IN AND OUT OF MORTAL FLESH

S’il n’est autre vie, / Entre ame a homme et ame a truie / N’a donques
point de diference.¹
—Hélinand of Froidmont, Vers de la mort

I.
Animal Resurrection:
Opening and Shutting the Gates of Heaven

When the world is re-established in its primeval state all the animals must
obey and be subject to man and return to the first food given by God, as
before the disobedience they were subject to Adam and ate the fruit of the
earth. This is not the time to show that the lion will eat straw, but this indi-
cates the size and opulence of the fruits. For if an animal like the lion eats
straw, what will be the quality of the wheat whose straw is food fit for lions?²

So argued the second-century theologian Irenaeus in his Against Her-
esies. Though some animal rights thinkers understand Irenaeus as antici-

¹. Hélinand of Froidmont, The Verses on Death of Hélinand of Froidmont, Les vers de
la mort: Old French Text with Verse Translation and Commentary, trans. Jenny Lind Porter
(Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 119: “if there is no other life, there is no
difference at all between a human and sow’s soul.”

². Book V, 33.4, translated in Robert McQueen Grant, Irenaeus of Lyons (New York:
Routledge, 1997), 179–80. For Irenaeus’s quasi-millenarian eschatology, see Eric Osborn,
Irenaeus of Lyons (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 139–40, and especially
Christopher R. Smith, “Chiliasm and Recapitulation in the Theology of Irenaeus,” Vigiliae
pating the actual resurrection of either lions or straw, he may be speaking only about the general perfection of animals as part of creation’s return to its prelapsarian condition. Furthermore, this paradise of lions may be but a temporary antechamber, since Irenaeus promises some Christians an even better existence with God beyond this paradise. Yet regardless of Irenaeus’s precise beliefs, his text must be recognized as among those that at minimum promised an afterlife that, at least for a time, accommodates humans as well as flora and nonhuman fauna. Irenaeus had the support of an even earlier Christian work, Papias of Hierapolis’s *An Interpretation of the Sayings of the Lord*, as well as that of scripture itself: Mark 9:43–47 threatens sinners with Hell’s undying worm; Revelations 22:2 places the Tree of Life in the Eternal City; and, though medieval Christianity might not have considered the lush paradise promised by 2 Enoch 8:1–3 as canonical, it certainly so did regard those of Jeremiah 31:12 and Isaiah 11:6–9 and 65:25, the latter of which, by imagining lions and oxen peaceably sharing a meal of straw, frustrated Gnostic belief in an immaterial afterlife and inspired Irenaeus’s anti-Gnostic literal gloss.

Eschatological expectations of similar content, if not necessarily of similar doctrine, are not uncommon in medieval faith. The testimony of Arnaud Sicre d’Ax, denounced as a heretic in 1321, describes the seventh, highest heaven as a place of “grande clarté, beaucoup d’anges, de beaux vergers et des oiseaux qui chantent” (great brightness, many angels, of beautiful orchards and singing birds). It would be easy to dismiss Arnaud’s vision as just a record of heterodox local belief, but it differs little from more doctrinally sound material. The seventh-century Northumbrian layman Drythelm, not atypically for visions of the otherworld, sees souls awaiting entrance to paradise in a “broad and pleasant meadow . . . filled with the scent of flowers.”

Honorius of Autun’s *Elucidarium*, a widely read and translated twelfth-century catechetical encyclopedia, pictures the future world freed of the postlapsarian curse, blooming with “odoriferis floribus, liliis, rosis, violis immacessibiliter” (unfading, sweet-smelling flowers—lilies, roses,

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violets; *PL* 171:1168D). Bernard of Cluny’s twelfth-century *De contemptu mundi* describes heaven as a place where saints will “stroll and dance amidst holy lilies and blooming flowerbuds.” Like many other painters of the Last Judgment, Fra Angelico imagines the afterlife as a garden thronged with the souls of the saved; a manuscript of a fifteenth-century compendium on the last judgment pictures animals among its celestial humans, as does a fifteenth-century painting by Giovanni di Paolo, which features, amid its grass, flowers, and trees, a sheep and several rabbits. While early Christianity sometimes imagined that Eden continued to exist on Earth as an antechamber for souls waiting to enter the final paradise, the aforementioned paintings and other such works portray not this world, which will be divinely immolated in the last days, but rather the perfection that comes after. These works picture, even if never quite articulating the point doctrinally, that all the world and its inhabitants will enjoy the benefits of the coming renewal.

Several early Christian documents more overtly advocate for the abandonment of an anthropocentric soteriology, and, more importantly, imagine the present world, and not only the future one, as one in which both humans and animals belong to the community of the faithful. In the *Acts of Philip*, Philip and his entourage baptize a goat and a leopard, both of which eventually take on human shapes so that they might receive the Eucharist. Another

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6. For a brief review of debates concerning Honorius’s identity, which relies on the work of Valerie Flint and Marie-Odile Garrigues, see Jeremy Cohen, “‘Synagoga conversa’: Honorius Augustodunensis, the Song of Songs, and Christianity’s ‘Eschatological Jew,’” *Speculum* 79 (2004): 310–11.


9. For the painting, see Giovanni di Paolo, *Paradise*, tempura and gold on canvas, transferred from wood, c. 1445 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City). For more on heaven as a garden, see Clifford Davidson, “Of Saints and Angels,” in Davidson, *The Iconography of Heaven*, 24–25, which cites the church of S. Vitale in Ravenna as an early example of the Christian heaven imagined as a garden, and also Peter Damien’s *De gloria paradisi*, in which heaven has springtime meadows.

story, even less committed to human uniqueness before God, imagines that once, in the wilderness, the Apostle Paul baptized a lion and that some time later he met the lion again in the arena:

Then Paul recognized that this was the lion which had come and been baptized. And borne along by faith Paul said, “Lion, was it you whom I baptized?” And the lion in answer said to Paul, “Yes.” Paul spoke to it again and said, “And how were you captured?” The lion said with its own voice, “Just as you were, Paul.”

As more animals are set on Paul and arrows shot at the lion, a hailstorm breaks out, freeing them both. Paul departs for Macedonia, while the lion “went away into the mountains as was natural for it.” The story might be construed as among the many variants of Pliny’s story of Eplis of Samos, who rescued a lion from starvation by extracting a bone that had lodged in its mouth, so earning its adoration and assistance. But Paul’s lion had sought assistance not for its body but for its soul. Rather than mutely holding out its paw, it speaks, as one believer to another, and nearly suffers martyrdom with Paul. It then, finally, returns to its own life, independent of humans and their needs, eschewing neither its baptism or its leoninity.

Several medieval Christian works, without any pretensions to being scripture, suggest that animals, like humans, deserve postmortem care. In Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, a poor village priest buries his beloved dog


13. For other such stories, including versions in the twelfth-century chronicle of Geoffrey de Vigeois and Alexander Neckam’s De natura rerum in which the lion’s benefactor sails for home, while the abandoned lion swims alongside the boat until it drowns, see Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, “The Grateful Lion: A Study in the Development of Mediaeval Narrative,” PMLA 39 (1924): 485–524.
in a churchyard and dodges his venal bishop’s condemnation by convincing him that the dog had set aside a fund for its own burial.\textsuperscript{14} The Middle English romance \textit{Bevis of Hampton} ends with a church founded to pray for the souls of Bevis, his wife Josian, “And also for [Bevis’s horse] Arondel, / Yif men for eni hors bidde schel” (and also for Arondel, if men shall pray for any horse; 4616–17).\textsuperscript{15} It may be too much to imagine that the priest expected his dog to join the other cemetery internees in the coming resurrection, not least of all because of the self-conscious silliness of the collection’s other tales, but \textit{Bevis} is a serious work that requests prayer for a horse in a pious and solemn conclusion. Judging by the evidence of one fifteenth-century veterinary manual, people did in fact pray for horses: the manual, full of charms and prayers to counteract all manner of equine disorders, calls upon the Trinity and then, for good measure, “\textit{ðe} sonne, and of \textit{ðe} mone, and of \textit{ðe} .vij. sterres, and of all creatures, and of all daingeles, and of all \textit{ðe} confesse-roes, bisschopes, and of all hundred abbotes redy to syng on mydwynter nyght”\textsuperscript{16} (the sun, and the moon, and the seven stars, and all creatures, and all angels, and all confessors, bishops, and all 100 abbots ready to sing on midwinter night). However, like the story of Paul and the lion, \textit{Bevis} requests assistance not for Arondel’s body, which, being buried, is beyond care, but for his soul; it thus reserves the possibility that a horse, like a human, might need assistance to ease its journey through purgatory. Even \textit{Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles} might be taken seriously, since even jokes can have a serious core: when Saint Faith and Thomas Becket resurrect animals, their hagiographers call these miracles \textit{joca} and \textit{ludi}, trifles, acts that should not be taken seriously, evidencing not only disapproval but also, as Dominic Alexander remarked, a “sense of discomfort.” For jokes, as Freud observed, can be symptoms, in this case, of the repressed recognition that not only humans should be reverenced; that human distinctiveness emerges only through scorn for others; and that the immortality for which humans hope, one—as I will treat below—without animals, and without the world they had shared, can hardly be counted as life.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} Rossell Hope Robbins, trans., \textit{The Hundred Tales (Les cent nouvelles nouvelles)} (New York: Bonaza, 1960), 353–54. 386 lists several places where an analogous story, “Le Testament de l’âne” (The Last Testament of the Donkey), appears, including works by Rutebeuf and Poggio Bracciolini.

\textsuperscript{15} Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., \textit{Four Romances of England} (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997).


A few medieval Christian thinkers argued that the soul, being immaterial, could not die, and that therefore animal souls were as immortal as those of humans, a point that contradicted the received wisdom evidenced in Sidrak’s assertion that the animal soul is but an “oonde”; medieval ghost stories not uncommonly included animals, such as the horses of Hellequin’s Hunt, or the several animals in a late-medieval collection of ghost stories, including one with a ghost that briefly takes the shape of a horse walking on its hind legs and another with a flock of human dead riding spectral “equos ovex et boves . . . et universa pecora” (horses, sheep, and oxen . . . and all manner of livestock). These, and perhaps even other works and traditions, could serve as evidence that some Christianities imagined humans sharing an afterlife with all creation. But such evidence need not be sought only in recherché Christian writings, odd moments in medieval narrative, atypical spiritual philosophy, or, for that matter, ghost stories. It appears in the heart of Christianity, in the work of its first great doctrinal thinker, the Apostle Paul, who writes:

For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:19–23)


Despite the typically Pauline obscurity, the meaning seems clear enough: if “the creature” that groaningly awaits delivery from “corruption” into another, more perfect existence is understood as distinct from the human “ourselves” and “we” awaiting the “redemption of the body,” then Paul promises perfection and redemption to nonhuman creation and perhaps even an entrance, as perfected beings, into eternity.

