one another and categorizes some as “little better than” beasts and some as not as good as singing birds and hounds. Laughing at Quince’s prologue, Theseus says to Demetrius, “I wonder, if the Lyon be to speake,” and Demetrius replies, “No wonder, my Lord. One Lyon may, when many Asses doe.”⁷⁵ *Midsummer* often characterizes its speaking workmen as remarkable speaking creatures who are like grounded beasts because of how poorly they speak. If we suspend our belief that the world is, and has always been, divided strictly between humans and other creatures and attend instead to musicality and rhetorical ability, we can see in *Midsummer* a large group of mortals, some of whom are musical and some immusical. But that does not mean that the play is uncritical of its musically apt aristocrats. *Midsummer* does not, I think, object to Demetrius’s calling the workmen “asses.” It seems to invite laughter and enjoyment of that characterization. But, significantly,

it also does not present Demetrius as a great man. The hierarchical code in Renaissance England required aristocrats to care for people who had fewer advantages. Demetrius does not appear to be a loving nobleman, and, in the creaturely world, asses could serve as an example to people of how to love their young.

Creaturely Kinds Again

Just as *Midsummer* differentiates between kinds of humans, it is equally interested in essential differences between other kinds of creatures; the play differentiates between those creatures on the same basis that it differentiates between kinds of humans. When Theseus introduces Snug and Starveling as “two noble beasts,” the audience sees not two, but three actual mortals. Snug and Starveling appear with Starveling’s dog, the play’s only actual embodied nonhuman. That real dog’s absence, however, from Theseus’s list of “beasts” suggests that Starveling’s dog is not a “noble beast.” That is, Theseus’s list places the human and the lion in the category of “noble beasts” and ignores Starveling’s dog entirely. Since Theseus has recently described his musical hounds in great detail, Starveling’s dog is not the same kind of beast as Theseus’s hounds, even though all of these mortals are broadly classified as dogs.⁷⁶ *Midsummer* makes it clear that Theseus’s hounds are as different from Starveling’s dog as Theseus is from Starveling. In addition, the differences between these dogs seem allied to the differences between these men: some men sing, hunt, and are worthy of notice, and some are immusical, do not hunt, and are “beneath social notice.” Likewise some dogs sing, hunt, and are worthy of notice, and some only fawn and are negligible, such as Starveling’s dog.⁷⁷

This logic undergirds the divisions among *Midsummer*’s dogs and among dogs in other Shakespeare plays.⁷⁸ It is the logic behind the prideful exchange between Demetrius and Hermia:

- Hermia:* Whats this to my *Lysander*? Where is hee?
 Ah good *Demetrius*, wilt thou giue him mee?
Demetrius: I had rather giue his carcasse to my hounds.
Hermia: Out dog, out, curre: Thou driu’st me past the bounds of
 maidens patience.⁷⁹

In this exchange, Demetrius’s hounds become his dog-realm surrogates, onto whom he can displace his own desire to destroy *Lysander*. Those hounds would accompany Demetrius on hunts and would serve both as signs of his status and agents of his desires. Hermia demeans Demetrius by calling him not a hound but a generalized dog and then degrading that insult, calling him a “low-bred” dog.⁸⁰ This difference between dogs depends on their relative utility for men, but it also seems to be a difference in kind, akin to the differences between men that are likewise

differences in kind. This is made abundantly clear in Macbeth's discourse when he speaks to the murderers he employs to kill Banquo and his son:

I, in the Catalogue ye goe for men,
As Hounds, and Greyhounds, Mungrels, Spaniels, Curres,
Slowghes, Water-Rugs, and Demy-Wolues are clipt
All by the Name of Dogges.⁸¹

Macbeth divides the realm of dogs into dogs of quality—hounds and greyhounds—and dogs that do not rate a distinctive name (just as the murderers remain nameless); *Midsummer* also divides dogs into spaniels that fawn, hounds that sing, and useless, nameless dogs like Starveling's that, even when embodied, remain unmentioned by aristocrats.⁸²

As with the play's dogs, the play's birds are categorically differentiated in relation to their voices. *Midsummer*'s privileging of singing creatures accounts partially for the prodigious presence of birds in the play. In addition, the play's birds gesture again to the centrality of birds in the Renaissance and to their perceived likenesses to people.⁸³ Birds' centrality to people's daily bodily experience becomes apparent in the play when Oberon commands Robin to meet him "ere the first Cock crowe,"⁸⁴ and later when the two leave the stage after Robin hears "the morning Larke."⁸⁵ It seems likely that the lark's call in this case was actually produced on stage, so that either an instrument used by a human or a human voice mimicked bird language. Birds also function symbolically in the play. For example, in the opening scene of the play, Hermia swears by "*Venus* doues."⁸⁶ In addition, ravens and crows appear as symbols in the play, standing for degraded blackness. Lysander compares the dark-haired Hermia to a raven: "Who will not change a Rauen for a doue?"⁸⁷ And Demetrius awakes to his spellbound vision of Helena, the whiteness of whose hand "turnes" mountain snow "to a crowe."⁸⁸ Although the crow's and raven's feather color obviously accounts for this symbolic use of the birds, this use also aligns carrion birds with undifferentiated racialized humans (the *Ethiop* and "tawny *Tartar*") and the grounded beasts (the cat and "vile thing") that Lysander compares Hermia to later in the scene. Carrion birds do not sing and are, therefore, closer kin to grounded beings than they are to singing birds whose language is beautiful and meaningful.

The play invites its audience to laugh at Bottom's failure to distinguish between men, and it may also ask us to laugh at his inability to tell the difference among other creatures. Bottom does not know what noises creatures make, nor can he distinguish between grounded and flying creatures.⁸⁹ When the company of workmen fear the noble women's reactions to a lion's roar, Bottom says, "I will aggrauate my voice so, that I wil roare you as gently, as any sucking doue: I will roare you an 'twere any Nightingale."⁹⁰ Not only does Bottom "confuse 'sitting dove'

and ‘sucking lamb,’” he also seems unable to understand what kind of a noise a roar is.⁹¹ As Bacon suggests in his discussion of the “resemblance” between the sounds made by other creatures and “the articulate letters,” there can be no confusion between a roar and sounds made by nightingales or doves.⁹² Bottom shows how inattentive he is to sound. He also seems altogether unaware of a lion’s characteristics. He tells his friends that “there is not a more fearefull wilde foule then your Lyon liuing.”⁹³ Again, Bottom can’t distinguish between flying and grounded creatures.

In contrast, this distinction appears to be primary to many in the play. When Oberon, the king of the (flying) fairies, conceives of the most horrific love objects for his queen, he lists only hairy, grounded creatures. Alone on the stage, he tells the audience of his plan to make Titania “pursue” the “next thing then she waking lookes vpon / (Be it on Lyon, Beare, or Wolfe, or Bull, / On medling Monky, or on busie Ape).”⁹⁴ And with the love juice in his hand, Oberon invokes the “Beare” again, but adds an “Ounce,” “Catte,” “Pard,” and “Boare” to his list of “thing[s]” she might see when she awakes.⁹⁵ Unlike the play’s dogs and birds, the creatures Oberon lists seem relatively undifferentiated—they are all “thing[s]” and all horrific love objects for the flying Titania. Although the “Monky” and the “Ape” appear with associated behavioral characteristics, they are as likely and as repulsive love objects as any of the other hairy animals that Oberon imagines. In his survey of today’s attitudes toward “animals,” Cary Wolfe criticizes the Great Ape Project for limiting the extension of rights to apes as “those who are (symptomatically) ‘most like us.’”⁹⁶ As James Knowles suggests, apes and monkeys—particularly marmosets—provoked and symbolized fears of humans’ likeness to beasts in Renaissance texts.⁹⁷ But Knowles also points to a wide variety of grounded creatures, including hares, hogs, lions, and hounds, that could stand for bestial humans.⁹⁸ *Midsummer* demonstrates again that Renaissance humans did not categorize other creatures as we do. There was, first and foremost, no “us” in the post-Enlightenment (and especially in the post-civil rights American) sense, even though that “us” is still an ideal. And some birds might have more in common with some men and women than all apes had with all people.

Bottom’s Grandiosity: The Sixteenth-Century Ass Becomes the Quintessential Human

Bottom occupies a unique position among *Midsummer*’s creatures. With his ass-head on, Bottom looks like a monster to his friends because he has the trunk and limbs of a human and the head of a donkey. His monstrous “translation” might seem to challenge the idea of a Renaissance creaturely continuum since it could be seen as pointing to distinct differences between the human and other creatures. The logic of that argument would run as follows: If a combination makes a monster, then the

categories are essentially different. But to the immortals in the play, and to its aristocrats, Bottom is only and always an ass. Awakened from her love-juice dream, Titania does not say she was in love with a monster; instead she says, "Me thought I was enamoured of an Asse."⁹⁹ And at the end of the play, Theseus holds out hope that "With the helpe of a Surgeon, he might yet recouer and prooue an Asse."¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, even in Bottom's human condition, before and after his translation, both his name and his personality mark him as closer to an ass than he is to an ideal aristocratic man. Bottom is, by all accounts, the most self-promoting of characters, and he was created in a culture that discouraged self-promotion. For example, Jonson warns writers to be very careful when they are writing to the powerful, "lest any spice of rashness, folly, or self-love appear."¹⁰¹ Bottom, full of "folly" and "self-love," reveals himself as essentially the ass that Robin makes him.¹⁰² Observing Bottom's overweening vanity and bumbling incompetence, Robin only actualizes Bottom's ass identity.¹⁰³ In Renaissance iconography, the ass appears as "an image of vanity," so Bottom's most salient personal quality also signaled his ass identity iconographically to his original audiences.¹⁰⁴ In *Midsummer*, Bottom is vain because he is an ass, and just as the ass is the essence of his name, his vanity is the essence of his ass identity.

However, since the early nineteenth century, that vanity has come to be seen as signaling instead his essential humanity.¹⁰⁵ William Hazlitt initiated the modern reaction to Bottom in his commentary on the character, which, tellingly, begins with a claim to reconsider: "Bottom the Weaver is a character that has not had justice done him. He is the most romantic of mechanics."¹⁰⁶ Writing in 1817, Hazlitt revalued the character in relation to Hazlitt's own Romantic convictions. He recognized Bottom's class status in the play, but he transformed Shakespeare's "rude mechanical" into a "romantic" "mechanic." Shakespeare seems to be using "mechanical" in a sense the *OED* terms "now rare": "Belonging to or characteristic of people engaged in manual work, esp. regarded as a class, artisanal; vulgar, coarse."¹⁰⁷ Hazlitt cleanses Bottom's social status of its vulgarity by calling him "romantic" in the sense of "Having a bent or tendency towards romance; readily influenced by the imagination."¹⁰⁸ However, Hazlitt appears to misread the character who C.L. Barber terms the most "literal-minded" of characters,¹⁰⁹ and Hazlitt's misreading goes along with his refusal to actually see Bottom in his ass guise. Hazlitt says, "Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage, it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in."¹¹⁰ Perhaps Hazlitt is calling the actor who might portray Bottom "a gentleman" who would be demeaned by appearing with an ass's head. Or Hazlitt may be identifying Bottom with the character he plays in Quince's play: "a most louely gentleman-like man."¹¹¹ What Hazlitt is refusing, however, is any nonhuman identity for Bottom. Thus "justice" for grandiose Bottom means his elevation

to a pure human status. Later in the nineteenth century, Charles Knight continued in Hazlitt's line. Dorothea Kehler says of Knight, "Acknowledging Bottom's self-confidence, authority, and self-love, Knight maintains, 'Why, Bottom the weaver is the representative of the whole human race.'"112 If Hazlitt is Bottom's first promoter, Knight may be his most enthusiastic, taking the qualities that made Bottom a Renaissance ass as the qualities that make him the exemplary man.

In the twentieth century, critics and directors eagerly took Knight's cue. For example, Frank Sidgwick in 1908 sees little humanity in anyone in the play besides Bottom: "The characters are mostly puppets, and scarcely any except Bottom has the least psychological interest for the reader."¹¹³ A generation later, in G. Wilson Knight's prefatory note to a reissue of his 1932 treatment of Shakespeare's symbolism, *The Shakespearean Tempest*, he says that in "the general challenge of Shakespeare's broad humanity and humour in relation to kings (we remember Falstaff and Bottom)."¹¹⁴ Although Barber (in 1959) astutely recognizes Bottom's literal-mindedness, he also says that "Bottom's charming combination of ignorant exuberance and oblivious imaginativeness make him the most humanly credible and appealing personality Shakespeare had yet created from the incongruous qualities required for the clown's role."¹¹⁵ Likewise, Harold Bloom says that "Bottom the natural man is also the transcendental Bottom"¹¹⁶ And Deborah Wyrick, in her article about every aspect of the "ass motif," agrees entirely: "Bottom serves as a clear comic everyman—a mirror in which the playgoer can see the human condition."¹¹⁷ Thus even a scholar who has investigated the material and symbolic purport of asses in the Renaissance lauds Bottom's essential humanity. David Selbourne, who closely observed and recorded the rehearsals for Brook's New York production of *Midsummer*, documents Brook's direction in relation to Bottom's transformation: "Brook is saying, as I enter, that 'the prop of the ass's head cannot be more than a token. . . . 'No conceivable object,' Brook is calmly telling them, 'can turn a man into a believable animal.'"118 Writing in the early nineteenth century, Hazlitt refused to admit that the fantasy of *Midsummer* could be adequately represented in the theater; but like Hazlitt, Brook, the most famous modern director of the play, refused to see Bottom as an ass. For nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics and dramatists, grandiose Bottom is only a human, and even the quintessential human.

Derrida says that there is "a supposed discontinuity, rupture, or even abyss" between "those who call themselves men and what so-called men, those who name themselves men, call the animal." He also suggests that "[t]he multiple and heterogeneous border of this abyssal rupture has a history."¹¹⁹ *Midsummer*'s displays of mortals and the play's criticism over the centuries belong to that history. The play is a monument of the creaturely world. It does not construct or abide by "the limit between Man with a capital M and Animal with a capital A,"¹²⁰ for its singing birds

are not categorized as “vile things,” whereas some of its humans, the ones present for use, are. If the human in *Midsummer Night’s Dream* can exclude women, working men, Jews, and Ethiopians, can we really see an essential Renaissance human nature truly separated from other creatures? *Midsummer’s* display of the mortal world suggests otherwise. We can see the twentieth-century embrace of Bottom as a quintessential man as a democratic move. However, that move also denies the reality of the creaturely world in the Renaissance and, therefore, denies the use of humans in that world. Unfortunately, seeing other humans as present for one’s use has a very long, continuous history itself. Writing about the history of human interactions with chickens, Haraway observes that chickens “labored on the Egyptian pyramids, when barley-pinching pharaohs got the world’s first mass egg-industry going to feed the avian’s co-conscripted human workers.” And she points out that in America’s industrialized food world today, “even human laborers in the chicken industry are super-exploited.”¹²¹ In between Ancient Egypt and the global capitalistic industrialized order in which I live was the creaturely world in which Shakespeare lived and wrote. Denying the use of workers in that world will not help us to stop denying the use of workers in our own, just as denying the creaturely continuum will not help us to stop denying the way humans treat other creatures today. As Jonathan Safran Foer so eloquently puts it, “Humans cannot be human (much less humane) under the conditions of a factory farm or slaughterhouse. It’s the most perfect workplace alienation in the world right now. Unless you consider what the animals experience.”¹²² Sadly, there is a myriad of other perfect workplace alienation situations in the world today, including slavery and factory work that amounts to slavery.

It is far from accidental, I would argue, that the twentieth century embraced a character as full of self-love as Bottom and, thereby, elevated a character created as akin to a beast to the pinnacle of humanity. In chapter four, I will explore the making human of another-twentieth century hero, Falstaff, the character who is compared to other kinds of creatures more than any other Shakespearean character. G. Wilson Knight’s association of those two characters is apt. Compared to Falstaff, Bottom is a relatively harmless narcissist; he is a powerless clown in his play. He blusters among his fellows but treats them and Titania’s fellows with some respect. Falstaff, as we will see, is a far more narcissistic beast, and his social status offers him the power to oppress and use those below him, a power he exercises happily. First, however, we will see how the creaturely continuum extended activity to objects as well as mortal beings.

Notes

- 1 Boehrer. *Shakespeare Among the Animals*; Jeanne Addison Roberts. *The Shakespearean Wild: Geography, Genus, and Gender*. Lincoln, NB: University

- of Nebraska Press, 1991. For the sheer variety of creatures in the play, see also Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 180 and 213.
- 2 Boehrer. *Shakespeare among the Animals*. 44.
 - 3 All quotations from *Midsummer* will be cited from the 1600 Quarto edition (Q1) by signature followed by the act, scene, and line numbers from William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Norton Shakespeare*. 814–63. B4v, 2.1.101. For other explorations of this continuum, see Laurie Shannon. “Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Sovereignty, Human Negative Exceptionalism, and the Natural History of *King Lear*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60 (2009): 168–96, especially 171–3, and J. A. Shea and Paul Yachnin. “The Well-Hung Shrew.” *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Eds. Dan Brayton and Lynne Bruckner. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. 105–22.
 - 4 See Gary Jay Williams. *Our Moonlight Revels: A Midsummer Night's Dream in the Theatre*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997. Especially chapter two; and Trevor R. Griffiths. “Introduction.” *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare in Production*. Ed. Trevor R. Griffiths. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Especially 12–25.
 - 5 Derrida. “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).” 399.
 - 6 David Selbourne. *The Making of A Midsummer Night's Dream: An Eyewitness Account of Peter Brook's Production from First Rehearsal to First Night*. London: Methuen, 1982. 227.
 - 7 As Stephen Greenblatt notes, one Q1 stage direction reads, “Enter Quince, Flute, Thisby and the rabble” (G2). (Stephen Greenblatt. “Introduction.” *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. William Shakespeare. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 839–848. 840). The *OED* defines “rabble” as “[a] pack, string, swarm (of animals). *Obs.*” and as “the common, low, or disorderly part of the populace” (*A.n.* 1, 2c).
 - 8 H2, 5.1.222.
 - 9 In *Midsummer*, Shakespeare makes this “gentle” joke repeatedly. For example, Titania calls Bottom with his ass-head on, “my gentle ioy” (F2v, 4.1.4).
 - 10 *OED*. “conscience.” III 5.
 - 11 Paster. *The Body Embarrassed*. 33.
 - 12 Bottom does respond to Theseus during the play, but his response demonstrates his deep misunderstanding of Theseus's position in relation to the representation.
 - 13 Kenneth Burke. “Why *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57 (2006): 297–308. Annabel Patterson. *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989. See also Stephen Greenblatt's comment in his introduction to the play in the *Norton Shakespeare*: “[W]e are invited at once to join in the mockery of the inept performers and to distance ourselves from the mockers. That is, the audience of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is not simply mirrored in the play's upper classes; the real audience is given a broader perspective, a more capacious understanding than anyone onstage” (841). Also see Richard Wilson's fine essay: “The Kindly Ones: The Death of the Author in Shakespearean Athens.” *A Midsummer Night's Dream: New Casebooks*. Ed. Richard Dutton. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. 198–222. I share the utopian goals of some critics, although my reading of the play's workmen obviously differs. Patterson offers compelling evidence that the play asked its contemporary audience to care about food shortages and unemployment (see especially 55–7). However, seeing people as beasts does not necessitate starving or mistreating those people. The play could be criticizing or at least acknowledging starvation and unemployment and still categorizing the workmen on a lower end of the creaturely continuum than some nonhuman creatures.

- 14 B4, 2.1. 93–4.
- 15 Raber notes that in Giovanni Battista Gelli's *Circe* 1549, "Ulysses begins with the humblest of creatures, the oyster and the mole (also the simplest and humblest of humans, a fisherman and a ploughman respectively)" (*Animal Bodies/ Renaissance Culture*. 1).
- 16 H3v, 5.2.1–4.
- 17 According to Horace Howard Furness, the eighteenth-century editor William Warburton amended "beholds" to "behowls" (William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dreame*. A New Variorum Edition. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1895). The *Norton Shakespeare* follows Warburton and his followers. Warburton's emendation would add the wolf to the list of mortals who make noise at night.
- 18 TLN 92–3, 1.1.55–6. This is the folio reading with through line numbers followed by the *Norton* Act, scene, and line numbers. The *Troilus* 1609 quarto reading is "the cignets downe is harsh, and spirit of sence / hard as the palme of plow-man" (A2v).
- 19 G2, G3v; 4.2.9, 5.1.72. Philostratus is the speaker in the quarto.
- 20 D4, 3.2.13.
- 21 Hv, 5.1.210–13.
- 22 William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dreame*. A New Variorum Edition. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1895. 222n.224.
- 23 Furness. 223–24n.230.
- 24 Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 175. Fudge's claim here risks discounting the historically simultaneous rise of African slavery in the British Empire.
- 25 G4, 5.1.108–125.
- 26 G4v, 5.1.119, 122–3. Lysander's simile seems to place Quince as the rider of the horse, but his comment, "he knows not the stop," may make Quince the horse.
- 27 Paster. *The Body Embarrassed*. 128.
- 28 See Fudge's discussion: *Brutal Reasoning*. 42–50. See also Thomas. *Man and the Natural World*. 43.
- 29 C4v, 2.2.124–6.
- 30 This is the gloss in William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd edn. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. 251–83; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. 4th Edn. Ed. David Bevington. New York: Harper-Collins, 1992. 147–77.
- 31 This is the gloss in *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Norton Shakespeare*. Gen. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. 814–63.
- 32 OED. "point." 6.
- 33 See also Helena's comments on the easily "beguil'd" and "periur'd" boy, Cupid (Bv, 1.1.239, 241).
- 34 D2v, 3.1.80–4.
- 35 On women as horses see Roberts. *The Shakespearean Wild*. 64–7; see also Gwynne Kennedy. *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000. For a discussion of the workmen's confusion of gender in regards to facial hair, see Will Fisher. *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 91–3.
- 36 E3v, 3.2.258, 261–2, 264.
- 37 Kim F. Hall. *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995. 23.
- 38 Hall 24.

39 C3-C3v, 2.2.36–40.

40 Dv, 3.1.38.

41 C3, 2.2.6, 13–14.

42 D2v, 3.1.106.

43 D3, 3.1.116–120.

44 Unlike in the modern world, people in the Renaissance did not completely differentiate between the noise produced by asses and the noise produced by horses. See the *OED* “bray.” It is probably telling that Bottom enters twice with his ass-head on, both times to cue lines with “horse[s]” in them.

45 Griffiths. 148.

46 D2v, 3.1.98.

47 See Boehrer’s discussion of the varied classical opinions on the relation of speech to definitions of the human: *Parrot Culture*. 8–10. See also Cary Wolfe. *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, especially chapter two, where he discusses ways to “unsettle the ontological difference between human and animal, a difference expressed in the philosophical tradition by the capacity for language” (47). And see Derrida’s comments in response to Jean-Luc Nancy’s question, “[I]n the shift, which you judge to be necessary, from man to animal . . . what happens to language?” (“‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.” 116). Also see R. W. Serjeantson. “The Passions and Animal Language, 1540–1700.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 425–4. Serjeantson surveys English and European views. He claims that “early modern natural philosophers almost universally insisted that only humans were capable of language and speech” (425). However, he refers to “a popular belief in early modern England that ‘in the olde tymes’ animals could speak” (426).

48 See Brian Cummings. “Pliny’s Literate Elephant and the Idea of Animal Language in Renaissance Thought.” *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 164–85, on Renaissance ideas about animals that can use or understand human semantics.

49 See also C. L. Barber. *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959. 138.

50 Bruce Smith. “Hearing Green.” *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*. Eds. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 147–68. See also Bruce Smith. *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-factor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

51 Francis Bacon. *Sylva Sylvarum: Or a Natural History: The Works of Francis Bacon*. Eds. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath. (1864). St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1969. 4: 263.

52 Bacon. 225.

53 A4v, 1.1.183–9.

54 See the Variorum’s collation: William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. A New Variorum Edition. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1895. 25.

55 *OED*. “catch.” n.1 14.

56 On voice in the play, see Maurice Hunt. “The Voices of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.” *Shakespearean Criticism Yearbook 1992*. Vol. 22. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1994. 39–47. I agree with Hunt that “Shakespeare’s choice of

- the word “auditor” rather than “spectator” as a term for playgoer [3.1.67] suggests that he valued dramatic appeals to playgoers’ ears as much (or more) than those designed for their eyes” (39).
- 57 D3, 121–3.
- 58 Quince tells his friends that Bottom is “a very Paramour for a sweete voice” (G2, 4.2.11–12). Quince’s line probably got a laugh here not just because he mistakes “paramour” for “paragon” but because the audience has recently heard how bad Bottom’s voice really is. See also Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. Topsell says that “the Asse is called . . . of some *Megamucos* because of his vnpleasant voyce” (20).
- 59 F2v, 4.1.4.
- 60 D4, 3.1.182.
- 61 F4-F4v, 4.1.104–120.
- 62 Patricia Parker. *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*. London: Methuen, 1987. 121. Wilson as quoted in Parker 117.
- 63 Ben Jonson. *Timber; or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter: Ben Jonson*. Ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947, rpt. 1965. 8: 620–1.
- 64 Kathryn Perry. “Unpicking the Seam: Talking Animals and Reader Pleasure in Early Modern Satire.” *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 18–36.
- 65 Parker. *Literary Fat Ladies*. 124.
- 66 Francis Bacon. *Sylva Sylvarum: Or a Natural History: The Works of Francis Bacon*. 4: 280.
- 67 Bacon. 4: 282.
- 68 “Mimmick” is the folio reading (TLN 1041). Q1 has “Minnick,” Q2 “Minnock” (D4). The OED lists “minnick” as a variant spelling of “mimic.” D4, 3.2.19, G3v, 5.1.56.
- 69 George Puttenham. *The Art of English Poesy*. Eds. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. 95–6.
- 70 See R. W. Dent’s comment: “the language—in its grotesque combination of muddled syntax, padded lines, mind-offending tropes, ear-offending schemes—does violence even to what would otherwise be woefully inadequate” (quoted in Antony Price, ed. *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night’s Dream: A Casebook*. London: Macmillan Press, 1983. 135). Many critics see Bottom as particularly human and compelling when he speaks about his dream vision after he awakes without his ass head (Gv-G2, 4.1.196–211). However, Bottom mangles not only the sense but also the musicality of 1 Corinthians in that speech.
- 71 F2, 3.3.1–8.
- 72 H, 5.1.169–75.
- 73 Puttenham. *The Art of English Poesy*. 170.
- 74 See also Patricia Parker’s reading of joinery in the third chapter of *Shakespeare from the Margins: Language, Culture, Context*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Parker makes a strong case for the bad joinery practiced by the workmen as making visible the oppressive “hierarchies” that “smooth discourse . . . forges and the orders it constructs” (115).
- 75 H, 5.1.151–3.
- 76 F4-F4v, 4.1.116–124. See Mark S. R. Jenner. “The Great Dog Massacre.” *Fear in Early Modern Society*. Eds. William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. 44–61. Jenner notes that although the English slaughtered dogs in times of plague, “it was dogs that

- they slaughtered, not other members of the canine commonwealth. Ladies lap-dogs and hounds of the gentry were specifically excluded from these regulations" (55).
- 77 See also Michael Dobson. "A Dog at All Things: The Transformation of the Onstage Canine, 1550–1850." *Performance Research* 5 (2000): 116–24. Dobson offers evidence of hunting dogs displayed at great expense in University and court productions. His evidence points to a significant distinction between these dogs and the clown's dog in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. See also Alan Stewart on how highly James I valued his hunting dogs: "Government by Beagle: The Impersonal Rule of James VI and I." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 101–15. According to Stewart, James saw his favorite bitch's death as more significant than the accidental hunting death of a keeper.
- 78 See also Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal*. 113.
- 79 D4v, 3.2.62–6.
- 80 OED. "cur."
- 81 *Macbeth*. TLN 1092–1095, 3.1.93–6.
- 82 C2, 2.1.204.
- 83 See also Thomas A. Hamill. "Cockfighting as Cultural Allegory in Early Modern England." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39 (2009): 375–406, on the "very intimate set of relations" between cock breeders and their gamecocks (390).
- 84 C3, 2.1.267.
- 85 F4, 4.1.91.
- 86 A4v, 1.1.171.
- 87 C4v, 2.2.120.
- 88 E2, 3.2.143.
- 89 See also G. Wilson Knight: "the bird-beast opposition is vivid here . . . Bottom's heavy wit or blundering ignorance gives us other examples . . . The humour in these clearly depends on the bird-beast contrast" (quoted in Antony Price, ed. *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Casebook*. 67).
- 90 B2v, 1.2. 67–8.
- 91 *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Norton Shakespeare*. 821n.1.
- 92 Francis Bacon. *Sylva Sylvarum: Or a Natural History*. 4: 265–6.
- 93 Dv, 3.1.29–30. On Bottom's confusion of species see also Boehrer. *Shakespeare Among the Animals*. 65.
- 94 Cv, 2.1.179–81.
- 95 C3-C3v, 2.2.36–7.
- 96 Wolfe. *Animal Rites*. 192.
- 97 See also Kim F. Hall. "'Troubling Doubles': Apes, Africans, and Blackface in 'Mr. Moore's Revels.'" *Race, Ethnicity, and Power in the Renaissance*. Ed. Joyce Green MacDonald. Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997. 120–44.
- 98 James Knowles. "'Can Ye Not Tell a Man from a Marmoset?': Apes and Others on the Early Modern Stage." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 138–63. See also Fudge's chapter on bearbaiting in *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Although Fudge claims a special significance for apes and monkeys at one point in the chapter, 12–13, she also points to the practice of giving the bears "human names" (16).
- 99 F3v, 4.1.74.
- 100 H3, 5.1.298–299.

- 101 Ben Jonson. *Timber; or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter: Ben Jonson*. Eds. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947. Rpt. 1965. 11: 566.
- 102 See Cynthia Marshall. *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. Especially 13–24, for a concise summary of challenges to the idea of a stable self as a Renaissance ideal or as emerging in the Renaissance.
- 103 Trevor R. Griffiths. “Introduction.” *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Shakespeare in Production*, provides a telling history of press commentary on Bottom in productions (see 102–5).
- 104 Deborah Baker Wyrick. “The Ass Motif in *The Comedy of Errors* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1982): 432–48.
- 105 Bottom is not the only “mechanical” whom the nineteenth century transformed into the essential man. See S. S. Prawer. *Karl Marx and World Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976. Prawer shows how Karl Marx often looked to Snug as he thought about men of his day. In an article about Abraham Lincoln, Marx compares Lincoln to Snug—both are examples of “an average man of good will” (269).
- 106 William Hazlitt. *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays*. (1817). London: Oxford University Press, 1966. 98.
- 107 OED. “mechanical.” 3.
- 108 OED. “romantic.” 4.a.
- 109 C. L. Barber. *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959. 148.
- 110 William Hazlitt. *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays*. (1817). London: Oxford University Press, 1966. 103.
- 111 B2v, 1.2.71.
- 112 Dorothea Kehler. “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: A Bibliographic Survey of the Criticism.” *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Critical Essays*. Ed. Dorothea Kehler. New York: Garland, 1998. 3–76.
- 113 Frank Sidgwick. *The Sources and Analogues of “A Midsummer-night’s Dream” Compiled by Frank Sidgwick*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1908. 2.
- 114 G. Wilson Knight. *The Shakespearean Tempest*. (1932). London: Methuen, 1971. xv.
- 115 C. L. Barber. *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy*. 156.
- 116 Harold Bloom. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998. 151.
- 117 Wyrick. “The Ass Motif in *The Comedy of Errors* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.” 447.
- 118 Selbourne. *The Making of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.” 223.
- 119 Derrida. “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).” 399.
- 120 Derrida. “Animal.” 398.
- 121 Donna Haraway. “Chicken for Shock and Awe: War on Words.” *Making Things Public: Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*. Eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. 384–6.
- 122 Jonathan Safran Foer. *Eating Animals*. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2009. 256.

3 The Lively Creaturely/ Object World of *The Rape of Lucrece*

As well as being a text full of birds and beasts, *The Rape of Lucrece* is also home to many objects, non-living “actants” or “actors,” to use Latour’s terms.¹ Latour maintains that “*any thing* that . . . modif[ies] a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor—or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant.”² A number of the poem’s objects do figure as particularly lively actors, including locks that speak and a pillow that seems angry. In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Jane Bennett reminds us, “Humanity and nonhumanity have always performed an intricate dance with each other. There was never a time when human agency was anything other than an interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity; today this mingling has become harder to ignore.”³ In this chapter I will argue, firstly, that *The Rape of Lucrece*, like most texts written before Cartesian ideas gained purchase, did not, and could not, ignore this mingling—it was ever-present. In the world Shakespeare was writing in, creatures, things made of creaturely substances—like quills (pens), pillows, and beds—and things made by creatures—like doors, hives, needles, and nests—could be immediately thought of in terms of the creatures that made them and the creatures they were made from; they did not need Latour’s and Bennett’s theories to be understood as dancing together. In other words, Latour and Bennett, looked at from a historical perspective, are reminding humans of a state of affairs that could be a given when Shakespeare was writing. Pens, pillows, and beds might not be thought about without thinking of geese, and likewise, doors and nests might not be thought about without thinking about humans and birds as makers and the relations among those makers.

