"BLYNDE BESTES": ASPECTS OF CHAUCER'S ANIMAL WORLD

by

BERYL ROWLAND

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Mediaeval Latin  G.B. Riddehough
The Epic  R.C. Cragg
Greece  C.W.J. Eliot

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BERYL ROWLAND
(Mrs. E.M. Rowland)
B.A., University of London
M.A., University of Alberta

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Chairman F.H. Soward

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W. MEREDITH THOMPSON

External Examiner: W.H. Clawson
University of Toronto
"BLYNDE BESTES": ASPECTS OF CHAUCER'S ANIMAL WORLD

ABSTRACT

The medieval animal world was vast and included mythical creatures as well as birds, reptiles and other beasts. This dissertation confines itself mainly to mammals. It explores the numerous references to them in Chaucer's works and finds these to be consonant with his general treatment of the brute creation for literary purposes.

By Chaucer's day, the traditional attitude towards animals was well defined. The fables, the Bible, hermeneutical writings, natural histories, encyclopedias and art all stressed the apparently human characteristics of animals and rarely demonstrated scientific interest in the assessment of them. In an age when the visible world existed to instruct man in spiritual matters, the characteristics were stereotyped and used merely to throw light on human or divine nature.

Chaucer, whether he draws from popular lore, expository writings or animal stories, whether he is translating or using knowledge seemingly derived from observation, appears to think primarily of the conventional ideas associated with animals and to find animals interesting mainly because they can illustrate humanity. Many of his analogies are meaningful solely because of the conventional attributes of animals which are either stated or implied. In his most successful figures he is able to make folklore, symbolism and realistic detail combine to vivify the complexities of human character and action.

Despite the assumptions of a number of critics that Chaucer shows a personal liking for animals, the evidence examined reveals that his references, at best conventionally colorless, are generally depreciatory and that animals frequently serve to illustrate distasteful aspects of humanity. He selects pejorative proverbial expressions and reinforces them with equally unfavorable observations of his own. In the case of the mammals considered in detail in this dissertation, the hare, the dog, the horse, the wolf, the sheep and the lamb, only the lamb receives an unequivocally favorable presentation and this presentation is necessitated by traditional Christian symbolism.

To some extent Chaucer's attitude may be regarded as stemming from Boethius, who regarded animals as exemplifying the baser passions of man. But an analysis of the nature of Chaucer's references, both figurative and non-figurative, indicates that an additional reason must be found to account for what often appears to be a compulsive selection of unpleasant images. It is suggested that Chaucer's recoil is the result of an inner tension. He tries to repress the attraction which he feels for the uninhibited vitality of the animal world because he knows that, according to the teachings of his Church, the uncontrolled expression of the natural passions is to be condemned, and that the animal serves as a warning, illustrating what man becomes when, to his eternal damnation, he permits the body to triumph over the soul.
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CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONS

In Chaucer's day, the animal world comprised far less and far more than it does now. On the one hand, there was no conception of the infinite variety of forms which actually exist; on the other, the vast group which, being neither vegetable nor mineral, belonged to the animal world, included such fabulous creatures as the unicorn and the griffin, half-men and half-beasts such as centaurs and syrens, and spirits with some kind of corporeal existence, such as angels, devils, incubi and others. The group of mythical creatures used by Chaucer, apart from those of classical origin and those essential to medieval Christian dogma, is small. With the exception of the griffin, the phoenix and the basilisk, he makes no reference to popular mythical creatures; he has no unicorn, yale, mandrake or salamander. Neither does he refer to many others, such as the bonasus, caladrius, cerastes, leucrota and manticore, which, though less common, appear frequently in the bestiaries.¹

¹The bestiaries, dating from the fourth century A.D., were translations and expansions of the Greek Physiologus, a pseudo-scientific work which used the animal world to illustrate Christian dogma. For description of creatures cited, see Florence McCulloch, Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries (North Carolina, 1960), pp. 98, 99-101, 103, 136, 142-143.
Nevertheless, the group is too large to be handled here. Birds and reptiles have also had to be omitted for the same reason, although these two groups, as well as the one previously mentioned, have been taken into some account when considering Chaucer's general attitude to nature, in Chapter Two. In Chapters Three to Seven, I shall confine myself to mammals in Chaucer's works, illustrating in detail the methods in which they are used by reference to the hare, the dog, the horse, the wolf and the sheep. My conclusion from this whole investigation will be briefly summarized in Chapter Eight.

The majority of the mammals which Chaucer mentions are indigenous to England. They are the ass, boar, cat, cow, coney, deer, fox, goat, hare, horse, mouse, pig, polecat, rat, sheep, squirrel, weasel and wolf. The remainder are more exotic creatures: the ape, bear, leopard and lion, which were imported into England; the camel, the elephant, the lynx and the whale, which Chaucer may have seen in his travels abroad.

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2 The elephant occurs only as "Sir Olifaunt" in Thop, VII, 808, and may be briefly dealt with. "Olifaunt" was the name of Roland's horn in the Chanson de Roland, and it has been suggested that the giant represents the French chivalry opposed to Philip. See F. N. Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston, 1957), p. 739. Robinson adds that "the name is appropriate enough without any such far-fetched explanation."

3 The lynx appears only in translation, in Bo, III, pr. 8, 40, and will not be discussed again. Boethius refers to Lynceus, rather than to the lynx. The French prose version, usually ascribed to Jean de Meun, which Chaucer undoubtedly used as well as the Latin original and a Latin commentary of Nicholas Trivet, refers to the animal as "de lins." See Robinson, op. cit., p. 804.
or learned about from travellers, books and representations in art and sculpture; the hyena and the tiger, which he is unlikely to have seen.

The material which may have influenced Chaucer in his use of the animal is vast. Popular tradition, the fables, the Bible, ancient Greek and Roman writings on natural history, the *Physiologus* and the subsequent bestiaries, the encyclopedists and homilists, art and architecture, as well as information he may have had as a result of first-hand experience, must all be considered.

It is not easy to make a distinction between folk and literary traditions. Primitive peoples saw animals both as replicas of themselves, once speaking and acting as human beings did, and as objects of mystery, incarnations of spirits. The stories they devised about them were originally not held to be fictions but living reality, believed once to have happened in primeval times and probably retaining for a long time a counterpart in ceremonies which died out while the myth lived. When the original significance was lost, the stories continued

to be repeated and elaborated in many different ways. The myths and rites of the ancient world, such as the deaths and resurrections of Tammuz, Adonis, Mithra, Virbius, Attis and Osiris, and of their various animal representations, goats and sheep, bulls, pigs, horses, fish and birds, were transmuted into legends which the Christian world regarded only as entertainments, even though it adopted the same archetype in its own mythology. In the *Panchatantra*, on the other hand, animal stories became part of a *niti-shastra*, a text book of wise conduct of life; in Pliny, they served for natural history, illustrating the thesis that all animals are instruments for man's use; in the works of the theologians from the patristic period to medieval times they were facts belonging to the Book of Nature, which was a vast cryptogram whereby Man might discover God's truths and become regenerated. In all of them, however, the ascribing of specific traits to certain animals or types of animals, whether as a result of observation or fantasy, persisted, and because, with few exceptions, the spirit of scientific enquiry was completely lacking, conventional ideas about animals were reinforced by further fictions. They were

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*Cf.* Chaucer's Parlement,* University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature*, II (1918), 341, that India was the birthplace of the fable, and attributed by J. A. MacCulloch, *Medieval Faith and Fable* (London, 1932), p. 452, to Theodore Benfey, *Panchatantra*, trans. and commentary, 2 vols. (Leipzig 1859), is not generally held. As MacCulloch states, p. 454, "... we are more and more driven to the conclusion that there never has been any one centre for story invention, but that diffusion by borrowing or transmission has gone on steadily from prehistoric times."

so much a part of man's attitude towards animals that it is not surprising that the most numerous of Chaucer's references to animals consist in brief mention of stereotyped characteristics, many of which occur in proverbial simile or metaphor. Even today, the fox, goat, lion, tiger and sheep are still given the same figurative meanings as Chaucer gave them.

Among the specific works which were part of popular tradition in Chaucer's time are the Aesopic fables, originating in India in the sixth century B.C., entering the Greek language with Babrius in the second century A.D., and Latin with the collections of Phaedrus in the first century A.D., Avianus in the fourth century A.D., and Romulus in the eleventh century. Popularized in England from the twelfth century onward by Walter, chaplain to Henry II, Neckam and Marie de France, such stories as "The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing," illustrating the deceptiveness of appearances, and "Androcles and the Lion," the classic example of a lion's showing gratitude by fawning upon a benefactor, circulated so widely that even the briefest allusion appears to have been understood. Chaucer himself makes

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7 For examples, see G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1933), p. 207.
elliptic reference to the fable of "The Wolf and the Mare," found in the Latin Aesopian collection, and the fact that a Miller is the speaker suggests that such fables, far from remaining the particular entertainment of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, had become part of oral tradition.

Of even greater popular appeal in England, if one can judge from the frequency with which its themes appear in ecclesiastical sculpture and carving, was the cycle of animal stories which bears the name of Reynard the Fox, its principal character. Obviously of great antiquity, with the trickster hero playing a role similar to that ascribed to the coyote, the great hare, and the master rabbit in the North American folktale, it developed through the *Panchatantra*, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Greek and Latin collections as a moralistic and didactic work. Under medieval influence, it became satiric, and like

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8RVT, I, 4054-4055.

9Owst, op. cit., p. 204.


11Campbell, op. cit., p. 273.

12Tucker, op. cit., p. 27.
all trickster heroes, Reynard, representing anarchy against order, individualism against collectivism, both exposing and indulging in the follies of mankind, embodied the chaos principle. By the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries it comprised over twenty branches, having as its kernel the quarrel between Reynard and Ysengrim, and using the Fox as the presiding genius in most of the episodes. Although versions appeared in German in the late twelfth century and in Flemish in the mid-thirteenth century, it was in France that it received its earliest and fullest development as a beast epic satirizing the church, court and society. As distinct from those of the Aesopian fables, the animal protagonists are no longer types but have character and personality. Nevertheless, Aesopian material recurs and it is possible that Chaucer may have read the fable of the Mare and the Wolf in the Reynard poems as well as receiving it through oral tradition. While,

13Janssens, op. cit., p. 36; Welter, op. cit., p. 100; Rose, op. cit., p. xxiv.

14Sisam, Chaucer: The Nun's Priest's Tale (Oxford, 1953), p. xvii. Sisam notes, p. xxii, that in the hands of the didactic writers of le Couronnement Renard, ante 1250, Renard le Nouveau, c. 1300, and Renard le Contrefait, early 14th cent., the cycle declined, and Renard came to be the embodiment of evil. It appears that the bestiary symbolism of the fox as the devil ousts the many-sided trickster figure.

15Reinhart Fuchs, ed. K. Reissenberger (Halle, 1886).

16Willem's Van den Vos Reinaerde, ed. E. Martin (Paderborn, 1874).
until Caxton, we have only two full-length English versions of Reynard stories extant, the mid-thirteenth century *The Fox and the Wolf* and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, evidence points to the existence of a considerable Reynard literature in England.\(^{17}\)

The appearance of Reynard in the *exempla* of homilists,\(^{18}\) in illustrations, sculpture and wood carvings,\(^{19}\) also suggests that the stories enjoyed a wide popularity in England. It is possible that Chaucer may have read some version of the opening story of the second branch, the story of Reynard and Chauntecleer which, in plot outline, *The Nun's Priest's Tale* closely resembles.\(^{20}\) But the fact that, in Chaucer's treatment, the fox no longer occupies the centre of the stage, suggests that, by the second half of the fourteenth century, the stories were no longer fashionable. Chaucer may, indeed, never have seen any written source but may have relied on a theme already popular


\(^{18}\)See Owst, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-207, 257, 342, n. 1; Wilson, *Early Middle English Literature*, pp. 244-245.


\(^{20}\)See Sisam, *op. cit.*, pp. xix-xxii, for abridged version of some 450 lines of the French. Sisam suggests there were probably a number of intermediate versions, some of them oral, p. xxvi. Mossé, *op. cit.*, p. 73, suggests Chaucer may have seen an English version of the tale.
in oral tradition. If so, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in the fox, Chaucer is making a sly allusion to the previous teller, the Monk, for the fox in sculpture and carving was not only frequently depicted in ecclesiastical garb but was often used to satirize monks in particular. Moreover, one of the popular incidents in the Reynard cycle was that in which Reynard entered a monastery and became a monk.

Among the ancient writings which contributed most to the popular animal lore of the Middle Ages are the Bible and Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*. The first reinforced symbolic concepts and expressed many of the traditional ideas on animals which are found in the Aesopic fables and in the various ancient writings on natural history. The ravenous wolf, the dog returning to its vomit, the fierce lion, the crafty and cunning fox, the venomous scorpion, are all illustrative.

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21 See Wright, *A History of Caricature* . . . , p. 78, for fox as monk in sculpture at Christchurch, Hampshire; p. 79, for fox as hunting monk with hare suspended on a pole behind him and a bird in his hand, in Nantwich Church, Cheshire; M. R. Price, *A Portrait of Britain in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1951), pp. xx-xxi, for bench end carving of a fox in abbot's robes in South Brent Church, Somerset; Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 222, for fox as monk at St. Mary, Beverley.


23 Gen. xxxix, 27; Matt. vii, 15; Matt. x, 16; Luke, x, 3.

24 Prov. xxvi, 11; II Pet. ii, 22.

25 Gen. xxxix, 9; Judg. xiv, 5-9; Job, iv, 10; Prov. xxviii, 1; Prov. xxx, 30; Isa. xxxi, 4; Ezek. xix, 6.

26 Judg. xv, 4-5; Song of Sol. ii, 15; Luke, xiii, 32.

27 I Kings, xii, 11, 14; Rev. ix, 5, 10.
phrases which have passed into common use and contain concepts found in Chaucer's works.28

Aristotle's great work on natural history, while it contained knowledge of animals based on observation,29 also included much unscientific popular lore which was passed down to modern times. Pliny in the first century A.D. used Aristotle extensively, and the later Roman compilers, Aelian and Solinus, in the third century, Claudian in the fourth century, and Cassiodorus in the sixth century, while extending the number of stories by trying to assemble all extant information from written and oral sources, based their information largely on Aristotle and Pliny. The two subsequent works which exercised an immense influence on the Middle Ages, the Physiologus and Isidore's Etymologiarum Sive Originum, repeated the same animal lore without questioning its accuracy.

Although an apocryphal decree of Pope Gelasius I, supposed to have been issued in 496 A.D., placed the Physiologus on the Index Prohibitorum,30 this work of moralized natural

28Eg. wolf, ParsT, X, 775; dog, ParsT, X, 137; lion, KnT, I, 1775; fox, Tr, III, 1565; scorpion, BD, 640-641.

29According to Pliny, Alexander ordered some thousands of people throughout the whole of Asia and Greece "omnium quos venatus, aucupia piscatusque alebant quibus vivaria, armenta, alvearia, piscinae, aviaria in cura erant" to follow Aristotle's instructions and report their findings. Pliny, Natural History, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb ed., TII (London, 1940), 34.

30T. H. White, The Bestiary (New York, 1960), p. 245; F. McCulloch, op. cit., p. 20, puts the date as 494 A.D.
history and its enlarged form, the bestiary, were among the best known types of medieval didactic literature. Through its wide diffusion by translation into many languages, including Old and Middle English, its animal lore became common property, passing into general literature, folkways and art. The title may have originally indicated the Greek pagan author who was dealing with the characteristics (φύσεως) of various animals. Later, when the allegories were added by a Christian writer, it was applied to the book itself. Among the Greek and Latin churchmen to whom authorship of the Christian Physiologus has been ascribed are Peter of Alexandria, Epiphanius, Basil, John Chrysostom, Athanasius, Ambrose and Jerome. Its use by Ambrose suggests that a Latin version must have existed by 386. The illustrated bestiary, in which the original content of the Physiologus was more than doubled, ranked as one of the leading picture books in twelfth century England, and the popularity of the material is attested not only by the


[32] Ibid., p. 19.


numerous Latin versions but by the French versions of Anglo-Norman poets such as Philippe de Thaon, Gervais, Guillaume le Clerc and Pierre de Beauvais and by its secular adaptation in Richard de Fournival’s *Bestiaire d'Amour*. Widely used was an eleventh century version attributed to Theobaldus, Abbot at Monte Cassino, and the *Middle English Bestiary* is a free translation of it.\(^{35}\)

While the material of the bestiaries was drawn from many sources, from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Bible, travellers’ tales, Herodotus, Aristotle, Pliny, Plutarch and others, it presented little new information on animals. The bestiaries’ most immediate source was the seventh century work of Isidore, which was a textbook for the schoolboy in Chaucer’s day\(^{36}\) and is twice alluded to by Chaucer.\(^{37}\) Isidore, in the twelfth book of *Etymologiarum Sive Originum*, invented etymologies to suit the supposed characteristics of each animal but otherwise repeated much of the information given by earlier writers. But whereas Isidore added no *significatio*, the bestiaries used the supposed facts of natural history to illustrate


\(^{37}\) *Pars T*, X, 89, 551.
moral precepts and theological dogma. None of the writers appear to have thought of stalking a lion to observe whether it did indeed dwell on tops of mountains, disguise its traces with its tail when pursued by hunters, sleep with its eyes open, breathe life on the third day into the cubs which its mate had brought forth dead. The supposed characteristics of the lion were important only because the lion represented Christ hiding the traces of his love in high places, the Godhead remaining awake though sleeping in the body after the crucifixion, the Father raising Christ from the dead on the third day. St. Augustine's *dictum*: "Nos quidquid illud significat faciamus et quam sit verum non laboremus," illustrates an attitude which was to predominate throughout the medieval period and to encourage, with respect to natural history in particular, the unscientific spirit typical of Alexandrian scholars under the Ptolomies.

Behind every object and event lay an idea, a spiritual entity or meaning, of which the immediate experience was merely the imperfect reflection or allegory. The world had been created by God for the spiritual edification of man and served no other purpose.  

Drawing widely on the material already described, the medieval encyclopedic works endeavoured to combine all branches of learning into a single whole, and adopted, in varying degrees, 

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38 Cited by T. H. White, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

the moralistic attitude of the bestiaries. Here again the approach was usually emblematic; the writers rarely showed any direct knowledge of the animals they described. Representative works are *De Naturis Rerum* by Alexander Neckam, late twelfth century, which discussed animals from an ethical and doctrinal point of view by means of numerous *exempla*; *De Natura Rerum* by Thomas de Catimpré, 1228-1240, which, in nineteen books dealt allegorically with the human body, soul, prodigious men of the east, quadrupeds, birds, marine monsters, fish, serpents and other phenomena; *Speculum Maius* by Vincent de Beauvais, circa 1250, which Chaucer is said to have consulted; and *De Proprietatibus Rerum* by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, probably written soon after 1248.

The last named work was one of the most widely read books of medieval times, surpassing in popularity other

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compilations such as Vincent de Beauvais', which was too large, and Neckam's, which was too brief.\textsuperscript{44} Besides Isidore, who is cited in approximately six hundred and sixty chapters, the chief sources were Pliny and the hexaemeral writers.\textsuperscript{45} Purporting to explain the allegories of scripture, it was a Latin text-book for schoolboys in Chaucer's day.\textsuperscript{46} Only rarely, as in the description of the cat,\textsuperscript{47} did it depart from the traditional and unscientific lore on which it was based.

Other writers who used animals extensively were the homilists. Animal fables, bestiary lore and animals in the everyday scene all served as subjects for pulpit moralization. In addition to the animal fables appearing in the homilies of such well-known French preachers as Jacques de Vitry of the thirteenth century who, in his \textit{Sermones Vulgares et Communes}, made use of many sources, including Aesop and \textit{Le Roman de La Rose},\textsuperscript{48} immense collections of them remain in the works of English preachers. The English monk, Odo of Cheriton, in

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\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Gerald E. Se Boyar, "Bartholomeus Anglicus and His Encyclopaedia," \textit{JEQP}, XIX (1920), 178.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{45} See Steele, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1; Se Boyar, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 179; Raven, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 14, for analysis of sources.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Plimpton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 96.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{47} Steele, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 165.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{48} Welter, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 118-124.
\end{itemize}
Paraboles et Fables, exploited material from Aesop, the bestiaries, and encyclopedists, with a realistic humor which anticipates Chaucer's, and his works were subsequently used by John of Sheppey, priest of Rochester, 1352-1360. Nicholas Bozon in his *Contes Moralizés*, 1320, and Chaucer's contemporary, Bromyard, in his *Summa Predicantium*, used animal fables extensively to attack social evils. Allusions to the bestiaries, with acknowledgments in the course of the sermon to such authorities as Aristotle, Pliny, Isidore, Vincent of Beauvais and Bartholomaeus Anglicus, occur frequently in the medieval homily. There is the mermaid who, like Chaucer's, "syngeth so mery;" the jointless elephant; the lion who, in raising its dead whelps to life, is likened to Christ; the deadly basilisk. But in addition to fable and bestiary lore, references to the animal in everyday life abound. Here, in brief sketches, we sometimes find color and actuality. In one sermon,

49 Welter, op. cit., pp. 124-127; Mosse, op. cit., pp. 77-81.

50 Owst, op. cit., pp. 205-207

51 Mosse, op. cit., p. 81.

52 Owst, op. cit., pp. 206-207. 53 Ibid., pp. 196-204.

54 NPT, VII, 4461-4462.

55 Owst, op. cit., p. 201. 56 Ibid., p. 198

57 Ibid., p. 197. 58 Ibid., p. 200.
the boar, while treated with typical bestiary moralization, is described with conviction:

1. a boor smyteth sore with his tusckis, that stonden in his mouthe; the seconde is that he wole gladli reeste him in foule slowis or mury places; the thirde is that he hath a foule stynkynge savur where he goth.\textsuperscript{59}

In another, we learn of dead sheep whose eyes are smeared with blood by corrupt sellers in order to make the carcasses look fresh.\textsuperscript{60} References to the frog croaking in filthy water,\textsuperscript{61} the lowly packhorse in the lane,\textsuperscript{62} the greyhounds running with open mouths,\textsuperscript{63} the bird struggling in the fowler's net,\textsuperscript{64} the butcher's dog with "blody mowth,"\textsuperscript{65} the house-dog, now chased out of the kitchen with a bowl of hot water, now fighting over a bone, now stretched out in the sun with the flies on him or watching the diners "until he gets what he wants, whereupon he turns his back,"\textsuperscript{66} show that, despite the weight of a tradition which, in many respects, was so removed from the actual world of nature, there existed a genuine interest in the animal world.

In Middle English literature the most widely used material on animals is of a traditional kind. There are the symbolic animals from the bestiarists and encyclopedists, animal legends, animal fable and satire, animals in spells and in proverb. The

\textsuperscript{59}Owst, op. cit., p. 197. \textsuperscript{60}\textit{Ibid}., p. 355.
\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid}., p. 39, n. 5. \textsuperscript{65}\textit{Ibid}., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Ibid}., p. 27.
influence of the bestiaries is to be seen in the use of animals in such didactic works as Jacob's Well, The Ayenbite of Inwyth, and Cursor Mundi, and in Mandeville's Travels which, while dropping the allegorical moralizations, adds to the stock of fabulous beasts declared to exist. In animal legends, among the most popular is that which tells of a conflict between man and monster; the dragons killed by Sir Beues and Guy of Warwick are of the same tradition as David's giant, Perseus' sea-monster, Hercules' hydra, Siegfried's giant snake and Beowulf's three monsters. Sometimes there is a fusion of Biblical and classical stories. The Orphic myth affects the story of David playing his pipe to sheep in Cursor Mundi, and Jonah's whale in Patience bears some resemblance to Lucian's sea-monster which was one hundred and seventy miles long and had temples, cities and forests on its back. The collection


73 Ibid., p. 385.
of fables in English which was used by Marie de France is not extant, but fables are used for didactic purposes and from the Reynard cycle comes one full length treatment of The Fox and the Wolf. From the fables, also, comes the idea of animals and birds talking as humans, but the early use of such dialogue for purposes of social and political satire occurs mainly in French and Latin; it is not until early in the fifteenth century that, in such poems as Richard the Redeless and others, satirists exploit the talking animal and take advantage of both the heraldic vogue and of traditional animal lore to produce recognizable figures possessing desirable or undesirable characteristics. Animal spells, deeply rooted, in the primitive ideas of the folk and found in Old English literature in the

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74 See Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, pp. 240-241.

75 See, e.g., belling the cat; The Vision of William Concerning Piers Plowman, ed. Walter W. Skeat, EETS, OS, 38, part 2 (London, 1869), Prol, 146-208, B-Text.

76 Corresponding to "Ysengrim dans le puits," of branch IV of the Reynard cycle. See Mossé, op. cit., p. 72; Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, pp. 246-249.

77 For commentary on The Owl and the Nightingale, see below, p. 20. See also J. E. Wells, The Owl and the Nightingale (London, 1907), p. lxiv.

78 Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, ed. T. Wright, Rolls Series (London, 1859-61) I, I-25. See, however, I, 195-205, for English poem written c. 1308, where use is made of the fable of Noble Lion and the fox and wolf at his court. The fox and wolf represent those who exploit the poor.

79 The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman Together with Richard the Redeless, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford,
Leechdoms, persist throughout the Middle English period and later. As in the poem "Rats Away," Christian myth is often superimposed on pagan material. Also part of the tradition of the folk are the numerous proverbs connected with animals, which continue to be quoted.

There is also another tradition, however, arising from a "deep-seated native delight in the woods and valleys, the plants and the birds of the country." As a result, even in works where the didactic approach of hermeneutical works is apparent, a knowledge of animals derived from direct observation may also be found. The Owl and the Nightingale, at the end of the twelfth century, despite its use of allegory and dialectic, displays a genuine interest in nature, and enumerates eleven mammals as well as many birds and insects. In The Parlement 1886, I, 603-628; Tucker, op. cit., p. 97; Wright, Political Poems, I, 363-366.


See, for example, proverbial expressions on the lion, B. J. Whiting, Chaucer's Use of Proverbs (Camb. Mass., 1934), p. 166.


of the Three Ages, the poacher's view of the countryside as he stalks a deer is given in vivid detail:

Hertys and hyndes on hillys thay goven,
The foxe and the filmarte they fled to the erthe,
The hare hurkles by hawes, and harde thedir drives
And ferkes faste to hir fourme and fatills hir to sitt...
I sege ane hert with ane hede, ane heghe for the nones;
Alle unburnesshedede was the beme, full borely the mydle,
With iche feetur as thi fote, for-frayed in the greves,
With auntlers on aythere syde egheliche longe.\textsuperscript{85}

Here, and in Winner and Waster\textsuperscript{86} also, the presentation of the actual scene, conscientiously and sensitively drawn, anticipates the approach to nature which is to reach its finest expression in the medieval period in \textit{Gawain and the Green Knight}.

But a realistic attitude towards animals is rare. Sculpture, art and the folk festivals reflect the traditional attitude and emphasize symbolic concepts of animals. Around doorways, facades and sidewalls of churches, capitals of the pillars and misericords, and in illuminated manuscripts, animals appear as attributes of saints, to illustrate Biblical narrative, bestiary lore or fables or, for satiric purposes, they appear in human garb, doing human actions, particularly in illustration of a form of satire called \textit{le monde bestorne} or the world turned upside down, where a hare rides a dog and

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\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., pp. 315-322. See particularly, pp. 316-317, lines 31-44.
blows a horn or a dog is drawn to execution by hares.\textsuperscript{88} In mummers' performances, pageants and masques, in the horn-dance\textsuperscript{89} and the "riding of the George,"\textsuperscript{90} the mimicking of animals and the employment of their conventional symbolic qualities persist throughout the period. In the \textit{ludus dominis regis} held by Edward III in 1347, the players wore heads representing dragons, peacocks and swans,\textsuperscript{91} and an illustration in a manuscript of the same period shows the players all wearing animal heads.\textsuperscript{92}

The extent to which Chaucer could, if he so wished, have had first-hand experience of the animals referred to in his works, must also be considered. The mammals indigenous to England, even the polecat\textsuperscript{93} and the wolf,\textsuperscript{94} were numerous at

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{87}Wright, \textit{A History of Caricature . . .}, p. 89, fig. 54.
\textsuperset{88}Ibid., p. 90, fig. 55.
\textsuperset{89}E. K. Chambers, \textit{The Mediaeval Stage}, I (Oxford, 1903), 166.
\textsuperset{90}Ibid., I, 221-224.
\textsuperset{92}Welsford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43; Chambers, \textit{op. cit.}, I, frontispiece.
\textsuperset{93}According to \textit{The Master of Game}, ed. Wm. A. and F. Baillie-Grohman (London, 1909), p. 71, the polecat was a familiar beast in England and was included among the beasts of the chase. Although poisoning of animals is referred to in some of the analogues to \textit{The Pardoner's Tale} in \textit{Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales}, ed. W. F. Bryan and G. Dempster (New York, 1958), pp. 413-438, there is no mention of a polecat, referred to by Chaucer, \textit{PardT}, VI, 855.
\textsuperset{94}See below, pp. 178-179.
\end{flushleft}
the time he was writing, and some of the more exotic animals he certainly must have seen. Performing monkeys and bears were common shows and a bear-warden was not an unusual appendage to a nobleman's household. The lion also was possibly used for sporting purposes and, in addition, was important in royal menageries. There was a lion in the Woodstock menagerie of Henry I, and, according to Stow, lions were kept in the Tower from 1235 onward. Edward III received one from the Black Prince in 1365, and in 1370, according to the Issue Roll, there were several lions in the Tower. Leopards, Chaucer must have seen. Not only were they employed in southern Europe in the chase of bears, wolves and wild boars, but they were


96 See C. S. Brown, jr., and R. H. West, "As by the Whelp Chastised is the Leon," MLN, LV (1940), 209-210, who suggest that Chaucer in SqT, V, 491, is referring to a matter of common knowledge and possibly current practice.


98 Stow, loc. cit.


101 Cook, loc. cit.
imported into England as gifts to Henry I, Henry II and Edward III, and there were several leopards in the Tower in 1370.\(^{102}\) Henry of Derby, whose satin cloak was charged with gold leopards in 1381-1382, had a special keeper for the leopard which he brought home from the east.\(^{103}\)

It is difficult to establish whether Chaucer saw the four remaining exotic animals, the tiger, hyena, whale and camel. While in sculpture and illustrations these four animals are often inadequately portrayed, the tiger sometimes having wings,\(^{104}\) the hyena a shaggy bear-like coat,\(^{105}\) the whale legs and the camel cloven feet,\(^{106}\) we cannot infer that these animals had not been seen by the artists, for the medieval craftsman was not concerned with zoological truth. Moreover, we must also

\(^{102}\)Poole, op. cit., p. 608; Cook, loc. cit.

\(^{103}\)Cook, loc. cit.

\(^{104}\)For illustrations see F. McCulloch, op. cit., plate IX; T. H. White, op. cit., p. 12, where the tiger, though wingless, bears no resemblance to the actual animal. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed. XIII, pp. 1325-1326, referring to the rare appearance of the tiger in medieval arms and to the unrealistic representation on the arms of Sir John Norwich, a 14th cent. knight, remarks that "deep mystery wrapped the shape of him."

\(^{105}\)See illustrations in T. H. White, op. cit., p. 30.

\(^{106}\)F. McCulloch, op. cit., p. 92

bear in mind not only that there may have been more varieties of animals in the Tower than we have been able to establish, but that abroad, in menageries such as those of Charles V at Conflans, Tournelles and Paris, or elsewhere, Chaucer may have seen the animals with which we are concerned. He may have viewed whales stranded on the shores of England or of Italy and, if he journeyed through the south of France, camels from North Africa.

The attributes Chaucer gives the tiger, the whale and the hyena do not indicate that he was making use of personal knowledge. The tiger is used to denote fierceness; the whale, 

108 In 1364, a proclamation was issued for the safe keeping of a beast belonging to the king, which was called an "oure". See H. T. Riley, Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries (London, 1868), p. 320. Riley identifies it as the urus, aurochs or bison of east Europe. There may also have been camels in the Tower Zoo. Camels appear to have been a feature of royal menageries in England. They were owned by Henry I, see Loftie, op. cit., II, 146; by Henry II, see C. H. Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (New York, 1957), p. 328; and by Henry III, who received one from his brother-in-law, Emperor Frederick II, see Poole, op. cit., p. 608.

109 See Holbrook, op. cit., p. 206, who, referring to a commentary on the Inferno by an anonymous Florentine, written c. 1375, remarks that there is "fair evidence that stranded whales were both a curiosity and a nuisance in his time."

110 KnT, I, 1657, 2626-2628; Env. to ClT, IV, 1199; SqT, V, 419. I can find no explanation, nor precedent, for attributing duplicity to the tiger, as in SqT, V, 543: "this tiger, ful of doublenesse."
in a phrase similar to that occurring in the *Towneley Second Shepherds' Play*,\(^\text{111}\) to denote huge size;\(^\text{112}\) in the single reference to the hyena is one of Chaucer's comparatively rare allusions to animal lore.\(^\text{113}\)

Whether Chaucer's allusion to the camel is indicative of direct knowledge of the animal is dubious. It occurs only once:

Ye archewyves, stondeth at defense,
Syn ye be strong as a greet camaille.

Env. to CIT, IV, 1195-1196.

It has been suggested that the main reason for the use of *camaille* is the pun: the secondary armorial sense implies that woman's verbal thrusts are sharp enough "to pierce right through a man's protective armor from front to back."\(^\text{114}\) Alternatively, taking into account *camaille* both as a piece of chain mail protecting head and throat and as a kind of hood worn by ecclesiastics, the phrase may mean "stand on the defensive . . . since you have good protective armor for a vulnerable part."\(^\text{115}\)


\(^{112}\)SumT, III, 1930

\(^{113}\)See below, p. 46.

\(^{114}\)Beatrice White, "Two Notes on Middle English," *Neophil*, XXXVII (1953), 113-115.

Camaille, however, may have further significance. I would suggest that Chaucer may be referring to the idea of the camel as expressed by Isidore¹¹⁶ and Alanus,¹¹⁷ both of whom stress that it is a humble beast of burden, the latter stating that it ministers to the wants of men like a bought slave. Or, since the passage is in line with clerical anti-feminist writing,¹¹⁸ Chaucer may have had in mind the traditional ecclesiastical view of woman's lasciviousness. Not only do Aristotle¹¹⁹ and the bestiarists¹²⁰ refer to the camel's love of copulation but modern zoologists state that, apart from the llama, the camel is the only non-laboratory animal¹²¹ which copulates outside

¹¹⁶ Isidore, *Etymologiarum sive Originum*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, II (Oxford, 1911), XII, i, 35.


¹¹⁸ For comparison of woman to tiger, such as occurs in *Env. to CIT*, IV, 1199, see *Les Lamentations de Matheolus*, ed. A. G. Van Hamel (Paris, 1892-1905), I, ii, lines 1065-1068. The work, composed 1291-1301 by a bigamous cleric, is a vigorous and lengthy diatribe against women. It draws upon much of the anti-feminist literature of the Church fathers and upon first-hand experience. It was comparatively unknown until it was translated and adapted by Le Fevre, 1370. Le Fevre's work is included in Van Hamel's edition.


¹²¹ That is, belonging to the group of animals which cannot be observed and experimented upon in the laboratory.
oestrus. Chaucer's reference, therefore, may have been derived both from his reading and from observation.

Existing traditions did not, however, encourage a realistic approach towards the animal. We have already seen that in popular lore, the fable, the Bible, the vast body of hermeneutical writings, the natural histories, the encyclopedias, the homilies, art and architecture, the spirit of scientific enquiry was lacking; the emphasis was on the apparently human characteristics of the animal. Aristotle did, indeed, however inadequately, endeavor to keep the eye on the object, and Pliny and Aelian attempted a survey of the natural world which did not have a Platonic thesis. But even they were concerned mainly with the similarities between man and beast, and in an age when the visible world existed only for the spiritual instruction of man, the characteristics they found were regarded as symbolic and were used to throw light on the nature of man. The emblematic approach, moreover, was inherent in traditions, both popular and literary, from earliest times, and it is not surprising that it should prevail in a period in which the object was merely an imperfect reflection of the idea, the moral entity, which lay behind it. Even in such apparently divergent works as the fables and the bestiaries, the premise is similar, although it differs in scope and in the nature of its application:

it ascribes to animals traits already established by long tradition and assumes animal behaviour is inspired by human motives. Whether represented as engaging in a wide variety of human activities or in a restricted series of ritualistic actions approximating to more grotesque aspects of human behaviour, animals are significant because they resemble man. Expressed in its most extreme form, the premise is that the animal is a human being in disguise. Metamorphosis, such as is seen in the mummers' plays, for example, is inspired not only by surviving primitive beliefs but by the prevailing concept of the animal in medieval times. Since the traditional attitude was so strong and unequivocal, it is not surprising to find that Chaucer when he considers the animal appears to think of its stereotyped characteristics and to find it interesting mainly because it provides illustrations of humanity. In the next chapter I will discuss Chaucer's attitude towards the animal and the use he makes of the animal in his works, whether he is drawing from popular lore, encyclopedic material, animal fables, taking passages from specific texts or applying knowledge apparently derived from personal observation.
CHAPTER II

CHAUCER'S USE OF ANIMALS

With regard to nature generally, Chaucer, it has been said, does not draw his inspiration from the fields. When he is describing a flower, for example, he appears to keep his eye steadily on the poetry of others, rather than on the object itself.¹ His gardens, whether the typical castle grounds as in The Knight's Tale, the stone-walled enclosure as in The Merchant's Tale, the luxuriant place for Maytime dancing as in The Franklin's Tale or the more extensive riverside as in The Parliament of Fowls, are all described in conventional terms and contain such vague phrases as "nevere was ther gardyn of swich prys,"² and "so fair a gardyn woot I nowher noon."³ He

¹P. F. Baum, "Chaucer's Nautical Metaphors," S. Atlantic Quarterly, XXXIX (1950), 73. See also John L. Lowes, "The Prologue to the Legend of Good Women as related to the French Marguerite poems and the Filostrato," PMLA, XIX (1904), 593-683. Lowes points out Chaucer's indebtedness to other writers for his description of the daisy, Prol. LGW, F. 40-65; G. 40-60. He remarks, p. 627, that Chaucer makes the "surprising blunder" of ascribing a smell to the daisy, line 123. F. N. Robinson, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston, 1957), p. 480, refers to the panegyric on the daisy as "almost a cento of quotations or imitations of contemporary poetry, French and perhaps Italian."

²FranklT, V, 911.

³MerchT, IV, 2030. For discussion on Chaucer's gardens, see R. W. V. Elliott, "Pearl and the Medieval Garden: Convention or Originality?" Les Langues modernes, XXXXV (1951), no. 2, 87.
has none of the intimate detail, the feeling for country life seen in *The Parliament of the Three Ages*. His description of the Golden Age in *The Former Age* emphasizes the evils which civilization has brought to man. Virgil refers to goats and lions and unyoked oxen, to the ram and the larks in the Golden Age which is to come with the divine child,⁴ and while neither Ovid nor Boethius, who closely follow him, refers to animals, even the latter's prosaic account contains the imaginative picture of men lying under the shadows of the high pine trees.⁵ Chaucer, in his idyllic description of people sleeping on grass or leaves, makes but few references to the beauties of nature and animal life.⁶ In *The Parliament of Fowls*, when he departs from his sources in his description of certain kinds of trees, he evaluates them for their usefulness and not for their beauty: the oak for building, the elm for coffins to hold carrion, the holm-oak for whip's lash, the shooter yew, and the aspen for smooth shafts.⁷ Such additions are, however, exceptional. Generally he relies on commonplace or tradition, his interest in nature being activated by a desire to relate it to the human situation.


⁶*The Former Age*, 18-19, 42.

⁷*PF*, 176-180.
Chaucer shows a similar attitude in his use of animals. The attributes he gives them are mainly conventional and he usually sees them not as objects of delight or of interest in themselves but as types illustrative of humanity. His most extensive use of animals is for stereotyped traits which can be applied to man. Even in The Nun's Priest's Tale, where there is sufficient detail to remind the reader that it is, indeed, a tale of a cock and a fox in that the cock has the habits of a barnyard fowl and the fox follows its natural pursuit, the human characteristics of the protagonists are stressed. In The Parliament of Fowls, the birds are mostly catalogued by traditional tags, and their characters are developed only so far as they throw light on human behaviour.