Nevertheless, I must admit that what I have presented so far in this chapter are but faint hopes, tantalizing hints at the possibility of an animal afterlife, drawn from a farrago of genres and eras, all interested in animals, all dodging the limitations of a rigidly anthropocentric conception of valuable worldly beings. They had little effect on the dominant strains of medieval Christianity. Whatever Paul’s expectation of the universal perfection of creation, his disdain for animals instructed medieval Christian thinkers, a point I treat later in this chapter. As for Irenaeus, despite the soundness of his scriptural support, his straw-eating lions found no allies among a medieval audience more concerned with the diets of Edenic animals than with those of the coming paradise;20 the section of his Against Heresies in which he made these claims was rediscovered only in the late sixteenth century; the Middle Ages would have known of it only through Eusebius’s History of the Church, which characterizes Papias and those misled by him, such as Irenaeus, as misreaders of the “mystic and symbolic” language of Scripture’s promise of a millennial kingdom. And Eusebius, at any rate, does not even mention the lions.21 The transformed leopard and goat of the Acts of Phillip likewise vanished, at least for European Christianity, and though Jerome at least acknowledged the story of Paul and the lion, he did so only to dismiss it. The verdant and zoological afterlives of Drythelm, Bernard of Cluny, and Honorarius probably should be understood as mere appearances rather than as actual objects,22 or they should be understood allegorically, per Savon-
arola’s gloss of his own eschatological *Compendium of Revelations*, where his “white sheep, ermines, rabbits, and [other] harmless creatures” frolicking in a meadow represent “Christians engaged in the active life.” 23 Or, most simply, these animals amid the garden should be understood as belonging to the standard furnishing for any *locus amoenus*, and thus as a doctrinally loose attempt to represent the ineffable joy of paradise through a serviceable medium for portraying pleasure. Notably, Fra Angelico’s *Last Judgment* depicts paradise both as a garden thronged by the blessed resurrected, and, in its upper left-hand corner, as a heavenly and glowing city into which a pair of the blessed enter. The painting recalls an ancient Christian characterization of paradise as comprising a garden and city—an arrangement familiar to scholars of Middle English from the poem *Pearl*—but the painting’s structure also seems pedagogic, as if directing the gaze of its viewers, like the blessed themselves, towards the immortal city, unsatisfied with a merely bucolic heaven. 24 Though the ghost stories imagine what at least appear to be animal spirits, none even gestures towards a doctrine of the immortality of animal selfhood; nor do any of the medieval Christian assertions for the immortality of the animal soul opine about where these immortal souls will spend eternity. Not even the Gospels’ undying worm finds a place in the afterlife: *Summa Theologica*, SS q. 97, a. 2, “Whether the Worm of the Damned is Corporeal,” asserts that the worms of hell “must be understood to be not of a corporeal but of a spiritual nature,” standing for “the remorse of conscience.” Other, less spiritual commentators did not dispel the worm’s materiality, but required that infernal animals be understood as demons in disguise: the Middle English *Prick of Conscience*, an enormously popular and stultifyingly orthodox doctrinal compilation of the fourteenth century, explains that infernal hounds, adders, toads, wolves, lions, and “othir ver-


myn” “sal noght be elles, bot devels of helle, / In liknes of hydus bestes and vermyne”25 (other vermin . . . shall be nothing else but devils of Hell in likeness of hideous beasts and vermin; 9450–51). Similarly, the Middle English Jacob’s Well, an extended penitential guidebook, has a spectral, tormented knight explain that “þis hors þat beryth me is a feend, þat turmentyth me, & beryth me to peyne of helle”26 (this horse that bears me is a fiend that torments me and bears me to the pain of Hell), and therefore not an animal but a demonic psychopomp.

The exegetical reaction to Paul’s promise of general perfection is especially telling. Origen inspired the first strain of exegesis when he utilized Paul to frustrate the faith of those who worshiped celestial bodies: if such bodies would be perfected, then they must be at present imperfect and thus merit no piety. This partially nonhuman salvation is a somewhat more expansive soteriology than what became usual to medieval Christianity, yet because Origen believed celestial bodies to be rational, ensouled beings, he also limited Paul’s promise to only those forms of worldly beings that, like humans, were recognized as possessing reason.27 Augustine’s response to Origen, which further circumscribed the verses’ scope, proved to be foundational to medieval commentary.28 In the Refutation of the Priscillianists and Origenists and in question sixty-seven of the Miscellany of Eight-Three Questions, Augustine argued that Paul referred only to humans. Augustine has not discarded Paul; he still allows for the perfection of all creation, but only through humans, whom Augustine characterizes as a microcosm, hav-

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ing all creation in themselves: like angels, they are rational; like animals, they can sense; like trees, they have a vital force without sensation, evident, for example, in the growth of hair. The coming perfection of humans will perfect the four elements as well: earth makes up human bodies; heat fuels bodily life and “light shines forth from our eyes”; air fills the lungs; and moisture constitutes blood.\(^{29}\) Other exegesis even more strongly excludes animals from “delive[ry] from the servitude of corruption.” A late-antique commentary on the Epistles first explains that Paul’s promise of redemption apples only to humans and then reemphasizes human dominance of the world: “\textit{Exspectatio creaturae, de rationi creatura sermonem fecit, et non sicut quidam existimant, de irrationali, vel insensibili, quae ad servitutem hominum creatas est}” (“The expectation of the creature”: he said this about a rational creature, and not as some think, about an unreasoning creature, or an insensible one, created to serve man; \textit{PL} 30: 683A).\(^{30}\) Rabanus Maurus similarly expels animals from the community of the resurrected. First, he speaks about the traditional belief that resurrected humans would refill the celestial ranks emptied by the fallen angels (for example, see Augustine, \textit{City of God} XXII.1). Then, he explains that the “\textit{creaturam, ut potes rationabilem, habere exspectationem quamdam}” (“the creature,” insofar as it is rational, has this expectation; \textit{PL} 111:1454C); even if he were following the Origenist approach to celestial bodies, including the stars and moon in the promise of resurrection, he still excludes animals. Finally, Haymo of Auxerre, perhaps losing sight of the Origenist controversy, repeats the Augustinian line—humans “esse cum lapidibus, vivere cum arboribus, sentire et vivere cum animalibus; intelligere, id est rationabilitatem habere, cum angelis” (have being in common with stones, live in common with trees, sense and live in common with animals, understand, that is, have rationality, in common with angels; \textit{PL} 117:432C–D)—but not before asserting, without any implicit or explicit reference to stars, the gross error of any reading of the passage that “comprehenderit . . . bestias” (included . . . beasts; \textit{PL} 117:432B).\(^{31}\)

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31. The \textit{PL} mistakenly ascribes this commentary to Haymo of Halberstadt. For more on the early tradition of commentary on this verse, see Pelagius, \textit{Pelagius’s Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans}, ed. Theodore de Bruyn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 110. A representative modern version of Haymo’s method can be found in Brendan Byrne, \textit{Romans}, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 255 and 259, which begins: “This small passage stands as one of the most singular and evocative texts in
Haymo, like Christian doctrine more generally, bound nonhuman worldly beings to the dying world from which humans would eventually escape. Yet despite this doctrine, animal resurrection stories abound in medieval Christian writings. The *Cursor Mundi* includes one of many medieval retellings of the further adventures of the rooster whose crowing shamed the apostle Peter. The rooster, dead and stewing, bursts from its pot when Judas declares that Jesus:

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shal neuer ryse aȝeyn
trewly by no myȝt
Furst shal þis cok vpryse
was scalded ȝister nyȝt
Vnneþe had he seide þat word
þe cok took vp his flïȝt
Feþered fairer þen biforn
crew þi grace on hiȝt. (15985–93)
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“shall never rise again, truly by no might. First shall this rooster rise up, which was scalded yesterday night.” Scarcely had he said this when the rooster took flight, feathered more fairly than before, and it crowed, through divine grace.

Other stories tell of Jesus resurrecting a fish, or of Saint Columba resurrecting an ox out of the scraps left by a ravenous warrior, who had consumed it in one sitting; or, in the lives of other Irish saints, Brigit and Finnian each

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resurrecting sacrificed calves, and Modwenna, in Geoffrey of Burton’s life, refusing the gift of a slaughtered pig by reassembling and reviving it. William of Canterbury’s twelfth-century life of Thomas Becket, like a collection of the miracles of the English King Henry VI, also speaks of several animals resurrected through prayer. None of these stories, however, record their animals as being resurrected to anything but another mortal existence. As soon as Columba returns the ox to life, hungry reapers kill and eat it; Modwenna gives the pig back to the slaughter-happy swineherd, who, misinterpreting the nuns’ general prohibition against meat-eating as a distaste for pork, promptly returns with a stag’s carcass; and, whatever its evangelical potency, Judas’s rooster will presumably once more end its existence in the soup. Even in miracles, death swallows animals completely. This is an often repeated point of medieval Christian doctrine, as in Aquinas’s *Summa contra Gentiles* II.82, which draws either directly from chapter 17 of the fifth-century *Liber de Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus* of Gennadius of Marseille (PL 42: 1216), or from the use of Gennadius in Section 48 of the anonymous, widespread Cistercian *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul* (c. 1170), to assert that the souls of animals are not immortal, but rather “perish along with their bodies.”

35. Ibid., 197 and 228.


restored to life puts it just as bluntly: “Non enim brutorum resurrectio credenda est” (the resurrection of beasts is not to be believed in). William does not mean to doubt the story he himself has just told; instead, he takes care not to use the word “resurrectio” to describe what the sheep experiences: it “reviveret” (revived) and “suscitavit” (awakened); like a bull resurrected by Saint Silvester, it is “ad vitam revocasse” (called back to life); its wounded flesh is “redintegrata” (made whole). Surely, as William explains, the revivification of animals can be believed in insofar as it helps humans believe in their own coming resurrection, but no one should believe in the afterlife of beasts: resurrection itself must be reserved exclusively to humans. Geoffrey of Burton constrains matters still further: when Modwenna restores a calf to a pauper who had slaughtered it for her, Geoffrey wonders whether she actually resurrected it. He concludes:

> It is not important to determine whether [the calf] was the same one, which God miraculously brought back to life by His ineffable power, as he could certainly do if He wished, or whether, more likely, it was another one, either created from nothing or brought there from elsewhere, that was clothed in the same form and colour and fashioned along identical lines and of the same size.39

Why should one miracle be “more likely” than another? Geoffrey judges it so because he prefers to think that God, thinking like he does, would judge the revivification of an animal doctrinally distasteful. To keep human particularity intact, Geoffrey prefers either to avoid thinking matters through too deeply—though he feels compelled to dilate on them—or else to limit his saint or God Himself to only another creation or even a kind of divine cattle rustling. In any case, he wants not to have had life returned to a creature that had lost it but rather to have provided yet another animal for human use.

The dominant strains of Christianity just as forcefully denied animals any authentic participation in the Christian community, either in this world or the next. In Caesarius of Heisterbach’s thirteenth-century *Dialogus Miraculorum*, several students play at being priests by baptizing a dog in a river. But Caesarius’s God, the God of Gennadius or Aquinas, will entertain none of this. Unlike the animals of the Acts of Philip, the dog, “virtutem tanti nominis sustinere non valens” (unable to bear the strength of such names), namely the “trini nominis” (three names) of the Trinity, turns rabid.40 I offer

Santi, “L’animale eterno.”


40. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Joseph Strange, vol. 2 (Co-
two other wholly typical examples drawn from either end of the Middle Ages, the first from the fourth-century *Natalicia* of Paulinus of Nola, birthday poems to Saint Felix, and the other from a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century exempla collection by Heinemann of Bonn. The *Natalicia* teems with animal stories. In one, a cow hides in the woods, having escaped the Christians who swore it to sacrifice, but when it finally recalls its duty, it runs to the altar of Felix and gives its neck freely to the ax. Although Paulinus had already written that the cow “showed human intelligence, and acted as though aware that its life was in debt to a vow,” he concludes:

> Why should all this have happened? Surely, as the Apostle puts it, God has no concern for cattle? No, the Maker who makes all things for us achieves all in all for us. Through ignorant cattle He performs signs which work on our behalf. By clear signals He works on brute minds to strengthen our faith and make us trust in the truth, so that men may be taught to loose their tongues in speech and tell of that Lord whom the dumb beasts proclaim by signs.\(^{41}\)

Heinemann tells a story in which a heretic steals a Host and throws it into a pig trough. Rather than eating it, the pigs recognize and reverence their Creator. Retreating from the trough, they kneel and show, “tam vocis grunnitu quam narium flatu, unanimiter sacramenti gloriam et hominis insaniam”\(^{42}\) (as much as with grunting as with blowing of their nostrils, the glory of the sacrament and insanity of men). Their piety might be recognized as evidence that pigs can have as direct relationship with God as humans do. But Heinemann does not write, “unanimiter sacramenti gloriam et *porcorum devotionem* [the devotion of pigs].” Heinemann has provided only yet another tale rebuking human piety by comparing it to the uninstructed devotion of irrational creation.\(^{43}\) The very directness and sincerity of the pigs’ piety, in other words, far from joining them to humans as co-religionists, instead reveals them as merely animals, as—per Lacan’s ineradicable humanism—

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43. For similar stories, see Alexander, *Saints and Animals*, 35–36, or Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, 129–30, where a dog refuses to eat the Host given to him by a Jew (“And anone þe dogge fell downe on all iiiij knees and did as he couthe reuerence to þe Sacramente”), which should stir us to belief because “an vnresonable beeste so dud, þat neuer had techynge of holychurche.”
“lacking the lack,” and therefore as lacking the rational, voluntarist distance from their own piety that would save them from being exposed to the fate common to all domestic pigs.

Animals could have no piety of their own; they could not matter in themselves, but rather belonged entirely to humans; whatever they suffered or however they worshiped, they would be abandoned to mortality, to a death of such unimportance that humans would hardly consider it death, if death is understood not as the finitude of an individual subject but as a loss to a community: as I will point out later in this chapter, death counts as death when people take notice of it, in irreparable grief, in building monuments, in writing obituaries. A dialogue on theodicy in the *Elucidarium* exemplifies this point. When the student wonders why churches burn down, the master explains that God sends calamities to punish or to lead Christians to love him more: the implicit point, that suffering is both symptom and proof of moral significance, becomes evident when the student next asks, “Cum mors et aegritudo sint poenae peccati, cur haec patiuntur pecora, cum per discretionem peccare nesciant?” (Since death and sickness are punishment for sin, why do livestock suffer these things, since they do not know how to sin?; *PL* 172: 1140B–C). The Master explains, “Per ea homo punitur, cum eorum dolore vel morte in animo torquetur” (Man is punished by these things [viz., animal suffering], since from their sickness or death man is tormented in his soul). The student then wonders about wild animals, who fall sick and die without any humans knowing of it; the master explains that these deaths result from the corruption humans introduced into the world with their primordial sin. Domestic animals die to teach humans a lesson; wild animals die because of human frailty. In neither case do animals suffer or die for or because of themselves; in both cases, death arrives from, or is directed at, humans. Human needs and human actions dispossess animal of their lives, suffering, and death, rendering all of these only an anthropocentric instrument or effect.

The sharpest articulation of this condition appears in Aquinas. Amidst his consideration of whether resurrected people will eat after the resurrection, he explains, “Now this necessity [of eating] lasts as long as man’s animal life endures. But this life will cease in that final renewal of the universe, because the body will rise not natural but spiritual: hence animals and plants will also cease to exist then.”

44. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God (Questiones Disputate de Potentia Dei)*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1932), Bk 2, q. 5, a. 9. Aquinas also treats this issue in *ST SS* q. 91, a. 5, “Whether the plants and animals will remain in this renewal,” where he draws the same conclusion; for example, “Since the renewal of the world will be for man’s sake it follows that it should be
mainstream medieval Christian resurrection doctrine consigns animals to everlasting mortality. The confinement of animals to this mortal life confines them just as firmly to a purely instrumental existence, since, as Aquinas argues in *ST* 2a2ae, q. 25, a. 3, “Whether irrational creatures also ought to be loved out of charity,” humans extend charity to other humans in part because humans share an expectation of immortality. If charity is future-oriented, and animals have no true future, then animals can only be tools, to be treated “charitably,” as I explain later in this chapter, by being properly used. Animals, having no purpose in themselves, have no cause to exist once humans have sloughed off their reliance on other worldly beings. When humans rise into their undying identities in the afterlife, they will cease to need animals because they will need neither food, labor, nor the instruction they receive from animal suffering and death. At long last, humans can finally rest secure in an autonomous and lonely humanity. Animal futures different from Aquinas’s can be imagined, whether for the Middle Ages or for a present that persists in thinking other beings as only instruments (consider, for example, the common argument that species diversity must be preserved from human rapaciousness, since the loss of species might mean the loss of some as yet undiscovered cure for [human] cancer). Such futures do not require severing any connection to an abandoned, benighted past; such a break is impossible. Yet a new future is still possible. In *The Parallax View*, Žižek argues that though a choice cannot break entirely with the past, it can still be called a choice, not a purely mechanistic effect of the past. For the past is heterogeneous, a place of conflict and opportunity, like the present. It does cause the present, but that cause does not exhaust the past’s resources. A free choice thus “changes the future by changing the past itself (in the Bergsonian sense of inserting a new possibility into it),” or, more simply, by reopening a route to a future that a particular choice had only apparently foreclosed. Causes for new futures can be found in those pasts that could not help but imagine humans in a paradise shared with birds, grass, trees, or, for that matter, lions; in those exempla that picture, almost despite themselves, an unnameable *devotionem porcorum*; in those scriptures in which a baptized beast, a savior to an apostle, returns to its wilderness life, saved but indifferent to human society. Through all these pasts, humans might give themselves to another future in which no life or indeed no thing (if such a division can or should be sustained) might be conformed to the renewal of man."

45. Žižek, *Parallax View*, 203.

46. See Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 144, whose well-known conclusion imagines a Parlia-
treated as a mere end. My epilogue tries to think through what such past possibilities might offer for a new and better way forward.

Even the most anthropocentric of doctrines could not close the door on the rest of the world so handily: it was no easy matter to ferry human souls safely alone to the afterlife. Some Christian scholars worried that humans might unwittingly smuggle animals within themselves, or that humans, like animals, might be left to molder in the dust of this mortal world. They imagined that humans who ate animals might be resurrected into hybrid bodies, partly human, partly animal, or, worse still, that by eating animals, humans might irredeemably pollute their own resurrectable flesh with the mortal flesh of animals and thus bar themselves altogether from the resurrection. Slaughter, consumption, and digestion, the very processes of violence through which humans most strenuously separate themselves from animals, threatened to entangle humans with animals, in eternal life or in unceasing death.

II.

Half Man, Half Pig?:
Meat, Digestion, and the Resurrection of the Body

The human subjugation of animals allows humans to claim exclusive possession of reason and a set of qualities associated with this claim (language, free will, an immortal soul, and so on), since if animals also possessed any of these qualities, they could resist being dominated. The human subjugation of animals also allows humans to gloss their stereotypically upright posture as heaven-oriented and that of the animals as oriented towards base, worldly appetites. Yet bodily evidence for human distinctiveness stumbles over the obstacle that bodies, whether human or animal, are worldly, and, as such, grow and eat, die, rot, and turn to dust. What good is human bodily superiority if human and animal bodies eventually become indistinguishable from one another? Humans counteract this likeness by arguing for a key difference:

Nor does the earthly material from which mortal flesh is created perish in the sight of God, but whatever dust or ashes it may dissolve into, whatever vapors or winds it may vanish into, whatever other bodies or even elements it

mention of Things, in which the “ozone hole,” “the voters of New Hampshire,” and “meteorology of the polar regions” all have their voice.
may be turned into, by whatever animals or even men it may have been eaten as food and so turned into flesh, in an instant of time it returns to the human soul that first gave it life so that it might become human, grow, and live.\textsuperscript{47}

This assurance of the persistence and integrity of the human body through this (and the after-) life appears in Augustine’s \textit{Enchiridion}, but it could have been drawn from virtually any medieval explanation of Christian resurrection doctrine.\textsuperscript{48} This is as true for the early medieval scholars as for later sophisticated reappraisals of the doctrine that threatened to dissolve the attachment between humans and any particular bodies. Many thirteenth-century scholars argued that the elements that made up the human body were not fundamentally associated with any one subject or even fundamentally human, but human only because they were ensouled by human souls.\textsuperscript{49} Nonetheless, as Caroline Walker Bynum explains, because the medieval Christian self “is not a soul using a body but a psychosomatic entity, to which body is integral,”\textsuperscript{50} and because this self in its entirety is destined for resurrection and eternal life, even thirteenth-century sophisticates, compelled at last to abandon their erudite explorations of the relationship of matter and self, argued, as did Bonaventure, “into whatever dust or ashes [human flesh] is turned . . . into the substance of whatever other bodies, or into the elements, or into whatever food, it will return, at that [last] moment of time, to the soul which animated it at first.”\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, Christian


\textsuperscript{49} Bynum, \textit{Resurrection}, 259–60.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 135.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Sentences} commentary, bk. 4, dist. 43, q. 5, conclusion, p. 462, quoted in ibid., 244. Aquinas similarly writes, in \textit{ST} SS a. 79, q. 1, “Whether in the resurrection the soul will be reunited to the same identical body,” “We cannot call it resurrection unless the soul returns to the same body. . . . [I]f it be not the same body which the soul resumes, it will not be a resurrection, but rather the assuming of a new body.” This position was not always and everywhere the same. Bynum, \textit{Resurrection}, 135 and 256, observes that Hugh of St. Victor and Robert of Melun could conceive of the person not as a psychosomatic unity but as “soul using a body.” The positions of Origen and Eriugena were even less materialist, but such beliefs tended to be condemned as heretical (ibid., 142–46). Note that the scripture itself is silent about the
scholars universally agreed that animal bodies and souls would come to nothing. Paulinus of Nola articulates the precepts of an argument repeated throughout the Christian Middle Ages:

Though we share with other breathing creatures the same substance of flesh, we are not at death’s dissolution restored to nothingness as souls excluded because of the death of the flesh. No, when the trumpet sounds every region of earth will restore our bodies from their hidden seeds; our body, mind, soul will be joined in their compact with each other, and we shall be haled before the Lord God in our wholeness.\(^{52}\)

Only animals really die, whereas death for humans is only a temporary interruption, the end of the capacity for humans to determine where they will spend eternity, an opportunity to solicit the assistance of the living, but nothing more.