Vinciane Despret says that the science born out of the post-Cartesian world gives us an “impoverished world, a world of minds without bodies, of bodies without minds, bodies without hearts, expectations, interests, a world of enthusiastic automata observing strange and mute creatures; in other words, a poorly articulated (and poorly articulating) world.”⁴ Shakespeare’s world was much better “articulated” than the laboratory world Despret describes. It lacked both the layers of machines and the ideologies that could be seen as interfering today between all the

creaturely makers in the world and what they make and also as distinguishing categorically between human and nonhuman creatures. If the laboratory world as described by Despret posits humans as pure minds who observe “animals” who are only bodies, Shakespeare’s world was a world in which everything was understood to be made, including humans and other creatures, who were made and embodied by God. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, the narrator calls Lucrece and her maid “prettie creatures,” and when he talks about the servant who takes her letter to Collatine, the narrator speaks of him as belonging to the group of “harmlesse creatures” who “talke in deeds” while others promise more than they deliver (1233, 1347–8).⁵ Some of the poem’s humans are mute like this servant, and some of them boast rather than serve, but all of the poem’s humans are creatures. Likewise, in contrast to the humans and creatures in Despret’s world, the poem’s creatures apart from humans (beasts and birds) are neither “strange” nor “mute”; they and their bodies, minds, and sounds are undeniably present. Also, the things that creatures in the poem make are articulated with their makers and users. Rather than depicting human minds observing and living in a mindless world, *The Rape of Lucrece* describes a well-articulated, interactive world of birds, beasts, humans, and things. This articulated creaturely/object matrix is the context for Colatine being “the publisher / Of that rich iewell” that is Lucrece’s sexual honor (33–4). That matrix is also the context in which Lucrece’s “bleeding bodie” is “publish[ed]” as what Tarquin made (1851–2). This reading of the poem, then, will bring to the fore the immensely detailed creaturely/object matrix in the poem, a matrix that has generally remained invisible in critical accounts of the poem’s principal humans and its human social and political relations.

Although those human social and political relations have been read for the most part as if they exist apart from the poem’s other creatures and its things, there have been some critical nods toward one particular non-human creature featured in *Lucrece*—bees—and one particular object in the poem: the painting of the Fall of Troy that Lucrece tears at in her rage after her rape (1564). This reading, thus, contributes to what could be seen as a project begun by Sarah Plant’s and Misako Matsuda’s readings of the bees that figure in the poem, and it also contributes to and expands upon the discussion of one of the poem’s objects: that painting.⁶ Both Plant and Matsuda read the poem’s bees as figuring human relations, political and social. Theirs are not readings of the creaturely articulations in the poem, but rather significant investigations of how bees served as models for human behavior in Shakespeare’s time. The critical treatments of the painting, however, point to the other articulations in the poem between creatures, especially human creatures, and objects.

Many critics have looked at how the poem’s description of the painting relates the Troy story to Lucrece’s story and also at how the poem addresses its own literary artifice in relation to the painting’s artifice.⁷ As

Catherine Belsey suggests, “Shakespeare’s ekphrasis repeatedly praises the painter’s achievement.”⁸ If, as Margaret Farrand Thorp suggests, Shakespeare is relatively uninterested in “artistic observation,” the painting in *The Rape of Lucrece* is an example of the poem’s interest in the liveliness of the created world and the articulation of that created world with its creators.⁹ As Belsey suggests, the painter and his achievement appear in almost every stanza of the poem’s extended ekphrasis. Thus, the painting is more than a non-living actant; it is an extension and embodiment of its maker. The Fall of Troy first appears in the poem as “a peece / Of skilfull painting” (1366–7); its gerund identity, as something that has been painted rather than as a disarticulated thing, makes it akin to an actor. It is “a peece” of the painter’s skill rather than existing apart from its maker. In addition, in that same opening stanza of the ekphrasis, the narrator says that the painting is “made for” Troy, “[b]efore the which is drawn the power of Greece.” And Troy, the narrator says, seems to kiss Heaven because “the conceived Painter drew [it] so proud” (1368, 1371).¹⁰ Here Shakespeare characteristically uses polyptoton, the repetition of a word in different versions—“drawn” and “drew”—to stress the work done by the maker of the painting. In another stanza, the narrator stresses the painter’s costly labor, telling readers that the blood in the painting represents not only the human cost of the conflict but also “the Painters strife” (1377). In addition, when Lucrece sees Sinon, the traitor, in the painting, what she also sees is the painter’s work: “the Painter labour’d with his skill / to hide deceit” (1506–7). The poem stresses that work again, opening the stanza after next with the line, “the well skil’d workman this milde Image drew” (1520).

The ekphrasis continually compliments the artist, lauding his “sweet obseruance,” his “nice” ability to place images, the “Art” of his “Phisognomy,” and “his wondrous skill.”¹¹ However, the painting is not only an achievement of the painter; it is also an actor in its own right. In concert with Lucrece, the Fall of Troy speaks. Although the poem says, “The Painter was no God to lend” his painted humans voice, Lucrece can speak through the painted Hecuba (1461). Lucrece addresses the painted Hecuba, saying, “Poore Instrument . . . without a sound, / Ile tune they woes with my lamenting tongue” (1464–5). Speaking to Hecuba, Lucrece promises to use a knife to “scratch out the angrie eyes” of her “enemies” (1469–70). The painted cloth inspires Lucrece to act in concert with its represented people. As a product of Art with a capital A in the poem, the painted cloth is a particularly lively actor, but within the context of the other object actors and actants in *Lucrece* it points toward the liveliness of the poem’s created world, which mingles creatures and objects and continually refers to their relations.¹²

Unlike the rest of *The Rape of Lucrece*, the ekphrasis is relatively devoid of the abundant nonhuman creatures that populate the poem. In the context of the abundant creatures in the poem as a whole, it is interesting that

the painted cloth does not depict the Trojan Horse, the object/creature center of the Fall of Troy story.¹³ If the painting neglects nonhuman creatures, however, the poem as a whole abounds with creatures. Accompanying the numerous and varied birds in the poem are abundant beasts, including tigers, lambs, deer, rams, worms, serpents, mice, cats, wolves, dogs, horses, and bees, as well as creatures that are now seen as mythological, such as a cockatrice, a unicorn, and, perhaps, a griffin. In addition, the word “beast” appears as a creaturely classification in the poem, if not as often as the word “bird.” Most of the poem’s references to beasts are used to describe Tarquin, who is variously characterized as a wolf, tiger, cat, lion, or dog as well as a falcon and night-owl. The poem also likens him to mythical beasts, to a serpent and to stinging insects. As this chapter will show, as well as classifying the poem’s creaturely world into birds, beasts, and humans, the poem divides its creatures, perhaps primarily, into predators and prey. The poem, therefore, likens its human creatures to its non-human creatures because of their common bodily identities and their common ferocity and vulnerability. In this chapter, I examine *Lucrece*’s creaturely world, including its “things,” showing how the poem’s creaturely abundance and its lively non-living actants are related. The poem is about human bodies and souls; however, those human concerns seem intimately related to the birds, beasts, and object actants and actors that Lucrece lives among. The painting is only one of the object actors in the poem. The poem’s bodily and spiritual concerns appear to be features of, or even inseparable from, a larger, lively creaturely and object world. *The Rape of Lucrece* will enable us to further explore the differentiation of the creaturely world and also to investigate the relations of that world with the material world humans created.

Birds, Again

As I have shown, Shakespeare and other Renaissance authors lived among and with birds, and, therefore, they thought through birds continually. The classical and biblical texts they wrote in relation to were also produced by people who lived among and thought through birds. Thus, in the classically based *Rape of Lucrece* Shakespeare’s narrator and characters think through birds. Like the other Shakespeare plays we have looked at, *The Rape of Lucrece* is a cornucopia of birds: bird imagery, bird tropes, symbolic birds, and references to “real” birds and bird parts. Birds are a common creaturely classification in the poem, utilized in metaphors, similes, and *sententiae* such as “Birds neuer lim’d, no secret bushes feare,” a saying that refers specifically to a human hunting practice and the emotional life of birds (88). In addition, the poem names many specific birds, including doves, owls, falcons, sparrows, ravens, crows, eagles, nightingales, and swans. This particular poem’s massive interest in birds is not exceptional, but, excluding discussions of how the

Philomel story functions in the poem, it has been largely unremarked, just as the bird presence in *Midsummer* and in Donne's *Devotions* has largely escaped notice. Shakespeare depicts Lucrece herself figuratively as an assortment of birds and as living among actual birds; birds are the accompaniment of her daily life, and their bodies provide the technology she uses to communicate. The poem refers to all of these features of Renaissance human life among birds: actual living, singing birds heard daily; classical stories about birds; hunting for and with birds; and bird bodies, used by Renaissance humans as technology as well as food.

Birds create the soundtrack of Lucrece's life in the poem, and, as they do in so many Shakespeare plays, bird sounds—sonorous and dissonant—demarcate night and day. In *Lucrece*, owls screech and nightingales sing in the dark, and songbirds' voices mark the dawn. The poem is also attentive to the relative musicality of its birds. After the rape, "the little birds that tune their mornings joy / Make [Lucrece's] mones mad, with their sweet melodie" (1107–8). She begs them to stop and to "intomb" their "tunes" in their "hollow swelling feathered breasts" (1121–2). She also tells them that her misery "loues no stops nor rests" and calls the noises that they have been making "nimble notes" (1124, 1126). The "little birds" signal the advent of the morning that makes visible Lucrece's overnight transformation from chaste wife to "corrupted" woman (1172). Their presence in the poem's world particularly upsets Lucrece because of how beautifully they sing, their music throwing her sorrow into relief. The poem repeatedly stresses these morning birds' musicality: like human musicians, they have "melodie," "stops," and "rests"; they sing "notes" and "tunes." One of the poem's night birds also sings beautifully, but the other, the owl, emits threatening cries. The night's soundtrack includes "Owles, & wolues death-boding cries" (165). Later in the poem we hear that the night has also been marked by a weasel's shriek and a nightingale's song: "By this, lamenting Philomele had ended / The well-tun'd warble of her nightly sorrow" (1080–1). Philomel, the raped woman who was transformed into a nightingale, enters the poem, not in her mythic guise at first, but as a feature of its soundtrack, another bird who helps humans to tell time and another bird with superior musicality: her song is "well-tun'd."

As other critics have noted, how we read Philomel's relation to Lucrece can be pivotal for how we interpret Lucrece's story.¹⁴ After dismissing the musical songbirds, Lucrece summons a version of the Ovidian Philomel to replace them. Instead of their song, she wants to hear Philomel, whose imagined self-torture with a thorn she likens to her intent to stab herself (1135–8). She identifies herself and her plight with the bird. Lucrece says that she will sing with the nightingale: "And with deepe grones the Diapason beare: / For burthen-wise ile hum on TARQVIN still, / While thou on TEREVS descants better skill" (1132–4). Lucrece will sing the lowest note while the nightingale sings the highest. Feminist criticism

of the poem has concentrated on the voice and agency the poem allows Lucrece. In one of these important readings, Jane O. Newman suggests that the Philomela story offered Shakespeare “traditions of female political agency more threatening to patriarchy than Lucrece’s”; however, Shakespeare chose to represent Lucrece as more passively complicit with patriarchy.¹⁵ Catherine Belsey responds to this, and other feminist readings of the poem, by pointing to Lucrece’s pre-Cartesian understanding of the embodied mind. In Belsey’s reading, Lucrece’s “grief is registered physiologically, calling into question the distinction taken for granted by so many modern readers between mind and the organism of which it is a part.” Unlike the men in the poem, Lucrece understands that rape “violates flesh as well as self-respect, organic integrity at the same time as self-determination.”¹⁶ Although as Newman notes, “a self-wounding Philomela does not appear in Ovid’s text,” Shakespeare chooses to represent Philomel as a self-mutilating bird, with a thorn pressed against her breast.¹⁷ But, as Belsey suggests, Lucrece takes up her knife in order to remove her soul from the body that has been violated by Tarquin; perhaps, therefore, a bird who punishes herself to stay awake so that she can indict her rapist with the most beautiful poetry is a proper figure for Lucrece to “imitate” (1137); Lucrece’s rape and her possible pregnancy are real and are inseparable in her mind, and, as Belsey suggests, her denial of her body in her suicide liberates her soul. This act is easily misconstrued in a world that separates mind from body, just as the overwhelming presence of birds in the poem has escaped that world’s readers.

For many of those readers, Lucrece’s suicide appears as a denial of herself. The poem, however, sees her suicide as a way for the most precious part of herself, her soul, to be freed. In addition, in this Renaissance poem, the narrator’s account tellingly relates Lucrece’s suicide to flight. Like Philomel, Lucrece is transformed into a winged thing:

Even here she sheathed in her harmlesse breast
A harmfull knife, that thence her soule vnsheathed,
That blow did baile it from the deepe vnrest
Of that polluted prison, where it breathed:
Her contrite sighes vnto the clouds bequeathed
Her winged sprite, & through her wounds doth flie
Liues lasting date, from cancel’d destinie. (1723–29)

Her body is the soul’s cage; although Tarquin has made that body a “polluted prison,” the poem also sees that body not as a good in itself, but as a prison within which her soul has “breathed” and from which she can be set free. Her soul has wings like a bird and flies into “the clouds” as birds do. Thus, Lucrece is transformed in a Renaissance winged shape, into a spirit form that has a bird-like character. That soul flies like a bird

to a place beyond earth where she will live everlasting although she has cancelled her bodily life.

Just as the narrator makes Lucrece a winged spirit at the point of her death, the narrator's first invocation of the nightingale in *Lucrece* elides the bird's and Lucrece's identities. As John Roe suggests, Lucrece is "identified with the nightingale and ends her complaint just as the bird finishes its song."¹⁸ Likewise, the narrator identifies Lucrece with a bird when she first speaks to "COLATINE and his consorted Lords" of the rape (1609): "And now this pale Swan in her watrie nest, / Begins the sad Dirge of her certaine ending" (1611–12). Here Shakespeare invokes what Roe calls "the legend that the swan sings shortly before its death." As Roe notes, Shakespeare nods to this "legend" in three other instances, once in *The Merchant of Venice*, once in *Othello*, and once in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.¹⁹ The swan's dying vocal behavior was disputed knowledge in the Renaissance. In Edmund Spenser's *Shepherde's Calendar*, Cuddie complains that his wit, "were he not with love so ill bedight, / Would mount as high, and sing as soote [sweet] as Swanne." E.K.'s gloss reads:

The comparison seemeth to be strange: for the swanne hath ever wonne small commendation for her swete singing: but it is sayd of the learned that the swan a little before hir death, singeth most pleasantly, as prophescying by a secrete instinct her neere destinie.²⁰

Pliny, the elder, translated by Philemon Holland, however, is unsure about this. He says, "Some say that the Swans sing lamentably a little before their death, but untruly, I suppose: for experience in many hath shewed the contrarie."²¹ De la Primaudaye, in contrast, avers that swans "sing sweetlier then any other foules . . . And some say, that they presage their death by their songs."²² The story about swans' voices was disputed in Renaissance natural history; in this poem, it affords Shakespeare another bird identity for Lucrece and, significantly, another identity that is associated with voice and song.

Birds function in the poem symbolically to represent Lucrece's victimization and her empowerment, and the poem is also interested in real birds and real birds' voices themselves. Lucrece's interactions with the singing birds, although stylized, refer to ways that people wrote about living with actual birds. She appreciates the songbirds' musicality in the way that Renaissance people customarily did. Topsell describes canaries that "sing very sweetly & shrill hauinge a longe breath which they intende and remitte at their own pleasure . . . with an harmonious voyce like a musitian." He quotes and translates an epigram that compares these birds' songs to human musical creation:

Whie doe I muse at musicks melodye:
ffrom stop or stroke of pipe that comes & goes?

This herbe-greene birde of sparrowes quantitie
More pleasing tunes from little throte out throwes
No Eagle greate nor thousand pens can frame
Or singe such notes so sweetly modified.²³

Like Topsell, Lucrece responds to the sweetness of the birdsong and the skill the birds display. Her response uses the same vocabulary Topsell uses (and finds) to describe birdsong. Birds sing more pleasingly than musicians can when they use pipes with “stops”; additionally, the song-birds’ musical production transcends their size and outstrips the efforts of poets. The nightingale’s superior singing skill as the poem depicts it is legendary, but it also interacts with the creaturely world Shakespeare and his readers lived in. The swan’s sweet death song floats between legend and natural history, also interacting with the creaturely world. In that world, as I have shown, birds did sing more beautifully than people, and their articulate speech compared favorably with human speech, especially with speech by less-articulate humans like Bottom. In Topsell’s text, they could also express more with their music than could some men with a thousand pens. Lucrece’s rape has left her inarticulate in those creaturely terms: “With vntun’d tongue shee hoarslie cals her mayd” (1214). She can no longer sing in tune like the birds she lives with.

However, she can still utilize a bird part to convey her message. In order to write to her husband, Lucrece summons “paper, inke, and pen,” then “houer[s] ore the paper with her quill” (1290, 1297). Earlier in the poem, Lucrece, in an apostrophe to Time, refers directly to the bird origin of writing tools. Time works, she says, “To blot old books, and alter their contents” and “To plucke the quilts from auncient rauens wings” (948–9). In this creaturely world, Time allows powerful birds to be transformed into technology for human hands. Like so many other Renaissance texts, *Lucrece* invokes the deeply felt associations between birds and human mental productions. Those associations arguably govern Shakespeare’s choice of the verb “hover” to describe Lucrece’s action with quill in hand. Those associations also appear earlier in the poem in the narrator’s description of how quickly her maid responds to Lucrece’s hoarse call: with “swift obedience [she] to her mistresse hies. / For fleet-wing’d duetie with thoghts feathers flies” (1215–6). This metaphorical constellation—“fleet-wing’d duetie” and flying feathered thought—can seem abstract to modern people, but the poem’s references to quills should alert us to its more concrete attachments. Or, more accurately and broadly, since many wealthy people lived and hunted with birds (hawks) who came flying to their hands when called, and since many more people conveyed their thoughts to other people using feathers, the poem’s description of the maid’s swift appearance could not be thought about without actual birds in mind. Also, “actual” birds come to Lucrece’s mind when she urges her “sowr-fac’d groome, to high as fast / As lagging fowles before

the Northerne blast” (1334–5). Bird feathers, migratory birds, songbirds, domesticated birds, and hunting and hunted birds were quotidian features of creaturely life and feature in *Lucrece* accordingly.

Birds, Beasts, Predators, and Prey

As much as *Lucrece* classifies the creaturely world into birds, beasts, and humans, it also, and perhaps primarily, classifies it into predators and prey; that predator/prey division crosses bird and beast classifications in the poem.²⁴ The predator/prey division becomes visible when the narrator compares Tarquin to a hunting falcon and Lucrece to a harmless fowl. Just as Demetrius in *Midsummer* is the kind of aristocratic man who would hunt with hounds, Tarquin is the kind of man who might hunt using birds, but the poem places him and his rude violence among the predatory birds themselves, and it represents Lucrece as a bird preyed upon. After Tarquin’s first defensive explanation of his rape plan, he threatens her with a weapon that is like a falcon, and before she sees Tarquin, Lucrece is also characterized as a “doue” who “sleeps fast that this night Owle will catch” (360). In this metaphor, Tarquin is an ominous, shrieking killer bird, a bird who hunts apart from people. Prior to the rape, surprised awake by Tarquin, Lucrece lies “trembling,” “[l]ike to a new-kild bird” (457). As well as classifying her with singing swans and nightingales, the poem classifies her with harmless, easily hunted birds, whereas Tarquin is compared to birds who hunt and kill, hawks and owls, and birds who eat carrion. The narrator compares her condition when she and Tarquin first meet to “[b]irds never lim’d” and his condition after the rape to a “gorged Hawke” (88, 694). She is like a small bird who has never feared being caught in a sticky trap but who is likely to be; he is like an overfed hawk. The poem’s predator/prey classificatory logic is even more evident in the poem’s beasts, which include preying wolves and lions, and preyed-upon mice and lambs, among others. In the process and aftermath of the rape, Tarquin takes on many metaphorical predatory beast identities, and Lucrece takes on the identities of prey creatures. The narrator describes Tarquin’s quest for Lucrece’s body as a predatory beast’s hunt. He enters Lucrece’s room praying “for his pray, and he looks at her sleeping body “[as] the grim Lion fawneth ore his pray” (342, 421). Also among his predator identities, Tarquin is a “fowle night-waking Cat,” grasping and playing with a “weak mouse” (554–6). In that scenario, the narrator says that Lucrece’s “sad behaiour feedes his vulture follie” (556).

These heavily creature-laden lines participate fully in the narrator’s logic, spelled out later in the poem: “Not that deuour’d, but that which doth deuour / Is worthie blame” (1256–7). This moral logic divides the creaturely world into those who “eat ravenously” and those who are consumed.²⁵ Tarquin is a cat, a predatory night creature who takes on

weaker creatures and who plays with his prey. Arguably, this predatory behavior is implicitly, but significantly, contrasted with the positive worldly status Tarquin should have as a “princely” warrior fighting his peers—men of equal status, with equal weapons, who can fight back (90). He should have a “high name” won with “manlie chiuallrie” and “bruised armes” from fighting in the manner of Colatine (108–10).²⁶ Instead, the narrator characterizes Tarquin’s motivating force as “vulture follie,” a phrase customarily glossed as some version of “ravenous insanity.”²⁷ The *OED* gives a figurative definition of “vulture” as “[s]omething which preys upon a person, the mind, etc., after the manner of a vulture; *esp.* a consuming or torturing passion.” The customary gloss for the phrase as Shakespeare uses it here is surely correct, but it may not fully cover the creaturely significance of the word in this context. Tarquin’s folly may also be like a vulture because he has placed himself among the carrion birds, birds of prey who feast on the leavings of creatures like falcons, who, in contrast, fight nobly for their food.

Tarquin and Lucrece’s respective predator/prey bird identities feature prominently in the stanza in which he threatens her with his knife:

This said, he shakes aloft his Romaine blade,
Which like a Faulcon towring in the skies,
Cowcheth the fowle below with his wings shade
Whose crooked beake threats, if he mount he dies.
So vnder his insulting Fauchion lies
Harmlesse LVCRETIA marking what he tells,
With trembling feare: as fowl hear Faulcons bels. (505–511)

These creature-filled lines point not only to the poem’s predator-prey classifications but also to what Haraway calls “cross-species sociality,” a way of understanding creaturely relations that is especially evident in the stanza’s extended simile.²⁸ The simile refers to human hunting practices involving hunting birds: people outfit falcons with bells and train the belled birds on and with their hands. Tarquin’s weapon behaves in his hands “like a Faulcon,” a hunting bird, and since hunting birds launched from noble people’s hands, the blade’s bird identity, its similarity to a falcon, points doubly to Tarquin’s (desired) identity as a noble hunting man. His blade is like a falcon in a hand that could also launch such a bird. The simile depicts “cross-species sociality” because the blade’s shape, Tarquin’s arm action, and his body’s spatial relation to Lucrece’s body all mimic the hunting practices of falcons. His hand is like a “towing” falcon; he shakes it like a falcon’s wings shake; he towers over Lucrece like a falcon towers over his prey. Humans launch birds to hunt, but birds’ hunting practices are natural to the birds before and without humans. In the simile, Tarquin’s threatening speech acts on Lucrece just as the sounds that hunting birds make in their practice act on their fowl prey: “as fowl

hear Faulcons bels.” The bells people attach to falcons alert and may terrify the birds that falcons and humans prey on in concert. The poem refers to the world in which people become socialized and think about their use of technology in relation to how falcons naturally behave as they are hunting other birds; predator/prey bird interactions in that world are, in turn, conducted in relation to human technology—bells—and human desires, to hunt for glory as well as for food. Falcons are socialized to assist humans, and humans are socialized to act like and with falcons.

In addition, to a certain extent, the stanza offers the predators and prey birds similar statuses to predator and prey humans. This stanza’s falcon shares the personal pronoun that applies to Tarquin. Tarquin wields his blade like a falcon, and on a grammatical level the falcon is a “he,” as is Tarquin. In the shorter simile that ends the stanza, Lucrece is also likened to a bird in that she listens like a preyed-upon bird, holds her body like a “trembling” bird, and reacts emotionally, fearfully, like a fowl. At the same time that the poem differentiates its bird and human creatures through its similes and metaphors, it likens them on the level of their bodies and their respective bodily fates as well as in the poem’s pronouns. Tarquin is not a falcon, but he is a killer, and both are “hes”. Lucrece is not a bird (although her soul has wings), but her body can be preyed upon as small birds’ bodies can be preyed upon. Like birds caught with bird-lime, she can be caught in a trap because she shares her innocence and her bodily vulnerability with dove innocence, and Tarquin shares his predatory nature with other predators, including humans. Thus she begs Tarquin to spare her: “My selfe a weakling, do not then insnare me” (584). However, as readers, we have known from the beginning of the poem that Tarquin is laying “vnknown baits” and “hooks” for her (103). The poem likens human traps for birds to human traps for other humans and likens human weakness to prey creatures’ weaknesses.

Immediately after the rape, as I have noted, the narrator imagines Tarquin as like two sated hunting creatures:

Looke as the full-fed Hound, or gorged Hawke,
Vnapt for tender smell, or speedie flight,
Make slow pursuite, or altogether bauk
The prairie wherein by nature they delight:
So surfet-taking TARQVIN fares this night:
His tast delicious, in digestion sowing,
Deuoures his will that liu’d by fowle deuouring. (694–700)

Tarquin is depicted here as being like the creatures that, as a noble man, he would employ to hunt—he is like a hawk and like a hound. But rather than controlling those creatures and using their natures to make them serve him as a hunter, he is shown as resembling hunting creatures fed at the wrong time. Once again the poem references “cross-species sociality,”

but the referent here is to mistaken human practice. Humans warned each other of the dangers of overfeeding hawks and hounds in training. However, unlike actual hounds and hawks whom humans might mishandle, Tarquin has overfed himself rather than being overfed. Tarquin is not the same as an overfed hawk, but he acts like one, and because he is “surfet-taking,” he has acted “against himself” (717, 698). The overfed hounds and hawks, in contrast, are the victims of humans who make them act against their “nature.” Tarquin compromises his natural community alliance with noble human predators who hunt with birds because he resembles maltreated hunting allies. He is not only like carrion birds; he is like poorly trained hawks and hounds.

The predator/prey divisions in the poem are equally visible and meaningful in three metaphor-filled moments that make Lucrece into a lamb threatened and attacked by wolves and dogs. These appear prior to the rape, describing the rape itself, and describing Tarquin’s exit from the scene. The narrator explains that Tarquin prepares to rape Lucrece in “the dead of night,” a time in which “No noise but Owles, & wolues death-boding cries: / Now serues the season that they may surprise / The sillie Lambs” (165–7). Here, before the rape, Lucrece is associated with harmless, “sillie” creatures at risk from prey creatures who act under the cover of darkness and whose sounds forecast violent death. The actual rape scene is told through metaphors, but it makes explicit this earlier implicit comparison of Lucrece to a lamb. The extended series of metaphors in which Tarquin is a wolf and Lucrece a lamb cross two stanzas:

The wolfe hath ceazd his pray, the poor lamb cries,
Till with her own white fleece her voice controld,
Intombes her outcrie in her lips sweet fold.

For with the nightlie linnen that shee weares,
He pens her piteous clamors in her head. (677–81)

This oddly constructed description seems to over-identify Lucrece with a lamb. She is a pitiably crying lamb herself, and she also wears, or is covered by, something that is like a fleece, the skin of a lamb. Her lips appear also as compared to a man-made sheep enclosure, a “fold,” and her cries are contained by Tarquin as sheep are contained by humans. He “pens” the noises she wants to make as people pen the sheep they keep in folds.

On the level of sound, this narrated moment also helps to identify Lucrece with other kinds of nonhuman creatures. The noises Lucrece makes and wants to make, her “cries” and “clamors,” are pan-creaturely noises just as music is pan-creaturely in the poem and in the creaturely world. As is visible in the crying owls and wolves that make night noises, Shakespeare uses “cry” to signify the voices of many kinds of creatures, including humans, beasts, and birds. “Clamor” is also a pan-creaturely

noise. In *The Winter's Tale*, Antigonus hears the "sauage clamor" of the bear that will destroy him, and on the night of Duncan's murder in *Macbeth*, "the obscure Bird" (presumably an owl) has "clamor'd the liue-long Night."²⁹ Unlike the owl's noise, however, Lucrece's creaturely distress is controllable by the predatory human/wolf who attacks her. Furthering the poem's intense critique of Tarquin's lack of self-control, Tarquin is associated with uncontrollable noise made by night predators and then accused of stifling the cries that could have protected Lucrece.

It is notable that the lamb references that surround and encapsulate Lucrece stress her weakness in relation to her rapist, but they do so by making her spiritually superior. Lucrece as a lamb is "poor," "white," "sweet," and pitiable, adjectives associated with sheep, who, like doves, permeate scripture. Like doves, in scripture sheep appear literally as actors in the world and are consistently used as figures for people as well. Writing about sheep, Topsell reminds his readers of "the singular account which God himself made of this beast."³⁰ Just as the poem later elides Lucrece's identity and that of the nightingale, at this point in *Lucrece* she is at once a preyed-upon woman and a preyed-upon harmless sheep—just as sheep in scripture are both harmless and prey. Lucrece's voice is smothered with "her own white fleece." The next stanza clarifies the material referent for that fleece with the periodic sentence "for with the nightly linen that she wears / He pens her piteous clamors in her head."³¹ Still, the slippage between Lucrece's body and the "linnen" that covers her and a lamb's body and the fleece that covers the lamb reinforces Lucrece's spiritual and bodily relation to innocent sheep, biblical creatures favored by God.

In the modern world, for many of us, those biblical narratives can exist in a religious realm separate from science, but to Renaissance readers, those narratives could easily explain the natural world.³² Topsell reports that ancient authors say that sheep who drink from various rivers can, in consequence, give birth to either white or black lambs; when sheep drink from other rivers they can turn yellow, and, similarly, sheep who drink river water can change color from black to white or vice versa. In relation to these phenomena, Topsell says that these "things do not come to passe by miracle, but also by the power of nature, as may appeare by the History of *Iacob*, when he serued his father in law *Laban*."³³ Topsell then relates that biblical "History" and explains what that story means for sheep in his Renaissance world: "Vpon this action of the Patriarke *Iacob* it is cleare by testimony of holy Scripture, that diuers colours layed before sheepe at the time of their carnall copulation, doe cause them to bring forth such colours as they see with their eyes."³⁴ For Topsell, the Jacob story proves that sheep can change color naturally; it also proves that the ancient authors are correct about the color-changing capacities of sheep. The sheep references in *Lucrece* share a cultural context with Topsell's natural history, a context in which people understood other

people in relation to biblical stories, and in which sheep and acknowledged products of sheep bodies figured in daily life. Those biblical stories also determined people's understanding of, and care of, sheep—Topsell's text offers advice on caring for livestock. Scripture also inspired people to both act and not act like sheep and to see themselves as shepherds in a much more literal (and even figurative) sense than many people in England and America do today.³⁵ As Boehrer points out, when we look at sheep in Renaissance texts, "there is no sustainable distinction between" their "literal and figurative capacities."³⁶ Lucrece's lamb identity allies her with scriptural and actual sheep, creatures to be protected, subject to the predation of wolves and dogs. The "pen" and "fold" metaphors also make Tarquin into a shepherd who, rather than guarding his sheep, becomes the attacker he should have fended off.

Lucrece's lamb identity and Tarquin's predatory identity appear again when the narrator describes the rape's aftermath in linked and parallel similes: "Hee like a theeuish dog creeps sadly thence, / Shee like a wearied Lamb lies panting there" (736–7). Line 694 compares Tarquin to overfed hawks and hounds. Fifty-four lines later, the first of these paired similes continues this theme of poorly managed hunting companions. The poem gives us a hound-like Tarquin who has behaved as if he were subject to poor instruction. In his manual on hunting, George Gascoigne explains how gentlemen should "gouverne" their dogs in relation to sheep:

if there be any dog that is so ill taught as he would runne at a sheep or any such tame beast, you must couple him with a ram or a stout Sheepe, and with your wand you must all to pay him and beat him a good while, crying and threatening, to the end that another time he may know the rate of such as use it.³⁷

A dog that will attack a defenseless sheep, a creature he should work to protect, or at least whom he should not see as prey, is a dog who deserves to be severely beaten. *Lucrece* characterizes such a dog as a thief who "creeps," walks surreptitiously, cringing or in a childlike manner.³⁸ Tarquin's identification here as a "theeuish dog" is a complicated predatory identity; he acts like a dog, a predator who should serve shepherds and protect sheep or who should serve what Gascoigne calls "*Men of Noble kind*" when they hunt, but he is a failed predatory creaturely companion, and he is ashamed of his illicit predation. He leaves the rape like a cringing cur.