To a certain extent, Chaucer's attitude can be attributed to that which prevailed in the medieval church. We have already seen that, in popular imagination, as *le monde bestorne* illustrates,⁸ animals are creatures differing little from humans. A similar view is implied in some of the early hermeneutical writings.⁹ In the bestiaries, the animal kingdom became a collection of types and symbols of religious dogmas, and animals might represent Christ, the Devil, or various

⁸ See above, pp. 21-22.

⁹ According to Origen, the lower animals were created after the likeness of heavenly prototypes; since they were involved in the Fall, they were also included in the Christian scheme of redemption. See E. P. Evans, *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture* (New York, 1896), pp. 28-29.
aspects of humanity. But there was also another attitude, anticipated by some of the writers of the pre-Christian era when they used the less attractive animals to illustrate the baser aspects of mankind, and subsequently forcibly expressed by Boethius. To Boethius, the beasts represented what man became if he denied his spiritual nature and gave way to his passions; they provided illustrations for the various kinds of human degradation:


It was the Boethian view, in which the animals almost exclusively represented the most reprehensible traits of mankind, which was most frequently pressed into the service of moral

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10 E.g., in the story of the elephants, the elephant and his wife represent Adam and Eve, the Big Elephant Hebrew Law, the 12 elephants the band of prophets, the Little Elephant the Samaritan. See T. H. White, The Bestiary (New York, 1960), p.27.

11 For examples, see Charles Cahier and Arthur Martin, Mélanges d'Archeologie, II (Paris, 1851), 68.

12 Boethius, op. cit., IV, pr. 3.
didacticism by the medieval church. Man, a little below the angels and a little above the brutes, had to be provided with illustrations warning him of what he would become if, instead of elevating his soul, he submitted to the base desires of the body. Since the Aristotelian view that the inner characteristics were exemplified by the outward physical form was widely held, the animal, both by virtue of its position in the Chain of Being and its appearance, served as a most appropriate metaphor for human corruption.

Chaucer appears to hold the Boethian view. Arcite's speech distinguishing man and beast suggests that the beast does not share in the Christian plan of redemption but can follow its animal nature because it has no after-life and reaps

\[\text{13 For its use by Hugo S. Victor, S. Bonaventure and others, see Cahier and Martin, op. cit., II, 19. See also, p. 50, the illustration in a 14th cent. MS in the Bibliothèque nationale, where each of the seven deadly sins is represented by a social type, a bird and a quadruped. See Thomas Wright, A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art (London, 1875), pp. 80-81, for Odo of Cheriton's dissertation on the popular story of the death of the wolf, in which wholly derogatory traits are ascribed to the animals following the bier. In the Secreta Secretorum, man is said to unite in himself the qualities of all animals, but most of the symbolism given is pejorative. See Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum, ed. R. Steele, EETS,ES, 74 (London, 1898), I, 104. G. G. Coulton, Medieval Panorama (New York, 1958), p. 112, remarking on the medieval church's lack of affection for nature, states that a French writer (la Marquise de Rambures), compiling a book on The Church and Pity for Animals, was unable to swell the medieval testimony beyond about one hundred pages.}\]
no punishment:

And yet encreaseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille.
And whan a beest is deed he hath no peye;
But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he have care and wo.  

KnT, I, 1315-1321.

In Truth Chaucer is, presumably, making the Boethian comparison of Man's lower nature with the beasts, and is not addressing the beast as such. For he can hardly be telling the beast to look up, if he accepts the view expressed by Boethius and others that quadrupeds look down.

Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal;
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the heye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede;
And trouthe thee shal delivere, it is no drede.  

18-21.

He may, indeed, merely be referring to "beste" in anticipation of the pun on Vache in the Envoy. In Fortune men who term Divine Will Fortune are addressed as:

Ye blynde bestes, ful of lewednesse!

68.

In An A B C Chaucer, following Deguilleville, abases himself

14 See Robinson, op. cit., p. 861, who compares Tr, III, 620; Fort, 68; KnT, I, 1309.

15 Boethius, op. cit., V, m. 5; Trevisa's Bartholomaeus Anglicus, 259/a: "Whanne an vnresonable beste is perfitliche ymade . . . beface þerof boweþ toward þeerþe . . . and oonliche to mankynde ordeigneþ vpright stature," cited in Middle English Dictionary, ed. H. Kurath and S. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, 1952- ), B2, p. 764.

16 Truth, 22. For note on pun, see Robinson, op. cit., p. 861.
before the Virgin and states:

Al I have been a beste in wil and deed.

Elsewhere, infidels are beasts\(^{17}\) and sinners are beasts.\(^{18}\)

Chaucer, then, seems to accept the view that the beast exemplified the baser aspects of man's nature. But while he does not apply the moral didacticism which usually accompanied such an attitude, he frequently selects the most pejorative symbolism and reinforces derogatory conventional ideas with equally unfavorable observations of his own. His attitude appears to be quite unlike that of the writer of the bestiary who has been termed a compassionate man, loving dogs and horses and showing a reverence for the wonders of life.\(^{19}\) The ape, proverbially drunken,\(^{20}\) lascivious,\(^{21}\) a dupe,\(^{22}\) a representation of the devil,\(^{23}\) an imitator,\(^{24}\) a grimacer\(^{25}\) and a fool.\(^{26}\)

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\(^{17}\)SecNT, VIII, 288. \(^{18}\)ParsT, X, 139.

\(^{19}\)T. H. White, op. cit., p. 247. \(^{20}\)Manc Prol, IX, 44.


\(^{22}\)Gen Prol, I, 706; MillT, I, 3389; RVt, I, 4202; CYT, VIII, 1313.

\(^{23}\)FrT, III, 1464. \(^{24}\)HF, III, 1212. \(^{25}\)HF, III, 1806.

\(^{26}\)Tr, I, 913; ParsT, X, 651.
is also a coward and appears in bad dreams. The sow not only has its proverbial redness but it eats the child in the cradle and "wroteth in everich ordure." The bear, the proverbially hungry animal which roars and is hunted, also.

27Prol to MkT, VII, 1910.

28NPT, VII, 3092. Owls and apes have a deeper psychological import in dreams than Chester I. Shaver, "Chaucer's 'Owles and Apeis'," MLN, LVIII (1943), 105-107, suggests. The phrase is more than "a stock symbol of the uncanny and, by extension, the absurd." Chaucer may be coupling owls and apes for the purpose of rhyming with japes, which purpose Robinson, op. cit., p. 753, puts forward as a possibility, but he also appears to be using his knowledge of dream psychology. It is true that the owl is a bird of ill-omen, as Robinson, loc. cit., remarks. It also forbodes death (PF, 343), and its use by the doomed man who scorns the significance of dreams has an ironic relevance. But, in addition, the owl is a creature which appears in nightmares, where it acquires vampiric traits. See Ernest Jones, On the Nightmare (New York, 1959), p. 107. Grimacing half-human and half-animal figures also occur frequently in anxiety dreams. See Jones, ibid., p. 80; J. A. Hadfield, Dreams and Nightmares, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1961), p. 198. Chaucer, therefore, has named two creatures prominent in the nightmare.

29Gen Prol, I, 552, 556.

30KnT, I, 2019. There is no corresponding passage in The Teseida. H. M. Cummings, The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Works to the Italian Works of Boccaccio, University of Cincinnati Studies, X (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1916), 144-145, considers Chaucer has substituted "a very palpable atmosphere of feudal realism" for Boccaccio's pseudo-classical devices. That Chaucer was citing an event by no means uncommon is indicated by Émile Agnel, Curiosités judiciaires et historiques du moyen âge... Procès contre les animaux (Paris, 1858), pp. 7-12, who cites cases from the 13th-17th centuries of pigs and sows eating children.

31ParsT, X, 157. The figure is not in the Summa of Pennaforte with which this passage is compared in Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, ed. W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (New York, 1958), pp. 733-734. See also HF, III, 1777.

32ParsT, X, 568. 33HF, III, 1589. 34KnT, I, 1640.
"strangleth the hunter." The lion did, indeed, symbolize utterly opposing principles in medieval thought, but the fact that Chaucer selects mainly pejorative symbolism may be indicative of a personal attitude; his choice may have been influenced by a general lack of admiration for animal life. The lion not only shows its proverbial fierceness, anger, and cruelty in battle, but is merciless in civil administration. The generosity for which the lion is traditionally famous is referred to only once.

It will be maintained that Chaucer's attitude is consistent whether he is drawing from popular or literary sources, from folklore or from life. Except when he is noncommittal, he usually finds in the animal qualities similar to the less attractive qualities in man. From popular sources he draws


36 Evans, op. cit., p. 87.

37 KnT, I, 1598; SecNT, VIII, 198.

38 KnT, I, 1656; SumT, III, 2152.

39 KnT, I, 2630. 40 KnT, I, 1774-1775.


42 LGW, F, 391-395; G, 377-381.
extensively upon the proverbial phrase, using it mainly in three ways: he takes some abstract quality, action or physical attribute commonly associated with the animal and makes it serve to illustrate some aspect of humanity. The human protagonist is fierce like the lion, blindy foolish like Bayard the horse, as unappreciative as an ass listening to a harp. He falls like "a styked swyn," groans like a boar, wallows like a pig in a poke, and is drunk like a mouse. He stinks like a goat if he takes up alchemy, looks like a wild boar, and has a beard as red as a sow or a fox. Apart from the lamb, with its inescapable religious connotations, and from the phrases used to describe Alisoun, the carpenter's wife, the proverbial expressions usually give rise to images which are distasteful. Even the lion, so often an emblem of nobility, is

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43 KnT, I, 1598; SecNT, VIII, 198.
44 Tr, I, 218; CYT, VIII, 1413.
46 PardT, VI, 556. 47 SumT, III, 1829
48 RvT, I, 4278. 49 KnT, I, 1261; WB Prol, III, 246.
50 CYT, VIII, 886. 51 SumT, III, 2160.
52 Gen Prol, I, 552. 53 See below, pp. 203, n. 24; 204-206.
applied favorably only to Emetreus, Troilus and Jason. The proverbial faithfulness of the hound is never referred to, and only derogatory proverbs having to do with its blindness, its stupidity and its snorting are applied to the horse.

In the early works the proverbial phrases are often used perfunctorily. Independent of his source, Chaucer applies the lion and tiger to Arcite, the lion to Palamon, the boar to both heroes, who are also compared to Thracian hunters of the lion or the bear. In view of the lack of consistency, it is difficult to accept the conclusions of one critic who thinks that, since Chaucer commonly characterized the lion as "wood" and the tiger as cruel and crafty, he may be suggesting a contrast between the "mad, instinctive type of fighter" and one who was a "crafty rather than an open fighter." Chaucer appears to be working within a convention and the similes are

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55 KnT, I, 2171; Tr, I, 1074; V, 830; LGW, IV, 1605.

56 See below, pp. 158, 161.

57 KnT, I, 1598; 1657, 2626.

58 KnT, I, 1656, 2630.

59 KnT, I, 1658.

60 KnT, I, 1638-1640.

61 A. H. Marckwardt, Characterization in Chaucer's Knight's Tale (Oxford, 1947), pp. 1-23. Marckwardt's generalization regarding Chaucer's use of the tiger is also questionable. In Env. to C1T, IV, 1199, the tiger is referred to as "egre," and in SqT, V, 543, as being "ful of doublenesse."
scarcely more appropriate than is the image of the drunken mouse which seems too homely for Arcite's rhetorical, philosophical outburst.\textsuperscript{62}

In his mature works, apart from their immediate and obvious significances, Chaucer's animal figures often have further implications. When the Wife upbraids her husband for drunkenness,\textsuperscript{63} the mouse is appropriate not only because it is included in the kind of popular expression one might expect the Wife to use but because it is associated with timidity, a quality the Wife's tirades evidently induce.\textsuperscript{64} The figure has further ironic implications when the husband is accused of comparing his wife to a cat,\textsuperscript{65} and when the Wife herself expresses contempt for the mouse which has only one hole to go to.\textsuperscript{66} The animal images here have a cumulative effect and appear to reinforce the earthy vitality of the speaker, particularly when, to the proverb last cited, the image "nat worth a leek," from the Wife's own domestic world, is added.

When, in early works, an animal figure in proverbial expression is extended, it is applied mainly to physical characteristics. It serves as an embellishment to the tale and is

\textsuperscript{62} KnT, I, 1261.  
\textsuperscript{63} WB Prol, III, 246.  
\textsuperscript{64} WB Prol, III, 432.  
\textsuperscript{65} WB Prol, III, 348-354.  
\textsuperscript{66} WB Prol, III, 572-573.
not an organic part of it. Curry has shown convincingly that Emetreus and Lygurge in *The Knight's Tale* are Martian and Saturnalian men respectively, and that Chaucer's descriptions of the two figures accord with those given for men born under the influence of Mars and Saturn by ancient and medieval astrologers. But the attributes given to Emetreus, who "as a leon his lookyng caste," are also leonine with respect to his hair, eyes, the marks on his face, and his voice:

His crispe heer lyk rynges was yronne,
And that was yelow, and glytered as the sonne,
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn;
A fewe frakenes in his face yspreynd,
Bitwixen yelow and somdel blak ymeynd;
And as a leon he his lookyng caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
His berd was wel bigonne for to sprynge;
His voys was as a trompe thonderynge.

A similar extension of an animal figure occurs in connection with Lygurge. In Chaucer's mature works, however, various
animal figures are often elaborately exploited to give depth and significance to the human character and situation, and even the animals in proverbial expressions employing conventional ideas of immediate comprehension are similarly used. In the composite picture derived from Robyn in The General Prologue and from Symkyn in The Reeve's Tale, the Miller is compared to the sow, the fox and the ape with respect to various physical qualities. But the Miller's resemblance to the three animals does not end there. In the character which emerges, we find that the Miller not only has further physical attributes in which he resembles the animals but he also combines the symbolical qualities attributed to them. As far as his appearance is concerned, the Miller's large mouth is sow-
like, and like the ape he is short-shouldered and broad\textsuperscript{72} and has a camus nose.\textsuperscript{73} With his gold thumb,\textsuperscript{74} he is as crafty as a fox. With his tales of "synne and harlotries\textsuperscript{75} he wallows in filth like the sow. The comparison to the ape, irrespective of whether his hair be abundant or sparse,\textsuperscript{76} is particularly appropriate. The ape is lascivious,\textsuperscript{77} and the Miller, whether we compare the description of him in \textit{The General Prologue} with medieval scientific writings,\textsuperscript{78} or take the phallic implications of Symkyn's weapons,\textsuperscript{79} the references

\textsuperscript{72} Cf. \textit{The Works of Aristotle}, trans. J. A. Smith and W. D. Ross, IV (Oxford, 1910), 502b, 10-15, where the ape is described as having the upper arm and thigh short in proportion to the forearm and shin, and as having a body much larger in its upper than in its lower part.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{RvT}, I, 3934.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Gen Prol}, I, 563. The proverb: "An honest miller has a gold thumb" appears to be ironical. But see Skeat, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 49.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Gen Prol}, I, 561.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{RvT}, I, 3935: "As piled as an ape was his skull." Curry, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 82, endows the Miller with thick hair but, p. 44, gives the Summoner, \textit{Gen Prol}, I, 627, a scanty beard. Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 687, suggests "bald, scanty."

\textsuperscript{77} Cf. the proverb cited in \textit{Reliquiae Antiquae}, ed. T. Wright and J. O. Halliwell, II (London, 1845), 196: "A widdowe that ys wanton with a running head, / Ys a dyvell in her kytt-chine and a nape in her bedde."

\textsuperscript{78} See Curry, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 82ff.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{RvT}, I, 3929, 3930, 3933, 3960.
to the mare,\textsuperscript{80} the horse,\textsuperscript{81} or merely his nose,\textsuperscript{82} is undoubtedly lecherous. The ape also represents a degree of drunkenness,\textsuperscript{83} and the Miller is both drunk on the pilgrimage and at bedtime in The Reeve's Tale. Like the ape in the bestiary fable,\textsuperscript{84} the Miller has two children, and like the proverbial ape he is made a dupe.

As has been seen, Chaucer frequently takes proverbial expressions in which the animal has a pejorative significance for the purpose of illustrating the less attractive characteristics of man. In using material from other sources, with a few exceptions, he also selects images which reveal the animal in an uncompromising light and applies them to human situations usually unpleasant in character. The material is of four main kinds: traditional encyclopedic lore, animal fable, passages from specific texts, followed closely or with certain modifications, and material apparently derived from personal observation.

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{80}RvT, I, 4055. For commentary, see below, pp. 189-191.

\textsuperscript{81}RvT, I, 4163. For commentary, see below, p. 158.

\textsuperscript{82}To medieval physiognomists, a turned-up nose, common to goats and monkeys, indicated "lustfulness, desire for coition and a love of things venerian." See Curry, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 85. George Fenwick Jones, "Chaucer and the Medieval Miller," \textit{MLQ}, XVI (1955), 6, contending that Chaucer's Miller conforms to the medieval idea of what a Miller should be, finds that Chaucer follows a tradition here. Millers were originally serfs, and even long after their emancipation were still portrayed with the physical traits usually attributed to serfs.

\textsuperscript{83}Manc Prol, IX, 44. Skeat, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 436-438 has an excellent note.

\end{footnotes}
Although Chaucer's interest in the bestiary seems slight, he makes more use of unnatural history than has been acknowledged. Fabulous creatures such as the basilisk, griffin, dragon, phoenix and mermaid are such commonplaces in medieval literature and art that any allusion to them may not be of much significance. Specific knowledge of unnatural history is, however, evident in Chaucer's references to the horse, the wolf and the hyena. The passages relevant to the horse and wolf are dealt with elsewhere. The hyena's gall has therapeutic properties according to Pliny, and Vincent de Beauvais states: "Hyænae fel oculorum claritatem restituit." In Fortune, the goddess, expressing Boethian concepts in her address to Le Pleintif, declares:

Thee nedeth nat the galle of noon hyene,  
That cureth eyen derked for penaunce.  
35-36.

85 See T. H. White, op. cit., p. 128, n. 1. White's observation that "his [Chaucer's] only overt mention of anything approaching a natural history is in the Parlement of Foules, v, 316" and his subsequent remarks are, however, questionable. It might also be noted that Chaucer makes one firm reference to the work, the Physiologus, in NPT, VII, 3271, and one possible reference in Epil. MLT, II, 1189, phislyas, var. phillyas, fisleas, etc. Skeat, op. cit., V, 167-168, suggests the word is a corruption of physices, with reference to the Physics of Aristotle. I would suggest that the Shipman, a churl, may be trying to pronounce Physiologus.

86 See below, pp. 155, 186-187.


88 See Skeat, op. cit., I, 545.
Chaucer may also be taking encyclopedic lore into account in connection with the hare, the camel, the weasel, the lioness, the tiger and the cat. Chaucer's possible use of the lore of the hare and the camel is considered in other chapters, and that of the weasel in The Miller's Tale is discussed later in this chapter with reference to Chaucer's use of direct observation of animals. Chaucer also refers to the weasel in The Tale of Melibee, line 1325: "Ovyd seith that 'the litel wesele wol slee the grete bole and the wilde hert'." Renaud de Louens': Le Livre de Mellibee et Prudence, the source from which Chaucer rarely departs in his tale, has: "Et Ovide ou Livre de Remede d'Amours dit, 'La petite vivre occist le grant thorel'." Skeat observes that "vivre" represents Latin vipera, a viper; Chaucer has construed it as if it represented Latin viverra, a ferret. Chaucer may have been influenced, however, by the widely circulated belief that the weasel was a

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89 See below, pp. 82-117, passim; see above, p. 27.

90 See below, pp. 71-79.

91 See Sources and Analogues, ed. Bryan and Dempster, p. 564.

92 Ibid., p. 588.

93 Skeat, op. cit., V, 214. But see also Georgine E. Brereton, "Viper into Weasel," MAE, XXVII (1958), 173-4, who suggests the substitution may be due to the fact that in one MS of Renaud de Louens' work and in three of Le Menagier de Paris meure/mure (miniver) has been written for uiure.
powerful little animal, capable of slaying the deadly basilisk. The reference to the hart is not in Chaucer's source, and I would suggest that there may be some transference of ideas here. In the bestiaries, the weasel and the stag are the two animals credited with the ability to kill snakes.\footnote{McCulloch, op. cit., pp. 187, 173.}

A reference to the habits of the lioness, as described by Pliny, may occur in the Wife of Bath's declaration:

\begin{verbatim}
Stibourn I was as is a leonesse
And of my tonge a verray jangeresse,
And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,
From hous to hous . . .
\end{verbatim}


The Wife, it appears, did not give up her former habits on her fifth marriage, and Jankyn, who had very good reason to know what those habits were, chastised her. According to Pliny, sexual passion is strong in the lion species, and when the lion detects adultery of his mate with a leopard, he concentrates his entire strength on her chastisement.\footnote{Pliny, \textit{Natural History}, III, 33.} Pliny also states that there is much indiscriminate mating;\footnote{Loc. cit.} the Wife has already intimated that her tastes were catholic.\footnote{ WB Prol, III, 621-626.}


\footnote{McCulloch, op. cit., pp. 187, 173.}

\footnote{Pliny, \textit{Natural History}, III, 33.}

\footnote{Loc. cit.}

\footnote{WB Prol, III, 621-626.}
Chaucer, however, may merely be applying an animal used by other anti-feminist writers to describe woman. Le Fèvre, translating and adapting Les Lamentations de Matheolus in 1370, expands on Matheolus' remark that woman is worse than a tiger:

Un vaillant auteur nous recite,
Que femme qui mari despite
Vault pis et plus est felonesse
Que n'est tigre ne leonesse.99

Again, when Chaucer applies tiger to woman in the ironic envoy to The Clerk's Tale100 he may have had a similar reason for his choice of epithet. On the other hand, Chaucer may have been thinking of the swift tiger of Hyrcania and India, which, as described by Pliny101 and embellished by the bestiarists,102 engages in furious pursuit of the hunter when its whelps are stolen. The same story may be alluded to in the description of Arcite in The Knight's Tale:

Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheyeye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is lite,
So cruel on the hunte as is Arcite. 2626-2628.


100IV, 1199: "Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Ynde." MED translates egre here as fierce, enraged, bold. See El, 29.

101Natural History, III, 50.

102The account of the glass spheres is added by the bestiarists. The hunter, having stolen the whelps, throws down a glass sphere. The tiger, looking at the sphere, believes its own reflection is that of a cub, and delays pursuit in order to nurse it. See McCulloch, op. cit., p. 177.
If so, the image may point forward to Arcite's defeat, for in most accounts the tiger fails against the hunter. The relevant passages in the Teseida contain no reference to a tiger, but Chaucer appears to have been indebted to the Thebaid and the Metamorphoses. 103

Another possible reference to popular lore occurs in The Wife of Bath's Prologue:

Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat; For whoso wolde senge a cattes skyn, Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in; And if the cattes skyn be slyk and gay She wol nat dwelle in house half a day, But forth she wole, er any day be dawed, To shewe hir skyn, and goon a-caterwawed. 348-354.

There are many literary precedents for the allusion to the singed cat. 104 Jacques de Vitry tells the story of a handsome cat given to roaming until its master disfigures it by burning its tail and pulling out its hair. 105 But by Chaucer's day,

103 H. B. Hinckley, Notes on Chaucer (Northampton, Mass. 1907), p. 107, compares Thebaid, IV, 315-316: "... raptis velut aspera natis / Praedatoris equi sequitur vestigia tigris." As pointed out by Skeat, op. cit., V. 90, Robinson, op. cit., p. 681, the Vale of Gargaphia where Actaeon was turned into a stag (Met., III, 156) probably suggested Galgophey. One of the dogs which tore Actaeon to pieces was called Tiger (Met., III, 217). Cf. also Met., VI, 636-637; XIII, 547-548.


in addition to being a "hoary commonplace" of the pulpit, it had also come to be regarded as a fact of natural history and is given as such by Bartholomaeus Anglicus. The Nun's Priest's Tale has a full length presentation of a beast fable. Elsewhere Chaucer alludes briefly to fables to provide illustrations for the human situation. The fables he uses are concerned with a conflict either between animals or between an animal and man. The references to the fable of the quarrelsome dogs and the thieving kite, and to that of the wolf and the mare are dealt with

106 Ovst, op. cit., p. 389.

107 Steele, op. cit., p. 389. The possibility of the story of the singed cat having a basis in fact cannot be overlooked. Frederick Drimmer, The Animal Kingdom, I (New York, 1954), 560, points out that the hairs in the cat's ears and its whiskers catch minute vibrations and tell the animal of movements it has not seen. A cat with singed fur, therefore, may be very unwilling to venture out-of-doors. That Chaucer is aware of the habits of the cat may be seen in the brief allusions in the MillT, I, 3441 and SumT, III, 1775, as well as in MancT, IX, 175-182, noted below, p. 57. In The Miller's Tale, Chaucer assigns to the hole, which is so useful to the prying servant, a practical purpose in daily life. In The Summoner's Tale, as is pointed out by Earle Birney, "Structural Irony within the Summoner's Tale," Anglia, LXXVIII (1960), 207-208, the gluttonous Friar drives the cat away from the bench, presumably because the animal has the place he wishes to occupy - close to the table where food is soon to be served. The reference to the cat in HF, III, 1783-1785, is proverbial. Cf. The Complete Works of John Gower, II (Oxford, 1901), iv, 1108-1110: "And as a cat wolde eate fisshes/ Without wetinge of his cles,/ So wolde he do," and see Robinson, op. cit., p. 787, for further references. Chaucer vivifies the phrase, however, by the addition of the word "sweynte."
in other chapters. The first contributes a disconcerting levity of tone to Arcite's speech; the second, appearing in a more mature work, has subtle and appropriate implications. A further reference to a fable occurs in The Wife of Bath's Prologue and there is a possible reference to an apparently proverbial expression given by Troilus in Troilus and Criseyde. The Wife shows up the weaknesses of the hypothetical arguments of the schoolmen by drawing on experience from life, and the implications of her rhetorical allusion to the Aesopian fable of the lion and the man are consistent with her point of view. Just as a painting illustrating Sampson's victory over a lion is invalid as an argument that the lion is inferior to man, so books written by clerks may be discounted. The lion in the fable demonstrated his superiority in a practical way. With equal empiricism, woman could demonstrate the perfidy of men, and her story would be quite different from that of the clerks. Troilus' reference to the bear in his uneasy discussion with Criseyde produces a piece of proverbial lore in support of her scheme to outwit her father.

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108 See below, pp. 142-143; 189-191.

109 WB Prol, III, 692: "Who peyntede the leon, tel me who?" For fable, see The Fables of Aesop, ed. Joseph Jacobs, II (London, 1889), 121. For other versions, in which the reference is to sculpture and not painting, see ibid., I, 251.

110 IV, 1374.
resorts to another proverb as a counter-argument:

"For trewely, myn owne lady deere,
Tho sleghetes yet that I have herd yow stere
Ful shaply ben to faylen alle yfeere.
For thus men seyth, 'that on thenketh the beere,
But al another thenketh his ledere.'
Youre syre is wys; and seyd is, out of drede
'Men may the wise atrenne, and naught atrede'"

IV, 1450-1456.

The observation that Troilus is using a proverbial expression is not very helpful. The only proverbs at all comparable appear to be:

But nothing thinketh the fals as doth the trewe.

_Anel._ 105

'A trewe wight and a theef thenken nat oon.'

_SqT_, V, 537

But neither contains any allusion to a bear, and Chaucer's expression does not appear to recur. The phrase may refer to the performing bear. Bear-baiting was popular in medieval England, and the ancient amphitheatres, used for similar purposes in earlier times, were employed for such exhibitions. Misericords contain many illustrations of the sport. The bear leader was the man who led the performing bear from village

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112 Cf. _MED_, B2, pp. 739-740.

113 Thos. Wright, _A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages_ (London, 1863) p. 111.

to village. In an illustration in the Harleian Manuscript 603, the man performs with the bear, and the bear, held by a rope, simulates sleep at the moment of representation. Speaking of the performing bear, Bartholomaeus Anglicus states that it is "an unsteadfast beast, and unstable and uneasy, and goeth therefore all day about the stake, to which he is strongly tied." Chaucer's phrase may merely refer to the recalcitrance of the bear towards its leader. Criseyde hopes to manage Calchas as though he were a performing bear under her control, but she will discover he has ideas of his own. My alternative suggestion is that the phrase may allude to a story in the Reynard cycle. In the story of the fox and the bear, the bear intends to bring the fox to court but the fox, by playing on the bear's weakness for honey, leads him to a great oak held open by wedges. When the bear reaches for the honey, which is in the tree-trunk, the fox removes the wedges and catches him. If Troilus is alluding to the fable, he implies that Criseyde, as the bear, may think she is as smart as the fox, Calchas, but she will be led into a trap. There is a possible extension of the figure not only in his subsequent emphasis on the craftiness of Calchas and on the tricks that will be employed

115 Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed. III, 582.
116 Wright, op. cit., p. 65.
117 Steele, op. cit., p. 169.
118 The Epic of the Beast, pp. 11-20.
to keep her in the Greek camp, but in his statement:

I not if pees shal evere mo bitide;
But pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot, syn Galkas on the Grekis syde
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule his name,
He dar nomore come here ayeyn for shame;
For which that wey, for aught I kan espie,
To trusten on, nys but a fantasie.

IV, 1464-1470.

Criseyde has not suggested Calchas should return to Troy, either in her discussion on the likelihood of peace\textsuperscript{119} or in her elaboration of her immediate plan.\textsuperscript{120} Her mind was fixed on her own return\textsuperscript{121} and her strategy regarding the "moeble" involved her own return, not that of her father.\textsuperscript{122} Troilus' remark implies that just as the bear hoped to bring the fox to court, a place where the latter dared not come, so Criseyde may hope to lead Calchas back to Troy but will not succeed.

Many of Chaucer's references to animals come directly from his sources. With regard to the wolf, the horse, the sheep and the dog, the borrowings are noted in the separate chapters. Here again we see that Chaucer often seems attracted to unpleasant and violent images.\textsuperscript{123} He may remain close to his source or he may elaborate on the image. Biblical images

\textsuperscript{119}IV, 1345-1358.
\textsuperscript{120}IV, 1366-1400.
\textsuperscript{121}IV, 1361.
\textsuperscript{122}IV, 1389.
\textsuperscript{123}See below, pp. 141-144, 189.
usually receive little elaboration, but to the comparison of Palamon and Arcite to wild boars Chaucer makes an addition which has been praised for its realism:

That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.  

KnT, I, 1659.

Its effect, however, is somewhat vitiated by the conventional exaggeration in the line following:

Up to the ancle foghete they in hir blood.  

KnT, I, 1660.

More valuable are Chaucer's additions in The Manciple's Tale to the description of the nature of the cat given in Le Roman de la Rose. The scene described by Jean de Meun is generalized:

Qui prendrait, beaus fiz, un chaton  
Qui onques rate ne raton  
Veu n'avrait, puis fust nourriz  
Senz ja voeir rat ne souriz,  
Lorc tens, par ententive cure  
De delicieuse pasture,  
Et puis veist souriz venir,  
N'est riens qui le peust tenir,  
Se l'en le laissait eschaper,  
Qu'il ne l'alast tantost haper.

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124 Cf. FrT, III, 1657-1658: Ps. x, 9; MkT, VII, 2031-2036: Judges, xv, 4-5; ParsT, X, 854: Prov. vi, 26-29; vii, 26; Ecclus. xii, 13, 14; xiii, 1; xxvi, 7. But see ParsT, X, 156-157 for elaboration of Prov. xi, 22, and 568 for modification of Prov. xxviii, 15.


126 See O. F. Emerson, "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," RR, XIII (1922), pp. 139-140.

127 For other references to the cat, see above, p. 51, n. 107.

Chaucer's concrete references to milk, flesh, the couch of silk, and the mouse going by the wall not only humanize the scene but emphasize the irrational and powerful quality of the instinct which can prompt an animal to renounce the luxuries of domestic life:

Lat take a cat, and fostre hym wel with milk
And tendre flessh, and make his couche of silk,
And lat hym seen a mous go by the wal,
Anon he weyveth milk and flessh and al,
And every deyntee that is in that hous,
Swich appetit hath he to ete a mous.
Lo, heere hath lust his dominacioun,
And appetit fleemeth discrecioun.

MancT, IX, 175-182.

With regard to the animal images in Troilus and Criseyde, only on one occasion, when he uses the epic simile of the bull,¹²⁹ does Chaucer follow the Filostrato without significant modification, and, as Meech shows so admirably,¹³⁰ Chaucer's figurative linkages with animals are more numerous, more diverse and often more concrete than Boccaccio's. An alteration, far-reaching in its implications, is made to the cinghari dream.¹³¹ Chaucer divides the elements of one dream into two dreams. In the first, instead of a boar, an eagle "fethered whit as bon" tears out Crisseyde's heart and replaces it with its own;¹³² in

¹²⁹ IV, 239-241. Robinson, op. cit., p. 828, notes that the figure in Boccaccio, Fil., IV, 27, goes back to Dante, Inf., XII, 22-24, and this is turn to Aen., II, 222ff.

¹³⁰ Sanford B. Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus (Syracuse, 1959), pp. 320-332.

the second, Criseyde embraces a sleeping boar. As Cummings points out, Boccaccio merely gives the dream and Troilo's own interpretation of it as an indication not only that his lady is untrue, as Troilus interprets it, but also that she has actually transferred her love to the Greek warrior. Chaucer postpones the full interpretation of Troilus' dream of the boar, reserving it for Cassandra, who gives the whole history of the boar and of the Calydonian hunt in an epic manner. The reason for Chaucer's introduction of a white eagle is obscure. Chaucer may simply be using the eagle to denote royalty and consider that, in its whiteness, it is a perfect symbol for Troilus. Other instances in Middle English literature in which a woman and an eagle are associated are not illuminating. Neither is the comparison of Chaucer's eagle to Dante's

\[133^{133}\text{Tr, V, 1233-1241.} \quad 134^{134}\text{Tr, V, 1246-1252.} \]

\[135^{135}\text{Cummings, op. cit., p. 88.} \]

\[136^{136}\text{Tr. V, 1457-1519.} \]

\[137^{137}\text{See Meech, op. cit., p. 43. In PF, 394, the tercel eagle is called "the foul royal."} \]

\[138^{138}\text{E. g., Metrical Romances, ed. Henry Weber, III (Edinburgh, 1810), 165. The empress in Octavian Imperator, about to be falsely accused of adultery, dreams that an eagle carried her children up to the sky; C. Horstmann, "Prosalegenden," Anglia, VIII (1885), 174: St. Mary of Oegines, weeping in contrition for her sins, "saw an egil vpon hir breste, ṭat as in a welle plonged the bile in hir breste . . . and she understode in spirite ṭat blessed Johne bare aweye hir weylynge 7 wepyng."} \]
very rewarding. The question also arises why Chaucer should transfer to the eagle the active qualities of the boar who, in the *Filostrato*, tore out the lady's heart with its tusks, and make the boar passive, slumbering through the embraces given by the faithless lady. Meech states that the first dream, in which the despoiler replaces the lady's heart with his own, implies Troilus' love for Criseyde, the second calls Diomede's love into question. The one dream "promises a mate both glorious and devoted; the other reveals the mate's successor to be as indifferent as it is gross." It might be noted that the boar, as a symbol of lust, is a more appropriate image for Chaucer's Greek warrior than for Boccaccio's. Boccaccio's Diomede falls in love with the heroine; Chaucer's does not. The second dream also calls into question the nature of Criseyde's love. She is no longer passive, no longer the "sely larke" in the grip of the sparrowhawk. Confronted by the symbol of lust, she is active, "kissyng ay" the sleeping boar. Her timidity and desire for protection are important motivations in both her love affairs. But even in the first romance, where she and her partner are genuinely in love, she is reluctant. What accounts, then, for her capitulation where, apparently, no

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140 Meech, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.
141 Tr. III, 1191-1192.
142 Tr. V, 1240-1241.
love is involved? It seems possible that in addition to other considerations, the thought of her love affair with Troilus, now frustrated, creates in her, perhaps unconsciously, a longing for a new experience. Chaucer remarks that her unhappy heart is set on fire:

Thorough remembraunce of that she gan desire.  

The symbolism of the boar and the nature of the dream itself tend to suggest that the second affair is one primarily of lust, and it is noteworthy that Chaucer explicitly states that he does not know whether Criseyde gave her heart to Diomede.\(^{143}\) Criseyde's sense of insecurity, her feeling that she is in a snare,\(^ {144}\) makes her capitulation to a quality as basic as physical passion psychologically feasible. For she wants to please, and, indeed, would want to please any man who could offer her strength or at least a temporary cessation of her fears. "I mene wel," she tells the importunate Diomede,\(^ {145}\) and her letter to Troilus shows that she wants to please her first lover also.\(^ {146}\) That, despite her careful evaluation,\(^ {147}\) she should entirely fail to anticipate the mental distress her relationship with Diomede would entail is also psychologically convincing. For she is presented as being too disturbed to be capable of imagining that she could suffer greater grief. While she is by nature "the ferfullest wight,"\(^ {148}\) her sense of insecurity is likely to have

\(^{143}\)Tr, V, 1050.  \(^{144}\)Tr, V, 748.  \(^{145}\)Tr, V, 1004.

\(^{146}\)Tr, V, 1590-1631.  \(^{147}\)Tr, V, 1023-1027.

been accentuated by her love affair with Troilus. Had the affair progressed naturally and, as would have been inevitable with a lover as diffident as Troilus, slowly, it might have seemed more solid to her, enabling her to face her subsequent situation with more assurance. But Pandarus, awakened by the swallow Proigne, a victim of treachery, accelerated the love affair and precipitated his victim into the arms of Troilus by a trick. When he interprets the dream of the boar he unconsciously reveals the motives for his treachery.

Pandarus is represented as an unsuccessful lover and, possibly, an aging one. The unnatural pleasure he takes in furthering Troilus' romance can possibly be explained if we assume that he has a sexual interest in his niece, which he can gratify only vicariously, through the success of Troilus. The nature of his attachment to his niece is not necessarily known to him. His open reference to an affair between affines and his allusion to a beloved whose identity Troilus apparently knows suggest that he believes his professed motives to be

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149 Tr, II, 64-70. 150 Tr, V, 1282-1285.
151 Tr, I, 622, 666-667; II, 57-63, 1165-1166.
152 Pandarus' age is still disputed. See Thomas A. Kirby, Chaucer's Troilus: A Study in Courtly Love (Louisiana, 1940), pp. 186-191, who discusses the views of older scholars and disagrees with the view that Pandarus is middle-aged.
153 Tr, I, 677-678. 154 Tr, I, 717.
genuine. His frank statement to his niece appears to indicate that he is unaware of the nature of his love for her and that he does not think of it as being similar to his love for a mistress. But the fact that Chaucer makes the distinction withouten paramours may mean that Chaucer either shares Pandarus' blindness or intends us to think about the possibility of a relationship between the two kinds of love:

"For, nece, by the goddesse Mynerve,
And Jupiter, that maketh the thondre rynge,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,
Ye ben the womman in this world lyvynge,
Withouten paramours, to my wyttynge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye weten wel youreself, I leve."

It is significant that Pandarus identifies his own wishes with those of Troilus, and at times of crisis sees Troilus and himself as one. After the consummation he makes a remark which, interpreted in Freudian terms, points up the nature of his interest in his niece, and his subsequent action supports the implications of his words:

And Pandarus gan under for to prie,
And seyde, "nece, if that I shal be dede
Have here a swerd and smyteth of myn hed!"
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hire nekke, and at the laste hire kyste.

