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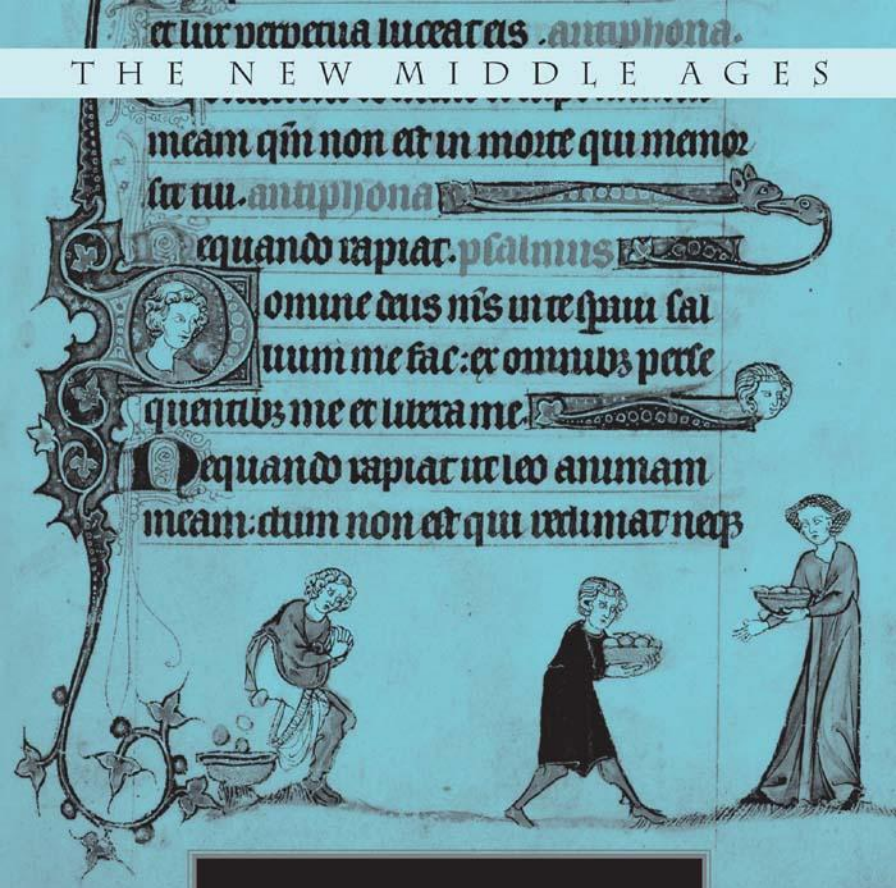

EXCREMENT *in the* LATE MIDDLE AGES

SACRED FILTH *and* CHAUCER'S FECOPOETICS

Susan Signe Morrison

THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

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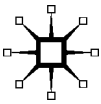

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First published in 2008 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the US—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN-13: 978–1–4039–8488–3
ISBN-10: 1–4039–8488–3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Morrison, Susan Signe, 1959–
Excrement in the late Middle Ages : sacred filth and Chaucer's fecopoetics / by Susan Signe Morrison.
p. cm.—(New Middle Ages)
This book examines medieval discourse on excrement. Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 1–4039–8488–3
1. Feces in literature. 2. Chaucer, Geoffrey, d. 1400. Canterbury tales. 3. Literature, Medieval—History and criticism. 4. Feces—Symbolic aspects. 5. Symbolism in literature. 6. Body, Human, in literature. 7. Sanitation in literature. 8. Refuse and refuse disposal in literature. I. Title.

PR1933.F43M67 2008
821'.1—dc22 2008003859

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: September 2008

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to numerous people who have shown support over the years in my efforts to pursue this project, particularly Jeff Persels, Elizabeth Robertson, Michel-André Bossy, C. David Benson, and Louise Bishop. Martha Bayless, Kathy Lavezzo, Kathleen O'Reilly, and Paul Strohm graciously shared their forthcoming work with me. I have found this kind of generosity among scholars to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of this project. I am grateful for the goodwill of others. I also wish to thank the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art for a research support grant to examine manuscripts.

Texas State University also supported this project with a summer research grant, enabling me to do work in London. Ann Marie Ellis has always steadfastly supported faculty in the College of Liberal Arts, for which I am most grateful. At Alkek Library, Kelvin Gregory was indefatigable with his discussions and suggestions. I could never have researched the book without the help of Jerry Weathers, Michelle Williams, and their team at the office of Interlibrary Loan. They showed determination in finding me books on the most bizarre topics. From my department, I am grateful to Mike Hennessy and Steve Wilson for their unflagging good humor and constant support. Edgar Laird and Elizabeth Makowski offered countless suggestions and willingly supported this project. Thanks to Dan Lochman for suggesting that I turn into a book what was originally a chapter of a different project. I am especially grateful to the Scholars' Group for their copious and careful comments, including Caroline Jones, Kitty Ledbetter, Marilynn Olson, Teya Rosenberg, and, especially, Vicki Smith. Their conviviality and support is most appreciated. Robert Gorman cheerfully and painstakingly searched a vital source for me. Illona Headrick never failed to offer a fine quip when making JPEGs of images of, as she put it, "number two."

Invitations to present my research have been both gratifying and instructive. Many thanks to Women's Studies Program at Texas A & M for inviting me to present a section of this book, as well as to all those who offered comments and responses, including Anne Morey, Leah M. DeVun, Robert

Boenig, and, especially, Claudia Nelson for her invaluable and sustained friendship, support, hospitality, and advice. Thanks to Alexander Schwarz for inviting me to present a section of this book in German at the "Tabu" Conference in Braunschweig, as well as to all those in Braunschweig who were so accommodating: Frau Schrimpf, Klaus van Eickels, Gerhild Scholz Williams, Hans-Joachim Behr, Stefanie Kaplan, Norbert Dichtl, Aribert Marohn, and Herr Weber. In Switzerland and France, Hermann and Uta Romer and Pam and David Neville-Sington offered intellectual engagement and hospitality. Various speakers and listeners at the Literary London conference 2006 were also helpful with suggestions and questions, including Haewon Hwang, Chung-Jen Chen, Ted Hovet, Sebastian Groes, David Skilton, Peter Humm, Leigh Dillard, Harry Joelson, Martha Musgrove, Adam Hanson, Brycchan Carey, Catherine Conan, Paul Humm, and Suman Chakraborty. Others to thank include Sarah Higley, Scott Kellogg, Nina Wright, Richard Almond, Tania String, Marcus Bull, Jane Schulenburg, Dee Dyas, Paul Strohm, and Lisa H. Cooper. Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to Tadeusz Rachwal and Catrin Gersdorf at the Warsaw School for Social Psychology for inviting me to the conference "Rubbish, Waste and Litter: Cultural Refuse/als." This conference was not only convivial, but highly stimulating, and it introduced many new ideas for me to conjure with. Savieta Aneno made the writing of this book in the summer of 2006 possible; her good humor and flexibility are deeply appreciated.

Librarians and manuscript keepers have made my life much easier, including Jayne Ringrose, Bruce Barker-Benfield, Stella Panayotova, and, especially, Rigmor Båtsvik, and I thank them for their patience, suggestions, and infinite good humor. Many thanks to David McKitterick, Joanna Ball, and the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge. In London, my thanks to John Clark of the Museum of London and Bridget Howlett, Senior Archivist, London Metropolitan Archives. Others who have offered suggestions include Todd McGowan, John Friedman, Patricia Gillies, Martha J. Bayless, Dawn Marie Hayes, Martha Carlin, Frank Grady, Maureen Quigley, Ralf Lützelschwab, Sarah Higley, Michelle Cameron, Gary Waller, and Randolph Petilos. Thanks as well to Russell Ganim and Peter J. Smith. Chris Derby-Kilfoyle, Brent E. Hanner, Phil Kloeckner, Barbara Zimbalist, Katherine Lewis, Ann Marie Rasmussen, Sarah Westphal-Wihl, Axel Bolvig, and the staff at Rievaulx Abbey alerted me to various sources. Bonnie Wheeler has been most helpful, supportive, and responsive to my project, as has the editorial staff at Palgrave. A special thanks to the anonymous reader whose excellent suggestions and questions enabled me to focus more rigorously on the theoretical dimensions of this material.

Various students, cheerfully indulging my filthy interests, have also provided much stimulation. In particular, I would like to acknowledge students in both undergraduate classes and graduate seminars, including Krista White, Cristi Clyburn, Toby Peterson, Sean Conner, Jessie Herrada, Laura Kooris, Robin Krawzsenek, Amy Leiva, Micah Robbins, Chris Sisto, Marcus Piazzola, David Hadbawnik, Heather Robinson, Brent Hanner, John Dunlap, Tracy Staton, and Dana Stiffler. I especially wish to credit Misty Schieberle for support, including helping me to roll up a membrane at the Duke Humfrey's Library, friendship, ideas, and sources, as well as a never-ending supply of bad puns.

Some material appears elsewhere in somewhat different form. Part of chapter 5 appears in *The Medieval Metropolis*, ed. Ruth Kennedy, Special Issue of the online journal *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, general editor Lawrence Phillips, www.literarylondon.org (forthcoming). Part of chapter 10 appears in *Rubbish, Waste and Litter: Culture and Its Refuse(al)s*, ed. Tadeusz Rachwal (forthcoming). Parts of chapters 5 and 9 appear in German in *TABU—Über den gesellschaftlichen Umgang mit Ekel und Scham* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, forthcoming 2008).

Many thanks for the fine support I received at Palgrave, particularly from Farideh Koohi-Kamali, Brigitte Shull, and Kristy Lilas. I am grateful for Bonnie Wheeler's vision and energy, which are a joy for medievalists in many disciplines. Newgen Imaging is to be thanked as well for their painstaking and careful work; the patience of Maran Elancheran and his team is deeply appreciated.

This book was inspired in great part by my son, John Callanish Kilfoyle, who was potty training when the idea first came to me to work on this subject and who now makes his own "Uranus/your anus" jokes. My daughter Sarah and her Girl Scout troop enthusiastically participated in a "scat" badge I organized. My children and husband Jim have patiently participated in many discussions on what might be to some an unsavory topic. They always showed a good sense of humor and tolerance for my predilection. Jim in particular read countless drafts and endured endless endeavors to plumb the depths of privies and scale the heights of dungheaps. I dedicate this book to them, and to my brother Bob and my parents for their bravery in the face of adversity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Mordre wol out."

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Prioress's Tale* (VII.576);
The Nun's Priest's Tale (VII.3052, 3057).[1]

That murder will inevitably be made known is proverbial wisdom; but this line appears in two of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* at oddly similar moments. The anti-Semitic *Prioress's Tale* concerns a young Christian boy, brutally attacked by vicious Jews and left for dead in the "wardrobe" (VII.572) that collects the filthy matter purged from the bowels of the "cursed folk" (VII.574). In *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, the knowledgeable rooster, Chauntecleer, relates famous prophetic dreams, including one in which a murdered pilgrim is hidden under a pile of manure on a dung cart on its way to "donge lond" (VII.3036); mention is made of a town whose dung is clearly meant for delivery outside of the walls to fertilize nearby fields. In both of these tales, we are assured that murder will out; the body of the innocent victim will be found and the guilty discovered and punished. The dead body, hidden in filth to secure the secrecy of the ill deed, symbolizes the abject humiliation of murder with waste from living human bodies. These murders will come to light—must come to light. Yet the exposure of the violent actions necessitates the seeker to wade through mire, possibly sullying himself. Material filth in the form of human or animal excrement cannot be avoided—indeed, as I will argue, should not be avoided. Just as murder, a repugnant and morally filthy act, cannot remain undisclosed, material dirt itself demands investigation.

The development of literary studies into a cultural poetics allows us to read literature as a part of the overall culture that reflects, participates in, and affects cultural meaning. Over recent decades, the body has increasingly been the site of philosophical, literary, historical, medical

and imaginative enquiry. Theoretical approaches insist that the body functions as the "preeminent object" *of* culture.[2] Although the body as a "socially constructed artefact" is no longer seen as "natural," Bryan S. Turner urges us not to "ignore the physiological, biological, and chemical grounding of the body."[3] His caution is based on the sense that the recent attention to the body is impatient with the material body, rendering it "dematerialized by feminist, linguistic, and psychoanalytic theory."[4] This study investigates how late medieval England dealt with excrement, both materially and figuratively, and asserts that the lowest of matters—excrement—matters. As the great humanist Erasmus asked concerning painted portraits, "Where are . . . .the bowels?"[5] This book will delve into those bowels. I focus on the disruptive body, capable of creating political, social and cultural discomfort, the body filled with excrement.[6] While excrement conventionally suggests feces only, excrement has meant any matter expelled from the body. Although I focus on fecal matter, I will periodically allude to sweat, urine, tears, semen, menstrual fluid, and snot as indicative of general views concerning bodily waste.

Medievalists acknowledge the body as a crucial element in understanding a culture and its literary products. There is one thing that all medieval bodies have in common—the male body, the female body, the transgendered body, the eunuch body, the bisexual body, the feminized body, the masculinized body, the sodomized body, the sodomizing body, the chaste body, the celibate body, the married body, the lecherous body, the heretical body, the devout body, the Christian body, the Jewish body, the Saracen body, the visionary body, the lay body: they all defecate. This is not to say that these bodies may not defecate in different socially constructed ways. Indeed, Marcel Mauss has argued for the "cultural determination of the body's apparently natural possibilities of expression and technique."[7] To read excremental moments as simply mimetic or merely realistic is problematic, since "[s]hit . . . correlates cultural flux."[8] Excrement, disciplined by humans in both physical and symbolic ways, is crucial in understanding how a culture works and is structured. A cultural poetics of excrement, what I call "fecopoetics," can explain the presence of feces—literal and symbolic—in late medieval texts. The neologism "fecopoetics" plays with "ecopoetics," a term that applies to an interdisciplinary approach to ecology, poetics, ethics, and the environment, an inclusive or "round" theoretical approach.[9] Fecopoetics explores how the excremental is used as a vital element in poetic and cultural enterprises.

This project stems from an exploration into fourteenth-century pilgrimage poetics by Dante, Chaucer, and Langland. While researching that book, I noticed numerous references to excrement, perhaps because

I was potty-training my son at the same time. I imagined I could address those scatological references in a couple of pages. Imagine pulling a thread out from a complex tapestry. Once you tug on that thread, you have disturbed the tightly knit pattern that starts to come undone. I yanked on the excrement "thread" in fourteenth-century pilgrimage poems and could not help see the network linking excrement to all aspects of medieval culture. The theoretical model of the network, the rhizome, articulates the dynamic practice of pilgrimage. As formulated by Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome has "no beginning or end; it is always in the middle.... [There is] another way of traveling and moving: proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing."[10] I will use the concept of the rhizome as a paradigm for understanding how central excrement was to medieval life. It is woven into the warp and weft of the tapestry of the Middle Ages.

My original intent to focus on pilgrimage will be evident in the proportion of time I devote to fourteenth-century pilgrimage poems, particularly *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer's dozens of scatological references have been seen as his sign of "innocence"[11] and the medieval openness to shit. The twentieth-century English novelist Kingsley Amis disparagingly compared *The Canterbury Tales* to "the big pipe, that takes away, the waste matter, from a public lavatory."[12] Waste matter *is* key to Chaucer; I argue that his many references show that excrement was troubling, problematic, indicative of social tensions, *and* a means of fulfilling his poetic agenda. To situate Chaucer's excrement in the web of late medieval discourse concerning waste, filth, and feces, I utilize a variety of sources: historical documents (including building contracts that cite privies, law cases about pollution or unexpected deaths, and leases); medical texts; theological works; various literary traditions, including writings by the Church Fathers, the Middle English *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* and *The Book of Margery Kempe*, Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*, *The Poem of the Cid*, the Icelandic *Læxdala Saga*, French *fabliaux*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*; and art historical materials such as manuscripts and church wall paintings. While works from various literary traditions are cited, this interdisciplinary book ultimately focuses on late medieval England and Chaucer's writings as touchstones for understanding the multiple roles excrement played materially and figuratively in the late Middle Ages.

Some scholars have investigated medieval filth. Lynn Thorndike and Ernest Sabine in the 1920s and 1930s, respectively, published on dirt and excrement in London. Malcolm Jones's *The Secret Middle Ages* revels in topics most often seen as taboo. Medievalists have unflinchingly approached

aspects of emissions seen as indicative of filth, including Valerie Allen's work on farting, Jeremy J. Citrome's probing the fistula-in-ano, Alexandra Cuffel's cross-cultural study of gendering disgust in religious polemic, Martha Bayless's examination of corruption, Conrad Leyser's insight into nocturnal emissions, Kathryn L. Lynch's exploration of the rotten, and Paul Strohm's reflection on Lydgate and sewage.[13] One could argue that the allure of transgressing margins has pushed what can be talked about in polite scholarly circles. We now can speak, with straight (pun intended) faces, of sodomy, farts, masturbation, menstrual blood, and wet dreams. But, overall, the recent critical debate about the history of the body has tended to avoid the topic of excrement. The stench of material flesh can be hidden by theoretical musings. By "coprolizing"[14] the body through fecal theory, that is, an emphasis on the excremental in society, I hope to correct the potential decorporealization of the medieval body. By exploring the meaning of excrement, with special focus on late medieval English writing, this study investigates modes of embodiment with focus on the discursive existence of excrement.[15] Just as queer theory has a "deconstructive effect, its ability to reopen to possibility what had seemed beyond interrogation,"[16] fecal theory can help us to stop being so reticent about a topic that may offend or discomfort.[17] Like disability studies,[18] fecal and waste studies attempt to make visible what we prefer to ignore, to articulate what we have silenced, to acknowledge what we have hidden.

Inspiration for how medievalists approach excrement theoretically can come from those working in other periods. Jeff Persels and Russell Ganin's book on early modern "fecal matters" helps us to reflect on the sixteenth-century fascination with feces. As they have pointed out, there has been a "relative academic neglect of the copious and ubiquitous scatological rhetoric of Early Modern Europe,"[19] a neglect this study attempts to remedy for the medieval period. Victorianists have much to offer medievalists in their work on filth and excrement, due to one iconic event and several crucial publications: the "Great Stink" of 1858 that gave rise to Joseph Bazalgette's magnificent construction of the sewers still in use in many places in London; the publications of Edwin Chadwick (*Report . . . from the Poor Law Commissioners on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* [1842]), of Chadwick and Henry Mayhew (*London Labour and the London Poor* [1861], which explored the Victorian underworld), and of Charles Dickens (*Our Mutual Friend* [written during 1864–1865], which explicitly deals with "dust," filth, and excrement, and their link to death).[20]

"Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above."

Katherine Hepburn as Rose Sayer in *The African Queen*

The material conditions and processing of excrement have been increasingly investigated by anthropologists, archeologists, and theoreticians of culture, all arguing how, in varying ways, we have disciplined ourselves with regard to excrement. Anthropological approaches, such as that of Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966), along with those inspired by her work, such as Julia Kristeva in *Pouvoirs de l'horreur. Essai sur l'abjection* (1980) [*Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1987)] and William Ian Miller in *The Anatomy of Disgust* (1997), influentially set up the category of dirt and its relationship to order and boundaries, reading excrement and other examples of filth as impurity and disorder; the borders of the body are its most dangerous zones.[21] Some theoretical texts focus on the development of culture as a rejection or disciplining of our animal selves as seen in our waste, filth, or dirt: Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930) [*Civilization and Its Discontents*] and *Totem und Taboo* (1913) [*Totem and Taboo*], Dominique Laporte's *Histoire de la merde* (1978) [*History of Shit* (1993)], Norbert Elias's *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (1939) [*The Civilizing Process*], Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959), Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (1965), David Inglis's *A Sociological History of Excretory Experience* (2001), Georges Bataille's *La Part maudite* (1949) [*The Accursed Share*] and *Visions of Excess* [selected writings from 1927 to 1939], and Giorgio Agamben's *L'aperto. L'uomo e l'animale* (2002) [*The Open: Man and Animal*]. Bakhtin argues that excrement can be read as subversive, carnivalesque, and grotesque, while Elias argues for a shift in scatological ideology with the advent of the early modern period, seen in a repression of the excremental.[22] Brown, building on Freud, links man's fascination with excretion to his obsession with death: "[e]xcrement is the dead life of the body."[23] This study suggests that a crucial focus for fecal studies centers on the tension between the private and the public. As the Bataille-inspired theorists George Beard and Harold Hutchins—those irrepressible fourth-grade comic book writers and the creators of Captain Underpants—put it in *Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People*:

> One day you're a superstar because you pooped in the toilet like a big boy, and the next day you're sitting in the principal's office because you said the word "poopy" in American History class (which, if you ask me, is the perfect place to say that word).[24]

Societies are structured around the control and regulation of excrement.[25]

Other books delve into the literal toilet or garbage tip: Richard Neudecker's *Die Pracht der Latrine* [*The Splendour of the Latrine*] (1994),

William Rathje and Cullen Murphy's *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage* (1992), Susan Strasser's *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (1999), and Elizabeth Royte's *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash* (2005). Some look at trash as an aesthetic category. *Trash: From Junk to Art*, the catalogue for a show on artworks using trash in the 1990s, sums up the way trash has constituted a vital element of twentieth-century art, writing, film, ballet, and theatre.[26] Ecocriticism and green studies focus on the ethical concerns stemming from pollution and suggest practical solutions to such issues, from Gay Hawkins's philosophical *The Ethics of Waste* (2006) to Gary Snyder's urging for "wild poetry" in *A Place in Space* (1995). Books on excrement are published for the general public but are less weighty in tone, such as Caroline Holmes's *The Not so Little Book of Dung* (2006).

The body is the primary and original "site of physical organization."[27] If the body is a text with its own narrative structure,[28] what does it mean when it is written with excrement? Georges Bataille has argued that in the human "transition from nature to culture,"[29] man negates himself "and [his] own animality."[30] This negation, a form of discipline, manifests itself in an aversion to examining certain aspects of our material selves, most clearly evident in our bodily emissions. We discipline our excremental bodies through actual bodily training (such as potty training, learning where and when it is proper and improper to defecate) and we discipline our minds by negating our animal selves. Perhaps early man noticed that living near raw feces caused illness, resulting in an evolved adaptive trait to avoid filth. However, numerous critics have pointed out that this "'abhorrence' of excrement is in no way 'natural'" but the result of culturally contingent socialization.[31] Bakhtin points out the importance of the material bodily lower stratum and what he calls the "grotesque body." Excrement was a relic of "gay matter," "an intermediate between the living body and dead disintegrating matter that is being transformed into earth, into manure. The living body returns to the earth its excrement, which fertilizes the earth as does the body of the dead."[32] Carnivalesque excrement functioned both as the material sign of abundance as well as humiliation; a magical medicine as well as corruption; renewal as well as death.[33] Excremental images, understood in a richly complex way by contemporaries, have become coarse and debased as we have stripped them of their ambivalence.[34] Bakhtin suggests that our modern estrangement from excrement is neither natural nor inevitable.[35]

The overarching design of this book roughly confirms the Bakhtinian argument for the existence of a medieval "grotesque"; but excremental moments in the Middle Ages were viewed in such varied ways that it is impossible to conclude that this was the dominant aesthetic.[36] We need

to temper Bakhtin's misleading implication that the folk enjoyed excreta while aristocrats and clerics disdained them; negative and positive views of excreta cut across class divisions. Excrement served to both undermine or disturb *and* confirm ideas of "normalcy" (cleanliness) and bodily completion. While scatology is perceived as low literally and metaphorically, we should no longer perpetuate stereotypes that medieval people did not mind smelling shit. In fact, its ubiquity in literature and the various decrees enacted suggest that excrement could be perceived of as being offensive. My interest in excrement as it occurs in pilgrimage texts is not (only) due to prurient or sick fascination with horrible stench and disgusting filth; excrement was present in the literature; discussed in arguments about the body, purgatory, decay, and growth; and was at issue in problems ranging from urban growth to maintaining soil fertility. Fecal theory touches on matters as diverse as the ideology of city versus country and that of resurrection.[37] Excrement had social, cultural, and even theological repercussions. People had a subtle, nuanced, and complex relationship with excrement. We will see the "incredibly malleable construction" of the signifying acts of excrement.[38]

Fecal discourse can be read as a culturally coded and determined event. We might say we are exploring the ideology or metaphysics of excrement. Like sex, excrement has become subject to the discourse that enunciates it.[39] As Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie have pointed out concerning menstruation, "[W]hat we discover when we discuss the body, is, mostly, a language."[40] Signifying practices "'intextuated' corporeality," as Elizabeth Grosz puts it[41] or "materialised" it, if one follows Judith Butler's discourse, "through regulatory norms." In other words, "[T]he body is produced by every description of it."[42] Defecation as ritual[43] is a process of relations that constructs a series of tensions. If, every time we defecate, what we produce is utilized on a dunghill, our excrement is validated; if it is hidden in a cesspit and regarded as the source of filth, pollution, and horror, our bodies disgust and alienate us. While Jonathan Dollimore is interested in sexuality and (perceived) perversion, much of what he says in conjunction to it could be applied to filth and cleanliness.[44] Just as perversion "is not repressed at all; rather, our culture actively produces it," we produce filth, literally and figuratively.[45] Filthy shit is called into being;[46] it had to be invented for purity to exist.[47]

We must investigate every aspect of the body, including the most unpleasant. This topic has been treated with laughter and disbelief, disgust and horror. Excrement may make us giggle or disturb us, discussing excrement may seem distasteful and low,[48] and dwelling on it may be perceived as unseemly.[49] Yet excrement is present in our public discourse, from best-selling children's books, such as *Walter the Farting Dog*, *Everyone*

Poops and *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby*, to potty jokes made by comedians. To read excrement, a (possibly) marginal subject, does not necessitate a subversive reading.[50] Seemingly trivial topics may, in fact, be central to cultural understanding.[51]

Chapter Outline

Part I of the book, "The Medieval Body: Disciplining Material and Symbolic Excrement," attempts to understand the medieval body in relation to excrement. Chapter 2, "The Rhizomatic Body," provides an overview of the many possible valences excrement had in medieval discourse, preparing the reader for specific aspects of excrement and dirt in the Middle Ages. The vast network of words associated with excrement, from literal filth and shit to figurative corruption and moral waste, shows how waste was of fundamental concern in medieval culture. As one of the semantic fields where excrement repeatedly appears is in medical discourse, a brief overview of excrement in medieval medical practice is discussed. Along with Jeffrey J. Cohen and Elizabeth Grosz, who apply Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome to understanding the body, I theorize that bodies exist in a perpetual process of transformation.

With chapter 3, "Moral Filth and the Sinning Body: Hell, Purgatory, and Resurrection," the book reviews the many symbolic and metaphoric uses of filth and excrement throughout medieval Christian religious texts for signifying sin. From the Bible to Pope Innocent III's comparison of the mortal body to foul filth, excrement recurs repeatedly as a symbolic equivalent for sin and is constructed as having moral dimensions; hence, hell comes to be the site of abject filth. Social control can be enacted through humiliation, insults, and anti-Semitic accusations involving excrement in secular works ranging from Norse sagas to *The Decameron*. Drawing on the long history in sacred texts that link excrement and sin, we see how Dante Alighieri in *The Divine Comedy*, Chaucer (especially through his figure of the Parson), and Guillaume de Deguileville in *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine* [*The Pilgrimage of Human Life*] associate excrement with illicit sexual or immoral behavior. Purgatory constitutes an in-between realm where the actor purges himself of sin, while the resurrected body must be an incorrupt and unchanging material entity to evade charges of corruption and decay. Medieval theories of the body were built on classical models that constructed a misogynist binary. The female was lesser and, in the most extreme rhetoric, even associated with excrement itself. Yet chapter 4, "Gendered Filth," ultimately supports a more complex understanding of gender and bodies. As "clene moder" ("clean mother" in *Piers Plowman*, II.50), the Virgin Mary redeems the woman's body from filth and pollution.

Part II of the book, "Chaucerian Fecopoetics," explores how excrement, both material and symbolic, played itself out in the imaginary world created in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. An exploration of private versus public space controls the ideas of chapter 5, "Urban Excrement in *The Canterbury Tales*." The material reality of excrement in the city created anxiety about public hygiene issues, causing excrement to be viewed as increasingly superfluous and foul, requiring its expulsion. Late medieval urbanization meant that in the city excrement could no longer be harmonized with the environment; consequently, urban excrement becomes associated with moral filth as in the Church Fathers' tradition and becomes increasingly subject to legal regulation. *The Canterbury Tales* illustrates the tension between public and private excrement (*The Miller's Tale*, *The Reeve's Tale*), given that it was written at a transitional time in the development of urban culture corresponding with an increased privatization of space. The chapter concludes by exploring why Chaucer chose Southwark, rather than London, as the starting place for his literary pilgrimage. Southwark was imagined in opposition to London. I return to issues of gender raised in chapter 4 to read Southwark as feminine in contrast to a masculine London in the *General Prologue*.