The resurrection doctrine counteracted anti-Christian polemics such as that of Porphyry, who claimed that the destruction of the human body by beasts rendered resurrection impossible.\(^{53}\) As the Christians argued, no shipwreck, rending in the arena, or burning at the stake, no putrefaction, desiccation, or dispersal could destroy the psychosomatic integrity of the human self. Coping with catastrophic change and the total disappearance of the body was simplicity itself for the doctrine, but for several twelfth- and thirteenth-century thinkers quotidian change before the cataclysm of the Last Judgment proved an almost insoluble problem.\(^ {54}\) For example, Master Martin’s treatise on the resurrection concocted an argument in which the

\[ \text{carnes animalium et piscium qui conveniunt mensis hominum, transseunt in carne vescentium. Tota caro hominis resurget, ergo caro animalium huissmodi facta humana resurget. Item transit caro hominis in carnem lupi et ita caro lupi resurget quia resurget caro hominis, quae in ea transivit.} \]

meats of animals and fish that are fit for the table of humans turn into the flesh of the eaters. All human flesh will resurrect, therefore the flesh of these ani-

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\( ^{53} \) Grant, “Resurrection,” 94, citing material from Porphyry’s *Against Christianity*.

\( ^{54} \) For an extended discussion, see Philip Lyndon Reynolds, *Food and the Body: Some Peculiar Questions in High Medieval Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

\( ^{55} \) Edited in Heinzmann, *Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele und die Auferstehung des Leibes*, 181. This may be the same person as Martinus de Fugeriis; see Gary Macy, “A Guide to Thirteenth-Century Theologians;” http://home.sandiego.edu/~macy
mals, having been made human, will resurrect. Also, human flesh crosses over into the flesh of a wolf [that has eaten a human] and thus the flesh of the wolf will resurrect since the flesh of the human, which has crossed over into the wolf, will resurrect.

Other scholars of this era imagined similar scenarios. In his commentary on the Sentences, Peter of Poitiers suggested that someone might say that a man “qui devoratus est a lupo, et transit caro hominis in carnem lupi, et ita resurget et caro lupi et resurget etiam caro hominis quae in eam transierat” (who was devoured by a wolf, and the flesh of the man turns into the flesh of the wolf, and thus [that] both the flesh of the wolf and the flesh of the man that turns into him will resurrect; PL 211: 1264D). Gilbert of Poitiers argued that if what humans ate turned into human flesh, then “caro porcina tunc resurgeret”56 (pig flesh would resurrect); and an anonymous twelfth-century Summa wondered whether “homo comedens ferinam carnem eam in suam carnem convertit et everso fera comedens carnem humanam et ita caro ferae in humanam conversa vel ex humana confecta resurget”57 (a man, in eating beast flesh, turns it into his own flesh and conversely a beast eating human flesh turns it into its own flesh, and thus the flesh of a beast having been converted into human flesh or having been made human will resurrect). The verbs describe lives not returned to separate existences in the resurrection, but rather ineluctably combined through digestion: facere, confacere, convertere, and transire. Humans would have to share their resurrected bodies with the creatures they had eaten or that had eaten them. This would be an afterlife either populated by humans and animals both, or, more horrifying, one of humans and animals conjoined in monstrous assemblages of eater and eaten.

This last option may not even be the worst, as the “chain consumption” problem suggests that some unfortunate humans might not be able to resurrect at all. Typical chain consumption scenarios, in which a human is eaten by an animal that, often, is then eaten by another animal, appear in Gregory the Great’s Homilies on Ezekiel (PL 76 1032C–D); in Honorius of Autun’s Elucidarium (PL 172: 1164D) and its many vernacular translations; and in a seventh-century florilegium of Augustine’s works, the Prognosticon


57. Edited in Heinzmann, Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele und die Auferstehung des Leibes, 211.
of Julian of Toledo (PL 96: 510D–511C), which was adapted into Anglo-Norman verse in the thirteenth century. Even had the chain consumption argument not been a common topic in Latin doctrinal writing, its appearance in vernacular works argues for its not being only an esoteric concern. In the Anglo-Norman adaptation, a student wonders whether a man who has been hanged, quartered, and then eaten by a dog will be resurrected, since the human body has clearly become conjoined to the dog. The student’s master attacks his disciple for daring to question God’s might: “Devom nus demander reson / Coment Dieus celes choses fet? / Ce est outrage e forfet!” (should we ask for an explanation for how God did these things? This is an outrage and an enormity!; 1745–47). Nonetheless the master counters with a story of his own in which a “clerc soutils” (sophistical scholar) tries to confound Gregory the Great with an even more outrageous scenario: instead of a corpse eaten by a hungry dog, a living man walking in the woods is killed by a wolf, which is in turn killed and eaten by a lion, which itself dies shortly afterwards:

La charoine del leoun jut  
E porri tote, a devint terre:  
Ou porreit l’en cest homme querre?  
Sachez, por veirs, je ne crei mie  
Ke cil relieve de mort en vie,  
Kar nul desseverer ne porreit  
Le terre que de homme esteit  
De cele que bestes devint! (1779–86)

The carcass of the lion lay on the ground and entirely rotted and turned to earth: where could one seek the man in here? Know, indeed, that I do not believe at all that this man could be recuperated from death into life, because nothing can divide the earth that was the man from that which became the beasts!

But Gregory “cele folour confoundi” (refuted this folly; 1789) by declaring that humans do, in fact, always return with all their limbs intact. The master then tells the student that if the human subject can survive such misfortune, then a fortiori it could survive being consumed by only one animal: the problem has been solved, but not, it should be said, without some impatience.

In this, the dramatized Gregory of the Anglo-Norman dialogue echoes the actual Gregory, whose *Homilies on Ezekiel* scorned those “objicere inanem quaestiunculam solent” (in the habit of throwing out an inane little question [about, among others, chain consumption]). Each work insists that the problem must be understood as beneath contempt, that certain operations of reason lead to irrational, silly, even dangerous thoughts: per the anonymous twelfth-century Summa, “melius est enim esse simplicem catholicum quam disertum haereticum” 59 (better to be a simple catholic than an eloquent heretic). To preserve the human, these works limit inquiry into the possibility of a human subject too deeply mixed with the mortal, changeable world, even as their very prohibitions of inquiry imply that they suspect the human cannot be of the world and still remain human. 60

Notably, resurrection doctrine did not concern itself with humans who might resurrect as partly bread, wine, vegetable, or fruit, the primary nourishment, at least ideally, of the clergy authoring doctrinal treatises; it concerned itself only with meat. Humans are only metaphorically like wheat (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 15:37); but their bodies, like those of animals, are literally flesh. The resurrection should efface this similarity, but it would fail as an ultimate guarantee of difference between humans and nonhumans if the doctrinal worries about digestion proved justified. Then humans eaten by animals might be digested into animal flesh and thus be “restored to nothingness,” unable to resurrect, or else animals that were eaten by or ate humans could enter into eternity and escape the nothingness that is their proper lot. If either happened, or if humans entered eternity as hybrid human-animals, then, to quote once more the question from the *Dialogue of St. Julian*, “Ou porreit l’en cest homme querre?” With every bite, the human would gradually meld with the animal and be given over to death or, at best, would lose the specificity and the supposed benefits and rights of its human existence. If the human so linked with animals did not resurrect, there would indeed be no difference, as the Cistercian Hélînand of Froidmont wrote in his late twelfth-century *Vers de la mort*, “Entre ame a homme et ame a truie” (between a man’s and sow’s soul), no need to scorn those who “s’abandonne a folie” (abandon themselves to debauchery), 61 no

59. Heinzmann, *Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele und die Auferstehung des Leibes*, 211.

60. I draw this idea from the call in Slavoj Žižek, “Bring Me My Philips Mental Jacket: Improve Your Performance!” *London Review of Books*, May 22, 2003, contra Jürgen Habermas and Francis Fukuyama, for biogenetic intervention and deep investigations into the human genome, even if such scientific work destroys longstanding metaphysical conceptions of choice and the “free” human subject. Žižek here belongs to the Enlightenment project as described by Kant: “aude sapere” (dare to know).

61. For a similar statement, from the late 1220s or early 1230s, see William of Auvergne,
need—although this point is only implicit in Hélinand’s text—not to treat humans as instrumentally as sows were treated. If on the other hand animals so linked with humans did resurrect, then Hélinand’s scorn for sows, and the system of the human supported by his scorn, would in turn have to be abandoned. There is still another problem. If human subjugation of animals produces the human, there is no essential human identity; there is only a fundamental conflict, or, more accurately, no foundation at all. It might be expected that the conflict between human and animal could end in the next life, where humans, having finally assumed perfected bodies, will be freed from the threat of worldly flux and especially of the need to dominate animals. This peaceful end might be understood as the point when the human at long last comes into its own. But if the meat-eating by which the human most forcefully asserts and constructs its humanity contaminates its perfected body, if the meat humans eat resurrects with them, then that struggle will be marked on the human body for eternity. Rather than finally arriving at an identity, the human will permanently display a corporeal reminder of the systemic and irreducible antagonism of the human. The truth of human nature—its contingency, its inessential relationality—will be irrepressible.

Christian thinkers countered this truth of human nature by proposing another: only what belonged to what they called the veritas humanae naturae, “the truth of human nature,” would resurrect. In effect, this clarification set aside a discrete portion of the human body as essentially human, rendering the rest of the body a kind of inhuman supplement unfit for resurrection, associated rather than joined with what was truly human. The aforementioned anonymous twelfth-century Summa, after wondering whether animals might resurrect, explains, “Respondeo nec caro humana ferinam nec econverso convertitur, sed una altera fovetur et crescit” (I answer that neither human flesh turns into that of a wild beast nor the other way around, but one nourishes the other and makes it grow). As proof, it first quotes Matthew 15:17, “Do you not understand, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy?”62 and then suggests that

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62. This is one of the standard proof texts for this position. The others include God’s creation of Eve from Adam’s rib, the feeding of the five thousand from the five loaves, and the resurrection of infants into adult bodies; for example, Häring, “Die Sententie Magistri Gisleberti Pictavensis,” 102.
food disappears from the body through defecation, urination, sweat, “sive alio modo” (or some other way). As if not entirely sure of the validity of the Matthew passage, it then adds, “Vel licet altera in alteram convertatur, non tamen in veritatem humanae naturae vel econverso” (Or, if it is allowed that one is converted into another, it is not however converted into the truth of human nature or the other way around). Finally, as if unwilling to explore any further complications to the problem of digestion and growth, that is, as if eluding the dangers of thinking any further, it concludes, “Vel etiam si convertantur dominus novit unam ab altera in resurrectione secernere” (Or, however, if they are converted the Lord will know one from another and in the resurrection will separate them). Other scholars intervened in the problem more confidently. Peter of Poitiers writes, “nec ideo transit cibus in car- nem hominis sicut testantur physici; vel si forte in eam transit, non in illam quae est de veritate humanae naturae, et quae in futuro judicio resurget” (nor therefore does food turn into human flesh as the natural scientists claim; or, if perhaps it turns into human flesh, it does not turn into that which is of the truth of human nature, which will resurrect in the future judgment; PL 211: 1265A). Using virtually the same words, Master Martin explains that “nec ideo cibus transit in carnem hominis, ut asserit physicus; vel si forte transit, tamen in ea quae est de veritate humanae naturae non transit” (nor therefore does food turn into human flesh, as natural science asserts; or, if perhaps it turns into human flesh, however it does not turn into that which is the truth of human nature). Drawing on works such as Hugh of St. Victor’s De Sacra- mentis, Peter Lombard similarly argued that the human body receives “help from foods but foods are not converted into human substance.” Despite Gilbert of Poitiers’ worries, pig flesh would not resurrect, because humans would be unchanged by—it might be said, defended from—their own eat-

63. Reynolds, Food and the Body, 61 n31, which discusses a similar point in Peter of Poitiers’ Sentences commentary, is applicable here: “Peter seems to presuppose that wolves do not truly assimilate food either, so that there is there a [sic] truth of lupine nature. But if so, one could not define it by reference to the resurrection.”