Pandarus, then, may be seen as preying on the two young people for the sake of an experience he can only have through them. He unconsciously wishes to be his niece's lover and gains a

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\[\text{Tr, II, 323-329; IV, 406.}\]
vicarious satisfaction from identifying himself with Troilus. Our contention does not deny the fact that the character of Pandarus is extremely complex.\textsuperscript{156} It adds a dimension which, while it may not have existed in the conscious mind of the author, is implicit in the text and throws light on Pandarus' interpretation of Troilus' dream. It is true that Pandarus' remarks to Troilus when separation threatens are intended to comfort him, and that the narrator himself stresses, as Boccaccio did not, that Pandarus' proposal to abandon Criseyde is prompted by his desperate concern for his friend.\textsuperscript{157} But he appears to dismiss his own obligations towards his niece too readily, and to regard her not as someone for whom he has expressed great love, but as any woman. His alternative proposal that Troilus should fight for possession of the lady\textsuperscript{159} is, as he must be well aware, so contrary to the tenets of courtly love that it cannot be accepted by either party, yet he is prepared to make it serve as an ultimatum to Criseyde:

\begin{center}
And if she wilneth fro the for to passe,
Thanne is she fals; so love hire wel the lasse.
\textsuperscript{Tr, IV, 615-616.}
\end{center}

Pandarus' pragmatic approach, and his former preoccupation with straightforward seduction rather than with romantic idealizations seem to suggest that to him the physical consummation is the

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{156} For admirable summary of scholarly views on Pandarus see Meech, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 412-414.
\item\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Tr}, IV, 393-427.
\item\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Tr}, IV, 428-431.
\item\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Tr}, IV, 582-630.
\end{enumerate}
most important achievement and end. Hence, he can indicate that one woman will be as good as another,\textsuperscript{160} can evaluate the affair as "casuel plesaunce,"\textsuperscript{161} and can experience an un-wholesome satisfaction in having his cynical views on feminine conduct confirmed.\textsuperscript{162}

In his exposition of the dream, Pandarus, an avowed disbeliever in interpretations of dreams,\textsuperscript{163} professes to see Criseyde and her father, youth and age, in an embrace. To make the image acceptable and to erase the sexual import of the dream, a factor which Troilus has already recognized, he has Calchas dying and Criseyde embracing him in sorrow.\textsuperscript{164} Troilus has said nothing about Criseyde exhibiting grief. "And she for sorwe gynneth wepe and crie" is Pandarus' own embellishment. It seems likely that Pandarus has produced a censored version of his own fantasy: himself, passive and dying of love, and Criseyde weeping and kissing him.

In the examples cited, where Chaucer makes use of his sources, the Boethian idea of the animal as exemplifying the baser passions seems dominant, and Chaucer appears to select images which can provide effective illustrations of less desirable human traits. Again, in the references to animals which are apparently based on personal observation, some of the most effective images are applied pejoratively to humanity.

\textsuperscript{160}\textsuperscript{Tr}, IV, 400-413. \textsuperscript{161}\textsuperscript{Tr}, IV, 419. \textsuperscript{162}\textsuperscript{Tr}, V, 1172-76. \\
\textsuperscript{163}\textsuperscript{Tr}, V, 362-385. \textsuperscript{164}\textsuperscript{Tr}, V, 1284-1287.
Since Chaucer in his works exhibits little interest in the world of nature per se, it is not surprising that allusions to the appearance or habits of animals seemingly indicative of direct personal knowledge are small. Animals are frequently included as part of the everyday scene but the references are usually non-committal or the description consists in a cliché. The Monk's palfrey is "as broun as is a berye;" the Clerk's horse is "as leene . . . as is a rake." Occasionally, however, Chaucer gives a detail which suggests he has examined his subject almost with a naturalist's interest. Chaucer's birds are not within the province of this thesis. But it should be noted that some claim might be made for him as an ornithologist. No reference to folklore is required to explain "the throstil old." With its beard-like white chest beneath its brown face, the bird looks old. Nor is Chaucer necessarily transferring the qualities of Alanus' gallus silvestris when he describes the pheasant as "skornere of the

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165 Gen Prol, I, 207.

166 Gen Prol, I, 287.

167 PF, 364. Robinson, op. cit., p. 795, states the throstle was apparently supposed to live to a great age. T. P. Harrison, They Tell of Birds (Texas, 1956), p. 41, suggests the superstition mentioned by C. Swainson, The Folk Lore and Provincial Names of British Birds (London, 1886), p. 4, by which thrushes are said to acquire new legs, may account for the adjective.
Although the wild pheasant comes and feeds with domestic chickens during the day around the barn, when at night the cock herds in the chickens to roost, the pheasant will refuse to obey him. Another description which appears to be based on actual observation occurs in *Troilus and Criseyde*:

> What myghte or may the sely larke seye,  
> When that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?  
> III, 1191-1192.

Although the circumstances are different, the passage is usually compared to *Filocolo*, II, 165-166. But whereas Boccaccio...

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168 See Skeat, *The Complete Works*, I, 519; Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 795, for commentary on BF, 357. Skeat's alternative suggestion that Chaucer may be alluding to the fact that the pheasant will breed with the common hen is dubious; exogamy is rare in the pheasant. Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 40, considers the proposal of "Bombadier," "Chaucer, Ornithologist," *Blackwood's Magazine*, CCLVI (1944), 125, that "just as the cock, Chanticleer, crows at dawn, so the pheasant crows at sunset before he climbs to roost," to be "equally reasonable." Oliver Goldsmith, *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, II, (London, 1855), 66, states that Longolius "teaches us a method that appears very peculiar. The pheasant is a very bold bird, when first brought into the yard among other poultry, not sparing the peacock, nor even such young cocks and hens as it can master." At that time it will breed with the common hen. An editorial note, however, refers to the failure of "the many attempts which have been made to invite it to breed in our yards and retire to rest with the barn-door fowl and turkey." I have found no reference in modern works on either poultry or pheasants which refers to mating between the pheasant and the common hen. Moreover, the phrase "by nyghte" does not support the view that Chaucer is alluding to mating.

169 Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 825. Root, *op. cit.*, p. 483. Karl Young, *The Origin and Development of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde* (London, 1908), p. 148, n. 3, maintains Chaucer's figure may or may not reflect the similar one in *Filocolo*: . . . "dove Filocolo timido, come la gru sotto il falcone, o la colomba sotto il rapace sparviere, dimorava." It should be noted that Filocolo is timid; in Chaucer, the lover is bold. Young also refers to *Filocolo*, I, 217: "avendo gia rimessa la semplice colomba intra gli usati artigli de' dispietati nibbi." Here the resemblance is closer but the reference is to the kite or hawk and the dove.
alludes briefly to the crane and the falcon and the dove and the hawk, and has no reference to foot, Chaucer is specific and describes an action typical of the sparrowhawk.\textsuperscript{170} He may, indeed, have witnessed the event many times in falconry. Again, in the description of gluttonous friars in \textit{The Summoner's Tale},\textsuperscript{171} while "fat as a whale" is probably merely a very general reference to the large size and to the blubber of a whale,\textsuperscript{172} "walkynge as a swan" suggests that Chaucer is relying on what he has actually seen.\textsuperscript{173} It has even been claimed that Chaucer's knowledge of poultry was such that in Chauntecleer and his wife Chaucer was describing Golden Spangled Hamburgs.\textsuperscript{174}

Significant details, seemingly indicative of personal observation, rarely appear in Chaucer's references to animals. He is familiar with and makes use of the hunting practices of

\textsuperscript{170}Cf. David A. Bannerman, \textit{The Birds of the British Isles}, V. (Edinburgh, 1956), 252. He states that the sparrowhawk "swoops over the bird and as it passes it drops a foot and picks the victim up with absolute unerring skill."

\textsuperscript{171}III, 1929-1930.


\textsuperscript{173}Phyllis Barclay-Smith, \textit{British Birds} (London, 1939), p. 14, observes that the swan "though a most elegant and beautiful creature on the water, is an extremely awkward walker on account of its very short legs and large body."

his age, and in addition to describing aspects of the hunt itself effectively applies hunting terms in metaphor. Crieseyde is the unsuspecting deer being driven into the "triste cloos," the place at which the bowman stands to shoot the deer; the husband, subjected to the physical or verbal assaults of his wife, is the weary hare on its form, worried by dogs, or the cowering quail; the Summoner in The Friar's Tale and Damien in The Merchant's Tale, apparently alike in their obsequiousness to superiors and in their lechery, are likened to the "dogge for the bow," the hound specially trained to be "absolutely subservient to his master . . . making his attack only when so ordered, and only upon a deer already wounded by the bowman's arrow." Chaucer also refers to other current practices having to do with animals. Both the brawny Miller and the effeminate Sir Thopas are represented as winning the ram at wrestling matches. The "free bull" which the lord of the manor was privileged to provide to run with the common herd of the village

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175 See below, pp. 128-132.

176 Tr, II, 1534-1535.

177 ShipT, VIII, 104-105.

178 Env. ClT, IV, 1206. 179 III, 1369; IV, 2014.

180 O. F. Emerson, "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," RR, XIII (1922), 146.

provides an apt simile for lecherous priests. But the allusions to hunting and other current practises are general and for the most part do not appear to have involved a close study in field or town of specific animals. Two animals, however, the monkey and the weasel, Chaucer appears to have considered with a naturalist's interest.

In The Prologue to The Monk's Tale, the Host, quoting his wife, states:

'Alas!' she seith, 'that evere I was shape To wedden a milksop, or a coward ape, That wol been overlad with every wight!' 1909-1911.

Cowardice is not a quality attributed to the ape, either by the early natural historians, the encyclopedists, fabulists or the bestiarists. Goodelief may merely be using a derogatory noun and applying an adjective appropriate to her husband. On the other hand, she may be using the adjective because it is an observable fact that each group of apes has its bullies and its underdogs. 183

In The Parson's Tale, in a passage apparently original with Chaucer, an attack is made on contemporary fashions in

182 ParsT, X, 898.

183 Drimmer, op. cit., I, 176. Drimmer also states that it is not unusual to find an aggressive female dominate a troop, in which case "we observe various ranks of superiority in the males, who are treated with fear and respect by those inferior to them." Drimmer's remarks apply to the Old World monkey, the Macaque, of which there are about 50 species. I assume that Chaucer's ape is the macaca sylvanus, the Barbary ape, indigenous to Europe.
Upon that oother side, to spoken of the horrible dis-ordinat scantnesse of clothyng, as been thisekutted slopnes, or haynselyns, that thurgh hire shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres of man, to wikked entente./

Alias! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lik the maladie of hirnia, in the wappynge of hir hoses;/ and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hynde part of a she-ape in the fulle of the moone./ And mooreover, the wrecched swollen membretts that they shewe thurgh disgisyngle, in departynge of hire hoses in whit and reed, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres weren flayne. / 422-425.

In a sermon by the Franciscan Friar, Nicholas Philip, worldly priests are compared to climbing monkeys displaying the "turpitudinem posteriorum" and arousing "the derision of men." Chaucer's image is more extensive in its implications and certain details concerning the ape are applicable in each section of the passage cited above. Apes have the habit of turning the hinder ends of their bodies towards their fellow creatures. The gesture has a sexual import and is particularly noticeable in the adult female chimpanzee when, in a phase of her menstrual cycle, she shows sexual skin changes and enlarged pudendum, and presents herself for copulation. Chaucer's references to "wikked entente," the lunar phase, the female ape, and to swelling and coloration suggest first-hand knowledge of the appearance and habits of the she-ape in oestrus. Particularly apt is the simile for color. The she-ape's sexual skin changes to reddish

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purple, the color implied by the word "flayne."

The oblique extension of the figure of the she-ape is confined to appearance and behaviour of limited range. Sometimes more diversified characteristics of an animal, both physical and psychological, are exploited to give depth to human situation and character. The seemingly brief simile of the weasel has implications of greatest significance in The Miller's Tale, and in his indirect elaboration of the figure Chaucer not only appears to make use of details based on personal observation, as he does in connection with the she-ape, but to take into account, perhaps not always consciously, the folklore connected with the animal. That Chaucer should be familiar with the weasel is not unlikely. Weasels were domesticated both in ancient and medieval times and took the place of cats as hunters of rats. Whether they were caged, I have been unable to ascertain. The weasel, in Neckam's anecdote of the weasel and the poisoned milk, searches all over the house for her stolen offspring. On the other hand, tame weasels today are usually caged because they are very destructive. The description of Alisoun as being dressed mainly in white with a

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186 See above, pp. 43-45, and below, pp. 82-117.


188 Ibid., pp. 201-202. Much later, in 18th cent. England, weasels were apparently caged. See Goldsmith, op. cit., I, 412.
sprinkling of black\textsuperscript{189} suggests Chaucer may have been thinking of the \textit{mustela erminea}, the white weasel.\textsuperscript{190} He may never have actually seen the ermine in its full winter coat, for the complete change, when the animal is entirely white except for the black tip of its tail, usually occurs only in the northern parts of Britain.\textsuperscript{191} Whatever variety of weasel Chaucer had in mind, he appears to be carrying on the image of the weasel when he states:

\begin{verbatim}
And sikerly she hadde a likerous ye;
Ful smale ypulled were hire browes two,
And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.
She was ful moore blisful on to see
Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.
\end{verbatim}

The description of Alisoun's eyes implies both the lustful quality commonly attributed to the weasel in folklore,\textsuperscript{192} and

\textsuperscript{189}Alisoun's apron and smock are white. Her collar, inside and out, and the ties of her cap are embroidered with black (3236-3242).

\textsuperscript{190}It seems possible that in Mel, VII, 1325, Chaucer termed the ermine the weasel. See above, p. 47, n.93. Chaucer would have been familiar with the fur from its use as trimming. In the reign of Edward III the wearing of ermine became restricted to the royal family. See Encycl. Brit., 9th ed., VIII, 526. The usual trimming was white with black spots. See MED, E2, p. 226. The fur is more cream than white, as Goldsmith, op. cit., I, 414, and J. G. Wood, op. cit., I, 290, observe. Cf. "as whit as morne milk," (3236). It is also described as "woolly" in Library of Natural History, ed. Richard Lydekker, II (New York, 1904), 654, and pieces of black lamb's wool were used to decorate it; see NED, Ermine\textsuperscript{2}.


\textsuperscript{192}See Thomas Shearer Duncan, "The Weasel in Religion, Myth and Superstition," Washington University Studies (Humanistic Series), XII (1924), 58, 62.
the actual brightness and color of the animal's black eyes. The plucked eyebrows are not only in the latest fashion,\textsuperscript{193} a fashion vehemently condemned by the anti-feminist writer of The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry,\textsuperscript{194} but correspond to the \textit{schnurren}, the sparse, sprouting hairs which the weasel has above its eyes.\textsuperscript{195} Moreover, the darker markings in the fur above the eyes give the appearance of arched \textsuperscript{196} eyebrows.\textsuperscript{197} The comparison to the young pear tree and the lambswool also suggests the ermine. In winter, the ermine is white like the pear tree in bloom and the fleece of the lamb; in summer,


\textsuperscript{194}The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, ed. Thomas Wright, \textit{EETS,OS}, 33 (London, 1868), pp. 67-68, castigating women who "popithe . . . and paintithe and pluckithe her visage, otherwise thanne God hath ordained hem," describes the tortures in hell endured by a woman who plucked her hair.

\textsuperscript{195}Alfred Brehm, Brehm's Tierleben, IV (Leipzig, 1926), 404. For illustration of \textit{schnurren}, see Drimmer, \textit{op. cit.}, I 497.

\textsuperscript{196}For definition and usage of \textit{bent}, see \textit{MED}, B2, pp. 724-725.

\textsuperscript{197}According to J. Nicholls, Senior Keeper, Seattle Zoo, the markings are distinctive in the \textit{mustela erminea} and the \textit{mustela nivalis}. 
its coat may have a yellowish hue,\textsuperscript{198} the color associated with \textit{pere-jonette}.\textsuperscript{199} "The shynyng of hir hewe,"\textsuperscript{200} which is brighter than a newly minted coin,\textsuperscript{201} not only suggests the color of the ermine's summer coat but the sheen on the fur, peculiar to the \textit{mustela} family.\textsuperscript{202}

Alisoun's song is described as being "as loude and yerne/ As any swalwe sittyng on a berne."\textsuperscript{203} The new image does not eliminate that of the weasel, for here we have another creature with white underparts and a noise which is comparable to the squeak of the weasel. Chaucer appears to be alluding to the swallow's twitter, the loud, high-pitched "tswee" which it makes when excited or alarmed.\textsuperscript{204} The swallow's actual song, which it utters both on the wing and at rest, has remarkably

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{198}See Drimmer, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 494; \textit{Encycl. Brit.}, \textit{loc. cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{199} \textit{Pere-jonette} is an early ripe pear, yellow in color. Its etymology is uncertain but may be connected with \textit{jaune}. See Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 684-685.
\item \textsuperscript{200}Brewer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 267, contending that in the portrait of Alisoun, Chaucer is burlesquing the medieval ideal of feminine beauty, remarks that, while Alisoun's hue is bright gold like a lady's, it is compared to a coin worth six shillings and sixpence. However, the description is attractive and does not seem to imply ridicule.
\item \textsuperscript{202}For reference to glistening appearance of the fur, see Robert Hegner, \textit{Parade of the Animal Kingdom} (New York, 1935), p. 623.
\item \textsuperscript{203}For description, see H. F. Witherby \textit{et al.}, \textit{The Handbook of British Birds}, II (London, 1943), 227.
\end{itemize}
small carrying power. The image of the weasel is also implicit in the description of Alisoun's youthful, animal playfulness, in the references to the countrified perfume of her mouth and the associations with fermented honey, stale ale and stored apples:

Therto she koude skippe and make game,
As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame.
Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth. 3259-3262.

For the weasel is a most frolicsome creature. It jumps and gambols, and even when approaching its prey it indulges in playful antics. Furthermore, it may have a "faintly sweet stink rather like a granary infested with mice," except when it is annoyed. Also suggestive of the weasel is the description of Alisoun as "wynsynge . . . as is a joly colt," and as

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205 Witherby, loc. cit.; Bannerman, op. cit., III, 376. The latter states: "Not very much has been written about the song of the swallow . . . It is particularly sweet and arresting but uttered in a low tone, so that only those blessed with good hearing can really appreciate it." Brewer, op. cit., 268, states that the swallow has no song.

206 Encycl. Brit., loc. cit., (mustela erminea); Drimmer, op. cit., I, 495 (must. erm.);


209 When angry, the weasel secretes musk from glands near the anus. See C. B. Moore, The Book of Wild Pets (Boston, 1954), p. 374; George Cuvier, The Animal Kingdom, II (London, 1827), 284. Cuvier states that the musk "has a strong and, to many, a very disagreeable odour, although it is highly prized by others."

210 3263. NED, under wince v¹: "to kick restlessly from
springing from an embrace as "a colt dooth in the trave," turning quickly away with her head. Her resistant, writhing behaviour is, in fact, similar to that of the weasel, a sinuous little animal which can, however, if caught young enough, be tamed by stroking gently and often. Like the weasel, which is almost four times as long as it is high, Alisoun has a long body, and like the weasel also, which has a straight back of almost uniform thickness throughout, Alisoun's body is as "upright as a bolt."


211 3282. 212 3283.

213 See Encycl. Brit. loc. cit., for the agility of the mustela erminea and "the peculiar snakelike character of its motions." Among the explanations proffered for the phrase "Pop goes the weasel" is that, in the dance, the dancer "pops" through or under the arms of the other dancers "in the same sinuous manner as a weasel enters a hole." See N&Q, 10th series, III (1905), 491.


215 Ibid., I, 336. 216 3264.

217 Brehm's Tierleben, loc. cit.

218 3264. i.e., "as straight as an arrow." See MED, B5, pp. 1032-1033. The weasel's long horizontal appearance is one of its most distinctive features. Chaucer's phrase also suggests "bolt-upright" (L. supina), an adjective both appropriate to the weasel and to Alisoun. Chaucer may also have been thinking of Isidore, op. cit., XII, iii, 3. "Mustela dicta, quasi mus longus; nam telum a longitudine dictum."
Although Alisoun is a desirable young woman, she has many reprehensible qualities which are commonly associated with the weasel in folklore. The weasel image is, indeed, so apt that Chaucer appears to have been influenced in his choice not only by his personal knowledge of the animal but by his awareness of popular superstition. The weasel in the various names given for it in Greek and Latin, Italian and French, meant a young woman.\(^{219}\) It also signified a bad woman.\(^{220}\) In proverb women were called weasels when they were lustful, tricky and crafty.\(^{221}\) Traditionally, also, the weasel had associations with honey\(^{222}\) and with a yellow life-giving flower,\(^{223}\) and these associations may have influenced Chaucer not only in the references to Alisoun as "hony deere"\(^{224}\) and "hony-comb"\(^{225}\) but in his description of Absolon's method of wooing. For Absolon

\(^{219}\) Duncan, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-40.

\(^{220}\) Duncan, p. 58, states that the superstition was "widely held."

\(^{221}\) Ibid., pp. 61-62: "Si une fois une fille a fait l'amour, j'aimerais mieux garder un pré rempli de belettes;" "Malin comme un fichèou;" "Fine comme la panquèze."

\(^{222}\) Ibid., p. 44. According to Greek folklore, since the weasel is supposed to be jealous of maids, honey and perfume are left in the room where the bridal dowry is stored, in order to propitiate the animal.

\(^{223}\) Ibid., p. 63.

\(^{224}\) 3617.
addressing Alison in flattering or coaxing words, and offering fermented honey among his gifts, is observing a custom similar to that adopted in Greece towards the weasel. The weasel image is still implicit in the dénouement of the tale. Alison, like the weasel in both ancient and modern folklore, brings ill-luck. Like the weasel in proverb, she is associated with water, and like the weasel in Greek folklore, she metes out justice. Moreover, in dispensing justice, she reveals herself as an animal and makes use of osculum a tergo, an indispensable part of homagium a Diabolagium. The rite is

226-3698-3699. 227 3378.

228 For custom, see Duncan, op. cit., p. 47.


231 Ibid., p. 59.

232 In addition to being a favorite form for a witch (see Apuleius, op. cit., p. 66), the weasel was, of course, a notorious shape-shifter. See Duncan, op. cit., p. 47; C. Moore, op. cit., pp. 95-104.

233 For reference to rite, see Howard Williams, The Superstitions of Witchcraft (London, 1865), p. 93.
singly appropriate, for the Devil often appeared in the form of a cat or of some other familiar animal. Perhaps some awareness of the significance of his involuntary tribute is indicated in Absolon's remark when he swears vengeance: "My soule bitake I unto Sathanas." We have already remarked that Chaucer appears to show little admiration for the animal world as such, and that, except when he is non-committal, whether he draws from popular lore, literary sources or from life, he often appears to select repellent images to apply to humanity. In many of the brief references and the more detailed applications of the animal figure, the animal stands for qualities which Chaucer clearly estimates as repulsive. In The Miller's Tale, inasmuch as Chaucer appears to draw on a physical description of an animal which he has observed closely and applies the figure to a woman who, despite the disproportions in her physique, emerges in the initial description as most desirable, the use of the weasel image does not seem to reflect his usual practice. Nevertheless, our analysis of the weasel image leads to the conclusion that Chaucer is maintaining a consistent attitude. He selects an animal which, however attractive in appearance, is extremely cruel and predatory in nature and which has innumerable

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234 The Templars, in 1307, were accused of participating in such rites. See Howard Williams, p. 77.

235 3750.
pejorative associations in folklore. As such, the weasel is a most appropriate image for the wanton woman of the fabliau, who finally and crudely reveals herself as an animal. We have observed that, for Chaucer, the animal usually stands for greed, violence, stupidity, in fact all the aspects of human degradation which, according to the teachings of Boethius and the medieval Church, emerge when the soul is not in control of the body. But the fact that Chaucer, apparently so sharply conscious of the poignant sensuous appeal of "this world, that passeth soone as floures faire," should rarely be able to particularize any attractions when he refers to the animal world and should ignore traditions which were, as we indicated in the first chapter, often favorable towards the animal, suggests that he may have supplemented the Boethian attitude with a personal one. At times, the distaste he exhibits is so intense, his recoil so unequivocal as to imply the presence of tension. There are grounds for thinking that the tension may arise from the fact that the animal world constitutes a challenge to his orthodox views. The Wife of Bath, the promiscuous lioness, is triumphant in her claim for the natural life; Alisoun, the untamed weasel, emerges unscathed. Excused from social obligations by their creator, they exemplify the unlicensed vitality of the animal world, a quality which, it seems, is to Chaucer both simultaneously attractive and repellent, producing images of both the skipping kid and the prancing ape. Tension
arising from the double vision may not only contribute to the extreme complexity of the animal figures, many of which are discussed in subsequent chapters, but may account for what often appears to be a compulsive selection of repellent images.
CHAPTER III

THE HARE

All Chaucer's allusions to the hare are brief; he refers to it both directly, as being part of the milieu in which his characters move, and in simile. Some of the references suggest that he has a direct knowledge of the animal, but he also appears to be familiar with and to accept the vast amount of folklore which endowed the hare with both physical and psychological peculiarities. While he makes use of traditional ideas, he does not, as is sometimes his practice with reference to other animals, apply commonplace phrases in which the application, symbolic or otherwise, is overt. Most of the allusions have subtle connotations and their full significance is only apparent when various implications of the lore of the hare are taken into account, and when it is realized that ideas associated with the image may be explored elsewhere in the text. The hare, unlike the sheep, for example, has a shifting symbolism and many attributes. Because of its variety and ambiguity, Chaucer is able to make it serve as a flexible device to illustrate the vagaries of human character.

Even the direct reference to the hare as an animal of the chase is used to underline an important aspect of character.
The Monk is a keen hunter:

Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight;
Of prikyng and of hyntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

*Gen Prol*, I, 190-192.

By singling out the hare as the Monk's particular delight in hunting, Chaucer puts him in the class of hunting specialists. Early in the fourteenth century, Twiti declares that "she is the most merveylous beste of the world,"⁠¹ and Edward, Second Duke of York, following *Le Livre de Chasse*, written by Chaucer's contemporary, Gaston de Foix, remarks:

The hare is a good little beast, and much sport and liking is the hunting of her, more than that of any other beast that any man knoweth, if he were not so little.⁠²

Dame Berners, in her hunting treatise first printed in 1486, follows Twiti and says that the hare "kyng shall be calde of all venery."⁠³

In mentioning the swift greyhounds, Chaucer shows that the Monk is also a true huntsman in that he tracks and hunts the hare in the proper fashion. Twiti remarks that the hare, in common with the hart, the boar and the wolf, is **enchased**,

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¹*La Venerie de Twiti*, ed. Gunnar Tilander (Uppsala, 1956), p. 44.


³The Book of St. Albans, facsimile with introd. by W. Blades (London, 1881), sig. eii.
meaning that it is hunted with greyhounds after having been tracked with the help of the *limier*. Edward, Second Duke of York, disapproves of snare-hunting of hares and is careful to point out that it is not an English practice:

Men slay hares with greyhounds and with running hounds by strength, as in England, but elsewhere they slay them also with small pockets, and with purse nets, and with small nets, with hare pipes, and with long nets, and with small cords that men cast where they make their breaking of the small twigs when they go to their pastures . . . But, truly, I trow no good hunter would slay them so for any good.

In 1591, Sir Thomas Cockaine, whose work is based extensively on the lost *Book of Tristram*, a hunting bible referred to by Malory, also emphasizes the use of dogs in tracking and hunting the hare.

Ramona Bressie shows that the description of the Monk might apply to William de Cloune, abbot of Leicester from 1345 to 1378, the only hunting monk specified in known records, and cited by Knighton in his *Chronicon* as a notable hunter of hares. William de Cloune was a friend of John of Gaunt, who stocked

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4 *La Venerie de Twiti*, p. 51. The editor, p. 92, glosses *enchased* as "attaquer, lancer, chasser la bête avec les chiens après l'avoir quêté à l'aide du limier," in contrast to the method used in hunting the buck, doe, fox and other vermin who were *encoylid*: "lancer, chasser la bête avec les chiens sans avoir aucune piste, et sans avoir quêté au paravant avec le limier."

5 *The Master of Game*, p. 22.


7 Ibid., sig. biii.
the Abbey wood and Leicester forest with deer, and the King, his son, Prince Edward, and many lords of the realm hunted there. Miss Bressie concludes, however, that in order to know whether Cloune was the Monk, it would be necessary to have more information about hunting monks and about Chaucer than is now possible. Complete identification is made more difficult by the fact that, despite the disapproval of the Church and the pejorative symbolism attached to the hunter, hunting prelates were common at the time. But for our purpose, the reference to the hare serves to put the Monk among the hunting aristocracy and to emphasize his disregard of two

8'A Governour Wily and Wys," MLN, LIV (1939), 477.

9Ibid., p. 490.

10See O. F. Emerson, "Some of Chaucer's Lines on the Monk," MP, I (1903-4), 105-115, and Rudolph Willard, "Chaucer's 'Text that seith that hunters been nat hooly men'," Univ. of Texas: Studies in English (1947), 209-251. It is possible that the extent of the conception of the hunter as a kind of devil has been overstressed. Charles Cahier and Arthur Martin, Mélanges d'Archéologie, I. (Paris, 1848), 120-123, show that St. Augustine, in sermon LI, calls both the Devil and Christ hunters, and that Isidore, in Contra Judaeos, terms the apostles not only fishers but hunters. Martin assumes that in the hunt depicted in metal work in the Abbaye d'Oignes, the hunters represent Christ and the apostles. There is also a scene where the hunters and hunting dogs represent the preachers, and some of the dogs chase the hares to the feet of the bishops, the successors of the apostles. Gaston de Foix, as translated in The Master of Game, pp. 4-8, claimed hunting helped men to avoid the seven deadly sins.

principles of monastic rule usually regarded as most important — labor and claustration. For, as contemporary illustrations of lavishly dressed hare-hunters and their retinue plainly indicate, the hunting of the hare was a social pastime. Chaucer thus carefully vouches for the Monk's bland apostasy, and prepares us for the thrust in the final line:

A fat swan loved he best of any roost. Gen Prol, I, 206.

The Monk, "ful fat and in good poynt," is well fed. His evaluation of ecclesiastical opinion in terms of a plucked hen and an oyster indicates that his mind is on food and that he disparages both a cheap fowl and the mollusc freely permitted in monastic diet by the Church. His worldliness, epitomized

12 G. G. Coulton, Medieval Panorama, (New York, 1958), p. 269, gives propertylessness and spare diet as the two other pillars of discipline.

13 See the illuminations from a manuscript of Gaston de Foix, "Hare-hunting with greyhounds and running hounds" and "Hare-driving with low bells," in The Master of Game, pp. 182, 184.

14 According to W. W. Skeat, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, V (Oxford, 1894), p. 21, a "pulled" or plucked hen was of little value. He adds that Tyrwhitt stated he had been told that a hen whose feathers were pulled, or plucked off, would not lay eggs. But the plucked hen may also have been despised on aesthetic grounds. In Russia and Poland similar proverbial expressions exist with reference to the wet hen: mokraya kuritsa; mokra kura. That the oyster was despised as poor man's diet may be seen from SumT, III, 2099-2102:

"Yif me thanne of thy gold, to makeoure cloystre,"
Quod he, "for many a muscle and many an oystre,
Whan othere men han ben ful-wel at eyse,
Hath beene our foode, our cloystre for to reyse."

See also The Vision of William concerning Piers Plowman, ed. W. W. Skeat, EETS, OS, 67, 81, part 4 (London, 1885), p. 188, for
by his hunting of the hare, suggests that the kind of sophistry which prompted certain monks, forbidden to eat meat unless it were game, to hunt their pigs with hounds after the manner of the chase, \(^{15}\) would not be distasteful to him. It was always a controversial point whether fowl should be classed with meat or with fish as in Genesis. \(^{16}\) Even today, the ruling on abstinence appears to be ambiguous:

Meat diet comprises the flesh, blood or marrow of such animals and birds as constitute flesh meat according to the appreciation of intelligent and law-abiding citizens. For this reason, the use of fish, vegetables, molluscs, crabs, turtles, frogs and such-like cold-blooded creatures is not at variance with the law of abstinence. Amphibians are relegated to the category whereunto they bear most striking resemblance. \(^{17}\)

According to one writer, the opinion that the sinfulness of an animal could be judged by its feet apparently admitted certain

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\(^{17}\) The Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. Charles C. Herbermann et al., I (New York, 1907), 68. The NED defines *flesh meat* as "flesh (as opposed to fish and vegetables) as an article of food."
fowl to the table because they did not have feet but "flippers." Others suggest that all poultry, not merely birds with webbed feet, may have been admitted:

Abstinence from flesh meat was obligatory in all monasteries in England, at all events until the thirteenth century, but already certain relaxations had begun to creep in . . . It seems that poultry did not count as 'flesh meat', although this is not quite certain. Father Knowles thinks that the term "meat" in monastic diet was not intended to include the flesh of fowl. He adds, however, that there is no definite evidence that fowl was allowed, but the very large number of birds that figure on all contemporary farm lists might seem to point in this direction, though the sick and guests must always be remembered.

Such opinions indicate that there is some difficulty in determining what the practice was. But certainly, in earlier times, the eating of fowl appears to have been prohibited in some monasteries. Odo, second abbot of Cluny, gives a horrifying exemplum of a monk who choked to death on a chicken bone.

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18 W. Ley, The Lungfish, the Dodo and the Unicorn (New York, 1948), p. 73.


after arguing

volatile, inquit, non est caro, volatilia enim et pisces
unam habent originem et aequalem creationem, sicut noster
hymnus continet. 21

In specifying the swan as the Monk's preference, therefore, Chaucer may have in mind more than the fact that it was expensive, compared with other birds. 22 He is demonstrating a way in which the Monk:

... leet olde thynge pace.

Gen Prol, I, 175.

He may be suggesting that the swan appears frequently on the Monk's menu because the Monk is in agreement with those who, by casuistical argument, classify poultry as fish.

In Sir Thopas the hare is also introduced satirically to illustrate character:

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Therinne is many a wilde best,
Ye, both bukke and hare.

Thop, VII, 754-756.

Here Chaucer may have in mind the lack of courage traditionally ascribed to both the hare and the deer family. The timidity


22 Bressie, op. cit., pp. 488-489, states that a swan was six shillings at Christmas. The usual price for a goose was threepence, a partridge twopence, and a chicken twopence-halfpenny. In connection with Cloune, she observes that Leicester Abbey might have fattened its own swans, for it had watermills and at least one moated manor house.
of both animals is early remarked upon by Aristotle; and Isidore of Seville, whose vast *Etymologies*, 623, helped, so it is claimed, to keep alive the scientific learning of the Greeks in the Latin West, says that the hare is *satis timidum* and the deer *timidum animal et inbelle*. Isidore's work, as has already been remarked, was certainly known to Chaucer, but the ideas expressed there concerning the two animals are widespread. In the poem "On the Evil Times of Edward II," the writer remarks disparagingly of the nobility:

And nu ben theih liouns in halle, and hares in the feld. In another poem, "The Mourning of the Hare," the hare vividly describes its fears as a hunted animal, and Chaucer himself

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26. See above, p. 12.


in The Parliament of Fowls refers to the "dredful ro."\textsuperscript{29}

With reference to Sir Thopas, it is to be noted that the knight has no dogs with him and he is not hunting. The observation that hunters regarded the hare as "no ignoble quarry"\textsuperscript{30} is, therefore, hardly relevant. The point is that the brave Flemish knight, setting off on an adventure, rides through a forest where the wild beasts are of no fiercer kind than two notorious for their timidity.

There is also another possible interpretation: Chaucer may have intended to suggest the he-goat,\textsuperscript{31} thus juxtaposing the same two animals which occur in the description of the Pardoner in The General Prologue.\textsuperscript{32} Both the hare and the goat have a

\textsuperscript{29}PF, 195. See also Bo, IV, pr. 3, 115-118: "... and yif he be dredful and fleynge, and dredith thinges that he oughte nat to ben dredd, men schal holden hym lik to the hert." Chaucer may also have had in mind that "imbelles capreae sollicitusque lepus" are the animals hunted in the arena at the Floralia, the licentious celebrations in honor of the goddess Flora. See Ovid's Fasti, trans. Sir James George Frazer, Loeb ed. (London, 1951), p. 286. For evidence that Chaucer knew Ovid's Fasti, see E. F. Shannon, Chaucer and the Roman Poets (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), passim; John P. McCall, "Chaucer's May 3," MLN, LXXVI (1961), 201-205. The latter suggests that the significance Chaucer appears to attach to May 3 may be explained by reference to the Floralia.

\textsuperscript{30}S. I. Tucker, "Sir Thopas and the wild beasts," RES, X (1959), 54-56.

\textsuperscript{31}For the use of the word in this sense, see MillT, I 3387; "blowe the bukkes horn," and examples quoted in the Middle English Dictionary, ed. H. Kurath and S. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1952- ), B5, p. 1214.

\textsuperscript{32}Gen Prol, I, 684, 688.
reputation for lasciviousness. In the symbolism of the hunt, according to Martin, "les lièvres signifient les incontinentes." Among the scurrilous phrases given for the hare in a poem in a late thirteenth century manuscript is hare-serd, which the editor glosses as "copulating hare," adding that the hare in rut presents a very curious spectacle, hence the phrase "as mad as a March hare." Of the goat, Isidore remarks:

Hircus lascivum animal et petulcum et fervens semper ad coitum. Cuius oculi ob libidine in transversum aspiciunt, unde et nomen traxit.

The two animals then serve as appropriate symbols for a knight afflicted with love-longing rather than with derring-do, and Sir Thopas's "prikyng" becomes associated with conduct which, while appropriate to John in The Reeve's Tale, is most unbecoming in one "who was chaast and no lechour," especially since he displays similar abandon.

The hare in simile is another method Chaucer uses for the purpose of illustrating human behaviour. He may either employ a proverbial phrase or refer to habits ascribed to the hare.

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33 Cahier and Martin, op. cit., I, 123.


36 RvT, I, 4231. 37 Thop, VII, 745. 38 Ibid., 774.
The proverbial expression "as mad as a March hare," is suggested in *The Friar's Tale* when the Friar remarks:

For thogh this Somonour wood were as an hare,  
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare.  
*FrT*, III, 1327-1328.

Skeat observes that hares are wildest in March during the breeding season. 39 Emerson, quoting Turberville that the hare "is one of the most melancholike beastes that is," suggests that the idea in the proverb is connected with that of melancholy attributed to the hare. 40 But melancholy is not the quality the Friar is attributing to the Summoner, and *harlotrye* implies that *wood* in context is associated with the "woodnesse of lecherie," castigated by Trevisa. 41 The pun on *hare* and *harlotrye* reinforces the point. 42 What the Friar is saying is that even if the Summoner fornicated as much as a hare, he would not spare the details.

An effective use of a hare simile occurs in *The Shipman's Tale*:

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40 O. F. Emerson, "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," *RR*, XIII (1922), 147, n. 36.


"Nece," quod he, "it oghte ynough suffise
Fyne houres for to slepe upon a nyght,
But it were for an old appalled wight,
As been thise wedded men, that lye and dare
As in a fourme sit a wery hare,
Were al forstraught with houndes grete and smale."

ShipT, VII, 100-105.

Emerson remarks that the word *fourme* shows Chaucer's acquaintance with specific hunting terms. But its use cannot be taken as indicative of Chaucer's practical familiarity with the sport. Indeed, in view of the widespread use of hunting terms and the availability of treatises, the suggestion has been made that even the Gawain Poet was an armchair huntsman. Numerous instances of the word *fourme* are cited in the Middle English Dictionary, from 1290 onwards. The form (*fourme*) is a slight depression in the ground in which the hare lies, and the hare, having no definite home and no burrow, is said to be strongly attached to it. Daun John is correct if he is implying that the hare is on its form in the morning, for the hare

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43 O. F. Emerson, RR, XIII (1922), 145.