Chapter 6, "Sacred Filth: Relics, Ritual, and Remembering in *The Prioress's Tale*," establishes how anti-Semitic rhetoric associated Jews with filth as in Chaucer's *The Prioress's Tale*; excrement is demonized and symbolically yoked with the Jews into whose "pit" or privy the wounded Christian boy is thrown.[52] Jews become regulated through rhetorical excess. Purity and pollution were a semantically rich means to describe the matter (Jews) outside of the Christian body and outside of England, from which Jews had been expelled in 1290. Filth can be demonized in anti-Semitic writings or viewed as a crucial aspect of the sacred. Religious systems often enshrine what is taboo. The relic functions as symbolic detritus or "excrement" that is fetishized in the ritual of pilgrimage. *The Prioress's Tale* shows how pilgrimage functions as an act of remembering and memorializing the past. The sanctified little boy, like the Eucharist in Host desecration tales, is made filthy and yet retains sacred power.

Chapter 7, "The Excremental Human God and Redemptive Filth: *The Pardoner's Tale*," extends this discussion by exploring the late medieval focus on the humanation or enfleshing of Christ. The increasing focus in the late Middle Ages on the human aspects of Christ complicates conventional binaries regarding the body, such as sacred and profane, masculine and feminine, clean and filthy. As Julian of Norwich's work suggests, Christ's "excremental" body is fully humanizing and in full concordance with orthodox theology. Filth predicates redemption. In

Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, the Host suggests cutting off the Pardoner's testicles and enshrining them in a hog's turd. The Host's insult contaminates the sacred with the fecal, suggesting slippage between the holy and the filthy. The relic, the dead detritus of the human body, could be, Chaucer scandalously and ironically suggests, sacralized excrement. But the poet ultimately leaves us desiring the true Host, the body of Christ, not the false supper promised by the earthly Host, Harry Bailey.

Chapter 8, "The Rhizomatic Pilgrimage Body and Alchemical Poetry," reads poetry laden with filth as linguistic alchemy, a catalyst for transformation just like pilgrimage itself. Medieval manuscripts of sacred texts that include images of excremental activities and matter visualize this ambiguous line between the sacred and the profane to show how bodies are unbounded. The pilgrim body endemic to pilgrimage poetry epitomizes the rhizomatic nature of the body in general. The pilgrim, meant to be transformed and changed, and excrement, a symbol for the way the porous body (the site where food both changes into excrement and whence it is expelled), are analogous in being liminal. Pilgrimage, a ritual wedded to amendment and change, and excrement, which composts into useful fertilizer, both involve the process of material or spiritual metamorphosis. The liminality of the rhizomatic pilgrim body—a fluid, feminized body—helps explain why Christine de Pizan avoided the model of the pilgrimage poem she admired in Dante. But pilgrimage appealed to Margery Kempe, who redeems the excremental female body by associating it with Christ. Rather than reading scatological moments merely as evidence of low medieval humor or as revelling in the bodily grotesque, I argue that they are integral to Chaucer's literary purpose, an ingredient in the alchemical stew of his poetic agenda.

Where bodies defecate (the garderobe or the field) and what happens to the excrement (carried away by a tidal river or used as fertilizer) are obvious differences that are affected by, for example, class and geography.[53] In the country, dung in open fields is good. For example, in 840, Walahfrid Strabo, bishop of Richenau, writes in *Hortulus—the Little Garden*: "If you do not refuse to harden or dirty your hands . . . to spread whole baskets of dung on the sun-parched soil—then, you may rest assured, your soil will not fail you."[54] The retention, recycling, and transformation of excrement is best undertaken in rural communities. Rural dung-heaps signified wealth, as probate inventories indicate; dung that fertilized crops would help society and symbolized community. While it may seem anachronistic to look at late medieval literature through the lens of green studies, its practitioners argue that we can scrutinize human–nature relationships in any literary text and,

increasingly, medievalists are using ecocriticism to examine literary texts. The environment does not only refer to "wildness" or "natural" areas, but can include cultivated and built landscapes. Ecocritics maintain that knowing where our food comes from and where our waste is disposed prevents alienation; this, in turn, helps us cultivate responsibility. Just this sort of awareness of waste disposal and food production is integral to the positive weight given to dung by Chaucer, along with William Langland, as explored in chapter 9, "Chaucerian Fecology and Wasteways: *The Nun's Priest's Tale*." "Fecology" suggests the ecological integration of excrement in rural environments; "wasteways," an outgrowth of "foodways," examines how the world orders waste.[55] Dung as positive is representative of dialogic thought for which renewal and response are integral.

The concluding part of the book, "Looking Behind, Looking Ahead," grapples with the legacy of the Middle Ages, its construction as "excremental," and proposes waste studies as a field for future work. Chapter 10, "Looking Behind," begins by showing how there exists a continuity between medieval and early modern legal documents concerned with excrement, demonstrating how the strict periodization dividing the Middle Ages from the Renaissance is an arbitrary division. However, with the Reformation, differences do emerge with regard to the semiotics of filth; the Reformation inaugurated a "trashing" of the medieval past, including an ascription to it of being allied with waste and excrement. The chapter goes on to interrogate how the excremental continues to inflect our discussion of the Middle Ages. Disability studies, which investigate nonnormative bodies, suggest strategies that can help scholars of waste in understanding why filth is so repugnant to our sensibilities. The body's production of excrement undermines notions of a unified, coherent body. Lennard Davis's work allows us to see how we postmoderns have constructed medieval bodies as "disabled" and "excremental" in order to contrast with our own.

Excremental research falls under the larger field of waste studies, a conversation increasingly focused on filth, rubbish, garbage, and litter. Chapter 11, "Waste Studies: A Brief Introduction," initiates the general topic of waste studies through reference to Zygmunt Bauman's *Wasted Lives*. Woven through the chapter, Bauman's work allows for an elaboration on the subject of "waste" with specific reference to wasted production, money, and the poor in Chaucer and Langland. The title of the conclusion, chapter 12, "Bottoms Up! A Manifesto for Waste Studies," takes its inspiration from Donna Haraway's influential essay "A Cyborg Manifesto"[56] and functions as an elaboration of waste studies as a field for literary critics to explore. Already many theorists of waste exist

and their work can enhance our understanding of culture. I argue for the development of waste studies, an arena for ethical and moral criticism, as an integral field of study for medievalists and scholars specializing in other periods. The exploration of waste with the recognition of its necessity constitutes a mode of responsible theoretical inquiry.

PART I

THE MEDIEVAL BODY: DISCIPLINING MATERIAL AND SYMBOLIC EXCREMENT

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CHAPTER 2

THE RHIZOMATIC BODY

What can mucking about medieval garbage heaps tell us? How did medieval people view feces materially? How can we try to reconstitute the Middle Ages, especially with regard to the visceral smells and slime of everyday reality? A major problem for the twenty-first century medieval fecologist lies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century psychological, medical, and scientific developments and discoveries that inevitably affect one's perceptions. For example, we see feces and their material existence in terms of their bacterial and ecological dimensions. In the Middle Ages, the basis of physiological understanding was rooted in the humoral theory, something to be briefly explored.[1] How was the body understood in the Middle Ages? What was the role of excrement within the framework of medieval physiology? In order to see how excrement was understood physically and biologically, we will look at fecal words that appear in medical texts.

The metaphor of the rhizome controls the subject of this chapter: the body of excremental vocabulary and how the medieval body was medically understood. The rhizome is a paradigm for linkages and networks. Unlike arborescent thought, which is hierarchical, rhizomatic thought is "growing out in all directions."[2] Textual and fleshly bodies have orifices, openings, and gaps. These fissures prevent us from seeing the written or human text/body as contained or discrete; rather, they allow us to see the textual or fleshly body as part of a cultural network (rhizome). To construct a literary scholarly argument, the fecal theorist needs to examine the semantic usage of words associated with excrement. Words are clues leading to cultural understanding. We are detectives, not unlike Sherlock Holmes examining tobacco ash or scraps of paper, reading litter to imagine what happened and what was thought. We can sift through language, itself a rubbish heap or sewer, replete with words reiterated, recycled, and reused, "full of debris from the past,"[3] to reanimate

history.[4] To know words enables us to see how people thought. Ways in which we discipline our thoughts and fears about the body are evident in the linguistic world we come to share as we enter language.

We typically "discipline" excrement by ignoring or avoiding traces of its presence. Instead of following up on questions like "What's that funky smell?" we move on, giggling uncomfortably. Rather than cleaning up, we choose a different stall in a ladies' room if a toilet has smeared matter on the seat. Or we infantilize it by, for example, calling it "poop." If it's "poop," it is cute, it is for the baby, separate from that which we adults create or produce. While excrement may evade thought in that we may try to repress thinking about or representing it, it hardly evades language; in fact, language makes excrement manifest. Waste itself refuses to use language, but we do have linguistic fragments or shards; the meaning of a word is litter-al. A linguistic analysis of the extensive fecal vocabulary in Middle English allows us to see the many ways in which excrement was understood literally and used figuratively, suggesting a wide spectrum of associations within medieval culture for filth and dirt. Various nuances touch on sin, morality, gender, the Bible, medicine, alchemy, and transformation.

One can see reflected in the terms *excrement*, *dung*, and *shit* the hierarchical assumptions modern English speakers have internalized concerning words of Latin, French, and (Old) English or Germanic origin, where Latin is most highly valued and Germanic words are lowest.[5] *Excrement*, first used in the mid-sixteenth century, is a neutral, polite, and publicly sanctioned term used for fecal matter ejected from the anus. A neutral term, it has a narrow definition. Deriving as it does from a Latin word meaning *to sift*, it suggests science and rationality. In the hierarchy of terms indicating *feces* (again, a Latin and therefore valorized term dating from the early fourteenth century, meaning *sediment* or *dregs*, as well as to indicate *excrement*), *manure* and *dung* lie lower than *excrement*. *Manure*, coming as it does from Old French *mainoverer*, a word that derives from Latin *manus* (*hand*, hence, to till by hand), is a word that can be used in polite society, often with animal associations, and little used in this sense before the sixteenth century.[6] *Muck*, coming from the Old Norse for *dung*, was more commonly used.[7] Likewise *dung*, a synonym for *manure* and generally associated with animals, comes from the Old English for prison, and is related to the Old High German word *tunc*, cellar roofed with dung. *Manure* and *dung* are endorsed as terms since they are associated with fertilization, something vital for the health of crops and the success of a society.[8] Lowest on the hierarchical scale is *shit*. *Shit* [Germanic], comes from the Old English word *scite* (dung) and *sciten*, to defecate. *Turd*, from the Old English, possibly linked to a Indo-European root meaning to *tear* or *split*, likewise occupies

this low status. *Manure* and *dung* are publicly sanctioned and indicative of social utility, potentially containing redemptive and curative powers, while *shit* suggests excess, shame, and filth, and is linked to pollution and sin.[9] The verbal spectrum of signifiers for excrement refers to identical material; it is only context, the speaker's intention and receiver's perception, that determine how that matter is viewed. As Boccaccio writes in the Author's Epilogue to *The Decameron*:

> No word, however pure, was ever wholesomely construed by a mind that was corrupt. And just as seemly language leaves no mark upon a mind that is corrupt, language that is less than seemly cannot contaminate a mind that is well ordered, any more than mud will sully the rays of the sun, or earthly filth the beauties of the heavens.[10]

In other words, if you find my book unpleasant, it can only mean your mind is corrupt.[11]

A Turd By Any Other Name . . .

A linguistic overview demonstrates that excrement was not dualistically understood, where the absence of excrement signifies purity and the presence of excrement pollution. Rather, the language of excrement was positioned along a continuum. The rhizome seems the appropriate metaphor for exploring the web of words used to signify various manifestations of excrement. The body of words in Middle English can be likened to a physical body, a rhizomatic body with a network of significations. We can enter this vast word web pertaining to excrement at any point, allowing us to see how it pervaded medieval thought and society. The *Middle English Dictionary*[12] is an invaluable resource for exploring the verbal resonances of excrement. Words connected to excrement fall into two categories: first, the literal, which this chapter focuses on, and, second, the symbolic, metaphoric, or figurative. Generally speaking, the literal meanings exist first and the figurative develop out of them. In the fifteenth century, for example, *garbage* entered English from French. The first definition signified the entrails or offal of animals; a secondary definition meant human refuse in general or litter; and the final definition was figurative, signifying worthlessness.[13]

Verbs abound which signify the ejection of excrement from the anus, such as *avoiden*, *beshiten*, *cakken*, *cukken*, *maken ordure*, *don esement*, *maken foul*, *devoiden*, *foulen*, *defien*, and *skiten*. *Shiten* means just what it does in modern English; a verb with a special meaning, *overshet*, means to be covered with excrement, as in the fifteenth-century play, *Mankind*: "I am doynge

of my nedyngys; be ware how ȝe schott! Fy, fy, fy…My fote ys fowly ouerschett" (783–4, 786).[14] It is not impossible to imagine this situation happening, especially in a common privy. Nouns indicating excrement vary enormously, including *drit*, *thost*, *tord(e)* and *ordure*. *Esement* and *digestioun* appear together in the moment when Margery Kempe refers to her incontinent elderly husband: "[H]e cowd not don hys owyn esement to gon to a sege, er ellys he wolde not, but as a childe voydyd his natural digestyon in hys lynyn clothys."[15] *Dung* appears as both a noun, meaning a barnyard mixture of dung and straw used for fertilizer, and verb (*dongen, dungen*), with the latter meaning "to manure (a field, a plant)" as in "Dungen or mukkyn londe." *Womb(e)*, which can mean "the human intestinal track, intestines, bowels," was used in expressions, such as *dissolucioun (outpassinge) of the womb(e)* ("purgation of feces, excretion") or *flux of the womb(e)* ("diarrhea"), while *fruit of womb(e)* can be a euphemism for excrement. The wonderfully evocative *squiballes*, meaning hard excrement, uniquely appears several times in an early fifteenth-century manuscript of John Arderne's *Fistula* in a recipe for an enema to remove the stubborn matter: "Water alon & salt boiled togidre and ȝette in by a clistrye bringeþ out squiballez."[16] Excremental terms appear in personal names and place names. The people mentioned, such as Rogero Drittecarle, John Drytecarle, Rob. atte Tordehelle, Augnes..uxor Walteri Muk', Thomas Turd, and Thomas le Gangfurmer (privy cleaner), must have been involved with dung, muck, and dirt (manure) in a professional capacity. The place name of "Mukland," likewise indicates a spot where muck was known to have been piled up. In these cases, the places and people are metonymically associated with something to do with muck, dung, dirt, or turds. Their work status is indicated in their name. These cases are already straying from the literal into the symbolic realm.

The Rhizomatic and Humoral Body: Purgation and Health

As Victoria Sweet points out, bodies are understood within and reflect the context of the society studying them. For us, the body is analogous to a computer; DNA, like microchips for computers, hardwires our physical and perhaps even behavioral destiny. During the industrial revolution, bodies were seen as machines, but in the Middle Ages, a fundamentally agrarian culture, bodies were seen as plants.[17] This vegetable body has resultant waste—such as semen—to be "composted" for the engendering of future "vegetables." The vegetable body suggests an understanding that recognizes orifices and their boundaries. Excrement of the "vegetable body" did have its uses, such as fertilizer for crops. The medieval body

was recognized as having spaces and gaps that were essential to health and well-being. Just as the body has various openings and places of entry, the rhizome has been described as a "decentered structure with various points of entry."[18] The rhizomatic body, needing to be purged, has multiple openings through which excessive humors can be eliminated or through which it can be invaded, by penises or food, hands and fingers. There are also points of exit; for the body, that includes the anus.

The ordered body appears in Cicero, who reads the body architecturally, where the excretory parts are placed in the rear just like drains for houses.[19] The anus, associated with filth, functions as a "paradigm of sinfulness," yet it remains necessary to the "perceived bodily order."[20] In the Middle Ages, just like the ever-amending soul, the body was seen as unfinished. It was not contained or discrete but interacted with other bodies and the space around it. Medieval thinkers inherited the humoral notion that the body is in a constant state of flux. Medieval bodies were read as "caught in the process of eruptive becoming."[21] In Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, for example, the body does not have its own integrity; it is colored by its experiences. For example, the tumor on Saint Etheldreda's neck results from her youthful vanity. Penitentials acknowledge the body's possibilities, from bestiality to rape and even filth ingestion, including that of worms and bodily waste.[22] In his analysis of John Arderne's *Practica*, a surgeon's text from the fourteenth century, Jeremy J. Citrome focuses his attention on an incident involving an anal fistula. Arderne expresses anxiety over, as Citrome puts it, "bodies that open, leak, and disintegrate, enacting the most literal sort of fragmentation."[23] The fistula-in-ano functions to underscore a lack of bodily integrity that, in turn, suggests a lack of internal identity.[24] Similarly, the body's production of excrement undermines notions of a unified, coherent body and indicates continual metamorphosis. References to excrement fetishize the evidence of a nonunified body.[25] This is the grotesque body Bakhtin favors, the "ever unfinished, ever creating body," the body of ambivalence and change, the body of orifices and convexities.[26]

Natural philosophers examined what excrement was and why it existed. One common idea of digestion in the Middle Ages was delineated in the "four digestions." According to this theory, in the first digestion the stomach turns food to chyle, the usable liquid leftover from food after it has been masticated; chyle, accessed by the intestines for nutrients, is then sent to the liver in the second digestion where it is converted into blood. In the third digestion, the heart and its spirit refine some of this blood, which is then carried to the arteries. At last, in the fourth digestion, a small amount of the heart's blood is converted

into semen.[27] Whatever is leftover must be eliminated from the body. The work of the second-century Galen, based on that of Hippocrates, was fundamental for medieval medical ideas. Writing extensively about digestion in *On the Natural Faculties*, Galen focused on one key concept with regard to digestion: *alteration*. Food alters its form through the digestive process.[28] Evacuation takes place because of the process of alteration and this transformative faculty. Once the stomach has taken in what nutrients it needs, the remainder is excess waste and is rejected "like an alien burden."[29] Both vomiting and defecating reflect the necessity to eliminate unnecessary matter from the body. Galen compares the way liquids flow through the body to garden conduits in which "one has to arrange the flow of water into all parts of the garden by cutting a number of small channels leading from the large one."[30] The vegetable body model is a structure that requires both the fertilization and the purging of water. Dry feces result from humoral imbalance; just as a field might dry up and not produce crops if not watered properly, the human body dries up if one's humors are deficient. Similarly, tainted or excessive watering of a field without proper drainage can result in a lack of crops, just as the human body might respond to bad humors with diarrhea. Too much fluid will drown or dilute healthful elements, while too little will dry up the organism.

Building on Galen, William of Conches, in his *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy* (*Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, ca. 1144–1149), writes that

> There are three kinds of virtue: natural, spiritual, and animal. The natural virtue is in its turn divided into four: appetitive, retentive, digestive, expulsive.[31]

William tells us that after the body consumes food through the appetitive force, the retentive force allows our bodies to use that which it has consumed. After the stomach retains what it needs,

> [t]he rest, being of no use to it but necessary to the other organs, is pushed out by means of the expulsive force....Anything feculent is sent into the rectum [*longao*] and from there discharged in the water closet. And this is the waste from the first digestion.[32]

Excrement is a necessary and integral part of bodily function. If we do not excrete, we feel uncomfortable or ill. Too much excretion can weaken us. So the proper amount and type of fecal matter is key to a healthy functioning organism. The excretion of feces and humors is vital for health and balance.

Hildegard von Bingen (c. 1155) in her *Causae et Curae* subscribes to the humoral theory of the body's fluids, a theory that provides the basis for her analysis of fecal odor, texture, and color. Within her medical cosmology, the body needs to have humoral balance. There is a distinction between what is useful and reused and what is superfluous and discharged: "What cannot be used from the consumed foods and drinks descends into a person's lower intestines, changes itself into excrement . . . and is evacuated by the body."[33] She describes the entire process of digestion, a process that confirms the paradigm of the body as vegetable:

> The internal blood vessels, namely those of the liver, the heart, the lungs, and the stomach, receive the finer juice from these [ingested] foods and carry it through the entire body. In this way the blood in a human being is increased and the body is nourished, just as fire is kindled by bellows and as grass greens[34] and grows from wind and dew . . . Of the ingested food and drink, whatever is feces descends toward a person's lower abdomen and is converted into putridity . . . .[and] is expelled. Similarly, when one presses grapes, one pours the wine into a vessel and the residue, that is the skins of the fruit, is discarded . . . .[35]

This image from viticulture enables the reader to envision the entire process. The image of the body being nourished, just as grass turns green and thrives, suggests an analogous relationship between the vegetable "body" and the human body.

Bodily problems occur if the person eats food that is inappropriate. If people eat raw, uncooked food or foods with some other deficiency, "at times they send forth through the entire body bad humours and a bad stench as from a putrid dunghill and, as if green and wet wood were burning, they spread a bad vapor everywhere in the body."[36] Hildegard explains why some excrement has turned into watery diarrhea:

> When bad humors abound in a person . . . .[I]t will make the food restless and turbulent, the way things are in a busy street or in a cesspit . . .[37]

She is interested in the literal quality of excrement. Here feces are compared to "a busy street or in a cesspit." Yet only once something is compared *to* feces do we enter the symbolic realm of excrement. The variant odors of feces can indicate, even predict, eventual well-being or unavoidable decline. Strong-smelling feces are not necessarily cause for alarm if the patient's feces typically carry a strong odor. Atypical feces can be a sign of imminent death.[38] Excessive black bile can be blamed for affecting feces's color, texture, and smell. Mental balance is integrally tied to physical well-being; for example, melancholia could cause feces to turn black.[39] Even

today, we see a symbiotic relationship among exercise, physical health, and mental clarity, alertness, and balance. Hildegard is not judgmental about the anal area of the body. Recent work on her invented language by Sarah L. Higley suggests that she puts body parts on a physical, rather than a moral, scale, and includes words for the anus, intestine, and entrails, as well as privy cleaner.[40]

Purgation, both its process and product, was key for health, but pleasure also plays a role in it. After all, we are discomforted by constipation and are relieved to finally defecate. Likewise, when ill, vomiting provides relief. Humors in the form of solids, such as feces, or liquids, such as sweat, urine, and tears, must be released by the body to remain healthy. If they are not released by the body's own accord, then they must be expelled through force, such as by bleeding the patient or by administering enemas. Medieval people clearly knew that the inner regions of the body were vital to good health. Saints Phiacre and Étanche were the patron saints of hemorrhoids and were invoked to relieve pain and suffering, while Saint Erasmus was in charge of the belly and entrails,[41] due to the torture he suffered in his martyrdom. Many of the concoctions available for purging excrement were available to everyone, in the form of herbs or by simply eating more fruits and vegetables. This meant that purging was a readily accessible and comprehensible method of cure for common people. We might say it is a democratic prescription. But purgation clearly does not cure every ailment; some forms of purgation are available only from trained or experienced medical practitioners.

Middle English Medical Texts

The extensive web of words for medicine links excremental words with those of healthful or productive purgation or transformation. Excrement could be transformative literally; it was seen as a vital element in medicine and has been used as a curative therapy.[42] Ancient Egyptian medical papyri listed recipes and concoctions with fancy names containing animal and human excrement,[43] remedies that made their way into Greek medical practice[44] from the early Hippocratics to Galen and beyond.[45] Amulets created from bones found in wolf excrement made for an effective dentifrice, according to the first-century Pliny the Elder. These ancient medical beliefs were carried throughout medieval Europe. In the Old English Bald's *Leechbook*, for example, there are numerous recipes utilizing excrement: "If you cannot staunch a bloody wound, take new horse-dung; dry it in the sun or by the fire; rub it to powder very thoroughly; lay the powder very thick on a linen cloth; bind the bloody wound with that for a night."[46] A late

thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century set of texts based on the works of a twelfth-century woman doctor from Salerno, Trotula, also advises the use of dung in medical recipes. In the case of too much bleeding, "make a plaster of the dung of birds or of a cat [mixed] with animal grease and let it be placed upon the belly and loins."[47] The methodology for gaining information about the body's interior came from performing experiments on bodily excretions to decipher medical situations. Just as over-the-counter urine tests can determine pregnancy, urine was a vital element in the conception process.[48] The *MED* cites *thost* and *tord(e)* as words used in medical recipes, including the particularly delicious one of frying a turd, hot from the cow, in vinegar. As we will see in chapter 4, numerous recipes utilizing excrement were created specifically for women. In homeopathic medicine, "like cures like"; thus, the "dirty" parts of women (their genitalia) could be cleaned and cured by "dirt."

Excremental words can carry specific medical connotations. *Flux*, *avoiden*, and *purge* mean the discharge of humors as well as the flow of excrement. The enticing chicken Pertelote promises to cure her studly rooster husband, Chauntecleer, of his bad dreams: "[T]ho herbes shal I fynde/ The whiche han of hire propretee by kynde/ To purge yow bynethe and eek above" (*Nun's Priest's Tale*, VII. 2951–2953). Healing transformation through purgation lies behind words such as *defien* and *digestioun*, changes that can involve unpleasant things (pus) or pleasant (nutrients into flesh), but which have an ultimately healthy effect. Unsurprisingly, medical texts are highly concerned with excremental matters since one's health is often implicated in digestive matters. A thirteenth-century English herbal text shows a naked youth using a chamber pot in the presence of a lady.[49] A thirteenth- or fourteenth-century miscellany of medical writings depicts a highly stylized diagrammatic representation of the excretory system, including the diaphragm, stomach, two kidneys, and two ureters.[50] A more realistic diagram showing the venous system includes a lovely coiled-up intestine or colon, rather like a curled-up garden hose.[51] A fifteenth-century manuscript of John Arderne's surgical writings has numerous excretory pictures, including rectums bleeding from piles or fistula.[52]

Excrement also was of interest to those investigating the natural world, beyond its practical application as an ingredient in salves and prescriptions. Texts were written that alluded to or even focused on excretion and excrement, both feces and urine. In the late fourteenth century, Henry Daniel in his *Liber Uricrisiarum*, dating from 1376 to 1379, makes a distinction between "pisse" and "vryn": water that passes out of the body soon after it is drunk is piss, while urine has been "cooked" in the body and supplied nutrition to the various body parts.[53] Daniel

emphasizes the necessity to purge and thereby cleanse superfluities. Ralph Hanna tells us that *crakkyng, and wlisping benethin* signifies the farting that accompanies the *shityng*. *Rosping* signifies belching or vomiting while *brakyng* means vomiting. *Egestiown* means to evacuate the bowels and, as Hanna points out, this use of it predates the *MED*'s earliest entry from 1425.[54] All of these words suggest distinctions between the acts of farting and shitting and that proper purging is vital for health. The fourteenth-century English surgeon John Arderne writes that "it auaileþ mich to hole men, constipate and noȝt constipate, if þai be purged twyse at lest or three or four tymeȝ in a ȝere . . . "[55] Though elsewhere he suggests that after sewing up a fistula the patient should not defecate if possible for forty-eight hours after the operation:

> If þe pacient for-soþ may noȝt abstene hym fro þe pryue In þe mornyng be it clensed with hote watre and a sponge and be it dryed and eft soneȝ be putte in of þe forseid poudre, And be it ordeyned as on þe day afore.[56]

The patient should be encouraged to abstain from defecation since the strain could tear open the sewn up wound. One should also clean the wound after a movement, indicating an awareness that excrement could be infectious.

As all these examples show, excremental vocabulary and medical writings concerning excrement indicate that attention was paid to matter from the anus. Staring into the sewer, we make both literal and figurative detritus and filth our focus, visible and thinkable. We have already digested food, that is why excrement exists. But we also digest it in the sense that we try to understand it, bring it under control, and thereby cleanse it of its threat. A word or a medical explanation attempts to domesticate what can offend. In this way we could also read excrement in terms of Kristeva's "semiotic," an element that must be disciplined in the symbolic realm. The Symbolic Order is expressed through a linguistic pattern; societal order controls through denotative language in both literal and figurative ways, as we will see in the next chapter.[57]

CHAPTER 3

MORAL FILTH AND THE SINNING BODY: HELL, PURGATORY, RESURRECTION

As famously attributed to Augustine, we are born between urine and feces ("*inter faeces et urinam nascimur*").[1] The mingled sexual and excretory organs necessitate secrecy. We feel nausea for "both kinds of 'filth.' We cannot even know if excrement smells bad because of our disgust for it, or if its bad smell is what causes that disgust."[2] At the same time, the entanglement of these functions makes desire an integral element in filth production. Desire—for erotic or excremental fulfillment—must be disciplined. By analogizing sin—particularly sexually related sins—with filth, the Church Fathers attempted to control and shame the individual into socially constructive behavior. Our bodies are cause enough for us to be disgusted with ourselves. Excrement became a means to control the body and to punish the soul.