Gascoigne explains that "a ram or a stout Sheepe" can be used to train a hound not to attack smaller, defenseless, sheep. The world of sheep that the poem refers to is the same world of sheep that Topsell and Gascoigne describe. This is an easily understood differentiated sheep world, just as the world these men lived and wrote in contained a differentiated, hierarchical dog world. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus's hounds are

immeasurably superior to and even categorically different than Starveling's dog. Likewise, Tarquin as a sheep is a categorically different sheep than Lucrece. When Lucrece wakes up to find Tarquin assaulting her, his hand on her chest, the narrator calls his hand, "Rude Ram to batter such an Iuorie wall" (464). In this description, Tarquin's hand is in the same condition as his whole body. He acts like the kind of a sheep who should serve humans but instead destroys their property. Not incidentally, this description highlights the whiteness that the lamb metaphor offers. The narrator specifies that Lucrece has "white fleece" and, in contrast to the "rude ram," her chest is like an "Iuorie wall." The ram metaphor makes Tarquin like a prey animal, but that prey animal is strong and potentially destructive, and it is also on the flawed, nonwhite edge of prey animals.

A lamb and a wolf are conventional metaphors for a victim and a criminal, Lucrece and Tarquin; they also may well be another instance of what Boehrer calls "the inveterate dyad of sheep (or lamb) and wolf." Boehrer points out that England's wolves had largely been hunted to extinction by the time Shakespeare was writing. He argues that references to that sheep/wolf dyad are not a "reflection of contemporary environmental circumstances; instead they acquire the character of literary convention."³⁹ I would argue, however, that what Shakespeare's usage of the sheep/wolf dyad points us to, in *The Rape of Lucrece* at least, is not only literary convention. The poem nods to a predator/prey relation that structured human and nonhuman creaturely life and that was, even more significantly, acknowledged to structure life in the world. In his natural history of four-footed beasts, Topsell explains that to humans, "[h]aving thus brought the sheepe to their deliuey for the multiplication of kinde, it then resteth to prouide that the new borne lambe be secured from Dogs, Wolues, Foxes, Crowes, Rauens, and all enemies to this innocent beast."⁴⁰ He also says, "In the story of the Dogges we have shewed already how necessary a sheapheards Dog is to the flocke, to defend them both from Wolues and Foxes."⁴¹ When Lucrece rails at personified Opportunity and says, "Thou sets the wolfe where he the lambe may get," she is invoking a well-rehearsed "literary convention" (878). But wolves were not only literary convention in Shakespeare's world. Topsell's natural history nods to the presence of wolves in other countries besides England. Wolves were real predators in the world, not just ideas, and Tarquin's wolf identity refers to that reality as well as to conventional literary uses of these creatures.⁴²

As well as referring to wolf predation of sheep, the poem floats a fantasy that predators can abandon predation. After the rape, Lucrece imagines herself singing with Philomel in "some darke deepe desert" in an effort to change beastly predatory nature. She says to Philomel that in that desert, "we will vnfold / To creatures stern, sad tunes to change their kinds, / Since men proue beasts, let beasts bear gentle minds" (1146–8).⁴³ Earlier in the poem, Lucrece imagines that Tarquin can be turned from

his “foul desire” to exploit her prey-like innocence to become a king who will protect the innocent; in these lines, she believes that other creatures might stop being killers (611–13). The narrator had previously compared Tarquin “To the rough beast, that knows no gentle right / Nor ought obeyes but his fowle appetite” (545–6). In her fantasy moment with Philomel, Lucrece imagines rough beasts transformed to gentle beasts. Tarquin has abandoned himself to his beastly, predatory nature, and since he has transformed into a beast, she and Philomel can act like Orpheus and convert the minds of killing beasts to “gentle minds.” They will no longer be “creatures stern.”

When Lucrece characterizes the predatory beasts she and Philomel will tame as “creatures stern,” she employs an adjective that Shakespeare applies indifferently to many entities that maim and kill, including things, humans, and nonhuman creatures. The *OED* entry for “sterne” records the diminution of possible usages of the word in modernity; as an adjective, “stern” now generally applies to “persons and things personified, their dispositions and temper.” The word means “severe,” but it no longer customarily denotes death and murder, and it is no longer used to apply to nonhuman creatures’ minds. But in Shakespeare’s texts, it was a word that characterized a thing that kills, a body intent on killing, and also a low-status man. The history of the usage of “stern” can be read as a miniature history of how humans have regarded human and beasts’ minds and also of how beasts and low-status men were once easily comparable.

“Stern” used to be applied to abstract and concrete things that kill as well as to people.⁴⁴ The word also applied to killing and maiming creatures, including humans. Shakespeare has *Titus Andronicus*’s Marcus ask Lavinia “what sterne vngentle hands” have cut her arms off, and, in other plays, he applies the adjective to what hungry lions do and to both actual and Petrarchan sonnet murder.⁴⁵ Hamlet characterizes his plan to kill Claudius as “sterne effects,” and in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Demetrius use a Petrarchan commonplace when he accuses Hermia of having “Pierst” him “through the heart with” her “stearne cruelty”; that accusation comes in the same speech in which he twice calls Hermia “the murderer.”⁴⁶ Another of Shakespeare’s usages indicates the slippery slope between humans who kill and beasts. In *3Henry VI*, the Duke of York famously calls Queen Margaret a “Tygres Heart, wrapt in a Womans Hide,” and he also says, “Women are soft, milde, pittifull, and flexible; / Thou, sterne, obdurate, flintie, rough, remorselesse.”⁴⁷ In the Renaissance, as Lucrece’s transformation fantasy suggests, predatory beasts like tigers had “stern” “minds,” bent on killing, just as characters like Hamlet and Queen Margaret could be imagined to have. “Stern” also appears in a status insult launched by Margaret’s lover, the Duke of Suffolk. In *2Henry VI*, Suffolk insults the Earl of Warwick, saying, “Blunt-witted Lord, ignoble in demeanor, / If ever Lady wrong’d her Lord so

much, / Thy mother tooke into her blamefull Bed / Some sterne vntutur'd Churle."⁴⁸ Warwick is deeply offended at the insult, but the play does not question Suffolk's assumptions: that an uneducated rustic man is "stern" and immoral. That the word "stern" could package meanings that seem so disparate to modernity—low-status, immoral, violent, bent on killing—and that it could be applied so widely, to things, people, and beasts, point to very different ways of understanding minds and bodies. Lucrece and the poem imagine that beasts might be converted to have "gentle minds." I would argue that the fact that beasts are no longer characterized as stern points to the removal of personality from the world of beasts. This creaturely world in which beasts could be called stern and a bird could tame a stern beast, a world divided into predators and prey, was very differently divided than our own.

The Rape of Lucrece and the Hunt

In the conclusion to *Shakespeare and the Hunt*, Edward Berry claims that Shakespeare "probes" questions about hunting "energetically, forcing us to consider, even in the flash of a metaphor, what it is to be a hunter and what to be a hunter's prey."⁴⁹ Berry mentions that in *The Rape of Lucrece*, "Lucrece is compared to a frightened doe, and her rape becomes thereby a kind of hunt," but Berry does not treat the hunting references in the poem extensively.⁵⁰ As he suggests, and as the previous section shows, the prey references in the poem can help readers to see Lucrece as innocent, helpless, and victimized. In addition, however, the poem's hunting references help, as we have seen, to construct a realm of noble human hunting that the poem cordons off from the beastly predation that Tarquin is engaged in. Along with multiple references to Lucrece as a prey animal, the poem specifically refers to what Berry calls "the culture of the hunt," not only to criticize Tarquin as a predator, but also to criticize him as a nobleman who does not hunt the way nobles should. Lucrece's doe identity and Tarquin's likeness to overfed hounds and hawks cooperate to further compromise his alliance with noble huntsmen. As Suzanne J. Walker suggests, noble hunters pursued deer, especially stags, not for food but for a "powerful sense of elite identity, as aristocrat, landowner, and warrior."⁵¹ Tarquin is not a Renaissance aristocrat, but the poem positions him as a noble warrior, and it is this identity that he compromises in his misplaced and appalling hunting practice. The poem directly refers to aristocratic hunting and to the ways that human hunting should fit into the creaturely world order. *Lucrece* does not condemn noble hunting culture; rather, it condemns Tarquin for violating the rules of the hunt.

Rather than acting like an aristocratic hunter, Tarquin hunts the pure Lucrece as if he were a beast:

Shee the picture of pure pietie,
Like a white Hinde under the grypes sharpe clawes,

Pleades in a wilderness where are no lawes
To the rough beast, that knowes no gentle right,
Nor ought obayes but his fowle appetite. (542–45)

It is not clear whether by the word “grype” Shakespeare means a griffin or a vulture, but “Hinde” definitely means a doe.⁵² The simile positions Lucrece as a white, and therefore pure, doe, being hunted in a lawless wilderness, outside the aristocratic hunting realm, a realm that in the Renaissance was entirely controlled and ritually ordered. Instead of being a nobleman who hunts within those bounds, in this simile Tarquin is a “rough beast, that knows no gentle right.” He is the opposite of a “gentle” or noble man whose hunting was constructed as “a courtly form of battle,” meant to recall and refer to such a man’s military endeavors.⁵³ As Berry suggests, “military rationales for hunting in the period” may well be “nostalgic.”⁵⁴ *Lucrece* may not refer to the complexity of the arguments that surrounded hunting in Shakespeare’s own time, but it does invoke a classical model of hunting that related the practice to “justice and temperance” as well as to the “arts of war.”⁵⁵ Tarquin’s inability to temper his lust is invoked here in the guise of his failure as a noble hunter.

Tellingly, Lucrece appeals to Tarquin specifically as a noble huntsman. The poem says that she asks him to “stoope to Honor” and “coniures him “[b]y knighthood” and “by gentrie” (574, 569). And what she conjures him to do is to hunt in the classical aristocratic mode: “End thy ill ayme, before thy shoote be ended,” she says, “He is no wood-man that doth bend his bow, / To strike a poor vnseasonable Doe” (580–1). Lucrece’s diction comes from the particular vocabulary of elite hunting. Gascoigne invokes a scene in which elite men recall the hunt: “reioycing and recreating their nobleminde with rehersall which hound hunted best, and which huntsman hunted moste like a woodman.”⁵⁶ Lucrece’s address to Tarquin as a huntsman who is acting like “no wood-man” is an intricate speech act. She asks him to be a hunter, but to aim his weapon at a different prey creature, not an “vnseasonable Doe” like her. Aiming at her, the wife of another nobleman, would violate his honor, the season in which he should hunt. To complete his “shoot” aimed at such an object means he will abandon his aristocratic identity. Aiming at her will end his ability to shoot as a “woodman,” the best of the aristocratic huntsmen.

Just as the narrator identifies her as a doe, Lucrece happily embraces her doe identity in her quest to reform Tarquin into a noble woodman. She positions herself as a “poor vnseasonable Doe,” a deer who should not be hunted under elite human laws. The poem identifies her as “like a white Hind” and as like “a poor vnseasonable Doe”; it also later characterizes her indecision as like that of “the poore frightened Deare that stands at gaze, / Wildly determining which way to flie” (1149–50). Walker explains that the noble hunting treatise that Gascoigne translates constructs a hunted stag as an individual: “[I]f individual identity is a

privilege of the subject, it is also, in the hunt, the hallmark of the victim . . . the very fact of being the object of the hunt has transformed” the stag “into an independent subject.”⁵⁷ If Gascoigne’s text makes a deer into a subject in order to construct a noble hunting identity, *Lucrece* constructs Tarquin’s victim as a doe in order to reemphasize Lucrece’s innocence and to further criticize Tarquin’s predation. It is also possible that because of modernity’s divisions, we can read subject/object relations askew from their Renaissance significations. The stag in Gascoigne’s text is a noble prey. As Walker suggests, that status makes the deer “inherently different” than other deer who “remain generic collections of useful organs and bones.”⁵⁸ The culture that produced Gascoigne’s text and *The Rape of Lucrece* also saw many, many people as generic and of use. At times and for the elite, certain dogs, birds, and deer could have subjectivity, and certain humans could be denied that status easily. Lucrece’s doe identity refers to that state of affairs. I would argue that it cannot be read completely and accurately if we see it only as a way of objectifying her.

Lively Objects

If a line can be said to be blurred before it is drawn, *The Rape of Lucrece* blurs modernity’s firm, if imaginary, line demarcating objects from subjects. That line is imaginary because, as Latour, Bennett, and Despret suggest, people have never lived in a world in which objects do not act. *Lucrece*, however, creates, and perhaps nods to, a world without that imaginary line. We have glimpsed that world already in the way that the adjective “stern” functioned in the Renaissance to designate things that kill as well as people and other creatures that kill. The adjective “stern” troubles the idea that the Renaissance world firmly distinguished between subject and object. *Lucrece*’s vivified world of objects also shows us objects with subjectivity. In the stanza beginning with “This said” in which Tarquin threatens to stab Lucrece, we have seen an example of what Haraway calls “cross species sociality.” In that stanza, we have also seen that Tarquin and the towering falcon, to which his weapon is compared, share grammatical personhood: both are “he.” Notable as well in the “This said” stanza is the subjectivity the poem awards what it calls Tarquin’s “Romaine blade” (505). That blade, the “Fauchion,” is the subject of the stanza’s governing simile, the blade “which” is “like a Faulcon” (506). That blade is also “insulting”: “under his insulting Fauchion lies / Harmesle LVCRETIA (509–10). The “insulting” blade could be called pathetic fallacy, after Ruskin, or just run-of-the-mill personification in this trope-abundant poem.⁵⁹ However, what looks like a common figure of speech may appear differently in the context of the other very lively non-living actants that permeate *The Rape of Lucrece*.

The poem describes a lively world, a world in which objects seem to have personhood and act, and in which their presence has effects.

A spate of these actants are characterized by Tarquin as “lets,” things that attempt to stop him as he advances to Lucrece’s bed: “the dores, the wind, the glove” (330, 325). The “dores” are particularly lively: they have “locks,” “portall[s],” and a “threshold,” all of which act in the poem, and the poem’s “locks” have voices as well as seeming minds: “The lockes betweene her chamber and his will, / Ech one by him inforst, retires his ward: / But as they open they all rate his ill” (302–4). These locks’ noise, their rating, seems to scold Tarquin.⁶⁰ The locks also have personal pronouns, both gendered (“his ward”) and neutral plural (“they”). In addition, they have a creaturely function (as watchmen or guards), and they “retire,” retreating like armies “when confronted by superior force.”⁶¹

Rather than using the definition that would give the locks consciousness and activity, the *OED* launches a new definition in order to classify the usage of “retire” in this sentence—“Ech one by him inforst, retires his ward”: “To draw or pull back, esp[ecially] to a previous position; to retract.” That definition, for which the *OED* can find no prior usage, may be an attempt by the *OED* editors to dismiss the seeming humanity or creaturely liveliness of the “retir[ing]” locks. The dictionary collects another couple of usages that apply to inanimate objects; however, the dictionary’s desire to initiate this definition with this poem’s usage of “retire” is questionable since retiring is primarily a creaturely action, of people and other creatures, in the majority of its Renaissance usages and even in some of the usages the dictionary collects to support that definition.

The liveliness of the locks is certainly figurative, but it also points to the activity of numerous objects in the poem. These locks, which can retire as watchmen do when they are forced to, are located in doors whose thresholds have desire as well as voice: “The threshold grates the doore to haue him heard” (306). This threshold seems to rub noisily against the door with a purpose in mind. It wants Tarquin to be heard. Likewise, the “portall[s]” that hold the locks are “vnwilling,” and they let in “wind,” “which warres with [Tarquin’s] torch to make him staie, / And blowes the smoake of it into his face” (309–12). Ignoring the desiring, noisy threshold, the reluctant portal, and this active and seemingly intentional wind, Tarquin advances and takes Lucrece’s glove from where it lies in the rushes: “And griping it, the needle his finger pricks, / As who should say this glove to wanton trickes / Is not inur’d; returne again in hast. / Thou seest our mistresse ornaments are chast” (319–22). As Katherine Eisaman Maus suggests, “The narrator describes the needle as in effect warning Tarquin of Lucrece’s refusal to tolerate outrage.”⁶² The needle’s active intervention and supposed speech is qualified in the poem; it acts “in effect.” Unlike the locks which make noise and thus seem to “really” speak, the needle pricks, and the narrator supplies what it might say: “as who should say.” Again, however, the needle has personality in its pronoun; it acts as a “who” and not a “which” or a “that.”⁶³

In the rape scene, after being blinded by either her light or his own shame, Tarquin opens his eyes to a vision of Lucrece's hand under her head on her pillow; a pillow which the narrator describes as another very active and emotionally attuned object:

Her lillie hand, her rosie cheeke lies vnder,
Coosning the pillow of a lawfull kisse:
Who therefore angrie seemes to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his blisse. (386–89)

In this image, Lucrece's pillow has a seeming mind with the ability to be deceived or cheated (cozened) and to become angry. That pillow is also imagined to have the ability to swell in relation to his (its) desire, as if the pillow could have "his blisse" if it (he) could be touched by Lucrece's lips. I am not suggesting that this exceptionally lively pillow is actually alive in the poem. Rather, I am arguing that the pillow is part of the creaturely world in which it is easily imagined to have activity and even mind. The pillow may be particularly articulated because it (he) would be made of what were once the parts of birds: feathers. In the context of a world in which pillows were once bird bodies, the pillow's swelling liveliness is inherently a creaturely liveliness even inside a trope.

The lively non-living actants in *Lucrece* are features of the poem's creaturely matrix. They desire as Tarquin desires; they attempt to delay Tarquin, and they live, speak, and act in a set of stanzas that also include "real creatures" in Lucrece's house and imagined creatures in Tarquin's mind. Just as the threshold and the locks make noise to warn Lucrece, "Night-wandering weezels shreek to see him there" (307). The weasels "shreek," the threshold "grates," the locks "rate," but he dismisses all of this activity: "he takes [them all] for accidentall things of triall" (326). However, in his dismissal, Tarquin imagines that the hardships he has encountered are like late frosts that, when experienced in the context of the spring, "giue the sneaped birds more cause to sing" (333). In Tarquin's simile, those birds have creaturely reason, and they have "cause": they sing because they know that spring is here, not mindlessly, but with the season in their minds. They are as far removed from clockwork, undifferentiated "animals" as the "things" in Lucrece's room are removed from "matter" attached to "automatism or mechanism."⁶⁴ I am suggesting here that the creatures Tarquin imagines have minds that are unlike the minds that the poem lends to objects. The objects that are given minds in the poem do not "really" have minds, but they do have activity; they are actors in the poem and actors in the world. *Lucrece* foregrounds their activity, does not deny that activity as a feature of the creaturely world. In a world in which the creation of objects was closer to the foreground of human consciousness, made objects mingled with humans, acted, and were easily imagined to have mind and purpose. In this poem, Tarquin would have been better advised had he listened to their noises and pricks.

Perhaps this reading of the poem can also offer a new angle on the critical conversation about how the poem objectifies Lucrece. As Belsey suggests, “Collatine sees his wife as a possession,” and “Lucrece does not challenge this subject-position in words but enacts another.”⁶⁵ Belsey is responding to a feminist conversation about the poem that in turn responds to the many instances in the poem where Lucrece is classified as an object, a possession. Not only does Colatine advertise his wife as his possession and her honor as a “jewel,” the narrator calls Lucrece’s honor “so rich a thing, / Braving compare” (39–40). And when Tarquin is advancing toward her “chamber dore,” the narrator calls her “the blessed thing he sought” (340). As Belsey suggests, Lucrece acts as a subject even as she is categorized by the men around her as an object. The creaturely reading in this chapter, however, may also suggest that a categorical subject-object distinction is a feature of a world later than Shakespeare’s world and the one he created in *The Rape of Lucrece*. Lucrece interacts with the painted story of Troy as if the painted figures have subjectivity. Likewise, or in a similar manner, the objects that surround her speak to Tarquin and attempt to block his path to the destruction he will initiate. Those objects, and the humans who interact with them, exist in a world with abundant creatures, creatures who sing, speak, and think in the poem. The narrator calls Lucrece a thing and a creature in a world of things and creatures, things and creatures not categorically differentiated from one another in their ability to act. Her body, like the bodies of all the creatures around her, is a made thing, made by God, and will decay as things decay. Her soul, in contrast, will fly like bird, escaping out of the hole she creates in her body, its casing:

Euen here she sheathed in her harmlesse breast
A harmfull knife, that thence her soule vnsheathed,
. . .
Her contrite sighes vnto the clouds bequeathed
Her winged sprite, & through her wounds doth flie
Liues lasting date, from cancel’d destinie. (1723–29)

Her body is not nearly as significant as that winged soul. As the next chapter will suggest, we risk misreading Shakespeare’s texts when we see them as valuing the body the way that we do.

Notes

- 1 Michel Callon and Bruno Latour explain that “[n]onhumans are party to all our disputes, but instead of being those closed, frozen, and estranged things-in-themselves whose part has been either exaggerated or downplayed, they are actants—open or closed, active or passive, wild or domesticated, far away or near, depending on the result of the interactions. When they enter the scene they are endowed with all the nonhuman powers that rationalists like them to have, as well as the warmth and uncertainty that social realists recognize

- in humans. But symmetrically, humans, instead of acting like humans-among-themselves whose part has been minimized or exaggerated, are granted all the powers of discussion, speech, and negotiation sociologists like them to have, but in addition they endorse the fate of all the nonhumans for whom rationalists and technologists are so concerned" (Michel Callon and Bruno Latour. "Don't Throw the Baby Out with the Bath School!: A Reply to Collins and Yearley." *Science as Practice and Culture*. Ed. Andrew Pickering. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. 343–68).
- 2 Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 71.
 - 3 Jane Bennett. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. 31. See Raber. *Animal Bodies/Renaissance Culture*; and Robert N. Watson. "The Ecology of Self in *Midsummer Night's Dream*." *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Eds. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. 33–56, for accounts of intermingling inter-species bodies in Renaissance texts.
 - 4 Vinciane Despret. "Sheep Do Have Opinions." *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*. Eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. 360–9. 131.
 - 5 All references to *The Rape of Lucrece* will be given by line numbers in parentheses in the text of the chapter except in cases where the length of the citation would be distracting. Quotations are from the 1594 Quarto (*Lucrece*).
 - 6 See Misako Matsuda. "The Bee Emblem in *The Rape of Lucrece*." *Hot Questrists After the English Renaissance*. Ed. Yasunari Takahashi. New York: AMS Press, 2000. 131–44. Matsuda reads the bee emblem as a political allegory. See also Sarah Plant. "Shakespeare's Lucrece as Chaste Bee." *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 49 (1996): 51–7.
 - 7 See the supplementary note to lines 1366–1568 in William Shakespeare. *The Poems*. Ed. John Roe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 284–5. See also Richard Meek. "Ekphrasis in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale*." *SEL* 46.2 (2006): 389–414 and Marion A. Wells. "'To Find a Face Where All Distress Is Stell'd': 'Enlargeia', Ekphrasis and Mourning in *The Rape of Lucrece* and the *Aeneid*." *Comparative Literature* 54.2 (2002): 97–126.
 - 8 Catherine Belsey. "Invocation of the Visual Image: Ekphrasis in *Lucrece* and Beyond." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.2 (2012): 175–98.
 - 9 Margaret Farrand Thorp. "Shakespeare and the Fine Arts." *PMLA* 46.3 (1931): 672–93.
 - 10 Shakespeare is very probably stressing his own ability with a conceit here, employing polyptoton and punning at the same time, since the Greek army is drawn in two senses, collected in front of Troy and painted in front of the painted Troy.
 - 11 1386, 1412, 1394–5, 1528.
 - 12 The description of the painting introduces only one nonhuman creature, and only within a simile, when the narrator says that the men portrayed listening to Nestor, "seem'd to swallow vp his sound aduice / . . . / As if some Marmaide did their eares intice" (1409–11). It may be that the symbolic resonance of the Troy story prompted the inclusion of a symbolic creature. Valerie Traub suggests that "in Renaissance typologies of the monstrous, the hybrid bodies of mermaids" signify a feminine identity that defies reproduction (*The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 131–2). Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey contend that in the period "mermaids represented the dangerous and

- destructive possibilities of uncontrolled sexuality” (“Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I.” *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540–1660*. Eds. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn. London: Reaktion Books, 1990. 11–35.14). On the history of mermaids and merpeople, see Horace Beck. *Folklore and the Sea*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973. 227–53.
- 13 In premodern tapestries that depict Troy’s defeat, that horse is centrally located. See Sir Sidney Colvin. “The Sack of Troy in Shakespeare’s ‘Lucrece’ and in Some Fifteenth-Century Drawings and Tapestries.” *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*. Ed. Israel Gollancz. Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1916. 88–99. Plates 1 and 2.
 - 14 See Lynn Enterline. *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Especially 163.
 - 15 Jane O. Newman. “‘And Let Mild Women to Him Lose Their Mildness’: Philomela, Female Violence, and Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (1994): 304–26.
 - 16 Catherine Belsey. “Tarquin Dispossessed: Expropriation and Consent in *The Rape of Lucrece*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52.3 (2001): 315–35.
 - 17 Newman. “‘And Let Mild Women to Him Lose Their Mildness’: Philomela, Female Violence, and Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece*.” 309.
 - 18 William Shakespeare. *The Rape of Lucrece: The Poems*. Ed. John Roe. 1079n.
 - 19 William Shakespeare. *The Rape of Lucrece: The Poems*. Ed. John Roe. 1611–12n.
 - 20 Edmund Spenser. “October.” *The Shepheardes Calendar: The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. 89–90.
 - 21 Pliny, the Elder. *The Historie of the World*. 282.
 - 22 Primaudaye. *The French Academie*. 759. Also see the madmen’s song in *The Duchess of Malfi*: “We’ll sing like swans, to welcome death, land die in love and rest” (Webster. *The Duchess of Malfi*. 4.2.72–3).
 - 23 John Edward Topsell. *The Fowles of Heauen or History of Birdes*. (1613–14). Eds. Thomas P. Harrison and F. David Hoeniger. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1972. 119–121.
 - 24 Berry suggests that the “image of a helpless animal surrounded by attacking predators haunts Shakespeare’s imagination and recurs throughout the plays” (*Shakespeare and the Hunt*. 218).
 - 25 *OED*. “devour.”
 - 26 The poem, of course, makes this point repeatedly. Tarquin is a “shame to knight-hood” and “A martiall man” who is, instead, “soft fancies slaue” (197, 200).
 - 27 This is the gloss given to the line in *The Norton Shakespeare*. John Roe glosses the phrase as “devouring madness” (*The Rape of Lucrece: The Poems*. Ed. John Roe. 171n.556).
 - 28 Donna Haraway. *The Companion Species Manifesto*. 4.
 - 29 *The Winter’s Tale*. TLN 1498, 3.3.55; *Macbeth*. TLN 809, 2.3.55–6.
 - 30 Edward Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. 598.
 - 31 See the supplementary note to line 680 in Roe’s edition which discusses the possibility that “linen” might refer either to her bedclothes or to a night smock. For the controversy over the meaning of “linen,” see *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Poems*. Ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1938. 175n.
 - 32 The best account I know of the different temporalities that can ally some people today with the premodern world and some with scientific explanation is Latour’s *We Have Never Been Modern*.
 - 33 Edward Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. 605.

- 34 Topsell. 606.
- 35 See Yachnin. "Sheepishness in *The Winter's Tale*." especially 216–19.
- 36 Boehrer. *Animal Characters*. 186.
- 37 George Gascoigne. *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting*. London, 1611. 31. The *OED* offers a definition of "rate" based on this usage: "A rebuke to a dog." It seems possible that this way of using the word, which the *OED* finds in three hunting manuals and a shooting magazine, comes from a specific vocabulary used by hunters with hounds. It may also be a usage in text that comes from reading Gascoigne's usage of "rate" in this way. It also seems possible that Gascoigne is using the word to talk about the poor value of such a hound.
- 38 *OED*. "creep."
- 39 Boehrer. *Animal Characters*. 165.
- 40 Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. 608.
- 41 Topsell. 611.
- 42 In addition to exploring the world of predatory beasts outside of England, the poem refers to imaginary (to us) predators in order to describe Tarquin's creaturely depravity. He is described as having "a Cockatrice dead-killing eye" and of being a "grype" with "sharp claws" (540, 543). Topsell categorizes the Cockatrice as an existing serpent. See 119–25 in *The Historie of Serpents: Or, the Second Booke of LIVING Creatures*. London, 1608. Griffins do not appear in Topsell's history of beasts although unicorns are present.
- 43 In this stanza, we can see how deeply Lucrece has identified with, and empathizes with, the nightingale as Philomel. Lucrece says, "And [because] poore bird thou sing'st not in the day, / As shaming anie eye should thee behold," she will find the faraway place to sing to the predators (1142–3). She and the bird share shame, morality, and ambition.
- 44 In his eponymous play, Richard III calls battle "Sterne Alarums," and, in the poem of that name, Venus tells Adonis that she has been courted by the "sterne, and direfull god of warre"; likewise, Rumour in *2Henry IV* calls personified war "the sterne Tyrant." (*Richard III*. TLN 6, 1.1.6; *Venus and Adonis*. 98; *2Henry IV*. TLN 16, Induction 14).
- 45 In *The First Part of Henry VI*, Talbot says that young Talbot brandished "His bloodie Sword" over him to protect him, "And like a hungry Lyon, did commence / Rough deeds of Rage and sterne Impatience" (TLN 2236–8, 4.7.6–8).
- 46 *Titus Andronicus*. TLN 1089, 2.4.16; *Hamlet*. TLN 2510, 3.4.120. *The Norton Shakespeare* glosses this phrase as "intended acts." Robert Miola's Norton edition glosses it as "harsh purposed actions" (William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Ed. Robert S. Miola. New York: Norton, 2011. 82n. 129–30); the Everyman Shakespeare says "my fierce impulses" (William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Ed. John F. Andrews. London: J.M. Dent, 1989. 206n.126); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. TLN 1082, 3.2.59.
- 47 TLN 603, 607–8, 1.4.138, 142–3. For an interesting discussion of Margaret and of "Robert Greene's famous attack on Shakespeare" using the tiger's heart line, see Phyllis Rackin. *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990. 157–8. 157n.14.
- 48 TLN 1915–18, 3.2.210–13. Suffolk is responding to an insult by Warwick that compares Suffolk to a butcher and Cardinal Beaufort to a predatory bird.
- 49 Berry. *Shakespeare and the Hunt*. 225.
- 50 Berry. 35.

- 51 Suzanne J. Walker. "Making and Breaking the Stag." *Early Modern Zoology: The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts*. Eds. Karl E. E. Enekel and Paul J. Smith. Leiden: Brill, 2007. 317–37.
- 52 The *OED* classifies this usage of "grype" as a vulture. The dictionary also cites contemporary usages of the word as meaning "griffin." Modern Shakespeare editors sometimes offer both possibilities and sometimes just "griffin." The poem has just said that Tarquin has "a Cockatrice dead killing eye" (540), which may help the case for griffin, also a mythical beast. Berry explains that "the female of the red deer was a 'hind'" (*Shakespeare and the Hunt*. 17).
- 53 Walker. "Making and Breaking the Stag." 320.
- 54 Berry. *Shakespeare and the Hunt*. 24.
- 55 Berry. 24, 23.
- 56 Gascoigne. *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting*. 128.
- 57 Walker. "Making and Breaking the Stag." 329. For the relation of Gascoigne's text to the text Walker is specifically reading, *La Vénerie*, see Walker. 318.
- 58 Walker. 329.
- 59 For an extended treatment of the poem's tropes, see Katherine Eisaman Maus. "Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37.1 (1986): 66–82. Regarding the pervasiveness of tropes in the poem, Maus suggests that "[b]oth Tarquin and Lucrece as well as the narrator, as we have seen, privilege particular tropes—they treat them as if they were unqualifiedly true, using them as guides to judgement and to action. But this valorization seems fraught with difficulties in a poem that emphasizes the limitations of its metaphors and advertises a variety of interpretive options even for tropes the significance of which might seem obvious" (79).
- 60 Notes or glosses of this word explain their [be]rating as creaking or squeaking. See for example *The Norton Shakespeare* gloss to line 304. The *OED* records many uses of the word "rate" to mean scolding or rebuking but none that are figurative. Thus the dictionary appears to ignore this usage.
- 61 *OED*. "ward, n.2" "retire, v."
- 62 Maus. "Taking Tropes Seriously." 79.
- 63 This usage of "who" corresponds to the *OED*'s definition 11c.: "Used instead of *which* in reference to an inanimate thing or things; chiefly with personification. (also with suggestion of personality, e.g. of a life-like statue); sometimes as of a ship, approaching sense).
- 64 Bennett. *Vibrant Matter*. 3.
- 65 Belsey. "Tarquin Dispossessed." 329.