45 MED, F4, p. 770.

46 J. G. Wood, Animate Creation, Í (New York, 1885), 480-481.
searches for its food in the evening. He is also correct in referring to "houndes grete and smale," for limiers were never any distinct breed of dogs but were taken from various breeds and specially trained. Chaucer's image could refer to the dogs taking the hare in its form before it started, as sometimes happened, but it most probably applies to a situation similar to that described by Turberville:

I have also seen an Hare runne and stand up two houres before a kennell of houndes, and then she hath started and raysed an other freshe Hare out of her forme and set her selfe downe therin. In such a situation, the hare might well be described as "wery". Used by Daun John as an opening gambit for his early morning conversation, the image comparing married men to the hare gains significance when it is remembered that medieval writers often accuse the hare of lasciviousness. It is unlikely that the astute Monk has failed to notice the fact that the Merchant shut himself up with the accounts "til it was passed pryme," particularly when both he and the Merchant's wife are taking advantage of it to have a clandestine stroll in the garden. According to the time sequence given, the Merchant

48 The Master of Game, append., p. 235.
49 Ibid., p. 17.
51 See above, p. 92.
and the Monk have drunk and played for "a day or tweye," and on the third day the Merchant has remained in his counting house until past nine o'clock the next morning.\(^{52}\) The time the Merchant has recently spent with his wife must have been brief and Daun John knows it. But the Monk has the good wife upon the psycho-analyst's couch. The expressive hunting image conjures up the picture of an exhausted husband, hounded by his insatiable mate,\(^{53}\) — a conception of marital relations thoroughly appropriate to a cleric.\(^{54}\) By the oblique allusion, he prepares his accommodating companion for the blunter enquiry to follow, and is successful in eliciting information most satisfactory to him.

Two other apparently widespread beliefs concerning the hare may also have contributed to Chaucer's choice of image. The first concerns the eyesight of the hare. In his hunting treatise, Edward, Second Duke of York, repeating the idea expressed by Gaston de Foix, says: "she hath bad sight,"\(^{55}\) and the poem on the names of the hare refers to the hare as *purblinde*

\(^{52}\) *ShipT*, VII, 73-88.

\(^{53}\) Cf. *WBT*, III, 149-162.

\(^{54}\) See, for example, *Les Lamentations de Matheolus*, ed. A. -G. Van Hamel (Paris, 1892-1905), I, i, lines 460-462; ii, 1663-1696.

\(^{55}\) *The Master of Game*, p. 17.
and west-loker. The modern Welsh for hare, ygibddall, means "the purblind one." As far as his wife and his "deere cosyn" are concerned, the Merchant, metaphorically it seems, shares the hare's affliction, for his final request to his wife is only that in future she "na be namoore so large."

The second belief concerns the hare's lack of affection. Neither in unnatural or natural history is any claim made for the hare's affection towards it mate or its young. Quoting Archelaus, Pliny, who was widely read in the Middle Ages, says the hare reproduces equally well without mating. Edward, Second Duke of York, states that the hare will eat its offspring on occasion. According to some present-day naturalists, the father takes no interest in its young. By referring to the hare, then, the Monk may be expressing a blanket contempt for husbands as knowing nothing of love.

The idea of the hare's being ignorant of love or of the trials of those who experience true love also occurs in The

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56 Ross, op. cit., p. 350. The editor, p. 362, glosses west-loker as "the looker with bunged-up eyes," west being a dialectal word for sty.

57 Ibid., p. 361.

58 ShipT, VII, 431.


61 The Master of Game, pp. 21-22.

Knight's Tale when the Duke, having found Palamon and Arcite fighting and having ascertained the cause, suggests that "the beste game of alle" is

"That she for whom they han this jolitee
Kan hem therfore as muche thank as me.
She woot namoore of al this hoote fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!"

KnT, I, 1807-1810.

Neither the phrase, nor indeed scarcely any of the Duke's speech, is to be found in Boccaccio. There is also a variant reading of an hare instead of or an hare. Hinckley takes the former reading, saying that he suspects an allusion to some proverb, fable or bit of popular science with which he is unacquainted. Robinson takes the reading or, although he remarks that both reading and interpretation are doubtful and there may have been a proverb to the effect that the cuckoo knows little of the hare.

The reputation of the cuckoo hardly needs to be stressed. Pliny states that the young cuckoo in its alien nest eats other young and finally the mother bird. As early as Roman times, the bird became associated with unfaithfulness because of its

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64 Robinson, op. cit., p. 676.

practice of depositing its eggs in another bird's nest.\textsuperscript{66} There is also good evidence that the adult cuckoo destroys nests containing other birds or eats the eggs, and that the young cuckoo ejects its foster-brothers by dropping them over the side of the nest.\textsuperscript{67} In coupling this unnatural bird\textsuperscript{68} with the hare, as knowing nothing of love, Chaucer is making an implication which must have been intelligible to his audience.

Whichever reading is taken, and however the reference to the cuckoo and the hare is interpreted, the comparison contributes to the flippancy apparent in Theseus' speech. The lapse of the high style and the introduction of colloquialism are regarded by Muscatine as an indication of "the leavening, balancing element of common sense in Chaucer,"\textsuperscript{69} and Robinson observes that the humor, even flippancy of tone, is Chaucer's, not Boccaccio's.\textsuperscript{70} A similar bantering, ironic tone has been noted in the Eagle's description of love in \textit{The House of Fame}, II, 672-698, a passage in which a hare image also occurs:\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{66}Charles Swainson, \textit{The Folk Lore and Provincial Names of British Birds} (London, 1886), p. 121.


\textsuperscript{68}Cf. \textit{PF}, 358: "The cukkow ever unkynde."

\textsuperscript{69}Charles Muscatine, "Form, Texture and Meaning in Chaucer's Knight's Tale," \textit{PMLA}, LXV (1950), 924.

\textsuperscript{70}Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 676.

\end{flushleft}
For truste wel that thou shalt here,
When we be come there I seye,
Mo wonder thynges, dar I leye,
And of Loves folk moo tydynge,
Both sothe sawes and lesinges;
And moo loves newe begonne,
And long yserved loves wonne,
And moo loves casuely
That ben betyd, no man wot why,
But as a blynd man stert an hare.

HF, II, 672-681.

The last line contains a phrase which Skeat takes as proverbial, comparing it to two proverbs: "By chance a cripple may grip a hare," and "The hare starts when a man least expects it." 72 No one knows how casual love affairs begin, unless they begin in the same fortuitous way that a blind man, someone with no sight at all, can unintentionally start off a hare.

A further elliptical reference to the hare occurs in connection with Chaucer the pilgrim. In The Prologue to Sir Thopas the Host says:

"What man artow?" quod he;
"Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare,
For evere upon the ground I se thee stare."

Thop Prol, VII, 695-697.

Fynde an hare has been termed a hunting figure, 73 the implication being that Chaucer is looking on the ground in a searching manner. One critic, taking for evere to mean "steadily, fixedly at this moment," 74 considers "the Host simply states that at

72 Skeat, Early English Proverbs, p. 87.

73 Emerson, RR, XIII (1922), 150.

this time Chaucer is staring at the ground as if in search of a rabbit."  

Certainly *fynde an hare* is a technical term, and is used by Dame Berners and by Twiti. But the understanding is that dogs are used. Following Gaston de Foix, Edward, Second Duke of York, indicates the impossibility of detecting a hare by its excrements instead of by scent:

> The hare cannot be judged, either by the foot or by her fumes (excrements), for she always crotieth in one manner, except when she goeth in her love that hunters call ryding time, for then she crotieth her fumes more burnt (drier) and smaller, especially the male.

Only in the heavy winter snow, as *The Mourning of the Hare* shows, is it possible to track a hare by its steps:

> In wyntur in the depe snow  
> On eueri side the wil me trace  
> Be my steppys they wil me knowe  
> And seven me fro place to place.

Even the humble, horseless hunter on the misericord at Ely Church has his dogs with him. In order to regard the Host's

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76 *The Book of St. Albans*, sig. eiii; *La Vènerie de Twiti*, pp. 52-53.

77 See also Cockaine, *op. cit.*, sig. biii.

78 *The Master of Game*, pp. 16-17.

79 *Ancient Metrical Tales*, ed. Hartshorne, p. 166.

remark as a hunting figure, therefore, one must either highhandedly substitute a rabbit, which has a burrow and can be tracked, for the hare, or assume that the Host is referring to Chaucer himself as a limier looking for a hare.

Another explanation is possible when the hare is considered in terms of popular superstition. The author of Mandeville's Travels remarks that, according to some Christians, summe bestes han gode meetynge, that is to seye for to meete with hem first at morwe, and summe bestes wykkyde meetynge.81 When he places the hare in the second category, he is voicing a superstition which still prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century, not only in England but in parts of Europe and Russia as well as among Indians, Laplanders, Arabs and South African tribes.82 The first nine lines of the poem on the names of the hare state that a man who meets a hare "shal him neuere be bet" unless he puts on the ground what he carries and:

Blesce him wip his helbwe
And mid wel goed devosioun
He shall saien an oreisoun
In be worshipe of be hare
Penne mai he wel fare . . .

Then follow seventy-seven deprecatory terms, emphasizing that the hare is one who is "euelei met" — bad luck to meet.83 In


83Ross, op. cit., 350-351. On pp. 374-376 is a 14th cent. Welsh poem which shows a similar attitude towards the hare.
the Church, the superstition seems less common; Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of Bath and friend of Henry II and Queen Eleanor, advises:

Do not entangle yourself in the false opinion of those who fear to meet a hare. 84

An exemplum of Jacques de Vitry, relating how a hare ran across the path of a husband and wife and provoked a quarrel, calls the hare "pulcher et pinguis." 85 Nevertheless, it is in the Church that the superstition finds permanent expression; for among the reliefs on the south porch of the cathedral at Chartres is that of a warrior dropping his sword and running away from the timid animal. 86

Considered in terms of popular superstition, therefore, the phrase "Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare" may suggest that the expression on Chaucer's face is that of a man anticipating ill-luck. But Chaucer is also described as seeming "elvyssh by his contenance," 87 and the interpretation of the earlier passage is affected by the meaning given to elvyssh.


87 Thop Prol, VII, 703.
Elvyssh has been taken to mean "mischievous"\(^{88}\) or "otherworldly."\(^{89}\) One critic, apparently acquiring for himself some of the occult power frequently attributed to elves,\(^{90}\) suggests Chaucer has been hiding "a merry twinkle" in his eye. The purpose of both prologue and tale is to make the Host's pretensions as a critic "humorously apparent," and the glimpse of Chaucer here is "in no way inconsistent with the highly sociable and slyly ironic qualities one attributes to him from his appearance elsewhere."\(^{91}\) Another critic sees the description as referring to a mingling of pity, sympathy and religious feeling evident in Chaucer after hearing the tale of the Prioress.\(^{92}\)

But the early and medieval conception of elves hardly seems to warrant such favorable connotation. In Beowulf the elves are among the brood of Cain:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þanon untýdras ealle onwōcon,} \\
\text{eotenas ond ylfe onðorcñēas.}
\end{align*}
\]

\(111-112.\)

\(^{88}\)R. M. Lumiansky, op. cit., p. 319.

\(^{89}\)Robinson, op. cit., p. 736.


\(^{91}\)Lumiansky, op. cit., pp. 318-320.

\(^{92}\)Knott, op. cit., pp. 135-139.
They struggle for a long time against God and are punished. That there was hardly any distinction made between an elf and a devil can be deduced from the fact that in the Anglo-Saxon Leechdoms similar salves are given to ward off the machinations of both. Among the herbs recommended in both a salve against elves and a "lipe drenc" against a devil and dementedness, for example, are lupin, fennel, bishopwort and wormwood. Nine masses are to be sung against an elf, twelve against a devil.\textsuperscript{93} In medieval times, the reputation of the elf does not appear to improve. The belief that elves were cast out by God persists,\textsuperscript{94} and recipes against elves occur as late as 1450.\textsuperscript{95} The Middle English Dictionary under elf, defined as "a supernatural being having magical powers for good or evil; a spirit, fairy, goblin, incubus, succubus, or the like," gives no examples of a good elf, and under elve, defined as "an elf or fairy (of either sex)", cites references from only two works, Layamon's Brut and The Wars of Alexander, in which a favorable connotation is possible.\textsuperscript{96}

In The Miller's Tale, Chaucer uses elf in the pejorative sense in the spell:

\begin{quote}
I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes. \\
\textit{MillT, I, 3479.}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{94} See MED, El, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{95} Ein Mittelenglisches Medizinbuch, ed. F. Heinrich (Halle, 1896), p. 155.

\textsuperscript{96} MED, El, pp. 63, 72.
In *The Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, he applies the adjective *elvysshe* to alchemy, a craft which the Yeoman declares to be that of a fiend, and against God's will.

*Elvysshe*, then, in *The Prologue to Sir Thopas*, might well apply to the expression of a man staring on the ground as though expecting to see the animal of ill-omen. It may, however, have a further implication.

The *incubus* became firmly established as an article of learned faith throughout Western Europe as early as 1100, the Christian concept of demons being superimposed on the Teutonic belief in elves, trolls or hillmen who had intercourse with mortal women. In popular lore, as the *Leechdoms* indicate, the association between *incubus*, elf and evil spirit was earlier.

The *Wife of Bath*, implying that *incubi* have become scarce since the advent of the mendicant friar, equates the elf with the *incubus*, and the false letter in *The Man of Law's Tale* suggests that Constance is an *incuba*:

> The mooder was an elf, by aventure, Y-comen, by charmes, or by sorcerie. *MLT*, II, 754.

In *The Prologue to Sir Thopas*, the fact that the Host describes Chaucer as seeming *elvysshe*, after having already

97 *CYT*, VIII, 751, 842. 98 *CYT*, VIII, 984.  
suggested:

This were a popet in an arm t'enbrace
For any womman, smal and fair of face,

_Thop Prol_, VII, 701-702.

may mean he is comparing Chaucer to the *incubus*. The Host may even be making sly reference to the Prioress who has just been the centre of attention; for women's religious orders were particularly harassed by visitations from *incubi*. In connection with an *incubus*, the hare may have further significance; it is an animal associated with evil spirits, and can operate either as a familiar, or as a devil itself.

But the Host is "japing". He is addressing Chaucer with "murye wordes." The tale just told has been of White Magic, and has sobered the company. The Host jests with the whole group and then, professing to see in Chaucer's countenance an association with the Black Arts, demands a different kind of tale, a tale of mirth. Obligingly, Chaucer takes his hero to Elfland, a place with which, so the Host has implied, he should be familiar.

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104 W. G. Black, "The Hare in Folklore," *Folklore Journal*, I (1883), 87; Mabel Peacock, "The Folklore of Lincolnshire," *Folklore*, XII (1901), 172; for persistence of the belief in the devil as a hare, as late as 1813, see J. U. Powell, "Folklore Notes from South West Wiltshire," _ibid._, p. 74.


106 For an interpretation of "Thanne at erst" (*Thop Prol*, VII, 694) as "then and not sooner," "then and not until then," see J. P. Rippolo, "The Meaning of "at erst"", *MLN*, LXIII (1948), 365-371.
The examples already cited show how two direct references to the hare and two similes serve to illustrate human character; how, when the hare is used in simile with reference to the passion of love, the tone can be affected, and how, when a hare image is applied to a human attitude, the inference may be subtle and ambiguous. The brief reference to the hare in *The General Prologue*, line 684: "Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare" also reveals the man. When the complete portrait of the Pardoner is considered and the lore Chaucer is likely to have known about the hare is applied to the text, the image appears to have a specific implication.

In trying to solve the problems connected with the Pardoner, some critics tend to attach too much importance to conclusions based on what is hypothetically conceived of as Chaucer's world of learning, instead of on the work of an artist using materials from life. It has even been suggested, with specific reference to the Pardoner, that Chaucer is not concerned with verisimilitude:

> The truth of the matter is, Chaucer does not much concern himself with verisimilitude as we understand the term. He makes no serious effort to be true to life, when he characterizes his pilgrims. One and all, they are too good to be true.107

Yet the portrait of the Pardoner contains physical details as acute and meaningful as any given by Thucydides, an observer trained in the Hippocratic method, and they can be analyzed, in the light of modern knowledge, as profitably as can Thucydides' description of the Plague of Athens. Artistically, the portrait as a whole shows Chaucer at his most mature.

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The medieval man, because he had to reconcile the ideal world of
the abstract system with the imperfect world of life itself, saw
truth as double, simultaneously universal and specific, transcen­
dent and local. Chaucer, sharing this double vision of the
Gothic world, uses images drawn from actuality, yet having a sym­
abolic meaning. Intuitively, he selects those which have a time­
less significance, and achieves a unity of focus, rare in the
period. It is the imagery which illuminates the Pardoner's
secret.

To Professor Curry, however, illumination comes from
ancient and medieval writings and opinions. The Pardoner's wax­
yellow hair, smooth-hanging as a hank of flax, and apparently
spread in thin clusters about his shoulders, may be inter­
preted from the Anonymi de Physiognomonia liber Latinus as showing
"an impoverished blood, lack of virility, and effeminacy of mind;
and the sparser the hair, the more cunning and deceptive is the
man." Glaring eyes indicate "a man given to folly, a glutton,
a libertine, and a drunkard," according to Polemon, writing in
the second century A.D., and shamelessness, according to the
Middle English version of the Secreta Secretorum. The last
named work also declares that "thos that have the voyce hei, smale and swete and pleasaunt, bene neshe, and have lytell of
manhode, and i-likened to women." Such interpretations are

108 For discussion of ounces and colpons, see D. W.
Hendrickson, "The Pardoner's Hair - Abundant or Sparse?" MLN,
LXVI (1951), 328-329. The conclusion is that the hair is sparse.
interesting and may well indicate that Chaucer "is perfectly at home in the medical science of his time." But Curry proceeds further to arrange the details in a composite picture to give a eunuchus ex nativitate, citing as his authority, Polemon, who claims to have known one such man. Curry's conclusion is:

To Chaucer belongs the great honor of having combined in the person and tale of his Pardoner a complete psychological study of the mediaeval eunuchus ex nativitate and a mordant satire on the abuses practised in the church of his day.\(^{109}\)

That some sexual abnormality is present in the Pardoner, seems likely. The physical description and Chaucer's own observation suggest it and, in particular, the ashamed silence with which the Pardoner receives the Host's indelicate suggestion at the conclusion is contrary to the reaction of a normal man who would most likely reply with cheerful, boasting repartee. But Curry's conclusion is, as I will show, unsupported by the text. A more probable explanation of the Pardoner's secret is contained in the image of the hare.

One of the most widespread beliefs about the hare is that it is a hermaphrodite. This error appears in the work of

\(^{109}\)W. C. Curry, Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences (London, 1960), p. 64. For complete discussion see pp. 54-70.

\(^{110}\)Not only does Curry claim support from The Canterbury Tales but from The Tale of Beryn as well. See Curry, p. 68. I can find no evidence in The Tale of Beryn that Kit knows the Pardoner's weakness; she is merely outsmarting a despised and unwanted suitor.
writers of different periods and is said to have survived until the end of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{111} Aristotle does not record it, but the superstition appears in both Pliny \textsuperscript{112} and Aelian,\textsuperscript{113} and in the Gwentian code of north-east Wales, supposed to be of the eleventh century, the hare is said to be incapable of legal evaluation because it is male one month and female another.\textsuperscript{114} Twiti states: "At on tyme he is male, at ober tyme female,"\textsuperscript{115} and in common with Edward, Second Duke of York,\textsuperscript{116} he applies masculine and feminine pronouns indiscriminately. In the poem on the names of the hare, the word ballart occurs, and may be some allusion to the hare's reputed bisexuality, and in the fourteenth century Welsh poem, Ysgyfarnog, the hare is termed gwr-wreic: a hermaphrodite.\textsuperscript{117}

Chaucer, in common, so it seems from Curry's researches, with the medical authorities of his own age and earlier, knows little about sexual deviates. He recognizes an abnormality but is unable to define it more exactly than:

I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare. \textsuperscript{\textit{Gen Prol}}, I, 691

He knows the Pardoner cannot function as a male, but he appears

\textsuperscript{112}Pliny, \textit{op. cit.}, III, 152. \textsuperscript{113}Aelian, \textit{op. cit.}, III, 97.
\textsuperscript{114}Barrett-Hamilton, \textit{loc. cit.}
\textsuperscript{115}La Vènerie de Twiti, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{116}The Master of Game, p. 14. \textsuperscript{117}Ross, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 357.
to sense libido in him, which he could have even as a gelding. He feels, too, that the Pardoner is feminine and lascivious, and he therefore uses the term mare. 118 Chaucer has already come closer to the truth in associating the Pardoner with the hare and the goat, 119 both traditionally regarded as hermaphrodites 120 and as lascivious. He is certainly not presenting here a eunuchus ex nativitate, for contrary to the opinions of authorities cited by Curry, libido and potency are absent in the true eunuchoid. 121 Moreover, all true eunuchoids tend to be tall, often very tall, 122 and it seems unlikely that such a characteristic would pass unmentioned. In the composite picture, the reference to the hare touches off implications which are reinforced by other details: the seemingly high-pitched voice, the smooth, hairless face, the long hair instead of the shaven crown, 123 the concern with fashion. 124 The Pardoner,  

118 See Aelian, op. cit., I, 224; Jones, op. cit., p.245, for significance of mare.
119 Gen Prol, I, 688: "A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot."
122 Ibid., p. 521.
123 Hinckley, op. cit., p. 45, states that long hair was the fashion during the Middle Ages for all but the ecclesiastical orders. He adds: "The Pardoner was, presumably, a Dominican friar, and should, as a matter of discipline, have shaved his crown."
124 Gen Prol, I, 682: "Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;"
in fact, displays marked characteristics of a testicular pseudo-
hermaphrodite of the feminine type.\textsuperscript{125}

Such an interpretation reveals why the Host should
address him as "Thou beel amy."\textsuperscript{126} It explains his relation-
ship with the Summoner,\textsuperscript{127} a relationship hardly possible if he
is regarded as a \textit{eunuchus ex nativitate}, in view of absence of
\textit{libido}. It explains why he should claim to be contemplating
matrimony,\textsuperscript{128} and why he should boast of having "a joly wenche
in every toun."\textsuperscript{129} He is a sexual deviate, as the Host realizes,
but he also has the typical desire of the sexual deviate to con-
form to the sex in which he is reared, although physically he
may be unable to do so.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{125}Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine, p. 515. In Mandeville's Travels, I, 134, Hamelius glosses "folk pat ben
bothe man and womman" as hermaphrodites. However, Mandeville's
subsequent description is totally unclinical.

\textsuperscript{126}PardT Intro, VI, 318.

\textsuperscript{127}P. F. Baum, "Chaucer's Puns," \textit{PMLA}, LXXI (1956), 232, 
points out the obscene pun in \textit{burdon} and concludes "that these
two worthies were homosexuals." D. Biggins, "Chaucer's General
Prologue, A, 673," \textit{N & Q}, CCIV (1959), 435-436, elaborates on
Baum's suggestion that \textit{burdoun}, literally "staff", is also used
in the extended and figurative sense of "phallus". B. D. H. Mil-
ler, "Chaucer's General Prologue, A, 673: Further Evidence," 
\textit{N & Q}, CCV (1960), 404-406, points out that the figurative sense
is regularly attached to ME \textit{bourdon}: "staff," "lance," from
which ME \textit{burdoun} is derived, and that the joke would be clear to
those who understood French.

\textsuperscript{128}WB Prol, III, 166-168. \textsuperscript{129}Pard Prol, VI, 453.

\textsuperscript{130}D. J. West, \textit{Homosexuality} (Harmondsworth, Middlesex,
Much of the imagery used shows the Pardoner's obsession with his own abnormality. Even some of his own appurtenances, such as the round vernicle, the hymen-like fragments of veil and sail tend to suggest his preoccupation. In his own speech, vaginal symbols recur: "the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,"\textsuperscript{131} "the golet softe and swoote,"\textsuperscript{132} Calling on Paul for textual support, he reviles both the womb and the "stynking cod."\textsuperscript{133} In castigating the drunken man, he presents a feminine viewpoint:

O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,  
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace.  
\textsuperscript{PardT, VI, 551-552.}

The drunken man's strange cry, "Sampsoun, Sampsoun," given on two occasions,\textsuperscript{134} has been regarded as the imitation of the snoring of a drunkard.\textsuperscript{135} It may have a far greater significance. In Sampson's hair is the secret of his virility; in the Pardoner's flowing locks is the secret of his own femininity. The former is betrayed through lechery; the latter may be betrayed through drunkenness. The Pardoner's fear is suggested by the emphasis he places on the indiscretion of the drunken man:

\textsuperscript{131}PardT, VI, 517. \quad \textsuperscript{132}PardT, VI, 543.  
\textsuperscript{133}PardT, VI, 534. \quad \textsuperscript{134}PardT, VI, 554, 572.  
\textsuperscript{135}Hinckley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 173.
Thy tonge is lost, and all thyn honeste cure;  
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture  
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.  
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun  
He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.  

PardT, VI, 557-561.

His description of the Old Man, knocking with his staff at his mother's gate, longing to be let into his mother's womb, may even suggest the anguished realization of his own male impotency:

"Lo, how I vanyssche, flessh, and blood, and skyn!"

PardT, VI, 732.

The same frustration may be apparent in his reference to Lot. He castigates Lot for the drunkenness which led to his committing incest; he omits the fact that there were mitigating circumstances: that, according to Genesis xix, 31-35, the daughters were largely to blame because they deliberately made their father drunk in order to seduce him and bear children. The intensity of the Pardoner's condemnation may arise partly from the fact that Lot committed a sin which he is unable to commit himself.136

Two of his most vivid images allude to excretion.137 He is also preoccupied with images of food and drink,138 and even when speaking of the efficacy of his relics, apart from lechery, he appears to have ideas associated with liquid uppermost in his mind.139 His concern suggests that he could be

136PardT, VI, 485-487.  
137PardT, VI, 527, 535.  
139Pard Prol, VI, 352ff
suffering from hypospadias, a disability which may occur in the hermaphrodite.\textsuperscript{140} Again, the image of the hare has some significance, for it was considered an unclean beast by the Britons, according to Julius Caesar,\textsuperscript{141} and the prejudice is said still to be in force in the Isle of Man.\textsuperscript{142} In the Middle English poem on the names of the hare and the fourteenth century Welsh poem \textit{Ysgyfarnog}, the hare is called \textit{soillart} and \textit{budrog}, meaning "filthy."\textsuperscript{143} If the Pardoner did, indeed, suffer from such a disability, Chaucer would almost certainly not have been aware of its nature. But it is possible that the manifest results of the disability might have influenced Chaucer, even unconsciously, in his choice of image.

In applying the hare image to the Pardoner, Chaucer makes use of the resources of its folklore to achieve a brilliant revelation of character. Simple as the phrase referring

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine}, p. 515. In cases of hypospadias there is a congenital opening of the urethra on the under side of the penis. The malformation prevents free urinary flow and sometimes causes dribbling and soiling of the clothes. See also \textit{Textbook of Pediatrics}, ed. Waldo E. Nelson (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 1057: "Since the penis is usually rudimentary in severe cases, . . . the appearance of the external genitals simulates that of the female (pseudohermaphrodism)."

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Julius Caesar: De Bello Gallico}, ed. J. H. and W. F. Allen and H. P. Judson (Boston, 1895), V, 12.

\textsuperscript{142} Barrett-Hamilton, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 246.

\textsuperscript{143} Ross, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 357.

\textsuperscript{144} See further, appendix I, pp. 226-237, below.
to the hare is, being a comparison based on factual description, it is, paradoxically, Chaucer's most intricate image. It exists as pictorial visualization, but, far more important, it carries an implication which, when applied to the portrait of the Pardoner as it emerges from *The General Prologue*, his remarks to the Wife of Bath, and his own prologue and tale, illuminates his personality. Chaucer's other allusions to the hare also have, as has been demonstrated, many subtle connotations. He is able to draw from the world of the encyclopaedia, from folk beliefs and from nature to create images which have great significance when applied to the situation in context. In all the allusions, his purpose is unvaried. The hare, whether indicative of worldliness, timidity, lechery, physical exhaustion, ignorance of love, fortuitous love, or sexual deviation, serves to illustrate the infinite variety in human nature.
Although there have been two conflicting attitudes towards the dog from comparatively early times, Chaucer's images, except when they are non-committal, always reveal the dog in a single, uncompromising light. In adopting one set of conventional ideas rather than the other, Chaucer may, as will be shown later, have been influenced by personal feelings towards the dog. But a partial explanation for his choice emerges when the history of the symbolism of the dog and of the dog's position in everyday life is examined.

Among the Amrations, the so-called "predynastic" Egyptians, dating from about 5,000 B.C., the dog was apparently highly esteemed; at one Amration burial site, dogs have been found interred with their masters, presumably to guide them on their journey into the next world.¹ Later, when Pythagoras returned from Egypt to found a new sect in Greece and at Groton in southern Italy, he taught, with the Egyptian philosophers, that at death the soul entered that of various animals, and

whenever a favorite disciple died, he held a dog to the man's mouth to receive the departing spirit, maintaining that no animal could perpetuate a man's virtues better.\(^2\) By the Jews, on the other hand, the dog was regarded with abhorrence,\(^3\) possibly because Egyptian beliefs were contrary to Hebrew teaching.\(^4\) Among the Greeks the dog was an object both of admiration and of scorn; while Homer and Aristotle paid tribute to the dog's affection, fidelity, long memory and intelligence,\(^5\) \(κυ\nu\omega\nu\) was applied as a symbol of shamelessness to women and others,\(^6\) and its adjectives were also derogatory.\(^7\) Among the Romans the dog was commonly called \(sagax\), and the supernatural powers attributed to it caused it to be associated with many rites.\(^8\) The domestic animal came in for a long tribute from


\(^4\)Encycl. Brit., loc. cit.


\(^6\)The Iliad, Opera Omnia, ed. S. Clark, I-II (London, 1814), vi, 344, 356; viii, 423; xxi, 481.

\(^7\)The Iliad, I, ix, 373 (\(κυ\nu\varepsilon\varepsilon\nu\)); ibid., viii, 483; x, 503; The Odyssey, III, xi, 427 (\(κυ\nu\tau\varepsilon\rho\varepsilon\nu\)).

Pliny who cited many incidents of dogs sacrificing themselves for their loved ones, and similar stories were later given by Aelian who added his own cri de coeur: The Physiologus did not deal with the dog but the encyclopedists and later bestiarists paid tribute. Isidore, citing the curious etymology which is repeated elsewhere, stated:

Canis nomen Latinum Graecam etymologiam habere videtur; Graece enim κύων dicitur. Licet eum quidam a canore latratus appellatum existimem, eo quod insonat; unde et canere. Nihil autem sagacious canibus; plus enim sensus ceteris animalibus habent. Namque soli sua nomina recognoscunt; dominos suos diligunt; dominorum tecta defendunt; pro dominis suis se morti obiciunt; voluntarie cum domino ad praedam currunt; corpus domini sui etiam mortuum non reliquant. Quorum postremo naturae est extra homines esse non posse. In canibus duo sunt: aut fortitudo, aut velocitas.

Similar praise, with illustrative anecdotes and lore from proverb and fable added, was given by the compiler of a Latin bestiary of the twelfth century, and by the writer of

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De Bestiis et Aliis Rebus, a work incorrectly attributed to Hugo de S. Victore.

Conflicting attitudes towards the animal, substantiated perhaps by the contrast between the behaviour of the half-wild dog and that of the trained one, are noticeable in literature over a long period. Beothius, likening man to the various qualities of animals, stated, as translated by Chaucer:

and if he be felonows and withoute reste, and exercise his tonge to chidynges thow schalt likne hym to the hownd.

The emphasis on the undesirable characteristics of the dog, which was repeated in the fourteenth century Secreta Secretorum, was reinforced not only by Biblical reference but by Christian symbolism. In a fourteenth century manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, where each of the seven deadly sins is illustrated by a social type, a bird and an animal, the dog is a symbol of envy, together with the Friar and the sparrowhawk. In the Gesta Romanorum, which has been termed

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14 Pseudo-Hugo de S. Victore, op. cit., cols. 86-88. The accounts in White's bestiary and in "De Bestiis . . ." are very similar.

15 Bo, IV, pr. 3, 110.

16 Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum, ed. R. Steele, EETS, 74 (London, 1898), I, 104.


the most popular story-book of the Middle Ages, we have both concepts; in one story the dog's faithfulness is stressed while in another the dogs and nets of a poacher symbolize the vices. The dog's mystical powers, however, were associated with evil rather than with good; the Christian attitude seems to have turned the hounds of pagan gods and goddesses, such as those belonging to the Celtic huntress whom the Romans equated with Diana, into the familiars of witches and devils, giving rise to folklore beliefs, some of which persist into this century, in sinister, hunting ghost-hounds, in the devil appearing as a dog, and in dog-vampirism. There are a few

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20 Ibid., tales XII, CXLII.

21 Campbell, op. cit., p. 432.

22 According to E. Jones, On the Nightmare (New York, 1959), p. 115, the custom of killing a dog (or cat) which leaped over a coffin is still prevalent in the northern parts of Britain. For the custom, see W. Henderson, Notes on Folklore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders (London, 1879), p. 59.

23 Henderson, op. cit., p. 129.

24 Ibid., p. 277.

25 Jones, op. cit., pp. 115; 117.
instances of the dog appearing as a magic, tutelary animal, but in the saints' legends the dog rarely appears, and when it does, its presence is usually disturbing. Saints such as St. Dunstan and St. Waltheof were troubled by the devil appearing to them as a dog, and the mothers of Bernard, Dominic, and Vincent dreamed they had dogs in their wombs. Fierce hounds played an important part in the dream ride to hell, or in hell itself.

In Middle English literature, except in references to hunting, the dog is usually presented in an unfavorable light.

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29 Loomis, White Magic, p. 18.


The enemy is "an haeclene hund" in Layamon, and in the Ancren Wisse nuns are instructed how to deal with the hound of hell:

Forpi, mi leove suster, sone se þu eauer underyst bet tes dogge of hell cume snakerinde wip his blodi flehen of stinkende bohtes, ne li þu nawt stille . . .

A contemptuous attitude towards the dog is reflected in romances such as Havelok and King Horn, in many homilies, and, indeed, continues to be forcibly expressed in later literature.

While the derogatory opinion of the dog seems to stem mostly from the religious tradition, it may be partly indicative of the position of the dog in actual life. In medieval, in contrast to modern Britain, where not to love dogs is a sign of an ignoble nature, the dog, a familiar sight in field, city and home, had not yet come to be regarded in the same light as the sacred cow of India. It is true that the savage forest laws

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32 Layamon's Brut, ed. Sir F. Madden, II (London, 1884), 272, line 16623.


34 The Lay of Havelok the Dane, ed. W. W. Skeat, rev. K. Sisam (Oxford, 1915), p. 82, lines 2434-2435. The traitor Godard whom his enemies wish to flay is likened to "Þe þef þat men dos henge/ Or hund men shole in dike slenge."

35 King Horn, ed. J. R. Lumby, EETS,OS, 14 (London, 1866), lines 1465-1466. Saracens are called hounds. "We schulle þe hundes teche/ To speken vre speche."


instituted by Canute were modified in favor of lapdogs which could pass through a special dog gauge, seven by five inches, and the appearance of dogs on the tombs of their masters and, even more frequently, of their mistresses, suggests that they were highly prized for their loyalty and affection. In the fourteenth century in particular, brasses and sculptures were popular, and it seems that dogs were valued, not only in the hunt, as might be expected, but among the ladies. One lady was so fond of dogs that she disturbed the devotions of the nuns at Walton, and another brought twelve dogs to church at Langley.

38 Stuart, op. cit., pp. 95-111.

39 See Evans, op. cit., p. 89: "Christ trampling on a lion, an adder, or a dragon (Ps. xci, 13), is often used to indicate His triumph over the powers of hell. The same idea was intended to be expressed by sculpturing figures of deceased persons reclining on tombs with their feet resting on a lion, a dragon or a dog, which was likewise regarded as an incarnation of the evil principle, in conformity with the apostle's assertion, "For without are dogs." At a later period, the lion at the feet of a man symbolized manly strength and courage, and the dog at the feet of a woman signified undying love and fidelity. It was the substitution of the Aryan for the Semitic point of view that reversed the meaning of the symbolism."

40 See M. Davenport, The Book of Costume, I (New York, 1948), 198-215: fig. 553, the earliest English brass of a lady, Margaret, Lady de Camoys, at Trotton, Sussex, 1310; fig. 554, Lady de Creke, at Westley Waterless Church, 1325; fig. 558, Joan of Northwood, at Minster, Sheppey, 1330; fig. 586, Margaret de Walsokne, at St. Margaret's, Lynn Regis, 1349; fig. 597, Maude, Lady Cobham, at Cobham Church, Kent, 1370; fig. 598, Katherine, Lady Harsick, at Southacre, Norfolk, 1384; fig. 601, Lora de Saint Quintin, Bransburton Church, Yorks, 1397.


42 Ibid., pp. 306, 412.
Similar infatuations provided targets for satirical writers, preachers and others. Nevertheless, the contention that a tenderer attitude prevailed towards dogs in the Middle Ages than has sometimes developed since is hard to justify. Some idea of the attitude towards dogs can be gauged from the fact that a law existed, probably originating with the Normans and certainly in force during the reign of Henry I, which subjected all dogs found in the royal chases and forests, except those belonging to privileged persons, to be maimed by having the left claw cut from their feet, unless they were redeemed by a fine. In the villages and on the highways dogs roamed


44 See Owst, op. cit., p. 327, for Bromyard's sermon.

45 See The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, ed. T. Wright, EETS, OS, 33 (London, 1868), pp. 28-29, tale XX, for cautionary story of a lady who was fond of dogs instead of the starving poor.

46 White, op. cit., p. 64, n. 1. White praises The Master of Game for suggesting that a dog-boy should sleep permanently in the kennels in order to keep the hounds happy. The sentiment is, in fact, Gallic, being translated directly from Gaston Phoebus. Some would view with less favor than White apparently does the suggestion that a child of seven or eight years should be in the kennels night and day to keep the hounds from fighting and should be beaten for disobedience "until he dreads to fail." See text in The Master of Game, ed. Wm. A. and F. Baillie-Grohman (London, 1909), p. 124.

half wild. Their appearance was villainous, and rabies was a constant threat. Around the house, dogs were either mainly scavengers, admitted, so it is claimed, along with cats without restriction of number and probably tolerated with some measure of indifference; or favorite dogs, pampered in varying degrees. The fact that the steward may give the cat and dog a clout when driving them from his lord's bedroom, and that children at mealtime are requested to desist from scraping and clawing dogs, suggests that the animals, even in superior homes, sometimes came in for rough treatment. While a piece of plot ingenuity cannot be taken as evidence that dogs were in fact so treated, it might be noted that the writer of "Dame Siriz," a thirteenth century redaction of a widely circulated fabliau, did not feel constrained to modify the fact that a dog's eyes were daubed

48 See D. Hartley and M. M. Elliot, Life and Work of the People of England, I (London, 1928), plate 33e, where two large and lively dogs follow a traveller, one of them impudently trying to bite the traveller's staff.

49 See The Master of Game, p. 85.

50 T. Wright, A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England During the Middle Ages (London, 1863), p. 161. It might be noted, however, that the Gawain poet, despite his regard for detail, mentions no dogs either in Arthur's hall or in that of the Green Knight.

51 "John Russell's Boke of Nurture," Early English Meals and Manners, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS, OS, 32 (London, 1868), p. 66. Written in 1452, the work may be a touching up of an earlier version. See introd. p. lxix.