One example indicates the many ways an incident of defecation could be used for material and moral discipline. By the Anglo-Saxon period in England, defecation is apparently not meant to be a communal or social activity as it was in the Roman period. References to excretion as embedded in the tension between the public and private are articulated in a letter, ascribed to Ælfric,[3] to Brother Edward. The writer makes a request:

> I also ask you brother, since you are more often among women in the countryside than I am, that you should say something to them—if you can say it to them for embarassment, however; it embarasses me greatly to say it to you. I have often heard it said, and it is deplorably true, that at their feasts these country women will often drink, and even eat, in privies; and it is a disgraceful act and great folly and ignominious disgrace that anyone should ever be so ill-mannered that he fill the mouth with food above and at the other end pass the excrement from him, and so imbibe both the ale

> and the stench that he might satisfy his wicked gluttony thus in particular. I cannot for embarassment talk about the shameful deed as disgustingly as it is disgusting, that anyone should eat in a privy; but it is never necessary for any virtuous man.[4]

This letter protesting against women eating and defecating in the same place misogynistically identifies such female country bumpkins with filth; the women become tainted by the matter they eject.[5] The privy is dangerous both in that it is private, where private desires can be pursued, and where women can find autonomy. This diatribe against gluttony can also be read as expressing anxiety at the lack of boundaries between what should be public (eating) and private (defecating).[6] The collapse of private and public is seen graphically in the lack of distinctive arenas for eating and defecating.

Read as filth, demeaning, or insulting, excrement has been used as a negative marker for moral corruption and sexual license. The metaphor of sin as filth "recalls—indeed, reactivates—the anxieties of our earliest indoctrination into the difference between right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable."[7] As such, it becomes the ideal symbol for hell, the location of sin and degradation. But Church Fathers nuance their views toward the body, sex, and filth. Abelard vacillates between what might be read as conventional attacks on the sensual body and compassion for the frailty of human will, while Pope Innocent III sees the body as a source of abject disgust and a locus for disdain, an approach Guillaume de Deguileville's *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine* follows, though with more humor and finesse. Eschatologically, sins are punished in purgatory, reflecting our earthly errors and experiences. The chapter concludes by exploring the resurrection of the body and theological worries about the decaying and defecating body in Heaven.

Biblical Filth

There is a long history of excrement in sacred texts, referenced with the necessity to divide one's living space from one's filth (see Nehemiah 2:13, 3:14).[8] Deuteronomy 23:12–14 addresses sanitation: "Thou shalt have a place without the camp, to which thou mayst go for the necessities of nature, Carrying a paddle at thy girdle. And when thou sittest down, thou shalt dig round about, and with the earth that is dug up thou shalt cover That which thou art eased of." This passage indicates how excrement should be separated from the place where you live. In preparation for God's possible visitation, human excrement was to be covered up: "([F]or the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee,

and to give up thy enemies to thee:) and let thy camp be holy, and let no uncleanness appear therein, lest he go away from thee" (Deuteronomy 23:14). The emphasis is on placing the excrement outside of one's living space; burying the excrement would be a sanitary way of disposing it and help reduce the possibility of disease. Elimination of one's personal filth would ideally be performed with some privacy. Saul looks for privacy to relieve himself in a cave (I Samuel 24:3).[9] In yet another reference to literal excrement, God suggests to Ezekiel to use human excrement as fuel to cook bread rather than the usual choice of animal excrement mixed with straw. When he protests, God allows cow dung to be substituted (Exekiel 4:12–15). This aversion to using human excrement as fuel suggests a taboo against cooking with the waste leftover from what has already entered the body. The thought of placing near the mouth what has been ejected from one's anus is revolting. Indeed, excrement in such contexts is taboo, and, as such, useful for humiliating and insulting ones' enemies.

The useful aspects of "dung" are acknowledged in the Bible, such as its use for fuel and fertilizer (as in Luke 13:8, Psalms 83:10,[10] Isaiah 25:10). But "dung" can also take on the symbolic valence of worthlessness or lack of permanent value. In the New Testament, for example, all is meaningless or excrement without Christ: "Furthermore I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8). Medieval saints' legends pick up on this contrast between what is transitory and valueless—marked by dung—with what is permanent and valuable. In Ælfric's *Life of Saint Agatha*, for example, the harlot Aphrodisia tries in vain to persuade the virtuous Agatha to sleep with Quintianus, the evil leader of Sicily. When Aphrodisia tells Quintianus of her failure, she explains: "I offered [Agatha] gems, cloths of gold, and other favors, as well as a huge home and servants, but she rejected all that as if it were the dung which lies under foot."[11] In the *Life of Saint Agnes*, the relatives of Simpronius try to offer her rich robes and more, "but the blessed Agnes rejected all that, caring no more about those treasures than about the reek of dung."[12] The saint's rejection of riches by dismissing them as mere dung suggests both that dung was to be despised and that there exists a correlation between riches and dung. Similarly in the *Life of Saint Eugenia*, who cross-dresses to fulfill her Christian faith, the daughter reveals her breasts to her father and with this action exposes her identity: "For Christ's love, I left all of you, and scorned earthly desires as if they were dung."[13]

Filth of whatever sort is identified with what is worthless, without any literal or figurative merit. *Drit* (excrement or dirt) figuratively signifies

something valueless, degrading, or sinful. "Goostly almes is myche betere þan deling of þis worldly drit," as John Wyclif suggests, placing spiritual deeds above the matter of this world.[14] *Thost*, meaning dung or turd, can mean, as in the fifteenth-century play, *The Castle of Perseverance*, that which is worthless: "And euery man sette at a thost.... Al oure fare is not worth a thost."[15] A negative view of the body and filth carries over metaphorically in Sir John Clanvowe's late fourteenth-century *The Two Ways*, in which the riches of the world are likened to filth. "And, therefore, for þe love of God sette we not oure hertes so muche vpon þe foule, stynkyng muk of þis false, faillyng world....And, þerfore, þat muk of þis world þat is cleped richesse it shulde be cleped sorwe and no richesse."[16] What the world treasures and admires is just dung or filth, that which has no true worth in terms of Christian history, and is a sign of foulness and perfidity.

Hellish Stench

In the neoplatonic tradition as developed by Plotinus, material is visible, physical, and imperfect. It is ontological refuse—dirty, dark, and formless—a kind of existential anarchy. The Absolute is the highest in terms of hierarchy, followed by the intellect, soul, and finally matter, which is given the status of being only when touched by the soul.[17] The range of biblical semantics combined with the neoplatonic tradition carries over into medieval valences. In medieval thought, hierarchical space perceived up as good (heaven) and down as bad (hell); hence, in terms of bodily space, up was good (head) and down was bad (genitalia/defecation).[18] Within this symbolic economy, excrement inevitably became linked to hell.[19] The excremental stench of hell had its source in "the bowels of Satan."[20] The symbolic valence of filth within Christian thought is present in material depictions of hell, one we can see taking form in the Anglo-Saxon period. A letter of Wynfrith (Boniface) to Eadburga, 716–717, tells about a monk who experienced a vision of paradise and hell.

> And he said that when he had to return to his body, in all the vision, he had seen no other creature he despised so very much as his own body, nor nothing seemed so hateful nor so contemptible; and he never smelt a fouler stench as it then seemed to him that the body smelled, except for the devils and the burning fire which he saw there.[21]

The Old English poet Cynewulf refers to himself as being "soiled by my deeds" and says the sinful are "polluted with wickedness."[22] With Ælfric's

Catholic Homily 17, Sermon on the Epiphany of the Lord, when he speaks about the gifts to the Christ baby, we can see what is to come full force in the later Middle Ages—the equation of excrement with (sexual) sin.

> Myrrh, as we said earlier, acts so that dead flesh does not easily rot. Certainly the dead flesh rots rankly when the mortal body is enslaved to overflowing lust; just as the prophet said of some: "The cattle have rotted in their dung" [Joel I:17]. As the cattle rot in their dung, so fleshly men end their days in the stench of their lust. But if we spiritually offer myrrh to God, then our mortal body will be preserved through continence from the stenches of lust.[23]

In the late twelfth-century *Sawles Warde* (*The Custody of the Soul*), Fear describes Hell to Prudence: "[A]nd dragons with tails, as dreadful as devils, which swallow [souls] whole and vomit them out again before and behind" ("ant iteilede draken, grisliche ase deoflen, þe forswolheð ham ihal ant speoweð ham eft ut biuoren ant bihinden").[24] In other words, the demonish dragons both vomit and defecate souls. Sinful humans literally *become* excrement. In *Ancrene Wisse* (*Guide for Anchoresses*), Part 7, an elaborate allegory about what can extinguish love of Jesus suggests that "Urine is the stench of sin" ("Migge is stench of sunne").[25] For the projected female audience, the sin alluded to is sexual in nature.

The *Ancrene Wisse* equates excrement with flattery.

> The fikeleres meoster is to hulie the gong-thurl. Thet he deth as ofte as he with his fikelunge ant with his preisunge writh mon his sunne, thet stinketh na thing fulre. Ant he hit huleth ant lideth, swa thet he hit nawt stinketh. The bac-bitere unlideth hit ant openeth swa thet fulthe, thet hit stinketh wide. [The flatterer's work is to cover the [devil's] privy-hole; he does this as many times as he conceals with his flattering and praising someone's sin, which stinks more foully than anything else. And he hides and covers it over, so that it does not reek. The backbiter takes the lid off and uncovers the filth, so that it stinks far and wide.][26]

Dante likewise associates flattery with stench by immersing his flatterers into filth. For example, in Canto 18, the Eighth Circle, called Malebolge, the Second Pouch has Flatterers immersed in excrement: "This was the place we reached; the ditch beneath/ held people plunged in excrement that seemed/ as if it had been poured from human privies . . . " (Inf. 18.112–114).[27] Here flattery functions like excessive language; it is, therefore, appropriately punished with another surplus—shit.[28] In Canto 28 in the

Ninth Pouch, the sowers of scandal and schism, including Mohammed and Alì, his nephew and follower, are eternally disemboweled.

> No barrel, even though it's lost a hoop
> or end-piece, ever gapes as one whom I
> saw ripped right from his chin to where we fart:
> his bowels hung between his legs, one saw
> his vitals and the miserable sack
> that makes of what we swallow excrement.
> (*Inf.* 28. 22–27)

A fourteenth-century Italian manuscript of Dante's *Commédia* shows this moment. Mohammed, read as a sower of discord, rips open his chest to his entrails in perpetuity. Some matter, possibly excrement, is on the ground.[29] Since Mohammed was viewed as a schismatic, a heretical Christian, excrement symbolizes the language of division.

Excremental material filth, laden with symbolic value, was an inner moral marker and sign of spiritual corruption, not necessarily simply an outward physical sign.[30] Moral impropriety's link to scatology finds resonance in Acts: 1:18–19, when Judas's guilt is marked by the rupture of his intestines.[31] Sin and degrading behavior become literalized as excrement. In *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* by Guillaume de Deguileville, hell is equated with filth when the Pilgrim is shown a pilgrim scrip on which was written how "[Jesus Christ] descended into the infernal mire to lift out all his friends and lead them to Paradise."[32] "Mortal sin" is equated with "filth."[33] The wicked, those who refuse to undergo penance, "became all black and dirty—filthy, stinking and vile—just as if they had come out of a charcoal-maker's black sac or a foul dung-heap or mud-hole."[34] In "Seinte Margarete" [Saint Margaret], after Margaret bursts out of the dragon, she has a conversation with a demon. He confesses how he leads those with desires astray in what must be the most packed alliterative line aside from *Piers Plowman*: "I lead them through false love little by little into such deep mire that they drown in it . . . [T]hey take a terrible fall into the foul and muddy mire of carnal filthiness" ["Ich leade ham wið leas luue lutlen ant lutlen into se deop dunge þet ha druncnið þerin . . . . ha . . . ferliche falleð fule ant fenniliche i flescliche fulðen . . . "].[35] Chaucer's *Summoner's Prologue* includes the famous description of the devil's anus with the swarming friars going in and out; association with the anus, Satan's no less, constitutes an insult of the most disgusting abjection. Chaucer's Parson talks about dung often, generally linking it to lechery. In delineating the causes that move a man to contrition, the first is remembrance of the

sin and consequent shame. "And yet be ye fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne and youre synful usage, for which ye be roten in youre synne, as a beest in his dong" (X.138). Those people who wear too few clothes are guilty of pride, revealing their "shameful privee membres" (X.424).[36] He chastises those who reveal their buttocks, linked to stinking excrement. In his diatribe against lechery, the Parson again invokes excrement repeatedly, here against adultery.[37] For the Parson, excrement is to be linked with sin, particularly sins linked with sexual overtones such as lechery or pride in clothes inciting sexual attention. In these univalent moments, excrement suggests humiliation, debasement, discord, and sin.

Figurative and Symbolic Middle English Words for Excrement

One way we negate our animal selves is by extending literal words for elimination into the figurative and symbolic realms. Once waste is symbolized, it is no longer literal. Yet, this does not mean loss; it is still present in our thoughts. Words have slippage; nowhere is this better seen than in the word *womb(e)*, which can mean both stomach and the intestinal cavity. This link between the belly and the colon was observed in the Anglo-Saxon period. In her discussion of monastic sign language in the *Monasteriales Indicia* from BL MS Cotton Tiberius A.III, Nancy Stork translates sign 97 as follows: "The sign of the latrine is to set your right hand flat over your stomach and use the sign for asking leave of your elder, if you want to go thither."[38] By having the monk cover his stomach, the sign clearly indicates the link between the belly and excrement, consumption and excretion. The belly functions metonymically for the large intestine. A Danish church wall painting shows Saint Erasmus whose intestines are being wound out of his stomach in excruciating torture, connecting the digestive (stomach) with excretory (intestines).[39] As the *Middle English Dictionary* illustrates, *wombe* can be used to mean stomach. Figuratively, it can refer to carnal pleasure, in that the stomach was seen "as the seat of gluttony or excess" as Chaucer's Pardoner exclaims: "O wombe! O bely! O stynkyng cod/ Fulfilled of dong and of corrupcioun!" (VI.534–535). *Wombe* carries an enormous variety of significations, from the lower abdomen to the pierced side of Christ. Medically, a plaster placed on a woman's "stomac" causes her to "spewe"(vomit), while the same plaster placed on her "wombe" causes her to "go to prevy," suggesting the *wombe* is linked to the guts as involved in elimination.[40] *Wombe* is used metaphorically in reference to the astrolabe, the main disk of which has a hollow holding plates that represent various latitudes of the world. The main disk Chaucer calls the "moder"

(mother), while the hollow itself is called the "wombe" (*A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, I.14).

Other words carry figurative meanings beyond their literal ones. Like dung, *muk* means everything from animal or human excrement to sewage and filth; the figurative meaning stems from the literal. Excremental words carry moral implications. *Filth* suggests not only literal shit and dirt, but inner, moral, and spiritual sin and immorality. *Filth-hede* means corruption and sin, the pudenda, and lust. Finally, filth is anything that can corrupt spiritually or morally or signifies parts of the body that can corrupt. Moral filth is generally, though not exclusively, associated with sex and sexual misdeeds such as sodomy. *Foulen* means to pollute, literally and metaphorically. *Ordur(e)* nicely illustrates both the literal and figurative valences of filth, signifying literal or moral filth. Middle English pilgrimage texts abound with *ordure*. For example, the Chaucer's Parson, who uses filthy words more than any other character, equates a sinfully vain woman to a pig: "For right as a soughe wroteth in everich ordure, so wroteth she hire beautee in the stynkynge ordure of synne" (*The Parson's Tale*, X.156). John Lydgate's fifteenth-century translation of Deguileville's *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* also cites ample ordure: "[B]ut a lyknesse off ordure,/ And a statue off slyym vnclene . . . Donge & putrefaccïoun . . . .Thow shalt yt [the body] fynde . . . .[R]ound abouten in the place,/Yt was fful (I yow ensure)/ Off bryddës dunge and foul ordure."[41]

In Chaucer's work, excrement is represented as either being an integral and healthy part of culture, as when the plowman hauls dung in the *General Prologue* (I.530), or as being something worthy of mockery, disdain, revulsion, or demonization. Excrement appears in the *General Prologue* when the narrator comments on the "Persoun of a Toun," on how priests should be virtuous, for how else can the flock become virtuous without the guidance and example of a holy leader: "And shame it is, if a prest take keep,/ A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep" (I.503–504). That is to say, if the priest is "shitty" or morally compromised, then his clean flock may be sullied. His spiritual filth can infect his parishioners. *Tord(e)* signifies something worthless and can be used in abusive expressions, such as the Host's famous assessment of the narrator's poetry in the *Tale of Sir Thopas* in *The Canterbury Tales*: "Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!" (VII.930). Rather than praising his art, the Host denigrates Geoffrey's craft in the lowest way he knows how: through excremental rhetoric. As with the gravediggers in *Hamlet* or the slapstick moments in *Mankind* or with Noah's wife, the broad humor enlivens us, but also serves as a reminder of our mortality, as seen in a fragmented, filth-producing body.

Social Control Through Excremental Rhetoric: Humiliation and Insults

Filth has long been linked with death. After Hector's death in *The Iliad*, Priam witnesses the outrages that Achilles inflicts on his son's body and, filled with horror and grief, grovels in dung: "Smeared on the old man's head and neck the dung lay thick/ that he scraped up in his own hands, groveling in the filth."[42] This filthing of oneself is a form of self-abasement. The material filth coating the body works as an analogy for the spiritual and inner depths of sadness and despair. A thirteenth-century manuscript (MS Cambridge Ee.3.59, dating c. 1250–1260), *The Life of King Edward the Confessor*, an Anglo-Norman work, depicts the death of Edmund Ironside on the privy pierced by a sword.[43] This is how one history describes his death:

> When the king, terrible and most fearsome to his enemies, was at the height of his reign, he went one particular night to the house of ease, where the son of ealdorman Edric, lurking at his father's advice in the pit of the privy, struck the king twice with a sharp dagger right in the privates; and thrusting the point into the king's bowels he left it in there, fleeing.[44]

The location of his murder increases the abasement of his death. It was committed at Edmund's moment of vulnerability and evident filth, which reveals his (and our) base nature. Excrement arouses horror and shame. Only the lowliest will work with dung, as most cultures seem to suggest, such as with the untouchables in India. The poor, whether rural or urban, are said to be "made of the Devil's excrement."[45] To daub someone with shit is to equate them with dirt. For example, the Emperor Trajan made prisoners clean sewers; St. Sebastian was thrown into the Cloaca Maxima after martydom.[46]

Excremental discourse persuades, humiliates, accuses, and controls. Rhetorical attacks on others—Jews, the poor, peasants, women—were all means to control people's behavior and to affect attitudes towards certain groups. Female brewers and bakers in the time of Edward II could be punished by being made to stand in a dung-cart up to the knees for adulterating ale or cheating customers by selling short measure.[47] Here excess greed is rewarded with an excess of dung. In a 1338 manuscript of *The Romance of Alexander*, tall tales relate extravagant adventures: Alexander's men confront a giant sea monster as our hero drives a spear into the creature's mouth. In the lower right corner a bald man defecates before a kneeling nun. It is possible the illuminator is commenting on the veracity of such excessive

reports; in other words, the narrator is, possibly, full of shit.[48] A scholar in the Seventh Story, Eighth Day, of *The Decameron* is tricked by a woman to spend the night in the snow and he retaliates by having her suffer in the blazing heat. When he at last confronts her, he cries out, "My one great regret is that the illness I suffered on account of the cold had to be treated with the warmth of stinking dung, whereas your own injuries, occasioned by the heat, can be treated with fragrant rose-water."[49] Although he ultimately succeeds in his retaliation, he is still psychologically tormented by the degrading medical cure he was forced to endure.

Works from various literary traditions, including Icelandic sagas, play with excrement's potential to punish and control. Norse insults uttered by males against other males typically include, among other transgressions, drinking urine and eating corpses, as well as accusations of breaking "alimentary taboos."[50] Verbal abuse utilizes excrement to debase and humiliate.[51] In *Njal's Saga*, for example, one recurrent charge concerns Njal's lack of a beard, an accusation linked to dung.[52] His sons are referred to as "Dung-beardlings," possibly suggesting that only by putting dung on their faces can they replicate beards.[53] Dung was a valuable commodity in Iceland; but, imagined on the face as a replacement for a beard, it functions as a sign of deficiency and lack, resulting in humiliation.[54] These insults function as "jokes," not for the victim, but within the dialogue between the insulter and his cohort. As Mary Douglas has shown, a joke "connects and disorganizes. It attacks sense and hierarchy."[55] To transform verbally the beard on one's chin to excrement clearly is nonsensical and, hence, funny; it is insulting, though, in suggesting that the victim is less hairy than "normally" hirsute males, since manly attributes are valued in Icelandic culture. The filth of dung lends an added dimension of devaluation in the insult-joke. In another saga, *Læxdala Saga*, we see humiliation acted out in the arena of filth control. In this elaborate and fascinating tale, filled with stormy passion and ironic understatement, Gudrun and Kjartan fall in love with each other, but they then part due to misunderstandings and injured feelings. Kjartan gathers together about sixty of his followers and visits Laugar where Gudrun and her husband, Kjartan's foster-brother Bolli, live:

> In those days it was the custom to have the privy outside, some distance away from the farmhouse itself, and such was the arrangement at Laugar. Kjartan now seized all the doors of the house and refused to allow anyone to go outside; and for three days he forced them all to stay indoors without access to the privy.... The men of Laugar were furious and thought the incident a much greater humiliation and disgrace than if Kjartan had killed one or two of their men....

By forcing them to remain inside for three days, Kjartan virtually guarantees that they will have to defecate at some point. The inability of the inhabitants at Laugar to defecate out of doors smeared them symbolically (if not literally) with excrement. This clever trick is, needless to say, paid for in the expected violence endemic to saga.[56]

We can see this kind of shame operative in the *The Poem of the Cid* as well. At one point, the hero is with his cowardly and greedy sons-in-law, the Infantes of Carrión. As they sleep, an escaped lion enters the hall. The Cid's men protect their lord. But,

> Fernando González [one of the Infantes] looked round for somewhere to hide, but found no open door nor tower; so in his panic he crawled under the couch. Diego González made off through the door, crying: "I shall never see (my home in) Carrión again!" In his terror he got behind the wine press and made his cloak and tunic all filthy [*Tras una viga lagar metiós' con grant pavor,/ el manto e el brial todo suzio lo sacó*].

The Cid wakes up, finds out what has happened, and walks toward the lion, who hangs its head. The Cid leads it along, controlling the wild beast. Meanwhile, when the Infantes are found:

> You never saw such jesting and mockery as then went round the palace. The Cid forbade it to continue, but the Infantes felt that they had been put to shame and deeply resented all that had happened [*Muchos' tovieron por enbaídos los ifantes de Carrión,/ fiera cosa les pesa d'esto que les cuntió*].[57]

Here the inability of the Infantes to control themselves, particularly Diego González who beshits his breeches, show a lack of manliness that is defined by bodily control. That he defiles himself with excrement rather than simply crying makes it all the more humiliating. In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the Eighth Story, First Day, utilizes figurative references to excrement. Lauretta, the narrator, tells us how

> our modern courtiers are better described as asses, brought up, not in any court, but on the dungheap of all the scum of the earth's iniquities.... [T]he present generation has been stripped of all the virtues, and left to wallow abjectly in a cesspit of vices.[58]

She uses excrement to judge and implicate the moral and social behavior of people at court. In another tale, a doctor is tossed into a ditch "into which the farmers used to pour the offerings of the Countess of Cesspool, to enrich their lands."[59] While the material is useful in the country, to be

daubed with filth is nonetheless humiliating, especially since the victim is a doctor and not himself a farmer. In the Fifth Story of the Second Day in *The Decameron*, Fiammetta tells the story of the hapless Andreuccio who goes to Naples. While visiting a none too virtuous woman, "Nature demanded that he should relieve his belly." A page indicates where he can relieve himself and Andreuccio succeeds in almost dying. We are told:

> In a narrow alleyway, such as we often see between two houses, some boards, and a place to sit, had been rigged up on two beams, running from one house to the next.

The poor man falls down and, though unhurt, "he got himself daubed from head to foot in the filthy mess with which the place was literally swimming."[60] The terrific odor that he exudes thereafter causes him no end of humiliation.

Excrement, Money, and Jews

The idea of equating excrement with gold or valuable items has a long history. In the Roman era, urine was taxed under Vespatian; human and animal excrement were taxed under Constantine.[61] Famously, Sigmund Freud explores the association linking money, dirt, and the devil; in this analysis of folklore, finding treasure becomes a code for defecation.[62] Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History,* a Freudian reading of money and excrement whereby things—such as coins—come to substitute for the child's excrement,[63] discusses the medieval and early modern attitudes to these symbolic equivalents. Excrement literally had monetary value; but money is, in fact, useless.[64] In Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale* itself, the friar expected money under Thomas's buttock that the old man had hidden "in pryvetee" (III.2143), but instead gets the fart—highlighting the link between money and scatological matter(s).[65] The symbolic equation between gold and shit continues into the modern period as we can see in such authors as Thomas More, with his golden chamber pots.[66] Dominique Laporte in *The History of Shit* argues that in the city dung is merely corrupt matter that can only reenter urban culture transformed as gold.[67] Given imaginary value by a society, gold comes to symbolically substitute for excrement once the state polices it.[68] A nexus of associations among money, filth, and sin, plays itself out in the most vicious form of excremental rhetorical control: anti-Semitic writings equating Jews with fecal matter.[69] The relative stability of Christianity in the Middle English period compared to the late Anglo-Saxon period under recurrent Viking invasions meant that it was able to

devote energy to attacks on other religions. In a Weberian reading, Lester Little has argued that in the vexed adaptation to a profit economy, late medieval culture fully recognized the dual nature of money as both useful and demonic, where it is seen as "filthy and disgusting waste."[70] The ensuing anxiety found an outlet in attacking the convenient outsiders, the Jews.[71]

While Jews were associated with filth from at least the twelfth century,[72] the association of filth and fecal matter with one's enemies is not an innovation of anti-Semitic rhetoric.[73] Jews, Christians, and Muslims made references to the same impurities—menstrual blood, excreta, disease, corpses—and drew on common material for this polemic, suggesting anxieties about the proximity of the other and a desire to create community among one's fellows.[74] For example, Muslims thought of both Christians and Jews as filthy. In twelfth-century Seville, regulations existed stipulating that "a Muslim must not massage a Jew or a Christian nor throw away his refuse nor clean his latrines. The Jew and the Christian are better fitted for such trades, since they are the trades of those who are vile."[75] The late fifteenth-century scholar, al-Wansharishi, from North Africa, describes the dangers of living with nonbelievers for Muslims living amongst Jews and Christians in Spain, "because of all the dirt and filth involved, and the religious as well as secular corruption, which continues all the time."[76] Accusations by Muslims and Christians against one another frequently included assertions of defiling holy places. Pope Urban II in calling forth the Crusade in 1095 accused Muslims of destroying "altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness."[77] Meanwhile Muslims read Crusaders as defiling holy ground by slaughtering their enemies within the holy precinct of Jerusalem, stabling their horses by the Mosque of Al-Aqsa, painting pictures of animals, including pigs, and keeping wine on the Sacred Rock.[78] In MS Royal 16 G VI, f.185v, the *Chroniques de France ou de Saint Denis* from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, Christian soldiers defecate on the Saracen shrine after the Mansur of Cordoba has plundered the shrine of St. James.[79] Here the filth of Christians is used to desecrate a Saracen holy space. There is no redemption meant—or taken—in this act. Filth is integral to the act of defiling a sacred space.