4 Falstaff and “the Modern Constitution”

Falstaff has become a kind of god in the mythology of modern man.
(John Dover Wilson¹)

One of the strangest features of modern Shakespearean criticism
has been the apotheosis of Falstaff.
(G. F. Brady²)

In the creaturely world, bodies made people like other creatures, and bodies also made people different from one another. As we have seen in chapter two, workmen’s bodies were thick skinned and hard handed. Also, all mortals had humoral bodies, but as Paster shows, “though in one sense all bodies were equally humoral since they were equally material . . . they were [also] humorally all different . . . humoral difference guaranteed that the structure of humoralism would reflect hierarchical social values and could be used powerfully to naturalize” those hierarchical values.³ Since all mortals, including humans, shared the humoral body and its passions, the humoral body connected people to other creatures.⁴ At the same time, the humoral body enabled, and could be used to explain, distinctions among people (and among other mortals). Relative control over the passions was ideally thought to distinguish men with better blood from common men and to distinguish men with better blood from women, although this ideal was often challenged by the bad self-control of many gentle and noblemen. Tarquin’s struggles with himself are a good example of this challenge. In this humoral world, denial of the body offered a voluntary way for humans to distinguish themselves from one another and from other mortals. That is, because bodies connected all mortals, humans could secure their humanity by rejecting bodily desires and even the body itself. Paradoxically for modernity, Lucrece secures her humanity by abandoning her “tainted” body, whereas Tarquin becomes beastly by succumbing to bodily desire.

The Renaissance disdain for the indulgence of bodily desire is familiar to scholars, but scholars tend to deny its far-reaching implications for

understanding Shakespearean characters who praise and indulge their bodies. In a world where the body connected all mortals, praise of the body could be seen as praise of bestial, not human, nature. Renaissance disdain for bodies argues against celebratory interpretations of characters who wholeheartedly embrace the body, the most prominent of whom is certainly Falstaff. No Shakespearean character loves his body so much and is so intent to preserve it. As Phyllis Rackin suggests, Falstaff is convinced that "material, physical life is the ultimate reality and *summum bonum*."⁵ In addition, no Shakespearean character is so in love with youth, even though his own youth is a fantasy. As I will show, the characters around him see Falstaff as a beast, and his love of youth is a feature of his beast-identity. In contrast, Falstaff's devotion to his body's pleasures and to youth made him seem essentially human to many twentieth-century critics. Not surprisingly, Harold Bloom is preeminent in this pack, calling Falstaff "the true and perfect image of life itself," but Bloom is hardly alone when he lauds Falstaff as the perfect man.⁶ For example, D. A. Traversi (1938) praises Falstaff's "real human understanding," a "humanity which the politicians, bent on the attainment of success, seem bound to exclude," and Rosalie Colie (1974) says that "[w]hat Falstaff offers Prince Hal is not only the symbolic freedoms of youth, but also a chance to practice at being human."⁷ More recently, James C. Bulman (2002) has called Falstaff "the all-too-human victim of a callous political system," and Andy Mousley (2007) has said that "history without Falstaff is history without a human face."⁸ These critics and many others see Falstaff's love of youth and his body as signaling his delightful human nature.⁹

The contrast between Falstaff's own celebration of his beast-like body and the critical celebration of him as epitomizing the human points to the contours of what Latour calls "the modern critical stance."¹⁰ Latour uses the word "modern" in a specific way, not as a purely temporal category (as it is used in my epigraphs) but as denoting a way of thinking. He argues that "to be a modern" means believing in the division between nature and society; "the modern critical stance" accepts Descartes's creation of "two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of human beings on the one hand; that of nonhumans on the other."¹¹ Additionally, for Latour's moderns, science has distinguished "animals" biologically from humans, and that species differentiation renders impossible phenomena that people in the Renaissance thought plausible, such as monsters born out of the sexual coupling of humans and beasts.¹² Through the lens of Latour's moderns, Falstaff's devotion to his embodied self cannot connect him to beasts since the body is one thing that makes all humans different from other mortals. Using Giorgio Agamben's terms, Falstaff is a character created within "the machine of earlier times" as a funny, even charming, devotee of his bestial nature. That character has then been reclassified within "the anthropological machine of the moderns" as the

quintessential human.¹³ But in Shakespeare's plays, Falstaff's devotion to his body and desires is beast-like. The celebratory response to Falstaff's love for his own body may teach us more about Latour's moderns than it does about Renaissance Falstaff. Falstaff's apotheosis as a premier human is a special case that may show us how mistaken "the modern critical stance" can be about the creaturely world.

Beastly Falstaff

Falstaff is the most beast-like of Shakespeare's human characters.¹⁴ Almost seventy years ago, Audrey Yoder counted sixty-seven "animal" comparisons for him in the two parts of *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, more than for any other Shakespearean human, including the suggestively embodied second and third runners-up, Caliban and Richard III.¹⁵ In his plays, Falstaff sounds like both a beast and a carrion bird, lusts as a cat does, and wallows in his various creaturely identities. However, not all of these references are equally visible to today's readers and audiences. Many of them involve beasts made into food or being prepared for human consumption. Today, what Derrida calls the industrialized "reduction of the animal . . . to production . . . of meat for consumption" and "all sorts of other end products" can blind humans to the reality of bodies.¹⁶ However, as we have seen in chapter one, those bodies and their significance were visible and important when Shakespeare was writing. Also, "In a daily diet of flesh humans experience[d] a reminder of the corruption of humanity."¹⁷ In addition, pethood has developed as a valued institution, making cats seem like family members to many people,¹⁸ and, as we have seen, birds are much less differentiated in the popular imagination than they were in Shakespeare's time. In addition, some of Shakespeare's creaturely vocabulary is now obscure, and some words which used to denote both humans and other creatures have lost their multiple referents. Falstaff's nonhuman identities and affinities were much more evident when he was conceived.

The first *Henry IV* play refers three times to the creaturely sounds Falstaff produces, none of which elevate his character. According to the Prince, Falstaff roars like a "Bull-Calfe." Later in the play, reinforcing the comparison to cattle, the Prince calls him "my sweet Beefe."¹⁹ At the end of the play's second act, Peto tells the Prince that Falstaff lies "fast asleepe behind the Arras, and snorting like a Horse," and in the play's fifth act, the Prince addresses Falstaff directly, saying to him, "Peace, Chewet, peace."²⁰ A chewet is a name for a small crow also called a jackdaw and a chough. They are easily domesticated birds who make a lot of noise.²¹ Shakespeare is playing on Falstaff's name, Jack, here as well as having the Prince call him a chattering tamable bird; Shakespeare may also be referring to what the *OED* finds as the more customary meaning of "chewet"—"A dish made of various kinds of meat or fish, chopped

fine, mixed with spices and fruits, and baked, fried, or boiled"—and to the root word "chew," Falstaff's second favorite activity, even if it is a poor second to drinking sack. We have seen that bird tropes can invoke a higher grade of human, but in this example, the Prince addresses Falstaff as a lowly, common, tamable bird.²² Likewise, when Falstaff sounds like a horse, all of the possible positive implications of horse metaphors seem deliberately dropped from the reference.²³ Later in the play, when Falstaff conditionally compares himself to a horse, he compares himself to a lowly equine: "And I haue not forgotten what the in-side of a Church is made of, I am a Pepper-Corne, a Brewers Horse." The Prince is like Pegasus, but Falstaff only snorts like a workman's horse.²⁴

Falstaff roars like a bull, chatters like a crow, and snorts like a horse in *1Henry IV*, and in that play and in *2Henry IV*, he identifies himself, and his cohorts identify him, as edible flesh. In *1Henry IV*, some of Falstaff's self-identifications come encased in the conditional sentence construction—"If I be not . . . , I am"—that is one of Falstaff's "oral signature[s]" in the play.²⁵ When he defends his imitation of Henry IV to the Prince, he says, "Depose me: if thou do'st it halfe so grauely, so maiestically, both in word and matter, hang me vp by the heeles for a Rabbet-sucker, or a Poulterers Hare."²⁶ And alone with the audience, he says, "If I be not asham'd of my Souldiers, I am a sow'ct-Gurnet."²⁷ In both cases, Falstaff's conditional syntax indicts him as the flesh in question. When he asks to be deposed, Falstaff says his discourse is more weighty than the Prince's, but the Prince tells the truth about Falstaff's vanity and his love of sack, whereas Falstaff blithely sacrifices his companions and lies about his own comportment: "[I]f that man should be lewdly giuen, he deceiues mee . . . I see Vertue in his Lookes . . . there is Vertue in that *Falstaffe*: him keepe with, the rest banish."²⁸ A self-justifying sinner is funnier than a truth-telling scolder, but Falstaff's conditional syntax makes him equivalent to a "Poulter's Hare," a slaughtered rabbit displayed for sale. In the case of his conditional self-comparison to "a sow'ct-Gurnet" (a pickled fish), when he speaks in soliloquy, Falstaff may be ashamed of his soldiers; however, in front of other characters, he displays them and disposes of them shamelessly. He is a pickled fish in public even if he is not when he is alone on stage.

In *1Henry IV*, Falstaff self-identifies as slaughtered and pickled flesh, and in both parts of *Henry IV*, the characters around Falstaff identify him and address him as butchered or about to be butchered cattle, oxen, and pigs. Acting as the King in their little play in the tavern, the Prince calls Falstaff "that rosted Manning Tree Oxe with the Pudding in his Belly."²⁹ In *2Henry IV*, Poins asks Bardolph, "And how doth the Martlemas, your Master?"; the Prince adds the question, "Doth the old Bore, feede in the old Franke."³⁰ In this scene, behind Falstaff's back, Poins calls him a fattened pig or cow prepared for a feast, and the Prince calls him a pig eating in a sty; a few scenes later, Dol Tearsheet sits on Falstaff's

lap and calls him a "whorson little tydie Batholomew Bore-pigge," a pig cooked for the St. Bartholomew's Day feast.³¹ Most of these pig comparisons insultingly point to Falstaff's gluttony. Likewise, Shakespeare has Falstaff thinking in terms of "Rabbet-sucker[s],"³² "Poulters Hare[s]," and "sow'ct-Gurnet[s]" to further and always characterize him as a man thinking about food (and drink). That gluttony, like his large belly, is a sign that he lacks the bodily control expected of a noble man. Shakespeare may well be stressing that gluttony primarily, but he does this by comparing Falstaff to edible flesh.

In *1Henry IV*, as well as offering to be hung up for sale by a poulter, Falstaff compares himself twice to a cat. He tells the Prince, "I am as vigilant as a Cat, to steale Creame."³³ This is his second self-identification as a cat in *1Henry IV*. In the first, Falstaff complains that he is "as Melancholly as a Gyb-cat."³⁴ The Prince offers alternative or additional similes, but Falstaff rejects those as "vnsauoury," implicitly claiming his own as more delicious. If many people today, including myself, see cats as beloved pets, they used to be seen as stinking, potentially disposable creatures.³⁵ Robert Darnton points to a long history of cat killing and torture in Europe.³⁶ Topsell's 1607 *Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes* informs its readers that although one might find cats useful "for the suppressing of small vermine," they are poisonous companions, causing "consumptions." He cautions, "[W]e must auoyde their harmes." He ends his disquisition on cats with medicinal recipes made from burnt cat heads and dried cat livers.³⁷ Likewise, Izaak Walton (1653) starts a recipe for a paste to make as bait for carp, "Take the flesh of a Rabet or Cat cut smal, and Bean-flower, or (if not easily got then) other flowre, and then mix these together."³⁸ For Walton, a cat is meat, useful for fish bait. In Shakespeare's other plays, cats are good for target practice and feature in lists of lowly creatures.³⁹ As a cat in the English Renaissance, Falstaff is more worm-like than prized.

Not all of Shakespeare's beast comparisons for Falstaff are as evident as cat or ox. For example, in both parts of *1Henry IV*, Falstaff is called a "Brawne," a name for a pig or boar fattened for human consumption, or, more broadly, for any flesh to be eaten.⁴⁰ This word no longer easily denotes meat, but Shakespeare uses the word this way and also, in other plays, to denote human flesh.⁴¹ Another word that signifies both beast and human flesh in the Renaissance appears twice in its beast guise in relation to Falstaff. In *1Henry IV*, the Prince calls Falstaff a "horson impudent imboast Rascall,"⁴² and in *2Henry IV* Doll Tearsheet addresses him as "you muddie Rascall."⁴³ A "rascal," among other things, could mean the "young, lean, or inferior deer of a herd, distinguished from the full-grown antlered bucks or stags."⁴⁴ Thus the Prince is calling Falstaff an inferior deer as well as a base immoral man.⁴⁵ Doll may be using "muddie" to mean without energy, or to mean immoral, but Falstaff replies to the beast connotation of "Rascall," denying that he is lean.

He says that women like Doll "make fat Rascalls."⁴⁶ Thus, he may liken himself to a deer, just not to a skinny deer.

In addition, the humans around Falstaff describe him as butter, tallow, and oil, and he embraces those identities in the same way that he embraces his "rascall" identity.⁴⁷ Metadramatically introducing Falstaff to the tavern scene in *1Henry IV*, the Prince cries, "Call in Ribs, call in Tallow," summoning Falstaff as meat and drippings.⁴⁸ In *2Henry IV*, the Lord Chief Justice attempts a simile to describe Falstaff's decrepitude: "you are as a candle, the better part burnt out," and Falstaff embroiders the simile: "A Wassell-Candle, my Lord, all Tallow."⁴⁹ Here Falstaff insists on the fatness of his candle-identity as well as the candle's beast-derived essence. Later in that play, the Prince calls Falstaff, "You whorson Candle-myne you";⁵⁰ a candle mine seems to be a Shakespearean coinage meaning a mine of tallow or fat.⁵¹ As well as describing Falstaff as made of tallow, the Prince asks Poins to see the fat man as "a dish of Butter" melted by the sun.⁵² In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare reinforces these identities: Falstaff calls himself "as subiect to heat as butter,"⁵³ and speaking as a fat Windsor stag, he asks, "[W]ho can blame me to pisse my Tallow."⁵⁴ Again, Falstaff not only accepts his beast-like body; he revels in it. Expanding the range of fat referents, Mistress Ford asks her friend Mistress Page the figurative question, "What tempest (I troa) threw this Whale, (with so many Tuns of oyle in his belly) a'shoare at Windsor?"⁵⁵ And Falstaff blames his earthly woes on the devil's fear that his oil "should set hell on fire."⁵⁶ Writing Falstaff as butter and dripping tallow, Shakespeare depended on an automatic association of his liquidity with beast fat. J. Dover Wilson explains,

"Tallow", a word often applied to [Falstaff], generally in opprobrium, is not rightly understood, unless two facts be recalled: first, that it meant to the Elizabethans liquid fat, as well as dripping or suet or animal fat rendered down; second that human sweat, partly owing perhaps to the similarity of the word to 'suet', was likewise thought of as fat, melted by the heat of the body.⁵⁷

Seemingly shy in the face of his own insight, Wilson says, "Elizabethans saw every day in the streets human beings too much like Falstaff, Bardolph, and the rest to class them as animals; but they would certainly think of them as a pack of scurvy rascals, inhabiting a sphere altogether remote from that to which Hal rightly belongs."⁵⁸ However, Wilson's entirely appropriate vocabulary choice, "scurvy rascals," speaks to the Renaissance lack of separation between all "human beings" and other creatures. A rascal was a name for a deer as well as a human in Shakespeare's world. When I cite Shakespeare's beast tropes as evidence of Falstaff's Renaissance identity, I could look like a perpetrator/victim of what Richard Strier calls New Historicism's "systematic confusion of the

vehicle with the tenor of metaphors."⁵⁹ Indeed, when William Hazlitt, for example, lauds the "animal enjoyment" he receives when he appreciates Falstaff, he is using the word "animal" descriptively, assuming that enjoying the pleasures of the body thoroughly, as an "animal" might, is an aspect of personality that would never cause confusion between two categorically separate kinds of mortals.⁶⁰ To take Hazlitt's "animal enjoyment" metaphor as evidence that he is really calling himself an "animal" would be to confuse matters in the way Strier criticizes. However, the multitudinous beast tropes for Falstaff in his three plays are much more slippery than Hazlitt's metaphor because those tropes were written in the creaturely world, a world in which all mortals shared humoral bodies. Falstaff is certainly being metaphorical, but his metaphors also speak to a truth about his body. Elizabethans thinking about "rascals" could be thinking about both deer and humans, and Elizabethans seeing a human body might not have automatically classified the person in question as fully human.

When Wilson calls the crew of men in the tavern "a pack of scurvy rascals," he is writing in a world in which "rascal" has lost most of its nonhuman meanings. The *OED* puts the obsolete symbol (†) before all of the "senses relating to an animal." Likewise, "brawn" no longer signifies pork, the flesh of other creatures, as well as human muscle. Most of us no longer believe, except perhaps in our fantasies, that when we sweat we are losing fat in the same way that fat melts off meat when we cook it. In the Renaissance, as we saw in chapter one, people made medicine from burnt cat heads and livers and also from people's body parts and excretions. Wendy Wall and Karen Raber both point to how interchangeable humans' and other creatures' bodies were in medicine and cooking.⁶¹ As we have seen, Donne thought that the pigeon's body would absorb and dispel his sickness. Raber sums up these practices and beliefs:

Humans consumed dung and urine, used brains and other internal organs for salves, applied live animals to wounds, ground up both animal and human bones . . . and so on in the quest to heal themselves. This process was not one-sided, either: human urine, sweat, and bodily effluvia were fed to animals in a similar attempt to cure.⁶²

This undifferentiated bodily world was the world in which Falstaff loves his body more than his fellows and in which his fellows classify him among the beasts.

Children and/as Beasts

Just as Falstaff's beast attachments may be obscure today, it may likewise be difficult to see how Falstaff's claims to youth compromise his humanity. In fact, the apotheosis of childhood beginning in Romantic ideology

seems to have been a historical partner to, and enabler of, Falstaff's apotheosis.⁶³ Many twentieth-century critics agree with Falstaff's assessment of his own youthfulness, and many of them love him as a child, perhaps as the repository of their own desires to respond to the world with what they see as Falstaff's childlike innocence (his amorality).⁶⁴ For example, Robert B. Heilman (1946) approves of "the innocuous humour and the essential childlikeness and irresponsibility of Falstaff."⁶⁵ Similarly, the blithely sexist Wyndham Lewis (1927) says,

But Falstaff is a "child" too. . . . He is armed from head to foot with sly feminine inferiorities, lovable weaknesses and instinctively cultivated charm. He is a big helpless bag of guts, exposing himself boldly to every risk on the child's or the woman's terms. When he runs away or lies down he is more adorable than any hero 'facing fearful odds.'⁶⁶

Well aware that Falstaff might seem overly self-absorbed, C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler (1986) excuse him as at least not hypocritical: "Falstaff's self-love is right out in the open, and at his most winning 'plump Jack' has all the charm of a little child."⁶⁷ What is missing from these readings of Falstaff is the insistence in Renaissance culture generally that childhood is a bestial state.⁶⁸ On the bestiality of childhood, Elizabeth Harvey quotes from de la Primaudaye: "we see how the child so long as it is in the Mothers wombe, differeth almost nothing at all from plantes; and after it is borne, how it differeth but a little from brute beasts."⁶⁹ As I suggested in the introduction, rather than denoting an essentially higher understanding and appreciation of life, childhood in the Renaissance was a beast-like state precisely because the child was "a figure of cognitive privation."⁷⁰

For twentieth-century critics, however, Falstaff's claims to youth signal his essential humanity. A.C. Bradley (1902) lists the ways that Falstaff renders duty and honor absurd and then says,

These are the wonderful achievements which he performs, not with the sourness of a cynic, but with the gaiety of a boy. And, therefore, we praise him, we laud him, for he offends none but the virtuous, and denies that life is real or life is earnest, and delivers us from the oppression of such nightmares, and lifts us into the atmosphere of perfect freedom.⁷¹

Bradley sees Falstaff as delivering "us" from "oppression," offering the "freedom" that belongs to humanity at its best, humanity signaled by "the gaiety of a boy." What is human for Bradley and for the critics who follow him is the childhood realm of imagination that denies reality. As Harold C. Goddard (1951) proclaims, "[t]hat at any rate is what Falstaff

is: Imagination conquering matter, spirit subduing flesh."⁷² This seems an odd claim about so insistently material a character, but the claim is necessary for Goddard to appreciate Falstaff's transcendent youth.⁷³ Like Bradley, Goddard loves Falstaff as a child. He says,

[i]s there any activity of man that involves the same factors that we find present in this Falstaff? . . . Obviously there is. That activity is play. Except for that little item of moral responsibility, 'play' expresses as nearly as one word can the highest conception of life we are capable of forming: life for its own sake, life as it looks in the morning to a boy.⁷⁴

Goddard, like Bradley, sees Falstaff's boyishness as epitomizing human perfection.

Renaissance people shared the belief that childhood was a time of play, but they did not valorize play. As Keith Thomas shows, "the most common adult reaction [to children's accidents] was that children were tiresome creatures who played in the wrong way, at the wrong time, and in the wrong places."⁷⁵ Shakespeare seems to allude to this idea when Falstaff packs a bottle of sack instead of a pistol on the battlefield, and the Prince, pulling it out of Falstaff's case, "*Throws it at him*" and asks, "is it a time to iest and dally now."⁷⁶ When Shakespeare created Falstaff, "it was more usual to feel that children's play was at best a waste of time, and at worst a very bad preparation for adult life. Protestant culture was particularly hostile to the notion of play for playing's sake."⁷⁷ Goddard's language as he praises Falstaff's ability to make everything play is particularly telling. Goddard says that play "expresses . . . the highest conception of life . . . life for its own sake."⁷⁸ Falstaff unquestionably believes in *his* "life for its own sake"; that belief makes him useless and dangerous on the battlefield, a field that proves humanity through willingness to sacrifice one's body for monarch and country.⁷⁹ Falstaff's childish choice of play over bodily self-sacrifice signifies his humanity, but perhaps only for Latour's moderns. Goddard is precisely right when he assesses Falstaff's proclivities but precisely wrong that those proclivities define the Renaissance Falstaff as quintessentially and perfectly human. Instead, they may define Falstaff in Renaissance terms as quintessentially bestial.⁸⁰ Unquestionably, Renaissance audiences enjoyed watching Falstaff, but it is unlikely they enjoyed watching him as some sort of perfect human.

As Michael Witmore suggests, in the Renaissance "[u]sually it is only when childishness is directed, in the form of trust and dependence, toward God that credit is given to adults for moving backward on the developmental scale."⁸¹ Falstaff's childishness is directed toward sin as opposed to God. He claims the beastly nature of the child and rejects the spiritual potential for childish innocence. In *2Henry IV*, Falstaff tells the Lord Chief Justice, "we that are in the vaward [vanguard] of our

youth, I must confesse, are waggés too.”⁸² The youthfulness with which he identifies is not a spiritual category. In that play, the Prince complains that Falstaff has moved the boy he gave him away from God: “he had him from me Christian, and see if the fat villain haue not transform’d him Ape.”⁸³ Falstaff pretends to a corrupt youthfulness, and he corrupts the youths around him. However, many of his twentieth-century critics accept his pretense and adore him because of it. Colie’s view of Falstaff as a man educating the Prince toward humanity is not at all exceptional. The Prince, however, sees lessons in childishness as leading toward an ape, not human, identity. Fudge explains that in educational treatises of the Renaissance, “[t]he child’s descent into beastliness is a constant threat . . . and it is the avoidance of this and the achievement of human status that is the aim of education.”⁸⁴ A child’s body had to be disciplined in order to become fully human, beaten in the way that wayward dogs who ran at sheep were beaten.⁸⁵ The criticism that insists that Falstaff is educating the Prince appears to disregard the major premise of Renaissance education, the disciplining of body and mind away from the pleasures of the body.⁸⁶

Falstaff and “the Modern Constitution”

Latour’s account of the moderns helps to explain why Falstaff can be so beast-like in his plays and yet can be seen so often, and by so many, as the quintessential human. In “modern temporality,” Latour suggests, humans are isolated as actors of history from the rest of the actors, mortals and objects, who make up what Latour calls their “networks.” He opens his discussion of the warrants of what he calls “the modern constitution” with this claim:

Modernity is often defined in terms of humanism, either as a way of saluting the birth of ‘man’ or as a way of announcing his death. But this habit . . . overlooks the simultaneous birth of ‘nonhumanity’—things, or objects, or beasts—and the equally strange beginning of a crossed-out God, relegated to the sidelines.⁸⁷

In this account, what makes people moderns is their ability to see humans as the makers of history, somehow apart from, or in absolute control over, the nonhuman actors—mortals and objects—in their world. Latour also says,

No one is truly modern who does not agree to keep God from interfering with Natural Law as well as with the laws of the Republic. God becomes the crossed-out God of metaphysics, as different from the premodern God of the Christians as . . . the Society invented by sociologists [is] from the old anthropological collective and its crowds of nonhumans.⁸⁸

Latour locates the modern constitution in the simultaneous construction of Nature, Society, and the crossed-out God as separate and in guarantee that they will stay separate. In that constitution, humans make society, nature exists as a separate place of either refuge or challenge, and God does not interfere in the world.

Falstaff, however, lives in his plays in a creaturely world with neither these separations nor these guarantees. Shakespeare created Falstaff as deeply embedded in a network made of humans, birds, beasts, fishes, and objects, in the creaturely world in which human and beasts shared humoral bodies. He also created Falstaff before the advent of the "crossed-out God," before God's "transcendence distanced Him infinitely, so that He disturbed neither the free play of nature nor that of society."⁸⁹ In *1Henry IV*, *2Henry IV*, and *Merry Wives*, Falstaff embraces his beastly body and tries to transform the people around him from Christians into apes.⁹⁰ Those people continually remark on both his beastly predilections and his diseased soul. When Poins asks Bardolph, "[H]ow doth the Martlemas, your Master?" Bardolph replies, "In bodily health Sir"; Poins rejoins, "Marry, the immortall part needes a Physitian: but that moues not him: though that bee sicke, it dyes not."⁹¹ Falstaff does not care about his soul, or at least he does not care enough about his soul, because the soul does not die.⁹² He cares only for his body, the part of him that the people around him see as a beast, in this case a "Martlemas," probably a cooked pig. It is precisely Falstaff's devotion to his body and to life that makes him seem like a beast to the characters around him. Shakespeare created Falstaff in a world in which devotion to the body instead of the soul, and at the expense of the soul, was bestial, and he never stops stressing Falstaff's sinful bodily devotions.

However, for Latour's moderns, the crossed-out God and the strict divisions between that God, Nature, and Society, thus between humans and other creatures, mean that none of this language matters at all. The modern constitution and its guarantees have determined much of the criticism of Falstaff, even by critics who self-identify as rejecting the destructive aspects of modernity.⁹³ For example, Hugh Grady sees Falstaff as a "transitional" figure who "embodies a central moment in the development of Western modernity."⁹⁴ Grady wants to reject Bloom's "outmoded Romantic bardolatry" while lauding Falstaff's "utopian self."⁹⁵ He does this by dividing Falstaff into two selves, dependent on "social context." Outside of the tavern, Falstaff represents "the community-destroying dynamics of an embryonic capitalist society." Within the tavern, however, "Sir John's comic championing of the bodily self and its pleasures functions as a communal, class-conscious discourse of a plebeian social element oppressed by the idealisms of church and state."⁹⁶ Yet Falstaff's "championing of the bodily self and its pleasures" seems far from communal. Even in the tavern, it involves jettisoning his companions in favor of his own body,

and "Sir John" hardly identifies on a class basis with the commoners he exploits and the ones whom he leads to their deaths. Grady's belief in the primacy and value of the human body compels him to misrecognize Shakespeare's beast-like character as representing an ideal humanity that could be opposed to institutions, "the idealisms of church and state."

Grady's criticism could be classified as what Latour calls "antimodern." Latour sees the antimoderns as the "accomplices" of the moderns, as helping to create and maintain the set of beliefs in the modern constitution. He says that

the antimoderns firmly believe that the West has rationalized and disenchanted the world, that it has truly peopled the social with cold rational monsters which saturate all of space . . . What do the antimoderns do, then, when they are confronted with this shipwreck? They take on the courageous task of saving what can be saved: Souls, minds, emotions, interpersonal relations, the symbolic dimension, human warmth, local specificities, hermeneutics, the margins and the peripheries.⁹⁷

As an antimodern, Grady wants to save the tavern (his margin) from the power of the court (his center). He sees Falstaff as a signpost on the way to modernity, as a character divided between the "aesthetic" world of "cold rational monsters" and the "local" tavern world of "human warmth," but his account of modernity is itself dependent on what Latour calls "modern temporality"; it is the antimodern stance that helps to support Latour's modern constitution.⁹⁸ For Grady, modernity is a temporal and inescapable fact. He sees the contemporary world as disenchanted; he decries "the evacuated cultural space of modernity . . . a system of pointless circulation and exchange capable of enthralling individuals and entire societies."⁹⁹ So he wants to save "what can be saved," what he calls Falstaff's carnival self: "communal, pleasure-loving, and self-centred rather than solitary, penitential, and self-denying."¹⁰⁰ But his analysis of Falstaff depends on the moderns' crossed-out God. Grady recognizes how "sullied" Falstaff is in his plays, but he dismisses Christianity and the soul as without real meaning for Shakespeare and ordinary people in the Renaissance, and so he can see his antimodern response to Falstaff as Shakespeare's public's response.¹⁰¹ Only in the world of the crossed-out God can Falstaff's sinful devotion to body over soul and absolute refusal to sacrifice his own body for anyone else be misrecognized as "communal." For Grady, nothing the plays say about God or the soul can be truly significant. If Falstaff is read backwards through the lens of Latour's moderns (or antimoderns), he can look like a divided man, half of whom points forward toward today's empty world and half backward to something we have lost. But that reading depends on exiling Falstaff from the network of God, creatures, and objects that surrounds him.

That network is, however, always visible in the plays. From Falstaff's first entrance in *1Henry IV* to the narration of his exit in *Henry V*, he exists in relation to what Paster calls "the ensouled body, the embodied soul."¹⁰² The distance between that network and the world of the "crossed-out God" becomes visible in the difference between the way Shakespeare stages Falstaff's final words and the way Bloom describes that death scene. In *Henry V*, the Hostess tells us about Falstaff's dying, and what she said to him as he died:

How now Sir *John* (quoth I) what man? Be a good cheare: so a cryed out, God, God, God, three or foure times: now I, to comfort him, bid him a should not thinke of God; I hop'd there was no neede to trouble himselfe with any such thoughts yet.¹⁰³

Falstaff is crying out for what Latour calls "the premodern God of the Christians" as he dies;¹⁰⁴ he and the Hostess live in the world of that God, not the "crossed-out God" of the moderns. Her stupidity and the text's humor at her expense depend on her poor timing in relation to God and heaven. At death, Christians in the Renaissance invoked the present God, but the Hostess thinks it might be comforting rather than damning to tell a dying man invoking that God that he need not do that "yet."¹⁰⁵ When Bloom describes this death scene, he effectively crosses God out entirely while simultaneously invoking Him:

we are given the great vision of the death of Falstaff in *Henry V*, which assures us that "he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child." Playing with flowers, and smiling upon his fingers' end, Sir John dies as a child, reminding us again of his total lack of hypocrisy, of what after all makes us love him, of what doubtless first drew the Machiavellian Hal to him. Freedom from the superego, authentic freedom, is the liberty to play, even as a child plays, in the very act of dying.¹⁰⁶

Bloom embraces the Hostess's comparison of Falstaff to a child, but he leaves Falstaff's dying cries for God out of his account of the death, and he also omits as insignificant Falstaff's remorse about sack and women.

A Christian death in the early seventeenth century required repentance for sin. Bloom believes in Falstaff's salvation—Bloom is assured, he says, by the Hostess's testimony. But for Bloom that salvation does not require repentance because Falstaff's massively embodied life is the opposite of a sin. This potential contradiction is characteristic of the crossed-out God of the moderns. Latour describes that God's place: "His position became literally ideal, since He was bracketed twice over, once in metaphysics and again in spirituality. He would no longer interfere in any way with

the development of the moderns, but He remained effective and helpful within the spirit of humans alone."¹⁰⁷ Refusing to see any references to repentance, Bloom reads Falstaff's death as an idealized picture of a child playing. Critics have debated whether Falstaff dies of venereal disease or of the plague, but both were seen in the Renaissance as having origins in sin.¹⁰⁸ As Donne's *Devotions* suggests, most illness was attributed to the sinner's relation with God. However the scene in *Henry V* is interpreted, it offers a picture of Falstaff's rejection of the aims of his bodily life, especially and incontrovertibly his rejection of sack. Falstaff appears to have been trying at last to heal his sick soul, the part of him that, cared for properly, would have made him more human than beast. Bloom sees that same scene as cementing his identity as a spiritually blessed, playing child. Bloom both crosses God out of Falstaff's death and depends on his own "crossed-out God" to have admitted Falstaff to Heaven precisely because of what Shakespeare tells us about Falstaff's bestial sinfulness.