52 "The Boke of Curtasye," Early English Meals and Manners, p. 179.
with mustard to make it cry.\textsuperscript{53} Probably the statement in the thirteenth century \textit{De Proprietatibus Rerum} of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, as translated by Trevisa in 1397, reflects a common attitude:

Nothing is more besy and wittyer than an hound, for he hath more wit than other bestis. And houndes know theyre owne names, and love their maisters, and defend the houses of their maisters, and put themselfe wilfullye in peryll of deth for their maisters, and ren to take proies for theyr maisters. And houndes pursue the fote of proie by smel of blode, and love company of men, and maye nat be withoute men . . . Houndes have other proprites that ben not ful good, for houndes have contynuale Bolisme, that is immoderate appetyte . . . Also an hounde is wratheful and malycyous soo that, for to awreke hym selfe, he bytethe ofte the stoon that is thrown to hym, and bytethe the ston with gret wodness that he breketh his owne teethe and greveth not the stone, but his owne teethe full sore. Also he is gylefull and dysceyvable, and so ofte he fyckelythe and fawneth with his taylle on menne that passeth by the waye, as though he weere a frende; and bytethe them sore (yf they take none hede) bakwarde . . . Also he is covetous and glotonous . . . And though [the flies] bite and perce somtyme the houndes eares, yet for slouth he taketh no comforte and strength to chace and dryve them awaye, but unneth when they fie ayenst his face he snatcheth at them with his mouthe, and besiethe to bite them with his teethe. And at the laste the scabbed hounde is vyolently drawn out of the doungyl with a rope or with a whyp bounde abowt his necke, and is drowned in the ryver, or in some other water, and so endeth his wretched lyfe. And his skynne is not take of, nor his fleshe is not eate nor buryed, but left finally to flyes and to other dyvers wormes . . . Houndes that ben ordeyned to kepyng of houses sholde be closed and bounde in a derke place by daye, and soo they benne the stronger by nyght, and the more cruell ayenste theves.\textsuperscript{54}


While Bartholomew's attitude seems callous, it must be noted that in the latter part of the passage cited he is referring to the diseased animal and to the watchdog. He also gives both of the traditional concepts of the dog, disparate as they appear to be. The dog is praised for its industry, intelligence, fidelity, courage and hunting ability. It is castigated for its greed, viciousness and deceit.

Chaucer, however, uses conventional ideas of the dog which are wholly pejorative. Except when they are non-committal, his references are harsh, and when he uses a proverbial phrase or an image from a literary source, he frequently selects those with derogatory connotations. In simile or metaphor, the object to which the dog is compared is unpleasant. Yet he must have read the widely circulated stories illustrating the dog's faithfulness and courage. He was certainly aware, as his description of the Prioress shows, of the affection that might be lavished on the animal. The fact that he makes no reference to the dog's praiseworthy attributes may indicate that he has a personal dislike of the animal.

The dog in the hunt is mentioned several times in Chaucer, but the lack of detail suggests that he takes it for granted and has no special interest in describing its movements. Indeed, Chaucer's references to hunting as a whole are curiously brief, even though, as a member of a noble household, he must

\[55\text{Gen Prol, I, 146-149.} \]
have been very familiar with the sport. His treatment may
be based on the assumption that such a familiar pastime does
not require full description or it may reflect a recoil of the
cultured man of broad interests from the innumerable accounts
of hunting exploits to which he must have been subjected. It
is true that he depicts Theseus as a keen hunter, but there
is a certain derisive attitude in his account of the hunting
activities not only of Sir Thopas, but of the Monk, particularly
if we regard as puns _venerie_, _pryking_, and, for that matter,
even the hare. Chaucer has only one hunt in which he goes
through the motions from the uncoupling of the hounds to the
sounding of the _forloyn_, and when he has an opportunity to
describe a hunt from his source, he makes certain modifications

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56 Chaucer was appointed deputy Forester of North Pether-
ton in 1391, and the appointment was renewed in 1398. The extent
to which he actively discharged his duties, however, appears to
be unknown. See F. N. Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer
(Boston, 1957), xxiv. For the fullest discussion on the Pether-
ton Forestership, see Russell Krauss, "Chaucerian Problems:
Especially the Petherton Forestership and the Question of Thomas
a Forester was "an officer sworn to preserve the vert and venison
in the forest, and to attend upon the wild beasts within his
bailwick."

57 KnT, I, 1679-1682.

58 See P. F. Baum, "Chaucer's Puns," PMLA, LXXI (1956),
242.

59 Gen Prol, I, 191. See FrT, III, 1327-1328, for pun
on hare and harlotrye.

60 BD, 375-386.
but does not enlarge the scenes to any marked degree. In
Theseus' hunt in The Knight's Tale he includes the hounds given
by Boccaccio, and by introducing the hart, instead of fowls
and animals, and describing its movements, he makes the scene
more specific and actual, but the treatment is relatively brief:

And to the grove that stood ful faste by,
In which ther was an hert, as men hym tolde,
Duc Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
And to the launde he rideth hym ful right.
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye,
This duc wol han a cours at hym or tweye
With houndes swiche as that hym list comaunde.

KnT, I, 1688-1695.

In the description of the preparations for the hunt in the story
of Dido in The Legend of Good Women, by bringing the hounds into
the court, in contrast to Virgil's "Massylique ruunt equites et
odora canum vis," he medievalizes the scene and gives it focus:

Into the court the houndes been ybrought;
And upon coursers, swift as any thought,
Hire yonge knyghtes hoven al aboute,
And of hire women ek an huge route.

LGW, III, 1194-1197.

Instead of huntsmen waiting for Dido at the palace door, mounted
knights, women and dogs all hover about the queen. A similar
tendency to medievalize is seen in the description of the hunt

61 Teseida, ed. A. Roncaglia (Bari, 1941), V, 77.
62 Cf. Teseida, V, 78.
63 Opera, ed. T. L. Papillon, I (Oxford, 1882), The
Aeneid, IV, 132.
itself, where he uses the correct hunting term, "a herde of hertes," gives English hunting cries and omits Virgil's wild goats. But the scene is less descriptive than Virgil's, and Chaucer is not so anxious to anglicize it consistently as to omit the lion, nor does he hesitate to substitute a bear for a boar, apparently for the purposes of rhyme.

As might be expected, his various descriptions of the actions of dogs in the chase are in accordance with the practices of his age. In *The Franklyn's Tale*, by the magician's art, Aurelius sees a hundred harts "slayn with houndes," denoting the English practice, described in *The Master of Game*, of running down the deer with hounds; in *The Book of the Duchess*,

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65 *Aeneid*, IV, 152-153.

66 *LGW*, III, 1214-1215; *Aeneid*, IV, 158-159.


69 Op. cit., pp. 165-180. The chapter is not in Gaston de Foix. The hounds Chaucer refers to would be *reseeyours*, the heavy greyhounds which were slipped last and were capable of pulling down a big stag. See append. pp. 247-248.
the hounds, after being uncoupled and quickly pursuing the hart for a long time, overrun the scent:

The houndes had overshote hym alle,  
And were on a defaute yfalle.  
Therwyth the hunte wonder faste  
Blew a forloyn at the laste.  

BD, 383-386.

The *forloyn* is sounded in accordance with the correct custom. It is the signal that the stag has got away far ahead of the hounds or that the hounds have outdistanced some or all of the huntsmen. With regard to Theseus' hounds in *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer's phrase "han a cours . . . with houndes" is a further illustration of Chaucer's familiarity with specific hunting terms. But it is possible to overstress Chaucer's concern with hunting practices. In *The Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer states:

And as I lay thus, wonder lowde  
Me thoght I herde an hunte blowe  
T'assay hys horn, and for to knowe  
Whether hyt were clere or hors of soun.  
And I herde goynge, bothe up and doun,  
Men, hors, houndes, and other thyng;  
And al men speken of hyntyng.  

BD, 344-350.

It has been suggested that Chaucer, referring to "other thyng," was no doubt thinking of preparations such as those cited in the chapter entitled "how the assembly that men call gathering

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70 The Master of Game, p. 173.  
71 KnT, I, 1678, 1695.  
72 KnT, I, 1694-1695.  
73 Emerson, op. cit., p. 141.
should be made both winter and summer after the guise of beyond the sea" in *The Master of Game*. But a similar phrase occurs in Barbour's *Bruce* - "As hors or hund or other thing," where it refers not to hunting but to pillaging in battle, and it is possible that Chaucer is merely using a tag for the purposes of rhyme.

Of specific kinds of dogs, Chaucer mentions the alaunt, the greyhound, and the spaniel. The first is a strong, ferocious dog, supposed to have been brought to western Europe by a Caucasian tribe called Alains or Alani, who, in the fourth century, invaded Gaul and then Spain. During the Middle Ages the best alaunts were obtained from Spain. Gaston de Foix, living on the borders of Spain, gives a description which exactly tallies with that given in *Libro de la Monteria*, a fourteenth century treatise on hunting by Alfonso XI. The alaunt is probably related to the Great Dane. Chaucer's alaunts accompany Lygurge in *The Knight's Tale*:

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74 Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 116. The chapter referred to in *The Master of Game* is XXXIII, pp. 163ff.


76 See above, pp. 83-84, for commentary on *Gen. Prol*, I, 190.


78 Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 38
Aboute his chaar ther wenten white alauntz,
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leoun or the deer,
And folwed hym with mosel faste ybounde,
Colered of gold, and tourettes fyled rounde.

Chaucer's alaunts are white. According to Edward, Second Duke of York:

though there be alauntes of all hues, the true hue of a good alaunte, and that which is most common should be white with black spots about the ears, small eyes and white standing ears and sharp above.\(^{79}\)

There are three kinds of alaunts: \textit{alauntes gentle}, \textit{alauntes veutrères} and \textit{alauntes of the butcheries}.\(^{80}\) The large size of Chaucer's alaunts suggests that they are \textit{alauntes veutrères}, good for baiting the bull and for hunting the wild boar. All alaunts will hold any animal but the \textit{alauntes gentle} appear to be smaller than the \textit{alauntes veutrères}, and the \textit{alauntes of the butcheries} are used mainly by butchers to bring in cattle bought in the country.\(^{81}\) Since all types are vicious, the fact that Chaucer's alaunts wear muzzles is not significant. \textit{Colered} is a heraldic term,\(^{82}\) but while "colered of gold, and tourettes fyled round"\(^{83}\) is appropriate to the glittering pageantry of the general description of Lygurge, such details may have been derived from contemporary life. The collars of hunting dogs

\(^{79}\) The Master of Game, p. 116.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., pp. 116-118.  
\(^{81}\) Ibid., pp. 117-118.


\(^{83}\) KnT, I, 2152.
were often ornate and expensive. Edward, Second Duke of York, gives the impression that alaunts were not uncommon in England, for he adds to Gaston de Foix's account the fact that they were used in bull-baiting as well as in boar hunting. Chaucer describes the dogs in detail probably to fit in with the general brilliancy of the spectacle, rather than because they were unfamiliar to his audience.

Under the name greyhound a whole group of dogs was included in the Middle Ages, such as the large Irish wolfhound, Scottish deerhound and the smaller, more elegant Italian greyhound. The Scottish deerhound may have been used for pulling down deer, but for the Monk's hare the smaller, nervous harehound, described in France as petit levrier pour lièvre was probably used. Hounds of the greyhound group were not restricted to the kennels. They were the constant companions of their masters on journeys, in wars and at home. A Welsh proverb declared that a gentleman might be known "by his hawk, his horse and his greyhound," and by the laws of Canute the greyhound was the companion of a gentleman only and could not be kept by anyone of inferior rank.

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84 The Master of Game, append. pp. 218, 236.

85 Ibid., append. 216.


87 The Master of Game, append. p. 216.

88 Ibid., pp. 216-217.
In Chaucer's single reference to the spaniel, the idea of the hunting animal is applied to woman in pursuit of man:

And if she be foul, thou seist that she
coveiteth every man that she may se,
for as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe,
til that she fynde som man hire to chepe.

WB Prol, III, 265-268.

The Wife of Bath is giving a demonstration of the efficient way in which she copes with a complaining husband. The husband has apparently implied that the ugly woman is a nymphomaniac who solicits boldly until she meets with success. The question arises why an ugly woman should be compared to a spaniel. The demonstrative nature of the spaniel is, of course, well known. But since spaniels can be good hunters and are fighters and great barkers if taken among running hounds, the image may suggest predatory, aggressive and noisy qualities. Perhaps Chaucer still has the image in mind when he refers to the husband as a quail, in the envoy to The Clerk's Tale:

89 The idea appears to be traditional. See Caxton's Game and Playe of the Chesse, introd. W. E. A. Axon (London, 1883), p. 170: "Seneca sayth that the women that have evyll visages ben gladly not chaste."

90 See The Master of Game, p. 119. Cf. Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream, II, 1, 203-207. "I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius, The more you beat me, I will fawn on you. Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave, Unworthy as I am, to follow you."

91 The Master of Game, pp. 119-120.
Ne dreed hem nat, doth hem no reverence,
For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventure.
In jalousie I rede eek thou hym bynde,
And thou shalt make hym couche as doth a quaille.  
\textit{CIT, IV, 1201-1206.}

For Edward, Second Duke of York, states specifically of the spaniel:

And also when they be taught to be couchers, they be good to take partridges and quail with a net.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 120. See also \textit{The Fables of Aesop}, II, 298-299, where a young huntsman states that spaniels "are good for to serche and fynde partryches and quayles."}

Hunting terms having to do with dogs have a derogatory connotation when Chaucer uses them metaphorically. Of the Summoner in \textit{The Friar's Tale} Chaucer writes:

For in this world nys dogge for the bowe
That kan an hurt deer from an hool yknowe
Bet than this somnour knew a sly lecchour,
Or an avowtier, or a paramour.  
\textit{FrT, III, 1369-1372.}

A similar metaphor is applied to Damyan in \textit{The Merchant's Tale}. He goes to January:

\ldots as lowe
As evere dide a dogge for the bowe.  
\textit{MerchT, IV, 2013-2014.}

The dog referred to would be the greyhound, capable of pulling down the wounded deer in preparation for the kill. In the first example the metaphor appropriately illustrates the Summoner's ability to hunt down sinners in preparation for subsequent punishment by the archdeacon. In \textit{The Merchant's Tale} Damyan has just received a letter from May and has high hopes of cuckolding
the antlered stag, January. The metaphor suggests his eagerness and readiness. It is not continued further, but there may be an ironical hint of it in the later remark of the victim when he is unwittingly contributing towards the final consummation:

"Mighte I yow helpen with myn herte blood." MerchT, IV, 2347.

On the domestic scene, there are a number of references to dogs which have unpleasant connotations. The disreputable Friar indulges in puppy-like frolics; the widow of Cappaneus tells Theseus of Creon's decree that the dead shall be eaten by dogs; the aged January would prefer the most ignominious of deaths, that dogs should eat him, rather than that on his demise his property should pass to a stranger; Griselda says she was afraid that cruel hounds or some foul vermin had eaten her children; quick-tempered Goodelief, according to her husband, refers to the servants as dogs, and suggests he should kill them; the sinister beast of which Chauntecleer dreams is "lyk an hound," and Pertelote, diagnosing that Chauntecleer's dreams are the result of an excess of red choler, includes "whelpes grete and lyte" among the unpleasant items, arrows, fire with red flames, red biting beasts, and conflict, which appear in such dreams; "olde dotarde holours" are compared

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93 Gen Prol, I, 257.  
94 KnT, I, 947.  
95 MerchT, IV, 1438.  
96 C1T, IV, 1095.  
97 Mk Prol, VII, 1899.  
98 NPT, VII, 2900.  
99 NPT, VII, 2922-2932.
to dogs going through the gestures of urinating "when he comth by the roser or by othere beautees." None of the illustrations given above appear in any of the sources cited for the works. The *Teseida*, however, has a reference to animals eating the dead, but Chaucer in *The Knight's Tale* has substituted hounds. In general, the allusions give concreteness and also harshness to the world in which Chaucer places his characters. They may even imply a certain personal revulsion. In the frank simile in *The Parson's Tale* there emerges not only the intensity of the Parson's contempt for aging lechers but something more. The rosebush and "othere beautees" have an appropriateness with reference to women: they also suggest that Chaucer's conception of the dog is of an animal that defiles.

Where a sentimental attitude towards dogs is described, it seems to be accompanied by gentle ridicule. Of the Prioress we read:

Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde  
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel-breed.  
But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,  
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte;  
And al was conscience and tendre herte.  

*Gen Prol*, I, 146-150.

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101 *Teseida*, II, 31; *KnT*, I, 947.
Chaucer is no doubt well aware that nuns are forbidden to keep dogs. After his visitation to the three great nunneries at Romsey, Wherwell, and St. Mary's, Winchester, in 1387, Bishop Wykeham issued an injunction forbidding nuns to bring birds, rabbits and hounds to church and further stated:

Item - whereas, through hunting-dogs and other hounds abiding within your monastic precincts, the alms that should be given to the poor are devoured, and the church and cloister and other places set apart for divine and secular service are fouly defiled, contrary to all honesty - and whereas, through their inordinate noise, divine service is frequently troubled - therefore we strictly command and enjoin you, Lady Abbess, that you remove these dogs altogether, and that you suffer them never henceforth nor any other such hounds, to abide within the precincts of your nunnery.

The "smale houndes" are presumably lapdogs, popular with ladies in secular life and, it seems, with romantic young ladies in particular. An illustration of the period shows a courting couple on horseback. The lady is carrying a little dog, and in her black gown and white wimple she looks very much like the Prioress in the Ellesmere illustration. The lapdogs, in addition to the fluted wimple, the exposed forehead and the brooch, may indicate not only the Prioress's disobedience and sentimentality but also her secret romantic longings. For the Prioress is still a comparatively young woman, and her dainty

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103 Cited by G. G. Coulton, op. cit., p. 397.

104 See Hartley and Elliot, op. cit., I, plate 18.

105 Sister Mary Madeleva, A Lost Language and Other Essays on Chaucer (New York, 1951), p. 46, finds the Prioress is a "cheerful dignified, kindly woman of fifty years." Crying over mice and dogs suggests neither cheerfulness nor dignity, and a soft, red mouth and "fair forheed" seems appropriate to a younger woman.
manners, appearance and conduct show a concern with feminine trivialities which have no place in monastic life. The Rule of St. Benedict stresses the great responsibilities of the Prioress:

A Prioress aw for to be
Principall in gude degre
Both in ðe abba and withoute, 323-325.

and far from being distressed about the chastising of her dogs, the Prioress should be concerned, as is specifically stated in The Rule, with chastising and controlling her sisters.\textsuperscript{106} Since The Rule also enjoins the Prioress to feed the poor, \textsuperscript{107} there is irony in the fact that Chaucer's Prioress can give the finest food to her dogs and yet, at the same time, have it said of her that "al was conscience (sensitiveness) and tendre herte."

When Chaucer draws on his sources for references to dogs, they are usually of two kinds: those in which the unpleasant characteristics of dogs are likened to human failings, and those in which dogs are associated with ideas of violence. The proverbial expression of the dog returning to its vomit is used in the Parson's fierce denunciation of sinners, anticipating an equally revolting image in the next sentence:

\begin{quote}
but for youre synne ye been woxen thral, and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaundre of hooly chirche, and foode of the fälse serpent; perpetueel matere of the fir of helle; and yet moore foul and abhomynable, for ye trespassen so ofte
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 105.
tyme as dooth the hound that retourneth to eten his spewyng. And yet be ye fouler for youre lange continuyn in synne and youre synful usage, for which ye be roten in youre synne, as a beest in his dong. 

\textit{ParsT, X, 137-139.}

The use of the proverb to indicate the way in which man repeatedly sins is widespread, and its appearance in \textit{The Parson's Tale} is appropriate. Together with other illustrations, however, it suggests that Chaucer, when using sources, is drawn to unpleasant images connected with the dog. In \textit{The Knight's Tale}, Arcite, commenting on the dispute between Palamon and himself over Emily, implies that the lovers can be compared to dogs in respect to quarrelsomeness and stupidity:

\begin{quote}
We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon; 
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon. 
Ther cam a kyte, whil that they were so wrothe, 
And baar awey the boon betwixe hem bothe. 

\textit{KnT, I, 1177-1180.}
\end{quote}

Here Chaucer goes outside his immediate source to draw upon a fable closely approximating to Aesop's "The Lion and the Bear."

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Prov. xxvi, 11; II Peter, ii, 22; Pseudo-Hugo de S. Victore, \textit{op. cit.}, col. 87; Rom, 7285.}
\item See \textit{ParsT, X, 907}, where, following the \textit{Tractatus de Viciis}, as cited by K. O. Petersen, \textit{The Sources of the Parson's Tale} (Boston, 1901), p. 76, the sin of incest is likened to the habit of dogs; \textit{SecN Prol, VIII, 60}, where the speaker, abasing herself as a "flemed wrecche" alludes to Matt. xv, 27, and presents the dog as an unworthy creature. A reference to Cerberus also occurs in \textit{Tr, I, 859}. It is interesting to note that the two references to Cerberus by Chaucer are the only ones cited in the \textit{Middle English Dictionary}, ed. H. Kurath and S. M. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1952- ), \textit{CI}, p. 120.
\end{enumerate}
Although the thieving nature of the kite is often acknowledged by natural historians and others, the actual source of Chaucer's version is not known. The homely image is not particularly suited to the serious knight nor even to Arcite's immediate argument that since he and Palamon are both in prison they are not likely to be successful with Emily. In reducing the triangle of two love-sick knights and the fair Emily to a quarrel of two dogs over a bone, the simile anticipates the flippant attitude towards romantic love expressed by Theseus later. Also in The Knight's Tale is the story of Actaeon who, having been turned into a stag by Diana, is subsequently eaten by dogs, a story not described in his immediate source but introduced from Ovid. In Boccaccio, Actaeon is mentioned in Emilia's orazione to Diana but there is no reference to dogs.

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110 Pliny, op. cit., III, 310; Aelian, op. cit., I, 146; Both writers maintain that the kite, though rapacious, will not steal holy offerings. Jacques de Vitry, on the other hand, has an exemplum in which the kite polluted and stole the sacrifices of the gods. For text, see The Exempla of Jacques de Vitry, ed. T. F. Crane (London, 1890), p. 16.

111 Robinson, op. cit., p. 774.


113 KNT, I, 1785-1814.

114 KNT, I, 2065-2068


116 Teseida, VII, 79.
Further images of violence occur in The Tale of Melibee. In one image, given by Prudence when advising her husband not to underestimate his enemies, Chaucer's source, Le Livre de Mellibee et Prudence, has "le chien, qui n'est pas moult grant, retien bien le sanglier," whereas Chaucer has "an hound wol holde the wilde boor." By omitting the reference to size, Chaucer robs the maxim of some of its force. He may be thinking of the great alaunts, usually used to hold the boar. In another image, Chaucer closely follows his source in likening the meddler to the man who takes a strange dog by the ears and is subsequently bitten.

Of two proverbial expressions connected with the dog, one presents an image of flagellation, the other hints at the potential violence of the dog. The falcon in The Squire's Tale says to the sympathetic Canacee:

"But for noon hope for to fare the bet,  
But for to obeye unto youre herte free,  
And for to maken othere be war by me,  
As by the whelp chasted is the leon,  
Right for that cause and that conclusion,  
Whil that I have a leyser and a space,  
Myn harm I wol confessen er I pace."

_SqT, V, 488-494._


118 See above, p. 134.

119 _Mel, VII, 1541; cf. Sources and Analogues, p. 599.
Its sententiousness is not particularly suited to the falcon nor to the teller of the tale. Its origin may be either factual or literary; a thirteenth-century illustration shows a lion chained to a stake and a trainer with dogs and a whip. The accompanying text indicates that the trainer beats the dog to intimidate the lion. But the expression also has long literary antecedents and appears to have become proverbial in Latin, French and English by Chaucer’s day.

The second proverb occurs in *Troilus and Criseyde*. It is admirably suited to the character of the person who cites it. Its use and application illustrate Chaucer’s art at its most mature:

> Quod tho Criseyde, "Lat me som wight calle!"  
> "I! God forbede that it sholde falle,"  
> Quod Pandarus, "that ye swich folye wroughte!"  
> They myghte demen thyng they nevere er thoughte.

> "It is nought good a slepyng hound to wake,  
> Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne.  
> Youre woomen slepen alle, I undertake,  
> So that, for hem, the hous men myghte myne,  
> And slepen wollen til the sonne shyne.  
> And whan my tale brought is to an ende,  
> Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende."

*Tr*, III, 760-770

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120 See C. S. Brown Jr., and R. H. West, "'As by the whelp chastised is the leon'," *MLN*, LV (1940), 209-210.

121 See G. Frank’s reply to Brown and West, *MLN*, LV (1940), 481. The saying’s literary antecedents were also pointed out earlier by J. S. P. Tatlock, "Chaucer’s Whelp and Lion," *MLN*, XXXVIII (1923), 506-507. Its use in a sermon of Jacobus de Voragine was remarked upon by J. L. Lowes, "'As by the whelp chasted is the leoun'," *Archiv*. CXXIV (1910), 132.
There is an unusual amount of aphorisms, "ensaumples" and other proverbial material in *Troilus and Criseyde*, which is not found in *Il Filostrato*, and, apart from the narrator, Pandarus is the main user of such material. The use of the proverb in the passage cited is psychologically very astute. Pandarus' arrival in Criseyde's bedroom via the trap door makes Criseyde uneasy and she wants to call one of her companions, the custodians of her honor and reputation. By drawing upon the wisdom of the ages, Pandarus is able to make her sensible suggestion seem like folly, implying that her sleeping attendants are not friendly watchdogs but hounds which attack when wakened. In a brief phrase, he conjures up the world of which Criseyde is always afraid, and, not surprisingly, successfully silences her.

The examples cited above suggest that, for Chaucer, the image of the dog had unpleasant connotations. It seems possible that, while Chaucer may have been influenced by the tradition which viewed the dog unfavorably, he was also affected by a personal feeling towards the dog. The fact that Chaucer,

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in *The Knight's Tale*, omits Boccaccio's passing praise of the dog, is probably due to exigencies of style. He is making use of the rhetorical device of *occupatio* and he introduces a lightness of tone not unsuited to a romance. Two further allusions, however, appear to support my contention.

That the dog to Chaucer can be equated with one of the most rapacious of animals is indicated by a reference in *The Parson's Tale*. In likening those who condone the wickedness of their menials to dogs following carrion, he substitutes dogs for wolves in his probable source, the *Tractatus de Viciis*. Even more illuminating is Chaucer's reference to the dog in *The Book of the Duchess*, where his most detailed description of the animal occurs:

> And as I wente, ther cam by mee  
> A whelp, that fauned me as I stood,  
> That hadde yfolowed, and koude no good.  
> Hyt com and crepte to me as lowe  
> Ryght as hyt hadde me yknowe,  
> Helde doun hys hed and joyned hys eres,  
> And leyde al smothe doun hys heres.  
> I wolde have kaughte hyt, and anoon  
> Hyt fledde, and was fro me goon.  

BD, 388-396.

125 *KnT*, I, 2204-2205: "What haukes sitten on the perche above,/ What houndes liggen on the floor adoun."

126 *Teseida*, VI, 8: "astor, falconi e can di gran prodez/ usavano e diletto."

127 This method of abbreviation enables Chaucer to dismiss the pageantry in a few lines and avoid Boccaccio's grand manner. For general discussion of Chaucer's rhetorical figures, see J. M. Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, XII (1926), 95-113.

128 *ParSt*, X, 441.

129 For text see Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
It is sometimes assumed that in this scene Chaucer has consciously depicted a sympathetic relationship between the Dreamer and the dog.\footnote{130} There is no definite evidence, however, to suggest that such was Chaucer's intention. The term "the little dog" or "the little puppy"\footnote{131} is in itself misleading. Chaucer does not use the diminutive anywhere in the passage, and in The Nun's Priest's Tale Pertelote's description of whelps which may appear in dreams indicates that they may be large as well as small.\footnote{132} Moreover, although Chaucer states that he intended to catch the whelp, he does not, as has been inferred, indicate that he wished to take it in his arms.\footnote{133} His intention may well have been to hold the dog by its collar. The motive for his action seems to be practical. Skeat, in explaining the line "I was go walked fro my tree,"\footnote{134} states that "Chaucer dreamed

\footnote{130} See E. T. Donaldson, Chaucer's Poetry (New York, 1958), p. 952: "The chief of several agents that brings the Dreamer to the Knight's aid is a little dog, perhaps to us the most pleasing symbol of the sympathy that pervades Chaucer's dream world: our instinctive reaction to the bewildered puppy is, like the Dreamer's, a release of affection, an opening of the heart." Cf. Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer (Baltimore, 1951), pp. 32-33: "He also gave to the creature the charm and the appeal which very young things have. The little beast became interesting in its own right."


\footnote{132} NPT, VII, 2932.

\footnote{133} Kittredge, Chaucer and his Poetry, p. 69.

\footnote{134} BD, 387.
he was one of the men posted to watch which way the hart went, and to keep in the hounds." Emerson objects that the task would be too menial for Chaucer but nevertheless considers Chaucer's intention would be to return the hound, "who koude no good," to the huntsmen. The description of the dog's behaviour provides no conclusive evidence that Chaucer found it endearing. It does not behave like the little dog in Machaut's Dit du Roy de Behaingne, which faithfully follows the mourning lady, or like the amiable lion in the Dit dou Lyon, which submits to petting. Whelp is used elsewhere by Chaucer in a pejorative sense, and while faun may be used in a favorable sense in Middle English, it can also mean "to court favor by cringing, flattery, or the like," and is so used by Trevisa in his

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135 Skeat, op. cit., I, 474.

136 See Robinson, op. cit., p. 755, who interprets it as "did not know any good or advantage; hence, knew not what to do." The idiom also occurs in ML Epil, III, 1169: "can moche good," meaning "to be capable or competent, to know one's profit or advantage."

137 Emerson, op. cit., p. 134.

138 Gen Prol. I, 257; NPT, VII, 2932. The only other two occurrences of whelp (dog) in Chaucer's works are: SqT, V, 491: "As by the whelp chasted is the leon," and SecNT, VIII, 59-61: "Thynk on the womman Cananee, that sayde/ That whelpes eten somme of the crommes alle/That from hir lorde's table been yfalle."

139 MED, Fl, pp. 424-425. Shakespeare's references to fawning dogs and their unpleasant connotations have been pointed out by Caroline Spurgeon and others. E. A. Armstrong, Shakespeare's Imagination (London, 1946), p. 155, concludes: "Shakespeare detested dogs, as any reader who cares to look up his references to them can easily verify."
translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' description of the dog. Although the whelp appears docile, docility was widely acknowledged to be a deceptive trait in the dog,\textsuperscript{141} and Chaucer shows elsewhere that he is aware of the fate of the meddler who takes a strange dog by the ears.\textsuperscript{142}

I suggest that the significance of the relationship between the narrator and the whelp can only be fully understood in its dream setting, and that a sentimental interpretation of the scene cannot take into account the remarkable way in which genuine features of a dream have been superimposed on literary conventions. Chaucer may have had the poems of Machaut in mind,\textsuperscript{143} and he clearly uses the dog as a convenient transitional device.\textsuperscript{144} At the same time, however, he is recording, perhaps unconsciously, the reactions which he might have had in

\textsuperscript{140}See above, p. 127.


\textsuperscript{142}Mel, VII, 1541.


\textsuperscript{144}Since Chaucer signally fails to make use of the long tradition of the dog's faithfulness and affection, he is unlikely to be using the whelp here as a symbol of marital fidelity. J. M. Steadman, "Chaucer's 'Whelp': A Symbol of Marital Fidelity?" N&Q, CCl (1956), 374-375, considers that the whelp, as a symbol of fidelity, might represent the poet's own loyalty to the deceased duchess and to John of Gaunt in his grief, or John of Gaunt's loyalty to his dead wife or Blanche's \textit{fides uxoria} as evinced in
a real dream. If, as I have suggested elsewhere, the room, the streaming rays of the sun, the participation in a ghostly hunt, presided over by a legendary figure, and the landscape, are indicative of the anxiety-erotic dream, then the action which Chaucer subsequently attributes to himself in the dream appears to be psychologically accurate. His pursuit of the dog is an example of the process of dream reversal: he is doing the opposite of what he would have done in actual life.

If my interpretation is correct, the meaning of the whelp in The Book of the Duchess is consistent with Chaucer's fundamental attitude towards the dog. Used non-figuratively, the references to the dog in the hunt or in daily life are either non-committal or, for example, in the allusions to dogs eating the dead, unpleasant. Figuratively, however, they evoke a whole series of distasteful and often violent images. The most forceful of these are associated with sexual activity: the Friar

the course of her married life. He supports his suggestion by citing exempla of dogs' loyalty, possibly known to Chaucer, and by referring to the effigies of dogs on the tombs of their mistresses.

\[145\text{See below, appendix III, pp. 246-247.}\]

\[146\text{BD, 321ff.}\]

\[147\text{BD, 336-338.}\]

\[148\text{BD, 344ff.}\]

\[149\text{BD, 368.}\]

\[150\text{BD, 397-433.}\]

indulging in unseemly dalliance; the Summoner, a fornicator himself, hunting sexual offenders; Damian, behaving obsequiously to the husband he intends to cuckold; the ugle female soliciting the male; the insatiable wife making her husband distracted; lechers who have become impotent through age, are all compared to dogs. Even romantic love is reduced or rendered unpleasant in the instances cited in The Knight's Tale and The Squire's Tale when the image of the dog is used. The dog also serves as an epithet for menials who should be killed; it returns to its vomit like sinners continuing in wickedness; it appears in bad dreams; servants are like sleeping dogs, harmless, so it is implied, only as long as they are asleep. If Chaucer had ignored the tradition favorable to the dog, he seems to have supplemented the other tradition in such a way as to suggest that the animal has become a private symbol to him. The meaning of the symbol becomes even clearer when, to the evidence already cited, we note that in one rendering from a source, Chaucer appears to equate the dog with the wolf, an animal which, even by the bestiarists as well as by present day psychiatrists, has been interpreted as a symbol of sexual aggression. He

\[152\text{ShipT, VII, 103-105. For commentary, see above, pp. 94-97.}\n\[153\text{ParsT, X, 441.}\n\[154\text{See below, p. 180.}\n\[155\text{Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language (New York, 1951), pp. 235-241.}\]
associates the animal with fornication and regards it with a feeling of revulsion. In *The Book of the Duchess* his reaction is such as might occur in a genuine dream. If one accepts the theory that Chaucer's eight years' sickness is not a poetic fiction¹⁵⁶ and notes that the dream itself, with the introduction of the hunt, the inconsequential details and quickness of pace, has features of the *angstvolle Traumfahrt* caused, so psychologists state, by frustration,¹⁵⁷ then the attraction and repulsion exhibited in the episode of the whelp may be explained. The whelp in the dream represents sexual licence, simultaneously distasteful and desirable to Chaucer, and ultimately unattainable.


CHAPTER V

THE HORSE

There are more than one hundred and fifty references to the horse in Chaucer's works, and there is one incomplete story dealing with a legendary magic horse. Most of the references can be divided into three groups: those, mainly brief, having little or no figurative associations; those using proverbial expression or fable for the purposes of illustrative comparison; and those exploring symbolically at either conscious or unconscious levels some of the various attributes of the horse which have exercised the human imagination from earliest times.

The bulk of references is in the first group. Here Chaucer's attitude is realistic and detached. He makes no allusion to the horse's intelligence and loyalty, the qualities repeatedly cited in the accounts of Pliny and others.¹ If he describes a scene in which horses struggle with a cartload of hay in a slough, his concern is not for the horses but for the

reaction of the owner and its effect on the action.\(^2\) If he follows a source, he rarely shows any inclination to enlarge substantially on it.\(^3\) In *The Parson's Tale* he even repeats traditional lore about the animal, which his own observation should prompt him to query.\(^4\) He mentions the horse primarily as an essential feature of daily life at home, on the road or in the hunting field, assuming a knowledge of horses on the part of the audience. That he obviously knows what constitutes a good horse is evident from his description of the brass steed in *The Squire's Tale*:

\(^2\)FrT, III, 1539ff.


\(^4\)ParsT, X, 815. In a passage for which there is no correspondance in his sources, Chaucer compares the man of "fool-largesse" to "an hors that seketh rather to drynken drovy or trouble water than for to drynken water of the clere welle." Aristotle states that the horse will never drink from a stream until he has trampled it into a turbid condition. See The Works of Aristotle, ed. J. A. Smith and W. D. Ross, IV (Oxford, 1910), 595b, 30. Aristotle claims that camels also drink muddy water. In the bestiaries the camel but not the horse muddies the water in order to drink. See T. H. White, *The Bestiary* (New York, 1960), p. 80; McCulloch, op. cit., p. 102.
Greet was the prees that swarmeth to and fro
To gauren on this hors that stondeth so;
For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
So wel proporcioned for to been strong,
Right as it were a steede of Lumbardye;
Therwith so horsly, and so quyk of ye,
As it a gentil Poillezys courser were.
For certes, fro his tayl unto his ere,
Nature ne art ye koude hym nat amende
In no degree, as al the peple wende.  

*SqT*, V, 189-198.

He also shows familiarity with the various kinds and names of horses. But the most significant references in the first group are those which illustrate some particular aspect of man, and even the passage cited above may indicate that the Squire's taste in horses, like his taste in dress, is more pretentious than his father's. Some of the horses of the pilgrims in *The General Prologue* indicate social status or character of their riders. The horses of the "parfit gentil knyght," for example, are in keeping with his character:

His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.  

*Gen Prol*, I, 74.

The ascetic Clerk, who is not sufficiently worldly to eke out his income through secular employment, has a horse as lean as a rake.  


6 *Gen Prol*, I, 287.
rides an ungainly nag, presumably the best he could hire. On the journey itself, an evaluation of the horse as a status symbol provokes a patronizing remark from the Host:

Thanne spak oure Hoost with rude speche and boold, And seyde unto the Nonnes Preest anon, "Com neer, thou preest, com hyder, thou sir John! Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertes glade. Be blithe, though thou ryde upon a jade. What thoght thyng hors be bothe foul and lene?"

NP Prol, VII, 2808-2813.

A close scrutiny of the horses of the Canon and his Yeoman yield clues suggesting that the riders' haste has been too excessive to have been inspired merely by a desire to join "this myrie compaignye." In The Parson's Tale the condemnation of those who possess too many fine horses, or decorate them lavishly, not only places the Parson in the long tradition of homilists who make similar observations, but is a critical reflection

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7 Gen Prol, I, 390. See appendix below, p. 240, under Rouncy.

8 CY Prol, VIII, 559-586.

9 ParsT, X, 432-434.

10 See K. O. Petersen, The Sources of the Parson's Tale (Boston, 1901), p. 39, for a similar passage in Peraldus' Tractatus de Viciis. See also G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 250, 283. The passage from Zechariah, x, 5, which the Parson uses to give force to his argument, does not, it might be noted, contain any reference to fine or lavishly decorated horses.
on some of the company.

In the second group, Chaucer's use of proverb or fable for the purpose of comparison is usually brief and apt. The description of the Miller in The Reeve's Tale,

This millere hath so wisely bibbed ale
That as an hors he fhorteth in his sleep,

apparently makes use of a proverbial expression. Here the allusion to the horse emphasizes the sexual power traditionally associated with a miller, and stressed earlier in the tale in the description of the Miller's weapons.

11 Criticism of the Monk may be implied. Similar homiletic condemnations referring to worldly prelates often single out features emphasized in Chaucer's portrait of the Monk. See Owst, op. cit., p. 283; T. Arnold, Select English Works of John Wyclif (Oxford, 1869-71), III, 519-520, where the "worldly preest . . . with fatte hors and jolye and gay sadeles, and bridelis ryngyne be the weye, and himself in costly clothes and pelure," is condemned. The Merchant may also have had an elaborate saddle. Cf. Political Poems and Songs, ed. T. Wright, Rolls Series (London, 1859-61), I, 307: "That high on horse willeth ride/ In glitterande gold of great array."


13 See E. Jones, On the Nightmare (New York, 1959), p. 281. See also George Fenwick Jones, "Chaucer and the Medieval Miller," MLQ, XVI (1955), 3-15, who shows that by tradition the medieval miller was assigned unpleasant characteristics and was, in literature, often given a red beard as a symbol of greed and lechery.

14 RVT, I, 3929, 3930, 3931, 3933, 3960. Chaucer may also have had another reason for emphasizing the Miller's weapons. G. F. Jones, op. cit., p. 7, states that millers were originally serfs among the Romans and Teutons and, as such, were prohibited from bearing arms. Even in medieval times, they were sometimes prevented from carrying arms.
A French analogue contains no reference to a horse, although it describes the miller as snoring loudly:

Adont se couche et ronfle fort
Icel mouner et tost s'endort.\(^{15}\)

*Fnorteth* is appropriate in connection with the Miller. The word applies to the snorting of the horse,\(^{16}\) and in many instances in folklore snorting indicates the horse's desire to copulate.\(^{17}\) In the same tale occurs Chaucer's one allusion to an animal fable in which the horse is a protagonist. The brevity of treatment suggests that the story was well known and was possibly part of oral tradition.\(^{18}\) Another proverbial expression, "a colt's tooth," is used somewhat wistfully by the Reeve\(^{19}\) and the Wife of Bath.\(^{20}\) The phrase has been interpreted to mean that, though no longer young, the Reeve and the Wife "still feel youthful impulses, especially with regard to"


\(^{17}\)E. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

\(^{18}\)For commentary on *RvT*, I, 4054-4056, see below, pp. 189-191.