Despite this general assessment of one's enemies as filthy, there exist two peculiarities to anti-Semitic rhetorical attacks. First, the Jew in these attacks is associated with the devil. Martha Bayless has written on this connection between Jews and excrement, showing how in certain tales Jews are situated "symbolically and at times literally in the mire of perdition."[80] And, second, the identification of the Jew with filth is linked to the association of money with filth; the money-lending Jew becomes a symbol for avarice. The Jews, identified with fecal matter, with pollution, are

also accused of usury, or the excess fertility of money; money, according to Brown, is socially acceptable, even valuable, "shit."[81] So gongfermors, paid for removing excrement and then making a profit on selling as fertilizer that which they were just paid for, function in a sense like usurers of excrement. The French fabliau, "De La Borgoise d'Orliens [The Wife of Orléans]" plays with these resonances. The husband, who makes money from selling merchandise and usury, is cuckolded by his wife and punished in part by being beaten and thrown on the dung heap.[82] The Jews, like excremental profiteers, symbolically resonate together with filth. In anti-Semitic rhetoric, money-lending Jews became tainted by the filth of this imagined excess value. Filth is disciplined so extremely in such writings that it is displaced entirely onto Jews.[83] Further, Steven Kruger has argued that a late medieval Christian "ambivalence" and "nervousness" about the body caused Christianity to attack "other" bodies, such as those of the Jews, which could be repudiated as being "animal-like, disgusting, contaminating,"[84] though, in reality, Jews were highly conscious of acts like defecation and washing, as the thirteenth-century Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg's responses to questions concerning privy use and cleanliness indicate.[85]

Bodily and Spiritual Filth

Abelard reads sin and pleasure as filth. Recalling their lust in Letter 5, Abelard writes to Heloise, "[N]o reverence for decency or for God even during the days of Our Lord's Passion, or of the greater sacraments could keep me from wallowing in this mire."[86] He continues by reading his castration as a just punishment that "cut me off from the slough of filth in which I had been wholly immersed in mind as in body."[87] He argues that "God himself has thought fit to raise us up from the contamination of this filth and the pleasures of this mire and draw us to him by force . . . ."[88] He consoles, as best as he is able (which is far from enough, according to some readers), Heloise, who still struggles with desire. Her achievement is greater than his since she resists desire, one he no longer can have due to his castration. "For it is written of men, or rather, the beasts of this wretched life, 'The beasts have rotted in their dung.' "[89] Yet after his castration, Abelard is horrified to remember passages in the Bible that would classify him, now a eunuch, as filthy. Citing Leviticus 22:24 and Deuteronomy 23:1, Abelard writes,

> I was also appalled to remember that according to the cruel letter of the Law, a eunuch is such an abomination to the Lord that men made eunuchs by the amputation or mutilation of their members are forbidden to enter a church as if they were stinking and unclean, and even animals in that state are rejected for sacrifice.[90]

Heloise, in response, ponders on what makes an act truly unclean. She recounts how the apostles were not so careful about washing their hands before eating. When they are rebuked, Jesus defends them saying,

> "To eat without first washing his hands does not defile a man." He then added the general ruling that the soul is not defiled by any outward thing but only by what proceeds from the heart, "wicked thoughts, adultery, murder" and so on. For unless the spirit be first corrupted by evil intention, whatever is done outwardly in the body cannot be a sin.[91]

And here she reiterates the concept developed by Abelard that it is the intention, not the act itself, that constitutes a sin. Abelard equivocates in his long instruction on how to structure a women's religious community. Quoting Romans 14:3, Abelard includes the passage: "I know on the authority of the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, only if a man considers a particular thing unclean."[92] Citing Jesus again, he condemns those who pay more attention to outward appearance than inner cleanliness: "A man is not defiled by what goes into his mouth but by what comes out of it. What comes out of the mouth has its origins in the heart, and that is what defiles a man; but to eat without first washing his hands, that cannot defile him." Abelard uses this passage to explain, "Therefore no food defiles the soul, only the appetite for forbidden food. For as the body is not defiled except by bodily filth, so the soul can only be defiled by spiritual filth."[93] Abelard's instruction for women is ultimately compassionate and understanding of bodily frailty.

The compassion suggested in Abelard's comments does not resonate with Pope Innocent III who writes about our foul flesh in *De miseria humane conditionis* or *On the Misery of the Human Condition* (dating from before 1195). "For sure man was formed out of earth.... He will become.... a mass of rottenness which will forever stink and reek."[94] After reading his repeatedly misocorpic rhetoric, it is tempting to imagine dust to dust being translated "dung to dung" as has been suggested.[95] Sexual intercourse is the filthiest of activities the already rancid body can perform.[96] Babies are not the focus of joy and laughter. Rather,

> [w]hen a child is conceived, he contracts the defect of the seed, so that lepers and monsters are born of this corruption... [I]f it may be said that one enters clothed, listen to the kind of clothing he wears—foul to speak of, fouler to hear of, foulest to see: a stinking caul dripping with blood.[97]

The products of our bodies are not useful or beautiful like those of plants in nature: "Look at the plants and the trees—they produce flowers, foliage, and fruit; you produce nits, lice, and tapeworms. They pour forth oil, wine, and

balsam; you give off spit, urine, and dung. They breathe forth a sweet odor; you give off a dreadful stench."[98] Even if we consume the fruit that Innocent praises, we can only produce something disgusting: "Gluttony demands a heavy tribute but gives the meanest returns: the more delicate the food, the more stinking the dung. What was foul to swallow comes out fouler, making vile gases above and below and hideous noises."[99] Even if you dress up the human body, the inner rot cannot be erased.[100] No matter how virtuously we try to live our lives, we are doomed to return to the stench of our origins: "Almost the whole life of mortals is full of mortal sin, so that one can scarcely find anyone who does not go astray, does not return to his own vomit and rot in his own dung."[101] Pope Innocent does not give a break to humans even after they die: "In life he produced lice and tapeworms; in death he will produce worms and flies. In life he produced dung and vomit; in death he produces rottenness and stench."[102] This kind of harsh rhetoric was bound to influence Christian attitudes to the most natural of human bodily functions: from birth, defecation, and sexual intercourse to death itself.

Saint Francis met Innocent III, who, thinking or pretending to think that Francis was a swineherd, said, "Don't bother me with your Rule. Go back to your pigs and preach all the sermons you want to them." On being told this, Francis is said to have gone to a pigsty and rolled around in the dung. In this stinky state, he returned before the Pope. "Lord, now that I have done what you commanded, have the goodness in your turn to grant what I request." The English chronicler Matthew Paris suggests that Innocent "then regretted that he had received him so badly, and having sent him off to wash, promised him another audience."[103] Francis was allegedly willing to cover himself in filth, because he clearly recognizes how dung is conventionally understood to be polluting. We are told that on one journey, punishment was meted out to a brother, Barbaro by name, said to have committed the sin of evil-speaking before a knight. Francis orders the brother to ingest donkey dung, saying, "The mouth which has distilled the venom of hatred against my brother must eat this excrement."[104] Filthy talk deserves to be cured by filth in homeopathic reciprocation, that treats "like with like."

Following Innocent III's condemnation of bodily filth, Guillaume de Deguileville, a Cistercian monk, equates the body with the dung it produces. In *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, Reason tells the Pilgrim that he serves a horrid companion:

> [H]e is a pile of corruption, an image made of dung, a statue made of mud, a scare-crow.... And even worse, something that is disgusting. When he has eaten and he is full, you carry him to the privy or out into the fields to empty his belly.[105]

The rather clueless Pilgrim cannot figure out who this ill-doer is and vows to kill him. Reason must then inform him, "He is your body, your flesh."[106] Reason argues that if the Pilgrim were not supporting his own body, "it would be like a pile of dung and never move."[107] Reason temporarily unburdens him of his body, a shedding only death can make permanent. The Pilgrim is thrilled to be momentarily freed of "the crippled one." But, "I was unhappy only in that I must once more live and dwell and remain in the body . . . .I saw that what Reason had preached to me was true. I saw clearly that my body was dung, and that to value it would be useless." His body is, as Reason explains, his "adversary."[108] The Pilgrim sees his body as stronger than he is, but he can checkmate the body by eating and drinking less and acting chastely.

Purgatory and the Soul

Purgatory, spatialized as an actual location where the dead purged their sins, gained currency as a theological concept between 1000 and 1300.[109] One problem concerned the period of time between death and the resurrection. What happened to the body? The development of the doctrine of purgatory needed to address the state of the flesh. It was accepted that disembodied souls were bodily tortured in Purgatory. While the body in hell is a victim of digestion, generation, and corruption, just what was denied as being present in Heaven, purgatory represented a liminal space, a region of the in-between, a site of bodily and spiritual purgation. *Purgation* and *purge*, used in Middle English early in the thirteenth century, signify both spiritual cleansing and bodily evacuation of filth. Literal and figurative meanings for words can exist simultaneously; here the controlling notion lies in transformation or change. Spiritual and physical purging are analogues. At Christchurch Monastery in Canterbury, the *reredorter* (latrine) drains were cleaned by rainwater and bathhouse pipes called "purgatoria."[110] Achieving health by eliminating filth from one's physical body can be accomplished by the use of purgatives or the natural course of physiology. But how does one eliminate spiritual filth? *Filth* from the taint of original sin can be eliminated by the sacrament of baptism. Purgation can be enacted through confession, the purging of one's sins verbally. In 1437, we are told of one William, "By vertu of which confession . . . by lawe of holy chirch was purged."[111] Though the confessional box does not come into existence until the sixteenth century,[112] the privy and confession have some similarities.[113] Indeed, Felix Fabri makes that very connection in his pilgrimage account.

> In the morning, when the pilgrims get up and their stomachs ask for grace, they climb the bridge and head for the prow, where on either side of the spit privies have been provided. Sometimes as many as thirteen people or more will line up for a turn at the seat, and when someone takes too long it is not embarrassment but irritation that is expressed [*nec est ibi verecundia sed potius iracundia*]. I would compare the wait to that which people must endure when they confess during Lent, when they are forced to stand and become irritated at the interminable confessions and await their turn in a foul mood....[114]

Purging is not to be viewed negatively. It is part of a process of transformation, leading to rebirth, and is necessary for physical or spiritual health.[115]

Like the soul in purgatory, the pilgrim is liminal, in-between, while enacting penance. In Guillaume de Deguileville's poem, Penance tells the Pilgrim that she makes

> people lay aside all uncleanness....[W]hen the tears come flowing out from a truly contrite heart, I gather them up again right away and I make them into a wash-water, and I put all filthy things in it to wash and cleanse them....The heart of a sinner is like a great earthen pot, filled with a foul and stinking liquid....I make all the pieces very small so that the great filth inside it is spilled out, for if I did not break it up completely and make tiny pieces of it, a lot of filth might remain lodged in the pieces.[116]

Penance says, that according to Scripture, there is a gate of filth in Nehemiah. There are six gates where she lives, but only one allows filth to enter in. "[T]he sixth...is necessary for salvation. It is the gate of filth through which all purge and cleanse themselves, through which they throw everything out if they do not want to remain unclean. This is the mouth of the sinner."[117] Pilgrimage tries to expel dirt from the soul through the process of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, hence the prevalence of filth in the Parson's *Tale* and Deguileville's poem.

Resurrection and the Body

As Caroline Walker Bynum's *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* shows, bodily digestion and excremental production were key issues in discussions about resurrection. The body and soul are not dualistically divided from one another. Rather, the self was perceived as a psychosomatic unit. Early theologians generally agreed that the self is a corporealized soul.[118] For Augustine, the body is a sign of personhood and is integral to the self, with all its scars and features. But what happens

to the body between death and the Last Judgment? Do resurrected bodies have intestines? Do resurrected bodies defecate?[119] What happens to the material we eat during our lifetimes? Does everything that passes through our bodies become resurrected too?[120] The real problem for medieval theologians was the perception of the body as a threatening site of decomposition and rot. Process and change can be viewed negatively, as troubling and disturbing decay and putrefaction. Hence the rejection of a (mis)understood Origen. For example, in 397, Jerome attacks John of Jerusalem whom he reads as an Origenist: "Origen says . . . that we will . . . digest food with stomachs . . . Those who believe this tell us [he says] that we will then [in the resurrection] produce feces, give forth humors, take wives, and produce children."[121] John Scotus Erigena grappled with this problem in the ninth century. For Erigena, the material body of flesh is accident while the soul is substance, reflecting the argument about transubstantiation, in which the bread is the accident and Christ's body the substance. Just as we cannot imagine eating God's body in anything but a bread-like substance, so too we cannot imagine the resurrection of our self in anything but our individual body, since the self is a somatized soul.

> Man has intellect, reason, sense, seminal life, and body, not this body corruptible after sin, but that body which man had before sin; not this compound and soluble body, but that simple and indivisible one; not his animallike and earthly body, but that spiritual and celestial one; not this body begotten by seed from the carnal union of the two sexes, but the body produced from the simplicity of nature before the transgression, and the one that will have being at the Resurrection; not this body known to the corporeal sense, but the one still hidden in nature's secret recesses; not this body added because of sin, but that which was implanted in a nature still undefiled, the body to which this corruptible, mortal body will return.[122]

The incorruptible body that we will return to at the Resurrection is our interior body. There was a suspicion of Erigena since he saw all bodies as becoming spiritual bodies, where differences among bodies would disappear, and where bodies would become fused and indistinguishable. His view was not ultimately the dominant one, which asserted that there would be bodily differentiation in heaven.

The threat of decay was resolved by most theologians by arguing for stasis in heaven. Although the body will rise with all its entrails, redemption is seen as a "triumph over digestion and nutrition."[123] Even Hildegard, who sees positive transformation in *veriditas*, allows that God infuses matter with life. The soul is like a jewel trapped in dung.[124] To be incorrupt, the resurrected body had to become a site of changelessness, rather than a site

of transformation.[125] Bonaventure argued that men and women rise with all their parts, even their intestines.[126] Superfluities, such as hair, nails, and intestines, are necessary and have a "perfect use" in resurrection since the mind desires harmony. However, since the resurrected would not need intestines for depositing waste products, the intestines would instead be filled with "noble humors" or "noble spirits."[127] Thomas Aquinas dealt with the issue of resurrection by focussing on man's final perfection, the fulfillment of his contemplative, not his natural, life. To be happy after death, people need to have their bodies; some "material continuity" must exist.[128] Thomas insisted on Christ's resurrection. "Whatever properties belong to the nature of a human body were totally present in Christ's risen body." The risen Christ had everything a material body has, such as blood, bones, and flesh.[129] Some might be squeamish about contemplating a completely material Christ. Aquinas cites Augustine:

> Augustine says, Perhaps given the presence of blood, a more bothermore adversary might press further in an embarassing manner and state, If there was blood in Christ's risen body, why not also pituitary glands, from which phlegm is produced? Why not also yellow bile from the choleric parts of body, and black bile from the melancholic?

Aquinas asserts you can add anything you like to Christ's risen body, as long as you "avoid anything which implies corruption."[130] Material bodies are corruptible since, unlike form, matter alone is susceptible to change. Indeed, for Aquinas, basing his conclusions on Aristotle, Averroes, and Galen, the entire body was subject to wastage, renewal, and replacement. The solution lies, then, in making the material body incorruptible, recognizing the self as structure rather than matter, as potential rather than realization. The body completes the soul.[131] The blueprint, to use Bynum's metaphor, of the self is realized in the body.[132] Identity for Thomas, as for Aristotle, was " 'according to form' [*secundum speciem*] and not 'according to matter' [*secundum materiam*]."[133] Unlike matter, form lasts. The resurrected body becomes purified through immutability; as such, it is material, but not subject to change and corruption. This gives rise to the possibility of the immaterial, purely formal body. The blessed life is, as Giorgio Agamben points out, "in no case an animal life."[134] Thomas flushes away the issues of excrement in heaven.

CHAPTER 4

GENDERED FILTH

"We don't want to confront our bodily functions anymore. We're too busy."

Linda C. Andrist, Professor at MGH Institute of Health Professions in Boston concerning Lybrel, a pill that eliminates the menstrual period.[1]

Seemingly, excrement cannot be gendered; the production of excrement is common to both men and women. Yet, as Elizabeth Grosz asks, "Can it be that in the west, in our time, the female body has been constructed not only as a lack or absence but with more complexity, as a leaking, uncontrollable, seeping liquid; as formless flow; as viscosity, entrapping, secreting; as lacking not so much or simply the phallus but self-containment?"[2] The answer, alas, is yes. When the body is the enemy, as described in the previous chapter, "moral virtue [becomes equated] with mastery of the body and, eventually, with mastery over anyone associated with the body, such as animals, women, indigenous peoples, homosexuals, and Jews."[3] In their cultural history of menstruation, Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie argue that, although "men's bodies are at least as fluid as women's,"[4] the female body exemplified and manifested the threat of "corporeal chaos."[5] There are dangers inherent in focusing on menstruation since it inevitably genders the corporeality of the body.[6] Menstruation discourse "both furthers the alienation central to female-embodiment and works to maintain the internal stability of the terms 'men' and 'women.'"[7] Grosz's argument that "there has never been space in culture for women *as* women"[8] suggests that women can only be understood in relation to men. I will argue that the female body was perceived as exemplifying the dangers of the excremental body. Only by disciplining her filth is woman able to transcend her own corruption and sin.

Single-Sex Model

While many scholars have emphasized the misogyny inherent in attitudes of Church Fathers toward female flesh, male flesh was also seen by some as ambiguous. Saint Bernard contended that the "human being is nothing but fetid sperm, a bag of manure." Thomas Laqueur has shown that there was a single-sex model for gender understanding with the female genitals being the inverse and enclosed version of the male genitals.[9] Male and female bodies were seen as existing on a spectrum.[10] While "[m]edieval thinkers associated *body* with *woman*,"[11] Carolyn Walker Bynum has asserted that "[n]othing entitles us to say that medieval thinkers essentialized body as matter or essentialized either body or matter as female."[12] Both male and female bodies could be without reason and polluted; the same word (*fluxus*) was used for menstruation and nocturnal emissions.[13] Uncontrollable aspects of the male body undermined the reason endowed in men and were a reminder of man's fall from grace.[14] Nocturnal emissions came to reflect the surrender of the inner will and, thus, those who suffered them were morally condemned.[15] In early Christianity, Christians distinguished themselves from Jewish ritual purity by not regarding nocturnal emissions as a reflection of moral integrity. Once Christianity became a state religion, however, there developed "introversion;" that is, within Christianity itself, some groups distinguished themselves from each other, including with regard to purity. John Cassian read this uncontrolled male flux as reflecting an uncontrolled mind. Gregory saw this emission as a bodily infirmity, not contaminating in itself, but, rather, evidence that "[p]ollution resided in the mind."[16] Odo of Cluny describes in his biography of Gerald of Aurillac how Gerald would wash himself after nocturnal emissions, his "pollution."[17] Odo comments, "This action may seem foolish to those whose filthy mind reeks with the foul stink of vice."[18] While Gerald may have viewed this emission as pollution, Odo condemns those more who mock Gerald for his fastidious nature. Sin within the soul is worse than the pollution of the flesh.

Leaking, Filthy Women

However, the one-sex model of the body did not equalize men and women. Medieval medical theories based on Aristotle presented the male body as paradigmatic. That men's bodies were perceived as capable of pollution and lack of control created anxiety and fear so profound, Jacqueline Murray argues, that they became projected on women's bodies.[19] Women then became identified with "breaches in boundaries . . . with openings and exudings and spillings forth."[20] The female body was read as containing

filth and disgusting oozings that are squeezed out of her foul carcass. Maurice Bloch in reworking Durkheim's idea, "that it is society which creates the individual and not vice versa," posits that "it is society which creates the anti-individual and hence creates the illusion of the group and that it does this on the basis of the devaluation of a particular symbolic representation of women."[21] The anti-individual reinforces the sense of the group; in this case, the excremental individual (woman) reinforces the sense of the normal, clean individual (man). The disgust fomented around women's menstrual blood, a bloody excrement, transforms her entire being into a filthy pit.[22] This disgust toward women's bodies could then be extended to others considered in some way polluted. For example, Alexandra Cuffel has thoroughly shown how Jews, Christians, and Muslims created a religious polemic rooted in antique views of the body that equate the womb with a sewer.[23]

Women's bodies represented best what was frail about bodies in general.[24] The female body was seen as ordinarily polluting, most obviously in menstrual flows.[25] The filth at childbirth could be disturbing.[26] Women are even associated with excrement itself.[27] Jerome in *Against Jovinian* meditates on St Paul's injunction, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

> If it is good not to touch a woman, it is bad to touch one; for there is no opposite to goodness but badness.... He would never have added "let each man have his own wife," unless he had previously used the words "to avoid fornication." Do away with fornication, and he will not say "let each man have his own wife." Just as though one were to lay it down: "It is good to feed on wheaten bread, and to eat the finest wheat flour" and yet, to prevent a person pressed by hunger from devouring cow-dung, I may allow him to eat barley. Does it follow that the wheat will not have its peculiar purity, if barley is preferred to excrement?[28]

Wives in this passage are analogized as barley, but also associated with excrement. Odo of Cluny advises men to see beneath the skin of women, recognizing them as nothing more than as a "bag of shit [*saccum stercoris*]."[29] Centuries later, Jean Fusoris, in a treatise on the astrolabe written between 1407 and 1412, writes that "...the [human] body, to tell the truth, is nothing but excrement ("*fiens*") and putrescence ("*pourriture*") composed of the four elements; but the soul is a noble thing, created directly by God in the image and semblence of the Blessed Trinity...."[30] Because men had been, since Aristotle, allied with the soul and women with matter, even this criticism of the body weighs more against women than men. While both men and women are, beneath the skin, nothing more than

bags of shit,[31] there is an overtone of misogynist disgust. As we have seen, excrement symbolized many things, one being illicit sexual behavior; but women were especially singled out for sexual misconduct and, thus, allied with filth. One punishment for illegitimate sexual behavior was to be immersed in mud and filth on a cucking stool;[32] as in Dante, the punishment symbolizes the sin. In the early thirteenth-century *Hali Meiðhad* (*A Letter on Virginity*), carnal intercourse is virtually always accompanied by the descriptor of "filth": "fule wurðinge" (foul mire) or "fulþe" (filth/filthiness).[33] Chaucer's Parson links shit to brothels. "Of this brekynge comth eek ofte tyme that folk unwar wedden or synnen with hire owene kynrede, and namely thilke harlotes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be likned to a commune gong, where as men purgen hire ordure" (X.884).[34] Having sex with a prostitute is like shitting in a communal privy. The sexually open woman is, in other words, a toilet.[35]

Women carry the burden of sexual filth. While a man may be foul for various reasons (drunkard, layabout, or sexually loose), a woman's foulness lies in her sexual history. *Filth* signifies a generically base or worthless person, but referring to women means "a wanton woman, strumpet." Hence, words associated with women and filth suggest loose sexual morals. *Foul* can refer generally to sinful people, but a "foul woman" means "an unchaste woman." Even virgins were not immune from the consideration of filth.[36] The misanthropic rhetoric in the *Rule for Anchoresses* ratchets up a misogynist overlay in the description of a woman's face;

> Amid te menske of þi neb. Þet is þe fehereste deal. bitweonen muðes smech & neases smeal,ne berest tu as twa priue þurles? Nart tu icumen of ful slim? Nart tu fulðe fette? Ne bist tu wurme fode?' [In the middle of the glory of your face, which is your most beautiful part, between the mouth's taste and the nose's smell, do you not bear two toilet holes, as it were? Are you not come of foul slime, are you not a vat of filth, will you not be worm's food?][37]

Jean de Meun has Le Jaloux (a jealous bullying husband) mouth vicious misogynistic accusations concerning women's beauty: "[I]f one wanted to cover a dung-heap with silken cloths or little flowers, well-arranged and beautifully coloured, it would certainly still be a dung-heap, whose custom it is to stink just as it did before."[38] In Boccaccio's *Il Corbaccio*, a dead husband returns to tell the potential next husband of his former wife the graphic truth about her. The dead husband warns that, if he saw her in the morning coughing up phlegm, "You would have thought

that you had met up with a load of dung or a mountain of manure, from which you would have fled, as you do from something disgusting." He also describes her anus as the "village of Evilhole."[39] Boccaccio picks up on this misogynist rhetoric and plays with it, making it so extreme and offensive as to, perversely, discharge it of any verisimilitude.

In the famous scene after the lovers have consummated their secret liaison in *The Miller's Tale*, Alison sticks out her "hol," which Absolon kisses. Elaine Tuttle Hansen argues for the ambiguity of Alison's "hol," which could signify anus or the vaginal orifice.[40] Hansen cites scholars who see the anxiety over the "frightening lack of difference between male and female bodies,"[41] but argues that this conflation indicates the Miller's perception of "women's sex (or sex with a woman)" as "dirt, decay, and dissolution;"[42] in other words, shit. Peter G. Beidler has commented on the eating and food imagery prevalent in the *tale*, particularly with reference to Alison. Absolon associates love with food, sending Alison various savory items such as wine and meed. Absolon views her in light of culture, as cuisine to be consumed; but, rather than eating her, Absolon must be content with the place associated with the result of eating—her buttocks. He responds with a "hysterical" cleansing and scrubbing of his mouth: "Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes/With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes" (I.3747–3748).[43] These items constituted the medieval equivalent of toilet paper.[44] In other words, by kissing her "naked ers" (I.3734), his mouth has been transformed into an anus. It is as though Absolon is wiping excrement from his face (ass).[45]

Any kind of involuntary leaking of bodily fluid unmans male characters. In the Icelandic saga *Njal's Saga*, Gunnar lies when telling the story of how Skarphedin reacted to the burning of Njal. Falsely claiming that Skarphedin cried when he was burned to death,[46] Gunnar feminizes his enemy. Blood gushes out of the ears of Thorhall Asgrimsson upon hearing of the death of his father Njal. After reviving from a faint, he admits it had been unmanly of him,[47] because of the suggestion of a lack of bodily control. Later, when Thorhall finds out that the lawsuits were not going well,

> he was so upset that he could not speak a word. He sprang out of his bed and seized his spear, Skarphedin's gift, with both hands and drove it through his leg. Flesh and the core of the boil clung to the spear when he had cut open his leg, and a gush of blood and a flow of pus poured like a stream across the floor. He then walked out of the book without a limp....[48]

In this case, to *voluntarily* "leak" himself, to *intentionally* cause himself pain and leakage, *is* manly. Like Saint Francis who intentionally dirtied

himself, Thorhall enhances his status through deliberate self-sullying. In Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, Socrates is humiliated by Xantippa casting "pisse upon his heed" (III.729). She initiates the action, not him. *Involuntarily* sullied, Socrates's shame lies in being the victim of the instigator of shame.

Women's bodies are equated with filth in the opening pages of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*. The Pilgrim goes "out of [his] house, where [he] had been for nine months..."[49] The first woman he met, the daughter of the emperor, tells him to wash himself, "for if you consider where you come from and the house full of filth you have been in for nine months, you certainly need to wash yourself."[50] She refers to original sin and baptism, allying the woman's body that houses the infant with moral and physical filth. Only Christ "was not unclean."[51] At one point Reason argues that, "You are Samson, it is Delilah,"[52] feminizing the evil body he must learn to resist. Various sins are personified by women described with misogynist rhetoric. When he meets Hypocrisy, she tells him that the cloak she wears "was made long ago to cover my ugliness, to hide my faults and to conceal my filth. Just as the snow decorates a dung-heap and makes it white on the outside, or as painting makes a vile and stinking sepulchre shine, so this cloak covers me up and tells people I am beautiful, that I am some holy thing."[53] The old crone Treachery, whom the Pilgrim describes as a "slatternly bitch," proclaims, "The more it stinks, the better I like it."[54] Gluttony arrives, "a big old crone who had a long nose and big misshapen eyes." As Gluttony tells him, "I leave trails of slime after me like a snail."[55] He then chastises her, "[Y]ou stinking old thing. Do not go talking to me about this any more! It is abominable, foul, filthy and disgusting."[56] He then encounters Venus, enemy of chastity, whose clothes "were all dirty and covered with filth."[57] As she explains, the angels "held their noses when they saw me coming, and they would not have done this at a piece of stinking carrion, unless it were even more disgusting."[58] "Virginity," she continues, "would never lie in the bed or in the bedroom where I lay. I was never anything but repugnant and disgusting to her, because of my unbearable stench....I am old and ugly, I slobber and I stink, and I am filthy and slimy—even more filthy than I dare to say, because it is unspeakable."[59] Venus goes on,

> I ride a bad mount, for by his nature he lies down where the path is worst and where there is the most filth. This mount is my will, and he carries me just like a pig, ready [to] lie down wherever there is filth and dung. He is like a swine with its snout in the dirt. Wherever he beds down, he puts me down, more often in a filthy place than a clean one, and I am soiled by

> it and covered with filth and dung. I make myself a private chamber for all those who pass by the way, a true dung-heap at the crossroads, where all who want to can come and take their turn doing filthy things.[60]

As in the Parson's description of the whore being like a common privy, Venus describes herself as a dung-heap open to all customers.

This negative reception to things excremental extends itself to gender in linguistic terms. The Middle English word *birthen* means a burden, fetus, excrement, afterbirth, or placenta—all things ejected from the body. One would normally see the arrival of a child as a happy expulsion, but the valences of this single word set these various products as related. Giving birth is like shitting. Yet this comparison is not always negatively intended. One adverse result to an arduous childbirth is the creation of fistulae (abnormal gaps or openings, that can cause feces to be ejected from somewhere other than the anus). For women suffering fistulae on giving birth, a Trotula manuscript recommends the use of various medical packs and sewing up the rupture between the anus and the vagina. The patient should have bed rest and "there let her relieve herself and do all customary things . . . it is fitting that she abstain from . . . all things that are hard to digest . . . ."[61] If the womb exits after birth, "give to her such a diet that for ten days she does not defecate or urinate often."[62] Giving birth and defecating are similar processes: both require effort in the same general region since a resulting fistula collapses the opening that ejects feces with the opening that ejects a child. Yet this medical text wishes to prevent her from straining her bowels and encourage recovery.

Excremental Medical Recipes

Egyptian medical recipes cite excrement in connection with helping a woman's "wandering womb" to return to its correct location. One recipe was meant to urge the uterus to descend to where it belonged: "The fingers of the woman are rubbed with [dry excrement moistened with beer]; thou shalt apply it to all her limbs and to her diseased place." Or a woman might be fumigated from below with the "dry excrement of men."[63] As far back as Hippocratic medical practice, treatments involving excrement were used virtually always for women. In his study of ancient Greek Hippocratic manuscripts, Heinrich von Staden analyses the use of excrement in pharmacology. While men harbor impurities, women, especially their uterus and genitalia during intercourse, menstruation, and giving birth, are seen as particularly problematic and prone to "bodily dirt."[64] Often treatment would involve homeopathy, or the treatment by similars.[65] The polluted and polluting womb is "sufficiently

menacing to require the cleansing power of excrement."[66] There is an Old English recipe for curing women's excessive bleeding by using hot horse turds. "If a woman suffer from too great a menstrual discharge: take fresh horse-dung, lay it on hot coals and allow it to steam a lot up between the thighs under the clothes, so that the person sweats a lot."[67]

In a saint's play by the tenth-century abbess Hrotsvit von Gandersheim, the holy Pafnutius tells an abbess that he can cure the harlot Thais by placing her in a cell.