Perhaps as telling as the oddly coincident conclusions of Grady's and Bloom's readings on the question of Falstaff's love for life in the body is the way that the *Oxford English Dictionary* categorizes Shakespeare's use of the word "catechism" to characterize Falstaff's famous speech about honor and the body in the *1Henry IV*. The final lines of that speech read, "Honour is a meere Scutcheon, and so ends my Catechisme."¹⁰⁹ The dictionary tells us that a "catechism" can signify "[a]n elementary treatise for instruction in the principles of the Christian religion, in the form of question and answer" ("catechism" 2.), and also that there could be a transferred usage that "in 17th c. [was] chiefly applied to works which parodied the preceding" ("catechism" 3.). But the dictionary does not put Falstaff's "Catechisme" under this heading. Instead it has a fourth definition, seemingly written for that usage and one other it can find from the mid-nineteenth century: "*fig.* A course of question and answer" ("catechism" 4.). I would argue that it is the "crossed-out God" of the moderns that accounts for this categorization. In both the quarto of 1598 and the folio, Falstaff speaks what he calls his "Catechism" in response to the Prince. In the quarto, the Prince says "Why, thou owes't God a death" (I3v); in the folio text, written after the "Act to Restrain the Abuses of Players," he says, "Why thou owe'st heauen a death."¹¹⁰ In twentieth-century editions of the play, the Prince then leaves the stage, but neither the quarto nor the folio indicates an exit at this point. The exit that twentieth-century editions almost invariably add in brackets may have contributed to the isolation of that speech in critical discourse from the comment about God or heaven that prompts it. Seen in relation to that speech, however, Falstaff's catechism parodies the catechism that helped to teach children that they "should forsake the devil, and all his vanities of the wicked worlde, and al the sinful lustes of the fleshe." The 1559 Catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer* taught all Christians about "the life euerlasting" and about their "duety towards God" and

their "neighbour[s]" (D.iiv; D.iii). Falstaff's worry about his body displaces his duty from the God to whom he owes a death toward a worldly concept, "honour," that he can lampoon as empty. The answer he gives to the Prince dodges the cue to which it responds. To the moderns and the antimoderns, who Latour says share a "playing field," the love of life in the body and self-preservation are assumed goods, and Falstaff's catechism teaches the appropriate lessons¹¹¹—bodily life is more valuable than any word. But as a parody of the Catechism, it teaches Shakespeare's audience how mistaken Falstaff is to value his body over "the life euerlasting."

The Rejection of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the Modern Constitution

Certainly Falstaff is most visibly beast-like in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which, after a series of bodily humiliations, he appears on stage in the guise of a rutting stag. However, as Ian Moulton suggests, "[t]hrough the *Merry Wives* has always been a popular play, many of Falstaff's more ardent worshipers dismiss it out of hand."¹¹² In 1958, E.M.W. Tillyard said of the character in *Merry Wives*, "this Falstaff is a different man," and many twentieth-century critics agree.¹¹³ Goddard claims "something like a consensus" on the question.¹¹⁴ That consensus is speaking when an astute critic such as Jill L. Levenson says categorically, "[t]he Falstaff who first appears in *1Henry IV* is not the same Falstaff who drives the plot of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*."¹¹⁵ Thus, when *Merry Wives* makes Falstaff's beast identity most visible, even when it is only the realization of the identity that is ever-present in the *Henry IV* plays, the play is roundly rejected by many critics as not showing us the real Falstaff. Whereas critics labor to separate the *Merry Wives* Falstaff from the Falstaff of the history plays, Shakespeare seems intent on connecting his Falstaffs, especially on the level of the character's body and devotion to the body. As I have shown, Falstaff is made of fat in all three of his plays. In all of the plays, as well, his fleshy body is the character's essence. The *1Henry IV* Falstaff excuses himself to the Prince, saying, "Thou seest, I haue more flesh then another man, and therefore more frailty."¹¹⁶ Falstaff offers the same self-justification in *Merry Wives* in a conversation with Mistress Quickly about his escapades with Mistress Ford: "[T]ell her so: and bidde her thinke what a man is: Let her consider his frailty, and then iudge of my merit."¹¹⁷ In both plays, Falstaff rests his claim for his manhood on a reed slender for that purpose in Shakespeare's texts.¹¹⁸ Most famously in *Hamlet*, "frailty" is the attribute, even the essence, of womanly sexual weakness.¹¹⁹ The word signifies "[m]oral weakness; instability of mind; liability to err or yield to temptation," and in the humoral economy it also signifies, as Falstaff insists upon, the body, whose passions identify most mortals.¹²⁰ Falstaff's "frailty" in *Merry Wives* is the same "frailty"

he insists upon as his fleshly essence in *1Henry IV*. Nonetheless, critics have rejected the visibly bestial Falstaff.

In *Merry Wives*, Falstaff recommences his self-nomination as flesh. After his laundry basket escape from Master Ford, he asks the rhetorical question, "Haue I liu'ed to be carried in a Basket like a barrow of butchers Offal?"¹²¹ Indeed, Falstaff's buck basket adventure means that he *has* lived to be treated as if he were the remnants of the butcher's trade. Falstaff has conditionally been a "Poulter's Hare" in *1Henry IV*; now he likens himself to the butcher's leavings. In the same scene, still livid about that adventure in the buck basket, Falstaff rails:

thinke of that, a man of my Kidney; thinke of that, that am subject to heate as butter; a man of continuall dissolution, and thaw: it was a miracle to scape suffocation. And in the height of this Bath (when I was more than halfe stew'd in grease (like a Dutch-dish) to be throwne into the Thames).¹²²

True to form here, Falstaff identifies himself with his bodily condition: "a man of my Kidney." He names himself in the same terms that the Prince has used to address him in *1Henry IV* when the Prince says, "Peace ye fat-kidney'd Rascall."¹²³ Moreover, Falstaff envisages the effects of his heated bath in the buck basket as cooking him in his own grease like a piece of stewed meat. His *Merry Wives* body is the greasy beast body the Prince invokes in *1Henry IV* when he asks to have "Ribs" and "Tallow" called in. A "buck" is a word for a male deer as well as for the lye used to wash clothes. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* makes hay with Falstaff as a deer, the deer-identity initiated in *1Henry IV*. Although foolish Master Ford does not know that his wife has hidden Falstaff in the household's buck basket, Ford's rant about his own dreaded cuckold status reminds the audience that a buck is a deer to be hunted: "I bucke: I warrant you Bucke. And of the season too."¹²⁴ Ford inadvertently invokes Falstaff's deer identity, the identity that Falstaff glories in at the play's denouement when he imagines himself in sexual congress with Mistress Ford and Mistress Page: "Diuide me like a brib'd-Bucke, each a Haunch."¹²⁵ As the usages of the word "rascal" in *1Henry IV* and *2Henry IV* suggest, Falstaff is like a deer; Falstaff's emergence as a visible buck in *Merry Wives* only makes literal the identity integral to his characterization in the history plays.¹²⁶ In addition to the Prince calling Falstaff an "imbost Rascall" in *1Henry IV*'s third act, when he bids what he thinks is farewell to Falstaff in the play's closing minutes the Prince says, "Death hath not stricke so fat a Deere to day, / Though many dearer in this bloody Fray: / Imbowell'd will I see thee by and by."¹²⁷ In this pun-laden speech, the Prince identifies Falstaff as simultaneously a nobleman, a slaughtered deer, and, perhaps, an executed criminal, all of whom could be disemboweled.¹²⁸ Tellingly, however, Falstaff replies only as the deer.

When the Prince leaves the stage, Falstaff says, “Imbowell’d? If thou imbowell mee to day, Ile giue you leaue to powder me, and eat me too to morrow.”¹²⁹ In this famous speech, Falstaff declares that saving his own life by pretending to be dead makes a man “the true and perfect image of life indeede.”¹³⁰ This speech is funny, and Falstaff’s love for his own body appeals to many critics, but the speech makes it clear that Falstaff invests in his body rather than in his soul and also that he invests in his own body at the cost of the bodies of the men around him. For Falstaff, personal bodily integrity is what makes life “true and perfect.” Truth has nothing to do with morals or God or community; truth is saving his own, and only his own, body. The Prince’s farewell speech offers Falstaff a cue to see himself as more than that body, but Falstaff misses that cue. Falstaff as the rutting stag at the end of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* visually reinforces the body-centered character that Shakespeare created in the two parts of *Henry IV*. It is the deer body Falstaff has chosen. The rejection of the *Merry Wives* Falstaff by so many Falstaff-lovers may be an appalled reaction to that reinforcement, for its acceptance might entail a reconsideration of one of Latour’s moderns’ most treasured creations—the embrace of life on earth as denoting humanity—and its Shakespearian correlative, Falstaff as the quintessential human. Falstaff was enormously (in all senses) fun to watch in his time of creation, as he still is today. However, I believe that his original audiences understood him as a degraded clown and enjoyed his degradation. In the next chapter, I turn to a long scene, the sheep-shearing scene in a later Shakespeare play, *The Winter’s Tale*. A close look at the clowns in that scene will point us to some of the real human inequalities in the Renaissance creaturely world.

Notes

- 1 J. Dover Wilson. *The Essential Shakespeare: A Biographical Adventure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952. 88.
- 2 G. F. Bradby. *Short Studies in Shakespeare*. London: John Murray, 1929. 53.
- 3 Gail Kern Paster. *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. 137, 209.
- 4 See also R. W. Serjeantson. “The Passions and Animal Language, 1540–1700.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2 (2001): 425–44.
- 5 See William Richardson’s 1788 comment, “Pursuing no other object than the gratification of bodily pleasure, it is not wonderful that in situations of danger the care of his body should be Falstaff’s central concern” (quoted in Samuel Burdett Hemingway, ed. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Henry the Fourth Part 1*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1936. 415). Rackin. *Stages of History*. 203.
- 6 Bloom. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. 284. For a cogent response to Bloom that sees his love of Falstaff as founded in Swinburne’s Victorian criticism, see Robert Sawyer. “Looking for Mr. Goodbard: Swinburne, Resentment Criticism, and the Invention of Harold Bloom.” *Harold Bloom’s Shakespeare*. Eds. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 167–80.

- 7 D. A. Traversi. *An Approach to Shakespeare*. 2nd edn. New York: Doubleday, 1956. 31; Rosalie L. Colie. *Shakespeare's Living Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974. 21.
- 8 James C. Bulman. “‘Henry IV, parts 1 and 2.’”: *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Ed. Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 158–76. Andy Mousley. *Re-Humanising Shakespeare: Literary Humanism, Wisdom and Modernity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007. 85.
- 9 For an excellent and detailed review of Falstaff's critical history up until 1980, see Jeanne Addison Roberts. *Shakespeare's English Comedy*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. See also David Ellis. “Falstaff and the Problems of Comedy.” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 34 (2005): 95–108. Also see Ian Frederick Moulton. “Fat Knight, or What You Will: Unimitable Falstaff.” *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Comedies*. Eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. 223–42.
- 10 In *Error Misuse Failure: Object Lessons from the Renaissance*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, Julian Yates offers a lovely description of Latour's idea of “the modern.” Yates calls it “a particular condition of historicity, a way of framing our relation to the world that insists on our absolute difference from it” (7). Yates rightly sees Latour as challenging “the Renaissance Myth.” Indeed, Latour insists that, as his book title indicates, “we have never been modern.” Nevertheless, this “way of framing our relation to the world” is a perspective with a history and with effects in the world. I will be arguing that Falstaff was not written from that perspective. For an interesting discussion of the problem of historical time see Michel Serres, with Bruno Latour. *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*. Trans. Roxanne Lapidus. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995. 48–52.
- 11 Bruno Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. 10–11.
- 12 As Haraway says, “[t]wo hundred years of what became the powerful world-changing discourses of biology have produced us as species, and other critters too” (“We Have Never Been Human, What is to Be Done? Interview with Donna Haraway.” 144).
- 13 Giorgio Agamben. *The Open: Man and Animal*. Trans. Kevin Attell. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004. 37.
- 14 Shakespeare's nonhuman creature characters include Starveling's dog in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—see chapter two—the clown's dog in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the bear in *The Winter's Tale*.
- 15 Audrey Yoder. *Animal Analogy in Shakespeare's Character Portrayal*. New York: King's Crown Press at Columbia University, 1947. On Caliban's “animality,” see Bruce Boehrer. *Shakespeare Among the Animals*.
- 16 Jacques Derrida. “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).” 394.
- 17 Erica Fudge. “Saying Nothing Concerning the Same: On Dominion, Purity, and Meat in Early Modern England.” 74.
- 18 For a fascinating discussion of the implications of pethood, see Marc Shell. *Children of the Earth: Literature, Politics, and Nationhood*. 148–75. On pethood, see also Donna Haraway. *The Companion Species Manifesto and When Species Meet*; and June Dwyer. “A Non-Companion Species Manifesto: Humans, Wild Animals and the ‘Pain of Anthropomorphism.’” *South Atlantic Review* 72 (2007): 73–89, especially 76. Also see Erica Fudge. *Pets*.
- 19 TLN 1217, 2.5.241. TLN 2186, 3.3.163.
- 20 TLN 1493–4, 2.5.483–4; TLN 2666, 5.1.2.
- 21 Men who talk a lot are called “choughs” twice in other Shakespeare plays. Speaking to Horatio, Hamlet says of Osric: “he hath much Land, and fertile;

let a beast be Lord of Beasts, and his Crib shall stand at the Kings Messe; this a Chowgh; but as I say spacious in the possession of dirt" (TLN 3591–4, 5.2.87–9). Conspiring with Sebastian, *The Tempest's* Antonio says, "As this Gonzallo: I my selfe could make / A Chough of as deep chat" (TLN 961–2, 2.1.261–2). Both usages are derogatory. Hamlet says that Osric is not really a man; he is a chattering bird, tolerated because he is wealthy. Antonio says that he could teach a tame jackdaw to speak with as much meaning as Gonzallo's speeches. For a beautiful account of the trainability and loquacity of jackdaws, see Konrad Z. Lorenz. *King Solomon's Ring*. New York: Signet, 1972. Shakespeare's easy references to the character of these birds is another example of how people customarily knew things in the Renaissance that only naturalists knew by the twentieth century.

- 22 See also Pistol's comment in *Merry Wives*: "Yong Rauens Must Haue Foode" (TLN 330, 1.3.30). Pistol may or may not be talking about Falstaff as well as himself and Nim. Either way, Falstaff is providing for a crew of men who are like denigrated birds. In *2Henry IV*, the Prince says to Poins, "Looke, if the wither'd Elder hath not his Poll claw'd like a Parrot" (TLN 1283–4, 2.4.232–3). In *1Henry IV*, the Prince makes fun of Francis to Poins, saying, "That euer this Fellow should haue fewer words then a Parret, and yet the sonne of a Woman" (TLN 1062–3, 2.5.91–2). This is a misogynist slur as well as a classification of Poins as a relatively lowly bird. On the status of parrots see Bruce Bohrer. *Parrot Culture*.
- 23 *1H4* TLN 2010–2, 3.3.6–8.
- 24 Compare all three of these references to Vernon's speech in Act 4, scene 1 in which the Prince and his men at arms are described as "All plum'd like Estriges," "Bayted like Eagles," and "wilde as young Bulls." Vernon also says that the Prince "vaulted" into his saddle "As if an Angell dropt downe from the Clouds, / To turne and winde a fierie Pegasus" (TLN 2329–2340, 4.1.99–110).
- 25 I take the term "oral signature" from Lynne Magnusson's groundbreaking work: *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 33.
- 26 TLN 1393–5, 2.5.396–8.
- 27 TLN 2386–7, 4.2.11–12.
- 28 TLN 1384–8, 2.5.387–91.
- 29 *1H4*. TLN 1410–11, 2.5.412–13.
- 30 *2H4*. TLN 882–3, 2.2.84–5; TLN 924–5, 2.2.124–5.
- 31 *OED*. "frank." n.2.1. TLN 1253, 2.4.206.
- 32 Falstaff's offer to be hung up by the heels for a "Rabbit-sucker" is perhaps more complex than his alternative: "or a Poulters Hare." The *OED* classifies this comment under its first definition for rabbit sucker, "a suckling rabbit," along with other citations that point to the term as meaning food. In addition, the *OED* offers figurative usages in which the term means a criminal. Criminals were punished "by the heels" (put into leg irons); this is the punishment the Lord Chief Justice threatens Falstaff with in *2Henry IV* (1.2.113). Falstaff's comment occurs in the scene in which he has just played the part of Henry IV, who stole the crown, so the term could have a secondary resonance of "thief."
- 33 TLN 2433–4, 4.2.51–2.
- 34 TLN 184–185, 1.2.64–5. While twentieth-century editions tend to gloss "gib cat" as "tomcat," the *Oxford English Dictionary's* evidence suggests that Falstaff might be feeling the passions of a female cat.
- 35 See Raber. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. 23–4.

- 36 Robert Darnton. *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. New York: Basic Books, 1984. 89–98. See also Harriet Ritvo. *The Animal Estate*.
- 37 Edward Topsell. *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. 106–7.
- 38 Izaak Walton. *The Compleat Angler or the Contemplative Mans Recreation*. London, 1653. 171.
- 39 See *Much Ado About Nothing*. 1.1.210, and *Troilus and Cressida*. 5.1.54, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. 3.2.261. Shannon shows how reluctant later generations are to seeing Shakespeare’s vision of the disposable cat in *The Accommodated Animal*. 29–31.
- 40 OED. “brawn.” 1HIV. TLN 1072, 2.5.100; 2HIV. TLN 71, 1.1.19.
- 41 See *Troilus and Cressida*. 1.3.294, *All’s Well that Ends Well*. 2.2.115, *Coriolanus*. 4.5.119, *Cymbeline*. 4.2.313.
- 42 TLN 2163–4, 3.3.145.
- 43 TLN 1067, 2.4.34.
- 44 OED. 4. Obs.
- 45 “Embossed” can mean “swollen.” The OED finds a usage from 1641 that signifies hunted. The note in Hemingway’s Variorum edition of *1Henry IV* gives a history of discussion of the word and its possible “animal” significance. Samuel Burdett Hemingway, ed. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Henry the Fourth Part 1*. 238–9.
- 46 2HIV. TLN 1069, 2.4.36. See also Berry. *Shakespeare and the Hunt*. 133–58.
- 47 See Willard Farnham. *The Shakespearean Grotesque*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. “Imagery having to do with the animal Falstaff . . . shows him as animal material fit for the butcher’s handling” (50).
- 48 TLN 1074, 2.5.102. See also the epilogue to *2 Henry IV*: “if you be not too much cloid with Fat Meate, our humble Author will continue the Story (with Sir Iohn in it)” (TLN 3344–5, 22–3).
- 49 TLN 418–19, 1.2.143–5.
- 50 TLN 1326, 2.4.273.
- 51 OED. “candle” 7.
- 52 1HIV. TLN 1082, 2.5.109.
- 53 TLN 1782, 3.5.100.
- 54 TLN 2495, 5.5.12.
- 55 TLN 608–609, 2.1.55–7.
- 56 TLN 2516, 5.5.31–2.
- 57 J. Dover Wilson. *The Fortunes of Falstaff*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943. 28.
- 58 Wilson. *Fortunes*. 39.
- 59 Richard Strier. *Resistant Structures: Particularity, Radicalism, and Renaissance Texts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 110. See also Strier’s cautions about “metaphoricity” in relation to “early modern humors discourse” (Richard Strier and Carla Mazzio. “Two Responses to ‘Shakespeare and Embodiment: An E-Conversation.’” *Literature Compass* 3 (2005): 15–31).
- 60 William Hazlitt. *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays*. 148. Derrida offers a very significant critique of this way of understanding the world in “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).” especially 399–400.
- 61 Wall. *Staging Domesticity*. 131, 171–2, 192, 194.
- 62 Raber. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. 104.
- 63 Romanticism seems to be deeply implicated in the rise of Falstaff as a god. See, for example, Harold C. Goddard’s comment on loving Falstaff: “For as Blake said, enthusiastic admiration is the first principle of knowledge, and

- the last" (*The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. 1: 176–7). J. Dover Wilson compares mistaken love for Falstaff to the Romantics' mistake about Satan. He says, "After all, Falstaff is 'a devil . . . in the likeness of an old fat man', and the Devil has generally been supposed to exercise limitless attraction in his dealings with the sons of men" (*The Fortunes of Falstaff*. 23). See Robert Langbaum's essential article "Character Versus Action in Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 8 (1957): 57–69. Langbaum comments, "The Falstaff question has been only less important than the Hamlet question in establishing the psychological interpretation of Shakespeare. Both Hamlet and Falstaff began to appear in their new complex and enigmatic character in the 1770's, the decade of Werther and of a European Wertherism that owed much to an already well-established sentimental tradition in England. Of such a propitious age for psychological criticism, Maurice Morgann, the projector of the new Falstaff, was one of the advanced spirits—liberal in politics, humanitarian in sentiment, and in literature endowed with the new sensibility" (63).
- 64 See W. H. Auden. "The Prince's Dog." *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*. (1948). New York: Vintage Books, 1968. 195. It is notable that Falstaff claims for himself the status of "youth," whereas many of his critics class him as a child. On the beastliness of "youths," see Lucy Monro. "Coriolanus and the Little Eyases: The Boyhood of Shakespeare's Hero." *Shakespeare and Childhood*. Eds. Kate Chedgzoy, Susanne Greenhalgh, and Robert Shaughnessy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 80–95. 86.
- 65 Robert B. Heilman. "Falstaff and Smollett's Micklewhimmen." *Review of English Studies* 22 (1946): 226–8.
- 66 Wyndham Lewis. *The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare*. (1927). London: Methuen, 1951. 227.
- 67 C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler. *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. 204. More recent scholarship on children in the English Renaissance challenges these kinds of readings. On children's charm in particular, see Catherine Belsey's comment in relation to the princes in *Richard III*: "At this moment, in the early 1590s, the culture does not seem to have perceived what we have come to think of as the distinctive appeal of childishness" ("Little Princes: Shakespeare's Royal Children." *Shakespeare and Childhood*. Eds. Kate Chedgzoy, Susanne Greenhalgh, and Robert Shaughnessy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 32–48. 46).
- 68 One critic who does not do this is Andy Mousley. He says, "One aspect of Falstaff unnoticed or ignored by the representation of Falstaff in exclusively physical terms is his childlike need" (*Re-Humanising Shakespeare: Literary Humanism, Wisdom and Modernity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007. 86). Mousley also points out that "[i]n *The Passions of the Minde* (1601), Thomas Wright argues that both the 'internal and immaterial' and 'external and material' expressions of passion are at their rawest in children and animals" (86). I could not be more sympathetic with Mousley's humanist project, but I am also sure that Shakespeare does not approve of what Mousley calls Falstaff's "ethical orientation . . . based on the body" (88). If in his plays Falstaff ever cared about anyone else's body, he might be seen to have a modern ethics that would be appealing.
- 69 Elizabeth D. Harvey. "The Souls of Animals: John Donne's 'Metempsychosis' and Early Modern Natural History." *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*. Eds. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. New York: Palgrave, 2007. 55–70. See also Erica Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 39–58, especially the evidence she cites on 47, and Leah Sinanoglou Marcus.

- Childhood and Cultural Despair: A Theme and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978. 10–11. See also Michael Witmore. *Pretty Creatures: Children and Fiction in the English Renaissance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. Witmore notes that Calvin’s ideas about “innate human depravity” detracted from notions of childhood innocence (30). Even prior to Calvin, as Witmore suggests, children were seen as innocent only because of their lack of cognitive abilities. This lack was not romanticized except in the case of child saints.
- 70 Witmore. 26.
- 71 A. C. Bradley. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. (1909). London: Macmillan, 1950. 263.
- 72 Harold C. Goddard. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. 1: 176–8.
- 73 See also Sir Walter Alexander Raleigh. *Shakespeare*. New York: Macmillan, 1907. “The accidents and escapades of his life give ever renewed occasion for the triumph of spirit over matter” (189).
- 74 Goddard. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. 1: 183.
- 75 Keith Thomas. “Children in Early Modern England.” *Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie*. Eds. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. 45–78.
- 76 TLN 2948–9, 5.3.54.
- 77 Thomas. “Children in Early Modern England.” 63.
- 78 Goddard. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. 1: 183. See also Bloom. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. 297–8.
- 79 Henry IV is a truly compromised character, but Falstaff does not appear to represent a purer ideal; the play insists on the perfidy of the rebels and the relative good of the King’s cause, and Falstaff self-identifies as of the rebel’s party.
- 80 I am well aware of the risks in such a line of argumentation. Goddard says, “Falstaff is a touchstone to tell whether the juice of the magic flower has been squeezed into our eyes, if it has not, we will see only his animality. To the vulgar, Falstaff will be forever just vulgar” (179).
- 81 Witmore. *Pretty Creatures*. 39.
- 82 TLN 436–7, 1.2.161–2.
- 83 TLN 852–4, 2.2.56–8.
- 84 Fudge. *Brutal Reasoning*. 49.
- 85 See Thomas. *Man and the Natural World*. 45.
- 86 That Falstaff is the Prince’s father/teacher has been a pervasive assumption in critical discussions. The Lord Chief Justice seems to believe this, and Falstaff intimates such a relationship at least at 2 *Henry IV*. 1.2.178, but the Prince tells us from the beginning of their staged relationship that he has been and will be using Falstaff as a “foyle” (1*H4*. TLN 316, 1.2.193). When the Prince calls Falstaff the “Tutor and the Feeder of [his] Riots” (2*H4*. TLN 3274; 5.5.60), he may well be reading the script that Shakespeare suggests he has written for himself from his first moment with Falstaff. The Prince’s sophisticated rhetorical abilities from that first appearance indicate that he needs no one to teach him anything; as William Empson says, “he is well able to look after himself” (*Some Versions of Pastoral*. New York: New Directions, 1974. 106). That readers want so much to believe in the parenting relationship may say more about how they think character is constructed than about how Shakespeare sees characters. See Jonathan Goldberg’s comment: “Hal is still bent, as he was in his first soliloquy in Part 1, on the mockery of expectation and the falsifications that are coincident with his truth” (*Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992. 151).

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- 87 Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. 13.
- 88 Latour. 33.
- 89 Latour. 33.
- 90 2*H4*. TLN 852–4, 2.2.56–8.
- 91 2*H4*. TLN 882–7, 2.2.89–90.
- 92 The plays make versions of this point repeatedly. See the discussion between Falstaff and the Prince, in which Falstaff accuses the Prince of corrupting him and says, "I must giue over this life, and I will giue it ouer: and I do not, I am a Vilaine. Ile be damn'd for neuer a Kings sonne in Chritendome." He then immediately agrees to sinful activity (1 *H4*. TLN 203–206, 1.2.84–6). See also his offer to repent in his conversation with Bardolph (1*H4*. 3.3), and the reprise of that offer (*Merry Wives*. 4.5.83–4). Also see the conversation with Doll in 2 *Henry IV* (2.4.205–210). For an interesting discussion of Falstaff as "a parody of the sixteenth-century puritan," see Kristen Poole. "Saint's Alive: Falstaff, Martin Marprelate, and the Staging of Puritanism." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 (1995): 47–5.
- 93 There are critics who do "not agree to keep God from interfering with Natural Law as well as with the laws of the Republic" (Latour. 33). See, for example, Matthew Fike. "Dives and Lazarus in *The Henriad*." *Renaissance* LV (2003): 279–91. See his interesting treatment of the Dives and Lazarus material in relation to Falstaff.
- 94 Hugh Grady. "Falstaff: Subjectivity Between Carnival and the Aesthetic." *Modern Language Review* 96 (2001): 609–23.
- 95 Grady. 609, 614.
- 96 Grady. 619.
- 97 Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. 123.
- 98 Latour. 71.
- 99 Grady. 619.
- 100 Grady. 612.
- 101 Grady. 623.
- 102 Gail Paster, Mary Floyd-Wilson, et al. "Shakespeare and Embodiment: An E-Conversation." *Literature Compass* 2 (2005): 1–13.
- 103 *Henry V*. TLN 839–44, 2.3.16–20.
- 104 Latour. 33
- 105 On deathbed ritual in the early seventeenth century, see Katherine Koller. "Falstaff and the Art of Dying." *Modern Language Notes* 60 (1945): 383–6
- 106 Harold Bloom. "Introduction." *Falstaff*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1992. 1–4.
- 107 Latour. 34.
- 108 On the death scene, its Christian and medical references, and its bawdiness, see also Christopher Baker. "The Christian Context of Falstaff's 'Finer End.'" *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* XII (1986): 68–86; James Cutts. "The 'Whore of Babylon' a 'Whore A' Babb'lin'?: A Note on Falstaff's Death." *American Notes and Queries* 6 (1968): 133–5; Paul N. Siegel. "'All Was As Cold as Any Stone': A Bawdy Pun in the Description of Falstaff's Death." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 9.3 (1991): 25–6; and A. A. Mendilow. "Falstaff's Death of a Sweat." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9 (1958): 479–83.
- 109 1*Henry IV*. TLN 2778–9, 5.1.138–9.
- 110 TLN 2765. For a beautiful discussion of the effects of that Act on texts, see Tiffany Stern. 53–5.
- 111 Latour. *We Have Never Been Modern*. 48.
- 112 Moulton. "Fat Knight, or What You Will: Unimitable Falstaff." 235.
- 113 E. M. W. Tillyard. *The Nature of Comedy and Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958. 11.

- 114 Goddard. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. 1: 182.
- 115 Jill L. Levenson. “Shakespeare’s Falstaff: ‘The Cause That Wit Is in Other Men.’” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74 (2005): 722–8.
- 116 TLN 2173–4, 3.3.153–154. Shakespeare echoes the introduction to the Catechism in the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, which says that confirmation “is most mete to bee ministred when children come to that age, that partlye by the frayltie of their owne flesh, partly by the assaultes of the world and the Deuill, thei begin to be in daunger to fall into sondrie kindes of synne” (*Book of Common Praier, and Administration of the Sacramentes, and Other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of Englande*. London, 1559. D.i.v).
- 117 TLN 1721–3, 3.5.43–4.
- 118 See Valerie Traub’s important discussion of Falstaff’s beast-likeness in relation to “the female reproductive body” (“Prince Hal’s Falstaff: Positioning Psychoanalysis and the Female Reproductive Body.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989): 456–474). See also Rackin, who suggests that Falstaff’s traits “locate him on the wrong side of the binary opposition that divided man from woman, spirit from matter, aristocrat from commoner” (*Stages of History*. 204).
- 119 *Hamlet*. TLN 330, 1.2.146.
- 120 OED. “frailty” 2.
- 121 TLN 1683–4, 3.5.4–5.
- 122 TLN 1781–7, 3.5.98–103.
- 123 TLN 741, 2.2.6.
- 124 TLN 1489–0, 3.3.133–4.
- 125 TLN 2505, 5.5.21.
- 126 On Falstaff’s “animal” identity in *Merry Wives* see also Jeanne Addison Roberts. “Falstaff in Windsor Forest: Villain or Victim?” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26 (1975): 8–15; John M. Steadman. “Falstaff as Actaeon: A Dramatic Emblem.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14 (1963): 231–44; J. Drew Stephen. “Falstaff and the Culture of the Hunt.” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74 (2005): 729–39; and Grace Tiffany. “Falstaff’s False Staff: Jonsonian Asexuality in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.” *Comparative Drama* 26 (1992): 254–70.
- 127 TLN 3072–4, 5.4.106–108.
- 128 See the note to the speech in the *Norton Shakespeare*: “Prepared for embalming and burial as noblemen were; disemboweled in the manner of a hunted deer” (1220n. 5). For the criminal interpretation, see the OED “embowel” *v.* I. 1. See also Farnham’s comment: “Thus each time the ‘deer-deer’ pun is used in farewell to Falstaff it enforces what has been put forth of his monstrous doubleness as a man-animal” (68).
- 129 TLN 3077–8, 5.4.110–11.
- 130 TLN 3084–5, 5.4.116–17.