\(^{19}\) *Rv Prol*, I, 3888.

\(^{20}\) *WB Prol*, III, 602. *var.* coltyssh tothe.
love." But Chaucer alone uses the phrase in the Middle English period, and another interpretation is possible. While the Reeve's legs betray his appetite, his rusty blade suggests that his performance or, possibly, his opportunity, is no longer commensurate with his desires. The Wife, on the other hand, if she looks nostalgically on the past and flaunts her husbands' testimony of her sexual superiority to other women with somewhat pathetic credulity, implies that she could cope vigorously with a sixth husband. What they appear to have in common at the time of the reference to a colt's tooth is a young marriage partner. The elderly carpenter in

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22 Both the MED, C4, p. 401, and F. N. Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (New York, 1957), p. 686, give the phrase as proverbial, although it does not occur before Chaucer and is not cited again until 1588, in Greene's Perimedes.


24 Gen Prol, I, 618.

25 WB Prol, III, 469-475.

26 WB Prol, III, 607-608.

Miller's Tale is married to a young wife - "Wynsynge she was, as is a joly colt;" The Wife of Bath capitulating to Jankyn, remarks:

He was, I trowe, a twenty wynter oold,  
And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth;  
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.  

"To have a sweet tooth" is a proverbial expression meaning to have a liking for sweet things. In using the expression "to have a colt's tooth," Chaucer may be suggesting that both the Reeve and the Wife have a desire for youthful partners in love. A further use of proverbial expression occurs in The Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale and in The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, and may be implied in the reference to proud Bayard in Troilus and Criseyde. The proverb is in connection with the blind horse. The Canon's Yeoman likens those who hope to profit by alchemy to the foolhardy, blundering, blind horse. In Gower's Confessio Amantis, a similar figure occurs in connection

28 MillT, I, 3263. It is usually assumed that the Miller takes his portrait of the "riche gnof" from the Reeve. See Curry, op. cit., p. 76.

29 WB Prol, III, 655-658: "'Whoso that buyldeth his hous al of salwes,/ And priketh his blynde hors over the falwes/ And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,/ Is worthy to been hanged on the galwest." W. W. Skeat, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, V (Oxford, 1894), 308, giving the same line in Reliquiae Antiquae, I, 233, remarks that Jankyn is quoting some old saying, as is shown by the metre which varies and becomes irregular.

30 CYT, VIII, 1413-1416. 31 Tr, I, 218-224.

32 See appendix below, pp. 241-242, under Bayard.
with the practice of necromancy.  

Besides using proverbial lore and fable relating to horses, Chaucer also draws from the legends of the magic horse in *The Squire's Tale*. The tale has not been traced to one definite source, and, in view of its fragmentary character, it seems impossible to do so. Chaucer uses several of the motifs which occur in tales of magic horses—magic mirrors, rings and talking birds, and the steed of brass with its bright mane has obvious affinities with the horse-sun-god of earlier mythology. We do not know how Chaucer intended to develop the story. It is possible that the tale is a boxed type. On the other hand, Chaucer may have intended the falcon to play a part similar to that of the dove in the Moorish tale of Prince Ahmed where the bird tells the Prince how to find the magic steed and enables him finally to win the princess.

33 The Complete Works of John Gower, ed. G. C. Macaulay, IV (Oxford, 1901), 202. "Ther is no god, ther is no lawe/ Of whom that he takth eny hiede:/ Bot as Baiard the blinde stede,/ Til he falle in the dich amidde,/ He goth ther noman wole him bidde."


35 Haldeen Braddy, "The Genre of Chaucer's Squire's Tale," JEGP, XLI (1942), 279-290, suggests that the source was the oriental tale of the frame type and that Chaucer's story, if completed, would have begun and ended with the theme of Canacee, with various other episodes interposed.

36 For the content of this tale, see G. W. Cox, The Mythology of the Aryan Nation, I (London, 1870), 151-154.
That Chaucer was familiar with some of the themes occurring in the vast mythology of the horse is evident in *The Squire's Tale*. Nor is he likely to have remained unaffected by any of them if, as seems possible, they arise from sensations and images regarding the horse which are deeply rooted in the human psyche. Three, in particular, recur: the human transformed into the horse; the ride with death or happiness as possible sequels; sexual violation by a supernatural being in equine guise. They are found not only in mythology but in the anxiety dream where, according to some psychologists, their presence indicates that the glistening, swift-moving, potent animal serves as a vehicle for expressing infantile sexual conflicts often never adequately resolved, even in adulthood. Mainly through the influence of the Church but also through folk beliefs, it seems to me that these themes developed, coalesced and hardened in literary form, and acquired a symbolism so unvarying and so frequently reiterated as to have become eventually widely known. The symbolism is expressed in two principal figures, both of which appear in Chaucer's works at conscious and unconscious levels.

The first figure is that of the rider and the horse, which was used extensively from early times to illustrate the precarious hold of the soul over the body. Closely associated with it is the idea of the centaur, who serves as an awful example of what happens when the soul loses control. Philo uses the image of the rider and horse when commenting on Exodus, xv, 1, and makes a distinction between the horseman who controls the horse and the rider who is carried wherever the horse wishes.
The horseman subdues his passions and is saved. The rider is cast with his horse into the sea. Other writers who use the metaphor are Plutarch and Saint Augustine. In religious works in England during the medieval period the image occurs frequently. "A Tretyse of Gostly Batayle" states "like as one horse welle-taughte beryth hys mastere over many peryllys and saueth hym for perysshyng, so the body well-rewled bereth the soule ouer many peryllys off thys wrecched worlde." The fourteenth century preacher, Bromyard, likens the sinner to the galloping horseman with the Vices as his steeds. But the most extended use of the figure is in The Debate between the Body and the Soul, and it is a work that Chaucer might very well have known. It is a horrifying vision in which a worldly, pleasure-


38 Plutarch, Moralia, ed. G. N. Bernardakis, VII (Leipzig, 1896), XIV.


40 Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and His Followers, ed. Carl Horstman (New York, 1896), ii, 421.

41 See sermon cited by G. R. Owst, op. cit., p. 89.

42 That the poem enjoyed a fair measure of popularity is suggested by the fact that there are still seven MSS extant, of which at least five have been assigned to the 14th century. See M. U. Vogel, Some Aspects of the Horse and Rider Analogy in the 'Debate between the Body and the Soul' (Washington, 1948), pp. 1-3.
loving knight rides to hell, turning from hunter to quarry to be tortured by all the pains that Christian devils and the medieval imagination can devise. Its close parallels with the angstvolle Traumfahrt of the dream, in which the helpless subject finds himself riding and ridden upon, hunter and hunted in a headlong chase ending in terrible punishment, reminds us that the psychological basis and the reason for the persistence of the rider and horse figure is not far to seek.

Our second figure is an ambivalent one which again expresses itself in erotic dreams, the woman in this instance being equated with the horse or, as in the nightmare, with the rider. The first equation, where the woman is the horse to be bridled and controlled by man, is common in proverb, poetry and folklore, the symbolism persisting even to the present day in the marriage ceremony, where the ring is the halter used by the groom to harness his bride. The alternative equation, which clerics disseminated in their anti-feminist writings and in inspired testimonies at witch trials, was applied both to the witch who rode on an abbreviated form of a horse during her vile


44 It might be remarked that the strange fate of the woman in Gower's tale of Rosiphilee, who, as a punishment for spurning love, is festooned with halters, can only be explained by such symbolism. For tale, see The Complete Works, ed. Macaulay, II, 1244-1446. It is also significant that in cases of wife-selling, the wife usually wore a halter. See examples of wife-selling in County Folklore, ed. Mrs. Gutch, II (London, 1901), 298-300.
excursions. But the figure often "splits." Even the witch can have horse's hooves;\textsuperscript{45} the woman, therefore, may be either the horse ridden by the man or she may, less commonly, reverse the roles.

Enough has already been said about the Monk to show that the second figure appears in the implications of the puns in the portrait in \textit{The General Prologue}.\textsuperscript{46} But the three allusions to his fine horse or horses and the illustrations of his worldliness also emphasize that the Monk's body and not his soul is in control. Even the stress on the jingling of his bridle\textsuperscript{47} suggests that he is more interested in ostentation and gaiety than in controlling his horse. The Monk is riding to hell, and when Chaucer states "He was nat pale as a forpyned goost,"\textsuperscript{48} he may have had in mind not only the cloistered ascetic which the Monk certainly was not, but the tortured spirit in the hell hunt, which the Monk must ultimately become.

The equitation of the Wife of Bath is as significant as that of the Monk. In the reference to the ambler on which she sits easily,\textsuperscript{49} two puns may be intended. There is the connotation of \textit{ambulare}, relating to her sexual activity,\textsuperscript{50} and there

\textsuperscript{45} E. Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 258, 324.

\textsuperscript{46} See above, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{47} Gen Prol, I, 170; NPT Prol, VII, 2794-2795.

\textsuperscript{48} Gen Prol, I, 205. \textsuperscript{49} Gen Prol, I, 469.

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. the reference in Bromyard's sermon on "Luxuria", as cited by Owst, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 395.
is an ambling quality in her method of discourse— as the interchange between the Friar and the Summoner indicates:

"Now, dame," quod he, "so have I joye or blis,
This is a long preamble of a tale!"
And whan the Somonour herde the Frere gale,
"Lo" quod the Somonour, "Goddes armes twot
A frere wol entremette hym everemo.
Lo, goode men, a flye and eek a frere
Wol falle in every dyssh and eek mateere.
What spekestow of preambulacioun?
What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit dount
Thou lettest oure disport in this manere."

Of more importance in our discussion are her sharp spurs. Le Fèvre, whose work Chaucer may have read, says:

Femme fu chevalier, et l'ome
Fu le cheval portant la somme.

Matheolus, whom Le Fèvre translates or adapts, has a similar passage, and both of these antifeminist writers picture the woman as riding her husband and using spurs on him. The lines immediately following the reference to the sharp spurs explain the metaphor:

In felaweship wel koude she laughe and carp,
Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce
For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

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52 Ibid., I, lines 497-499.

53 Ibid., I, lines 465-466: "Nolens demittere sellam,/Hunc stimulo pungens equitavit sicut asellam." For Le Fèvre, see I, i, lines 1091-1092: "Son cheval en fist la barness/ Et le poignoit comme une asnesse."
Felaweshipe, besides denoting casual or temporary companionship as used by Chaucer in introducing his pilgrims, may refer to sexual intercourse. Carp, in addition to meaning to joke, can mean to complain or even to attack. The line, then, indicates the possible attitudes the Wife adopts in her sexual relations, and the subsequent two lines stress her experience.

In contrast to the spurs, however, the Wife's large, roundish hat gives an impression of generous femininity and suggests she can adopt a more accommodating position. It is therefore not surprising to find an ambivalence in the rider and horse figure when it recurs in her Prologue. The reason for the ambivalence lies in the Wife's horoscope. Her horoscope is in Taurus and her dominant planet is Venus but the combined good effects of both are vitiated by the presence of the evil planet Mars.

It is Mars who impels her to gain at all costs the dominating power over her husbands and who makes of her a scold, a wrangler, and a striker of blows—worthy of being beaten herself—until she attains her purpose. Truly, whatever one may say of Venus's influence it is turned into a baser order when Mars is discovered in conjunction. So the Wife of Bath appears in the Prologue to her tale: a fair Venerean figure and character imposed upon and oppressed, distorted in some measure and warped, by the power of Mars.

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54 For examples, see MED, Fl, p. 462.
55 Ibid., Cl, p. 67.  
56 Gen Prol, I, 470-471.
57 Curry, op. cit., pp. 112-113.
Mars is a horse-god, and etymologically the word is connected with grind, crush, and with mara, the night fiend.\textsuperscript{58} It is unlikely that Chaucer was consciously comparing the Wife with the dread visitant of the nightmare or cauchemar but by endowing the Wife with secret marks he certainly invites comparison. The seal of Venus and the mark of Mars may have been commonplaces to medieval astrophysiognomists,\textsuperscript{59} but the secret mark was also relied upon as the most certain method of detecting a witch, and among the various forms that a mara might take the most common was that of a witch who plagued men with her solicitations, riding on them and using her spurs.\textsuperscript{60} Affected by Mars, the Wife sees herself as the rider exacting tribute from the man who is her "dettour" and her "thral."\textsuperscript{61} When Venus is dominant, she is the horse. When she refers to the harneys\textsuperscript{62} she is thinking mainly of herself, the harness being traditionally associated with the vulva.\textsuperscript{63} As an expert in marriage, on the other hand, she is the whip.\textsuperscript{64} Later, she is the horse which "koude byte and whyne,"\textsuperscript{65} but here the description suggests

\textsuperscript{58}E. Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 244, 280, 326-339.

\textsuperscript{59}Curry, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 106-107.

\textsuperscript{60}E. Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 211-212.

\textsuperscript{61}\textit{WB Prol.}, III, 155.  \textsuperscript{62}\textit{WB Prol.}, III, 136.

\textsuperscript{63}E. Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 249, n. 2.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{WB Prol.}, III, 175.  \textsuperscript{65}\textit{WB Prol.}, III, 386.
her ambivalent role. The horse can be either aggressively sadistic or it can whinny "as if wanting a caress." In the proverb immediately following, the duality is more apparent:

Whoso that first to mille comth, first grynt;
I pleyned first, so was oure werre ystynt.  

_Forestalling her husband's complaints, she is the one who gets to the mill first and grinds her wheat first, but in the accepted symbolism of the proverb she is the mill or woman, and is merely implying her own promiscuity. With regard to Jankyn, she is attracted to his bright gold hair and to his legs and feet._

Here again horse imagery may be suggested, for she is seizing upon two factors which have always been stressed in the lore of the horse. The horse and the sun are intimately connected almost everywhere in religious mythology and the streaming rays of the sun are identified with the horse's mane. The sexual associations of hair are, of course, widely known. The leg and foot also, in legend and superstition, have almost invariably been associated with generative power. They cause streams or vegetation to appear; they become the property

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66 Skeat, _op. cit._, V, 301. Cf. Anel, 157, where the treacherous Arcite is likened to a horse "that can both bite and pleyne." It might be noted that when the bestiaries refer to the horse's habit of biting, they give it as a commendable trait which the horse displays towards its enemies.

67 See E. Jones, _op. cit._, p. 281, for widespread use of the figure. Earlier in the Prologue, 144, the Wife anticipates the figure by regarding herself as a meal of barley bread.

68 _WB Prol_, III, 304, 597-598.

69 E. Jones, _op. cit._, pp. 278-279.
of the medieval Devil whose temptations are predominantly libidinous in character.\textsuperscript{70} Even today, a horseshoe is lucky and a cloven hoof, used metaphorically, has implications of wickedness and animality. The Wife is apparently impressed with Jankyn's virility and it is not surprising to find that she loses her dominance over the male to such an extent that she can be equated in proverb with the blind horse.\textsuperscript{71} Finally, however, Jankyn capitulates and gives her the bridle.\textsuperscript{72}

In \textit{Troilus and Criseyde} the rider and horse figures illustrate the principle underlying the poem — the instability of the human condition. Troilus is the prancing carthorse subject to the dictates of passion as the horse is subject to the whip of the carter.\textsuperscript{73} But he is also the rider in control, as Pandarus, with his aphoristic advice, recognizes.\textsuperscript{74} When spirit and body are strained by love he appears as the warshattered hero on a wounded horse. Although he seems magnificent and impressive to all onlookers, and to Criseyde in particular, he blushes and lowers his eyes.\textsuperscript{75} Later, egged on by Pandarus to don his "beste gere,"\textsuperscript{76} he rides past still humble yet bold enough to salute his lady for the first time.\textsuperscript{77} He does not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70}Ibid., pp. 297-300; 323-324.
\item \textsuperscript{71}WB Prol, III, 656.
\item \textsuperscript{72}WB Prol, III, 813.
\item \textsuperscript{73}I, 218.
\item \textsuperscript{74}I, 953.
\item \textsuperscript{75}II, 624-644.
\item \textsuperscript{76}II, 1012.
\item \textsuperscript{77}II, 1247-1260.
\end{itemize}
permit himself any "unbridled cheere" during the courtship;\textsuperscript{78} his love for Criseyde gives him telepathic skill:
\begin{quote}
But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte,  
His wise goost took ay of al swych heede,  
It semed hire he wiste what she thoughte  
Withouten word.
\end{quote}
III, 463-466.

As the wall of steel and shield,\textsuperscript{79} he is still the knight fully in control of the body, and while Pandarus gives him warning after consummation:

Bridle alwey wel thi speche and thi desir, \textsuperscript{80} III, 1635.

Criseyde, when the parting comes, is able to say that Troilus' delight was always bridled by his "resoun."\textsuperscript{81} But at the final separation, "resoun" is not in control; Troilus can hardly sit on his horse for pain.\textsuperscript{82} Longing for death, he assigns his steed to Mars.\textsuperscript{83} He rides incessantly, obsessed with memories of his love.\textsuperscript{84} He becomes so deluded that he mistakes a cart for Criseyde.\textsuperscript{85} He grows so feeble that "he walketh only by potente."\textsuperscript{86} The dream, the letters, the false hopes, the evidence of Criseyde's unfaithfulness ensue and never again do we read of Troilus on his horse. He seeks death in arms, and slays many in his wrath until, slain by Achilles, his body finally separates from his soul. His "lighte goost" sailing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78}III, 429.  \textsuperscript{79}III, 479-480.  \textsuperscript{80}IV, 1678.
\item \textsuperscript{81}V, 35.  \textsuperscript{82}V, 306.  \textsuperscript{83}V, 561.
\item \textsuperscript{84}V, 1156-1162.  \textsuperscript{85}V, 1222.  \textsuperscript{86}V, 1718.
\end{itemize}
up "ful blissfully" to the eighth sphere secures its reward for virtue and is able to look down on the scene where he was killed and appreciate the vanity of life and love.

The horse is also used symbolically in connection with Criseyde. Early in the poem Criseyde congratulates herself that she stands "unteyd in lusty leese," but although in the love affair she is portrayed as a taker of prey as well as prey, she nevertheless emerges primarily as something which can be caught - the deer driven into the triste cloos and the lark in the foot of the sparrowhawk. Diomede's hand on her bridle as he leads her away from Troy, therefore, has inevitable implications. The Greek immediately has thoughts of securing her for himself, and he refers to the bridle again when he produces an argument to show that, since Troy is lost, she is firmly caught. The appeal is to Criseyde's pragmatism as her subsequent deliberations indicate, but the author handles the situation as sympathetically as possible for the heroine.

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87 V, 1809.  88 V, 1819-1825.  89 II, 752.

90 II, 1534-1535.  91 III, 1191-1192.

92 V, 92. Boccaccio, v. 13, is blunter and does not use the metaphor: "di colei si piglia."

93 V, 100-105  94 V, 873.

95 V, 1023-1029.
Yet doubts have already been raised as to whether any argument is necessary. As the boar, symbol of lust and of brute force, Diomede with his "sterne vois and myghty lymes square" must be irresistible; for from the description of Criseyde, sandwiched between that of Diomede and Troilus, we find not only that the heroine has shrunk in stature since her first appearance in the temple, but that she has a "lak" in that her eyebrows are joined together. Previously she has been faultless. Diomede's hand on the bridle, then, anticipates an easy victory which the author subsequently tries to deny him. A similar conflict in presentation is apparent when Criseyde surrenders to Diomede her former lover's bay steed and the brooch. She makes the gesture to avoid what she would regard as complete moral degeneracy, the being possessed by two lovers, but for reasons of psychological accuracy and for the sake of the action, she must, in her weakness and vague "routhe," continue writing


97 V, 813-814. Chaucer's authorities also mentioned Criseyde's joined eyebrows; See Robinson, loc. cit. Chaucer and his audience may or may not have regarded joined eyebrows as a sign of moral obliquity. Joined eyebrows were regarded by the ancients and by some medieval writers with favor. Other physiognomists considered them to be the sign of a passionate nature. See George L. Hamilton, "Supercilia Juncta," MLN, XX (1905), 80. In the references Hamilton cites, however, the eyebrows are thick rather than joined. See also Nathaniel E. Griffin, "Chaucer's Portrait of Criseyde," JEGP, XX (1921), 43, n. 4. D. S. Brewer, "The Ideal of Feminine Beauty in Medieval Literature," MLR, L (1955), 265, n. 4.

98 V, 1037-1040. 99 V, 1587.
to Troilus. Although the time sequence is obscure with regard to the early correspondence, the author is unable to conceal the fact that she is still writing, promising to return, after her surrender. Her token offerings to Diomede, then, like her sad promise to herself, are meaningless, and the distracted author might well comment:

- and that was litel nede -

V, 1040.

The horse and rider figure illustrates Chaucer's treatment of the animal at its most subtle and complex. But even when the horse is regarded primarily as an animal serviceable to man, symbolism is often suggested. A clumsy or unmanageable horse belongs to churls such as the Shipman or carter; a horse that chases wild mares to lecherous clerks; the reference to the gelding and the mare points up the sexual peculiarities of the Pardoner. At all levels, the element which seems to be significantly stressed is that of control. The hero, whether he be Theseus, or Aeneas can, at the height of his powers, control his horse; the weak or grief-stricken, such as Criseyde, Phaeton or the later Troilus, do not have control of their horses and disintegrate either morally or

\[100^\text{V, 1422-1428.} 101^\text{V, 1590-1631.} 102^\text{V, 1071}\]
\[103^\text{Gen Prol, I, 390.} 104^\text{FrT, III, 1539ff.}\]
\[105^\text{RvT, I, 4064-4065; 4080-4081.} 106^\text{Gen Prol, I, 691.}\]
\[107^\text{KnT, I, 1704-1705.} 108^\text{LGW, III, 1208-1209.}\]
\[109^\text{V, 92.} 110^\text{HF, II, 935-356.} 111^\text{V, 35.}\]
physically. The Pardoner, insecure in his ambivalent role, is, ironically, the one who offers insurance against a fall from a horse and a broken neck.\textsuperscript{112}

The horse out of control is not only represented as stupid, blind and recalcitrant but,\textsuperscript{113} either directly or by implication, as lustful.\textsuperscript{114} The colt is associated with lust and wildness.\textsuperscript{115} That Chaucer is affected by the deeply rooted impression of the horse as a phallic animal has already been suggested.\textsuperscript{116} His implied disapproval of the uncontrolled animal may indicate that it symbolizes instincts he wishes to subdue. Certainly the symbolical associations which the animal has for him appear to affect his treatment of the horse generally. For while he must have been familiar with the laudatory accounts of the natural historians and encyclopedists, he makes no use of them. He shows no affection for the animal and pays no tribute to its widely extolled loyalty and intelligence. He rarely enlarges upon references to horses in his sources and he selects proverbial expressions of pejorative connotation; the one tale in which a horse might have played a heroic role is unfinished. In hunting or daily life, although he shows an

\begin{enumerate}
\item[112] PardT, VI, 935-940.
\item[113] WB Prol, III, 656; CYT, 1413-1416; Tr, I, 218-224.
\item[114] See above, p. 171.
\item[115] See above, pp. 159-161; see also MillT, I, 3263; 3282.
\item[116] See above, pp. 158-159.
\end{enumerate}
awareness of the various kinds of horses, he exhibits little of the Gawain Poet's sensuous feeling for their elegant appearance or trappings but is usually content to let clichés or generalized attributes serve as description.
CHAPTER VI

THE WOLF

Traditional as it appears to be, Chaucer's attitude towards the wolf could have been influenced not only by popular lore and by literature but by a personal knowledge of the animal. For during the Middle Ages, wolves were numerous throughout Europe, and as late as the fifteenth century they roamed in the woods around Paris.¹ In England, the fact that King John in 1210 gave as much as fifteen shillings to two huntsmen for wolves killed in Gillingham, Dorset, and Clarendon, Wiltshire, has been taken by one historian as indicative that wolves were no longer common.² But hunting treatises show that wolf-hunting, which in ninth century England was part of a nobleman's training,³ continued throughout the Middle Ages. The Master of Game calls


the wolf "a common beast enough," and although the season for hunting wolves began at Christmas and ended on March 25, according to forest laws, it has been suggested that the wolf was probably hunted throughout the year. It was even legitimate to take the wolf by various snares and poison as well as by hounds. In 1370 Thomas Engaine held lands in Pitchley, in the county of Northampton, as a reward for furnishing dogs to destroy wolves, foxes and other vermin in the counties of Northampton, Rutland, Oxford, Essex and Buckingham. As late as 1433, Sir Robert Plumpton held one bovate of land in the county of Nottingham, called Wolf-hunt land, "by service of winding a horn and chasing or frightening the wolves in the forests of Shirewoold." Even in the fifteenth century, as illustrations in manuscripts show, dogs in England still wore spiked collars for defence against wolves.

In literature the qualities of the wolf which are particularly stressed from early times are its predatory nature and

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5 Ibid., append., p. 256. 6 Ibid., pp. 61-63.


8 Strutt, loc. cit.

its powers of dissimulation. Some of the bestiaries tell us the word means "ravisher" and that, because of their rapacity, prostitutes are called wolves. The wolf demonstrates its cunning by approaching a sheepfold noiselessly by night against the wind, and, according to Brunetto Latini, it falsifies its voice by putting its paw to its mouth. A bestiary engraving shows a wolf approaching a sheepfold with its paw in its mouth, and the curves of trees and grass suggest that it is going against the wind. Isidore's *Etymologies* and the bestiary wrongly attributed to Hugo de S. Victore, term the wolf "rapax ... et cruoris appetens," and Bartholomaeus Anglicus tells us that the wolf loves to play with a child and slay him afterwards.

The wolf has even further peculiarities attributed to it. It cannot turn its head because it has no joint in its

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13 See C. Cahier and A. Martin, *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, II (Paris, 1851), pl. xxii; McCulloch, *op. cit.*, pl. x, fig. 4.


neck. It whelps only in May during thundery weather, and it bites its own foot as a punishment if it steps noisily on a twig. To satisfy hunger, it sometimes eats clay. The idea, given by Pliny as an Italian belief, that a man loses his voice if the wolf sees him first, is often repeated. It is even mentioned in Alexander Neckam’s metrical treatise, De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae:

At lupus aspectu subito tibi praeripit usum Vocis, naturae consona cause subest.

But the concept of the wolf which seems to have exercised the imagination was that expressed in Matthew, vii,15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," and in illustrating the text, the wolf's predatory nature and powers of dissimulation were fully exploited. The bestiarists saw the prowler around

17 White, op. cit., pp. 57-58.
19 Ibid., p. 58.
20 White, op. cit., p. 59; Isidore, op. cit., XII, ii, 24; Steele, op. cit., p. 164.
the sheepfold as the devil, but the adaptio came to have a more immediate and concrete application. Neckam writes:

Nonnumquam canis et lupus quadam amica societate confoederantur, adeo ut et ipsi fures in noctis furvo incendentes caulas subintrent, ovesque strangulent. Sic sic adulator et bonorum ecclesiae dilapidator quandoque in unum veniunt consensum, ut bona ecclesiae subtrahant in perniciem simplicium claustrialium.

Sometimes the figure is used for light irony, as in the fable of Marie de France, in which the wolf attempts to become a monk, being attracted to his pious vocation by merry thoughts of a fat living among the sheep. Among more denunciatory applications of the figure are those of Giraldus Cambrensis who cites the Biblical text and applies it to Monks greedily seizing common land in order to be able to entertain more hospitably, and of Odo of Cheriton who denounces the rapacity and hypocrisy of the Cistercians, stigmatizing them as renegades and legacy hunters. Medieval preachers make use of

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22 White, op. cit., p. 59.

23 Neckam, op. cit., p. 214.


26 Cited by Evans, op. cit., p. 224.
the illustration to condemn heretical priests\textsuperscript{27} or deficient orders.\textsuperscript{28} Satirists amplify it vigorously to attack church abuses; the figure is used both by Matheolus\textsuperscript{29} and Le Fèvre\textsuperscript{30} and would, of course, be familiar to Chaucer from its treatment by Jean de Meun in \textit{Le Roman de la Rose}.\textsuperscript{31}

In the beast epic, except in the relatively early Latin hexameter poem, \textit{Ecbasis Captivi}, circa 950, where the fable of the wolf and the calf provides an allegorical outer covering to the story nucleus, the satire is broader in scope. In the work which is the main inspiration for the \textit{Roman de Renard},\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Reinardus Vulpes} or \textit{Ysengrimus} as it was subsequently called, written two centuries after the \textit{Ecbasis Captivi} by a monk, Nivardus of Ghent, the wolf is established in terms of social criticism as a rapacious oppressor of the people. The Reynard cycle itself is of great diversity:


\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., I, iii, line 796. Le Fèvre's work is a free adaptation of \textit{Les Lamentations}, with many omissions and additions.

\textsuperscript{31}See below, p. 185.

The wolf, unsympathetically portrayed as greedy and credulous and thoroughly outwitted in all his schemes, can be taken merely as a figure for derisive laughter. But the works also provide satiric criticism of many aspects of feudal society, and the wolf exemplifies the brutal force of the aristocrats against which the fox, as representative of the plebeian class, pits all his ingenuity.

As translator of the De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius and of part of Le Roman de la Rose, Chaucer is familiar with certain qualities attributed to the wolf, qualities which in any case, by his own day have become firmly established in popular imagination and are widely used in many kinds of literature. Boethius, when describing the vices which transform man

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35 Thomas Wright, A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art (London, 1875), p. 115. Wright, p. 77, also suggests that Reynard represents the ecclesiast, striving to outwit the baron. He remarks on the frequency with which sculptors and artists portray Reynard in clerical garb. Kenneth Sisam, The Nun's Priest's Tale (Oxford, 1953), p. xxii, states that in the later works of the cycle Reynard comes to be represented as the embodiment of evil.
into beast, stresses the rapacity of the wolf, and Chaucer translates:

For if he be ardaunt in avaryce, and that he be a ravynour by violence of foreyn richesse, thou schalt seyn that he is lik to the wolf.

*Bo*, IV, pr. 3, 104-107.

Following closely Jean de Meun, *The Romaunt of the Rose* applies the image of the wolf, with Biblical connotations, both to the false representatives of the Church, and to those in secular life who prey on the public; usurers, tax-gatherers, coiners, bailiffs, officers, magistrates, accountants:

These lyven wel nygh by ravyne,
The smale puple hem mote enclyne,
And they as wolves wole hem eten.

*Rom*, 6813-6815.

Chaucer's most common image is basically the same as Jean de Meun's: the rapacious wolf constituting a threat to the flock. But he treats it so briefly and allusively as to suggest that the figure is already proverbial. Whether he is taking the image directly from a source, as in *The Legend of Good Women*, in connection with Tarquin and Lucrece and Tereus and Philomena, or is using it independently, there appears to be no significant difference in treatment. The wolf stands for the secular, or the ecclesiastical taker of prey or, possibly, both; its helpless victims are the

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39 *ParsT*, X, 774; *PhysT*, VI, 102.

40 *ParsT*, X, 791. 41 *Gen Prol*, I, 513.
sheep. Primarily, the wolf serves as a handy device to establish sympathy for the victim and to emphasize the extent and immediacy of the peril. Chaucer does not follow the practice of some writers and expand on the significance of the wolf. The wolf in the briars to which new shepherds knowingly let their flock run, and "the pilours and destroyours of the godes of hooly church" who are worse than wolves, are not identified further. Neither does he elaborate his image with details from folklore except briefly, in the last example cited, where he uses an idea, to be found also in a third century A. D. collection in Greek prose by Aelian, De Natura

42See Owst, Preaching in Medieval England, p. 139.

43ParsT, X, 720. No source has yet been cited for the wolf images in The Parson's Tale here referred to. The contention that the newe shepherdes may have been intended by Chaucer as a reference to the government being taken over by Gloucester in 1388 seems hard to justify. The Parson implies that the newe shepherdes are indolent. The Merciless Parliament, through which the five "Lord Appellants," Gloucester, Derby, Arundel, Warwick and Nottingham eliminated their enemies, was tenacious and ruthless during its 122 days of office. In France its military policy was successful, and it cannot be blamed for the Scots' victory at Otterburn since the Scots were the aggressors and outmanoeuvred the English. For detailed account of the Merciless Parliament see Sir James H. Ramsay, Genesis of Lancaster, II (Oxford, 1913), 251-261. The newe shepherdes might equally well refer to new pastors who, through laxity, knowingly allow their flock to fall into heresies. In a sermon cited by Owst, Preaching in Medieval England, pp. 139-140, the wolf is likened to the heretic, and sharp heresies are said to prick and rend men's consciences "as thornes and breris pricken men, and torenden her clothes."

44ParsT, X, 767-768.
Animalium,\textsuperscript{45} that "whan the wolf hath ful his wombe, he styneth to strangle sheep."\textsuperscript{46}

Indicative of the extent to which the image of the wolf and the lamb has become proverbial is its use in Troilus and Criseyde:

"Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have; This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, iwys, Mote spenden part the remenant for to save, For ay with gold men may the herte grave Of hym that set is upon coveytise: And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse."

\textit{Tr}, IV, 1373-1379.

Here, expanding on the reference in the Filostrato to Calchas' avarice and Criseyde's confidence that her father will allow her to return, Chaucer makes good use of the fact that the expression is proverbial to throw light on Criseyde's character. The observation, reminiscent of her uncle's pedantries, and the sophistical nature of the superfluous explanation attached to it, serve to emphasize her own ambivalence. She is self-deceived. She regards her father as the Wolf, but thinks she can outwit him in dissimulation. Yet she has shown herself lamb-like from the beginning — a passive victim who


\textsuperscript{46}ParsT, X, 768. Bromyard, however, expresses a contrary view. When castigating the oppressors of the poor, he uses the fable of the wolf and the shepherd, and says that the wolf kills more sheep than he needs for his own personal sustenance because he has other people in mind. There is the dignity and pomp of his lady to be maintained; there are sons to be
expects injury. In the temple, she is already "ay undere shames drede." While, in her relationship with Troilus, she is portrayed both as a prey and as taker of prey, she is an active agent only as a symbol of love, the whole love affair itself seeming to arise largely from the illusions Pandarus creates for the paralyzed Troilus and the passive Criseyde. At crucial moments, images of physical violence occur: falling in love, she dreams her heart is torn out by an eagle; at point of consummation, she is the "sely lark" in the foot of the sparrowhawk. Even when she is compared to the singing nightingale, the stress is on its timorous nature. The fear that is finally to prevent her from returning to Troy is that she may fall into "the hondes of som wrecche." Unwittingly then, Criseyde conjures up her own position in a wolf-like world. Her cynical evaluation of mankind, her reliance on the covetousness of human nature, also provide the explanation for

promoted; daughters for whom dowries must be found; a retinue to be maintained. See Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England, p. 321.

47Tr, I, 180.


50Tr, II, 925-931. 51Tr, III, 1191-1192.

52Tr, III, 1233-1239. 53Tr, V, 705.
her subsequent conduct; in a predatory world, one "slyding of corage" must grasp at the nearest shepherd's crook.

Inasmuch as Calchas is a false prophet to the Trojans, a Biblical connotation is implicit in the image just cited. Chaucer also has three images of the wolf, however, where the associations are entirely different from those so far described. One is derivative: in The Knight's Tale, at the feet of the statue of Mars, Chaucer places the traditional animal:

A wolf ther stood biforn hym at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet.  

KnT, I, 2047-2048.

The description is ascribed to Albricus Philosophus, De Deorum Imaginibus: 54

Ante illum vero lupus ovem portans pingebatur, quia illud scilicet animal ab antiquis gentibus ipsi Marti specialiter consecraturn est. Iste enim Mavors est, id est mares vorans, eo quod bellorum deus a gentibus dictus est.

Skeat observes that Chaucer seems to have substituted a man for a sheep in deference to the curious etymology. 55

In The Reeve's Tale we have a brief allusion by the Miller to a fable:

"The greteste clerkes been noght wisest men,"
As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare.  

RvT, I, 4054-4055.

In one of the Reynard poems, Reynard and Ysengrim meet a red mare with a black colt. At the bidding of Ysengrim, who is


55 Skeat, loc. cit.
very hungry, Reynard asks the mare if she will sell her daughter. She agrees, saying the price is written on her hind foot. Reynard is suspicious and calls the Wolf, flattering him on his knowledge of languages. The Wolf tries to read the price and gets kicked for his pains.56 The same story, but with a mule instead of a mare, appears in the late thirteenth century Cento Novelle Antiche. There are numerous versions of the story - which is a combination of two different fables - but it is assumed that Chaucer is using one of the known versions in the Reynard cycle.57 In one of the earlier fables the mule boasts of his genealogy which, he claims, is written on his foot.58 The Miller is proud of the genealogy of his wife. The brevity of the allusion and the fact that it is used by an unlearned man, suggests that the tale had passed into oral tradition. It therefore seems possible that Chaucer may have been using another version, now lost, in which the selling and boasting motifs both occurred.

The allusion is appropriate in that the Miller identifies himself with the mare, traditionally regarded as a

56 Willem's Van den Vos Reinaert, ed. E. Martin (Paderborn, 1874), II, line 3994ff.


58 Baum, loc. cit.
lascivious animal.\footnote{E. Jones, \textit{On the Nightmare} (New York, 1959), p. 245. \textit{Aelian}, op. cit., I, 224.} For Symkyn's physical characteristics, particularly his "camus" nose, identify him as a "consummate harlot."\footnote{W. C. Curry, \textit{Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences} (London, 1960), pp. 77-90.} It is even more appropriate in its ironical implications. The Miller is congratulating himself on outsmarting the clerks but the final outcome is that the clerks, unlike Reynard and Ysengrim, do not ask for his womenfolk: they take. The kick is too late to repair the damage.

Finally, there is the she-wolf in \textit{The Manciple's Tale}:

\begin{quote}
A she-wolf hath also a vileyns kynde.  
The lewedeste wolf that she may fynde,  
Or leest of reputacioun, wol she take,  
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.
\end{quote}

\textit{MancT}, IX, 183-186.

A similar passage occurs in \textit{Le Roman de la Rose}, 7761-7766. It has been suggested that because it occurs in an entirely different part of \textit{Le Roman de la Rose} from the lines on the cat,\footnote{\textit{Le Roman de la Rose}, ed. Ernest Langlois, IV (Paris, 1922), 14039-14052; \textit{MancT}, IX, 175-182.} used in \textit{The Manciple's Tale} just before, and because a similar account appears in \textit{The Master of Game},\footnote{\textit{The Master of Game}, p. 55.} Chaucer may have known "this bit of animal lore . . . quite apart from any literary source."\footnote{O. F. Emerson, "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," \textit{RR}, XIII (1922), 146-147.} From the twelfth century onward, there are
many references in French literature to the belief. A similar account of the supposed characteristics of the she-wolf occurs in Le Fèvre's adaptation of Matheolus, which Chaucer could have read.

Elle ressemble l'escharbote
Qui guerpist l'odeur des fleuretes
Et suit le chemin des charretes
Es estrons des chevaulx se boute
Et aussi comme la louve gloute
Prent toujours des louveaux le pire.

But it seems possible that the passages cited may be relying on popular tradition. In all of them, the comparison, either implied or stated, is to Woman, the author of The Master of Game, with commendable insularity, inserting in his translation of Gaston de Foix, that the term is applied "beyond the seas in some countries." As has already been stated, bestiaries liken the wolf to the prostitute. In Rome, the Lupercal temples later became brothels, and Plautus, in the speech of

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65 Robinson, op. cit., p. 698, states there is no evidence that Chaucer read either of these works. However, although Matheolus's work attracted no attention prior to Le Fèvre, the latter, writing in 1370, aroused the interest of Deschamps and others.