> But because the sickness of both body and soul must be cured by the medicine of contraries, it follows that she must be sequestered from the tumult of the world,/ immured in a small cell, so that she may contemplate her sins undisturbed.[68]

The medicine of contraries insists that the harlot's open and public body must be closed and private. This gives rise to a fastidious concern Thais expresses:

> *Thais*: What could be more unsuitable,/ what could be more uncomfortable,/ than that I would have to perform all necessary functions of the body in the very same room? I am sure that it will soon be uninhabitable because of the stench.
> *Pafnutius*: Fear rather the eternal tortures of Hell,/ and not the transitory inconveniences of your cell....It is only right/ that you expiate the evil sweetness of alluring delight/ by enduring this terrible smell./
> *Thais*: And so I shall./ I, filthy myself, do not refuse to dwell/ in a filthy, befouled cell/ - this is my just due....
> *Pafnutius*: The more perfectly you humiliate yourself, the faster you will earn forgiveness.[69]

Thais, whose filth is linked not only to her gender but also to the actively engaged sexuality she has participated in, becomes analogous to the filth of her sin and her body. Her filth can only be cured by filth.

Purge carries the specific meanings of discharging both excrement and menstrual fluid, thus analogizing the two exudings. Similarly, *filth* signifies both the discharge of feces and menstrual blood, mucus, and spit. There is a link between the balance of the four humors and menstrual blood in Galenic and Hypocratic gynecology. Like excrement, menstrual flow was a necessary purgation that allowed for the balance of humors (blood, phlegm, yellow or red bile, and black bile). In Galenic medical thought, women are colder than men and, hence, could not "cook" their nutrients properly. While men eliminate their digestive residue through sweat or body hair, women have to have a great amount of waste matter

eliminated through menstruation. Without menstruation, in fact, they would have humoral imbalance and disease. The tradition that Trotula, the twelth-century Italian doctor, works out of does not see menstruation as negative, but rather as vital for health:[70]

> Because there is not enough heat in women to dry up the bad and superfluous humors which are in them, nor is their weakness able to tolerate sufficient labor so that Nature might expel [the excess] to the outside through sweat as [it does] in men, Nature established a certain purgation especially for women, that is, the menses, to temper their poverty of heat.[71]

As with menstrual blood, the writer of the Trotula texts explains: "Sometimes there is diarrhea on account of excessive coldness of the womb, or because its veins are too slender, as in emaciated women, because then thick and superfluous humors do not have a free passage by which they might break free."[72] In other words, excrement is excess, and the removal of this excess is a healthy process. Yet, as Mary Douglas and Julia Kristeva show, excrement, menstrual fluids, mucus, and spit all constitute fluids ejected from the body that are perceived as taboo and unclean.

Transcendent Purity

The eating practices of late medieval female mystics include the lack of toleration for food.[73] Self-starvation would stop typical female excretions, such as menses. In reports of self-starvation starting in 1200, there were often claims of "miraculous bodily closure . . . . women who do not eat are reputed neither to excrete nor to menstruate."[74] Female mystics assured their purity, their lack of filth, by not defecating or menstruating.[75] Internalizing misogynist thought that equated women with filth, these women proved their lack of filth by literally stopping it from flowing from their bodies. By willing themselves clean, they attempt to equate the purity of the Virgin Mary. Her clean body stands as a model for women's filthy bodies.[76] In Hildegard von Bingen's *Antiphon 5: About the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Mary is referred to as "that lucid matter [*lucida materia*]/ Through whom the Word breathed forth everything of value,/ Just as it led all creatures into being out of primoridal matter."[77] This lucid, clear, bright, or shining matter opposes that matter of filth, sin, darkness, and disorder. Her ability to act as intercessor cleanses filthy souls. Mary is the "open door to heaven" in the *Alma redemptoris*[78] sung by the little boy in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*. She is the anti-anus, the opposite of the door to

hell; she is "the gate of salvation."[79] As the Pilgrim teaches us to say the scriptures in the ABC to the Virgin:

> Moses saw, in a figure, that you, O Virgin clean and pure, would conceive Jesus, the son of God. He saw a bush that was burning, in spite of Nature, without being burnt up. This is you, and I am not deceived in any way about it. God is the fire within you, and you are the bush unburnt that tempers its heat. In this light, Virgin, may I be seen and received by you, and lifted up out of uncleanness.[80]

The Virgin is, of course, unique. What can mortal, average women do to attain the purity of Mary? They could, of course, adopt the self-starvation practices of the medieval mystics described above. But there are other options available, as we will see in chapter 7.

PART II

CHAUCERIAN FECOPOETICS

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CHAPTER 5

URBAN EXCREMENT IN *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

> *The Roman . . . gazed about him in his toga and he said: It is meet to be here. Let us construct a watercloset . . .*
>
> James Joyce, *Ulysses*[1]

In Rome, the sewer exemplified civilization, even the sacred. As Richard Neudecker's study examining the importance of the latrine in Roman civic life demonstrates, the social integration for the Roman citizen depended in great part on his excreta. An act we might consider highly personal and private—the ejection of feces from one's anus—became subject to public and political control. Archeological evidence has uncovered numerous public latrines in which the users would not be cordoned off from one another, rather would openly be placed cheek (so to speak) by jowl. In fact, the public latrine functioned as both a place to defecate and, just as much, as a place for public meetings. Bodily elimination became integrated into the web of cultural and social life. By controlling a private experience and making (quasi-)public a biologically necessary experience, the state was able to appropriate the bodily functions of its citizens.[2]

Literal waste has to be controlled to prevent disease and pollution. The disciplining of filth aids in cultural survival and development. But how excrement is disciplined varies according to culture and time period. One of the key differentiations is geography. For western Europe in the Middle Ages, and, as we will see in the focus of this particular study, late medieval England, the major difference in how excrement was dealt with emerged from distinctions between urban and rural areas. Records citing problems concerning pollution with specific mention of excrement allow us to see how excrement was used to control the body politic

and for social control. A clean city means an orderly city within the body politic. Both city and body overlap in how they are imagined.[3] The city desires and imposes order.[4] In condemning excrement as threatening and degrading, the individual body and, in turn, the body politic, were disciplined. As Elizabeth Grosz has argued, "bodies define cities, but cities also define bodies."[5]

In a case from the period 1321–1322,

> The jurors say that . . . [when] a certain William, son of Henry atte Rowe, goldsmith, stood at the top of St. Vedast lane near Chepe, and made water into a certain urinal, he cast the urine into the shoe of an unknown young man, and because the latter complained, the said William struck him with his fist, so that a staff called "pollex" which was in the young man's hand fell to the pavement. On seeing this the aforesaid Philip upbraided the said William, who moved with anger straitway picked up the staff and feloniously struck the said [Philip] over the forehead, inflicting a mortal wound an inch long and penetrating to the brain so that he fell to the ground, and was thence carried by men unknown for charity's sake to the said Hospital where he had his ecclesiastical rights and there lingered until Saturday after the Feast of Circumcision when he died at the third hour of the said wound and of no other felony.[6]

Privatization of urination could have prevented such a case from arising. Here, the splashing of urine onto someone's shoe precipitates murder. William makes someone else filthy, thereby humiliating him. Chastised by his evident transgression, William angrily controls the body of his witness by eliminating the voice condemning his own behavior.

The early modern period has often been cited as the locus where modern subjectivity originated. Gay Hawkins argues that the modern state established the supremacy of categories like "private" and "public."[7] But evidence exists for such distinctions over a thousand years ago. Subjectivity dates back to at least the medieval period, as we can see through excremental moments. Excrement horrifies when it should remain private; indeed, one definition of "shit" might be *excrement made public*. The very categories of private and public belong to the discourse of public control, as in the letter ascribed to Ælfric about the country women eating and defecating in the privy, discussed in chapter 3. Where, when, and how one defecates may seem like a private endeavor, but is, in fact, socially determined and controlled. After seeing how legal documents record excrement, this chapter explores various moments in *The Canterbury Tales* that play out tensions between private and public in conjunction with excremental matters. The chapter concludes by asking why the poem starts off in Southwark rather than London. Southwark is

figured as a filthy, feminine arena to be disciplined by a masculine and clean London. But the final reality that all bodies must eject filth undermines this staging of London.

City Detritus: Filthy Profit

Just as the imminent death of the condemned man concentrates his mind wonderfully, as Dr. Johnson pointed out, so, too, does the city concentrate one's mind mightily on excrement.[8] How can we render present that which we wish to ignore? Surely there can be no pleasure for us, in the twenty-first century, to pick our way around dung-heaps or jump over sewage-splashed gutters. Walter Benjamin, who criticizes traditional historiography since its desire for a coherent unified narrative necessitates the denial of the "'refuse' and 'detritus' of history,"[9] sees the only recovery of the city "as a collection of debris."[10] Narrative order prefers to ignore "the mass of debris"; consequently any description of the city results in the rhetorical creation of an urban entity that never existed.[11] How can we make the medieval city come alive? Perhaps, like Jorvik, the Viking Centre in York, we can create artificial smells that purport to carry us back to "Olde England." But Jorvik smells oddly sweet, redolent of ripe fruit rather than piles of turds or pools of diarrhea. All we can hope to do is paint a similacrum of a city in words. Michel de Certeau points out how the historian must pick and choose from "shards created by the selection of materials, remainders left aside by an explication . . . ."[12] While Benjamin laments the "discarded and misunderstood traces" of a city's past, de Certeau argues that these traces can be found in the edges of the historian's rhetoric. We can discover these traces in historical documents.

Where did one go to defecate? A privy had three parts: the seat, the chute and collection or disposal location such as a pit, and the superstructure, generally made of timber. This wooden structure could rot and cause injury or fatalities. Consider Richard the Raker, a cesspit cleaner.

> On Thursday before the Feast of St. Laurence [10 Aug.] the same year [1326], information given to the aforesaid Coroner and Sheriffs that Richard le Rakiere lay dead of a death other than his rightful death in a latrine . . . .The jurors . . . say that on the aforesaid Thursday about the ninth hour when the said Richard was seated on a latrine in his house, the planks being rotten gave way, and the said Richard fell in and was drowned.

The person who found the body was one "William Scot, a fellow rakiere"[13] or refuse collector. Privies were generally off the solar or chamber on

the second floor; others were at the service end of a hall, even in the garret, yard, or garden. Numerous contracts exist indicating how many and where privies should be built.[14] While stone cesspits were the normal waste collection system, some medieval privies emptied directly into water sources, such as the Walbrook or Fleet in the case of London.[15] Garderobes could eject matter over a moat or river. When no ready water source was available, filth was put into a pit.[16] The removal of excrement from a cesspit would be referred to as "gong farming," a potentially lucrative trade. London cesspits were cleaned about every two years.[17] When the gongfermors or privy collectors emptied the cesspit, they would have to break open masonry to get inside, masonry that would then have to be rebuilt by a bricklayer and carpenter, thus providing work for these other craftsmen.[18] Latrine cleaners were members of what could be considered the most lowly of the "foul trades";[19] the dung cleaner stands metonymically for the "ordure it is his job to collect."[20] Nevertheless, gongfermors, workers who emptied cesspits, were paid a lot, two or three times the normal wage, then paid again in selling it to farmers outside of the city.[21] The cleaning of pits was well compensated; in 1281, the pits at Newgate Jail were cleaned at a cost of £4 7*s*. 8*d*. It took thirteen men five nights to clear the "cloaca." Each got three times the normal rate of about 6*d*. each per night.[22] The Earl of Lincoln, who maintained a London residence in Holborn, hired Robert Gardener to manage the garden. Records from 1295 to 1296 indicate that Gardener hired workers at the rate of 1 *d*. per day to undertake certain tasks, including manuring the vegetable beds.[23]

Cities record the cleaning of dung. Bailiff accounts from Gloucester record payments made, including for the "removal of dung-heaps in Gracelane and elsewhere."[24] There is reference made to Henry Ivory, a privy cleaner, in 1411–1412, paid by the number of "pipes" (vessels) that carried away the filth.[25] There are records of the latrines and drains of the Benedictine Monastery in Westminster being repaired and cleaned,[26] typically at nighttime.[27] The filth would then have been taken to areas outside the city designated for the purpose or to dung barges on the Thames.[28] The association between waste and night becomes explicit by the early fifteenth century, when Londoners were expected to keep refuse indoors until taken away by night scavengers. That London rid itself of its filth at night could be suggested in the one London tale of the *Canterbury Tales*. In response to the *Knight's*, *Miller's* and *Reeve's Tales,* the Cook exclaims, "Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,/ 'Ne bryng nat every man into thyn hous,'/ For herberwynge by nyghte is perilous./ Wel oghte a man avysed for to be/ Whom that he broghte into his pryvetee" (I.4330–4334). Now here the literal meaning would be beware of whom you offer hospitality to, especially at night. But who better exemplifies the person

brought into one's "pryvetee" than the night scavenger or gongfermor, who would literally be in one's privy at night to carry away the accumulated excrement? This literal association between night and excrement transfers symbolically in *Piers Plowman*, when we are told that the Jews "beden that men sholde/ Kepen [Christ's dead body] fro nyghtcomeris with knyghtes yarmed,/ For no frend sholde it fecche" (XIX.143–145). In this passage, the Jews are depicted as not wanting Christ's friends to bury the body properly; but Christ's body, dead matter, symbolically filth in the eyes of his enemies, is no more than excrement, polluted matter, or refuse, that which is typically taken away at night. The linkage between Jews and excrement will be more thoroughly explored in chapter 6.

Waste Control and the Ideology of the City

The ideology of the city, founded in its control of excrement, and the increasing disciplining of city excrement can be discovered in historical documents. For example, the Domesday Book records a statutory fine for cases of those who are discovered fouling Chester Cathedral with human waste.[29] But Lynn Thorndike and Ernest Sabine both fight against stereotypes of the Middle Ages as a foul, fetid, and filthy period. If mention is made concerning filth in the streets, it generally involves incidents involving unusual and extraordinary filth, indicating that the ordinary state of affairs was not necessarily so filthy as we moderns might like to imagine. As Patricia Yeager points out in the introduction to a recent special issue of *PMLA* on cities, infrastructures that control waste register themselves only when they are absent or dysfunctional.[30] The medieval city may not have been as polluted as it is reputed to be.[31] Nevertheless, London needed to rid itself of public excrement. As Paul Strohm has pointed out, "sovereignty and good plumbing" have much to do with one another.[32] Building ordinances and disputes often dealt with sewage and its (potential) leakage, cesspits, and drains. Privies had to be regulated at a certain distance from a neighbor's house. An ordinance of 1189 under Richard I concerns the distance cesspits must be from a neighbor's property (two and a half feet if lined in stone; three and a half feet if not).[33] In addition to these stipulations, various cases occur in which people die or are injured due to the necessity of relieving themselves.[34] Waste is also at issue in times of political crisis. When, in 1267, rebel barons took refuge on the Isle of Ely, Henry III attempted to create order within the body politic by cleaning up Cambridge:

> Moreover the king wills that the town of Cambridge be cleansed of dung and filth and be kept clean and the conduits be opened as of old they used

> to be, and be kept open, in order that filth may flow away through them, unless some other use or need stand in the way and that obstacles impeding their passage be removed and especially that the great ditch of the town be cleansed.[35]

Sworn-in burgesses enforced the enactment of such laws by their observant gaze. In a city like London, human waste disposal would be more fraught than in the country where waste could be used as fertilizer without the need for complicated transportation.[36] Varying aspects of fecopolitics pervade medieval life.

Urban Filth and Pollution

Laws made to counteract pollution indicate that polluting did go on.[37] The main latrine for the Benedictine monks in Westminster disgorged its effluence into the Thames.[38] In the time of Edward I it was decreed that "the water-course of Walbroke and the highway of his lordship the King shall be kept clear, so that no dung or other filth be thrown therein, to the disturbance and annoyance of folks."[39] In the thirteenth century, numerous accusations were made against tanners on the Fleet concerning pollution.[40] The London Assize of Nuisance records complaints concerning problems related to sewage and filth. While there were stipulations as to how close a cesspit could be to a neighbor's land, these were either deliberately disobeyed or sewage somehow seeped into an adjoining property. For example, on February 10, 1301, a defendant argues that the privy has been in his and his ancestors' possession "time out of mind," while the plaintiff asked that this precedent not "prejudice his case." Ultimately it is decided that the defendant must move the cesspit. Many such cases exist,[41] demonstrating how the "wall and boundaries [were] unstable"[42] in English medieval cities. The ambiguity inherent in the boundary determines one solution: the neighbors' mutually pay for the cleaning of the cesspit. Some ejected the waste from their latrines into gutters, causing a common nuisance. In another case from 1314, one woman tried to take advantage of an existing gutter to eliminate filth from her own privy. A gutter, constructed to collect rainwater and other water from houses, was used to rinse the privy on the Hithe. But Alice Wade constructed a wooden pipe from the seat of her solar privy to a gutter that then would get stopped up. As the ensuing stench greatly "inconvenienced" her neighbors, she was instructed to remove her do-it-yourself plumbing within forty days.[43] As this case clearly shows, a neighbor assaulting one's nose with smells was an "illegal [invasion] of privacy."[44] During the time of Edward II, an article of the wardmote

states, "Item, that no person throw straw, dust, dung, sawdust, or other refuse, into the streets or lanes; but cause the same to be taken by the rakers or others to the places ordained for receiving such dirt, under penalty of two shillings [to be paid] unto the Chamber."[45] Additionally, presentment is to be made "if there is any one whose practise it is to place filth in any streets and lanes within the Ward, and offensively before the doors of others."[46] A man, on March 10, 1344, is accused of polluting the Walbrook with both human and animal filth.[47] These many cases suggest that filth and its careful disposal was of great interest to the city, not simply due to health and aesthetic issues, but also in terms of property and ownership rights.

In another case from June 4, 1333, the nuisance lies not in the smell or presence of excrement, but in the revelation of body parts while defecating. Andrew de Aubrey and Joan, his wife, shared a cesspit with Thomas Heyron and Joan, widow of John de Armenters. Joan and Thomas removed the roof and wall "so that the extremities of those sitting upon the seats can be seen, a thing which is abominable and altogether intolerable." The defendants are told they must "enclose the cess-pit as it was before."[48] Clearly Andrew and his wife are offended by the sight of viewing the buttocks of others, especially while said buttocks are engaged in the process of defecation. Legal rights entail what you can witness from your property. Similar concerns with architecture and accusations about lack of modesty echo throughout *The Owl and the Nightingale*, a Middle English poem dating from between 1189 and 1216, possibly even the later thirteenth century. In this debate poem, the pious, sober, pessimistic Owl banters with the lighthearted and optimistic Nightingale. The Nightingale scorns the supposedly filthy Owl: "Þu art lodlich & unclene . . . Vel wostu þat [þine fule brode] doþ þarinne—/ Hi fuleþ hit up to þe chinne;/ Ho sitteþ þar so hi bo bisne,/ Warbi men segget a uorbisne:/ 'Dahet habbe þat ilke best/ Þat fuleþ his owe nest.'" ["You're hateful and dirty . . . You know what (your filthy brood) do in their nest—they're up to their chins in their droppings. They sit there as if they couldn't see, because of which people have a saying, 'Cursed be the animal that fouls its own nest'" (91–100)].[49] Owl accuses the Nightingale of not being sanitary and making its home by human privies:

> "Wane þu comest to manne haȝe,/ Þar þornes boþ & ris idraȝe,/ Bi hegge & bi þicke wode,/ Þar men goþ oft to hore node,/ Þarto þu draȝst, þarto þu wunest;/ An oþer clene stede þu schunest./ Wan ich flo niȝtes after muse,/ I mai þe uinde ate rumhuse,/ Among þe wode, among þe netle./ Þu sittest & singst bihinde þe setle:/ Þar me mai þe ilomest finde—/ Þar men worpeþ hore bihinde" [When you come to mankind's dwellings, it's

> next to the hedges and the thick weeds, where the thorns and twigs are tangled together, just where people go to do their business, that you hang about and where you make your home. You avoid other places where it's clean. When I fly out at night-time looking for mice, I can find you at the privy, among the weeds and the nettles. You sit and sing behind the toilet-seat. That's where you're most often found—just where people stick out their behinds" (585–596)].

And who would want to inhabit a place where human buttocks protrude?

As cities grow, the agrarian value of waste declines.[50] While in the country the dung from different animals would be distinguished, as one type of dung might be better for a particular crop, in the city such distinctions were not made among human and animal excrement, offal or any other type of garbage. During the plague year of 1349, Edward III alerted the mayor to the problem of filth.

> Order to cause the human feces and other filth lying in the streets and lanes of that city and its suburbs to be removed with all speed to places far distant from that city and to cause the city and suburbs to be cleansed from all odour and to be kept clean as it used to be in the time of preceding mayors, so that no greater cause of mortality may arise from such smells, as the king has learned how the city and suburbs, which are under the mayor's care and rule, are so foul by the filth thrown out of the houses both by day and night into the streets and lanes where there is a common passage of men that the air is infected, the city is poisoned to the danger of men passing, especially in the mortality by the contagious sickness which increases daily.[51]

Entries in the *Letter-Books* addressing filth problems are especially prevalent in the half century following 1349 when repeated outbreaks of plagues occurred, suggesting that the city, deeply distressed by the plague, was unable to resume conventional cleaning activities. Undoubtedly the chaos caused by the number of deaths had made the city government weak and disorganized, less able to manage daily affairs such as street cleaning.[52] Additionally, the miasma theory argued for the linkage between the filth one breathes and illness.[53] The king repeats his complaint in 1357, specifically citing odor.

> Order to cause the bank of the river Thames and the streets and lanes of that city and its suburbs to be cleansed of dung, dung-heaps and other filth, and to keep them clean, causing proclamation to be made that no one, upon pain of forfeiture, shall place any refuse there, and if they find any doing so after the proclamation to cause them to be punished in an

> exemplary manner; as in the time of the king's progenitors the streets, lanes and other places in that city and its suburbs used to be cleansed of refuse and filth, and to be kept from corruption thence arising, whereby no small honour accrued to the city and those dwelling therein, and now, in crossing the River Thames, the king has observed filth and other refuse accumulated upon the bank of the river in divers places, and noisome smells arise therefrom, whereby great danger may arise to the men dwelling in the city to nobles and others crossing that river, unless a remedy be speedily applied.[54]

In a writ sent to officials in London, Westminster, and Southwark, Richard II forbade the throwing of any rubbish or filth into the Thames.[55] Yet some waste could be useful and reused. For example, land was claimed for the London waterfront between 1000 and 1500 by building timber facing on the north shore of the Thames facing the south, filling it in with organic refuse, oyster shells, and stone chips and covering it with gravel or stone.[56]

It has been speculated that people in cities smaller than, for example, London, Paris, or Köln, might have had a less antagonistic attitude to dung, particularly that of animals, since in some buildings the animals would live below stairs and the humans in the upper story. Still, dung or excrement in the open streets was perceived of as a hazard or a health issue. Cities in addition to London had pollution problems. The irresponsible polluting of public spaces could be perceived of as evidence for antisocial behavior.[57] Precedent is cited when we are told of a street stopped up by filth in Bristol. In this record of a suit in the mayor's court, John prays remedy. Precedent is on his side. Since "ancient time," he and his ancestors had a gutter that connected to the common gutter in the street. But the common gutter has been stopped up due to rubble and stones thrown into it by one "Symond"; consequently, John's gutter stops up.[58] The weight of the suit lies not only in the pollution suffered, but the stoppage of a gutter long in usage. Roads blocked by filth or trash also needed to be cleaned up. In the mid-1450s in Cornwall, there is a formal statement made against sixteen men who have "occupied the king's highway with dung and timber planks."[59] Public byways should be kept clear and free.

The Owl defends her home decor by pointing out that it is modeled after human decor with the privy near the living quarters: "Men habbet, among oþre iwende,/ A rumhus at hore bures ende,/ Vor þat hi nelleþ to uor go—/ An mine briddes doþ also" ["Among other contrivances people have a privy next to their dwellings, because they don't want to have to go too far away—and my birds do exactly the same" (651–654)].[60] Legal documents echo the owl's point that it is good for a privy to be not too

far distant and accessible. Indeed, the accessibility to a privy seems to have been understood as a basic right.[61] The distance of a privy from a domicile could cause numerous problems, such as leakage and aesthetic disgust. Increasing density converted some private alleys into public thoroughfares. A title deed specifically cites the legality of access to a "comon privy." The access to such a privy is elaborately detailed in legal documents, specifying the owners of tenements and land to articulate actual boundaries and access points.[62] The law recognizes the physiological necessity of elimination as well as the health benefits to society that the effluvia be confined to an official place like a privy or cesspit identifiable in a legal document.[63] Public toilets were certainly available in bigger towns. The Benedictine monastery in Westminster had socially segregated latrines, as well as ones for public use. It is known that there were public latrines in Cripplegate ward, over the Thames at Temple Bridge,[64] one at Queenhithe over an open sewer, and another for those living on London Bridge, with two doors.[65] John de Abydon was reportedly killed coming out of common privy "in London Wall within Cripplegate Ward, at the head of Philips Lane."[66]

The Excremental Cities in *The Canterbury Tales*

Lewis Mumford in his monumental *The City in History* suggests that the first germ of a city is "in the ceremonial meeting place that serves as the goal for pilgrimage . . . ."[67] This link between the foundation of the city and pilgrimage plays a key role in fourteenth-century pilgrimage works. David Wallace has argued that the city of the *Inferno* is a "subterranean version of Dante's Florence."[68] This hellish city exposes what earthly cities must regulate and discipline: shit. Dante and Virgil have to pass near—or through—Satan's sphincter to exit the infernal city.[69] Wallace has famously written on London as the "absent city" in Chaucer's poem.[70] I would like to build on his notion to suggest that there are numerous absent cities in Chaucer's work. The absent cities in the framework embracing the tales themselves include Canterbury, the site of the sought-for relics, and the heavenly Jerusalem invoked by the Parson. Then there are the cities actually present in the tales themselves: from Oxford and Bath to a nameless city in Asia. In all these cities, there is one reality that had to be faced: excrement and its disposal. Historically, excrement would have been a fact for every Londoner. Save for *The Cook's Tale*, *The Canterbury Tales* focus on cities other than London. The materiality of excrement becomes literally present in Chaucer's work, which, lying at a transitional time in the development of urban culture, reflects the ideological conflicts concerning excrement as played out in the city and

country.[71] Urban excrement, viewed as superfluous since it was not as readily utilized as it was in the sustainable rural culture,[72] was increasingly associated with moral filth.

The Miller's Tale has long been regarded as scatological, and well it should be, with the most famous fart in all English (if not world) literature. The structure of the scatological moments in this work illustrates the tension between private and public, the fundamental divide that complicates the presence of excrement in a city, that of Oxford. Chaucer's excrement-laden text makes public what should be private[73] and the controlling opposition in the *Miller's Tale* is private/public. *Prive* in Middle English has a wide valence of meaning, from mystery to genitals, hence the disturbing nature of discussing God's mystery/genitals, His "pryvetee" (I.3454). In addition to the scene where Absolon kisses Alisoun's "hol," with its entailing ambiguity,[74] the references to bodily orifices continue when Nicholas goes to piss out the window just like one real-life unfortunate. One had to be careful in micturating from one's window. About midnight in 1325–1326, when

> John Toly [servant of Henry de Gysors] rose naked from his bed and stood at a window of the solar 30 ft. high to relieve himself towards the High Street, he accidentally fell headlong to the pavement crushing his neck and other members, and thereupon died about cock-crow.[75]

This real-life Nicholas ended up taking a header into the street, a tragic ending Absolon would no doubt have approved of. The window frame functions as the threshold between private and public. Nicholas transgresses this border by making a privy of the border, straying into the public. We are told that "out his ers he putteth pryvely" (I.3802), which could mean "secretly," but could also mean "as in a privy manner." After all, he sticks it out "Over the buttok, to the haunche-bon" (I.3803), just as one might sit on a privy. The pissing never, evidently, takes place, since Absolon comes and speaks; Nicholas responds with a fart. Absolon prefigures or embodies the city ideology, one that shuns public scatology. Nicholas retains an unrepentant rural acceptance of bodily functions.[76] Why is the moment so famous and so funny? Chaucer graphically demonstrates how excrement can elicit humor. The "humor" from excrement is twofold. First, excrement literally emerges from the humoral theory of the bodies, wherein the excessive waste or imbalance of humor catapults waste to create a balanced and healthy body. Second, humor emerges as an offshoot of the tradition of humiliation associated with excrement, discussed earlier and present in Homer and the Bible, among other texts. The humiliation of being covered by or associated with excrement is

pitiable when the recipient is sympathetic to the viewer/reader. But, if we have little regard for the "victim," then we can laugh at him/her. The line between humiliation with pathos and humor with mockery depends on who is the recipient of excrement, on who is being "filthed."