5 *The Winter's Tale's* Pedestrian and Elite Creatures

I take the term “Pedestrian” in the title of this chapter from Benjamin Jowett’s translation of the hendiadys “πεζὸν καὶ Θηριῶδες” in Plato’s *Timaeus*.¹ In the dialogue, Timaeus describes the birth of the other races of creatures from the first creatures created, the men. According to Timaeus, men who were cowardly or immoral became women in “the second generation.” Birds had a holier origin, deriving from men who believed in heaven but thought to reach that height solely by looking upward, whereas

The race of wild pedestrian animals . . . came from those who had no philosophy in any of their thoughts, and never considered at all about the nature of the heavens, because they had ceased to use the courses of the head, but followed the guidance of those parts of the soul which are in their breast.²

Timaeus does not divide the mortal world between humans and what Derrida calls “the animal in the general singular, separated from man by a single indivisible limit.”³ Rather he separates creatures from each other based on their literal and figurative statuses as either grounded or flying. Mortals, the *Timaeus* argues, are formed of the same physical matter but potentially animated differently. Some mortals soar, and some are pedestrian. Although the *Timaeus* was obviously not a primary creation story in Shakespeare’s England, paying attention to all creatures in *The Winter's Tale's* sheep-shearing scene reveals, I will argue, that one important logic of the Renaissance creaturely world is essentially *Timaeus's* logic. As we have seen, in *The Rape of Lucrece* the Renaissance creaturely continuum is divided into predators and prey. What we see in *The Winter's Tale's* scene is the creaturely world divided into pedestrians and those who soar above the body; in addition, once again, we will see a creaturely continuum that has been largely overlooked in the play’s critical history.

The sheep-shearing scene’s creaturely references are divided hierarchically in ways that will look familiar to my readers by now. The scene’s elite characters speak of, and in terms of, elite birds. At the scene’s opening, we hear that Florizel originally found Perdita because his falcon flew across her father’s land. Their wooing also proceeds by means of birds.

He proposes to join hands with her so that they will appear like turtledoves, and later in the scene he uses a conventional simile when he calls Perdita's hand "[a]s soft as Doues-downe, and as white as it."⁴ Like so many other Shakespeare characters, Perdita measures the seasons by the behavior of "swallow[s]."⁵ Florizel also invokes creature stories that attest to a classical education: Responding to Perdita's fears about how their costumes might scandalously confuse their social statuses, Florizel justifies his swain (shepherd) costume by telling her how Jupiter "Became a Bull" and Neptune became "A Ram."⁶ When he feels abandoned by fortune, he compares his situation with Perdita to that of "flyes" subject to the wind.⁷ His desolation can be measured by their descent from turtledoves to flies, creaturely markers of mortality. Camillo's creaturely reference is spiritual, speaking to his characterization. When he first addresses Perdita, he imagines himself as a sheep in her "flock."⁸

The creatures that appear in Autolycus's conversations are, for the most part, more debased. For example, when Autolycus speaks of birds, he names only tamed and black birds. He uses a conventional color simile, also ubiquitous in Shakespeare's work, when he offers to sell the crowd of simple shepherds and maids cloth as "*blacke as ere was Crow*."⁹ After Polixenes reveals himself and the crowd scatters, Autolycus calls the shepherds and maids "the Heard," and also his "Chowghes" (jackdaws) who have been scared "from the Chaffe."¹⁰ (Autolycus's usages of the jackdaw here are an indication of just how much the Prince insults Falstaff when he calls him a jackdaw in *1Henry IV*). Autolycus's ballads are packed with creatures, including a pregnant usurer's wife longing "to eate Adders heads, and Toads carbonado'd," and a fish singing "against the hard hearts of maids."¹¹ Most significantly, as will become clear, Autolycus's conversations with the old Shepherd and his son (called only "the Clown") teem with relatively debased creatures. He calls the old Shepherd and his son "puppies" and "two Moales," and he says that the Clown has "Petty-toes."¹² Probably, he is saying that the Clown has pig's feet; the *OED* also records a usage as ape's feet and a number of usages as children's feet. The conversation at the end of the scene among Autolycus, the Shepherd, and the Clown is chock-full of creatures: When Autolycus asks the Shepherd whether he has an advocate to the king, the Clown tells his confused father that an "Aduocate" is "the Court-word for a Pheazant"; the Shepherd, who is apparently familiar with a court system in which he would have to bribe a magistrate with game or tamed birds, replies that he has "no Pheazant Cock, nor Hen."¹³ Later in the conversation, Autolycus predicts that the Clown will be tortured by the king, who will flay him alive, coat him with honey, put him "on the head of a Waspes Nest," and then drag him down mostly dead, leave him until the hottest day of the year, and set him in the sun until he is "blown to death" with flies.¹⁴ The terrified young man responds by begging his father to pay Autolycus because, he says, though "Authoritie [is] a stubborne Bear, yet hee is oft led by the Nose with Gold."¹⁵

The nonhuman creatures mentioned in the scene have different statuses. Some of them are symbolic (like the Clown's "Bear"), some figurative (like Autolycus's "puppies"), and some real within the play's world (like Florizel's falcon and Perdita's swallow), but none of these creatures appear in standard critical accounts of the scene, and only one, the singing fish, is discussed at all in the "Encountering Nature" section of Mario DiGangi's excellent *Bedford Texts and Contexts* edition of the play.¹⁶ That critical neglect of creatures has helped to make the play's creaturely continuum relatively invisible. I will argue that *The Winter's Tale's* creaturely continuum has been largely invisible not only because most academic Shakespeareans live under Latour's "modern constitution," but also because what becomes visible in the scene is deeply unappealing to those who believe in human equality and rights.

In this chapter, I will make the sheep-shearing scene's creaturely continuum more visible.¹⁷ That increased visibility will show us that the scene attempts to distinguish quite carefully and also quite brutally between pedestrian and soaring creatures. The "wild pedestrian animals" in the scene include humans' and other creatures' bodies, the human pedestrian creatures among them occupied, as the *Timaeus* suggests, with concerns of the breasts and the loins rather than the head. Beastliness in the scene is signified by both skin and clothing, but it manifests most significantly, if most immaterially, in quality of mind. The most pedestrian creatures are the most mindless, whereas others transcend their bodies. We will witness this transcendence in two characters, including, most particularly, the displaced princess, Pedita. But it also shows its face in an interesting partial way in the displaced servant, Autolycus. As the brief look above at creatures in the scene indicates, Autolycus has the bulk of the scene's nonhuman creaturely references, and he deploys them frequently to place the Clown firmly in the pedestrian realm. As I will show, Autolycus's references point metadramatically to his actor Robert Armin's own books and stage skills; in so doing, they reveal not only the short shrift given the Clown inside the play but also the pedestrian status of intellectually disabled humans in the English Renaissance world outside the *The Winter's Tale*.

"Rough and Hairy" Skins

Some of the nonhuman creaturely references in the scene may not rise to visibility in critical accounts because they seem conventional or otherwise insignificant. At least one of the references may also have been rendered less visible by modernized spelling. This reference comes in the preface to Autolycus's specific threats of torture for the Shepherd and the Clown, when Autolycus gives a fictional account of the public's attitude toward these men's "crime"—the men are very worried that they will be punished because the child they adopted (Perdita) has taken the

affections of the king's son (Florizel). Autolycus says, "Some say hee [the Clown] shall be ston'd: but that death is too soft for him (say I:) Draw our Throne into a Sheep-Coat? all deaths are too few, the sharpest too easie."¹⁸ Modernized spelling editions substitute the word "sheepcote" for the folio's "Sheep-Coat," and some then gloss the word as a "pen for sheep."¹⁹ But the folio's hyphenated word appears to be a classic example of what Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass call "semantic slipping and sliding."²⁰ It seems to mean both a pen for a sheep and the coat of a sheep, the fleece that the shepherds are shearing off the sheep and/or the sheep's skin. Autolycus, thus, may be saying that the Shepherd should be punished for attempting to "drag" or to "entice" the Prince into the coat of a sheep, for trying to turn his outside into that of a pedestrian beast.²¹ That the crime of putting Florizel in a sheep's coat would deserve such a terrible punishment as flaying alive points to the play's investment in what Ann Rosalind Jones and Stallybrass call "the long regime of livery" and what Michael Neill calls "the vestimentary system."²² In that system, clothes, rather than skin, were "the prime expression of social identity."²³ For noblemen, "[t]he clothed body . . . was a body memorialized through the markings of heraldry, armor, and letters. These were the prostheses that transformed the naked body into an identifiable person."²⁴ The spectacle of Florizel in a sheep coat threatens to annihilate his noble personhood.

This possibility for the word and the speech is reinforced by the pattern of visual and verbal reference to skins in Autolycus's conversation with the Shepherd and the Clown and in the scene generally. Act four, scene four contains a spectacle of dancing satyrs: carters, shepherds, neatherds, and swineherds, whom a servant describes as having "made themselves all men of haire."²⁵ And Autolycus describes the Shepherd and the Clown as "men of haire" in their own skins. When he greets them, he asks them about their "breeding," and when the Clown responds that they are "but plaine fellowes," Autolycus says, "A Lye; you are rough, and hayrie."²⁶ Their skin and the skins they wear signify their status, and according to Autolycus they have beast-like skin, akin to the sheep with which (whom) they live and work. Later in the conversation, the Clown reminds his father that Autolycus has predicted that the Clown will be tortured, his skin removed: "Remember," he says, "ston'd, and flay'd alieue."²⁷ And shortly thereafter, the Clown and Autolycus have an exchange about skin: Autolycus asks the Clown, disingenuously, "Are you a partie in this Businesse?" When the Clown replies, "In some sort, Sir: but though my case be a pitifull one, I hope I shall not be flayd out of it," Autolycus responds, "Oh, that's the case of the Shepheards Sonne."²⁸ The Clown moves from the misery of his situation, his "pitifull" case, to the potential physical misery of being without his literal "case": his skin. Pretending that he does not know to whom he speaks, Autolycus reassures the Clown that the situation in question and, I would argue, the skin

in question is the Shepherd's son's.²⁹ This extended pattern of reference to removable skins reinforces the skin meaning of "Sheep-Coat." Although Autolycus's threats are purely self-serving, the specter of Florizel in the Shepherd's case, in the skin of a shepherd, haunts the entire scene.

Two of the keywords in Autolycus's conversation with the Shepherd and the Clown, "hairy" and "case," point particularly to these men's statuses as pedestrian beasts. In Shakespeare's canon the word "hairy" appears only six times, in descriptions of beasts or in relation to creatures who are both human and nonhuman, but it is never applied to anyone designated as fully human. Venus uses it when she cautions Adonis that his spear will not pierce the boar's "brawnie sides with hairie bristles armed."³⁰ The beast called the "hairie foole" in *As You Like It* is not likewise protected.³¹ He is the wounded deer with the "leatherne coat," the philosophical subject of Jacques's musings on court and city.³² Adonis's boar has bristles described as "hairie," but the deer in the Forest of Arden is a hairy creature like the shepherds. So too is Bottom after his transformation in *A Midsummer*. Shakespeare gives him the word to describe himself: "[M]e-thinkes I am maruellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender asse, if my haire do but tickle me, I must scratch."³³ As in so many of his speeches post-transformation, Bottom speaks innocently, believing in his human appearance, but implicates himself as essentially an "asse." His hairiness is part of that bestial identity, as Shakespeare confirms when he also has Oberon use the word to describe Bottom to Robin. Oberon calls Bottom a "hatefull foole" and says that Titania has decorated Bottom's "hairy temples" with flowers.³⁴ Like the wounded deer in *As You Like It*, Bottom is a "hairie foole." His hairiness, like the Shepherd's and the Clown's, is an essential feature of his beast-like identity.

The word "hairy" appears only one other time in the Shakespeare canon, in a jesting conversation between Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse. In this set piece in the second act of *The Comedy of Errors*, Dromio and Antipholus discuss the baldness of Father Time and the balding of older men:

Antipholus: Why is Time such a niggard of haire, being (as it is) so plentifull an excrement?

Dromio: Because it is a blessing that hee bestowes on beasts, and what he hath scanted them in haire, hee hath giuen them in wit.³⁵

Antipholus: Why, but theres mainie a man hath more haire then wit.

Dromio: Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his haire.

Antipholus: Why thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

Dromio: The plainer dealer, the sooner lost; yet he looseth it in a kinde of jollitie.³⁶

According to Dromio, hairiness is characteristic of beasts, and men gain intelligence as they grow bald. Antipholus responds with a common proverb, “more haire then wit,” that, despite his prefacing the proverb with the word “but,” seems to confirm the linkage between hairiness and witlessness.³⁷ Dromio replies that those kinds of hairy men—the ones with more hair than wit—have the kind of wit that leads them to sexual congress and thus to losing their hair to syphilis. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare appears to briefly revisit this conversation, but this time, rather than having it take place between two jesting men of unequal rank, he has the Clown claim that he and his father are plain and has Autolycus call them hairy. All of the subtext from *The Comedy of Errors* conversation applies to this exchange. Autolycus places these men among the beasts, and the scene as a whole shows us that the Clown is a “plain dealer” who will lose a lot to pursue sex.

Unlike “hairy,” the word “case” is common in Shakespeare’s works; as the exchange between the Clown and Autolycus indicates, “case” can signify multiply in a single instance. As well as employing the more abstract possibilities of the word, in his plays Shakespeare uses “case” to mean a mask, clothing, the body as a whole, and the skin in particular.³⁸ When the Clown says, “though my case be a pitifull one, I hope I shall not be flayd out of it,” and Autolycus replies, “Oh, that’s the case of the Shepherds Sonne,” they are both using the general abstract meaning “condition,” but they are also using the word “case” to mean what the *OED* classifies as an obsolete definition: “the skin or hide of an animal.”³⁹ Under that definition, the dictionary provides four usages between 1569 and 1704, two from texts that deal with material nonhuman bodies, one from a figurative discussion of a nonhuman skin, and one from a theological discussion of a human. Aside from the usage in *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare’s other usage of “case” to mean “skin” is in the culminating scene of *Twelfth Night*, at the point where Orsino thinks Cesario/Viola has deceived him. Orsino accuses him/her, saying, “O thou dissembling Cub: what wilt thou be / When time hath sow’d a grizzle on thy case?”⁴⁰ Enraged at being betrayed (he thinks), Orsino speaks to Cesario as if to a beast, a bear cub.⁴¹ Out of contempt instead of rage, Autolycus also uses the beast skin meaning of “case” to indicate the Clown’s beastliness.⁴²

The sheep-shearing scene in *The Winter’s Tale* shows us that the Clown, a character without a family or personal name, has a beast’s “case,” a case that marks him as belonging to the creatures he tends rather than to the dominant humans he fears.⁴³ If Renaissance noblemen were marked as elite by their armor and their velvets and lace, men and women who worked with their hands were marked as common and even as beasts by their attire and their trades and environs. We have seen this in chapter two in the reference to the workmen as hard-handed men. Shakespeare’s Sonnet 111 persona famously worries that the “public means” by which he gains his livelihood have “brand[ed]” his “name” so that his

“nature” is almost “subdu’d/to what it workes in, like the Dyers hand.” In this world, “the distinction between gentility and baseness was a social marker that became physically inscribed upon the body itself.”⁴⁴ Thus, a rough and hairy-skinned Clown is without a name and has a bestial nature determined by the creatures he lives and works among.

Sex and the Pedestrian Realm

The sheep-shearing festival scene is concerned with extricating Florizel and Perdita from the pedestrian realm and extricating Florizel from the skin that could classify him in that realm of the beasts. The scene’s opening conversation between the two characters shows that Florizel is risking being classified by association as a pedestrian beast. Perdita exclaims, “How would he [the King] looke, to see his work, so noble, / Vildely bound up.”⁴⁵ Perdita worries that Florizel’s swain costume makes him look “vile”: low and base. Not insignificantly, “vile” could be applied in the period indiscriminately to humans and beasts.⁴⁶ In relation to Perdita’s speech, Samuel Johnson remarked that Shakespeare’s bookbinding metaphor—“to see his work, so noble, / Vildely bound up”—is inappropriate in the mouth of a country maid and must have sprung from Shakespeare’s own authorial concerns.⁴⁷ However, in the context of the scene’s preoccupation with skins, the metaphor is perfectly apt. Like Renaissance books that were bound with skin, Florizel is clothed in a skin: the clothing of a shepherd covers him, making him look vile, like a beast. Florizel’s response, which I have already quoted briefly, may be equally telling. Addressing Perdita’s concern, Florizel explains that the gods, for love, have taken the “shapes of beasts”: “Iupiter, / Became a Bull, and bellow’d: the greene Neptune / A Ram, and bleated: and the Fire-roab’d God / Golden Apollo, a poore humble Swaine, / As I seeme now.”⁴⁸ The conjunction “and” makes Apollo’s transformation into a swain one in a list of bestial transformations.

However, Florizel quickly follows up his analogy with a distinction between the gods’ transformations and his own:

Their transformations
Were neuer for a peece of beauty, rarer,
Nor in a way so chaste: since my desires
Run not before mine honor: nor my Lusts
Burne hotter then my Faith.⁴⁹

When he compares himself to metamorphosed gods, Florizel carefully distinguishes his desires from theirs because, as he acknowledges negatively, those gods did not in fact transform themselves for love, a concern of the head, but for lust, a concern of the breast. Just as the *Timaeus* does, the sheep-shearing scene divides mortals up between those with philosophy,

who use the courses of their heads, and those who look only downwards towards their breasts, between men and women motivated by elevated love and philosophy, and shepherds and maids motivated by lust and prurient interest. Autolycus calls the shepherds and maids “Moales” and “puppies,” two kinds of pedestrian creatures.⁵⁰ And in the scene, these people have the concerns of the breasts: the maids and shepherds happily and ignorantly desire Autolycus’s sexualized wares, and their conversation links them continually with sex. Autolycus sells them songs with “Dildo’s and Fadings,” and he peddles “*Pins, and poaking-stickes of steele / What Maids lacke from head to beele,*” and ballads about “*Mist. Tale-Porter.*”⁵¹ As well as snatching up his sexualized wares, Mopsa and her boyfriend, the Clown, argue over his promiscuity. She accuses him of fornication with another maid, Dorcas, and rather than denying the charge, he scolds the two maids for revealing sexual secrets at the feast rather than during “milking-time” or when they are “going to bed,” or are at the “kill-hole.”⁵² His shame at the maids who “weare their plackets, where they should bear their faces” only compromises these women further, since he implies that the women talk about sex at work and in bed. The reference to the “kill-hole,” presumably an oven, also seems like an inviting, extraneous, sexual pun.⁵³ The three-part song that Autolycus, Dorcas, and Mopsa sing also implicates the Clown as a male version of a whore.⁵⁴

Unlike Florizel, who dissociates himself from the potentially sexual aspect of his swain costume, Perdita fleetingly implicates herself as sexually interested. Complaining that she has no spring flowers to distribute, Perdita says,

O, these I lacke,
To make you Garlands of) and my sweet friend,
To strew him o’re, and o’re.

Florizel: What? like a Coarse?

Perdita: No, like a banke, for Loue to lye, and play on:
Not like a Coarse: or if: not to be buried,
But quicke, and in mine armes. Come, take your flours,
Me thinks I play as I haue seene them do
In Whitson-Pastorals: Sure this Robe of mine
Do’s change my disposition.⁵⁵

In this speech, Perdita appears momentarily eagerly sexual, responding to Florizel’s question with an invitation for him to be alive in her embrace, “quicke” and in her arms. Although she says that she is speaking outside of her customary “disposition,” she seems concerned about dying before she has lain with and played with Florizel, since she moves immediately, in response to Florizel’s “Coarse” prompt, to imagine Florizel as both an animate body in her embrace and a flower-strewn slope on which Love

personified, or perhaps she, can cavort. This, however, is the only indication in the scene that Perdita has sexual interest, and even this indication serves to simultaneously purify Perdita in relation to sexuality. It appears to be prompted by the naive assumption in Perdita's previous speech that Mopsa and Dorcas are virginal and her association between that assumption and the risk that maidens will die of green-sickness, a disease that was imagined to strike virginal women: "pale Prime-roses, / That dye vnmarried. . . (a Maladie/Most incident to Maids:)." ⁵⁶ Shakespeare characterizes Perdita as so innocent that she sees the young women around her as chaste: "your Virgin-branches yet / Your Maiden_heads growing."⁵⁷ She sees them this way even though the scene wastes little time in showing us that Mopsa and Dorcas are by no means virginal. Not only does Perdita's naiveté function to temper the force of her sexualized interest in Florizel, it also serves to remove her from the beastly milieu of the shepherds and maids. If she thinks that Mopsa and Dorcas are subject to a disease that attacks virgins, she has not spent much time with them.

A bit later in the scene, Shakespeare has Perdita profess not only sexual innocence in relation to sex acts but in relation to speech and even thought. This profession comes in a conversation that contributes to the characterization of her "brother" as a sexual beast. In that conversation, Perdita asks him to make sure that the pedlar (Autolycus) performs chastely:

Perdita: Forewarne him, that he vse no scurrilous words in's tunes.

Clown: You haue of these Pedlers, that haue more in them, than youl'd thinke (Sister.)

Perdita: I, good brother, or go about to thinke.⁵⁸

Perdita's epithet for the Clown, "good brother," seems almost an admonition here, as if the Clown could be kept from thinking about "scurrilous" matters were he to be "good." However, the Clown's "scurrilous" thoughts are integral to his characterization, a feature of his bestial nature. Arguably, the Clown is sexualized from his first appearance in act four. Remarking upon the state of Autolycus's clothes when they first meet, the Clown says, "If this bee a horsemans Coate, it hath seene very hot seruice."⁵⁹ This is quite probably a sexual joke, given the possible meanings of "hot" and "service."⁶⁰ In addition, Shakespeare often finds the "whores"/"horse" homophone irresistible.⁶¹ That homophone is activated early in *The Winter's Tale* in a conversation between Leontes and Camillo when Leontes calls his wife a "Holy-Horse" and accuses her of "horsing foot on foot" with Polixenes.⁶² As Paul Yachnin suggests, "Leontes uses the language of animality in order to degrade women."⁶³ The Clown, thus, is characterized in accordance with a pattern of horse-related sexual language already established in the play, and his proclivity for sexual humor continues even in conversation with his preternaturally

purified “sister,” brought up in the Clown’s realm but not kin to his bestial nature.

Perdita’s Face, Hands, and Mind

Perdita as a character is a human limit case for the “vestimentary system.” Because she has been raised from birth in the realm of pedestrian beasts, wearing milkmaid clothing and laboring among the sheep throughout her childhood, she should belong on the pedestrian end of the creaturely continuum. However, her royal blood means that she cannot have been defined by her sixteen years in milkmaid’s clothing and her bodily labor milking ewes. Just as Shakespeare carefully works to distinguish Florizel from his swain’s clothing by removing him from the sexual concerns of the breast, Shakespeare also points repeatedly to her royal truth being evident in Perdita’s face and hands rather than in her clothes. That Perdita attributes her one slippage into sexual interest to her costume—her “Robe”—is a tribute to the power of clothing to create identity, but the rest of the scene works to produce in her a bodily truth that removes her from her beastly environment. Perdita famously rejects cosmetics as a way to attract Florizel, saying that she would never want Florizel to approve her and “[d]esire to breed by” her “were [she] painted” (wearing makeup).⁶⁴ In addition, in the scene, the natural (as opposed to cosmetic) reddening of Perdita’s cheeks surfaces three times, and that reddening serves as a bodily sign of her noble status.⁶⁵ However, not all humans in the scene can read her blushes correctly. The Shepherd disparages that reddening, commanding her to play what he sees as her proper role. He says, “Come, quench your blushes, and present your selfe / That which you are, Mistris o’th’Feast.”⁶⁶ The Shepherd’s wording shows how bad a reader he is of bodily truth; rather than obscuring her true role, her blushes perfectly reveal her true self. They, rather than her customary milkmaid attire or her Flora costume, indicate that she is mistress of Sicilia and Bohemia, or as Camillo later calls her, “Mistresse / To most that teach,” not “Mistris o’th’Feast.”⁶⁷ In contrast to the Shepherd’s misreading, Camillo reads her blushes as revealing her truth, even though he does not know what her truth is. Speaking to Polixenes, Camillo says of the young lovers, “He tels her something / That makes her blood looke on’t.”⁶⁸ And later in the scene, Perdita responds to Camillo’s own compliment, saying, “Your pardon Sire, for this, / Ile blush you Thanks.”⁶⁹ Her modesty is a feature of her noble nature; in addition, her actual noble blood speaks through her cheeks, and it speaks in the contrast between her red cheeks and her noble whiteness. Her blush thus “symbolically assures the integrity of aristocratic bloodlines.”⁷⁰ It also separates her from the beasts she lives among.

The discourse surrounding Perdita’s blushes works doubly to distinguish the social groups in the scene, functioning in a similar way to clothing in

the “vestimentary system.” And Shakespeare makes that distinction seem natural by having it produced in undesigned speech: Without knowing who Perdita really is, Camillo admires how her blood looks out of her cheeks. In contrast, the Shepherd sees that same blood as a sign that she is shirking her work. Shakespeare gives the Shepherd lines that very directly compare Perdita’s noble speaking body with the speaking body of his late wife, whom the Shepherd praises by describing her uniformly red face: “her face o’fire / With labour, and the thing she tooke to quench it / She would to each one sip.”⁷¹ Unlike Perdita’s blushes, the Shepherd’s wife’s red face signifies her working and drinking life; just as his sheep tending has marked his body so that his skin is “rough and hairy,” his late wife’s household “labour” and the “quench[ing]” of her consequent thirst have colored her skin with the fires of intemperance and exertion. The Shepherd’s speech implicates his wife as potentially promiscuous and drunken, but the Shepherd does not understand the implications of his praise. He sees his wife’s behavior, drinking to and with each man and turning red with labor and drink, as more valuable than Perdita’s blushes. But his wife’s behavior and her facial transformation posthumously mark her, instead, as a sexually suspect laborer.

In contrast, Perdita’s body is extraordinarily unmarked by her labor; she has a hand that Florizel describes as not only as soft and white as doves’ feathers but as white as “Ethyopians tooth, or the fan’d snow, thats bolted / By the Northerne blasts, twice ore.”⁷² This is another case in which Ethiopians figure as pure blackness rather than as humans. Perdita’s hands’ softness and whiteness seem magical given that she asserts she has customarily performed manual labor. After Polixenes threatens her, she says to Florizel that she will “Queene it no inch farther, / But milke [her] Ewes and weepe.”⁷³ However, her association with sheep husbandry leaves no sign on her body. Commoner bodies in Shakespeare plays, in contrast, show their labor. In *As You Like It*, despite Corin’s status as a pastoral philosopher, his hands are “greasie,” “hard,” and “tarr’d ouer” from their labor.⁷⁴ Likewise, in that play, the Clown [Touchstone] reflects upon wooing a working girl: “I remember the kissing . . . the Cowes dugs that her prettie chopt hands had milk’d.”⁷⁵ Though the Clown finds Jane Smile’s hands pretty, they are chapped from the work of milking. “Milk” is a complex, multivalent signifier in Shakespeare’s works. Its color often stands for purity, but the labor associated with milking signifies commoner status and marks hands—except in Perdita’s case. Her reticent blushes and her white skin, unmarred by labor under the sun, signify the fact that she is, as the Clown says, “none of [the Shepherd’s] flesh and blood,” a phrase the Clown repeats four times, as if to assure the audience as well as himself.⁷⁶

However, as the scene also shows, the vestimentary system was a feature of the premodern creaturely world precisely because the body in that world was a slim reed indeed on which to hang human identity. We

have seen how Falstaff's devotion to the body and its pleasures compromises his human identity. The body was also dust in relation to eternal time and was acknowledged to be massively subject to change through illness and age in relation to worldly time, another concern of the play. It is possible that the "*Masks for faces, and for noses*" that Autolycus is selling refer to masks designed to hide the bodily effects of syphilis, which ate away men's and women's noses.⁷⁷ Also, Perdita, naturally wise beyond her years, responds to Camillo's proposal that love's "fresh complexion" may be marred by "affliction" with the comment, "One of these is true: / I thinke Affliction may subdue the Cheeke, / But not take-in the Mind."⁷⁸ That time and "affliction" will change appearance becomes evident on stage when Leontes comments on how Hermione looks in the final scene: "*Hermione* was not so much wrinkled, nothing / So aged as this seems."⁷⁹ On the one hand, the faces of syphilitic men and women signified a moral truth; on the other, the aged or suffering body might reveal nothing about the truth of character and social or moral status.

Thus, on one level, the scene resolves Perdita's identity crisis by locating her nobility on her body rather than in her milieu's clothing, and, on another, the scene overcomes the limits of the body as a register of identity by demonstrating Perdita's refined mind. If the play implies that Perdita's bodily perfection will last only as long as her mother's did, it also asserts that her perfection of mind may be limitless, that her nobility transcends her body. Significantly, in a scene so interested in the power of clothing, Perdita uses a clothing metaphor that concerns her mind: "By th' patterne of mine own thoughts, I cut out / The puritie of his."⁸⁰ In that metaphor, Perdita is the dressmaker, but a dressmaker who cuts out only abstractions. Her cloth is pure thought. Likewise, when Polixenes tries to tempt Florizel to buy the pedlar's ornaments for Perdita, Florizel responds that she cares only for the gifts of his heart. As if she were raised with a bubble of immateriality around her, Perdita has only philosophy, in stark contrast to her "father" and "brother" who lack the ability to think. Her hands are the color of doves, and her thoughts soar above her immediate world; her "brother's" toes are the toes of pigs, and his thoughts are likewise grounded.

The Fool and the Clown: Metadrama, Robert Armin, and the Creaturely World

In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare uses all of the techniques he honed in his playwriting career to stress the Clown's witlessness, his identity as what was called a "natural fool." Gloating over his ballad and trinket sales and his pickpocketing success, Autolycus comments sarcastically on the Clown's lack of reason: "My Clowne (who wants but something to be a reasonable man) grew so in loue with the Wenches Song, that hee would not stirre his Petty-toes, till he had both Tune and Words,

which so drew the rest of the Heard to me, that all their other Sences stucke in Eares.”⁸¹ In this speech, as in so much of his other commentary on the shepherds and maids, Autolycus differentiates himself from them by stressing their witless beastly essence and its contrast with his own quick wit and theatrical abilities. Their abandonment of sense and their distractibility are no match for his storytelling skills and his “open eare,” “quick eye,” “nimble hand,” and “good Nose.”⁸² And their reasoning disability also identifies them as beasts. The Clown who lacks reason has pig’s feet, and his hearing-bound friends are both the “Heard” and the “Herd,” the simultaneous meanings of Autolycus’s slippery word. They group themselves like domesticated beasts, spellbound by the fake pedlar’s call, and that fake pedlar can make two meanings while they cannot even truly comprehend one.⁸³

That Autolycus calls the Clown “My Clown” is one of a number of indications that the interactions of those characters are meant to show off Autolycus’s skills as an actor within both what Robert Weimann calls “the imaginary world-in-the-play” and “the real world of everyday experience.”⁸⁴ David Wiles argues that Autolycus was played by Robert Armin, the fool who succeeded Will Kemp as Shakespeare’s primary company clown, and that we can see this specifically because the character tells us that he has served in Florizel’s court: “The point of informing the audience that Autolycus is an ex-courtier is to remind them that the *actor* is a celebrated player of court fools.”⁸⁵ Armin’s origination of the role of Autolycus seems evident also in many of the role’s functions. Armin was a singer and was renowned for his “virtuoso mimicry.”⁸⁶ Autolycus enters the play singing twice, the second time invited to enter singing by the Clown. He also exits the stage for the first time singing, and in the sheep-shearing scene, he shows off his singing in parts as well as solo, prefacing the performance by saying, “I can beare my part, you must know, ’tis my occupation.”⁸⁷ This claim seems like a direct address to the audience, reminding it of one of Armin’s most marketable skills.⁸⁸ In addition, Armin’s mimic abilities are continually on display when Autolycus appears sequentially, first addressing the audience as himself, and then addressing other characters as a gentleman, a pedlar, and finally a courtier. When he uses the word “extempore”—“Sure the Gods doe this yeere conniue at vs, and we may doe any thing extempore”—the character is also probably referring to Armin’s skill at improvisation.⁸⁹ Shakespeare uses this word primarily in relation to theatrical situations, once when Falstaff is proposing his tavern play with the Prince, once in Quince’s instructions to Snug, and once in *The Taming of the Shrew*, when Petruchio is praising his own ability to produce a speech.⁹⁰ In addition, as Wiles observes, “Armin’s own multiple identities—as writer of ballads, tradesman, fool, King’s servant, would-be courtier—are refracted through the assumed role or alias of Autolycus.”⁹¹ Autolycus

is a fundamentally metadramatic role, probably written for Armin and celebrating his skills.⁹²

As well as helping to characterize the Clown and his friends, the beast identities that Autolycus assigns to the Clown contribute to Armin's metadramatic show. The audience is encouraged to laugh at Autolycus ridiculing the Clown in the "imaginary world-in-the-play," and at the same time the audience is seeing, and laughing at, a clown contest between Armin, the multi-talented primary clown in the company, and his "foil," an "old-fashioned rustic 'clown,'" resembling Kemp and played by a secondary clown in Shakespeare's troupe.⁹³ This clown contest was one of Armin's signature comic routines.⁹⁴ In addition, by the time Armin was appearing in *The Winter's Tale*, the clown contest was a feature of his own books that he was eager to promote. In a comment to the audience about the Clown and the Shepherd, Autolycus says, "how blessed are we, that are not simple men? / Yet Nature might haue made me as these are, / Therefore I will not disdaine."⁹⁵ Within the "imaginary world-in-the-play," this comment seems disingenuous at best given the character's massively displayed disdain throughout the scene. As Nora Johnson argues, Armin's "performances . . . follow a kind of adversarial logic that makes it very difficult to tell the difference between an attack on clowning and a building-up of the clown's comic authority."⁹⁶ But Autolycus's comment makes perfect sense as an advertisement for Armin's published works on "natural fools" (men who were intellectually challenged or mentally ill): *Fool Upon Fool* (1600 and 1605) and the reworked text published in 1608 as *A Nest of Ninnies*. In those books, Armin, the author, distinguishes himself from the natural fools he describes by narrating their antics. Autolycus's comment may even refer directly to this text in which Armin plays upon the idea that he is a witty fool who is displaying these naturals, also classified as fools. Autolycus/Armin may also be metadramatically referencing his own play *Two Maids of Moreclacke*, which contained two fool parts, both played by Armin: one a witty Autolycus-like fool, and one a natural fool.⁹⁷ By saying that he is blessed not to be a simple man, but that he could have been one, Autolycus/Armin could both show off his knowledge of natural fools and his ability to play those kinds of clown parts as well as his more customary witty fool parts.