64. Heinzmann, Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele und die Auferstehung des Leibes, 211.

65. Ibid., 181. For a later version, quoted in ibid., 202, see Peter of Capua (d. 1242), “Cibi autem non convertuntur in veritatem humanae naturae licet forte convertantur in carnem hum ranam quia aliqu a caro est in homine quae non est de veritate humanae naturae” (Foodstuffs are not turned into the truth of human nature, although perhaps they are turned into human flesh, because some human flesh is not of the truth of human nature).

66. Quoted in Bynum, Resurrection, 125. For the analogous passage, see Hugh of St. Victor, On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis), trans. Roy Defferrari (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), 123, where he argues that Eve was, as the Bible says, made from the rib alone, and from nothing extraneous, and likewise, we were all formed out of the tiny seed of Adam.
ing. While this solution required that human growth take place miraculously rather than naturally, while it cut off the essentially human from any true alimentary interaction with the world, it had the advantage of simplicity on other points: nothing significant and lasting in the human body was subject to change, and nothing animal could ever resurrect.

Another doctrinal strain, which would become dominant in the thirteenth century, promoted a natural rather than miraculous explanation for human growth by dispensing with the division between the truth of human nature and the rest of the body. This conclusion preserved human integrity by arguing that what humans ate and digested became human flesh. Thus the anonymous treatise *De novissimus* (On the Last Days) argues:

Dicunt enim quidam impossibile ut porcina caro clarificetur in die iudicii et regnum Dei possideat. Soluunt qui tenent sententiam: dicunt enim porcinam carnum iam non porcinam sed in humanam substantiam transformatum ressuscitari nullum esse inconueniens, sicut limus terre non simpliciter limus sed in humanam formam transfiguratus resurget in Adam.

They said that it is impossible that pork flesh will be perfected in the Day of Judgment and possess the Kingdom of Heaven. They solve it by asserting this opinion: they say that pork is not pork but is transformed into human substance, not unsuitable to be resurrected, just as the mud of the earth is not simply mud, but, having been transfigured into the human form, will arise with Adam.67

And in *Summa Theologica* SS q. 80, a. 4, “Whether whatever in the body belonged to the truth of human nature will rise again in it,” Aquinas, like *De novissimus*, asserts that “although that part of matter which at one time was under the form of bovine flesh rises again in man under the form of human flesh, it does not follow that the flesh of an ox rises again, but the flesh of a man: else one might conclude that the clay from which Adam’s body was fashioned shall rise again.”

Both systems had in common an insistence that animal violence against humans could do no lasting harm and that animal acts and animal appetites, like animal bodies, are from their very beginning given over to death. If, per Honorius of Autun’s solution to the problem of chain consumption: “Quod fuit caro hominis resurget; quod bestiarum remanet” (What was the flesh of men shall resurrect; what was of beasts shall remain; *PL* 172: 566A), then

anthropophagous animals at worst could only store the human temporarily until God comes to retrieve it.\textsuperscript{68} This point appears in Christian writing as early as that of Paulinus of Nola, who asserts it with unusual vehemence and specificity:

If a corpse has been devoured, the animals after digesting their food restore the limbs to earth wherever they purge themselves. In such cases, there is the transfusion of the human body from one not its own, but without loss of the potentiality of its own species. Even though bodies have been transferred to the earth from the bodies of beasts, they remain unaffectedly human with the seed alive in them. When a beast dies after chancing to feast on a human corpse, the reason remains apart from it; man is a rational animal, and accordingly in his very body he is superior to and king over other bodies. So, though he can be given as booty to dumb animals, he refuses to share their lot. So only that flesh which was the vessel of the rational soul will experience the power of resurrection, so that when the soul returns to earth the flesh may renew its physique and receive it in an imperishable garment.\textsuperscript{69}

In both systems, humans could injure without being injured; they were at once violent and invulnerable, like the fantasy of the “violent and self-centered” invulnerable subject described by Judith Butler, which I discussed in my previous chapter. Furthermore, if human slaughter and consumption of animals could transform animals into human flesh, as in digestive systems unreliant on \textit{veritas humanae naturae}, then human violence did not just split humans off from their ties to the rest of the world by asserting a fundamental human invulnerability and total vulnerability of the world to humans. Human violence could cause animals to disappear into human flesh while augmenting it.\textsuperscript{70} In this model, as in so many models of violence and domi-


\textsuperscript{70} This dynamic may be compared to the thirteenth-century Iberian kabbalist Joseph Gikatilla’s explanation of how God can simultaneously be merciful and require the sacrifice of animals. By consenting to be sacrificed (as they did in Eden) and consumed by humans, animals enable the exchange of their beastly substance for something better: “Whenever a human being eats a portion of the portions of a beast, it turns into a portion of the human being. Here the beast is transformed into a person, and her slaughter is an act of mercy, for she leaves the torah of beasts and enters into the torah of human beings. Death is life for it, in that it ascends to the degree of angels—and this is the secret of ‘Man and beast the Lord will save’ [Ps. 36:8]”; see Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus, “Meat-Eating and Jewish Identity: Ritualization
nation, one kind of violence, that of humans, can form, defend, and expand polities, including the little polity of the human body, and the other kind of violence, that of animals (and animalized humans), can only temporarily disturb the smooth workings of the reasonable polity before being put down, either by the agents of law or by the inescapably destructive force of its own irrational energies.

III.

How Delicious We Must Be

Frank fed us human meat, and we got the hunger. That's how you become a cannibal, Dee. You get one taste of delicious, delicious human meat, none of this stuff ever satisfies you.  

Nearly two thousand years ago in Jerusalem, during Titus's siege, robbers emptied a rich woman’s house of all she had, including her remaining food. According to the *Golden Legend*, the woman, in her despair, “strangled her son, had him cooked, ate half of his body, and hid the other half. But when robbers smelled the odor of the cooked meat, they burst in and threatened the woman with death if she did not give up her store of meat.”  

When she produced her son’s half-eaten body, the robbers froze in horror, repulsed as much by the infanticide as by their own confusion of human for animal flesh.  

Human flesh smells like meat because it is meat. According to some

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of the Priestly ‘Torah of Beast and Fowl’ (Lev 11:46) in Rabbinic Judaism and Medieval Kabbalah,” *AJS Review* 24 (1999): 229 n4. Gikatilla’s contemporary Bahya ben Asher limits the capacity to transform animal meat into intelligent soul to Torah scholars, that is, those humans capable of metaphysical thinking; see ibid., 233–34.

71. Fred Savage, “Mac and Dennis: Manhunters,” *It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia* (FX, 2008). I thank Mike Smith for introducing me to this episode.


73. For anthropophagy as a historiographic topos of famine, see Julia Marvin, “Cannibalism as an Aspect of Famine in Two English Chronicles,” in Carlin and Rosenthal, *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe*, 73–86; Bonnassie, “Consommation d’aliments immondes,” 1046–50; Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life,*
medieval natural science, the difference between human and animal flesh is one of degree, not of kind: human flesh differs from other meats only in its relative coldness or dryness. The indiscernibility between human and animal flesh is especially striking in the great famine set-piece of Raoul Glaber’s eleventh-century history, in which one man sells cooked human flesh in the marketplace of Tournus “ac si fruissent alicuius pecudis” (as if it were some manner of livestock). The authorities arrest and burn the vendor and bury the confiscated human flesh, transforming what had temporarily been a carcass back into a corpse through funeral and legal rituals. But these rituals cannot wholly erase the event of human flesh sold as meat: this may have been an illegal, abominable ware, but because it is edible, Raoul’s story confesses the inherent meatiness of all humans. Notably, when a father who had killed and eaten his own daughter begged Innocent III for a suitable penance, the pope enjoined him “nunquam de caetero carnibus pro quacunque necessitate vesceretur” (never again to eat other meats for whatever necessity; PL 214:1063D–64B; my emphasis).

Nonetheless, medieval texts attest that even before the resurrection human flesh possesses one distinguishing characteristic: it is the best of meats, the most restorative, most delicious, and most desirable. In Geoffrey of Monmouth’s History of the Kings of Britain, King Cadwallo, driven into exile by his brother Edwin, lands on the Isle of Guernsey and, in his grief, refuses to eat until someone can provide him with venison. Cadwallo’s beloved nephew, Brian, fails in his hunt, but rather than return with nothing, he slices off and roasts a piece of his own thigh and serves it to his uncle, who finds the flesh sweeter than any he had ever tasted before (“tantum dulcedinem in aliis carnibus non reperisset”). The singular deliciousness


74. Phyllis Pray Bober, Art, Culture, and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 245. For a similar observation, see Cohen, Medieval Identity Machines, 75: “ Whereas Augustine saw the line between animal and human as inviolable, as far as this Galenic body is concerned there is no difference between human and animal flesh.” Note that 1 Corinthians 15:39 (“All flesh is not the same flesh: but one is the flesh of men, another of beasts, other of birds, another of fishes”) might have prompted a discussion of the differences between human and animal flesh, but the usual exegesis remarks only on distinctions among resurrected humans, which will be like the differences in brightness among celestial bodies: e.g., Peter Lombard’s commentary on 1 Corinthians (PL 191:1685D–1686C). Haymo of Auxerre (PL 117: 600B, mistakenly ascribed to Haymo of Halberstadt) is rare in discussing a material difference between kinds of flesh: he explains that although all flesh is one, birds were made from air, humans from earth, and fish from flowing water.