In the Wife of Bath's *Prologue* we learn how her bosom friends might hear of her husband pissing on a wall (III.534); like Nicholas, the husband is pictured as pissing at a border, in this case between a house and the outside or boundary between two pieces of land (the exact location is not specified). Yet this exposure of his "pryvetee" (III.542) could cause the husband shame. In Bath, a small city, public and outdoor pissing is frowned upon, certainly enough to be commented upon by a wife to her friends and thereby causing embarrassment for her husband. Yet while girls and women most likely relieved themselves indoors, boys and men were known to do so outdoors. Sadly, children, small and easily overlooked, were even more vulnerable than adults while relieving themselves in the open air. About sunrise in 1339,

> Ralph de Mymmes, aged 12 years, a groom of John Absolon, carter, was bringing a water-cart with a cask full of water belonging to his master down Chepe, the same being drawn by two horses, when a wheel of the cart crushed the said John Stolere [a pauper and mendicant, of the age of 7 years] as he sat in the street relieving nature (*secreta nature faciendo sedentem*) so that he immediately died.[77]

In the early sixteenth century, John Colet built only urinals in his St Paul's School, London; for other purposes the pupils should go down to "the waterside."[78] It is unclear whether they directly defecated into the Thames or a gutter or used a common privy.

Waste disposal impinges on private and public spheres.[79] Latrines and privies were one way to dispose of human waste.[80] The household privy might be a small shed near the house. During the night, one would probably use a ceramic pot that would later be emptied into a cesspit. In *The Reeve's Tale*, which takes place not in a city (Cambridge) but near it (in Trumpington), Symken and his wife are, at least in the eyes of the students, deserving of being punished for having airs above their station. The wife is, after all, the proud illegitimate daughter of the town parson, and Symken steals from customers. The couple also bear some evidence of adhering to urban manners in that the wife in the night "gan awake, and wente hire out to pisse,/ and cam agayn" (I.4215–4216). Her departure from the cramped quarters of the room, where the family and the two students have bedded down, to urinate[81] suggests that they have a special place to evacuate the bowels, perhaps a privy or closet for

the purpose. There is evidently no chamber pot in the room. Symken and his wife separate the functions of sleeping and sexual activity from defecation and urination. This is indicative of aspirations to the upper classes (poorer people, after all, would probably not have had the space or money for a special chamber to defecate). The privy is a private place. The town takes on the expectations of the city.[82] This moment indicates what Diane Shaw has identified as the "growing desire for privacy and the ability to partition personal space" evident over the fourteenth century.[83] The excremental moment in *The Reeve's Tale*, when Symken's wife goes to piss, is an opening or invitation to her lower bodily stratum to which John is allowed access through the cradle trick and subsequent rape. The wife feigns city ways by leaving to piss; the students will have none of it, demanding and getting amends. The "esement" or legal compensation John and Aleyn want (I.4179, 4186) has the additional meaning of relieving the body by evacuating the bowels. The *MED* cites this meaning innovated by Margery Kempe in the passage concerning her incontinent husband; but it seems significant that Chaucer twice uses the word twenty lines before the wife leaves to piss. Peeing is a kind of "esement" or pleasure. Things we cannot or wish not to control (excrement or sex) become subject to social control, often through the intervention of our fellow citizens.

Why Southwark?[84]

David Wallace wonders why Chaucer does not have the pilgrims meet at the cross at St. Paul's or some other specifically London landmark. He concludes that Chaucer wanted to emphasize the randomness of the pilgrims' encounter; Southwark is a marginal area and the "dumping ground" for London.[85] Yet the link between the developing ideology of the city and changing attitudes to excrement also suggests why Chaucer chooses to begin the pilgrimage in Southwark rather than London itself. In her monumental study of medieval Southwark, Martha Carlin[86] has demonstrated the vexed, yet inevitable, relationship between London and Southwark. London was not just the walled city, but spilled over the edges to include Westminster and outlying areas, even Southwark across the Thames.[87] This seepage suggests the "link and mutual dependency between urban and country life."[88] Late medieval historical and literary works show a difference between the city and the country with regard to waste and filth. Indeed, historically, cities marked a limit between inside and outside with walls and gateways controlling access into and out of the urban area.[89] London and Southwark maintained separate characteristics in various ways, such as different laws and geography that projected

individuality. London existed in opposition to Southwark; all that Southwark was, London was not. The Thames forced diversity onto these adjacent areas. Southwark was stigmatized by London. The South Bank was associated with transitoriness, pleasure, riot, disorder, contagion, disrepute, sexual freedom, and disquiet. Additionally, Southwark was seen as a place of filth.[90] By the late fourteenth century, Southwark had specialist street-sweepers and rubbish-removers, although in 1402 the streets of Southwark were said to be "intolerably filthy."[91] Langland feeds into this imagined space as well when Haukyn, himself covered in filth, claims those who cure him best are "the Soutere of Southwerk, or of Shoredych Dame Emme" (XIII.340). The yoking of a shoemaker from Southwark and a woman from Shoreditch, an equally notorious area, suggests that Haukyn's "cure" cannot be a true, spiritual cleansing. These lay "medics" are tainted simply by the areas they come from.

The concept of a corrupt city stems ultimately from the idea of the body politic, whereby the political system is metaphorically rendered into a body. As Jacques LeGoff points out, the classical bodily metaphors were based on a system of "head/intestines/limbs," with the liver as the key element in the intestines, used as it was for auguries and fortune telling. The Christian system, however, privileges the head and heart, with the intestines denigrated to the space of shame. In the *Policraticus* by John of Salisbury (1159), the state is the body, the prince is the head, the feet are the peasants; the stewards and registrars evoke the belly and intestines.[92] If the king is ill, the body politic, the state, likewise ails.[93] Bodily order reflects political order. London, too, has been described as a body.[94] Linked to London by the intestinal Thames, Southwark could be read as the anus of London, a marginal, despised, yet integral, part of London.[95] Traffic between the two was inevitable, mutually necessary, yet vexed.

In Elizabeth Grosz's delineation of two prevailing models of the body and the city, the first argues for a naturalistic body, where the city reflects human endeavor and the body is subordinated to the mind; while the second offers parallelism between body and city, which function as analogues; here the king is viewed as the head of state, but problematically the male body becomes the model for all humans; this representational model relies on opposition between nature and culture, culture acting as a perfection of nature.[96] Grosz continues her argument about the corporealized city to take gender into consideration.[97] If Southwark was a body, how was it gendered? Southwark was a marshy, wet place where ditches were often being built.[98] Ditches suggest land drainage and often indicated sewers.[99] The association between fluidity and water with negativity or corruptness appears in numerous medieval texts.[100] A late fourteenth-century London reader of Chaucer's poem would have

identified Southwark with the tradition of watery filth and its concomitant moral ambiguity. Southwark contained numerous gardens and pastures and was "suburban" rather than "urban." The less valued city spaces are on the outskirts and in the suburbs, a reflection of the privileging of the center over the boundary.[101] This distinction suggests an additional dimension of "otherness" with which London stigmatized Southwark with its "stews," a term referring to both fishponds and brothels that were permitted on the south bank. Southwark is fluid, variable, changing, in contrast to the solidity, permanence (at least in the imagination), and superiority of London.[102]

The antagonism between London and Southwark is seen in attempts starting in the fourteenth century by London to exert jurisdiction over Southwark. London complained, as it did for many centuries, that criminals went to Southwark because they could not be taken from there due to immunity.[103] For their part, in 1376 the citizens of Southwark attempted (and failed) to get a charter of franchise, alarming London.[104] Over time, London cracked down on the prostitution of the south bank.[105] In the Middle Ages, as even today, Southwark beckoned immigrants. Londoners visited xenophobia on these aliens in Southwark (especially Flemings and Lombards). The conjunction of alien, female, and uncontrolled sexuality appears in the singling out of Flemish prostitutes. A 1393 proclamation was directed to restricting "common harlots . . . and more especially . . . Flemish women, who profess and follow such shameful and dolorous life."[106] While Carolyn Walker Bynum points out that male as well as female bodies could be connected to "putrefaction, physical or moral,"[107] there nevertheless exists a link between women's bodies and filth and watery pollution.[108] And in this economy, linked to early Church Fathers' hostility to the polluting and leaking female body as a source of sin and disgust, the feminine is the site of crime, filth, and pollution. This is the body of Southwark: feminine (loose, sexual, filthy) to the masculinity of London.[109]

The privy itself could be a feminine space, as for the women who ate and defecated in the same place in the Anglo-Saxon letter or as has been suggested by Elizabeth Robertson in her reading of May's sequestering herself in the privy to read Damyan's secret letter in the *Merchant's Tale*.[110] Like the threatening agency of a feminized Southwark, the feminized privy is a private space at odds with the prevailing domination of a patriarchal society. Yet, while Southwark was perceived as London's "scrapheap," Carlin argues for it as a dynamic site of agency.[111] Like Bakhtin's lower bodily stratum, Southwark could not be controlled or legislated. And while London charged Southwark with harboring criminals in ritual accusations, Carlin argues that this disguised London's recognition

of and desire for the economic power inherent in Southwark.[112] An overt attempt to control the public filth south of the river (Southwark as literal lower bodily stratum, south of London) was a ruse hiding economic motives. After all, filth can be transformed into gold in the urban arena, as Dominique Laporte has argued. As we have seen, excrement is a symbol for money; the dung-farmers earned money from people's waste, even earning money double-fold from it (first collecting it and then selling it). At times dung was taken into Southwark, work for which laborers were paid.[113] In the sixteenth century, the term "goldfinder" was used for those who sought out excrement.[114] I would argue that Chaucer uses Southwark because it stands as a metaphor *for* excrement, the dung-heap of the city, where the excrement gets transformed into compost, a process of transformation and change, just as pilgrimage entails amendment and self-transformation.

London as an "imagined community" juxtaposes itself to Southwark.[115] Opposed cities are a long-standing tradition (Rome and Jerusalem, the City of God and the City of Man) wherein the city can either represent an ideal community or a conflicted space of corruption.[116] Chaucer sets London up against its alter ego, Southwark. Yet, as the Cook's *Tale* shows, London has places "of pryvetee" (I.4388), "roten" apples (I.4406) who are morally contagious, and at least one woman "who swyved for hir sustenance" (I.4422).[117] London is no different from its imagined other, Southwark. It remains fundamental to all bodies that they do, in fact, defecate. The narrator in the *Merchant's Tale* points out about the privy when May feigns needing to go there: "Ther as ye woot that every wight moot neede" (IV.1951). In *Mankind* as well, Mankind says, "I wyll go do þat nedys must be don."[118] Shit is something all bodies do and produce. Defecation may have its unsavory aspects, but it is integral to the health of the body. The only "perfect" city is the heavenly Jerusalem; London and its alter ego, Southwark, are equally corrupt since they are fallen, human cities, laden with filth. In Chaucer, we go from excremental city[119] (Southwark) to the celestial city; from actual muck to metaphorical excrement sacralized in the form of the relic, as we will explore in chapter 6.[120]

CHAPTER 6

SACRED FILTH: RELICS, RITUAL, AND REMEMBERING IN *THE PRIORESS'S TALE*

In Alan Bennett's play *The History Boys*, one of the main characters, Irwin, teaches history at a state school for boys in the 1980s. Eventually he becomes a television history "talking head." We witness the filming of one of his shows at Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire. The sardonic, embittered Irwin speaks to the camera (us):

> This is Rievaulx Abbey and this vertiginous trench is its main latrine.
>
> It is a sad fact that whatever the sublimity and splendour of the ruins of our great abbeys to the droves of often apathetic visitors the monastic life only comes alive when contemplating its toilet arrangements. . . .Not monks stumbling down the night stairs at three in the morning to sing the first office of the day; not the sound of prayer and praise unceasing sent heavenwards from altar and cell; no, what fires the popular imagination is stuff from the reredorter plopping twenty feet into the drains.
>
> God is dead. Shit lives.
>
> Wanting toilet paper, or paper of any description, the monks used to wipe their bottoms on scraps of fabric . . . linen, muslin, patches of tapestry even, which presumably they would rinse and rinse again before eventually discarding them. Some of these rags survive, excavated from the drains into which they were dropped five hundred years ago and more, and here now find themselves exhibited in the abbey museum.
>
> The patron saint here, whose bones were buried at Rievaulx, was Aelred. And it is conceivable that one of these ancient arsewipes was actually used by the saint. Which at that time would have made it a relic, something at which credulous pilgrims would come to gaze.
>
> But what are these modern-day pilgrims gazing at but these same ancient rags, hallowed not by saintly usage, it's true, but by time . . . and

> time alone? They are old and they have survived. And there is an increment even in excrement, so sanitized by the years and sanctified, too, they have become relics in their own right . . . and more pilgrims come now to see them and these other remains than ever came in the age of faith.[1]

The depressed Irwin expresses through his sarcasm a profound connection between excrement, relics, and the sacred. The representations of excrement need to be understood fluidly and contextually. How does excrement fit in within religious discourse? I will not attempt a complete analysis of taboo and its relationship to the sacred, a subject much explored in religion and cultural anthropology. However, I will cite the work of Georges Bataille, Mary Douglas, and Julia Kristeva who allow us to see how the realm of the sacred cannot be discussed without mention of its apparent opposite, profane filth.[2] Filth could be an integral part of official doctrine.[3] Filth is disciplined to create a space for the sacred, even becoming a sign of the sacred itself. Pilgrimage can be understood as a sacred ritual wherein prohibited and tabooed filth becomes refigured. This chapter ultimately explores anti-Semitic rhetoric in late medieval writings with particular focus on Chaucer's *The Prioress's Tale*.

Ritual Pilgrimage: Sacred Filth

Social relationships are grounded in the body, the source of a symbolic superstructure[4] that "reproduces the real social relations among human beings."[5] The body both symbolizes society and contains "social anxieties."[6] The body, then, is simultaneously the focus of both positive cultural values and the cause of fears and problems. The body is, like any cultural system, riddled with anomaly; in the case of the body, the ambiguity lies in its boundaries and orifices that constitute danger zones.[7] Concerning dirt and its relation to cultural formation, Mary Douglas argues that ". . . . dirt is essentially disorder . . . .[Dirt is] matter out of place."[8] Julia Kristeva, in her psychoanalytical development of Douglas's paradigm in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, asks, "Why does corporeal waste, menstrual blood and excrement, or everything that is assimilated to them, from nail-parings to decay, represent—like a metaphor that would have become incarnate—the objective frailty of symbolic order?"[9] This rejected waste, the abject, must be kept separate from the self in order for a coherent stable self to be believed in. Kristeva describes the physical and emotional reaction to loathsome things, such as filth, waste, and dung.

> [R]efuses and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live . . . .If dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where

> I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything . . . [F]ilth is not a quality in itself, but it applies only to what relates to a boundary and, more particularly, represents the object jettisoned out of that *boundary*, its other side, a margin . . . .The potency of pollution is therefore not an inherent one; it is proportional to the potency of the prohibition that founds it.[10]

To have power symbolically, the binary, while precarious, must be inviolable.[11] The abject material ejected from the body threatens and compels us.

The act of consuming bodily filth in the mystical tradition, as in the cases of Catherine of Siena and Catherine of Genoa, illustrates this equation between the body and filth. The saints eat filth—from putrid water to pus—to overcome the naturally repulsed instincts of their bodies, prove their sanctity, and show that they cannot be reduced to their bodies. The ingested filth sacralizes their act. Within the construct of the sacred, then, filth ingestion is a sacred deed. As Douglas points out, ambiguity in the symbols of ritual can be "pleasurable,"[12] such as we can see in pilgrimage poetry where scatological humor, while shocking or inappropriate, can provide merriment (such as Nicholas's fart in *The Miller's Tale*) or the frisson of disbelief (as in the Host's insult of the Pardoner, to be discussed in chapter 7). While it may be difficult to imagine pleasure in ingesting pus, we can imagine the pleasure in conquering bodily weakness. Saints ingesting bodily filth illustrate their sanctity. Rather than showing the triumphant nature of the filthy body itself, such acts demonstrate the triumph of their weak bodies over a natural aversion to filth. To feel aversion to filth is, in other words, natural; to combat that aversion illustrates one's supernatural and inner strength.[13] Angela da Foligno, like the other women mystics, ingests bodily filth. Indeed, she sees herself *as* bodily filth. But her consumption of filth, in this case the scab and bloody wash water of a leper, differs from similar acts of other women mystics. By identifying the leper with Christ himself, she transforms her consumption into a Eucharistic meal.[14] Christ's embodiment allows Angela to—seemingly—transgress certain taboos in her devotion to him. The scab stands in for the Host and unites her with Christ.

The sacred and profane, holy and filthy, likewise interpenetrate in miracle collection stories with ample mention of bodily effluvia, such as blood, gore, spit, froth, pus, vomit, and feces. Sometimes the reliquary is befouled as fluids gush forth, allowing the healing of the sufferer. These filthy fluids are normally not permitted in the sacred space of a church; their historical or literary presence would have shocked a medieval recipient, as well as one today.[15] Unclean or polluted patients

need to gain ritual purity to be reintegrated into the social community. For example, in Osbern Bokenham's *Book of Holy Women*, Saint Lucy's mother has dysentery; mother and daughter make a pilgrimage to St. Agatha's shrine to heal her illness. As Sheila Delany has pointed out, Bokenham has expanded to more than thirty lines what was less than a line in the sources, reducing the body to "a foul bag open at either end, site of disease, emitter of black or red evil-smelling fluids."[16] After listening to the gospel story about the woman with flux who touched Christ's robe and was cured, Eutyce and her daughter pray. Lucy has a vision of St. Agatha informing her that her mother is healed due to Lucy's faith and goodness. The future pure and incorrupt martyr cures her corrupt mother even before she herself is made into a relic. The mother's filth signals Lucy's purity; she, in turn, heals the leaky sewage of her ailing parent. The profane bodily effluvia "[become] the index of the sacred."[17] The very filth marking degradation can be transformed into a sign of sanctity. In the hagiography of Christina of Markyate, one of her greatest trials is that she cannot excrete in her enclosed space. Christina hides in a tiny closet in the pious Roger's cell:

> Through long fasting, her bowels became contracted and dried up . . . .But what was more unbearable than all this was that she could not go out until the evening to satisfy the demands of nature. Even when she was in dire need, she could not open the door for herself, and Roger usually did not come till late.[18]

Christine's trial with excrement (lack of opportunity to defecate) is made a glorious indication of her virtue and sanctity. The rule of the Syon sisters, those women devoted to St. Bridget whom Margery Kempe herself identifies with, mentions how cleaning up charges' voided matter should be undertaken with patience: " . . . not squaymes to wasch them and wype them, or auoyde hem, not angry nor hasty or vnpacient, thof one haue the vomet, another the fluxe, another the frensy . . . ."[19] Withholding excrement (as with Christina of Markyate) and cleaning excrement (as the Syon sisters are expected to do or when Margery's husband become incontinent) amend the fecal matter into a sacred commodity.[20]

As Catherine Bell explains, taboo is inseparable from ritual; indeed, "taboo necessitates the ritual,"[21] helping construct social order.[22] For Georges Bataille, religious taboos are fundamentally based on one fact: we humans wish to negate our animal nature.[23] The sacred is nature "transfigured . . . .In a basic sense, what is *sacred* is precisely what is *prohibited*."[24] The abject is both taboo, yet full of life, rejected yet sacred, horrifying yet awe-inducing.[25] Excrement, while "low," is frightening

and powerful. Traditionally, excrement has been seen as being potentially dangerous, not only biologically, but also spiritually.[26] Excrement's link to death lends it this power.

> It is clear, in any event, that the nature of excrement is analogous to that of corpses and that the places of its emission are close to the sexual parts....[L]ife is a product of putrefaction, and it depends on both death and the dungheap.[27]

Death revolts and horrifies because of decay and putrefaction. Yet, just as excrement is not inherently filthy in that dung is useful and valorized within a rural culture, a dead body is likewise reacted to relationally; the reaction to filth is always a relational one. Dirt remains integral to order and system;[28] controlling it is "a positive effort to organize the environment."[29] As Douglas points out, "[R]eligions often sacralise the very unclean things which have been rejected with abhorrence."[30] In the "ambiguity of the sacred," "the impure, normally shunned, becomes 'sacred' in the sense that it is marked out as powerful in contrast to the non-polluted objects of familiar use."[31] "[R]ituals of purity and impurity" are, ultimately, creative and enabling.[32] The ritual of pilgrimage is intimately linked with the body, where one body (the pilgrim) is propelled to another body (the relic) in a church (in the shape of the cross Christ's body was on). Pilgrimage, an ordered ritual (at least in theory), is the effort to purify the self and body.

Though there are items reckoned to be relics, such as the Veronica or Mary's veil, whose status is due to the link between the item and the body of the saint, relics are most often parts of a dead body. Objects that still have obvious traces of dirt clinging to them are dangerous.[33] The finger bone that has gobs of flesh clinging to it may be disgusting and dangerous; but once the decaying matter has gone, the bone can be venerated as a holy object.[34] Similarly with excrement: when it has been composted, it loses its identity as waste and becomes something else—useful fertilizer.[35] The dead body as relic sacralizes detritus that in other circumstances would be shunned. In pilgrimage, one undergoes a rite to see the corpse or fragment of a dead saint, it is waste or the "ultimate filth"[36] of that person. Pilgrimage is a structure and ritual that sacralizes what is *symbolically* excrement—the dead body made relic—and forbidden. Relics are literally remains, and excrement is literally shit; relics, bodily detritus, finally remain only metaphorically excrement. After all, dead bodies are not literally excreted, though they are like excrement in the way they are unclean and decaying. Rather than being seen as filth, the leftover matter is made into its natural other, the sacred (just as shit is

bad, dung is good). Sacralized relics gain potency in their opposition and symbolic proximity to the lowness of excrement and pollution.

Yes, excrement is a sign of decay and partition (from the body); hence, it comes to signify moral corruption and ultimate damnation. But at the same time, excrement could be read as generative. The healing relic falls into this category. In a church calendar or martyrology from the late eleventh century, from October 8, we are told that rather than allowing the martyred bodies of St. Dionysius and his deacons Rusticus and Eleutherius to be thrown into the Seine, a Christian woman "ordered her men to steal the bodies at night and bury them in her field; and thereafter the field grew a hundred times better than it did before."[37] This not only suggests the healing and fertile power of relics, but also that relics function analogously to manure, aiding a field's fertility.[38] In Aelfric's Catholic Homily, I 18, the Sermon on the Greater Litany, he discusses how the rich and poor are necessary to each other and should work with each other. "The rich man gives [the poor man] bread which will turn into dung, and the poor gives to the rich man the life eternal [through prayers]."[39] Dung is seen as a natural result of a healthy process; in fact, Aelfric even suggests that dung parallels life eternal. Imaginary value is assigned to a saint's body part, its symbolically dead "excrement." This value is not always imaginary;[40] think of the "fundraising tours" relics would be taken on[41] and the money pilgrims would donate to shrines.[42] While excrement seems as far as possible from saints' relics, there is an economy of symbolism yoking them.[43]

Rituals frequently reaffirm social order through inversions.[44] The detritus of the dead holy person becomes fetishized by the believing pilgrim. The body part rises out of the abject into the Symbolic order, or, rather, the abject is appropriated into and by the Symbolic order. The fascination of pilgrimage with dead bodies disturbingly suggests that relics are, in fact, no more than the detritus of the decayed human body, no more than the sloughed off mortal remains of a material creature, no more than, symbolically, sacralized excrement.[45] The potential disruption that the recognition of relics as sacralized excrement could create is, at the same time, contained by the ritual process (pilgrimage).[46] Anthropological readings of culture bear out the necessity for anomaly in symbol patterning.[47] One of the anomalous[48] symbols in the system of pilgrimage is the existence of the relic itself.[49] Pilgrimage, as a cultural ritual, disguises and uses the anomalous dirt (the relic) by fully integrating it into the pilgrimage process as the object that magnetizes the pilgrim. Douglas argues, "Purity is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise."[50] Excrement shows change and development in the process from shit to dung to fertilizer. Pilgrimage, itself a process

of change and amendment, needs a sacralized totem, unchanging and pure. We can read the Host's comment about the Pardoner's breeches being with "fundement depeint" (VI.950), an allusion to the underpants of St. Thomas reputed to be on display in Canterbury Cathedral,[51] as making an analogy between the Pardoner's beshitted breeches and relics (false or otherwise). While a privy may be loathsome and foul, the relic contained in the reliquary is to be venerated.[52] Shrines are sacralized privies themselves, publicly endorsed.

Ingesting the Eucharist

The increase in excremental discourse in the late Middle Ages, especially the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, could be linked to the establishment of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the subsequent popularity of Corpus Christi festivals, and anxiety concerning the Word made Flesh. Piero Camporesi describes the psychological drama/trauma of the devout medieval Christian consuming God's body:

> Most likely, the introduction of the Host into the worshiper's mouth created a real trauma. As he swallowed it, all the terrifying images connected with this act—the body of the purest lamb entering the filth of the digestive apparatus, the divine flesh polluted by contact with mucous membranes, the juices of the corruptible flesh and the rot of the bowels—must have returned to his mind and seized him with vertiginous horror.... With concern and anxiety, theologians follow the descent of Christ's body into the *antrum*, the damp and smelly bowels.[53]

As Camporesi writes, Christ, in humiliating himself by becoming food, follows

> the ineluctable route to degradation of all substances that enter the carnal labyrinth of the human belly. The divine body must be absorbed by the "infamous body." The only sacrament to involve the human bowels, transubstantiation makes the stomach itself a kind of altar where occult and incomprehensible acts took place, a zone of liturgical mediation between Heaven and earth, the divine and the beastly, where an unimaginable rite of transformation occured.[54]

The doctrine of transubstantiation transforms the taboo of cannibalism into the sacred consumption of the divine body. The heightened antagonism against Jews coincides with the establishment of the doctrine of transubstantiation and Christian anxieties about the Eucharist. Chaucer's foray into the Host desecration genre horrifies in part by linking the sacred with filth.

A French fabliau from the late Middle Ages may be a strange place to begin a discussion of the Eucharist, but such bawdy tales contain latent serious theological arguments. In the Peeking Priest, a priest tells a peasant and the wife, desired by the priest, a lie: he (the priest) was peeking through their keyhole and saw the husband and wife "fucking." In fact, they had only been eating, which the peasant husband rightly contends. The priest declares he will prove that he saw them fucking; he switches places with the husband who is locked out and forced to watch through the keyhole while the priest (in fact) fucks the wife. Under the influence of the lustful priest, the husband believes that the priest was only eating with the wife, since that is what he himself had been doing. He falsely interprets what he sees.[55] An underlying reading of this story concerns the doctrine of transubstantiation, made dogma in 1215 in the Fourth Lateran Council under Pope Innocent III. While the appearance, "the accident" of the bread, may seem unchanged by the words in the mass, in fact the "substance," the "real" essence of the accidental dough, becomes God's body. Our physical body tells us one truth, but the truth of faith teaches us another reality. The tradition of believing in the priest's words that transformed one reality (flour and water as dough) into another (God's body) is present behind the peasant's belief in the priest's conversion of one apparent reality (the priest is fucking the wife) to another (they are merely eating, the act of transubstantiation leads to communion).

Excrement is typically a desecrating element. It can foul or pollute something sacred.[56] But if excrement is desecrating, what happens to an ingested sacred object like the Eucharist? If one ingests God's body, does not one excrete it as well? This was a serious theological problem.[57] Christ asks, "Do you not understand, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy?" (Matthew 15:17). If the Eucharist really is the body and blood of Christ, then it must come out in the stool, reasoned Guitmond of Aversa in the late eleventh century, or else Christ's understanding of digestion is incorrect. But Guitmond, along with others, pointed out that not everything comes out in defecation. Since the "more subtle and useful" things are converted into flesh and bone, some matter is evaporated through the pores, and other bits become mucus and spittle, perhaps the Host does not end up in the privy.[58] The digestion of the consecrated Host was the focus of debate for the stercorian heresy.[59] Stercorianists maintained that the ingested body of God had to be excreted as well.[60] Lollard rhetoric[61] and later Protestants picked up on this problem of consuming but not excreting God's body. The discrepancy between one apparent reality in connection with excrement—it is unpleasant, filthy, and smells—into another "truer" reality—God becomes human flesh but is

then resurrected—is latent in the conflicting discourses of Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century.[62] The argument against shitting out God's body is that our body profanes what is sacred; therefore, we could not excrete the body of Christ we consumed. God's body is sacred; shit is polluting; therefore, God's body cannot become excrement. Since common sense does not allow for this,[63] only a miracle can resolve this conundrum. As it was impossible doctrinally for God's body to become excrement, the theological argument concerning *accidens* and *substans* was developed. It was argued that the accident of the bread (the medium) might be defecated, but the substance (God's body) could not be.[64] The Pardoner exclaims in his sermon against gluttony: "Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grynde,/ And turnen substaunce into accident/ To fulfille al thy likerous talent!" (VI.538–540). This passage specifically alludes to the controversy over transubstantiation resolved in substance and accident.[65] As in the story of the Peeking Priest, there are echoes of faith and transubstantiation at play in the pear tree scene in *The Merchant's Tale*. Is it a struggle? Or had Damian "swyved" (IV.2378) her? As May tells January, "Beth war, I prey yow, for by hevene kyng,/ Ful many a man weneth to seen a thyng,/ And it is al another than it semeth" (IV.2407–2409). She could just as well be speaking of transubstantiation.