Fool Upon Fool does not call Armin by name, identifying the author on the title page only as the clown who plays at the Curtain theater: "*Clonnico de Curtanio Snuffe*." *A Nest of Ninnies*, in contrast, has a title page with the name "*Robert Armin*," centered, and a dedicatory epistle with an address that ends "*Ro. Armin* greeting," signed with the same name. That revised text probably preceded *The Winter's Tale* by two years. *A Nest of Ninnies* seems to be part of a self-promotion effort by Armin, a promotion that includes reference to the Globe Theatre and to roles in Shakespeare's plays.⁹⁸ The sheep-shearing scene functions in a

similar manner to promote Armin, the author, at the expense of and in contrast to the natural fools in the play. Armin/Autochylus does this, as I have been showing, partially by identifying these natural fools as beasts. When we see Autochylus classifying the Clown as a beast, we may also be seeing Armin classifying the clown that preceded him and his competitor clowns as nonhuman. That stage project is in line with, and may also act as promotion for, similar moves in Armin's books.

Fool Upon Fool shows us a Renaissance world in which natural fools could be understood as more akin to beasts than they were to humans. In that text, Armin both allies himself with the fools he describes and allies himself with his reading audience by dehumanizing those fools. The logic of the text is one that might give us pause today, for it seems to interpret disabled or differently abled human creatures as beasts.⁹⁹ For example, Armin introduces his stories about the "lean fool" Leanard who lived in the country with an appeal to his London readers:

I thinke it not a misse to tell [Leanard's stories] at London, that people seeing the strange workes of God, in his differing creatures, we that haue perfect resemblance of God, both in sence and similytude, may the better praise his name, that we differ from them whose humors we read, see and heare, are not so strange as true.¹⁰⁰

As in the metadramatic show in *The Winter's Tale*, in this text Armin allies himself with the audience, making speaker and reader into a "we" who are formed in God's image; "we" reason because of His gifts, and "we" will combine to praise God because there are those in the world, other of God's creatures, who differ from Him because they lack "sence" and are not formed in His image. This is not only Armin's logic. Leslie Hotson quotes a preacher who wrote in 1611 that it would be right to use "borne fooles" "as spectacles of Gods mercy to us, with whom it hath pleased God to deale more mercifully" by giving us "an inborn knowledge of right and wrong withheld from them."¹⁰¹ Armin can appeal to this logic precisely because he knows that his readers will understand it, that they also see naturals—people who would today be classified as intellectually or physically disabled or differently abled—as different sorts of creatures than themselves.

This reasoning is evident in one of the stories Armin tells about Lean Leanard: "How leane Leanard eate vp his Masters Hawke, and was almost choaked with the feathers." In that story, Leanard's master brings home "a goodly fayre Hauke" and praises her to his gentlemen friends, who also commend the bird. Leanard misunderstands their praise as meaning that the bird was "farre better meate then a Turkey or a Swan" and, when no one is looking, he wrings the hawk's neck and stuffs her into his mouth. In response, one of the gentleman cries "hang the foole," but the master spares Leanard because his naive response—that the Hawk was indeed not as delicious as had been claimed—is so funny. Armin explains

that “though the gentleman loued his hauke, yet he loued the foole aboue: being enforced rather to laugh at his simplicity, then to vex at his losses sodainly.”¹⁰² What is crucial here is that Armin tells the story without in any way judging the man who wanted Leanard killed for eating a bird. He does not assume that his audience would see the prospective punishment as either disproportionate or immoral. The “we” that Armin creates in the text is a “we” for whom a gentleman’s hunting bird might be more valuable as a life than a human who resides in the gentleman’s home.

Because this logic was common in Shakespeare’s England (and very visible if we care to look), Armin had a particular, personal interest in allying himself with the human audience on the reasonable, soaring end of the creaturely continuum. And that particular, personal interest helps to explain the beast vocabulary that he deploys against the Clown and his cohorts. Armin was a professional fool, and because of that he always risked being classified as a pedestrian beast. The text of one of Geffrey Whitney’s emblems argues that promoting a fool makes his folly visible and “is a shame to them, that make him clime [climb] . . . For low estate did shadowe euery crime.”¹⁰³ The emblem’s woodcut shows fools in two positions, one halfway up a tree and one seated with legs skewed sideways, seemingly begging. The naked fools bracket a huddled group of clothed men, one man at each end pointing to the fool either above or below him. Not only are the depicted fools naked, they are also not human—they have ape-like faces and long, muscular, clawed appendages. Whitney’s emblem may or may not represent professional fools; it certainly serves as a warning to his readers not to promote foolish men.¹⁰⁴ However, the iconic depiction of foolish men as beasts illustrates the mentality that Armin contended with. In addition, natural fools, according to Armin, lived like beasts. In *Fool Upon Fool*, Armin records the antics of Henry VIII’s famous court fool, Will Sommers. Despite Sommers’s favor with the king, he did not travel with Henry. Armin writes that Henry laughed at one of Sommers’s jests “and so pleasantly departed for that season, and Will la[id] him downe among the Spaniels to sleep.”¹⁰⁵ Again, without judgmental commentary, Armin documents (and perhaps helps to sustain) a world in which the natural fool belonged with valued dogs more than he belonged with valued people.¹⁰⁶

Wiles suggests that Armin was a very small and perhaps deformed man with an affinity for dog and frog roles: Armin, he says, “was obsessed with natural fools because he himself, physically though not mentally, *was* a natural fool.”¹⁰⁷ Many scholars agree with Wiles, but Peter Cockett suggests that “Armin need not be dwarfish or ugly, since as a skilled mimic he could adopt the kind of physical characteristics found in his descriptions of his naturals.”¹⁰⁸ Whether or not Armin physically resembled a natural fool, he was often cast in, and perhaps helped to develop, beast-associated roles. In turn, those roles reinforced a common identification of the people in his profession with nonhuman creatures. Shakespeare arguably played on this identification in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* when

Launce, a natural clown played by Kemp, says, “I am the dogge: no the dogge is himselfe, and I am the dogge: oh, the dogge is me, and I am my selfe.”¹⁰⁹ As Fudge suggests, “the fact that La[u]nce finds himself inseparable from his *dog* signals his failure as a human.”¹¹⁰ Armin, who had ambitions above “low estate” and who acquired a coat of arms during his lifetime, had a personal interest in distinguishing himself from natural fools like *The Winter’s Tale’s* Clown and Henry’s fool Will Sommers, who despite his association with a king slept among dogs; in the play, Armin/Autolycus does this by selectively identifying only natural foolishness with beasts.

Armin does this as well in his 1600 quarto *Quips Upon Questions*, in which a Clown speaker displays his “conceite[s]” in response to a wide range of questions. The second question in the book is “*Why barks that Dogge?*” The status of the speaker(s) of the four verses responding to the question is puzzling. The first verse opens with the suggestion that the dog should be asked the question, but it proceeds to attest to the silliness of this idea, since dogs cannot speak. The second and third verses compare dogs to men, but not to men’s advantage because, for example, men hold grudges while dogs forget their anger. While the first three verses discuss the questions as if they are spoken by other characters, the fourth verse appears to be spoken by the Clown speaker of *Quips*—at least that verse uses the first person: “Thou that wilt make comparisons so odious, / As twixt a Christian and a barking Curre, / I hold thy wit to be no whit commodious.” The quips are always in the Clown/Armin’s voice, and the quip that follows seconds this final speaker in claiming that witless men “*better be Dogges, and barke.*”¹¹¹ Again, a Whitney emblem offers an apt cognate. The woodcut depicts a dog barking at the moon; Whitney explains that this picture “reprehendes, those fooles which baule and barke, / At learned men.”¹¹² In *Quips*, Armin used his wit to identify himself as a Christian human in relation to those who value dogs over Christians. Shakespeare and other playwrights gave Armin roles in which he barked like a dog, but in *The Winter’s Tale*, as in *Quips*, he could project that status onto the Clown and his friends and promote his own witty humanity.

Just as we cannot firmly identify Armin with some speakers in *Quips*, Autolycus cannot be interpreted solely as Armin’s mouthpiece. Autolycus is also not a well-rounded novelistic character. As Wiles suggests in relation to clown parts, “Shakespeare constructs character as a set of functions, a set of relationships. The dynamics of the stage situation are more important to him than the internal consistency of a single character.”¹¹³ Autolycus functions as the play’s primary clown, its singer, and a mover of its plot, and his functions shift from scene to scene. When Autolycus enters the play, he sings of his promiscuity, his cowardice, and his lack of care for his soul.¹¹⁴ These three attributes help Shakespeare to place the new character for his audience, to remind them that they will be seeing

the man who played Touchstone and Feste, but they are not attributes that Armin would claim as a person, at least as he projects that persona in his own texts. Shakespeare also seems to be using the character and his Clown contest to launch critiques of courtiers and badly behaved nobles and magistrates. Those critiques, rather than characterization, explain the Clown's comment that "Authoritie [is] a stubborne Bear, yet hee is oft led by the Nose with Gold," and his assumption that magistrates can be bribed with game birds.¹¹⁵ They also can account for the exchange between the Clown and Autolycus about the character's expulsion from Florizel's court:

- Autolycus:* I cannot tell good sir, for which of his Vertues it was, but hee was certainly Whipt out of the Court.
- Clown:* His vices you would say: there's no vertue whipt out of the Court: They cherish it to make it stay there; and yet it will no more but abide.¹¹⁶

In relation to characterization, it makes no sense that the Clown, who has no vocabulary to speak of and no familiarity with court, can correct Autolycus's vocabulary. However, as a set piece designed to provoke audience reaction in relation to social stereotypes, the dialogue is immediately legible and accords with Autolycus's later comment that he "Reflect[s]" "Court-Contempt" on the Shepherd's and Clown's "Basenesse."¹¹⁷ Barbara Mowat connects Autolycus both to legal and moral discourses that condemned shiftless men and to a discourse that condemned wealthy sheep owners for forcing men into beggary.¹¹⁸ While we cannot be sure what Armin or Shakespeare believed about these social issues, what we see in the play's language and in Armin's texts is that, more often than not, they were articulated in relation to the creatures that humans in Shakespeare's world lived with and thought through all the time. The Clown's comment on corrupt authority depends on Shakespeare's audience's knowledge of the "stubborne" bears in London, and game birds were familiar to that audience as food and as barter currency.

For Shakespeare's audiences, as we have seen, other creatures and human relations with other creatures easily signified human moral status and degree; this was true both symbolically and materially. As Mowat suggests, the Shepherd and Clown's "vocations can hardly be seen as coincidental" because sheep owners took over land that was formerly common land. In texts like *The Winter's Tale*,

the sheep owner is blamed for the plight of vagrants and thieves. Nor can it be a coincidence that the shepherd enters calculating the amount of money that will come in from this year's shearing—more than £140, a goodly sum at that time—and that he then lists the expensive delicacies that he is off to buy.¹¹⁹

Sheep, thus, signify multiply in the play, in the scene, and in the Renaissance world; they help to identify the Shepherd and the Clown as beast-like, and they also may help to condemn men in their positions in real life as rapacious land owners. That the sheep-shearing scene opens with Florizel's praise of his falcon's acuity is also not coincidental or as incidental as it might seem to a modern who does not hunt using a bird as his or her ally and who does not associate nobility with soaring hunting birds. At the beginning of the sheep-shearing scene, Florizel says to Perdita, "I blesse the time / When my good Falcon, made her flight a-crosse / Thy Fathers ground."¹²⁰ Florizel finds the lost princess because of his hunting falcon. That falcon helps to mark his status as a flying mortal, a man close to the angels, a prince whose thoughts, reasoning abilities, and ability to suppress his bodily urges make him soar above the sheep-tending mortals his beloved has lived among. In a world where a house fool is potentially less valuable than a hawk, Florizel's falcon places him among the masters. It is his "good falcon" who flies toward Perdita's purified future, far from the beastly concerns of her companions in her misplaced youth.

Notes

- 1 Desmond Lee translates Plato's term as "land animals," as does Francis MacDonald Cornford. See Plato. *Timaeus and Critias*. Trans. Desmond Lee. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971. 123; Francis MacDonald Cornford. *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1956. 358. R. D. Archer-Hind translates the phrase as "the race of brutes that walk on dry land" (*The Timaeus of Plato*. Trans. R. D. Archer-Hind. (1888). New York: Arno Press, 1973).
- 2 Plato. *Timaeus*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1949. 75.
- 3 Jacques Derrida. "The Animal that Therefore I Am (More to Follow)." 415.
- 4 TLN 1972, 4.4.153; TLN 2186, 4.4.349.
- 5 TLN 1922, 1933; 4.4.109, 119.
- 6 TLN 1829, 1830; 4.4.28, 29.
- 7 TLN 2404, 4.4.528.
- 8 TLN 2485, 4.4.595.
- 9 TLN 2045, 4.4.216.
- 10 TLN 2493-4, 4.4.602, 603.
- 11 TLN 2086-7, 2099-2100; 4.4.255, 267-8.
- 12 TLN 2589, 2717; 4.4.686, 805; TLN 2483, 4.4.594.
- 13 TLN 2622-6, 4.4.718-22.
- 14 TLN 2665-72, 4.4.758-65.
- 15 TLN 2682-3, 4.4.773-4. On the significant resonances of bears in Shakespeare, see Andreas Höfele. *Stage, Stake, & Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 16 William Shakespeare. *The Winter's Tale: Texts and Contexts*. Ed. Mario DiGangi. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. But see Paul Yachnin. "Sheepishness in *The Winter's Tale*." 210-9. Yachnin does not discuss the sheep-shearing

- scene, but his reading of the significance of sheep in the play is attentive to the reality and significance of nonhuman creatures in the play.
- 17 Gabriel Egan makes the ecocritical point that “[a]t over 840 lines, the sheep-shearing feast of 4.4 is fully a quarter of the play and this alone makes clear the play’s concern with agricultural production” (*Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, 2006. 128).
 - 18 TLN 2660–2, 4.4.753–5.
 - 19 See the *Norton Shakespeare* for one among many examples.
 - 20 Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass. “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text.” 265. See also chapter one’s discussion of this feature of language.
 - 21 *OED*. “draw.” v.I, II26.
 - 22 Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass. *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 275. Michael Neill. *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. See Neill’s comment that “identity in the vestimentary system is always imagined as a kind of guise” (14).
 - 23 Neill. 9. See Shannon’s important discussion of “Borrowed Coats” in “Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Sovereignty, Human Negative Exceptionalism, and the Natural History of *King Lear*.” 185–8. Shannon also discusses the word “case.” Alison Chapman reminds us that in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the flayed saint “Bartholomew was the patron saint of those trades that work with skins: butchers, skinners, tanners, carriers, glovers, bookbinders, and even sausage-makers” and that he was also “the patron saint of tailors.” And this was because Bartholomew “bears his own skin like a cloak or mantle” (Alison A. Chapman. “Flaying Bartholomew: Jonson’s Hagio-graphic Parody.” *Modern Philology* 101.4 (2004): 511–41).
 - 24 Jones and Stallybrass. 270.
 - 25 TLN 2146–7, 4.4.311–13.
 - 26 TLN 2603–4, 4.4.701–2.
 - 27 TLN 2685–6, 4.4.776.
 - 28 TLN 2693–7, 4.4.782–6.
 - 29 See Shannon’s discussion of a similar play on the word in Ovid in “Poor, Bare.” 185–6.
 - 30 *Venus and Adonis*. 625.
 - 31 TLN 647, 2.1.40.
 - 32 TLN 644, 2.1.37.
 - 33 TLN 1534–6, 4.1.27.
 - 34 TLN 1563, 65; 4.1.48.
 - 35 According to the collation and the note in R. A. Foakes’s Arden edition of *Comedy*, Lewis Theobald originally emended the first “them” to “men” in the eighteenth century. The Norton Shakespeare follows this emendation, which Foakes says is “generally accepted” (William Shakespeare. *The Comedy of Errors*. Ed. R. A. Foakes. London: Routledge, 1991. 31). “Them” could certainly be an error for “men,” but it may also be another sign of the slipperiness of human identity for so many men, here those without wit.
 - 36 TLN 471–83, 2.2.77–89.
 - 37 Shakespeare seems to have been fond of this proverb early in his career. See the discussion between Launce and Speed in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 3.1.339–342, in which the phrase is repeated three times.
 - 38 For its use as “mask” see *Romeo and Juliet*. 1.4.29; as “clothing” see *Measure for Measure*. 2.4.13; for the body as a whole, see *Antony and Cleopatra* 4.16.91.

- 39 OED. n.5a, n.2.4a.
- 40 TLN 2326–7, 5.1.168.
- 41 The two other usages of “cub” in the canon also refer to bears: In the quarto *King Lear*, the Gentleman speaks of the foul weather “wherein the cub-drawne Beare would cough” (F3v, 3.1.12); in *The Merchant of Venice*, Morroco says that he would, “Plucke the yong sucking Cubs from the she Beare” (TLN 547, 2.1.29).
- 42 “Case” appears again later in the scene, when Camillo commands Autolycus to “dis-case” himself “instantly . . . and change Garments” with Florizel (TLN 2512–14, 4.4.618–20). That the word “case” can mean clothes, human skin, and sheepskin in the English Renaissance makes it a keyword in that system, which is itself one aspect of Agamben’s “machine of earlier times”; clothes and skins—both human and beast—were not categorically different. The lack of categorical differentiation between clothes and skin is evident in when Camillo urges Autolycus to hurry: “Nay prethee dispatch: the Gentleman is halfe / fled already” (TLN 2518–19, 4.4.624–5). Modern editions of the play say “half flayed,” which must be one of the meanings of “fled” here. “Flead” is a recorded form of “fled.” It seems likely that this is another case of “semantic slipping and sliding.” Since the Folio spells “flayed” as “flayd” and “flay’d,” “fled” here can mean both “flayed” and the past participle of “to flee.”
- 43 For a cogent discussion of the theatrical reasons for characters having and not having names, see Tiffany Stern. 63–6. The acting company conditions definitely account for this fact about Shakespeare’s texts. However, those conditions existed in a seriously hierarchical culture in which names (and titles) functioned very differently than they do today. See for example the discussion of the French and English dead at the end of the battle in *Henry V*: TLN 2790–2825, 4.8.68–99.
- 44 Louis Adrian Montrose. “Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form.” *ELH* 50.3 (1983): 415–59.
- 45 TLN 1821–2, 4.4.21–2.
- 46 See the OED. “vile” a., adv., and n., especially 5 a. and b.
- 47 Quoted in William Shakespeare. *The Winter’s Tale*. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. New York: Dover, 1964. rpt. of 6th edn. Lippincott, 1898. 183–84n.28.
- 48 TLN 1828–32, 4.4.27–31.
- 49 TLN 1832–6, 4.4.31–5.
- 50 As we have seen, Autolycus is using a bird name when he calls them “Chowghes.” In the previous scene, he calls the Clown a “Cocke” (TLN 1704, 4.3.33), and he says that the “sheerers will proue sheepe” (TLN 1789, 4.3.111).
- 51 TLN 2019–20, 2052–3, 2091–2; 4.4.193, 222–3, 259–60. On the possible meanings of “dildos and fadings” see Stephen Orgel. “On Dildos and Fadings.” *ANQ*. 5: 2, 3 (1992). 106–8.
- 52 TLN 2068–9, 4.4.237.
- 53 Unlike “Dildo’s and Fadings,” “kill-hole” has not attracted any comment, at least according to the latest variorum edition: William Shakespeare. *The Winter’s Tale*. Eds. Robert Kean Turner and Virginia Westling Haas. New York: MLA, 2005.
- 54 For a discussion of the names for male sexual criminality in the English Renaissance, see Rebecca Ann Bach. *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature Before Heterosexuality*. New York: Palgrave, 2007. 74–5.
- 55 TLN 1941–50, 4.4.127–35.

- 56 TLN 1936–9, 122–5. On green sickness, see *The Winter's Tale*. Ed. J. H. Pafford. London: Methuen, 1963. 171–2.
- 57 TLN 1929–30, 115–16.
- 58 TLN 2040–3, 4.4.209–14.
- 59 TLN 1735–6, 4.3.62–3.
- 60 See Gordon Williams. *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*. 3 Vols. London: The Athlone Press, 1994.
- 61 See for example, Enobarbus's conversation with Cleopatra 3.7.5–9.
- 62 TLN 368, 381, 1.2.278, 290.
- 63 Yachnin. "Sheepishness in *The Winter's Tale*." 222.
- 64 TLN 1914–16, 4.4.101.
- 65 Perdita blushes three times, and she also, at the beginning of the scene, refers to her propensity to blush, telling Florizel that if their costumes could not be excused by the occasion of the feast, she would "blush / To see [him] so attyr'd" (TLN 1810–11, 4.4.12–13). See Mary Floyd-Wilson on the equivocal status of blushing in racial discourse (*English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 158–9).
- 66 TLN 1872–3, 4.4.67–8.
- 67 TLN 2455–6, 4.4.570–1.
- 68 TLN 1979–80, 4.4.159–60.
- 69 TLN 2457–8, 4.4. 571–2.
- 70 Hall. *Things of Darkness*. 142.
- 71 TLN 1865–7, 4.4.60–2.
- 72 TLN 21886–8, 4.4.349–51.
- 73 TLN 2294–5, 4.4.437–8.
- 74 TLN 1251–59, 3.2.45–53. See also Theodore Leinwand. "Conservative Fools in James's Court and Shakespeare's Plays." *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 219–37: "The court's appropriation of Arden . . . stops short, as the fool makes clear, at Corin's hard hands, his tar, his labour, and his 'content'" (228).
- 75 TLN 830–2, 2.4.43–5.
- 76 TLN 2572, 2576; 4.4.669, 674–5. Note also that Florizel's blood manifests the same way: Perdita praises his "youth / And the true blood which peepes fairely through't" (TLN 1964–5, 4.4.147–8).
- 77 TLN 2047, 4.4.217.
- 78 TLN 2443–7, 4.4.563–4.
- 79 TLN 3217–18, 4.4.28–9. See Frances E. Dolan. "Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-Painting Debate in Early Modern England." *PMLA* 108.2 (1993): 224–39, on what the display of Hermione's aged body means in relation to the play's concern with the limits of female creativity.
- 80 TLN 2211–12, 4.4.368–69.
- 81 TLN 2481–6, 4.4.592–6.
- 82 TLN 2554–5, 4.4.653–5.
- 83 Of course, the Clown can produce double meanings. He does so when he talks about "horsemen" and also his "pitiful case." But the scene does not offer him much of this kind of humor, and it seems more interested in showing how he does not understand Autolycus's wit.
- 84 Robert Weimann. "Playing with a Difference: Revisiting 'Pen' and 'Voice' in Shakespeare's Theater." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50.4 (1999): 415–32 and *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. 256.

- 85 David Wiles. *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. 156. Andrew Gurr. *The Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Gurr does not include Autolycus in Armin's roles although he cites Wiles's chapter on Armin (218).
- 86 Wiles. 101.
- 87 TLN 2116–17, 4.4.283–4.
- 88 On the possibility that Shakespeare and Armin should be seen as collaborators, see Richard Preiss. "Robert Armin Do the Police in Different Voices." *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*. Eds. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel. Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2006. 208–27.
- 89 TLN 2559–60, 4.4.659.
- 90 The word appears again in the scene with Hal and Falstaff, when Hal says to Bardolph that his drinking has caused him to forever blush "extempore" (*1Henry IV*. TLN 1272, 2.5.290).
- 91 Wiles. *Shakespeare's Clown*. 157.
- 92 As Weimann says, "a profoundly histrionic person, this Autolycus shows more than one persona . . . In the change from one persona to another, the donning of his guise is a *secret* to his victims but *open* to spectators" (Robert Weimann. "The Actor-Character in 'Secretly-Open' Action: Doubly Encoded Personation on Shakespeare's Stage." *The Winter's Tale. Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance, and Theatrical Persons*. Eds. Paul Yachnin and Jessica Slights. Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2009. 188). Paul Yachnin and Myrna Wyatt Selkirk write about a "theatrical experiment at McGill University in 2003, in which a group of student actors, directed by . . . Selkirk, explored the lines of connection between metatheater and character in *The Winter's Tale*." They argue that "the text is designed to promote a fluid and flexible metatheatrical performance style that invites actors to be themselves and their characters at the same moment so as to engage the audience more effectively and to deepen the characters they personate." Yachnin and Selkirk's account of that student experience particularly features student commentary on playing Autolycus and on his interactions with the Clown; Selkirk's students felt that Autolycus engaged the audience directly, that "the character is created through the constant oscillation between the play-life and spectator-gaze" (Paul Yachnin and Myrna Wyatt Selkirk. "Metatheater and the Performance of Character in *The Winter's Tale*". *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance, and Theatrical Persons*. Eds. Paul Yachnin and Jessica Slights. Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2009. 139–57). I would argue that Autolycus's part affected students in this way because the part was designed specifically for Armin, perhaps even collaboratively with Armin, to display the company's clown and to engage Shakespeare's audience directly. The part still functions this way, but not in a context that includes its original range of reference, especially the references attached to Autolycus's creaturely vocabulary.
- 93 Wiles. 156. See also Robert B. Hornback. "The Fool in Quarto and Folio *King Lear*." *ELR* 34.3 (2004): 306–38, especially 319.
- 94 M. C. Bradbrook. *Shakespeare the Craftsman*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969: "He is often contrasted with a knave and he likes to prove that others are either fools, knaves or both, by means of catechism and other marks of the wise Fool" (57).
- 95 TLN 2627–9, 4.4.724–5.
- 96 Nora Johnson. *The Actor as Playwright in Early Modern Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 159–60.
- 97 See Hornback. 313.

- 98 Robert Armin. *The Collected Works of Robert Armin*. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972. 1.
- 99 See Peter Cockett's comment, "What is clear is that the keeping and enjoyment of natural fools rests on cultural assumptions alien to our own" (Peter Cockett. "Performing Natural Folly: The Jestes of Lean Leanard and the Touchstones of Robert Armin and David Tennant." *New Theatre Quarterly* 22.2 (2006): 141–54).
- 100 Armin. E4v.
- 101 Leslie Hotson. *Shakespeare's Motley*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952. 99.
- 102 Armin. D2.
- 103 Geoffrey Whitney. *A Choice of Emblemes*. Ed. Henry Green. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967. 190.
- 104 Wiles believes the emblem represents "the performing fool" and that the fool in the picture has "webbed feet" (Wiles. 150).
- 105 Armin. E4.
- 106 Shakespeare does not appear to see spaniels as valued. See Yachnin. "Sheepishness in *The Winter's Tale*." 213.
- 107 Wiles. 148.
- 108 See, for example, David Mann. *The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary Stage Representation*. London: Routledge, 1991. 56, and Keir Elam. "'Enter Clowne': The Travels of the English Comic Performer, from Off-stage to Centre Stage to Text." *English Renaissance Scenes: From Canon to Margins*. Eds. Paola Pugliatti and Alessandro Serpieri. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008. 179–202. Also see Cockett. 146.
- 109 TLN 613–15, 2.3.18–20.
- 110 Erica Fudge. "'The Dog Is Himself': Humans, Animals, and Self-Control." *The Two Gentlemen of Verona. How to Do Things with Animals: New Approaches, New Essays*. Ed. Laurie Maguire. London: Blackwell, 2008. 185–209.
- 111 Armin. A4v.
- 112 Whitney. 213.
- 113 Wiles. 74.
- 114 TLN 1679–88, 4.3.11–29.
- 115 TLN 2682–3, 4.4.773–4.
- 116 TLN 1756–61, 4.3.80–5.
- 117 TLN 2615–16, 4.4.712.
- 118 Barbara A. Mowat. "Rogues, Shepherds, and the Counterfeit Distressed: Texts and Infracontexts of *The Winter's Tale* 4.3." *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (1994): 58–76. It seems likely from reading Armin's own texts that he would not want to immediately condemn the poor in the way that some of the texts that Mowat cites do. See, for example, the final two lines of the quip in response to the question "Who sleepes in the grasse?": "Yet he's a more beast, that poore creatures scornes, / Who hauing a beasts hart, God send him haue beasts hornes" (B).
- 119 Mowat. 68. Also see Boehrer. *Animal Characters* for the ways in which the Clown's wealth is signified by his sheep (173).
- 120 TLN 1813–15, 4.4.14–16.

6 Human Grandiosity/Human Responsibility

Tellingly, Descartes did not believe in the corporeality of the angels. In the Sixth Set of Objections to the *Meditations* that Marin Mersenne assembled, a group of theologians and philosophers raise nine “difficulties”: collections of objections to Descartes’s arguments. The third difficulty concerns the corporeality of the angels and the minds of apes, dogs, elephants, and other creatures. The group’s central point is that angels may have bodies and that entities with bodies, including angels and many creatures, undeniably think, just as humans do. The group says, “You do not see the dog’s internal mode of operation any more than he sees yours; and there are plenty of distinguished men, both now and in the past, who have been prepared to allow that the beasts have reason.”¹ Descartes could not disagree more fervently. He replies,

even if [angels] really were believed to be corporeal, it would certainly not be intelligible to suppose their minds to be inseparable from their bodies, any more than it is in the case of men. . . . As for dogs and apes, even were I to concede that they have thought, it would not in any way follow from this that the human mind is not distinct from the body; the conclusion would rather be that in other animals, too, the mind is distinct from the body . . . But in fact the brutes possess no thought whatsoever.²

In a characteristically rhetorical move, Descartes pretends to consider what he sees as a silly argument, the conditional acceptance of the idea that dogs and apes “have thought,” and then he dismisses it. Minds are categorically human and categorically entirely divorced from bodies. Angels do not have bodies, certainly not bodies like birds, and dogs, apes, and elephants have no minds; they “possess no thought whatsoever.”

When any or all of the truths of the Cartesian package—the transcendent human mind, the irrelevance of classical natural history, the equality of people, the category “animal,” the body as machine—are taken for granted, it is easy to lose sight that they are “truths” that Shakespeare,

Donne, and other English Renaissance writers did not accept. There are serious interpretive consequences to forgetting that there was a world prior to these truths, and there are also consequences to forgetting the links among them.

In his texts, Armin was still working within what Agamben calls “the machine of earlier times.” In that “machine” of the creaturely world, all mortals are classified as creatures, and those with human bodies have to become human. Agamben says that “the non-man is produced by the humanization of an animal . . . the slave, the barbarian, and the foreigner, as figures of an animal in human form.” Agamben is describing the mechanism of the creaturely world, in which, for example, a child is born as beast but becomes a human, but a slave or a “natural fool” is only ever a non-man, a beast in human form. In Armin’s case, using Agamben’s “machine of earlier times,” he produced himself as human, both as an author and in the guise of his character Autolyucus; meanwhile, the rustic clowns in *The Winter’s Tale* were left as non-men, in the company of the beasts. In contrast with this “machine of earlier times,” Agamben posits the “anthropological machine of the moderns” which “functions by excluding as not (yet) human an already human being from itself.” In that “machine” the human (at least the white human) can be a secure category, can define the human, but some “already human being[s]” can be expelled. This is where Agamben locates, in the early twentieth century, “the Jew, that is, the non-man produced within the man . . . the animal separated within the human body itself.”³ The interpretive fortunes of Shakespeare’s principal Jew, Shylock, and the discourses of skin color and blood in *The Merchant of Venice* are good, if sad, illustrations of the significant differences and continuities between the creaturely world of inequality that Shakespeare wrote in and the later “anthropological machine.”

There were many arguments for human equality floated in the creaturely world. Shylock famously makes an eloquent one in which he claims to be as good as the Christians because he bleeds just as they do. In his plays, Shakespeare places those arguments for human equality strategically, often giving them to the lowest of characters. For example, when the Chamberlaine in *1Henry IV* calls Gadshill “a false Theefe,” he replies, “Goe too: *Homo* is a common name to all men.”⁴ Gadshill is arguing that all humans are equal despite their different statuses. Perhaps because of his minor and disreputable role, Gadshill’s reply has not garnered critical attention; in contrast, Shylock’s most famous lines, making a similar argument about the insignificance of different statuses, have, arguably, been as powerful as any other lines in Shakespeare’s corpus. Those famous lines appear four lines into a long speech, although the sentiments that bracket them in the speech can be embarrassing to Shylock supporters and are, therefore, often left out of interpretations.