67 The Master of Game, pp. 54-55.

68 See above, p. 180.

69 Jones, op. cit., p. 136.
Strabax in *Truculentus*, for example, refers to prostitutes as wolves. The story of the she-wolf, which does not appear in the early natural historians, nor in the bestiaries, and seems to have no basis in actual fact, may therefore represent some transference of ideas concerning the prostitute and her pimp to the animal. Such a piece of popular lore one might expect the Manciple, with his "lewed mannès wit," to make use of, although, with characteristic lack of adroitness, he tries to apply it to man, when the logical application is to Phoebus' wife. The figure forms part of the discursive moralizings, not found in Chaucer's analogues, which are indicative of the pretentiousness and shiftiness of the teller.

Chaucer, then, in his allusions to the wolf, draws his material wholly from common tradition or from earlier writings. Primarily, he regards the wolf as rapacious and dissimulating, as a menace to the gullible flock, but he is also familiar with the outwitted wolf of the fables and with some of the habits attributed to the wolf in popular lore. The figure is used sparingly and is introduced with appropriateness. The Parson's application of Biblical symbolism, Criseyde's use of proverb, 

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71 *Gen Prol*, I, 574.

the Miller's allusion to fable, the Manciple's dilation on the habits of the she-wolf not only give point to the immediate situation, but, in varying degrees, throw light on the users themselves.
While the attitude towards the dog is ambivalent even in early times, one attitude towards the sheep and the lamb is dominant and remains unchanged through the centuries. Among the Hebrew writers of the sacred books, living in pastoral communities, the sheep appears to arouse contempt for its need of leadership and its stupidity\(^1\) rather than any deeply felt affection.\(^2\) The lamb, however, with its whiteness and inoffensiveness, becomes a symbol of peace and innocence, and in the New Testament, while the stupid sheep represent erring humanity, Christ is symbolized not only as the Good Shepherd but as the sacrificial lamb, the *Agnus Dei*. The symbolism has prevailed in literature, art, sculpture and religious thought up to the present day.

The bestiaries and the encyclopedists make very little of the sheep, and the remark of Pseudo-Hugo de S. Victore, can

\(^1\text{Ps. lxxviii, 52; Ps. cxix, 176; Is. liii, 6; Jer. 1, 6.}\)

\(^2\text{See Jer. xii, 3; Mic. v, 8; Ps. xlix, 11. Some of the most vivid images regarding sheep in the Old Testament occur with reference to their slaughter and rarely is any compassion expressed.}\)
be taken as typical of them:

Ovis molle pecus lanato corpore, inerme animal, animo placidum, ab oblatione dictum, eo quod apud veteres in initio non tauri, sed oves in sacrificia mactarentur. Ex his quasdam bidentes vocant eas quae inter octo dentes duos altiores habent, quas maxime gentiles in sacrificio offerebant, vel quae essent biennes. Ovis sub adventu hiemis, quia inexplebilis ad escam, insatiabiliter herbam carpit, eo quod praesentiat asperitatem hiemis adfuturam, ut prius herbæe pabulo se faciat quam gelu adurente omnis herbae deficiat.  

Of the lamb, the etymological explanations produce a statement often repeated:

Agnum quamquam et Graeci vocent ἀγγελός τὸν ἄγαψας, quasi pium, Latini autem ideo hoc nomen habere putant, eo quod præ ceteris animantibus matrem agnoscat; adeo ut etiam si in magno grege erraverit, statim balatu recognoscat vocem parentis.  

Pseudo-Hugo de S. Victore is more diffuse:


In England during the Middle Ages, landowners, both secular and ecclesiastical, developed the sheep-rearing industry


4 Isidore, Etymologicarum sive Originum, ed. W. M. Lindsay II (Oxford, 1911), XII, i, 12.

5 "De Bestiis . . ." col. 89.
extensively. The sheep appear to have been of two kinds: the small, active sheep with short wool, bred on poor mountain pastures, and the large sheep with longer wool, on the richer grasslands. They were bred primarily not for meat but for their wool, and the development of Flemish weaving in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries caused sheep farming to expand rapidly. In the fourteenth century, when labor became scarce and the home industry increased, more and more arable land was turned over to sheep-rearing, and it was not until the second quarter of the fifteenth century that a depression in the wool market occurred and sheep-rearing became curtailed. The villein, too, as can be seen from the early Pytchley records, had his sheep, as well as pigs, cows and oxen. According to the Hundred Roll of 1275, serfs at Swyncombe had the right to keep a horse, six oxen and fifty sheep on the common pasture free of charge. One of the main problems, if one can judge from the allusions in the Mystery plays, was to keep the sheep free from sheep rot and scabs. One shepherd claims to have


9Power, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
lost all his sheep through rot, another hopes to cure his of scabs and rot by applying henbane, horehound, ribble, radish, egremont, finter, fanter, fetter-foe and pennywort.

Chaucer is primarily a city man, and it is perhaps not surprising that he seems to have taken little interest in the animal as such, even if he is Controller of Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins and Hides in the Port of London from 1374-1386, and at first writes the rolls in his own hand. One cannot say of him, as has been said of Dante, that "he hates them [sheep] as if there were a feud between his ever conscious intelligence and their never ceasing stupidity." He uses sheep mainly for concrete illustration in every day life, in proverbial phrase and for religious symbolism. Usually his allusions are brief.

That the sheep owner faced the same problems as those of the shepherds in the Mystery plays is indicated by the Pardoner's description of the cures effected by his sheepbone, where the details regarding sheep, more extensive than anywhere


13 A reference to sheep also occurs through mistranslation. In Mel, VII, 997, Chaucer writes: "Salomon seith that right as mothes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth sorwe to the herte." Chaucer's source, Le Livre de Mellibee et Prudence, as reprinted
else in Chaucer, give a sense of actuality and conviction:

and furthermore,

Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every soore
Shal every sheep be hool that of this welle
Drynketh a draughte.

Pard Prol, VI, 357-360.

Sheep are included among the lord's property that the cheating Reeve controls,\textsuperscript{14} and one sheep is among the effects of the "povre wydwe, somdeel stape in age" in The Nun's Priest's Tale:

Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three keen, and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
NPT, 2830-2831.

The Reeve is engaged in both agriculture and husbandry in an area where, so it might seem from his successes, both activities may prosper. The fact that the widow has only one sheep has been taken as indicative that she is living in a grain-growing area; in good pasture country she would have had more.\textsuperscript{15} But the widow is less likely to have learned her profession of dairy-keeping\textsuperscript{16} in a grain-growing area. The one sheep, it seems, serves to emphasize the poverty and simplicity of life


\textsuperscript{14}Gen Prol, I, 597.

\textsuperscript{15}Power, op. cit., p. 29.

\textsuperscript{16}NPT, VII, 2846: "For she was, as it were, a maner deye."
in the sooty parlor and hall, compared to the gracious living of Chauntecleer who is "roial, as a prince is in his halle." The widow is too poor to have more than one sheep, but such is the unsophisticated goodness of her peasant life that even the sheep has identity. While the name Malle is useful for the purposes of rhyme, it is also appropriately plebeian and, as the derisive remark of the third shepherd in the *Prima Pastorum* suggests, is associated with stupidity and misfortune:

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Ye brayde of Mowllë that went by the way.
Many shepe can she polle bot oone had she ay
Bot she happnyd fulle fowll; hyr pycher, I say,
Was broken.
"Ho, God" she sayde,
Bot oone shepe yit she hade,
The mylk-pycher was layde,
The skarthys was the tokyn."^{18}
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The plain name has none of the pretentiousness suggested in the Frenchified elegance of "Pertelote."

When Chaucer uses the sheep and lamb in metaphor and simile, he expresses conventional views. Among the proverbial expressions he employs for the purpose of illustrative comparison are the meekness of the lamb, the stupidity or helplessness of the sheep, and the lamb longing for the teat.

He applies a proverbial phrase in *The Second Nun's Tale*:

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As meke as evere was any lamb . . .
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^{17}NPT, VII, 3184.

It is the third of three proverbial expressions occurring within the space of five lines and has a perfunctory ring. The references to the bee, the lion and the lamb also appear in Chaucer's source, the *Legenda Aurea*, and Chaucer appears to have been content to reproduce the triteness of his original.

In the allusion to the sheep cowering in the fold, which occurs in Palamon's arraignment of Fortune, Chaucer gives concreteness to a proverbial concept by using a specific image:

What is mankynde moore unto you holde Than is the sheep that rouketh in the folde?  

KnT, I, 1307-1308.

The passage, which does not appear in the *Teseida*, might be cited in support of Cummings' view that Chaucer creates a realistic atmosphere in *The Knight's Tale*, dependent on life and abounding in "the characteristic modes of genuine medi­aeval battle, tournament, court ceremonial, everyday speech and clamour, thought and philosophy." While Palamon's speech expresses ideas found in Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and *Ecclesiastes*, the reference to the sheep appears to be

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19 See text in *Sources and Analogues*, p. 672.


21 Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 672, compares lines 1303-1312 with Boethius, I, m. 5; Eccl. iii, 18ff. (quoted in Innocent, "De Contemptu Mundi," i, 2, Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CCXVII, 703). Neither, however, refers to sheep. In Eccl. iii, 19, is a parallel passage to *KnT*, I, 1309.
Chaucer's own. But the image does not arise out of an apparent familiarity with pastoral life and is not particularly suited to the teller. The allusion to the sheep's proverbial meekness is more effective when used by the Wife of Bath in demonstrating the way she deals with a complaining husband:

Thanne wolde I seye, "Goode lief, taak keep
How mekely looketh Wilkyn, oure sheep;
Come neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy cheke:
Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,
And han a sweete spiced conscience,
Sith ye so preche of Jobes pacience. \[WB Prol, III, 431-436.\]

The brief phrase aptly conveys her contempt and gives ironic point to the next line where the use of the word _ba_ serves as a reminder of the sheep's bleat and turns her proffered affection into mockery. Also effective, in that it is strikingly suited to the character of the speaker, is the remark of the besotted Absolon outside Alisoun's window:

I moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete. \[MillT, I, 3704.\]

While the phrase may be termed proverbial,\(^22\) it is also self-revealing; it is one of many images used to illustrate the small-town clerk and barber's oral-anal fixation.\(^23\)

The traditional religious symbolism of the sheep and the lamb, as used by Chaucer, does not require much comment


in most instances. The concept of the shepherd and his sheep occurs most extensively, of course, in the description of the parson in The General Prologue:

This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf.
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto.
That if gold ruste, what shal ired do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a prest take keep,
A shiten shepherde, and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules.
Or with a brethered to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;
He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.

Gen Prol, I, 496-514.

The paradox of the "shiten shepherde and a clene sheep" has parallels both in the late twelfth century Roman de Carité and in Gower's Vox Clamantis. It is also possible that

24 For an example of overt symbolism, see An ABC, trans. from Deguilleville's Le Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine, line 172: "Right soo thi Sone list, as a lamb, to deye." See also MLT, II, 452, 459; PrT, VII, 581, 584.

25 G. L. Kittredge, "Chaucer and the Roman de Carité, MLN, XII (1897), 113.

Chaucer, in praising the parson, may have had in mind a very different person, the unforgiving bishop of *Apocalypsis Goliae Episcopi*:

Errantem sequitur grex errans praevium
Quem pastor devius ducens per devium
Post lac et vellera, dat carnes ovium
Luporum dentibus et rostris avium. 27

But basically the concept of the shepherd and sheep, which appears in the description of the parson and in *The Parson's Tale* itself, 28 is that of the New Testament. 29 The imagery is used with simplicity and directness. It not only suggests that the good Parson himself possesses similar qualities but gives an impression of sincerity to the tribute. When the imagery is replaced by direct description of how the Parson might have behaved in London, a strikingly different quality is apparent. The cynicism subtly enhances the value of the tribute; it implies that the tribute comes from one well qualified to make an appraisal and from one who, for all his sophistication, has been moved to give unequivocal praise.

Traditional symbolism contributes significantly to tone in *The Clerk's Tale*. The sheep and lamb are among the objects of religious connotation which Chaucer seems to use in order to give the tale a hagiographic element. The first allusion to


28 ParsT, X, 720, 767, 791.

29 John, x, 11-14.
sheep in the tale\textsuperscript{30} occurs also in Petrarch's Latin letter, \textit{Epistolarum Senilium}, Book XVII, Letter III, and the anonymous French prose translation, \textit{Le Livre Griseldis},\textsuperscript{31} the two works which Chaucer consulted regularly throughout the composing process.\textsuperscript{32} But two allusions to an ox's stall,\textsuperscript{33} which are not in Chaucer's sources,\textsuperscript{34} suggest associations with the Nativity, and prepare us for the presentation of Griselda as the meek, suffering lamb whose child is to die.

Grisildis moot al suffre and al consente;  
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,  
And leet this cruell sergeant doon his wille.  
\textit{CIT}, IV, 537-539.

The simile is not in Chaucer's sources,\textsuperscript{35} and its religious connotations are subsequently reinforced by Griselda's own lyrical address to her child:

And thus she seyde in hire benigne voys,  
"Fareweel my child! I shal thee never see.  
But sith I thee have marked with the croys  
Of thilke Fader - blessed moote he be! -  
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree,  
Thy soule, litel child, I hym betake,  
For this nyght shaltow dyen for my sake."  
\textit{CIT}, LV, 554-560.

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{CIT}, IV, 223: "A fewe sheepe, spynynge, on feeld she kepte."

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Sources and Analogues}, pp. 302-303.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 289.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{CIT}, IV, 291, 398.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Cf. texts in Sources and Analogues}, pp. 304-305; 308-309.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 312-313.
Compared with the accounts of Petrarch and the author of *Le Livre Griseldis*, in which Griselda does not address her child but merely makes the sign of the cross with serene brow, there is pathos and simple manner of utterance reminiscent of the medieval lyrics in which the Virgin speaks to her infant. The image of the lamb, the ox's stall, and later Griselda's comparison of herself to a worm and her fears regarding the cruel hounds are all illustrations from the animal world which do not appear in Chaucer's sources, and they all emphasize Griselda's peasant simplicity and saintlike humility. Sparingly used in the work, they also provide striking contrast to the ironic envoy where *Chichevache, camaille, tygre* and *quaille* appear within the space of a few lines.

There are also two references to sheep which present problems of interpretation. The first occurs in *The Miller's Tale*. Nicholas, persuading John to prepare for the Flood, refers to Noah and his recalcitrant wife:

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36 Cf. texts in *Sources and Analogues*, pp. 312-313.

37 *CIT, IV, 88*: "Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye."
Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 711, takes the phrase simply to mean "naked"; a stock comparison (Fr. "Nu comme un ver"). Poverty, Rom. 454, is described as "nakid as a worm."

38 *CIT, IV, 1094-1096:*
"Youre woful mooder wende stedfastly
That cruel houndes or some foul vermyne
Hadde eten yow;"

39 *CIT, IV, 1188-1206.*
"Hastou nat herd," quod Nicholas, "also
The sorwe of Noe with his felawshipe,
Er that he myghte gete his wyf to shipe?
Hym hadde be levere, I dar wel undertake
At thilke tyme, than all his wetheres blake
That she hadde had a ship hirself allone. 

Robinson asserts that the reference is to the comic accounts of Noah's wife in the Mystery plays, in which case the allusion might have been more appropriate had it come from Absolon who took the part of Herod "upon a scaffold hye." But the tradition appears to have been widely known, and Nicholas need not necessarily be referring to the drama. In the tenth century Bodleian manuscript, containing the Caedmonian poems, is a picture of the Ark which shows Noah's wife standing at the foot of the gangway, and one of her sons trying to persuade her to come in.

Nicholas implies that Noah has a number of sheep. Yet, according to Genesis, vi, 20, only two of each kind are to accompany Noah. In the Mystery plays also, only two of each kind go into the ark and there is no mention of "wetheres blake." In the Towneley Play, God says:

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40 Robinson, op. cit., p. 686.

41 MillT, I, 3384.

Take to thi ship
Of ich kind beestis two,
Mayll and femayll, but no mo,
Or thou pull vp thi sayll.\textsuperscript{43}

In the Biblical version there is, admittedly, an ambiguity about the number of animals of each kind. According to Genesis, vii, 2, clean beasts are to be taken in by sevens, the male and female, and unclean beasts by two.\textsuperscript{44} But, in terms of popular tradition, the animals going in two by two, as in Genesis, vii, 9, has come to mean two of each kind only. Therefore, with application to the Biblical story, the passage cannot mean that Noah would give all his "wetheres blake"\textsuperscript{45} to have his wife sail by herself, because he has only two sheep to consider. Neither can we take the passage to imply that

\textsuperscript{43}Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose, p. 190.

\textsuperscript{44}The Interpreter's Bible, ed. G. A. Buttrick et al., I (New York, 1952), 543-544, following Document J of Genesis, states: "... seven of each kind of clean animal were taken into the ark – possibly three pairs and an extra male intended for sacrifice."

\textsuperscript{45}Neither W. W. Skeat, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, V (Oxford, 1894), 107, nor Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 686, give any comment on the lines beyond a reference to the drama. E. T. Donaldson, Chaucer's Poetry (New York, 1958), p. 119, translates: "he'd have given all the rams he had." Kelsie B. Harder, "Chaucer's Use of the Mystery Plays in The Miller's Tale," \textit{MLQ}, XVII (1956), 191-198, does not discuss the line. J. S. P. Tatlock and A. G. Kennedy, A Concordance to the Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Washington, 1927), p. 85, give blake as "black" in the passage under discussion, but the Middle English Dictionary, ed. H. Kurath and S. M. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1952-), does not cite the passage under blak, adjective or verb. An alternative meaning for blake is "to be frightened," as in blöken, OE. blácian. Mannyng, as cited in MED, B4, p. 99, has "Po Normans were sorie, of contenance gan blaken," The meaning, except for the problem of "all", makes good sense in the
rather than have all his sheep sail alone, he would prefer his wife to, because, apart from two sheep, the flock do not sail at all.

The meaning of the passage becomes clear, however, if we conclude that Nicholas is thinking of the sheep's current market value. The tight, close lamb skins were used as fur in the Middle Ages. The wool of black sheep was particularly favored and fetched high prices. To have his wife sail by herself, Noah would be willing to sacrifice all his black sheep, the most valuable of his flock.

Further problems of interpretation occur in connection with the sheepbone in The Pardoner's Prologue (VI, 350-371) and The Parson's Tale (X, 603). The Pardoner's sheepbone, which cures cattle of a variety of diseases, multiplies the livestock of the owner under certain conditions, and removes jealousy, belonged to a Holy Jew whose identity is unspecified. All we are told is that the shoulderbone was "of an hooly Jewes sheep," (351) and that the ritual to be followed for enlarging resources is "as thilke hooly Jew oure eldres taughte" (364). Both Jacob and Gideon have been put forward as the Hebraic passage, but there is no evidence to support its use. Elsewhere in Chaucer's works, blake refers to blackness, darkness, or a dark substance.

patriarch whom the Pardoner had in mind, but neither has convincing claims to the title. In Genesis, xxx, 37-43, Jacob's sheep multiply when they drink at the water troughs, as a result of wizardry brought about by wooden rods, not by a sheepbone. Gideon's fleece which is used to divine God's will is not a "miracle-working fleece," as it has been called. In Judges, vi, 37-40, God performs the miracle on the fleece as a sign that He is prepared to help Gideon save Israel. Gideon's subsequent "prosperity" consists in slaying the Midianites, erecting an ephod made from the gold earrings of the defeated, and producing seventy sons, activities which have nothing whatsoever to do with the fleece or, for that matter, with the Pardoner's sheepbone.

In addition to the problem regarding the identity of the Holy Jew, there is a difficulty concerning the sheepbone itself; the Pardoner does not ascribe to it the properties commonly attributed to a magic shoulderbone. The shoulderbone of a sheep is widely used in scapulomancy, a practice denounced by the Parson:

49 Rutter, op. cit., p. 536.

50 Ibid.,

51 Judges, vii, viii.

52 The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. S. M. Jackson et al., III (New York, 1909), 450, defines scapulomancy as the reading of the fissures caused on the shoulderblade of a sacrificial animal by exposing it to fire.
But let us go now to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon thise false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacyns ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle, or in a fir, or in a shulderboon of a sheep. 

Giraldus Cambrensis speaks of the Flemings of Rhos, in Wales, as practising divination with the right shoulderbone of a ram, and gives an instance of a wife revealing her own adultery through it. The superstition is said to have lasted among the descendants of the Flemings in Wales up to the twentieth century, with young women discovering the identity of their lovers by means of a bladebone of a shoulder of mutton. Geographically, the practice appears to be extensive. It is reported among the Tartars, in Persia and in Scotland. In France, a famous pirate, Eustace the Monk, who was subsequently killed in a seafight with the English off Sandwich in 1217, was a practitioner. In England, divination

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54 Ibid., editor's comment, p. 80, n. 1.

55 Ibid.


by sheepbone, referred to by Caxton\textsuperscript{58} as well as by Chaucer,
was continued in the nineteenth century by a young lady from
Wakefield.\textsuperscript{59} But divination is not the property assigned by
the Pardoner to his sheepbone. In fact, with regard to
cuckolded husbands, the sheepbone by eradicating justifiable
jealousy might be said to cause delusions rather than a revela-
tion of truth. The kind of magic worked by the Pardoner's
bone is usually attributed to precious stones\textsuperscript{60} or to medieval
charms,\textsuperscript{61} although it must not be forgotten that animal bones
have been used for medicinal purposes from ancient times.\textsuperscript{62}

An attempt has been made to solve the problems both of
the Holy Jew and of the sheepbone by suggesting that no specific
patriarch is intended, and that the bone itself comes from \textit{The
Parson's Tale}. The Pardoner connects the sheepbone with the
Holy Jew to make the relic more impressive, and there is satiric

\textsuperscript{58}{See Brand's Pop. Ant., loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{59}{W. Henderson, \textit{Notes on the Folklore of the Northern
Counties of England and the Border} (London, 1879), p. 175.}

\textsuperscript{60}{L. J. Henkin, "The Pardoner's Sheep-Bone and Lapidary
Lore," \textit{Bulletin of Hist. of Medicine}, X (1941), 505.}

\textsuperscript{61}{Carleton Brown, ed., \textit{The Pardoner's Tale} (Oxford,
1935), p. x; L. J. Henkin, "Jacob and The Hooly Jew," \textit{MLN},
LV (1940), 257.}

\textsuperscript{62}{See W. R. Dawson, \textit{Magician and Leech} (London, 1929),
pp. 109-111; \textit{County Folk-Lore}, ed. Mrs. Gutch, II (London,
1901), 181, states that in Yorkshire, a traditional cure for
diarrhoea, \textit{shoot}, \textit{scour} or \textit{scout}, the looseness in cattle, was
the lower jawbone of a pig, powdered fine, along with a quantity
of tobacco pipes, and given in thick gruel.
humor in the fact that a Holy Jew's relic is represented as possessing pagan, even sacrilegious powers. The Pardoner's sheepbone is inspired by the Parson's; the Pardoner's prescription suggests the cabalistic ritual "of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon these false enchauntours or nigromancer" condemned by the Parson, and the use of "charmes for woundes or maladie of men or of beestes" (607) is arraigned by the Parson immediately after his reference to various sorts of magic and divination. But even if it is granted that the Holy Jew may be merely a convenient fiction, the Parson's remarks, which do not even mention what the cabalistic ritual is, do not provide the answer to questions connected with the Pardoner's sheepbone. Barefaced liar though he is, why should the Pardoner attribute to the bone magical properties which, as far as can be ascertained, have never been associated with it, and why should he use it instead of magic stones, herbs or other charms, more valid for the purpose and more easily portable from village to village?

It is possible that, in all his hocus-pocus with the sheepbone, the Pardoner is trying to solve one of the difficulties inherent in his profession. A Pardoner is expected to have his own travelling display of sacred relics. But the

63 Henkin, MLN, LV (1940), 254-259.

demand for such relics far exceeds the supply, and there is intense competition for collectors' items. Even the partial enumeration of Fra Cipolla's collection, described by Boccaccio, includes the jaw-bone of Lazarus, a feather of the angel Gabriel, the hood of a seraph which appeared to St. Francis, the toenail of a cherub, some vestments of the Holy Catholic Faith, a finger of the Holy Ghost, a few rays of the star of Bethlehem, and a vial containing tones of the bells of Solomon's temple. The Pardoner is probably hard put to find relics that even look genuine, for in The General Prologue, I, 700, Chaucer immediately identifies his sacred relics as pigs' bones. A Pardoner without a saint's bone is without his most important stock-in-trade. As a representative of the Church, miracle-working relics are expected of him rather than charms or talismen of pagan times, and saints' bones are widely held to be efficacious in a variety of ways. Fragments of dead mortality have been used in spells and as remedies from ancient times, and their appeal to simple people is deeply rooted. In particular, water in which the

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bones of saints are dipped has curative powers.\textsuperscript{68} The Pardoner's problem is to make the sheepbone do the kind of work his customers expect from a holy relic. He knows that even the simplest peasant is unlikely to attribute the shoulderbone of a sheep to the anatomy of a saint. But a large bone, such as he might pick up near a village from the common pasture, has advantages from the point of view of showmanship and also saves him the trouble of transporting it from place to place. By producing a fiction about the Holy Jew's sheep, he is able to account for it and at the same time make use of ideas connected with saints' bones and wells. The bone appeals not only because it has the properties of medieval charms but because it arouses confused memories of the efficacy of bones belonging to saints.

The Pardoner may also be having his own private sneer at the Jewish faith. To the Jewish people, the reference to "an hooly Jewes sheep" would probably recall to mind the sacrificial animal. One of the earliest sacrifices recorded in the Sacred Books is of the ram offered by Abraham in place of his son.\textsuperscript{69} Indeed, if we were seeking to identify the Holy Jew, Abraham's claims to the title, flimsy as they are, are superior to those of Jacob and Gideon. As a result of his sacrifice,


\textsuperscript{69}Gen. xxii, 13.
Abraham is immediately promised success and prosperity, and to people of other faiths the roasted bones of the ram might well come to be regarded as having magical properties. But there is only one instance in the Bible of bones having supernatural properties and those bones belong to Elisha. The reference to the bone might also remind the Jewish people of the greatest of their ceremonial feasts, the Passover. After the destruction of the Temple, the Passover became a sacrament observed at home, and the lamb was no longer included. Instead, a roasted bone was placed on the table in memory of the rite. The Pardoner, then, takes a bone which, as he himself implies, has some sacred associations, and degrades it by applying it as a trivial nostrum.

Whereas Chaucer appears to think of the wolf largely in conventional terms, the sheep to Chaucer has its place in the everyday scene as well as a symbolism both secular and religious. The details of the sheep's diseases given by the Pardoner, the brief references to the sheep of the Reeve's master and of the poor widow, the allusion to Noah's "wetheres blake," and even the Pardoner's sheepbone, all reflect aspects of contemporary life and give concreteness to the situations. Traditional

70 II Kings, xiii, 21. For commentary, see The Interpreter's Bible, III, 258.

concepts of the sheep's meekness and stupidity are used perfunctorily in The Knight's Tale and in The Second Nun's Tale, but in The Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale and The Miller's Tale proverbial expressions are used to give vitality to the characters. In the portrait of the Parson in The General Prologue the symbolism of the sheep and the shepherd, and in The Clerk's Tale the symbolism of the lamb provide images of religious connotation and a high seriousness of tone. While Chaucer knows that sheep suffer from "pokkes", scabs and sores, and cower in their fold, he is not sufficiently interested in the animal to draw attention to it for its own sake. His allusions serve mainly to throw light on the human condition.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

My examination of the nature of Chaucer's references to animals reveals that Chaucer is basically traditional both in the attributes he gives to animals and in the applications he makes. From primitive times, man regarded animals as possessing specific traits, and these traits remained almost unchanged over the centuries, despite wide divergencies in the motivations of those who applied them. Different as the approaches of the early natural historian and the hermeneutical writer were, for example, the one seeking to compile a factual account of natural phenomena, the other regarding the visible world as wholly emblematic, serving to instruct man in the abstract truths which lay behind the physical manifestations, they both reiterated the stereotyped characteristics of animals found in many other kinds of literature as well as in popular lore. Chaucer uses the same conventional ideas. When he alludes to the fierceness of the lion,\(^1\) the rapacity of the wolf,\(^2\) and the craftiness of the fox,\(^3\) he is referring to widely accepted attributes. Indeed, the traits are so well known that he does not always state them. When he applies the

\(^1\)KnT, I, 1598. \(^2\)ParsT, X, 775. \(^3\)LGW, IV, 1393.
term fox to Pandarus\textsuperscript{4} or to the canon-alchemist,\textsuperscript{5} he assumes that his audience is aware of the significance of the metaphor. It is to be noted that, with the exception of the dog, the horse and the lion, where he chooses between two different symbolic concepts, he never endows an animal with a quality disparate to its traditional one.

Even more traditional is his application of the animal figure. For while he amplifies traditional ideas in some of his most effective references, his attitude remains conventional; he finds animals interesting mainly as types illustrative of humanity. His approach to the animal is unscientific, as it had been, with very few exceptions, since Aristotle. It is based on the assumption that the behavior of animals is inspired by human motives and, hence, animals are of significance mainly for their resemblance to man. This assumption is to be found in fables, natural histories, various sacred books, expository writings of the Church Fathers, bestiaries and encyclopedias, where, because the animal is regarded as similar to man, it is used to throw light on man. When Chaucer refers to Wilkyn as a sheep\textsuperscript{6} and compares those hoping to profit by alchemy to the blundering horse,\textsuperscript{7} he makes conventional ideas serve to illustrate human character and action. Although he may refer to a

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Tr}, III, 1565. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{5}\textit{CYT}, VIII, 1080.

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{WB Prol}, III, 432. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{7}\textit{CYT}, VIII, 1413-1414.
hunting or domestic animal in a descriptive scene, the scene itself is but a back-cloth for the human comedy. More commonly, even the most concrete of references illustrates character. The pilgrims' horses8 throw light on their riders; the Prioress's dogs9 reveal her sentimentality and her disregard for monastic discipline; the horse chasing wild mares,10 in addition to having a realistic narrative function, emphasizes the proclivities of John and Alayn; even the brief reference to Thomas's cat indicates Friar John's enthusiasm for food.

In some of the most striking animal figures, while the application remains the same, Chaucer is original in one of two ways: he implies rather than states the symbolism and introduces some realistic detail about the animal, or he exploits fully three different aspects of the animal, its symbolism, folklore and physical appearance. The symbolic quality of timidity is certainly implied in the comparison of Criseyde to the deer.12 But the hunting figure further suggests that Criseyde is an animal to be caught, that Pandarus is the beater exhibiting craftiness and experience in driving the animal into a trap, and that Troilus is the bowman demonstrating enforced

8Gen Prol, I, 74, 207, 287-288, 390, 469, 541, 615; NP Prol, VII, 2812-2813; CY Prol, VIII, 559-565.
9Gen Prol, I, 146-149.
10RvT, I, 4080-4081.
11SumT, III, 1775.
12Tr, II, 1534-1535.
patience and lying in wait for the quarry. In comparing the fashionably dressed man to the ape, Chaucer not only makes use of the basic symbolism of the ape as being imitative and lascivious. He also dilates on the physical appearance of the she-ape at oestrus to discover the most remarkable similarities between it and the fashionable man.

Where the three aspects are exploited, Chaucer's most interesting animal figures occur. When the hare is compared to the Pardoner in The General Prologue and the weasel to Alisoun in The Miller's Tale, a brief simile adumbrates an extremely complex presentation of character in which considerations of the animal's symbolism, folklore and physical appearance are all taken into account. The first reveals that the Pardoner is a hermaphrodite and may be suffering from a disease which has painful physical and psychological effects; the second indicates that, for all her countrified charm, Alisoun is the traditional creature of ill-luck, has many of the qualities attributed to the weasel in folklore, and resembles the mustela erminea in appearance.

An examination of the kind of image used suggests that, to Chaucer, the animal embodies the least attractive qualities

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13 ParsT, X, 422-425.  
14 Gen Prol, I, 684.  
15 MillT, I, 3234.  
17 See above, pp. 71-79.
of man. The implications are frequently pejorative, whether the images are derived from his own experience, natural histories and other compilations, fables, or from proverbial lore. To passages in which he appears to be following a literary source fairly closely, he sometimes even adds an image of violence or of sexual licence, and the two longest passages on animals for which Chaucer may have followed a source, illustrate man's "likerous appetit." Among the unpleasant images he presents are those of the lascivious ape, bull and spaniel, the cowardly ape, the urinating hound, the disease-ridden, fearful sheep, the child-devouring sow, and the whipped dog, of which all, with the possible exception of the last, are seemingly derived from life and are original to Chaucer; of the lascivious camel, cat and lioness and

18KnT, I, 1177-1180; 2065-2068.
19ParsT, X, 137-139; 857-858.
20MancT, IX, 175-182; 183-186.
21MancT, IX, 189.  22ParsT, IX, 422-425.
27Pard Prol, VI, 357-360; KnT, I, 1308.
28KnT, I, 2019.  29SqT, V, 491.
30Env. to ClT, IV, 1195-1196.
the unnatural hare\textsuperscript{33} and goat,\textsuperscript{34} images which, I have suggested,\textsuperscript{35} may have been taken from encyclopedic lore; of conflict between man and beast,\textsuperscript{36} or trickery between beasts,\textsuperscript{37} from the fables. When Chaucer uses proverbial expressions, they are, as we have seen, derogatory with reference to the ape, ass, bear, boar, dog, goat, horse, lion, mouse, sheep, domestic swine, tiger and wolf.\textsuperscript{38} The sheep and lamb have religious connotations for Chaucer which appear to be inescapable\textsuperscript{39} but the widely used symbolism of the lion as Christ is never used.\textsuperscript{40} Applied figuratively, the lion usually denotes fierceness, anger and cruelty in battle.\textsuperscript{41} Of the nature of two other animals which possessed a dual symbolism, the dog and the horse, Chaucer is equally unappreciative, as we have already seen.\textsuperscript{42} His figurative references to them are depreciatory and he makes no use of the widely circulating stories

\textsuperscript{33}Gen Prol, I, 684 \hfill \textsuperscript{34}Gen Prol, I, 688.
\textsuperscript{35}See above, pp. 27, 50-51, 48, 89ff, 91-92, 112.
\textsuperscript{36}WB Prol, III, 692.
\textsuperscript{37}Tr, IV, 1453-1454; KnT, I, 1177-1180; RvT, I, 4054-4055.
\textsuperscript{38}See above, pp. 36-40, 141, 144-146, 187-189.
\textsuperscript{39}See above, chap. vii, passim.
\textsuperscript{40}See above, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{41}KnT, I, 1598; SecNT, VIII, 198; KnT, I, 1656; SumT, III, 2152; KnT, I, 2630.
\textsuperscript{42}See above, chaps. iv and v.
attesting to their faithfulness and intelligence. The evidence that Chaucer finds the animal repellent is also supported by his references to the animal in dreams, if such dreams are regarded as revelatory of his own attitude. Red beasts, large and small dogs, black bears and bulls, owls and apes are creatures of the nightmare in The Nun's Priest's Tale, and even the whelp in The Book of The Duchess may be interpreted pejoratively.\(^{43}\)

The explanation for Chaucer's recoil is complex. While he shares the Boethian view that the beasts illustrate the baser passions of man and show what man becomes if he denies his spiritual nature, he appears to supplement it with a personal attitude. This attitude stems, I believe, from an inner tension which reveals itself in the extreme revulsion expressed in some of his images. To Chaucer, the animal is very similar to man, embodying qualities which he finds interesting, understandable and, in some respects, even desirable. He knows that man is but a poor, bare, forked animal and his delight in him is such that, like the Wife of Bath, he would not have him otherwise. But his Church teaches him that the expression of the natural passions, as exemplified by the unlicensed vitality of animal life, is to

\(^{43}\)NPT, VII, 2931-2935; 3092.

\(^{44}\)See above, pp. 151-152.
be condemned. He therefore tries to repress the attraction he feels for the uninhibited behaviour of the animal world and to see in the animal all the aspects of human degradation which emerge when the soul is not in control of the body. The animal becomes a kind of Yahoo, a creature of which it may be said:

Lo, heere hath lust his dominacioun,  
And appetit fleemeth discreetioun.  

*MancT*, IX, 181-182.
APPENDIX I

The Pardoner's "glarynge eyen."

My suggestion that the Pardoner is a hermaphrodite throws only partial light on the problems connected with him. It seems possible that the image of the hare may have an additional significance which can contribute towards a more complete interpretation of the Pardoner's character.

Most discussions on the Pardoner centre around the apparent incongruities in his behaviour. In the prologue he boastingly reveals his methods of extorting money from peasants and confesses his own complete depravity.\(^1\) He launches into his tale\(^2\) but is quickly diverted into haranguing against drunkenness, gluttony, gambling and swearing\(^3\) before completing his narrative.\(^4\) After concluding his sermon with a cynical demonstration of his final appeal to his customary gullible public,\(^5\) he gives a seemingly sincere benediction.\(^6\)

Then, despite the fact that he has already revealed his complete

\(^1\)Pard Prol, VI, 329-462.  \(^2\)PardT, VI, 463-482.
\(^3\)PardT, VI, 483-660.  \(^4\)PardT, VI, 661-894.
\(^5\)PardT, VI, 904-915.  \(^6\)PardT, VI, 916-918.
charlatanism, he tries to sell his pardon to the pilgrims, suggesting the Host should begin by kissing the relics for a groat.\textsuperscript{7} The interpretations proffered for the Pardoner's conduct are too numerous and varied even to be summarised here.\textsuperscript{8} But most critics appear to feel that the erratic shifts in tone, the elements of incoherence, the Pardoner's revelations and his final miscalculation require explanation, even if the explanation is simply that the apparent inconsistencies are all part of the confessional method.

An examination of the text suggests that the Pardoner, in addition to being an hermaphrodite, may be suffering from a disease, and it is possible that his behaviour can be explained in terms of it. It is unlikely that Chaucer recognized the characteristics he described as being symptomatic of a disease. But he was observant, and the details given and the implications of the imagery appear to include many of the noticeable features of the disease. An indication of the nature of the disease occurs in the reference to the glaring eyes of the hare.

The eyes of the hare are large, prominent, placed on the sides of the head, and have slightly elliptical pupils.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{7}\textit{PardT}, VI, 919-945.


Although not found in Aristotle, there is a very old and widespread belief that hares sleep with open eyes,¹⁰ an idea which may either have originated in the fact that it is almost impossible to catch a hare asleep,¹¹ or from the biological truth that hares are born with open eyes.¹² One natural historian remarks that "no matter how close an approach she allows as she lies in her form, her eyes are always open," and states further that when fully awake the eyes project beyond the surrounding surface. The extent of the protrusion he considers to vary with the will of the animal. The amount of white conjunctiva visible may vary from a considerable amount to none at all.¹³ Chaucer, then, in describing the Pardoner's eyes, seems to be suggesting that they have a bulging, glistening, staring appearance, and an apparent immobility of the eyelids. Such a description would also apply to someone suffering from exophthalmic goitre, a disease in which there is retraction of


¹² Barrett-Hamilton, loc. cit.

¹³ Ibid., II, 242.
the upper lid, orbital bulging and tension.\textsuperscript{14} I think it can be demonstrated that there are many indications that the Pardoner was, in fact, suffering from this disease, and that much of his behaviour can be explained in terms of it.

Among the outstanding clinical features of the disease are excessive sweating, insatiable thirst, and a voracious appetite.\textsuperscript{15} Evidence of the Pardoner sweating is inconclusive, but it should be noted that he is associated with the goat, an animal popularly supposed to be feverish,\textsuperscript{16} and that he only

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14}See \textit{Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine}, p. 493: "Upper lid retraction is characteristic, giving a glint to the eye or a coquettish look when it is mild in degree, or a frightened stare in more severe cases." See also \textit{Parsons' Diseases of the Eye}, ed. Sir Stewart Duke-Elder (London, 1954), p. 566: "There is a peculiar stare with the retraction of the upper eyelid, so that there is an unnatural degree of separation between the margins of the two lids . . . Normally, when the eye is directed downwards, the upper lid moves concordantly with it. In this disease, the upper lid follows tardily or not at all." Cf. the description of the bad sight of the hare, given above, p. 15, with \textit{Textbook of Medicine}, ed. Sir J. Conybeare and W. N. Mann, (Edinburgh, 1952), p. 229: "It [exophthalmic goitre] is often associated with swelling of the eyelids . . . This exophthalmic ophthalmoplegia may progress to such an extent that it becomes impossible to approximate the lids and may consequently lead to keratitis, corneal ulceration, ophthalmitis, and loss of vision."