That the Eucharist could be read as transgressive can be seen in the link between excrement and the Host that was played up in mock mass festivals as described by Bakhtin, in which "excrement was used instead of incense, or processions in which the festive clergy, eating boudins, rode in carts loaded with dung and tossed it at the crowd."[66] *Audigier*, which has jokingly been called a *chanson de merde*, contains multiple filth-laden inversions of religion doctrine. Audigier's father Turgibus dies on a dung-heap, where his soul issues "out of his rear, and his body performed miracles that night." Audigier is baptized thrice by being dunked into a ditch filled with piss. Later, in a battle with an old hag, she swallows him "like a blessed Host. When she felt herself swollen up she crouched down on the ground and opened her asshole wide. Audigier shot out, crying 'Onward'!"[67] These blasphemous moments underscore how vital—and troubling—cleanliness is to the sacred. The ingestion of a false relic parodies the dangers of consuming the Eucharist, a cannibalistic ritual, the dangers of which are contained by theology and faith.[68] The Eucharist, the site of anxiety and veneration, ultimately "guaranteed the symbolic order of medieval Europe."[69] Kathleen Biddick reads the Eucharist as existing at the border.

> It was both a "classical" body in the Bakhtinian sense, elevated, static, and monumental, and a "grotesque" body, broken, bleeding, excessive,

> maternal, paternal, a body that upset any fixed gender binary, a fluid body that troubled any container.[70]

The Eucharist flirted with danger and pollution; hence, Christian anxiety about the possibility of cannibalism. This shadow transgression only enhanced the power of the Eucharist.[71] Cannibalism is taboo, although it is sacralized in Christianity. Yet, it is no ordinary body that is consumed, but a Jewish body: the circumcised body that divides Judaism and Christianity.

Host Accusation Tales and Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*

Miri Rubin's book, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews*, explores the connection between Jews and polluting shit.[72] She focuses on a genre of Marian tale in which, typically, a Jewish boy eats the Eucharist. He is punished by his evil father, who tries to burn him up in an oven, but Mary intervenes to save the boy and his mother. We can see this archetypal story played out creatively by Chaucer in the *Prioress's Tale*. The seven-year-old schoolboy, or *clergeon*, is close in age to the typical Jewish boy of the Marian stories who is about eight or nine years old. The Christian boy at age seven is younger than his counterparts in analogues at age ten. Commentators have suggested that his extreme youth heightens the pathos of his torture and death. But it could work to echo a nascent, even shadow, Jewish identity. Under Edward I's 1275 *Statutum de Judeismo*, a badge for Jews to mark their difference was mandatory for Jewish children over the age of seven.[73] Here the boy lies on the edge of identity. The Jewish boy is typically pliant, soft, and eager to convert, just as the clergeon readily loves Mary. The Jewish mother of the anti-Semitic tale is replaced by a Christian mother who is like the Jewish "Rachel" (VII.627). The Jews in the *Prioress's Tale*, after cutting the throat of the little boy, "in a pit hym caste./ I seye that in that in a wardrobe they hym threwe/ Where as thise Jewes purgen hire purgen hire entraille" (VII.571–573). The wardrobe, a term usually meant to indicate a large room for both clothes and a privy, increased in importance for the upper classes starting in the late thirteenth century. Chaucer's use of the word does not imply that the Jews were rich.[74] Rather, by the fifteenth century it came to lose its function as the privy, instead becoming a euphemism for a latrine. Chaucer inverts the structure of the host desecration narrative—not oven, but privy; not Jewish boy, but Christian. The oven of the typical story is the opposite of the privy: a private but productive space in the typical Marian tale, deadly and polluting as imagined by the Prioress. Our disgust and revulsion at the little boy's murder

is heightened by our horror at his being thrown into the privy. The desecration with filth heightens our aversion and signals our revulsion at the abject.[75]

Excremental images are embedded throughout the Prioress's *Tale*. We are told at the start of the tale that the "Jewerye" (VII.489)[76] is a street "open at eyther ende" (VII.494), just as the mouth and anus are simply the ends of one long tube.[77] Like the Host in host desecration accusation tales, the attacked boy is thrown into a privy.[78] His companion teaches him "prively" (VII.544) and the Jews catch him in a "privee place" (VII.568).[79] Standard anti-Semitic accusations are embedded in the tale. Aligned with usury (VII.490), the Jews are stereotyped as perverse multipliers of money like their analogue gongfermors.[80] Blood is mentioned twice in the tale—the children scholars "ycomen of Cristen blood" (VII.497) and "The blood out crieth on youre cursed dede" (VII.578)—blood that in host desecration accusation tales spurts out of the attacked Host. The boy's throat is cut, just as in host desecration accusation tales the Host is usually boiled, pierced, or stabbed.[81] Perceived of as the locus for putrefaction, the body with its digestive decay seems a disturbing locus for the sacred flesh of Christ. Lester Little argues that charges against Jews of host desecration reflect the unease Christians felt concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation, official only since 1215. There was never a period during which the doctrine was universally accepted; the feast of Corpus Christ, established in 1264, was an attempt to support beliefs in transubstantiation. By accusing Jews of attacking the consecrated Host, Christians projected onto Jews their own doubts about the nature of this doctrine.[82] Jews serve to embody the fear of what happens to the Eucharist once it is ingested. Anxiety at the thought of digesting the Eucharist leaks out of these textual cesspits.

Typological or figural readings of the Bible, wherein Old Testament passages are read as prefiguring those in the New Testament, allow for the "the fantasy of supersession";[83] in other words, contemporary Jews in the late Middle Ages are easily erased as being coeval and only read as originary—and lesser—than Christians.[84] Christian typological readings allowed living Jews to be erased from the present and placed in an "othered" past.[85] The human body, embodied as Jewish, becomes the body to be rejected.[86] Giorgio Agamben asserts that our ability to distinguish ourselves from animals (and our animal selves) through the "anthropological machine of the moderns" ultimately leads, in its most perversely logical outcome, to the separation of Jews from "mankind" in fascist ideology: "[I]he inhuman [is] produced by animalizing the human."[87] The *Inferno* illustrates how anti-Semitic discourse struggled with this proximity of the Jew to the Christian. Sylvia Tomasch has

pointed out the anti-Semitism inherent in Dante's schema wherein hell is excremental. Jews are literally absent from the *Giudecca* (*Inf.* XXXIV.117), which means Jewish ghetto in medieval Italian, of the *Inferno*, but are made "metonymically present" through the "incomplete and monstrous body of the devil."[88] Satan's perverse body stands in contrast to the Body of Christ or the Church.[89] Tomasch goes on:

> Defecation, the process antithetical to ingestion, was often prominently featured in depictions of archdemons; it was also used to characterize medieval Jews, who were thought to be closely linked to impurity and filth. In Dante's hell, however, is no such, even temporary, satisfaction . . . [T]he bodily functions of Dante's demon show only an incomplete imitation of the digestive process. As countless texts and illustrations inform us, all who are sinful enter hellmouth but none comes out again—except Dante. Ingested then excreted, a wandering exile seeking his true progenitor, he alone returns to tell his tale.[90]

Once Dante leaves hell he also tries to leave the Jewish past of Christianity. Dante's evacuation from hell "serves as a sign of the incapacity of Christianity to completely digest the Jews."[91] The fantasy of the whole, coherent, unified Christian body is maintained by setting it in opposition to the defecating, fluid, leaking, stinking Jewish body. As Steven F. Kruger has pointed out, Jewish, leprous, female, and homosexual bodies were viewed as "debased bodies"[92] because of Christian anxiety about Jewish proximity to Christian identity.[93] The Christian body is constructed as clean and whole in contrast to the dismembered and filthy Jewish body.[94]

Writing about the massacre of Jews at Richard I's coronation in London, Richard of Devizes (c. 1190s), a Winchester monk, comments on how the people Winchester act more civilly. Nevertheless, the people of Winchester

> did not want partially to vomit forth the undigested mass which oppressed them violently bit by bit, unprepared for the danger they were in. They hid it in their bowels, modestly (or naturally) dissimulating their disgust meanwhile, till at an opportune time for curing their sickness they could cast out all the morbid matter once and for all.[95]

As Anthony Bale points out, the scatological rhetoric, typical of medieval anti-Semitism, both invokes a "Christian culture of feeding, regeneration, nurturing, and the digestive immutability of the Host" and the intermingling of Christian and Jew.[96] This intermingling suggests the familiarity of the Jew; the Jewish Other is inside the Christian self.[97]

The Christian wants to define himself against the Jew; but Christian identity cannot be disentangled from Jewish identity. Despite best efforts at linking Jews with excrement, it must have been evident even to purveyors of anti-Semitic tales that, yes, Christians defecated too. The Prioress uses shit to vilify the polluting Jews; yet everyone had a cesspit or dung-heap, rich and poor, Jew and Christian.

The link between the Eucharist and excrement occurs in anti-Semitic Marian tales. Rubin writes that there is an "increasing horror about the thought of Christ's body being in the bodies of Jews."[98] Innocent III in the early thirteenth century attempted to prevent the hiring of Christian wet nurses by Jews, since it was claimed that Jews forced Christian wet nurses to express their milk into a latrine for three days after taking communion.[99] Jews are connected with assigning Christ's body to filth. But this accusation implies that if Christ's body came out in milk, surely it would also have been thoroughly digested in the body and, thus, come out as excrement as well. Typically in host desecration stories, the Jews, who are about to be caught with the improperly obtained and treated Host, try to hide it, often throwing it in a polluted place like a privy,[100] whereupon, not infrequently, the polluted/polluting dung-heap becomes sacralized into a chapel for pilgrims.[101] The site of humiliation/desecration is validated, as in the *locus classicus*, the cross, the place of Christ's humiliation made also the sign of this victory, or in the arena where martyrs were killed. The anxiety about defecating God's body into a privy is transformed in the anti-Semitic text into literal action. The host accusation tale then contains that anxiety, even going so far as to glorify the defiled sacred boy/saint/God/Eucharist.

The Prioress's Tale: Memories May be Beautiful and Yet . . .

The act of pilgrimage is one of memorializing the dead, remembering the dead saint, and making current in the memory the past trials of a saint. Prayers for the dead are performances of "active memory."[102] Remembering insists on there being a narrative structure that orders the past. Both Christian and Jewish sides could and did memorialize the past.[103] As Jody Enders argues in her discussion of medieval theatre, memory is linked to violence. Staging violence makes absent bodies in pain present, the prime example being Christ on the crucifix. Remembering and member are linguistically knotted together, suggesting that the "memory of dismemberment and death" is creational.[104] Bloody images of the past are used for both remembering *and* forgetting;[105] the privy becomes the site of this transfiguration.[106] The Prioress, by constructing a tale wherein

the shrine memorializes the clergeon, remembers the violence enacted on the Christian child and attempts to throw into the pit or privy the violence enacted toward the Jews by Christians. Christians projected onto Jews their own guilt for having committed pogroms, and accused Jews of ritual murder. The eventual triumph of the dead child as saint is meant to win over the Jews' perfidy; the torture of the child is shown to be evil, while the torture of the Jews is valorized.

Pierra Nora distinguishes between *lieux de mémoire* and *milieux de mémoire*. A *lieu de mémoire* is "where memory is crystalized, in which it finds refuge," such as a museum, or monuments like the Eiffel Tower. It is the place or site of memory that belongs to the world of tourism or art history. It is the place for the private individual and belongs to history.[107] A *milieu de mémoire* is a "[setting] in which memory is a real part of everyday experience," such as family, church, village.[108] Rather than individual, this "environment of memory" is communal and belongs to

> public life, functions through a network of associations with diverse places, spaces, and groups . . . and, like human memory, condenses, abridges, alters, displaces, and projects fragments of the past, making them alive in the present for particular groups. Experienced dynamically and not viewed passively, reproduced mechanically, or studied abstractly, *milieux de mémoire* change and evolve.[109]

Monuments can have "a powerful symbolic agency"; thus, to destroy a monument "constitutes a personal and communal violation with serious consequences."[110] Jaś Elsner has written about how "[m]onuments have many different kinds of memory": the commemoration envisioned by the builder, the memory acquired over time, and the memory of absence. Iconoclastic transformations need to be public acts. The public nature of such changes visibly reminds us of what has been forgotten and repressed; this act simultaneously confirms the dominance of those who did the obliterating.[111] The sacred acts of memorializing and remembering control excrement on both the textual and material levels. While the Jewish privy is hardly a monument, it constitutes an abject place upon which a Christian monument is constructed to commemorate the dead Christian boy. The Christians deliberately act to obliterate the Jewish abject to construct a Christian site of worship. By obliterating the Jewish privy from the narrative, the Christian shrine erases the filth of the past, a past not forgotten, but enshrined in the tale the Prioress tells. In the *Prioress's Tale*, the jeweled tomb of a boy displaces the privy. The sacred needs to control filth in order to exert power. The tomb's solid materiality stands in distinction to the temporal and physical flux of the privy. The tomb,

as Bale describes it, "allows for an evacuation of historical meaning," and is "an erroneous fantasy."[112] In the case of Host desecration narratives, the act of memorializing reconstructs the privy as a shrine; the excremental becomes the sacred.[113] A manuscript image from an analogue to Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* depicts the little slain boy thrown into the privy; in fact, this image has five parts of the story. First, it shows the Jew luring the boy into his house; second, it shows the moment when the boy's throat is cut; third, the boy is dumped into the privy; fourth, the mother is shown pleading before the authorities; finally the bishop holds the lily found miraculously in the throat of the boy who lies in his burial cloth.[114] Jews are associated with excrement in anti-Semitic rhetoric, but the saintly boy remains untainted by the moral implications of physical filth due to his purity. By depicting five diachronic moments synchronically, the picture highlights movement and transformation, showing how the moment of abject filth signifies simultaneously redemption and glory. The black hole of the privy is the central image around which all the other images swirl, the site of both abjection and glorification.[115]

I would argue that in the *Prioress's Tale*, the little clergeon who is killed by the Jews functions as the symbolic equivalent of the consecrated Host attacked and thrown into the privy in host desecration accusation tales. Robert Boenig has pointed out the centrality of food in this tale, a centrality the little clergeon shares with female mystics. The ingestion of spiritual texts nourishes the soul, paralleling the ingestion of food for the body.[116] The little clergeon himself "metaphorically becomes food";[117] child and Host are transposed[118] and occupy a "proximity in symbolic meaning."[119] In some stories, not only does the desecrated Host bleed, but the baby Jesus appears to the perpetrators. Mary's presence in the *Prioress's Tale* as a eucharistic symbol comes out of her link to the Incarnation. Since Mary redeemed woman's flesh, all analogues of flesh, including rot, filth, and excrement, could likewise be redeemed by her. Matthew Paris writes about a Jew with an image of the Virgin Mary in his latrine "as it were in blasphemy of the blessed Virgin, he inflicted a most filthy and unmentionable thing on it, daily and nightly."[120] Yet he is not able to desecrate through his excrement; the filth only highlights the Virgin's purity. The boundaries between what is sacred and what is filth collapse. The little Christian boy in the *Prioress's Tale* is thrown into a privy; ironically, as a saint whose relics will be venerated, he will become like the (sacralized) waste he was thrown into. The boy becomes a saint and is covered in filth; his sanctity is not polluted by that filth; or, he is filth, he is excrement, which is sacralized by the miracle of God's intervention. The shock in the *Prioress's Tale* is not only its extremely offensive anti-Semitism (offensive to modern sensibilities as well as, evidently, medieval

ones, considering the evident shock Chaucer's pilgrims are in after she tells it), but also the symbolic equation between saint and excrement. The dead child is put into a tomb of marble stones, memorializing the boy in a sacred space that is meant to replace the filthy privy of the Jews. The tale itself is a toilet into which the Jews cast the clergeon, a shrine by which the boy can be memorialized.

Death typically suggests decay or change. The miraculous, nondecaying relic and the miraculously preserved dead saint's body suggest the normality of decay and the exceptionality of preservation by their very miraculous natures.[121] Hence, the murdered Christian boy in the *Prioress's Tale* thrown into a privy remains pure and unchanging despite the degradation of filth into which he is swallowed up. The Jews, polluted by excrement, cannot make the boy/Eucharist/body of Christ filthy even if touched with feces. By extension, Christian acts of violence against Jews could not be read (by complicit Christians) as polluting the Christian perpetrators.[122] The violence enacted against Jews had to be transformed into violence against Christians. Christians are cleansed, deodorizing their own culpable history. Rubin asks,

> Is the triumphant building of chapels and tabernacles, in the erasure of Jews from the subsequent celebrations of miraculous hosts, not akin to the half-anxious/half-hopeful gaze of a child who has done wrong and who eagerly seeks from her parent reassurance that she is still loved, that her transgression has been forgiven, indulged?[123]

What could better describe the Prioress herself, so self-infantilizing in her own *Prologue*? Her tale is itself a shrine built over a privy.[124]

CHAPTER 7

THE EXCREMENTAL HUMAN GOD AND REDEMPTIVE FILTH: *THE PARDONER'S TALE*

> *The private parts of Jesus Christ: can this phrase not also sound perfectly dignified, solemn and respectful?*
>
> Nicholas Royle, "The Private Parts of Jesus Christ"[1]

The modern discomfort and rejection of excrement as a valid symbol in social symbology chooses to forget the link between the medieval tradition of devotion to the human Christ and filth, pollution, and excrement. Paintings may show Christ spat upon and bloody, but they do not typically depict him or the Virgin with excrement.[2] We can see Christ bloodied and wounded, but not with excrement, the last taboo. Yet waste reminds us of the enfleshing of God. Excrement reminds us not only of our bodily nature, but of Christ's.[3] Excrement actually brings us *closer* to God. The "excremental" body of God enables us to find hope in our own dirty, filth-ridden bodies and supports an orthodox theology.

Redemptive Filth

In terms of artistic renderings of dung-heaps, the most frequent one is that of Job on the dung-heap. He is typically depicted alone, though sometimes with a friend or two. In MS Auct. D.3.4., there are relatively few illustrations. Two, extremely tiny, are fantastically elaborate: one of the creation—Eve emerging from Adam's side, the fall, Cain and Abel and Abel's murder—another of Christ's passion. Most of the other illuminations are of single figures in reflective poses; one is of Job on the dung-heap. Clearly, this moment is a key one for medieval readers or at least

the illustrator. MS Rawl. Liturg. e.33. devotes a large part of a page of the psalter to depicting Job on the dung-heap, with lovely hairlike strokes for the dung. Readers knew to read dung as a signifier for humiliation. The dung-heap, a reminder of our mortality and animality, is the site of Job's humble obedience. But a predominantly rural culture, as medieval society was, would recognize in the dung a sense of hope in the renewal and rebirth suggested in its use in fertilizing fields.[4] There is a twofold view of dung present in these depictions, as both a sign of the humble acceptance of whatever God has granted us and a sign of ultimate favor and salvation.

The appearance of filth in sacred spaces such as churches is evident in Danish wall paintings, extensively archived by Axel Bolvig. These include images of a man defecating on the heads of the congregation[5] and one of the Last Supper, where the apostles are entertained by an acrobat defecating on the head of a urinating man; yet another shows a woman whipping a man who defecates onto a pissing fellow.[6] Bolvig interprets this scene as demonstrating two forms of transformation—the religious, through transubstantiation, and the secular, where "bread and wine or beer [is transformed] into faeces and urine." The secular picture functions as a commentary or gloss on the religious picture. Clearly there must have been some purpose to these images within an enclosure one would normally think of as impervious to filth and the materiality of life. These wall paintings, which Bolvig reads as corresponding to the "oral society of ordinary people," express peasant ideology; peasants, increasingly important, influential, and powerful, were able to finance and sponsor these works.[7] The numerous depictions of urination and defecation in these holy buildings suggest that "*What is miraculously transformed by the body, the body gives back in a transformed way.*"[8] Sacred transubstantiation and mundane transformation are analogous. It is not blasphemous to juxtapose filth with purity. We need to understand the message of universal and constant change, a change that can transform equally the food sitting in the pit of one's stomach and the state of one's soul.[9]

In *Les Très Riches Heures Du Duc de Berry* (the late fifteenth-century Chantilly Hours), the snowy scene of "February" shows three peasants warming themselves by the fire. In the later Grimani Breviary inspired by this early work, Simon Bening replicated the same scenario with a slight variation:[10] rather than the adults exposing their genitals, a boy pees in the snow [F. 2v]. This difference has typically been read as a sign of the humor and crudity of Flemish "realism."[11] Rather than reading the peeing boy as a cute and amusing take on natural and unrestricted peasant mores, we could see the hot urine melting the frozen confection as a signal for spring and resurrection. A Flemish Psalter (MS. Douce 49, folio LXIII v)[12] shows a highly decorated initial with St. Francis preaching to

at least four birds. In the foreground we see a crouching dog, concentrating mightily as it defecates. What could possibly be the religious content of such an image? While St. Francis preaches to birds, all God's creatures are worthy of His word, even a shitting dog. This animal symbolizes us in our fleshly animal degradation, a state God can redeem only by becoming as degraded and material as we are.

Alexandra Cuffel has written about the anxiety caused by the possibility for divinity to be impure. Anti-Christian polemic picked up on this and played with the notion of Christ defecating.[13] In religious polemic from non-Christians and heretical Christians, that Christ came from Mary's womb meant that he was tainted with her filthy blood. True, in the early Christian era, there were some Gnostics who argued that Jesus did not defecate. According to Valentius, "Jesus endured everything and was continent. Jesus expressed his deity. He ate and drank in a strange way not eliminating the foods for there was such a power of continency that the food was not corrupted in him since he had no perishability."[14] But Odo of Tournai suggests otherwise in his *Disputatio contra Judaeum Leonem nomine de adventu Christi filii Dei* that depicts a supposed encounter between a Jew, Leo, and Odo in 1100. Leo expresses disbelief at the concept of belief in a God who descended from the filthy parts of a woman. Odo argues that our sense "despises our genitalia, viscera, and excrement, and judges them unclean. Reason, however, judges nothing unclean but sin, because God created all things good." Guibert of Nogent must argue for the body in a tract against Jews, *Tractatus de Incarnatione contra Judaeos*:

> The Son of God coming into the flesh had limbs so suitable to his body that the composition of those limbs did no harm. And let one not be wrongly ashamed for that which caused him no shame. And what would have shamed him where there was nothing that was not sacred! If anything is, it is good, except where sin is; the limbs which are good *per se*, when there is no sin, are sacred. Our limbs minister to our weakness, and since [our] ears, mouths, or nostrils serve [us] in expelling the superfluities of the head, what evil do the rest [of the organs] do, which, lower down, cast out the burden of the intestines?[15]

Against the disbelieving Jew, Guibert defends Christ's body and the necessities of corporeality, where "the margins of Christ's body come to represent the site of debate between believers and nonbelievers."[16] Guibert angrily addresses his (imaginary) Jewish interlocutor:

> Ask, most stinking and worthless one, concerning of our Lord, if he spit, if he wiped his nose, if he drew phlegm from his eyes or ears with his fingers, and understand why he did things such as the above with

> such respectability, and accomplished as well the remainder [of bodily functions]. But you tell me: in what belly did God, who appeared to Abraham, deposit those things which he ate, and if this happened, in what way did the logical consequences [of eating] occur? I tremble violently while I dispute such things; but you, sons of the devil, force me to it. May God, who knows with what feeling I act, consider [our dispute] to your disadvantage. In short, accept that God humbly took on all human things and feared nothing human except sins.[17]

As Steven Kruger argues, Guibert moves from a negative view of the body in constructing Jews, to a positive view of the body in his discussion of the logical end of Christ's consuming food.

The anxiety that God's body becomes excrement in the digestion process is controlled by theological argument to cover that even saints did defecate at one time, as did Christ. Christ's waste even became intriguing to some.[18] This First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ, accepted by Gnostics as canonical in the second century and condemned as heretical by Pope Gelasius in the fifth century, records miracles associated with Jesus's swaddling clothes or the water they were washed in.[19] The Wise Men are said to have returned home with one of the baby's swaddling clothes, given to them as a present by Mary. They then make a fire, worship it, "[a]nd having, according to the custom of their country, made a fire, they worshipped it....And casting the swaddling cloth into the fire, the fire took and kept it."[20] Miraculously, the swaddling clothes are still whole and unaffected by the fire. In another case, Mary left some swaddling clothes up to dry after she had washed them. A boy possessed by the devil puts the clothes on his head, demons fly out of his mouth, and he is healed.[21] These tales might be seen as peripheral; but at the heart of Western Europe, in Aachen Cathedral, is housed one of the holy relics collected by Charlemagne—the swaddling clothes of the baby Jesus.[22] What we may consider to be obscene or blasphemous could have been produced within the confines of the sacred.

Leo Steinberg argues that the attention paid to Christ's genitals in art starting in the thirteenth century is a reflection of the emphasis on the "humanation" (becoming human) or "enfleshing"[23] of Christ, including sexuality.[24] The circumcision, the subject in many paintings, foreshadows Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Steinberg dismisses one critic's reading of Hans Baldung Grien's woodcut, *Holy Family* (1511), where St. Anne's fondling of the baby Christ's penis is explained away as "nothing remarkable, since it is not uncommon for a grandmother to diaper her baby grandchild."[25] While I utterly concur with Steinberg's brilliant reading of these paintings, the reference to diapering is not ludicrous. In fact, I would take Steinberg's argument for Christ's humanity even further.

The circumcision, the emphasis on the penis, and the pointing to or fondling of the baby's genitals not only foreshadow Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and indicate His utter humanity, but also function as a displacement for the even "lower" (metaphorically) part of the lower (physically *and* metaphorically) body—the anus and the excrement every baby ejects. The drapery, gossamer, and linens in the numerous paintings Steinberg refers to suggest a cloth that would be wrapped about the baby's hips to function as a diaper. Think of the importance of the moment after Jesus's birth when he is wrapped in "swaddling clothes" (Luke 2:12). These clothes are not just to keep him warm or to bind him in an imitation of the closeness of the womb and thereby relax the infant, though this may be a by-product of that swaddling. The clothes clearly perform a key function: to collect the filth the human baby ejects. The Christ child is shown nursing in images of the *Virgin lactans*; as any mother (and not a few fathers) know, excretion frequently follows the suckling of the breast. I am not trying to naturalize these moments, by saying Christ's nudity is to show the baby being diapered; rather, these are highly theological moments, suggesting that the enfleshing of Christ is both most sacred (he became man to save us) and most profane (he took on the flesh that emits filth for us). Like Caroline Walker Bynum, I am not arguing *against* but *with* Steinberg; Christ's flesh, even wounded and polluting, was also "the occasion for salvation."[26] To be human is to eat; to be fully human, God must digest just as a human does. As Tertullian argued, by taking on the filthy human body, Christ signals his profound humility and compassion.[27] God has divested himself of his omnipotence; what more overt way to do this than to become a helpless, wriggling, filthy infant, utterly dependent upon others for nourishment, shelter, and personal hygiene?