In response to Salerio's question about what use Antonio's flesh could be put to, Shylock replies,

To bait fish withal, if it will feede nothing else, it will feede my reuenge; he hath disgrac'd me, and hindred me halfe a million, laught at my losses, mockt at my gaines, scorned my Nation, thwarted my bargaines, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies, and what's the reason? I am a *Jewe*: Hath not a *Jew* eyes? hath not a *Jew* hands, organs, dementions, sences, affections, passions, fed with the same foode, hurt with the same weapons, subiect to the same diseases, healed by the same meanes, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Sommer as a Christian is: if you pricke vs doe we not bleede? if you tickle vs, doe we not laugh? if you poison vs doe we not die? and if you wrong vs shall we not reuenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a *Jew* wrong a *Christian*, what is his humility, reuenge? If a *Christian* wrong a *Jew*, what should his sufferance be by Christian example, why reuenge? The villanie you teach me I will execute, and it shall goe hard but I will better the instruction.⁵

Gadshill's nod toward men's equality points to what men are called: in a world in which names and titles signified mightily, he claims that all of those, including the insulting name "thief," are just covers for the common name, *Homo*, that all men share. Shylock's claim, more appealing to me, and more attended to by modernity, rests on the equality of bodies.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the truth of that argument and the power of that truth can be taken for granted easily. For example, Terry Eagleton says of Shylock's claim, "What individuals share most vitally in common is the body: it is by virtue of our bodies that we belong to each other, and no cultural or linguistic community which is not somehow founded upon this fact is likely to survive."⁶ As James Shapiro in his wonderful book *Shakespeare and the Jews* shows, Shylock's claim, beginning "Hath not a Jew eyes," was very important to the first Jewish professor of English literature in England, Israel Gollancz, and to his brother, Hermann Gollancz, a professor of Hebrew. In 1912, Israel Gollancz published a book of homages to Shakespeare. That book includes a Hebrew ode written by his brother in which Shylock's famous lines are paraphrased as part of a quest to embrace "Shakespeare as a patriotic poet whose work paradoxically transcends divisions between nations and religions."⁷ Shapiro ends his own book with a moment in a 1986 Israeli film in which this piece of Shylock's speech enables Egyptian and Israeli "soldiers to transcend the vast differences that had until this moment separated them."⁸ The Gollanczs and the Israeli film see Shylock's lines as a plea for universal human rights and tolerance. These two attempts to make Shylock a spokesperson for tolerance share in a broad consensus that the human body connects us all, even defines humanity.

This was not a consensus in the creaturely world. In that world Shylock's claims can undermine his humanity, this despite, or even because of, how appealing and how humanizing those words sound in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Boehrer points out that "Shylock is relentlessly bestialized by the language of his play," continually referred to as a cur, a debased dog, and a vicious wolf.⁹ Boehrer does not include the "Hath not a Jew" lines in his account of the play's bestialization of Shylock, but he could have included them because in the creaturely world, Shylock's claims may have marked him as misunderstanding what founds humanity: not the body, but a soul aligned with reason. Instead of founding his claim on the soul, Shylock bases his argument for human equality on bodily things that many kinds of creatures were believed to have shared: eyes, senses, passions, affections, appetite, and also on things that all creatures shared: vulnerability to wounds, the elements, diseases, and, most significantly, mortality. Humans and some other creatures also shared organs and dimensions.¹⁰ Paster points out that "[i]n the hydraulic humoral model of psychology, a great many of the body's organ systems and hence the bodily fluids produced by them belonged not just to human beings but to animals as well."¹¹ As we have seen in the Introduction, De la Primaudaye says that the similarities of dimension between humans and apes caused confusion among people who make mistakes. He also explains that "the ape . . . vseth his hands and legs as man; haung nailles and fingers made and disposed as ours."¹² In addition, laughing because one is being tickled may not have demarcated humanity in the Renaissance even though Aristotle believed it did.¹³ As Fudge suggests, laughter "of the body" was the aspect of laughter which humans shared with other creatures, and it is that laughter on which Shylock stakes his claim.¹⁴ Shylock's case for his equality in relation to the Christians around him is deeply compromised by its reliance on bodily equality.

Out of their context of hate-based revenge, the famous lines may not have meant what they can mean today in a world that believes, at least in principle, in equality founded on the human body. In their context in the play, the lines may be even more significantly compromised by Shylock's inability to understand Christian principles. As Julia Reinhard Lupton suggests, Shylock's nod to the lack of difference between people with the name "*Iew*" and people with the name "Christian" ignores the play's "religious foundations."¹⁵ In their immediate context, the lines are spoken right after other lines that speak of tearing apart a Christian body and using it to attract fish and right before a vow to take an even more villainous revenge for the villainy to which he has been subjected. Regardless of the example of some vengeful, spiteful Christian humans around him, Shylock's characterization of vengeance as essentially Christian could look like a profound, and even demonic, misunderstanding, immediately apparent to his Christian audiences. Shylock comes into the

scene in the midst of a conversation between Solanio and Salerio, and he is introduced by Solario as a “diuell” coming “in the likenes of a *Iewe*.” Later in the conversation, when Shylock replies that Jessica is damned for leaving him and his faith, Salerio again invokes the devil, saying that only the devil would damn her for that. Lupton points out that “resentment describes the chip on the ugly shoulder of Richard III, the incalculable debt of Shylock, and the motiveless malignancy of Iago. And close behind each of these figures is Lucifer, clothed in the secular garments of the stage Vice and the Machiavel.”¹⁶ All of these characters also share debased canine identities in their plays. Shylock’s famous lines may be features of his beastly Luciferian identity.

Even beyond the immediate context of these lines, the conversation that features them undercuts one of the central claims that modernity has found so appealing, the claim that might subtend Shylock’s rhetorical question, “if you pricke vs doe we not bleede?” Behind that claim, especially as it has often been read, is the belief that blood and the fact that we bleed could connote equality. We all have blood, and that blood does not differentiate us; on the contrary, it serves as a sign of our common humanity. However, immediately before Shylock’s speech, Salerio has explained to him exactly how his blood and flesh differentiate him even from his daughter: “There is more difference betweene thy flesh and hers, then betweene Iet and Iuorie, more betweene your bloods, then there is betweene red wine and rennish.”¹⁷ As Lara Bovilsky suggests, “Because the gentle Venetians are reluctant to admit that manners may not be determined by blood, Salerio recasts Jessica’s difference as physical and internal”¹⁸ Bovilsky shows that Jessica cannot truly transcend her Jewish racial identity no matter how hard she tries to separate herself from Shylock’s blood. What Bovilsky also points to is the way the discourse of blood difference undercuts Portia’s suitor Morocco as much as it undercuts Shylock. Like Shylock, Morocco tries to base a claim for equality on blood when he “fantasizes a proof of masculinity and gentility in which the body would disclose its value through objective, physical properties: his own, most red blood.”¹⁹ In both Morocco’s and Shylock’s cases, arguments from the body seem to debase them in a world that could refuse to grant full humanity to people with dark complexions and to Jews. In chapter five, we have seen how Renaissance ideas about blood difference extended also to difference in social status. These ideas, unfortunately, are one of the continuities between the creaturely world and later worlds. Arguments about inequality based on blood were, sadly, part of the discourse that supported slavery in the United States.

The conversation among Shylock, Salerio, and Solanio also points to the creaturely world in a way that has not been previously noted. And, not surprisingly, perhaps, that way involves birds. Talking to these Venetians, Shylock uses the word “flight” to describe Jessica’s running away from home. Salerio responds to Shylock’s phrase—“my daughter’s

flight”—with an assertion that he knows “the Tailor that made the wings she flew withal.” Transforming Shylock’s concrete description into a metaphor, Salerio elaborates it: Jessica’s new Christian clothes are wings. Salerio then uses the root metaphor for wings to describe Jessica and her new ability: he says “the bird was fledg’d.” He is saying that Jessica, who is like a bird, has “acquire[d] feathers large enough for flight,” which are the means to leave her father.²⁰ This is the point in the conversation where Shylock attempts to claim his daughter on the level of their bodily similarity. He exclaims, “My owne flesh and blood to rebell.” Salerio’s response to that is to call Shylock “old carrion.” The *OED* classifies this use of “carrion” as meaning “the fleshly nature of man, ‘the flesh’ in the Pauline sense.” This is certainly correct since Salerio is sarcastically misinterpreting Shylock’s claim by asking if Shylock’s own body is rebelling against him: “Out upon it [meaning his “owne flesh and blood”] old carrion, rebels it at these yeeres.” However, Salerio’s use of “carrion” may imply more than this one definition. He may also be calling Shylock’s body dead flesh and nonhuman flesh and, perhaps, food for birds; ravens, kites, and vultures could be associated with the dead flesh on which they feed.²¹ In the context of Salerio’s bird metaphors, that latter meaning seems possible.

The bird discourse demarcates this conversation as belonging to the unequal creaturely world. Salerio’s figuration of Jessica as a bird with wings is intimately connected to his other attempt in the conversation to excise her from Judaism and attach her to Christianity. Salerio whitens Jessica—likens her to Ivory—and gives her wings like birds and angels. In Salerio’s discourse and, inadvertently, in his own, Shylock is a grounded beast, akin, as the other Venetians confirm, to the lowest of dogs; he is also a devil. Jessica belongs instead with the winged creatures who fly towards a heavens populated by angels with bird wings. Shylock is black, Jessica white; Shylock is a devil, Jessica an angel; Shylock is a cur, Jessica a bird. Even the most debased of birds, kites and vultures, eat fleshy, earth-bound creatures like Shylock, the carrion of the world. The play worlds of Venetian gentlemen and of Portia and the other denizens of Belmont believe in bodily inequality, inequality denoted by skin color, inequality denoted by religion, inequality that spans the creaturely world and makes some humans lower than some birds and aligns some humans with the birds and angels.

Descartes believed in human equality and in humans as categorically different than all other mortal creatures. But in the world he begot, Jews, people with dark skin, and many others continued, and often continue, to be treated as unequal. In *Shakespeare and the Jews*, Shapiro records two anti-Semitic responses to Shylock’s lines. He says, “[W]here others have seen Shylock’s famous speech as an [sic] futile though eloquent plea for the fundamental likeness of Jews and Christians,” the late Victorian anti-Semite Richard Burton (1898) “chooses instead to find in it confirmation

of the Jew's insatiable lust for revenge." Shapiro says that Burton "misreads that character's speech." In 1992, the anti-Semitic Elliot Baker claimed that Shakespeare did not write the speech. As Shapiro suggests, Baker cannot countenance a Shakespeare who would contend that Jews are equal to Christians.²² These two anti-Semitic responses to Shylock's lines are quite different from one another. Burton may be doing one of two things. He could be ignoring the lines that have come to be so significant to many of us and correctly reading the "insatiable lust for revenge" in the rest of the speech. It is also possible, if unlikely, that Burton is reading the speech as I have done, understanding that the famous part of the speech also undermined Shylock in Shakespeare's world. Elliot Baker is certainly misreading the speech by claiming that Shakespeare could not have written it because it promotes equality between Jews and Christians. More likely, both Burton and Baker read the lines as promoting equality. However, neither man believes in equality. In their anti-Semitism, Burton and Baker come closer to the views of Shakespeare's characters than to the Cartesian and modern dream of human equality.

In the creaturely world, the inequality of bodies and souls was a given, and human grandiosity, perhaps Descartes's gift that appeals most to us, was an anti-Christian menace. Andrew Marvell's poem "A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure" is a beautiful example of the menace of grandiosity in the Renaissance. The poem depicts a verbal battle that the Resolved Soul wins against Pleasure's temptations; essentially, the poem pits human grandiosity against humility.²³ Pleasure begins by labelling the Soul "Creations Guest, / Lord of Earth, and Heaven's Heir." Even though the Soul's refusal of all temptation will admit him to Heaven, essentially make him "Heaven's Heir," his replies to Pleasure throughout the poem implicitly rebut his entitlement to any of those three labels. Those labels initiate Pleasure's appeal to a human grandiosity that Resolved Soul will not inhabit. Initially, Pleasure offers gentle rest and a sweet smell that will make the Soul "Like another God below." The Resolved Soul refuses these sensual temptations and this divine position completely; he does not want to be a god on earth. Pleasure then moves on to offer a purely narcissistic lure, a mirror:

Pleasure.

Every thing does seem to vie
Which should first attract thine Eye:
But since none deserves that grace.
In this Crystal view *thy* face.

A master tempter, Pleasure tells the Soul that all things in the world are fighting to attract him, but that none are worthy of "that grace." "Grace," used here, signifies "favourable or kindly regard," but it is also another instance of Pleasure's characterizing the Soul as an earthly divinity, with

the capacity to give “Divine favour, benevolence, or providence.”²⁴ Finally, Pleasure offers the Soul “*thy* Face,” delight in the personal self above all. Soul replies, “When the Creator’s skill is priz’d, / The rest is all but Earth disguis’d.” Refusing any position as creator, and especially the position of self-creator, Soul places the body (the entity that can see his face in a mirror) as a servant; his face is kin not to God but to earth, the dirt beneath his human body’s feet. The Creator is the only one who has the ultimate “skill.”

Pleasure finally offers the Soul concealed knowledge, the offer Eve accepted:

Thou shalt know each hidden Cause;
And see the future Time;
Try what depth the Centre draws;
And then to Heaven climb.

Soul replies, “None thither mounts by the degree / Of Knowledge, but Humility.”²⁵ Published forty years after the Latin publication of Descartes’s *Mediations*, Marvell’s poem utterly rejects the temptation of expanded human knowledge. Soul wants no part of the newly created knowledge that Descartes offered in the context of the unlimited power of the disembodied human mind. What counts, instead, is “Humility,” the least Cartesian of virtues and the antithesis to human grandiosity.²⁶

Human equality as part of Descartes’s package belongs to that grandiosity—humans are all equal and superior as opposed to other creatures. However, Descartes’s fantasy of human equality has hardly compensated for the many costs of the rest of the Cartesian package. If we could treat each other, or if we had treated each other—all humans—as theoretical equals, accepting the realities of inequality but relating to each other with respect and caring, perhaps we could say that our brutal and miserable treatment of many other creatures has been a reasonable cost. But, for the most part, we have done a poor job caring for our fellow humans. As Barbara Johnson says, “Rather than trying to invent a humanoid thing capable of passing ever more sophisticated Turing tests, . . . our impossible dream is precisely to learn to live in a world where persons treat persons as persons”²⁷ Meanwhile, in America, the industrialized food system has made many creatures—chickens, pigs, cows, etc.—into neglected machines by ignoring what is not machine-like about them: their characters, sociability, families, and health; this ignorance has also come at the cost of human health. And we are still exporting this system of dealing with creatures to the rest of the world even as some people realize its costs and some people are valiantly fighting against it.²⁸

Since I began this book by mentioning Sir Andrew Aguecheek (*Twelfth Night*) as one character in use in a Shakespeare play, I will end with a discussion of Sir Andrew, who is a complicated example of what the use

of humans and other creatures meant in the creaturely world and what it means today. Sir Andrew is used by the other characters in *Twelfth Night* precisely because he is a natural fool, akin to Lean Leaned, but a fool out of place, posing as a knight. Like *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night* features a group of fools/clowns. In that group of characters associated with foolishness (Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, the Clown [Feste], and Maria), Sir Andrew is the one without intelligence, self-knowledge, courage, or wit. Immediately before Sir Andrew comes onstage for the first time, Toby says that Sir Andrew "hath all the good gifts of nature," and Maria replies, "He hath indeed, almost natural."²⁹ Andrew's next scene underlines the point. When Maria comes in to quiet the others, Sir Toby responds to Maria's scolding by producing witty foolishness and song. The Clown comments, "Beshrew me, the knights in admirable fooling," to which Sir Andrew replies, "I, he do's well enough if he be dispos'd, and so do I too: he does it with better grace, but I do it more natural."³⁰ Sir Andrew presumes to judge his wit as equal to Sir Toby's, but he unwittingly judges himself; he is the "natural" fool. Toby is "disposed," as in "inclined to merriment," but Andrew has the "bodily constitution" of a fool. (Both of these meanings of "disposed" are now obsolete.)³¹ Andrew's prideful ignorance, his natural fool identity, appears again a bit later when he, Sir Toby, and Fabian are spying on Malvolio, and Andrew is excited to be identified as a foolish knight in Malvolio's fantasy: "I knew t'was I, for many do call me foole."³² His natural fool identity, predictably, allies him with the beasts; Andrew is continually described and describes himself as an ass.³³ In relation to Andrew's lack of courage, Toby says, "[I]f he were open'd and you find so much blood in his Liuer, as will clog the foote of a flea, Ile eat the rest of th'anatomy."³⁴ Paster uses this comment as an example of the "bodily reality for the early moderns" that looks like "emotional figuration" to "post-Enlightenment readers."³⁵ Toby is describing Andrew's bodily reality as a natural fool: *Twelfth Night* works to establish Andrew as a natural fool among the beasts.

Andrew's natural foolishness is also signaled by his mistakes about human relations with God. One of those mistakes appears in the context of his use by the characters around him. The Clown takes Andrew's money because Andrew cannot tell the difference between witty language and idiocy; the Clown does this by producing meaningless idiocy that Sir Andrew misinterprets as "gracious fooling."³⁶ Andrew misuses and misunderstands "grace" again sixty lines later when he says that Sir Toby produces foolishness "with better grace" than he does. In Sir Andrew's discourse, as in Marvell's poem, "grace" is a keyword. In the poem, Pleasure uses "grace" strategically to appeal to what Pleasure hopes for: that the Soul will have the narcissistic desire to be a god. Although there are secular meanings of "grace" in the Renaissance, none of them could apply to Andrew's usages, and they were all derived from and directly related to ideas about God's grace. Unlike Pleasure, however, Andrew

is utterly ignorant about the meaning of God's grace. In his letter challenging Viola/Cesario, he writes, "*Farthewell, and may God haue mercie vpon one of our soules. He may haue mercie on mine, but my hope is better.*"³⁷ Andrew can imitate a theological formula, but he inadvertently uses it to invoke his own damnation. He hopes that God will not have mercy on his soul.

Throughout the play, Sir Toby proudly declares his usage of Sir Andrew, a man he despises, indeed does not view as a man. The two share a love of food and drink, but Andrew is unwittingly paying the bills for both of them. Fabian tells Toby that Andrew "is a deere Manakin to you Sir *Toby*," to which Toby replies, "I have been deere to him lad, some two thousand strong, or so."³⁸ Fabian is calling Andrew Toby's puppet but also an inherently lesser being. The *OED* offers, "A little man (freq[ue]ntly *depreciative*); a dwarf, a pygmy."³⁹ When Andrew offers to give his horse to Viola/Cesario rather than fight her/him, Toby tells the audience, "marry, Ile ride [Andrew's] horse as well as I ride" him.⁴⁰ To his face, Toby calls Andrew his pal; behind Andrew's back, Toby calls him a "Clodde-pole," a creature with rocks for brains.⁴¹ After Toby is injured, however, he unleashes his rage toward the creature he has made his instrument. He calls Andrew "sot," a word that, until the middle of the eighteenth century, was customarily used to mean "a foolish or stupid person." "Sot" can still be used to mean a drunk, a later meaning it appears to have picked up in Shakespeare's lifetime; however, it is likely that Sir Toby means to call Andrew a natural fool primarily. When Andrew offers to help Toby with his injuries, Toby asks, "Will you helpe[,] an Asse-head, and a coxcomb, & a knaue: a thin fac'd knaue, a gull?"⁴² Toby's use of "thin fac'd" is one of the things that connect Sir Andrew to Slender, another stupid, thin-faced character (in *Merry Wives of Windsor*). Very probably Andrew and Slender were played by the same actor who specialized in natural fool roles. "Asse-head" and all the ass commentary also connect Andrew to Dogberry (from *Much Ado about Nothing*) and maybe even to Bottom.

Perhaps it is not Andrew's stupidity, but rather his complete lack of individual initiative that prevents any moderns from mistaking him as a quintessential man. Bottom is just as dumb, pretentious, and fearful as Andrew, and he is as frequently compared to other creatures characterized as dumb; they are both asses. However, Bottom is more grandiose and self-directed, and he is surrounded by other workmen characters who admire him; moderns, like me, see all these men as men, not beasts, and their judgment matters to moderns, even though it is lampooned in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare's audiences clearly enjoyed laughing at Sir Andrew's stupidity just as we do today. It is unlikely, however, that Sir Andrew is being laughed at for all of the same reasons earlier audiences laughed at him, for his beastliness and his religious stupidity. Shakespeare's audiences were also, I have been arguing, massively less

inclined then we are to see Bottom, Falstaff, and the drunken Sir Toby as men to admire.⁴³ Moderns, I would argue, feel comfortable laughing at Andrew's stupidity because he is a follower, not a leader. Moderns may easily mistake individual self-centered initiative for essential humanity; this was not a mistake Renaissance people generally made. They were more likely to connect that trait with Satan; in histories and tragedies, Shakespeare customarily gives that trait to villains like Richard III, Iago, and Edmund (*King Lear*).

Renaissance audiences were laughing at Andrew's stupidity, but laughing in a creaturely context. In that humanist creaturely context, Sir Andrew is a failed human, more like another kind of creature than he is like a man. Timothy J. Reiss says, "In the *De oratore*, Cicero had observed that a person who did not know proper grammar would be incapable of rational thought and its expression. People would rightly 'think him not just not an orator but not human.'"⁴⁴ As we saw in chapter two, this point was echoed repeatedly in Renaissance rhetorical treatises. It is not accidental that Shakespeare gives Sir Andrew the inability to use proper grammar. Indeed, Shakespeare does this as a way of confirming Andrew's natural foolishness, his lack of rationality. When Andrew says, "I do it more natural," he uses the noun "natural" when he means to use the adverb "naturally," in the process condemning himself as less than human. In Shakespeare's works, that particular verbal mistake appears only in Andrew's discourse.

Erasmus's wildly popular sixteenth-century manual for boys' behavior, *De civilitate morum puerilium*, instructs boys to differentiate themselves from beasts, birds, workmen, and fools.⁴⁵ Erasmus explains, "It is unfittinge that some laughing neye lyke an horse. He is unmanerde and rude that laugheth with wide mouthe, and writhen [wrinkled] cheke, shewnge his teeth like a dogge that gnarreth [grows]." ⁴⁶ Children must learn to produce human sounds, to laugh like humans, not like horses, and to form their faces unlike dogs' faces are formed when they make sounds. Children must also learn to care for their body like humans, not as beasts do:

If any thing styke in the tethe it may nat be take out with thy knyfe nor thy nayles after the maner of dogges and cattes, but with a spyld of asshe [a toothpick], or with a penne, or with the small bones taken out of the legges of cockes or hennes.

Erasmus explains that civilized humans should use specific body parts of domestic birds, including the body parts made into pens (quills), instead of their nails because nails are bodily features that humans share with dogs and cats. Specific types of birds are also the templates for unmannerly speech: "It is no manner to . . . speke hastily nat with the tonge but mouynge all the body, which is the propertye of turtyll doues or wagtails, nor moch different from pyes [magpies] chatteringyng." Once again, we see that this Renaissance author assumes that his readers have specific avian knowledge. In this case, they know how three different

kinds of birds move their bodies when they speak. To be human, children must learn to differentiate themselves from these specific birds when they speak: not to move their bodies like doves and not to speak quickly like magpies. To be fully human, also, children must learn not to speak and act like people who work with their hands and not to carry themselves like natural fools. Erasmus tells them that they should keep their mouths closed, “nor let it not gape that is token of ydiot fooles.”⁴⁷ Likewise, to wrinkle the nose “is the propertye of scoffers and naturally fooles.”⁴⁸ Some humans in the Renaissance could choose to ally themselves with humanity. But some, including those who were naturally stupid like the character Andrew, could not.

In a footnote to *The Accommodated Animal*, Shannon points out that “while the cruelty of historical entertainments such as bear baiting is extreme, it matches the similarly spectacular public cruelties then enacted on human bodies.”⁴⁹ As we saw in chapter one, in Renaissance London tortured human bodies were on display, and human body parts were used like other creatures’ body parts. We should not forget that people used people in the Renaissance, nor should we forget that they (we) use people today. If I pretend that Shakespeare is innocent, I am making the same fundamental mistake that I make when I pretend that I am innocent of killing, of instrumentalism, of domination. Haraway says that “any relationship of seriousness including parenting, loving, political work, labour, would involve having to face . . . issues of unequal skill and unequal power and unequal everything.”⁵⁰ Rather than turning my face away from the realities of inequality as Descartes did, it might be better to accept all of my limitations and to embrace my responsibilities to all the creatures around me. Responsibility in the face of inequality seems preferable to denying inequality and practicing oppression whether that denial and oppression involves people or other creatures. Awareness and respect appear to me to be better stances toward the world than denial and fantasy.⁵¹ Collectively, we cannot change or take control of anything that we refuse to believe in or see. In relation to technology, Rosi Braidotti asks us to “respect the bond of mutual dependence between bodies and technological others, while avoiding the contempt of the flesh and the trans-humanist fantasy of escape from the finite materiality of the enfleshed self.”⁵² We are changing in the relations we have made with the machines that we make. But we are in control of those changes unless we deny our part in their making. As Haraway’s work taught me long ago, we “can be responsible for machines; *they* do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries.”⁵³ And Latour reminds us to “[t]hink of technology as *congealed* labor.”⁵⁴ I can choose to respect and reward labor and laborers. I can think about what I eat and wear and who is helped and harmed in those processes. And when I and others read and teach texts from the past, I can tell the truth about the relations depicted within them. Loving Shakespeare’s texts, and seeing their beauty and profundity, does not require denying the truths they tell about the creaturely world.

Notes

- 1 PWD. 2: 279.
- 2 PWD. 2: 287.
- 3 Agamben. 37.
- 4 TLN 729–31, 2.1. 87–8. See also Bottom’s idea about what Snug, the workman who plays the lion, should tell his audience: “I am a man as other men are” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Q, Dv, 3.1.38). For a discussion of that claim, see chapter 2.
- 5 TLN 1265–83, 3.1.45–61.
- 6 Terry Eagleton. *William Shakespeare*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986. 43.
- 7 James Shapiro. *Shakespeare and the Jews*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. 80.
- 8 Shapiro. 228.
- 9 Bruce Boehrer. “Shylock and the Rise of the Household Pet: Thinking Social Exclusion in *The Merchant of Venice*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50.2 (1999): 152–70. See also Shannon, who reads Shylock as participating in the creaturely world because he is subject to justice in the way that world subjected beasts to human justice: “My immediate claim is that the proximity between answerable animals and this ‘stranger cur’ in Venice places them all *inside* this multikinded, justiciable cosmos to which it testifies” (*Accommodated Animal*. 247).
- 10 The correspondence between humans’ and other beasts’ organs was a matter of fact for centuries. Descartes does not dispute this; he even makes it one of the principal reasons that people have mistakenly believed that “animals” have minds: “We made this mistake because we failed to distinguish the two principles of motion just described; and on seeing that the principle depending solely on the animal spirits and organs exists in the brutes just as it does in us, we jumped to the conclusion that the other principle, which consists in mind or thought, also exists in them” (Reply to Antoine Arnauld’s Objections. PWD. 2: 162).
- 11 Paster. “Melancholy Cats, Lugged Bears, and Cosmology.” *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*. Eds. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 113–29.
- 12 de la Primaudaye. 833. For evidence of the hand seen as distinctively human, see Höfele. 56–7. See also Raber. *Animal Bodies/Renaissance Culture*. 59–61. For a discussion of apes on the Renaissance stage, see Knowles. 138–63.
- 13 Aristotle says, “[M]an alone is affected by tickling . . . due first to the delicacy of his skin, and secondly to his being the only animal that laughs” (Aristotle. *On the Parts of Animals*. Trans. William Ogle. III.10. http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/parts_animals.html). Montaigne says, “It seems to me that Lactantius attributes to beasts not only speech but also laughter” (“Apology for Raymond Sebond.” 335).
- 14 See Erica Fudge. “Learning to Laugh: Children and Being Human in Early Modern Thought.” *Textual Practice* 17.2 (2003): 277–94.
- 15 See Lupton: “It is precisely the particularism of culture, set against a universalism presumed bankrupt, that neohistoricist readers of Shakespeare have attempted to salvage, whether in the guise of Othello’s blackness, Shylock’s Judaism, or Caliban’s indigenous claims. In the process, however, the religious foundations of the play’s conceptions of these positions are necessarily occluded, reduced, or secularized” (“Creature Caliban.” 20).
- 16 Lupton. “Creature Caliban.” 9.
- 17 TLN 1252–4, 3.1.33–5.

- 18 Lara Bovilsky. "'A Gentle and No Jew': Jessica, Portia, and Jewish Identity." *Renaissance Drama* 38 (2010): 47–76.
- 19 Bovilsky. 66. The relevant lines are:
 Mislike me not for my complexion,
 The shadowed liuerie of the burnish sunne,
 To whom I am a neighbor, and neere bred.
 Bring me the fairest creature North-ward borne,
 Where *Phœbus* fire scarce thawes the ysicles,
 And let vs make incision for your loue,
 To proue whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
The Merchant of Venice (TLN 518–24, 2.1.1–7)
- 20 *OED*. "Fledge" v.1. The *OED* classifies this usage under its second definition: "To bring up (a young bird) until its feathers are grown and it is able to fly. Also *figurative*]."
- 21 See the *OED*. "carrion."
- 22 Shapiro. 10, 82.
- 23 By "resolved," Marvell appears to mean "freed from doubt or uncertainty," a meaning that is now obsolete (*OED*. 1a). See Andrew Marvell. *Andrew Marvell: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*. Eds. Frank Kermode and Keith Walker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. 282. By "created," Marvell probably means "embodied," although the *OED* does not offer this meaning.
- 24 *OED*. "grace." 2b, 2a.
- 25 Andrew Marvell. *Miscellaneous Poems*. London, 1681. 2, 4.
- 26 See Melissa Edmundson. "'Try What Depth the Centre Draws': Classicism and Neoclassicism in Andrew Marvell's 'A Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure.'" *English Studies* 87.3 (2006): 294–302. See also John Rogers, who includes Marvell in the English writers who embraced anti-Cartesian vitalist philosophies of matter: *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- 27 Barbara Johnson. *Persons and Things*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008. 2.
- 28 See for one example Foer. *Eating Animals*.
- 29 TLN 145–6, 1.3.23–4.
- 30 TLN 771–81, 2.3.65–75.
- 31 *OED*. "disposed 4b." 2b.
- 32 TLN 1095, 2.5.72.
- 33 For ass, see TLN 188, 1.3.62; 1393, 3.2.10. See also Maria's response to Sir Andrew: "Ass, I doubt not." TLN 861, 2.3.150.
- 34 TLN 1440–2, 3.2.52–4.
- 35 Paster. *Humoring the Body*. 26.
- 36 TLN 722, 2.3.19–20.
- 37 TLN 1684–5, 3.4.148–50.
- 38 TLN 1432–4, 3.3.45–6.
- 39 *OED*. "manikin." 2.
- 40 TLN1807, 3.4.258.
- 41 TLN 1706, 3.4.168.
- 42 TLN 2360, 2369–70; 5.1.190, 5.1.198–9.
- 43 See Peter Holbrook, who offers Sir Toby, Falstaff, and Crab, the dog, as proof of Shakespeare's profound commitment to human freedom and individualism: *Shakespeare's Individualism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 29.
- 44 Reiss. *Mirages of the Self* (III.xiv.52). 476.

- 45 For an account of the many editions and the influence of this Erasmus text, see Norbert Elias. *The History of Manners: The Civilizing Process*. Vol. I. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. 53–4.
- 46 Desiderius Erasmus. *De ciuitate morum puerilium . . . nowe lately compiled and sut forth by Erasmus Roterodam in Latyne tonge; with interpretation of the same in to the vulgare Englyshhe tonge by Robert Whytngton laureate poete*. London, 1. Elias says that “places no particular emphasis on social distinctions, if we disregard occasional criticism of peasants and small tradesmen” (76). Erasmus counsels that “to wipe his nose with his arme or elbwe, pertaineth to fyshmongers” (*The Ciuilitie of Childehode with the Discipline and Institucion of Children*. Translated out of the French into Englysh by Thomas Paynell. London, 1560. A6).
- 47 Erasmus. *Ciuilitie*. A6.
- 48 Erasmus. A5.
- 49 Shannon. *Accommodated Animal*. 18n.37.
- 50 Haraway. “Conversations with Donna Haraway.” *Donna Haraway: Live Theory*. Ed. Joseph Schneider. London: Continuum, 2005. 114–56.
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