\item \textsuperscript{15}\textit{Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine}, p. 492: "The paradox of an insatiable and voracious appetite with progressive loss of weight is a source of wonder and concern to patient and relative. The explanation is the raised metabolic rate. Excessive thirst is an effort to compensate for loss of fluid by profuse perspiration." Under normal circumstances, if the Pardoner was the glutton he seems to be, he must have been very fat - a fact Chaucer might surely have commented upon.

\item \textsuperscript{16}Pliny, \textit{op. cit.}, III, 141; T. H. White, \textit{The Bestiary} (New York, 1960), p. 74.
\end{itemize}
wears the lightest of headgear. He is undoubtedly thirsty and is obsessed with images of food, wine and water. Pointed reference to his drinking is made by the Wife of Bath, and when he is invited to tell a tale, his first demand is for food and drink:

"It shal be doon," quod he, "by Seint Ronyon! But first," quod he, "heere at this alestake I wol bothe drynke, and eten of a cake."

"Seint Ronyon," itself, is an appropriate expletive for the Pardoner and may have been picked up from the Host not only for the pun on runnion, the male organ, but also because it has associations with water. For, elusive as "Seint Ronyon" is, he certainly seems to be connected with wells. Six lines further on, the Pardoner again indicates his intention of drinking, and in the Prologue he boasts of his consumption. When he begins his tale, he is distracted by his references to the revellers' excessive eating and drinking, and by the

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17 Gen Prol, I, 683: "Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare." It might be noted that the cap is decorated with a vernicle, an ornament which may have a particular attraction for the Pardoner since it commemorates St. Veronica who wiped the sweat from Christ's brow.

18 WB Prol, 170-171.


20 Pard Prol, VI, 452.

21 PardT, VI, 468.
vampiric image which he conjures up of the unnatural mutilation of Christ's body, and launches into a diatribe against drunkenness and gluttony. His violence and emphasis suggest that he has a sense of guilt in his preoccupation:

\[
\begin{align*}
0 \text{ glotonye, ful of cursednesse;} \\
0 \text{ cause first of oure confusioun;} \\
0 \text{ original of oure damnpacioun,} \\
\text{Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn;} \\
PardT, VI, 498-501.
\end{align*}
\]

His reference to Adam, for which he draws not upon the Bible but on Jerome, shows that the ideal state to him is that of a man who fasts:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Adam oure fader, and his wyf also,} \\
\text{Fro Paradys to labour and to wo} \\
\text{Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede.} \\
\text{For whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,} \\
\text{He was in Paradys.} \\
PardT, VI, 505-509.
\end{align*}
\]

He describes the processes of cookery with a sensuous relish which betrays his eager concern with food:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grynde,} \\
\text{And turnen substaunce into accident,} \\
\text{To fulfille al thy likerous talent;} \\
\text{Out of the harde bones knokke they} \\
\text{The mary, for they caste noght awey} \\
\text{That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote.} \\
\text{Of spicerie of leef, and bark, and roote} \\
\text{Shal been his sauce ymaked by delit,} \\
\text{To make hym yet a newer appetit.} \\
PardT, VI, 538-546.
\end{align*}
\]

\[22\text{PardT, VI, 474.}\]

\[23\text{PardT, VI, 483-588.}\]
His mind may even be on food when he describes his preaching methods earlier:

And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,  
To saffron with my predicacioun.  
Pard Prol, VI, 344-345.

He may be thinking not so much of the poetic associations of the rich yellow dye, but of the use of saffron in cooking. He discusses the effect of cheap and strong Spanish wines on wines stored near them in a way, it has been observed, "singularly inappropriate to a sermon," whereas his attack on gambling is somewhat more perfunctory. In the actual tale, the revellers' day begins with drink, while the funeral bell tolls for a "fordronke" companion, and ends, for two of them, with a fatal drink.

In the patient suffering from exophthalmic goitre, the carotid vessels pulsate. Describing himself, the Pardoner says:

Thanne peyne I me to streche forth the nekke,  
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,  
As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne.  
Pard Prol, VI, 395-397.

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24 H. B. Hinckley, Notes on Chaucer (Northampton, Mass, 1907), p. 164, while noting its use in cooking, concludes Chaucer is thinking of the dye.

25 Iris Origo, The Merchant of Prato, reprinted (London, 1959), p. 289, states that in cooking, saffron was believed to have the virtue of "comforting the heart and the stomach" and "curing red and bloodshot eyes."

26 G. H. Gerould, op. cit., p. 65.  
27 Ibid., p. 66.

28 Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine, p. 492.
The simile may be of significance solely with reference to the technique of a mob orator. But the comparison also seems apt when one considers the most striking feature of the dove's appearance. For, as was noted early by the encyclopedist Brunetto Latini in *Le Livre du Tresor*, the dove has a peculiar pulsating movement in its neck and throat. In pigeon circles, the dove's movement appears to be known as "pouting." One writer states:

> Observe the male pigeon while cooing to his mate or his neighbours. Notice that he inflates his throat and crop, and that this feature is an invariable feature [sic] in the act, often continued for some moments after the cooing ceases ... Notice how he increases the inflation whenever he begins cooing.

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30 "The terms 'pigeon' and 'dove' are loosely used and often interchangeable, but for the most part 'pigeon' refers to the larger species, 'dove' to the smaller." - Roger Peterson, *et al.*, *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* (London, 1954), p. 82.

31 Harvey A. Carr, *The Behaviour of Pigeons* (Washington, 1919), p. 138. Charles J. Maynard, *Vocal Organs of Talking Birds* (West Newton, Mass., 1928), pp. 43-44, also notes that the movement is connected with the voice: "The birds stand or perch upright with the head drawn somewhat backward, then air is taken into the oesophagus thus inflating his crop. This inflation causes the trachea to bow outward, thus drawing its lower portion and the bronchials forward, tensing the tympaniforms and the depressed tracheal area, fitting them to produce sound at the will of the bird. Of course, the two syringeal vibratory membranes are rendered tense by the syringeal muscles ... Considering the entire vocal apparatus, it would seem that the notes are produced by the tensed syringeal membranes vibrated by forcibly expelled air from the lungs."
The dove, then, is a particularly suitable image for the Pardoner. It has a tremulous voice which seems small but also has a "far-reaching, echo-like resonance."\[32\] Similar qualities are noted concerning the Pardoner's voice.\[33\] The dove is also a voracious eater and, unlike most birds, takes its liquids in a continuous draught instead of in small sips.\[34\] But, in particular, the dove has a pulsating movement similar to that which may be noted in sufferers from exophthalmic goitre.

The Pardoner's hair, yellow as wax and hanging smoothly as a hank of flax, has been described as "long and soft hair, immoderately fine in texture and reddish or yellow in color."\[35\] In the sufferer from exophthalmic goitre, the details given prompt a different interpretation. The Pardoner terms himself a young man.\[36\] If he is suffering from exophthalmic goitre,

\[32\]Maynard, op. cit., p. 45: "Sounds so produced are accentuated by the walls of the anterior air cell, by which the entire syrinx is enclosed, possibly aided by the inflated crop, until they acquire that far-reaching echo-like resonance for which many of the species of this group are remarkable. The tremulousness is probably produced by vibrations of the broad tympaniforms and the depressed tracheal areas."

\[33\]Cf. _Gen Prol_, I, 688: "A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot;" _Gen Prol_, I, 714: "Therefore he song the murierly and loude;" _Pard Prol_, VI, 331: "And rynge it out as round as goothe a belle."


\[35\]Curry, op. cit., p. 58. \[36\]_WB Prol_, III, 187.
his hair may whiten prematurely. One knows from observation that in the ageing the hairs may be white close to the skull—in the Pardoner's case, covered by a cap—but towards the ends are often a yellowish, transparent shade; indeed, very much like the color of wax.

Two other features of the disease might be briefly noted before we deal with its psychological aspects. Evidence that the Pardoner exhibits these features is, however, inconclusive. The patient often exhibits restless movement and a nervous tremor of the hands. The Pardoner does boast:

Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne
That it is joye to se my bisynesse,

Pard Prol, VI, 398-399.

but the description probably applies to his tricks of oratorical haranguing. The sufferer tends to lose weight. In the text there is no indication of the Pardoner's size, although the Ellesmere illustration is of a slight man. There may also be some significance in the fact that the gifts that he asks for are apparently small and easily portable.

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37 Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine, p. 493.
38 Ibid., p. 492.
39 Ibid., p. 492.
40 PardT, VI, 907-910.
But the most illuminating, in view of the problem connected with the Pardoner to which we have already referred, are the mental manifestations of the disease. The patient is unstable, and in severe cases restlessness may amount to mania and delirium. Paranoia may develop and, in such an eventuality, the patient tends to project his faults on others, and is capable of deceiving others. Even in cases not severe, the patient shows an inability for severe concentration.

Here then is the explanation for the incoherence of the Pardoner's outbursts, his inability to sustain the same idea for any length of time, his audacious self-exposure, his

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41 See above, pp. 226-227.


43 Textbook of Medicine, p. 230.


45 Price's Textbook of the Practice of Medicine, p. 1668.

46 Ibid., p. 492.

47 Gerould, op. cit., p. 67, attributing the Pardoner's loss of control to drunkenness, states: "He does not even move forward, but instead rambles from topic to topic ... he begins by saying that avarice is his sole theme, but he deserts it at once for his own confession and returns to it only to emphasize his own wickedness. He recalls his engagement to tell a story, but drops the tale after a few lines and drifts into a denunciation first of gluttony and then of gambling ... When he comes at length to the point of telling his 'moral tale,' Chaucer as is wholly right takes over."
guilt-ridden preoccupation with food, drink and sex, his apparent past successes with the public, and his inability to refrain from attempting one last flight of persuasive oratory at the conclusion. The Pardoner is a sick man, mentally as well as physically. In the light of my conclusion, his own statement, drawn from Seneca, hints poignantly at his plight:

Senec seith a good word doutelees;  
He seith he kan no difference fynde  
Bitwix a man which that is out of his mynde  
And a man that is dronkelewe,  
But that woodnesse, yfallen in a shrewe,  
Persevereth lenger than dooth dronkenesse.

PardT, VI, 492-497.
APPENDIX II

Chaucer's Horses

Ambler: a horse which has been trained to amble. Bowden, *op. cit.*, p. 217, states: "An ambling horse (often called a pacer today) is one which has been taught to lift two feet together on the same side of its body, making for comfortable riding on a long journey, and is therefore precisely the mount an experienced traveller such as Alisoun would choose." It seems to me, however, that the advantages of the gait which Bowden attributes to the ambler would be greater if one rode side-saddle. For a tentative explanation of Chaucer's reason for assigning an ambler to the Wife of Bath in *Gen Prol*, I, 469, see above, pp. 166-167.

Courser: a lighter, more agile animal than the dextrier; it was used in tournament, battle, hunting and parade. See *KnT*, I, 1502; *ScT*, V, 310, etc.

Dextrier: a warhorse of powerful build and great strength which, when fully equipped, was covered with armor. It was not customary for a knight to mount it until the instant of battle. On the march, a knight rode a hackney or palfrey, the dextrier being taken care of by the groom. In *Thop*, VII, 913, the hero's
Dextrier: horse is referred to as a dextrier. With reference to line 885, Karkeek, _op. cit._, p. 491, says he doubts if a dextrier ever went at an amble. No doubt the inconsistency is for comic effect.

Lombardy Steed: Karkeek, _op. cit._, p. 497, states the horse was a great favorite with English kings, and records show that the steed was purchased in Lombardy for large sums. It was trained to wheel round when at full gallop. See _SqT_, V, 214.

Mare: a despised horse, never used by persons of quality. See _Gen Prol_, I, 541, where it is assigned to the Ploughman. See also _Gen Prol_, I, 691; _RvT_, I, 4055, 4081; _Manc Prol_, IX, 78.

Palfrey: Alexander Neckam, _op. cit._, p. 260, states:

"Palefridus, sic dictus quasi passu leni fraenum ducens, decenti gaudet ornatus phalerarum. Campanulis pectoralis dulce tinnientibus delectatur, et decentis lupati fulgor ipsum juvat." In Chaucer's day it was _le cheval de parade_, popular with knights and ladies. See _Gen Prol_, I, 207; _KnT_, I, 2495; _RvT_, I, 4075; _LGW_, III, 1116, 1198.

Poileys courser: according to Karkeek, _op. cit._, p. 496, horses bred at Apulia in southern Italy were long celebrated. They were strong and well-proportioned. See _SqT_, V, 216.
Rouncy: Karkeek, *op. cit.*, p. 457, states: "The word 'rouncy,' from the Mediaeval Latin *runcinus*, implies a heavy, powerful animal, either a packhorse, or such as is used for rough agricultural purposes; in neither case was it suited for the saddle nor intended for such work." H. B. Hinckley, *Notes on Chaucer* (Northampton, Mass., 1907), pp. 29-30, suggests, on the other hand, that *rouncy* sometimes meant "warhorse" in Middle English, and provides examples of that meaning as well as for "nag." Bowden, *op. cit.*, p. 197, suggests that the Shipman, ignorant of the art of riding, would probably be assigned the worst horse for hire, and observes that in the Ellesmere MS. the Shipman's mount is something like a carthorse. See *Gen Prol*, I, 390.

Stot: Karkeek, *op. cit.*, p. 495, states that it was an undersized horse, what the English would now call a cob. He also mentions the opinion of Thorold Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices*, I, 36, that stots were low-bred, undersized stallions. See *Gen Prol*, I, 615, where it is the Reeve's mount, and *FrT*, III, 1630, where it is used as a term of abuse for an old woman.
Proper names:

Bayard: The name of the horse of Renaud de Montaubon who, in a quarrel over chess, killed his opponent Bertolai, Charlemagne's nephew. Outlawed, Renaud made several stands against Charlemagne but finally had to abandon his famous steed to him. The horse was thrown into the Meuse but it rose again and still gallops over the hills of Ardennes on St. John's Eve - See The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., XXIII, 96. The NED states that Bayard was first of all used as a mock-heroic, allusive name for any horse, and then in many proverbial phrases and sayings, when Bayard was taken as a type of blindness or of blind recklessness. The earliest use of Bayard, c. 1345, cited in the MED, Bl, p. 606, is a bay-colored horse, not a proper name. It came later to be applied as a proper name or as a common name as in RyT, I, 4115 and Tr, I, 218, or in proverbial expression as in CYT, VIII, 1413, referring to a blind, i.e. blundering, old nag. Bayard therefore acquired qualities not to be found in Renaud's horse, but apparently regarded in the Middle Ages as common in the horse. The blindness probably had a physical basis. According to William Youatt, The Horse (London, 1898), pp. 188-194, common inflammation, gutta serena or glass eye, glaucoma or green cataract are frequent eye diseases in the horse. With lack of
Bayard: treatment in the Middle Ages, the result must have been complete blindness.

Brok: FrT, III, 1543: "Hayt, Brok!" John L. Fisher, "Chaucer's Horses," South Atlantic Quarterly, LX (1961), 71-79, whose article appeared after my chapter on horses was completed, remarks, p. 74, that brock in this sense is from the Scandinavian (cf. OIcl. brokkr, trotter; brokkari, cart horse), and is defined by the MED as "an inferior horse, a jade." He suggests the pejorative sense may have been influenced by Celtic, brock: the gray badger.

Dun: For note on Dun to Manc Prol, IX, 5, see Robinson, op. cit., p. 763. It was a general name for a horse and was also associated with the rural game of lifting a heavy log, in which the cry was raised: "Dun is in the mire!" — i.e., the horse is stuck in the mud. According to Richard Barnes, "Horse Colors in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PQ, XXXIX (1960), 517, dun may have been the most common color for a horse in Anglo-Saxon times.

Scot: With reference to the Reeve's horse, Gen Prol, I, 616, Skeat, op. cit., V, 51, states that Scot is still a common name for horses in East Anglia. See also FrT, III, 1543.
In addition to the above terms, horse, in Gen Prol, I, 94, etc., steed in KnT, I, 2157, etc., are used of one and the same; capul occurs in RvT, I, 4088, 4105, SumT, III, 2150, Manc Prol, IX, 64, 65, FrT, III, 1554, and while it is a generic term, Chaucer appears to regard it as uncomplimentary. (see Fisher, op. cit., pp. 73-74); colt is used in simile in MiIT, I, 3263, 3282, and in proverbial expression in Rv Prol, I, 3888, and in WB Prol, III, 602; hackney, CY Prol, VIII, 559, was regarded by Froissart as a horse appropriate to "Les communes gens del pay," (see Fisher, ibid., p. 74); jade, according to NED, is of unknown origin but is often assumed to be a doublet of yaud (Icl. jald: mare) but apparently without reason. As a contemptuous name for horse, it appears in NP Prol, VII, 2812.

Chaucer uses the following terms having to do with saddlery and stabling: bit, brydel, croper, harneys, lathe (stable), peytrel (breastplate), reynes, sadel, sadel-bow (pommel), spores, stall, trappures, trave (a frame into which farriers put unruly horses in order to shoe them), trays (harness), and describes the gait of the horse by such words as amble, daunce, foundre, lepe, paas, praunce, skippe, springe, startlynge, sterte, stomble, stoupe, trippe, trotte. The colors of horses extend from snow or paper-whit (see above, p. 155) to blak, ranging through bay, broun, dun, lyard (roan) and pomely grys, pomely grey, or dappul gray. The Knight's Tale contains the largest number of equestrian terms of all the Tales and gives realistic details of the plight of man and horse in battle (lines, 2613-2616; 2684-2691).
APPENDIX III

The Chess Game in *The Book of The Duchess*

Chaucer may also use the animal figure in the chess game in *The Book of The Duchess*. The following discussion is based on the belief that, while verbal parallels exist between *The Book of The Duchess* and other poems, Chaucer's elegy is a unified work of art and not a pastiche; that while the elaborate artifices and rhetorical formulae of the French writers are present in the work,\(^1\) the synthesis produced is highly original and extremely subtle, with many levels of meaning. To deal in detail with the relationship between *The Book of The Duchess* and *Dit de la Fonteinne Amoureuse*, *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* and other poems by Machaut, Froissart's *Paradys d'Amours*, *Le Regret* of Jean de la Mote, *La Complainte de l'An Nouvel* . . . and *La Complainte de Saint Valentin* of Otes de Graunson, and *Le Roman de la Rose* is beyond the scope of this thesis. The alleged sources, however, have been considered and my conclusion is that,

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\(^1\)For antecedents to the treatises of Matthieu de Vendôme and Gaufred de Vinsauf and for discussion on the use Chaucer made of his masters of rhetoric in *The Book of The Duchess*, see J. M. Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, XII (1926), 95-113. See B. S. Harrison, "Mediaeval Rhetoric in *The Book of The Duchess*," *PMLA*, XLIX (1934), 430-431, for commentary on stylistic ornamentations.
while certain parallels must be admitted,\(^2\) the choice of particular borrowings, and the apparently original additions are of great significance. The work appears to have a degree of complexity and allusiveness without parallel in the whole of the Chaucer canon. Indeed, even local allusions may exist beyond the one usually recognized.\(^3\) Juno's male messenger, for example, who, for some reason, replaced Ovid's Iris, goes to a dark underground cave where he awakens the sleepers with his horn.\(^4\) According to long-established legend, there was a huge vault or cave under Richmond castle. A man was once sent into it and he found many people lying on the ground as if in a deep slumber. He was given a horn and a sword for the purpose of waking the sleepers but, overcome by fear, he did not do so.\(^5\) The tolling bell\(^6\) also invites speculation, for there was a bell


\(^3\)BD, 1319: "ryche hil," i.e. Richmond or Richemont, in Yorkshire. See Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 778.

\(^4\)BD, 132-183.


\(^6\)BD, 1322-1323.
at Richmond which, according to a custom supposed to have continued without intermission from the days of William the Conqueror, tolled twelve strokes, followed by a knell, on the death of a resident.7

In the dream, many features which appear inconsequential and incongruous become intelligible when interpreted in terms of dream symbolism. The dream appears to be of an anxiety-erotic type. The narrator has disclosed that he is disturbed. He prefers a tale of romance to chess or tables, and dwells on the misfortunes of Ceyx and Alcyone rather than on the metamorphosis whereby the tragic plight of husband and wife is resolved. The omission of the sequel may be the result of a specific ψω[αλων] and may indicate that the poet himself is unhappy. But there is a reversal of effect in his dream;8 instead of the scene being an unhappy one, it is cheerful with the heavenly singing of birds.9 If, in Freudian terms, a room in a dream usually signifies a woman,10 and the streaming rays of the sun denote generative power,11 nevertheless, the fact that Chaucer, like

7See Gutch, ibid., II, 321.


Morpheus earlier, is aroused by the sound of a horn suggests that he identifies himself as an agent rather than as a participant of love. The role is not assumed without difficulty, however. His act of taking his horse from his room, his excursion with the ghostly hunters and even the landscape through which he travels to find the Black Knight suggest that, in terms of dream symbolism, his mind is still concerned with his own erotic problems. But from the beginning of the dream, literary conventions – the May morning of the Garden of the Rose, the windows depicting the story of Troy, the walls on which are painted scenes of the Romance of the Rose – are interwoven with the genuine dream fabric, and with the introduction of the whelp, the conscious intention of the poet to develop his main theme intervenes. Apart from its other significances, the whelp may be an anticipatory symbol of a figure developed.

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12BD, 344-346.  
13BD, 357.  
14BD, 360-386.  
15BD, 397-433. While certain lines, as Robinson, op. cit., p. 775, notes, may be reminiscent of the Romance of the Rose, the landscape may, nevertheless, have a symbolic meaning. On landscapes in dreams, see Freud, op. cit., pp. 356-357.  
16BD, 291-334.  
17BD, 389.  
18See above, pp. 147-153.
in the chess game. The figure is associated with multiple word-play which, it seems, occurs at both conscious and unconscious levels, being inspired not only by literary conventions, but by the processes of an actual dream.\(^\text{19}\) My interpretation involves a detailed consideration of the chess game.

\textit{Le Roman de la Rose}, lines 6653-6720, is usually regarded as Chaucer's model for the chess game.\(^\text{20}\) Here Manfred, King of Sicily, is said to have been mated:

\begin{verbatim}
Desus son destrier auerrant,
Du trait de paonet errant
Ou milieu de son eschequier
\end{verbatim}

Conradin attempts to gain his uncle's throne but he and his cousin, Henry of Castile, lose first their Rooks, Queens, Pawns and Knights and then jump off the board themselves to avoid capture. Conradin, who is referred to with contempt throughout, could not cover a check because he lost his Queen in the first battle:

\begin{verbatim}
E, qui l'eschec dit leur eiist,
N'iert il qui couvrir le peiist,
Car la fierce avait esté prise
Au jeu de la prumiere assise.
\end{verbatim}

\(^\text{19}\) Freud, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 407, noting the frequency of word-play in dreams, remarks that according to Heuzen, "dreams involving puns and turns of speech occur particularly often in the old Norse sagas, in which scarcely a dream is to be found which does not contain an ambiguity or a play upon words."

\(^\text{20}\) W. W. Skeat, \textit{The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer}, I (Oxford, 1894), 478. F. D. Gooley, "Two Notes on the Chess Terms in \textit{The Book of The Duchess}," \textit{MLN}, LXIII (1948), 30, remarks that "the details of the chess game - saying check, mate in the middle of the board by a 'poun errant,' . . . are all taken from \textit{Le Roman de la Rose}, as Skeat has shown."
The differences between the game described above and that in *The Book of The Duchess* are so extensive that a comparison sheds no light whatsoever on Chaucer's game. In the one, several players take part in a game which allegorizes a political struggle for power; in the other, Fortune and the Knight play for the life of the Knight's wife. Whereas Conradin loses *la fierche* in the first bout, Chaucer's reference to Fortune's "false draughtes dyvers" implies that a number of moves have been made on both sides. Even the apparent verbal resemblances have little significance. "Pawn errant" was a frequent term for the mating pawn in the Latin problem MSS. Mating with a pawn was a fairly common occurrence, and the mate in the centre of the board was highly esteemed as skilful play, especially in France and England.

The main difficulty in Chaucer's game arises from the use of the term *fers*. It is true that *Le Roman de la Rose* uses *la fierche* but it was common practice, as Chaucer must have known, to use a different name for the original Queen from

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21 *BD*, 653.

22 The assumption by W. H. French, "Medieval Chess and The Book of The Duchess," *MLN*, LXIV (1949), 262, that the game was given up prematurely is not supported by the text.


25 Chaucer was, apparently, a chess player himself, *BD*, 51. It is unlikely that he would have been unfamiliar with the
that of the promoted pawn, and there are many examples in English texts from the twelfth century onward where the distinction is made.\textsuperscript{26} Charles, Duke of Orleans, writing in the first decade of the fifteenth century and borrowing very obviously from \textit{The Book of The Duchess}, uses \textit{dame},\textsuperscript{27} and Caxton remarks of the promoted pawn:

\begin{quote}
tyll he hath ben in the furdest ligne of the chequer/ And that he hath taken the nature of the draughtes of the quene/ And than he is a fiers/ . . . and whan he is comen to the place where ye nobles his aduersaries were sette he shall be named white fiers or black fiers/ after the poynt that he is in.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Even if Chaucer wished to avoid the term \textit{Queen} as being inappropriate for a Duchess, he might have used \textit{femina, virgo, mulier} or \textit{dame} and his meaning would have been immediately clear. His use of \textit{fiers} obviously enables the Dreamer to mistake the nature of the Knight's loss but I believe the motive was more subtle, involving multiple word-play on \textit{fiers} and \textit{the ferses twelve}.\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{26} Murray, \textit{ibid.}, p. 427, n. 31.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 752.
\textsuperscript{29} BD, 723.
\end{flushleft}
With regard to the ferses twelve there is an additional problem because, if the usual board, eight squares by eight, is used, there can be only eight ferses or nine with the queen. Skeat counts eight pawns, one bishop, rook, knight and queen to make twelve. He omits the king because it cannot be taken. Robinson follows a legitimate medieval practice of calling all the pieces ferses except the king. But the ferses on an eight by eight board would then number fifteen a side, and in the "Bare King" ending, cited by Robinson, the defeated player would lose fifteen ferses, not twelve. An attempt to explain away the difficulty by maintaining that Chaucer's game is draughts, not chess, is unconvincing. There are only two certain references to draughts before the sixteenth century, and the checked board illustrated in the early fourteenth century Queen Mary's Psalter, which is produced as evidence of draught-playing in England, might have been used for other

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30 Skeat, op. cit., I, 481-482.

31 Robinson, op. cit., p. 776.

32 Ibid., p. 776.

33 S. W. Stevenson, "Chaucer's Ferses Twelve," ELH, VII (1940), 215-222.

34 Murray, op. cit., p. 616.

35 Stevenson, op. cit., p. 219.
games, not necessarily for draughts. Moreover, one cannot ignore Chaucer's use of chess terms, fers, chek, mat, poun errant, jeopardyes, and of the word ches. Also unsatisfactory is the suggestion that the article should be omitted in "Thogh ye had lost the ferses twelve," in order to interpret the line "Had your loss been twelve times as great."

Chaucer's reference to the ferses twelve suggests he had a different kind of chessboard in mind. There is evidence that at least one other kind of chessboard was known in England in

The board, according to Stevenson, loc. cit., is not depicted with minute accuracy. It has six rows of squares in one direction, five in the other. The men are round. It might have been used for the game of tables described by Murray, op. cit., p. 407, n. 41, or for the popular game of "quek" for which Nicholas Preston and John Outlawe were indicted for cheating in 1376 — for case, see H. T. Riley, Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth Centuries (London, 1868), p. 395.

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BD, 654, 655, 681, 723, 741.

BD, 659.

BD, 661.

BD, 619, 652, 664.

BD, 619, 652, 664.

Cooley, op. cit., p. 33. French, op. cit., pp. 261-264, makes the observation that in medieval chess the loss of the Queen was not fatal to the game, but does not explore the problem of the twelve ferses. Bertrand H. Bronson, "The Book of The Duchess Re-opened," PMLA, LXVII (1952), 875, thinks that "the solution of the crux must be sought outside the game of chess."
because the Cotton Library contains a manuscript of the fourteenth century illustrating a circular chessboard. Murray identifies it as Byzantine or round chess which was played on a circular board of sixty-four squares arranged in four concentric rings of sixteen squares. Such a board would not produce twelve ferses but the fact that it was known in England indicates a possibility that other varieties of chess may have been imported. While Great Chess and Decimal Chess, known in Spain in the late thirteenth century, present difficulties when one tries to compute twelve ferses, the Courier game, played mainly in Germany from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century, does offer a possible twelve pawns for promotion. It was played on a board twelve squares by eight, the board being placed with the longer sides adjacent to the players. Each player had sixteen pieces of ordinary chess, and two Couriers, one Councillor or Man, one Schleich and four more pawns.


45 Murray, op. cit., p. 342. 46 Ibid., p. 348.


49 Ibid., pp. 483-484.

50 Ibid., pp. 484-485.
The rules for the promotion of pawns are not known. If the rule that the old Queen must go first was observed,\textsuperscript{51} the twelve \textit{ferses} could still be made. It seems possible that Chaucer, in order to develop the word-play on the \textit{ferses twelve}, may have been alluding to the Courier game. There was, however, another game, astronómical or Zodiacal chess, of Muslim origin but apparently known in Spain in the late thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{52} The board for the game consists of seven concentric rings which are divided into twelve equal parts by \textit{radii} from the common centre. Each of the twelve houses is allotted to one of the constellations of the Zodiac, and each ring is the orbit of one of the seven luminaries.\textsuperscript{53} It seems possible that Chaucer may either have been confusing the two boards or have taken attributes from each for the purpose of developing the multiple word-play.

Evidence suggests that Chaucer was thinking of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in \textit{The Book of The Duchess}. It has been remarked:

To Chaucer's century they were strangely living potencies, and the earth, in the words of a greater than Chaucer, was "this huge stage . . . whereon the stars in secret influence comment." Each sign, with its constellation, had its own individual efficacy or quality . . . \textsuperscript{54}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} Such may have been the practice in the usual European game. See Murray, p. 427.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Murray, pp. 349-350, identifies it with \textit{Los Escaques} described in the MS. of Alfonso X of Castile, 1283.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 349.
\end{itemize}
Since, however, he was writing at a time when the attitude towards astrology was still conservative, he may have preferred oblique rather than open reference. But his use of Fortune is highly significant. Although Fortune differed from astrology, the idea spread during the medieval period that Fortune’s gifts came from the stars. Chaucer himself equates Fortune with the planetary influences in The Knight’s Tale and in Troilus and Criseyde, and the striking similarity between a twelve-spoked wheel of Fortune and a diagram of the twelve signs of the Zodiac must have occurred to him.

In The Book of The Duchess Chaucer likens Fortune to the Scorpioun. In zodiacal terms, the comparison is an appropriate one, for, according to Trevisa’s translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, “the sygne of Scorpio hath the hous of deth and

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57 KnT, I, 1086-1090.

58 Tr, III, 617-618.

59 The number of spokes in Fortune’s wheel varied, but an illustration to Lydgate’s Fall of Princes shows a wheel of Fortune with twelve spokes. See Patch, op. cit., frontispiece. I would suggest, tentatively, that there may be a possible pun on fer: iron (Cotgrave). Cf. Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb ed., I (London, 1956), 11, 61, fera.

60 BD, 636.
of drede." Chaucer also makes many other allusions to zodiacal lore. He refers to the figures seven, ten and twelve, the first suggesting the seven luminaries, the second the ten degrees of the ecliptic and the ten days of the year presided over by each, and the third the twelve signs of the zodiac. He mentions the vernal equinox, and the planets. When the Black Knight says that he was familiar with the jeopardy known to Pythagoras, Chaucer may be thinking not only of chess problems but of problems connected with astrology. When he describes Blanche, he appears to bear in mind both her luminary qualities and her significance as a chess piece.

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61See NED, Scorpio = a zodiacal sign, the scorpion.

62BD, 408; 420; 455, where the age of the Black Knight is given as a multiple of twelve, although John of Gaunt's actual age was twenty-nine; 463, 573, 723, 824, 1323.

63BD, 398-415.

64BD, 693, 823-824. 65BD, 666-667.

66Skeat, op. cit., I, 481, notes that discoveries in astronomy were attributed to Pythagoras.

67BD, 821-824, 950, 963-964.

68Chaucer's description of the lady (816-1040) is usually regarded as being mainly derivative. See Robinson, op. cit., p. 776. However, as D. S. Brewer, "The Ideal of Feminine Beauty in Medieval Literature," MLR, 1955(L), 263-264, points out, Chaucer omits the description of the forehead, eyebrows, nose, mouth, teeth, chin, haunches, thighs, legs, feet, flesh and statement of age which occurs in Machaut's "Le Jugement dou
If, then, Chaucer is playing upon the idea of the twelve signs and of zodiacal chess, the meaning of the ferses twelve is clear. In *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, he writes:

... "zodia" in langage of Grek sowneth "bestes" ...
And in the zodiak ben the 12 signes that han names of bestes. 69

Ferus, in classical Latin, may have the meaning "wild beast." It also appears in Middle English as fer in Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus and in *Firumbras*, 70 and in Old French

Roy Behaingne," and adds:
"Hyr throte, as I have now memoyre,
Semed a round tour of yvoyre,
Of good gretnesse, and noght to gret,"

and that her shoulders were "ryght faire" (952).
The first passage is significant, especially when taken in conjunction with the preceding lines:
"But swich a fairnesse of a nekke
Had that swete that boon nor brekke
Nas ther non sene that myssat.
Hyt was whit, smothe, streght, and pure flat,
Wythouten hole; or canel-boon,
As be seymnge, had she noon." 939-944.

Comparisons of a lady's charms to ivory or even to ivory chessmen were not uncommon in the medieval romances. See Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 758, n. 6. But the detailed nature of the description here suggests Chaucer is stressing the idea of the chess piece. Medieval chessmen, usually made of ivory, were of at least two classes: chessmen which were carvings of real kings, queens, knights, etc; and chessmen which represented the different pieces by some conventional form. See Murray, p. 758. In Chaucer's description there are suggestions of a genuine representation but with the characteristics of the formalized piece, the long neck for easy handling added. The image of the chess piece is carried further when Chaucer remarks that, compared to others, the lady would have been

"A chef myrour of al the feste,
Thogh they had stonden in a rowe." 974-975.

69_Astr, 50-51.
70_MED, FI, p. 491.
as fer. The ferses twelve, therefore, refer to the twelve signs of the Zodiac.\textsuperscript{71} The Black Knight has already said that death, which we may equate with Fortune or the Zodiac, will not let him die.\textsuperscript{72} The Dreamer poses an alternative situation in which the Black Knight is free to oppose the decrees of Fate. He says to the Black Knight: even if you were not under the influence of the Zodiac and could choose your own destiny and kill yourself as you wish, you would be condemned because it is foolish to die for love. The whelp which Chaucer follows may anticipate the figure and represent the singular form \( \zeta \omega \delta \kappa \omicron \nu \), the diminutive of \( \zeta \omega \kappa \omicron \nu \): animal, or its presence may be due to the fact that, through etymological confusion, it replaced the fers, both counsellor and queen, in Mongol Chess.\textsuperscript{73}

Further interpretations of fers are still possible. Chaucer, in referring to his eight years' sickness,\textsuperscript{74} may be

\textsuperscript{71}Ovid, in the Phaethon Story (\textit{Met.} ii, 47ff) used by Chaucer, \textit{HF}, II, 941, refers to the signs of the Zodiac as \textit{formas ferrarum} (78) and \textit{simulacra ferrarum} (194). It is interesting to note that c. 1647 astrologers applied \textit{feral} to the Zodiac, believing the word to come from Latin \textit{fer/a}: wild beast. See \textit{NED}, feral\textsuperscript{1}; see also \textit{fer}: wildbeast (Cotgrave).

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{BD}, 583-586.

\textsuperscript{73}Murray, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 377. The tiger, also, replaced the fers in some instances.

\textsuperscript{74}For other views on Chaucer's eight years' sickness, see W. O. Sypherd, "Chaucer's Eight Years' Sickness," \textit{MLN}, XX (1905), 240-243, who concludes "the cause of it all is the very 'sickness' under which other love poets had lingered; and the one physician is his mistress - she alone can free him from his trouble . . . There is nothing new or especially striking about Chaucer's experience." R. S. Loomis, "Chaucer's Eight Years Sickness," \textit{MLN}, LIX (1944), 178-180; M. Galway, "Chaucer's Hopeless Love," \textit{MLN}, LX (1945), 431-439.
regarding himself as a pawn promoted to a fers. Caxton, identifying the pawns as commoners, says:

and thus goynge forth fro poynt to poynt they may gete by vertue and strengthe/ that thynge that the other noble fynde by dignyte/ and yf the knyghtes and other nobles helpe hem that they come to the ferthest lygne to fore them where theyr aduersaryes were sette they acquyre the dignyte that the quene hath graunted to her by grace./ 75

Rules of pawn promotion are obscure but in a game associated with the Courier game, the pawn had to make eight moves. It advanced to the fourth square on the first move, continued to the eighth square one square at a time, and on reaching the eighth made three freudensprung to the sixth, fourth and second squares of the same file before receiving promotion. 76

It is usually assumed that the poem was written soon after the death of Blanche on September 12, 1369. Nothing is known of Chaucer's life from March 1, 1360, when he was ransomed in France, and June 20, 1367, when he received from Edward a pension of twenty marks for life, and was described as "dilectus vallectus noster." A bill of privy seal, dated July 17, 1368, granting Chaucer a passport from Dover has led to the surmise that he may have been travelling in the service of the King on one of the first of a series of diplomatic missions on the continent. 77 Chaucer, then, has made the eight

76 Murray, op. cit., p. 392.
77 Robinson, op. cit., p. xx.
arduous steps towards promotion; but he is in the King's service, not that of John of Gaunt, and out of deference to his patron he laments his position and refers to John of Gaunt as the one physician who can heal him.\textsuperscript{78} Chaucer's acquaintance with John of Gaunt probably dated from Christmas, 1357,\textsuperscript{79} and his marriage to the sister of Katherine Swynford, probably in 1366, may have strengthened the association. When the Black Knight laments the loss of his \textit{fers}, Chaucer is using \textit{fers} to mean Blanche, the Queen in chess, and himself. The Dreamer's conclusion:

"But ther is no man alyve her Wolde for a fers make this wool"

740-741.

is a comment not only on an actual chess game, in that the loss of the Queen in medieval chess did not necessarily mean the end of the game, but is a modest disclaimer of Chaucer's own importance.

\textit{Fers} may have one further significance. The mourning Black Knight is found sitting with his back to a tree.\textsuperscript{80} The introduction of the chess game reminds us that, in contrast to the usual knight of the chess piece, he is horseless. He has lost his \textit{fers}. Although \textit{fers} was derived from \textit{firzan}: counsellor,\textsuperscript{81} there was considerable etymological confusion when

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{BD}, 39-40. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{79} Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. xx.

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{BD}, 445-447. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{81} Murray, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 159.
the word was introduced into the European game, and even the Western Moslems themselves forgot the derivation of the word and confused it with *faras:* horse. Whether Chaucer knew of the false etymology cannot be established. That he was familiar with the use of *ferus:* a horse, in classical Latin, is more likely. It is possible, therefore, that he may have used *fers* to equate horse and woman.

I suggest, then, that Chaucer used *fers* for the purpose of multiple word play. The *fers* may refer to himself as a promoted power, to Blanche as the Queen, or may be part of the horse and rider figure. Whether Chaucer knew of the Courier game I am unable to ascertain, but by using the *ferses twelve* appropriate to this game, and by punning on Middle English *fer,* he was able to make meaningful reference to the twelve signs of the Zodiac and to the twelve-spoked wheel of Fortune.

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