75. Rodulfus Glaber, Historium libri quinque, IV.10, 188–89.

of the flesh attests to the special relationship between Brian and Cadwallo, to the nobility of Brian’s corporeal sacrifice, but also to the inferiority of animal to human flesh. Cadwallo’s enjoyment is matched by the other, rare medieval descriptions of the taste of human flesh. In the Middle English romance Richard Coer de Lyon, Richard’s men trick an ailing Richard, who yearns for pork, into eating the spiced body of a “yonge and fflat” (young and fat; 3088) Saracen. Though “hys ffolk hem tournyd away and lough” (his folk turned away and laughed; 3114), Richard eats and regains his health and vigor.77 In the Chanson d’Antioche, the starving rabble among the crusaders discover human flesh to be a delicacy: “Mius vaut que cars de porc ne cars de cerf lardés. / Nule cars de porcel ne poroit ester tés”78 (It is better than pork or fat venison. No piglet’s flesh could be as good as this; 4985–86). Marco Polo reports that the Japanese think human flesh “the choicest of all foods,”79 and John Mandeville that the people of Lamore “wele gladly etyn manys flesch more than ony othir flesch” (will gladly eat man’s flesh more than any other flesh), despite their wealth and the ready availability of other kinds of meat.80 In one of Poggio Bracciolini’s tales, a teenage serial killer, “fassus est se plures alios comedisse, idque se agere, quoniam sapid-


78. Jan A. Nelson, ed., La Chanson d’Antioche (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003). For more texts like this, see Jill Tattersall, “Anthropophagi and Eaters of Raw Flesh in French Literature of the Crusade Period: Myth, Tradition, and Reality,” Medium Aevum 57 (1988): 240–53. For a recent attempt to determine the story’s truth, including whether crusaders were anthropophagous only at Ma’aara or also at Antioch and other places, see Jay Rubenstein, “Cannibals and Crusaders,” French Historical Studies 31 (2008): 525–52. I have examined all the first crusade narratives Rubenstein discusses; while a few others record anthropophagy and condemn it, only the Chanson d’Antioche describes the taste of human flesh. Albert of Aachen, Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem, ed. and trans. Susan Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 375, reports that “the Christians did not shrink from eating not only killed Turks or Saracens, but even dogs;” oddly presenting caninophagy as more horrifying than anthropophagy. Ralph of Caen, The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade, trans. Bernard S. Bachrach and David Stewart Bachrach (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 116, perhaps recalls Cynocephali lore in its condemnation: “in devouring them [i.e., the “gentiles”], the Christians looked like wild beasts, like dogs roasting men.” I use the words “anthropophagy/anthropophage” instead of “cannibalism/cannibal” not only because of the roots of the word “cannibal” in colonialism and genocide, but also because my discussion considers human-eating animals (who could hardly be called “cannibals”).


iores reliquis carnibus viderentur” 81 (confessed that he had eaten many other children, and that he had done this because they seemed tastier to him than any other flesh). The fifteenth-century hunting manual of Edward of York observes that “man’s flesh is so savory and so pleasant that when [wolves] have taken to man’s flesh they will never eat the flesh of other beasts, though they should die of hunger.” 82 In Summa Theologica, 2a2ae q. 147, a. 8, “Whether it is fitting that those who fast should be bidden to abstain from flesh meat, eggs, and milk foods,” Aquinas himself hints at the particular delight of anthropophagy by explaining that the flesh of quadrupeds should not be eaten during Lent because their bodily similarities to humans makes them more pleasurable and more nourishing to eat, which in turn “results [in] a greater surplus available for seminal matter, which when abundant becomes a great incentive to lust.” 83 If the consumption of the flesh of quadrupeds has such effects for such causes, anthropophagy must be a very great pleasure indeed.

Why should human flesh be thought to taste so good? Maybe because it did taste good. Postmedieval records of anthropophagy describe it as tasting like pork, beef, tuna, veal, cheese, or, according to Guy de Maupassant, who ate a piece of human flesh during a dissection, as having no flavor at all. 84


83. For the development of the notion of that meat-eating inspires lust, see Boulc’h, “Le statut de l’animal,” 44, and for a later developments, Julia Twigg, “Vegetarianism and the Meanings of Meat,” in The Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food, ed. Anne Murcott (Aldershot: Gower, 1983), 25, which cites the opinion of the late-nineteenth-century vegetarian Edward Carpenter that animal food “containing as it does highly wrought organic forces, may liberate within our system powers we may find difficult or even impossible to dominate.”

84. For Guy de Maupassant, see Wilhelm Stekel, “Cannibalism, Necrophilism, and Vampirism,” in Sadism and Masochism, trans. Louise Brink (New York: Grove, 1965), 305. Stekel’s analysis exemplifies the common conviction that anthropophagy in “modern” societies represents a return of the primitive repressed. Issei Sagawa, a graduate student in literature at the Sorbonne who in 1981 murdered and ate his classmate Renée Hartevelt, described her flesh as tasting like tuna. For beef, see Gananath Obeyesekere, Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 139, and pork, in the same book, 28. For veal, see William Seabrook, Jungle Ways (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), 173; and for beef and cheese, see Piers Paul Read, Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1974), 198
But like most accounts of the practice, medieval records of anthropophagy rely only on hearsay; claims for the flavor are not empirical, then, but rather help to portray anthropophagy as unusual, shocking, or desirable. The many psychoanalytic critical readings of anthropophagy therefore provide a readier approach than “straight belief” for explaining the purported deliciousness of human flesh. Freud’s myth of the origins of the superego in anthropophagy would explain that whatever is most prohibited—paradigmatically, incest and anthropophagy—must be a sign of pure id unconstrained by or overthrowing paternal/cultural constraints; readings inspired by Klein rather than by Freud would see anthropophagy, whether literal or metaphorical, as repairing the trauma of the distinction of the world from the self. Political readings, inspired by the common medieval troping of tyranny as anthropophagy, would explain its pleasure as a pleasure of unlimited political might, or, using Kristeva, would regard the intense pleasure of anthropophagy as representing the disgusting, disordered pleasures that must be repressed and abjected (onto “primitives” or tyrants, for example).
for normative subjects to solidify the boundaries of their identities. But to understand anthropophagy as a concretized metaphor for dynamics of interiority, exteriority, and incorporation, or as a metaphor for ethnic, political, or familial fantasies, is to treat the symbolism of anthropophagy without coming to terms with the act of meat-eating itself. To be sure, meat-eating is also a symbolic act, but because it generally requires the end of a life, and always requires some degree of dismemberment or excision, it is not only symbolic. While many medieval works consider the slaughter, butchery, and consumption of animals, they generally do so to guide cooking, to organize human labor, to help keep cities clean, or to encourage Christians to tame their flesh by temporarily curtailing their consumption of meat. Virtually no medieval work pays any attention to the lives animals lose in becoming meat. Only anthropophagy, a subjectively violent assault on the objectively violent status quo, might inspire horror or obsessional appetites. Modern studies of anthropophagy, to the degree that they replicate these medieval silences and differential attentions, may justly be accused of parochialism, or of what Richard Ryder in 1970 termed “speciesism,” since, like their medieval forebears, they attend only to that subset of carnivorousness that


most directly injures humans.\textsuperscript{91} Such analyses, whether medieval or modern, simply assume anthropophagy to be a special kind of horror, and, in so doing, uncritically perpetuate the distinction and superiority of humans from and to other animals. They fail to investigate how the human differentiates itself from others: how, to put it simply, the human is made, not born.\textsuperscript{92}

Any examination of the purported deliciousness of human flesh in anthropophagy must therefore begin by examining why anthropophagy itself should be considered so remarkable, or, more precisely, what function is performed by considering it remarkable. The question thus ceases to be about the taste of human flesh—though I will return to this issue—and becomes one concerned with the interest in anthropophagy itself. Any examination of the particular cultural fascination with anthropophagy among all the other -phagies should examine what humans lose as humans when they are eaten. The special horror of anthropophagy derives primarily from its violation of codes, not of polity or faith, nor even of species, but of privilege. Anthropophagy confounds the distinction between human and other animal lives, between what can be murdered and what can only be slaughtered, by digesting what the regime of the human demands be interred within a grave. The special horror of anthropophagy is therefore its impossibility: a human who has been slaughtered and eaten, who has lost the exemption from being eaten through which it defines itself as not animal, may have ceased to be recognizable as an \textit{anthropos}.\textsuperscript{93}

The prohibition of anthropophagy serves therefore as a defense not of humans, but of the human itself: hence the severity of both custom and legislation against it. A rare, perhaps unique exception in Christian law occurs in Alfonso the Wise’s thirteenth-century law compilation, the \textit{Siete Partidas}, which allows a besieged lord “to eat his own child with impunity [sin male estança] rather than surrender the castle without permission of the lord”;\textsuperscript{94} this law unusually rates duty to one’s lord higher than the duty to

\textsuperscript{91} The well-known systematic development of the implications of Ryder’s coinage is Peter Singer, \textit{Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals} (New York: Random House, 1975).

\textsuperscript{92} Donovan and Adams, \textit{Feminist Care Tradition}, well illustrates the indebtedness of critical animal theory to feminist thought.

\textsuperscript{93} My ideas accord with those expressed in the discussion concluding the Animal Studies Group’s anthology, \textit{Killing Animals} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 196, in which Erica Fudge suggests that “to eat a human is not just eating flesh and bones,” but rather a kind of destruction of the human itself; Steve Baker responds that anthropophagous animals, because they have reversed the structure of subjugation, might no longer properly be called “animal.”

\textsuperscript{94} Quoted in John Boswell, \textit{The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance} (Chicago: University of Chicago
one’s species. More typically, the thirteenth-century penitential of the English Bishop Robert Grosseteste classifies anthropophagy among the worst crimes: it explains that “Si pauper pro necessitate carnem asini aut caballi manducaverit, non nocet; si canem iii. di paeniteat; si humanam carnem manducaverit, x an. paeniteat” (if a poor person eats the flesh of a horse or ass out of necessity, it is not harmful; if a dog, let him do penance for three days; if he has eaten human flesh, let him do ten years of penance). Robert approves the consumption of horses in certain instances, while implying that no one who had other options would eat a horse. He frowns on the consumption of dogs but imposes one of his lightest penances on it: it ranks worse, but only just, than the two-day penances imposed on a married man who shames a married woman by feeling her breasts or on any male who takes a bath with his wife. Anthropophagy, however, receives one of his heaviest penances: though Robert imagines anthropophages as eaters rather than necessarily as killers, and though they may have eaten human flesh out of desperation, Robert nonetheless imposes penalties exceeded only by those imposed for the worst incest (15 years’ penance for any man who has sex with his mother or daughter and 14 years for having sex with his maternal or paternal aunt), the most antisocial acts (15 years for burning down a church or a brother’s house), and the most repulsive crimes (15 years for habitual bestiality); anthropophagy is nearly equal to incest with a sister (10 years, 1 on bread and water, and to be forbidden ever to marry). At least in terms of its punishment, anthropophagy is worse than murder.

95. Joseph Goering and F. A. C. Mantello, eds., “The Early Penitential Writings of Robert Grosseteste,” Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale 54 (1987): 50 at 102. Grosseteste’s class distinctions for hippophagy may be briefly explained as follows: the draft horses of the poor, not manifesting the military and political strength of the horses of the elite, would have been recognized as having roughly the same social function as oxen and thus would have been thought more edible: as Deleuze and Guattari put it, “a racehorse is more different from a workhorse than a workhorse is from an ox” (Thousand Plateaus, 257). The editors propose as a source Burchard of Worms’s eleventh-century penitential, the Corrector, XIX.88–89 (PL 140:1002), but these canons do not concern horse, ass, dog, or human flesh, but rather the eating of animals partially eaten by other animals, a point I considered in chapter 2. The reference to anthropophagy in Robert’s penitential is very unusual: for the rarity of such references in the penitentials, see Cyrille Vogel and Allen J. Frantzen, Les Libri paenitentiales, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978), 111. Note that there is some evidence for the medieval human consumption of dogs in England: Umberto Albarella, “‘The Mystery of Husbandry’: Medieval Animals and the Problem of Integrating Historical and Archaeological Evidence,” Antiquity 73 (1999): 873.

96. Goering and Mantello, “Early Penitential Writings,” 59 at 103, and 72 at 104.

97. Ibid., 66 at 103; 128 at 110; 67 at 104; 88 at 106; and 70 at 104. The murder punishment, 22 at 98, requires a complicated series of fasts, almsgiving, and public penance, but its punishment is less severe overall than that levied against the aforementioned crimes; it may
proscription of the thirteenth-century Norwegian Frostathing law is still more severe. It forbids the consumption of meat during Lent, demanding that any adult man of sound mind who eats meat give up his property to the bishop and become an outlaw. For those compelled either to eat meat or die, it is merciful, but only up to a point: “If a man is up on a mountain or out among the outer isles in Lent and is delayed by storms, he may eat, rather than perish, whatever is at hand, except,” notably, “only [the flesh of] man.”98 In the Frostathing law, the Christian code of Lent, as important as it is, matters less than the preservation of individual humans; but no individual human is more important than the human itself. No compulsion, not even starvation, relieves humans of their duty to their status as humans.

Narrative may be thought of as the human’s second line of defense against anthropophagy, as the mere act of telling horror stories about anthropophagy, while not telling stories that evince any special compunction about the consumption of animals, neutralizes anthropophagy’s threat to human particularity. Narratives of anthropophagy decry the violence that humans have suffered; they mourn human death while also memorializing it; and they never consider the death of animals. As Judith Butler points out, communities are as much constituted “by those [they] do grieve for as by those whose deaths [they] disavow.” Butler offers the example of American newspapers that feature obituaries on the deaths of individual American soldiers but that record the deaths of Afghans or Iraqis, if at all, only en masse.99 To use Butler’s terminology, the newspapers “frame” life in a certain way. It is the duty of cultural critics and ethical thinkers to understand “the field of representability” as much by “its explicit contents,” such as the obituaries, as by “what is left out, maintained outside the frame within which representations appear.”100 Fields of representability divide grievable lives, whose injuries and losses are accorded merit and commemoration, from lives outside the frame, not understood as significantly vulnerable and whose deaths do not

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99. Butler, Precarious Life, 46; for her insights on obituaries, see 34–37. For an allied point specifically concerned with animals, see Carol Adams, “Caring About Suffering,” in Donovan and Adams, Feminist Care Tradition, 210. “To abet [the] instrumental use of animals’ bodies, they are deliberately kept anonymous (don’t name anyone you wish to consume). As opposed to efforts at memorializing slain anonymous humans, we are specifically not to remind people of slain anonymous animals”; Adams restates this position in “The War on Compassion,” ibid., 23, “When humans turn a nonhuman into ‘meat,’ someone who has a very particular, situated life, a unique being, is converted into something that has no individuality, no uniqueness, no specificity.”
matter; thus it might be said that the frames divide life from nonlife.\textsuperscript{101} Chloë Taylor has expanded on Butler’s general concentration on human lives by observing that the obituary should also be understood as an act by which animals lives become nonlife, that is, put outside the field of representability and grievability.\textsuperscript{102} Anthropophagy narratives are, functionally speaking, a kind of obituary: because they articulate horror they do not articulate for the slaughter of nonhuman life, they fabricate the uniquely significant vulnerability of human lives while obliterating the lives and deaths of animals.

Anthropophagy narratives should be understood, then, as helping to support the general medieval indifference to the suffering and lives of animals in its dominant intellectual and social traditions. Augustine’s reading of the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” is foundational. In the first book of\textit{ City of God}, Augustine flatly asserts that it protects only humans:

> When we say “Thou shalt not kill,” we do not understand this of the plants, since they have no sensation, nor of the irrational animals that fly, swim, walk, or creep, since they are dissociated from us by their want of reason, and are therefore by the just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive for our own uses.\textsuperscript{103}

Augustine echoes Stoic and Peripatetic arguments against abstinence from meat-eating by asserting that taking the commandment literally would require that no one tear up shrubbery.\textsuperscript{104} He offers this only to mock the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{101} For this point, see Butler's further considerations on these issues in ibid., 8. She writes here, at 15, “‘this will be a life that will have been lived’ is the presupposition of a grievable life, which means that this will be a life that can be regarded as a life, and be sustained by that regard.” Note that I am strategically using, rather than accepting, Butler’s equation of vulnerability with “life”: object-oriented philosophy demands that the category and dignity of “life” be rethought, although this task is outside the scope of this book.
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Chloë Taylor, “The Precarious Lives of Animals: Butler, Coetzee, and Animal Ethics,” \textit{Philosophy Today} 52 (2008): 60–72. Unlike \textit{Precarious Life}, Butler’s Frames of War considers the question of the animal, especially at 75–77, but raises the question only to suspend it: Butler’s focus throughout remains on the human, and on the production of certain human lives as nonliving life. For insights allied to Taylor’s, see Fudge, \textit{Pets}, 14, on omissions in John Berger’s work: “even as Berger reminds us how significant the concept of home is to our sense of self he, like so many others, remains silent about the presence and role of pets in that home . . . we might regard the silence itself as an object of analysis.”
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Augustine, \textit{City of God}, I.20, 26. For the Latin, Augustine, \textit{Civitate Dei}, vol. 1, 34. For a detailed explanation of the logic of Augustine’s exclusion of irrational life from the care owed a neighbor, see Anthony Dupont, “Using or Enjoying Humans: \textit{Uti} and \textit{frui} in Augustine,” \textit{Augustiniana} 54 (2004): 486–90 and 493–94. Later commentary, which quotes Augustine, does without the context of Augustine’s gloss, which was to utilize the commandment to delegitimize any claims to “honorable” suicide and thus to frustrate a key pagan claim to virtue.
  \item \textsuperscript{104} The third-century Neoplatonist Porphyry summarizes some of these arguments in \textit{On
possibility of human abstinence from all killing as a “foolish error” and “ravings.” Thus he rescues the human good conscience. For Augustine, the Sixth Commandment must be almost literally reversed from its express content: thou shalt kill all but humans—but even this is saying too much, since, in his next section, Augustine approves the authority of human governments to go to war and to execute those they deem criminals. The longstanding influence of Augustine’s dual argument for the instrumentality of animals and for understanding this instrumentality as meaning “subject to slaughter” may be observed in Aquinas’s use of Augustine some nine hundred years later in Summa Theologica 2a2ae, q. 64, a. 1, “Whether it is unlawful to kill any living thing,” which modifies its Augustinian source only by giving it a slight Scholastic restructuring.105 Nor was this argument limited to the rarefied world of religious Latinity. It appears in the early fifteenth-century vernacular moral treatise Dives and Pauper, which proves at length that the commandment does not apply “boþyn to man & of beste” (both to men and beasts), but rather, giving Augustine’s formulation the specificity of English law, that “be þis word occidis in Latyn he specifyd & schewyd þat he deffendyd sleynge of man & nout of beste, for occisio in Latyn is in Englysh manslaute, quasi hominum cesio, & þefor þe propyr Englych is þis: Non occides, þu schal slen no man.”106 An allied exegetical tradition, dating to the Apostle Paul, asserts that the verses in Proverbs and the Mosaic law that seem to urge sympathy for animals should either be ignored because of their self-evident absurdity or, because of their absurdity, be interpreted as moral precepts benefiting only humans. Paul cites the Mosaic law against muzzling oxen while they tread corn (Deuteronomy 25:4) and adds incredulously, “Doth

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105. See also Robert Grosseteste, De Decem Mandatis, ed. Richard C. Dales and Edward B. King (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), 58–64, which, on the question of animals, simply quotes Augustine at length. I have been unable to consult a reputable version of the Tractatus decem preceptorum of Henri de Freimar, a mid-fourteenth-century commentary on the Decalogue extant in more than 350 manuscripts; for discussion of this work, see Bertrand-Georges Guyot, “Quelques aspects de la typologie des commentaires sur le Credo et le Decalogue,” in Les Genres littéraires dans les sources théologiques et philosophiques médiévales: définition, critique et exploitation (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, 1982), 244–47.

God take care for oxen?” (1 Corinthians 9:9). Paul says no, and then converts the law into a maxim for the human community: “Or doth he say this indeed for our sakes? For these things are written for our sakes: that he that plougheth, should plough in hope; and he that thresheth, in hope to receive fruit” (1 Corinthians 9:10). The anti-Jewish treatise of the Benedictine Abbot Guibert of Nogent (d. 1124) provides an example of a still severer treatment of scripture, as Guibert does not allegorize but rather altogether invalidates a Deuteronomic verse calling for kindness to animals. The verse in question is Deuteronomy 22:6–7:

If thou find as thou walkest by the way, a bird’s nest in a tree, or on the ground, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs: thou shalt not take her with her young: But shalt let her go, keeping the young which thou hast caught: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live a long time.

After quoting the verse, Guibert cites an earlier, Genesiac law, God’s granting of flesh to Noah (Genesis 9:2–4), and then concludes, “Ut modo bene nobis et longam vitam spondeat, si manus nostra pullorum matribus parcat?” (in what way could He promise us long life, if He spared mother hens from our hands?; PL 156: 524B). He provides no further interpretation. Regardless of the Mosaic law’s original purpose—perhaps for game management or ritual purity—and despite what it might have meant to exegetes among the Jewish communities Guibert himself encountered, Guibert interprets the verse as concerned only with the needs of animals. Ironically, Guibert’s own bluntly

107. Paul similarly allegorizes the Deuteronomic verse in 1 Timothy 5:17–18, “Let the priests that rule well, be esteemed worthy of double honour: especially they who labour in the word and doctrine: For the scripture saith: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”

108. Tractatus de incarnatione contra Iudeos III.8. Guibert directed this work in part against the Count of Soissons, who was sympathetic to Jews and Jewish ideas. For recent treatments of Guibert’s life and works, see Jay Rubenstein, Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind (New York: Routledge, 2002), who focuses on the Moralia in Genesim; and Steven F. Kruger, The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 39–60, who focuses on Guibert’s attitude toward Jews and other non-Christians. Guibert’s straightforward reading of Genesis 9:2–4 in the Tractatus may be contrasted to his wholly symbolic reading of the verse in the Moralia, III.9, PL 156:105C–106D; note, however, that Guibert does not use this symbolism to advocate for gentler treatment of animals.

109. According to some commentaries, the apparent unimportance of the commandment coupled with its great reward (long life) indicates that God wants all commandments to be followed. Implicit in this interpretation is that animals are normally beneath notice. See Elijah Judah Schochet, Animal Life in Jewish Tradition: Attitudes and Relationships (New York: Ktav, 1984), 179–80, which cites the Avot of Rabbi Natan (ninth century, Babylon) and, more relevantly for Guibert of Nogent, Rashi (eleventh century, Troyes).
literal interpretation exemplifies the interpretative inflexibility that Christian polemicists, Guibert included, imputed to Judaism. More relevant here, however, is that Guibert follows Augustine and Paul in presenting sympathy for animals as self-evidently mawkish. Previously in the same treatise, Guibert jeered at Jews for avoiding pork; at this point he mocks them for abstaining from the flesh of mother birds. Guibert implies that among the many Jewish mistakes is the abdication of human privileges, for in Gerald’s world, alimentary resources and even sympathy must be limited to humans lest the human itself lose out.

Perhaps nowhere is human violence against animals rendered at once so necessary and so invisible as in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica*, 2a2ae, q. 25, a. 3, “Whether irrational creatures also ought to be loved out of charity.” As Aquinas explains, animals’ irrationality bars them from merit ing direct charity: they lack the free will that would allow them to choose good, so humans can wish no good for them; for the same reason, humans cannot have authentic fellowship with animals; and, most conclusively, animals’ mortality bars them from charity, since humans wish other humans charity “based on the fellowship of everlasting happiness.” Nonetheless, animals can merit a kind of indirect charity “if we regard them as the good things that we desire for others, in so far, to wit, as we wish for their preservation, to God’s honor and man’s use; thus too does God love them out of charity.” Aquinas permits charitable feeling for animals only insofar as they are useful to God and humans; he also seems to delimit what God himself should do or feel. Since God created animals to be used by humans, and since slaughter and consumption are among these uses, this lethal charity, unrecognizable as violence, does not prevent but rather demands that animals be put to work, skinned, or eaten. In such a system, only human injuries matter to


111. See Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign*, 109, “once there is cruelty only toward the fellow, well, not only can one cause hurt without doing evil . . . and without being cruel not only toward humans not recognized as true humans and true brothers . . . but also toward any living being foreign to the human race . . . one would have the right to inflict the worst suffering on ‘animals’ without ever being suspected of the least cruelty.”

the dominant representational systems: humans are buried and prayed for, their deaths memorialized, the violence they suffer reckoned an object of horror or caution. Animals are only slaughtered, sometimes after suffering harassment by dogs to tenderize their meat, and their remains dumped into rivers rather than buried. This offal, the remnant of animal nonlife, is present to humans, if at all, only as a noxious reminder of what humans would rather forget.\textsuperscript{113}

With animals so entirely given over to human use, it would be, to recall Augustine, a “foolish error” to mourn or commemorate their deaths, to pray for the horse, as \textit{Bevis} asks us to do for Arondel, or to take the \textit{Carmina Burana}’s mocking “Lament of the Roast Swan” as a serious record of violence, or to similarly credit Anglo-Saxon Exeter Riddle 77, which gives voice to a helpless oyster eaten raw by a human.\textsuperscript{114} To take these works seriously as poems about animals would be to memorialize nonlife; it would force a recognition of the importance of the “denegation of murder…to the violent institution of the ‘who’ [rather than an animal ‘that’] as subject.”\textsuperscript{115} A popular medieval story tells what happens when a human grieves for what it should not. In the story, a greyhound overturns a cradle and bloodies itself trying to defend its master’s infant son from a serpent. Informed that his son has died, depending on the version of the story, either from his wife or justify cruelty. Barad and Drum both try to establish a Thomist foundation for animal rights, although Barad recognizes that Aquinas himself would disagree. For that matter, so would the modern Church; Fiddes, \textit{Meat}, 64, observes, “Pope Pius IX refused to permit the establishment of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals in Rome, on the grounds that this would imply that human beings have duties towards animals.”

\textsuperscript{113} The introduction to Albrecht Classen, ed., \textit{Violence in Medieval Courtly Literature: A Casebook} (New York: Routledge, 2004), 15, is exemplary: “our focus will rest on the manifestation of mostly physical violence as understood by the modern (and medieval) sense of the word, that is, as violence that leads to the harm or even death of another person, to the destruction of an object, an institution, or a political entity.” Classen neither justifies his exclusion of living nonpersons from this list (unless “objects” includes animals) nor defines what counts as a person.


\textsuperscript{115} Derrida, “Eating Well,” 283.
nursemaid, the master rushes home, sees the nursery a shambles and his dog covered with blood, and kills the dog. The tale commonly sneers at women’s bad counsel (rather than, say, the master’s impetuousness), affirming its misogyny through the narrative itself when the grieving master abandons the company of women. But in so doing, he abandons not just women, but human society as a whole. In one Middle English version, the master “brake his sper in thre partiis, & put his wyf in preson, and yede him self to the holy londe”116 (broke his spear in three parts, and put his wife in prison, and took himself to the Holy Land); in another, he enters his orchard, goes to his pond, “and for dule of hys hounde / he lepe in and sanke to gronde”117 (and out of grief for his hound, he leaped in and sank to the ground; 884–85), drowning himself; in another, he strips off all his armor:

And al barfote forth gan he ga,  
Withowten leue of wife or childe.  
He went into þe woddes wild,  
And to ðe forest fra al men,  
þat nane sold of his sorow ken. (918–22)118

And entirely barefoot he left, without saying goodbye to his wife or child. He went into the wild woods, into the forest, far from all men, so that no one should know of his sorrow.

The knight breaks his spear, forsakes his wife, and leaves for the Holy Land, not on crusade, but seeking penance heavy enough to cleanse his offense; he drowns himself; he disappears into the woods, where no one can witness his sorrow. Once astonished by his recognition of shared vulnerability with what the human community recognizes only as a dog, the knight surrenders his entire social existence.119 For the knight to remain himself and for the human community to persist, he must frame others appropriately: animals must die like animals, unmourned, discarded, and unthought.

118. Killis Campbell, ed., The Seven Sages of Rome (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1907). For an extensive list of sources and analogues of the story, see lxxix–lxxxii.
The purported taste of human flesh and the pleasure it gave to its eaters serves as the human’s final defense against anthropophagy’s threat to human superiority. Anthropophagy narratives present human flesh as a delicacy for much the same reason that the Eucharist had to be understood as sweet. The Host is literally just bread, but to preserve the faith, it must be experienced as the body of God, as surpassing in savor any worldly food; likewise human flesh is just meat, but to distinguish it from the flesh of animals and thus to preserve the human, it must be experienced—or others must be thought to have experienced it—as the sweetest and most delicious of flesh. Although the eaten human seems to have lost the structural position of being human, the fixation of the anthropophage on human flesh attests to a persistent human supremacy. The violence suffered by humans being eaten resembles that suffered by martyrs in hagiography, where every torment inflicted on them by some insatiable compulsive tyrant bears witness not to the tyrant’s strength but to the capacity of Christianity to drive a tyrant to frenzy. It is therefore to the advantage of humans that the taste of their flesh encourages anthropophagy.

Humans may be perfectly aware that their flesh resembles the flesh of other creatures; that it can be wounded or putrefy as readily as animal flesh; that it probably tastes much like pork, beef, or cheese. But to sustain themselves as human, various fictions of anthropophagy—historiographic, ethnographic, cynegetic—invent anthropophages that believe, to an obsessive degree, in the superiority of human flesh. This false but intense belief sustains the human sense of superiority interpassively, to use Slavoj Žižek’s locution, as humans preserve their human particularity by “believing or enjoying through the other.” In “Je sais bien, mais quand meme . . . ,” Octave Mannoni reappraised Freud’s work on disavowal and fetishism to argue that the subject does not need to believe in the fetish directly; the subject can sustain the potency of its fetish by believing that others truly believe in that which it knows to be false. Belief in the fetish therefore need not be

120. For the purported sweetness of the Eucharist, see Elizabeth Saxon, The Eucharist in Romanesque France: Iconography and Theology (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 150–51, which cites Augustine’s commentary on Psalm 33:9, “O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet,” a verse sung during the distribution of the Eucharist. For the popularity of this verse, and conceptions of God as sweet, from the twelfth century (at least) through the end of the Middle Ages, see Rachel Fulton, “‘Taste and see that the Lord is Sweet’ (Ps. 33:9): The Flavor of God in the Monastic West,” The Journal of Religion 86 (2006): 176–80. The thirteenth-century Italian mystic Angela of Foligno also speaks of the great savor of the Eucharist over the common run of meat: see Angela of Foligno, Complete Works, trans. Paul Lachance (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 186.

direct; it can be believed indirectly through others the fetishist imagines lack his or her sophistication. Developing this point, Žižek has written about the “subject supposed to believe,” someone—or indeed, something—external supposed to believe sincerely in that which we only pretend to believe, or in which we know ourselves not to believe in sufficiently, as if authentic belief were somewhere “out there.” The human subject preserves its sense of itself, whatever its doubts, by believing that the anthropophage stupidly, directly “believes” in the human subject’s importance. Held aloft passively by desiring others, whether these are animal, monstrous humans, or indeed God himself, who sacrifices Himself in His pure and direct love for the sake of human subjects who know themselves not to be worth the trouble, the human subject comports itself as if it were desirable, as if it especially mattered.

Although *Dives and Pauper* argues that the verb “occidit” of the Sixth Commandment applies only to humans, it still limits the slaughter of animals only to those occasions “when it is profytable to hym for mete or for clopinge or for to avoydyn noyance of þe bestis which ben noyous to man” (when it is profitable to them [i.e., mankind] for food or for clothing or to avoid injury from the beasts which are injurious to men) and forbids anyone “to slen hem for crueltie [or] for lykyng in vanite & schrewydnesse” (to slay [animals] out of cruelty or for the gratification of idle desires and depravity). Humans, it explains, “schuldyn han rewþe on beste & bryd & nout harmyn hem withoutyn cause & taken reward þat þei ben Godis creaturis” (should have mercy on beasts and birds and not harm them without cause and pay attention to their being God’s creatures). The only causes for killing animals that *Dives and Pauper* recognizes as proper are those that work past or use up the animal’s life on the way to satisfying some human need—food, clothing, self-defense. The animal’s life should entirely disappear into the product. Yet depraved killers of animals do not kill “withoutyn cause,” for they too kill to satisfy human needs. They sin not by being indifferent but rather by paying too much attention to animal suffering; they sin by treating nonlife as life. Proper killers work to reduce animals to utter materiality, while depraved killers work on the animal’s very life—its presence, its prolongation, its end. Depraved killers thus acknowledge that the life of animals has value in itself, that animals possess something in excess of what could be used up in the creation of some product. The obverse of this sin would be


to slaughter humans without depravity, without some kind of inassimilable excess, whether of grief or mourning or sadistic delight. For this would be a failure to acknowledge that humans, to be human, must possess something more than what can be calculated within regimes of “profyt.” Slaughtering humans must not be simply a job, but a sin, a horror, a drive, or a pleasure that is imagined to infect eaters with “the hunger.”