Appropriating the Excremental Body: Julian of Norwich and Mother Jesus

While the Virgin represented an unattainable standard of purity,[28] some medieval women writers were able to appropriate the excremental feminized body, as discussed in chapter 4, and transcend it. Bynum reminds us that, while there was a dualistic medieval misogyny that structured binaries in which females were lesser ("intellect/body, active/passive, rational/irrational, reason/emotion, self-control/lust, judgment/mercy and order/disorder"),[29] we should de-emphasize dualism and misogyny for a more complex understanding of the gender of bodiliness. Rather than reading in terms of dichotomies, medieval thinkers use gender fluidly.[30] There were positive female metaphors.[31] As is now well established, Christ's flesh was

seen by some late medievals as female, as lactating and giving birth.[32] As Julian of Norwich writes,

> [O]ure hye god, the souereyn wysdom of all, in this lowe place he arayed hym and dyght hym all redy in oure poure flessch, hym selfe to do the servyce and the officie of moderhode in alle thyng....The moder may geue her chylde sucke hyr mylke, but oure precyous moder Jhesu, he may fede vs/ wyth hym selfe...The moder may ley hyr chylde tenderly to hyr brest, but oure tender mother Jhesu, he may homely lede vs in to his blessyd brest by his swet opyn syde...So wyll he that we done as þe meke chylde, seyeng thus: My kynd moder, my gracyous moder, my deerworthy moder, haue mercy on me. I haue made my selfe foule and vnlyke to thee, and I may not nor canne amende it but with thyne helpe and grace....For the flode of mercy that is his deerworthy blode and precious water is plentuous to make vs feyer and clene.[33]

Women writers were not incapacitated by the misogynist tradition. They empowered themselves by a sense of closeness with Christ who chose to take on human flesh.[34] Christ reassures Margery Kempe, "[F]or Þhu hast so gret compassyon of my flesche I must nede haue compassyon of Þhi flesche."[35] Woman's flesh was allied to Christ's. After all, the only human flesh to create him was female, since he had no human father. We cannot forget a late medieval tradition that saw the body as humanizing in a positive way.[36]

Filth is crucial for Julian of Norwich in her argument endorsing God's compassion. In many ways, Julian uses images of filth conventionally, such as in mentioning the Fiend and his "foul stench."[37] Yet in the later Long Text version of her *Shewings*, she adds the word dirt ["solewyng"] to the description of Christ held in contempt and spat upon.[38] Julian elaborates on Christ's fair nature covered with foul flesh:

> It was a fygur and a lyknes of our fowle blacke dede, which that our feyre bryght blessed lord bare for our synne....[H]e would for loue and for worshipe of man make hym selfe as lyke to man in this deadly lyfe in our fowlhede and in our wretchednes as man myght be without gylt; wherof it menyth, as is before sayd, it was the ymage and the lyknes of owr fowle blacke dede where in our feyer bryght blessyd lorde hyd his godhede.[39]

Just as we are to be remade after our fall into sin, so God wanted to make Himself like us in a state between foul and blessed. Julian describes Christ's body realistically with disgusting and abject details.[40] In Chapter 51 she tells the parable of the lord and a servant, the servant being Christ's humanity. "[H]ys clothyng was a whyt kyrtyll syngell, olde and

alle defautyd, dyed with swete of his body." She also refers to "oure foule dedely flessch, that goddys son toke vppon hym."[41] Liz McAvoy's argument that, just as the servant is female, so too woman's flesh epitomizes all human flesh,[42] holds water when you consider that Julian strenuously, adamantly, argues that Christ is our Mother "by takyng of oure kynde made."[43] Woman may be polluted, but at the same time her flesh is allied to Christ's. One way to achieve Christ is by having, submitting to, one's female flesh.

A passage often excised from certain versions of the Long Text reads:

> A man goyth vppe ryght, and the soule of his body is sparyde as a purse fulle feyer. And whan it is tyme of his nescessery, it is openyde and sparyde ayen fulle honestly. And that it is he that doyth this, it is schewed ther wher he seyth he comyth downe to vs to the lowest parte of oure nede.[44]

McAvoy traces the word "purs," unusually used for "anus" here, and argues that it denotes a functionality to defecation. Rather than representing defecation as abjection, Julian endorses the necessity of our bodily elimination, thereby transcending the abject.[45] The body is to be glorified; it is a sign of God's infinite love, including "in the system of bodily digestion and waste elimination."[46] Indeed, the abject body, most perfectly epitomized in women and the crucified Christ, proves God's love. Even how we were created shows the redemption possible in filth. "[W]han god shulde make mannes body, he toke the slyme of the erth, whych is a mater medelyd and gaderyd of alle bodely thynges, and therof he made mannes body. But to the makyng of mannys soule he wolde take ryght nought, but made it."[47] God "arayed hym and dyght him all redy in oure poure flessch."[48] In her fifteenth revelation or shewing, Julian sees

> a body lyeng on þe erth, whych body shewde heuy and feerfulle and with oute shape and forme, as it were a swylge stynkyng myrre; and sodeynly oute of this body sprong a fulle feyer creature, a lyttylle chylld, full shapyn and formyd, swyft and lyfly and whytter then the lylye, whych sharpely glydyd vppe in to hevyn. The swylge of the body betokenyth grette wretchydnesse of oure dedely flessh; and the lyttylnes of the chylde betokenyth the clennes and the puernesse of oure soule. And I thought: with thys body blyueth no feyernesse of thys chylde, ne of this chylde dwellyth no foulnes of the body.[49]

The child can be us, frightened and hurt and dirty, or it can represent the purity and cleanliness of the soul as opposed to the aged, filth-ridden body. Only by touching Christ do we become clean.[50] The defecating, filthy body can release the pure soul. The body is associated with decay,

but is also "the access to God."[51] The humility excrement signals in the Judeo-Christian tradition can be a socially positive form of debasement, integral to the scene where Job sits on a dung-heap or when St. Francis openly loves the lark for the lowliness of its food scavenged from the dung of animals.[52]

As the body became increasingly privatized, the border areas of the body likewise became increasingly taboo. The revelation of viewing them would be read as obscene. We can, in other words, only read scatological marginalia as obscene, shocking, humorous, or a sign of medieval alterity, while a medieval reader could read it as (also) (possibly) obscene, humorous, and holy simultaneously. Slavoj Žižek points out that, "in the same way Duchamp's pissoir or bicycle are not objects of art because of their inherent qualities, but because of the places they are made to occupy: Christ is not God because of his inherent 'divine' qualities, but because, precisely as fully human, he is God's son."[53] Why else be born in a manger? Yes, it signals his humility by being born in a humble place; but why is the manger a humble place? Because it carries evidence of the animality of our fleshly selves.[54] Defecation may have its unsavory aspects, but is integral to the health of the body. Shit is something all bodies do and produce. Significantly, the word *foul* was used in the marriage service. As Christ says to Margery, "I take þe, Margery, for my weddyd wyfe, for fayrar, for fowelar, for richar, for powerar."[55] By becoming flesh, Christ necessarily takes on the foulness of the human body. Through crucifixion and resurrection, he transcended that foulness. Cleansed through penance (contrition, confession, satisfaction), a process ritualized through the performance of pilgrimage, the figurative filth of the soul can be purged, cleansed, and transformed. As is stated in *Mankind*, "Euery droppe of hys [Christ's] bloode was schede to purge þin iniquite."[56] Christ is the supreme leech whose medical purgatives are those of the spirit. The ultimate purge is Christ himself.[57] Conscience at the end of *Piers Plowman* claims he will continue in his endeavors "til I have Piers the Plowman" (XX.386). The use of the word "have" has long been a crux. Piers Plowman as the good Samaritan is Christ Himself. Conscience argues that he needs to continue until he enfleshes Piers Plowman. Just as Christ took on Piers' arms, we can only truly imitate Christ by becoming his flesh, a feminine flesh that lactates, bleeds, and nurtures.

In his argument concerning disabled bodies and the observer's faith in his/her own "coherent" body and identity challenged by fragmentary or disabled bodies, Lennard Davis posits that Western art privileges the whole body.[58] As his work articulating disability theory has shown, the fragmented/disabled body disturbs "normal" bodies. We work to avoid

or ignore fragmented, disabled bodies or to finish them imaginatively in an effort to make them palatable. As Davis has written, "The unwhole body is the unholy body."[59] Yet Christ's body is both unwhole *and* holy. Disabled by his wounds, the resurrected Christ is a "natural embodiment" of God within each of us.[60] It is in his very humiliation and degradation that Christ attains his meaning for Christians personally. Late medieval incarnational theology with its devotion to Christ's becoming human explored embodiment in its most sacred and profane manifestations—most lofty and most lowly, masculine and feminine, clean and filthy.[61] While not articulated fully, the implications of an excremental God works affectively for the faithful. Linda Holler characterizes two types of Christ wherein the wounds of Christ are viewed as a means to redemption beyond this world, "unencumbered by the demands of the body"; or as "signifying the price of social justice" and a means to overcoming dualism.[62] Rather than transcending our human condition, His wounds tie Him to it.[63] The excremental God allows us to see excrement not as something to be transcended but acknowledged and (re)used. The low, sordid form of Christ's crucifixion reveals the penetrable, fallible human body capable of redemption and receiving grace. The unbounded nature of our bodies, as seen in our production of excrement, can be a profound source, not just for shame, guilt, and fear, but also for joy, liberation and upliftment.[64] The "disabled" excremental God fully humanizes us.[65]

The Pardoner's Tale: Implications for Redemptive Filth

A notorious incident occurs at the end of the *Pardoner's Tale* where the yoking of the sacred and the filthy is not intended to have an allegorically palatable meaning. Although the Pardoner has just confessed that his relics are false, he perseveres in trying to sell them. Initially, the Pardoner encourages the sinful Host to be the first to kiss the relics.

> "I rede that oure Hoost heere shal bigynne,
> For he is moost envoluped in synne.
> Com forth, sire Hoost, and offre first anon,
> And thou shalt kisse the relikes everychon,
> Ye, for a grote! Unbokele anon thy purs."
> (*The Pardoner's Tale*, VI.941–945)

The infuriated Host imagines being forced to kiss the Pardoner's undergarments smeared with excrement.

> "Nay, nay!" quod he, "thanne have I Cristes curs!
> Lat be," quod he, "it shal nat be, so theech!

Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde breech,
And swere it were a relyk of a seint,
Though it were with thy fundement depeint!"
(*The Pardoner's Tale*, VI.946–950)

The Host continues by expressing the wish to cut off the Pardoner's balls as a substitute for relics and enshrining them in a hog's turd.

But, by the croys which that Seint Eleyne fond,
I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
In stide of relikes or of seintuarie.
Lat kutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;
They shul be shryned in an hogges toord!
(*The Pardoner's Tale*, VI.951–955)

The Host overtly associates relics, balls, and shit. While in the 1990s queer theorists focused on the sexual ramifications of this insult,[66] I would like to emphasize the more neglected elements of this triad: excrement and relics. In discussing the dung in the Harry's insult, Allen Frantzen writes that Harry annihilates the Pardoner's organs when he "*soils* them. Harry's real weapon is *filth*."[67] The Host's strength is in soiling, in polluting, the Pardoner, possibly working out of a tradition that reads the eunuch as filth.[68] The Host is, in essence, not only associating the Pardoner's balls but the relics themselves with excrement. Pilgrimage negotiates filth and prohibition. The presence of filth in the person of the polluted pilgrim can be integrated into a theological stance in which the sacred, even when touched with profanity, remains inviolable. The Host exposes that there is no difference between saintly others and us; like us, they defecate. When the host insults the Pardoner by suggesting he would enshrine his balls in a hog's turd, he collapses the fecal and the sacred. The Pardoner's false relics and the Host's insult show that what we consider to be shit and what we consider to be sacred are, in fact, not absolute, but contextual and changeable. The Host reveals the ambiguity inherent in the structure of pilgrimage as discussed in chapter 6: that people venerate something that functions *symbolically* as excrement—the superfluous waste of a corpse, that which ordinarily is perceived as filth.[69] The ritual of pilgrimage makes the polluting object one of ritual focus.

By bidding the Host kiss his relics, the Pardoner unleashes danger for the Host and the Host's masculinity. But the Host's rejoinder is far more disruptive than the Pardoner's action, for his insult threatens to dismantle the symbolic system of pilgrimage itself. The Host is disgusted by the Pardoner's daring to ask the Host to kiss his relics (his balls,

his excrement); but the Host goes one further by making explicit the association linking relics, balls, and shit, thus threatening the controlling fiction of pilgrimage—wherein relics function as part of the symbolic web of detritus. What is shocking about the Host's insult is not that he threatens to cut off the Pardoner's balls, which is a rather conventional attack on manhood; rather that the Host exposes what is underpinning the pilgrimage—indeed, all pilgrimages—itself: that, discursively, relics are no more than symbolic excrement.[70] This is literalized in one of the stories in *Thousand and One Nights* that suggests how Muslims read Christians as embodying defilement. In this tale, the high patriarch of Constantinople is so revered that his dried excrement is utilized as holy incense for ceremonial purposes. In order to produce more of this sacred filth, "the priests used to forge the powder by mixing less holy matters with it, that is to say, the excrements of lesser patriarch and even of the priests themselves." Christian soldiers then kiss a cross smeared with this matter. "[T]here could be no doubt as to the genuineness of the powder as it smells terribly and would have killed any elephant in the Muslim army."[71] While this story is meant to parody Christian ritual, at the same time it touches on a potential aspect of the relic: the fact that it is a commodity and, as such, filthy.

Chaucer's Host implies that the shrines visited in the pilgrimage are memorials to what imaginatively is no more than excrement. By verbally linking relics and excrement, the Host confuses vilified shit and life-giving, healing relics/dung. As Raison argues in *Roman de la Rose*, meaning is imposed arbitrarily on a word by the user and fixed by custom and society. Raison argues, "If…I had called testicles relics and had declared relics to be testicles, then you, who here criticize me and goad me on account of them, would reply that 'relics' was an ugly, base word. 'Testicles' is a good name and I like it, and so, in faith, are 'testes' and 'penis.'"[72] The Host's words expose the edifice upon which Christian pilgrimage is based by pointing up the arbitrary divisions between the filthy and pure, the sacred and profane. Canterbury is presented as a place where filth is not only present, but valorized: the relic as redeemed dung. There is mockery of Thomas's beshitten breeches and hostility to the enshrined turd/balls, but there is hope as well. The Host falls into the category of the joker who "appears to be a privileged person who can say certain things in a certain way which confers immunity." A joker can even be read as a "ritual purifier,"[73] for the Host's insult ultimately results in the kiss between him and the Pardoner initiated by the Knight. The Pardoner, sullied as a filthed relic himself, is kissed by the Host in a ritual parodying the kissing of relics. Dung contains redemptive powers; hence the kiss of peace at the end of the Pardoner's Tale despite the virulent

insult of filth and violence uttered by the Host. Excrement can be purgative and curative. The kiss may be imposed and unlikely, yet it suggests redemption. Only the kiss of peace can rectify the transgression voiced by the Host.[74]

All references to excrement gesture simultaneously to its opposite—purity. As orchestrator of a supper (never eaten, it is true), Chaucer's Host functions as an (admittedly debased) similacrum of the other Host, the Host par excellence, the Host of the Last Supper, Christ Himself. Considering that Chaucer is continually playing with multiple meanings, it would be surprising if we were not to consider the double meaning of the Host, more often referred to as the Hoost than as Harry Bailey.[75] In fact, according to the *MED*, the use of *host* as bread consecrated into the Eucharist proliferates in usage in the 1390s when Chaucer was writing *The Canterbury Tales*. While David Aers argues that *The Canterbury Tales* has unexpectedly absented the Eucharist from tales we would normally expect it to show up in,[76] I would argue for a poem constantly grappling with issues of transubstantiation and the Eucharist, in part through the figure of the Host. With the Host we are reminded continually of his difference from the True Host. That host—Christ—became, and becomes, eternally the host eaten and consumed by his believers, while this Host, Chaucer's Host, can only point out a link between shrines and shit and never redeems them. We are drawn to read this Host not as the wafer turned Eucharist; the simulacrum is just that, a fake, just as fake as the Pardoner's relics. Each reminder of the Host Harry Bailey suggests the opposite sort of Host, the bread that is consecrated as the body of Christ. The accident of dung may be shit, but the Eucharist as ingested body allows renewal in the cannibalistic consumer. Like Harry Bailly, Chaucer's Parson represents the monologic system, wherein the body and its excrement are only negative and can only represent sin and immorality. The Parson's pilgrimage text is a linear path to the closure of either salvation or damnation. While the Parson clearly works within the boundaries of contrition, confession, and satisfaction and, thus, the belief that one can alter one's destiny, there hangs a gloomy sense of joylessness and strictness over his view of the world. Excrement is utterly unredeemable; it functions monologically as a metaphor for spiritual filth that is deep pollution. The heavenly Jerusalem is a clean city with no filth.

Yet Catholic pilgrimage is dialogic. The pilgrim seeks a relationship with a saint and other pilgrims. It is a social act of faith. Even relics are dialogical: one person's body part healing another's, acting for another's health and wellness. The pilgrim's body and the saint's body are in a dialogical relationship to one another. Dung renews life through fertilization; relics, symbolically excremental as the detritus of the body, renew

through healing. The bread of the Host and the consequent excrement of the consumer is accident, but the body of Christ is the true, renewing substance. Chaucer recognizes the beauty in embracing the sign of God as transcendent, authentic, and sublime, the cause and means of aesthetic desire. Yet at the same time, he sees the inadequacy of human language in expressing this Being. Chaucer's work ends at the moment before consuming the Eucharist. In confessing in the *Retraction*, he is on the cusp of satisfaction, as is the reader whose confession and satisfaction lie in ruminating on the meaning of the *Canterbury Tales*. The narrator (presumably) eats the true Host once the text closes (if it ever does). But we readers are left eternally in the moment before consuming the Host. The true Host lies not in this text, *The Canterbury Tales*, but is available to be consumed by us once we have confessed just as the narrator does at the end in the *Retraction*. The real supper is the one we eat with Christ and of Christ, since it is the simulacrum of the Last Supper—unlike the debased version set up by Harry Bailey. There is no last supper for the pilgrims or the pilgrim-reader of *The Canterbury Tales*; there is no transcendent meal; it lies always in the future to be eaten, consumed by the reader in the form of a text, like the Old English riddle's bookworm. Chaucer ultimately directs our attention to the scatological not only to shock or amuse, but to suggest that only in our deepest humanity, even in the filth of our bodies, can we find redemption.[77]

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CHAPTER 8

THE RHIZOMATIC PILGRIM BODY AND ALCHEMICAL POETRY

Excremental Marginalia: Mediating Reality

Pilgrimage, a sacred rite, and the body, a profane material entity, exemplify the (con)fusion of sacred and profane. The medieval body is unfinished, unbounded, and fragmentary. Artists and writers react to this in various ways. Excremental marginalia both joke about the defecating body and take it seriously; Christine de Pizan rejects and ignores the pilgrim body; Margery Kempe redeems it. Chaucer reflects on the pilgrim body in his poetry. Excrement functions as an ingredient in the alchemical stew of his writing, not just as a spice to "saffron" it, as Latin does the Pardoner's speech (VI.345), but as a vital ingredient, which punctures, deflates, and allows for hope.

Visual images of excrement or excrement-related activities can be found throughout medieval art: in manuscripts, church stalls, sculptures, and gargoyles.[1] Some depict literal feces or acts associated somehow with bodily effluvia, which concern everyday matters. A picture of Villany from the *Roman de la Rose* shows a chamber pot and distaff (French, late fifteenth century).[2] One would expect that children would be associated with excremental practices as they are learning to be disciplined into the habits of sanitary civilization. Most infants are depicted in swaddling clothes that would have collected an infant's fecal matter, such as in a English fourteenth-century manuscript,[3] but the striking Bohun Psalter from before 1373 depicts the baby Jesus naked.[4] A highly decorated northern French Book of Hours from the early sixteenth century shows one child sitting on a potty chair and another drying a diaper by the fire.[5] We should be cautious about mistaking images in manuscripts or on church walls as explicitly replicating "reality" or as unmediated documents recording the narrative of everyday life. Images are not necessarily "invaluable historical

source material,"[6] rather they help construct a "reality."[7] After all, in the Luttrell Psalter, the clothes of the peasants are too pretty and colorful to be accurate,[8] and, while the peasants are busy plowing, sowing, harrowing, breaking clods, weeding, and gathering harvest, they are not depicted dunging. Nevertheless, images can serve as "an image of [medieval] self-understanding; an image of their ideology."[9]

Naughty manuscript marginalia depicting fecal matters, ignored for a time as meaningless frivolities, have come to be read in wide-ranging ways, from doodles to allegories.[10] Rather than being innocent of meaning,[11] scatological images, often involving anthropomorphized animals or hybrid creatures, carry significance beyond that of a medieval sense of humor. These bodies have had a troubled history in scholarship because of the attempt to harness their energy, to understand them and, thereby, control them. Karl Wentersdorf concludes that animal priests and doctors are not criticizing the professions they enact, but those individuals within those professions who are inferior or corrupt.[12] A moralizing didactic purpose lies behind these images, with excrement identified with the devil and sin. Such marginalia have been linked to exempla used in popular preaching,[13] or may have functioned as mnemonic devices, as visual metaphors of textual ones.[14] When animals satirize human actions by mimicking them, we recognize ourselves in the parodic margins of manuscripts. For example, an early fourteenth-century Breviary (British Library, Additional MS 29253) shows both an ape and hybrid man defecating coins. We are meant to see ourselves in these creatures who consume money. Unlike them, we are materially human; like them, we are guilty of the sin of avarice. But with that recognition comes one distinction: we are not those apes, even though we see ourselves in them. This simultaneous recognition and distinguishing make us human.[15]

In his extensive writings about the appearance of filth and excrement in the margins of manuscripts, Michael Camille reminds us that filth does not necessarily indicate subversion. In fact, grotesques and their dirty activities "[o]nce firmly located in a margin, [pose] little threat to the central order. [They] *need* not be integrated."[16] While the margins may problematize, they do not ultimately undermine the central authority.[17] Fecal marginalia do not ahistorically signify; rather such marginalia emblemize the position of marginalia in general. The violable boundaries of the body are reflected in the margins of medieval manuscripts, where an abundance of excremental images can appear.[18] Manuscript margins of many "of the most luxurious and expensive illustrated manuscripts of this period [fourteenth century] are full of the turds of human waste, expelled from the anuses of various creatures."[19] Filth, ejected from the margins or borders of our bodily orifices, is analogous for margins in general.[20]

The book, like the body, was not seen as "closed" in the Middle Ages.[21] Marginal images lie between meanings, between the edge and the center, in a transitional space. As such, the presence of marginal material, matter literally spilling forth from the margins of one's body, is an analogue for the body itself. Being on the margin replicates the place of excrement itself. The margin is a liminal space, a bridge mediating between the reader and the central text. In Bodley 264, f. 56, the defecating man and praying nun are two ends (so to speak) of the same spectrum. The reader vacillates identifying herself with the defecating and praying figures. These marginal figures suture us into the work, one that has no meaning without our participation.

Just like the human body, the text is sacred and profane, spatialized with the central sacred arena surrounded by the detritus, the scum spooned off that central froth. The margin is the area that invokes purgatory, the in-between, the liminal space between sacred and profane. It is also the space of purgation and transformation, linked to the fragmented body capable of redemption and salvation. The *Macclesfield Psalter* (1330s) contains numerous images of scatological activities, such as a contortionist exposing his anus.[22] The urinating man in the Macclesfield Psalter opposite the Office of the Dead echoes the transformation, decay, and rebirth in death itself. Such images can be read allegorically, but at the same time retain a material presence. This "both/and" signals the rhizomatic character of marginal excremental images. Grotesques, often defecating or related to urine, are fragmented and defecatory. They comment on the porous nature of our fragmented bodies and remind us of our own corporeality.

The Unfinished Pilgrim Body and Metatextual Implications

Filthy and incomplete bodies are linked with pilgrimage in this life. Excrement was literally of concern for pilgrims as we can see in the account by the Dominican Felix Fabri of Ulm, who traveled to the Holy Land in 1480 and 1483. In his account to help future pilgrims on their sojourns, he describes the boat journey to Jerusalem where just being able to defecate was a trial.

> As the poet says, "A ripe turd is an unbearable burden" [*ut dicitur metrice: maturum stercus est importabile pondus*]. A few words on the manner of urinating and shitting on a boat.
>
> Each pilgrim has near his bed a urinal—a vessel of terracotta, a small bottle—into which he urinates and vomits. But since the quarters are

> cramped for the number of people, and dark besides, and since there is much coming and going, it is seldom that these vessels are not overturned before dawn. Quite regularly in fact, driven by a pressing urge that obliges him to get up, some clumsy fellow will knock over five or six urinals in passing, giving rise to an intolerable stench....
>
> The pilgrim must be careful not to hold back on account of false modesty and not relieve the stomach; to do so is most harmful to the traveler. At sea it is easy to become constipated. Here is good advice for the pilgrim: go to the privies three or four times every day, even when there is no natural urge, in order to promote evacuation by discreet efforts; and do not lose hope if nothing comes on the third or fourth try. Go often, loosen your belt, untie all the knots of your clothes over chest and stomach, and evacuation will occur even if your intestines are filled with stones.[23]

Fabri also describes how the pilgrims would throw full chamber pots at the candles of other pilgrims to shut them up at night.[24] This historical document records literal excremental incidents.

References to excrement, the body's product, are unusually frequent in pilgrimage texts. Pilgrimage, a ritual wedded to amendment and change, and excrement, which composts into fertilizer to be useful, both involve the process of material and spiritual metamorphosis. The pilgrim, meant to be transformed and changed, and excrement, a symbol for the way the body, the site where food changes into excrement, is porous, are analogous in being liminal. The pilgrim is not yet waste; he is continually recycling himself until death through the process of amendment (contrition, confession, and satisfaction). Imaginative pilgrimage literature recognizes the fantasy of the unified self. If the body is a text with its own narrative structure,[25] what does that mean for the pilgrim body? Pilgrims seek out shrines with relics, which typically are body parts of the dead. The pilgrim desires access to the saint's fragmented body. In pilgrimage literature, the narrator is not a unified subject; hence the many tales, the non-cohesion, and multivocality. The fragmentary text gestures at complete meaning just as the relic is a metonymy for the saint's body.

A vast network of roots, the rhizome is not just associated with plant growth and gardening; it has also functioned recently as a critical theory term applied to narrative. The rhizome, described as "an ambulatory... structure,"[26] then seems appropriate to explore in connection with pilgrimage, an ambulatory ritual by its very nature. It is a useful paradigm for entering pilgrimage poetry in the fourteenth century, which tends to be fragmentary (*The Canterbury Tales*) or multiple (*Piers Plowman*, the dual versions of *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*) in structure. This "rhizomatic" structure reflects the fragmentary nature of the soul in

the ritual of pilgrimage. The concept of the rhizome is a useful one for describing pilgrimage literature that depicts ever-evolving pilgrimage, whose transformation is analogous to that of continually recycled and amended waste. The rhizome functions as a metaphor for the lack of closure in fourteenth-century pilgrimage literature. The body—the body of the pilgrimage poem and the physical body of the pilgrim—has no closure. This ever-changing pilgrim body, exemplified in the production of excrement, is linked to the ever-changing narrative or text, which is continually revised, revisable, and unstable. The body of the literary pilgrimage text enacts fragmentation metatextually, as, for example, with the many tales in Chaucer's poem and the multiple and conflicting versions of Langland's vision. Such narratives recognize that the self is not whole or finished but under constant revision. The poet must amend his poem, an analogue for body and soul. Both bodies—one made of flesh and blood, the other consisting of words—are rhizomatic in structure.

A marginal and ambiguous figure, the pilgrim is spatially in-between—between home and the desired shrine. Ritual pilgrimage sacralizes the marginal state. The fragmented body, like the fragmented poem, is signaled by the presence of filth. Yet redemption lies in this lack of closure and in change. We can see this in Julian of Norwich's *Shewings* in which she invokes pilgrimage: "[A]nd in other manner he shewde hym in erth thus, as it were a pylgrymage, that is to sey he is here with vs ledyng vs, and shalle be tylle whan he hath/ brought vs alle to his blysse in hevyn."[27] As she points out, "This boke is begonne by goddys/ gyfte and his grace, but it is nott yett performyd, as to my syght."[28] She rewrites her work over her life; both her life and the text voicing it are incomplete until death. The liminal pilgrim, in a state of in-between, emphasizes the boundaries of bodies, hence, excremental moments are appropriate to understanding it.[29] This body of metamorphosis is the pilgrim body, reflected in the body of the pilgrimage text, a body undergoing continual amendment. The sense of birth from manure, the redemptive quality laden in excrement, and produce from waste suggest how closure is deadening. Only in an open text, as seen in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century pilgrimage texts, for example, can there be hope for a future that never shuts down, one that is sustainable and continual.[30]

Christine de Pizan: Rejection of the (Pilgrim) Body Without Organs

In Elizabeth Grosz's book, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Grosz asks how we can overturn the hierarchy in which the mind is favored over the body. Notions of the unified, coherent body have been found

to be problematic by feminist critics such as Grosz.[31] As Jeffrey J. Cohen asks, "What if the body were conceived in other disciplines as likewise [as in microbiology] open and permeable?"[32] For Deleuze and Guattari, bodies are in a perpetual process of "production and metamorphosis;"[33] their notion of the Body without Organs resists a fixed or stabilized identity.[34] Grosz's claim for a feminism based on Deleuze and Guattari is laden with pilgrimage imagery:

> This, then is a risky undertaking, one in which there is a danger that one may lose one's way, be pulled astray from the path one has chosen; but the risks and rewards may be worth taking insofar as new paths of exploration, new goals, new theoretical paradigms and frameworks, may be made possible which could bypass the dilemmas posed for feminists by binary or dichotomous thought.[35]

This feminism, like Dante's *selva oscura* or "dark wood," could lead one astray. But one must risk just such a pilgrimage. Grosz acknowledges the discomfort some feminist scholars have expressed in their readings of Deleuze and Guattari whose understanding of the world is refigured from concepts such as binaries, being, and correlations to those such as "planes, intensities, flows, becomings, [and] linkages;"[36] "but if we do not walk in dangerous places and different types of terrain, nothing new will be found, no explorations are possible, and things remain the same."[37] Grosz champions Deleuze and Guattari, suggesting that "feminism, or indeed any political struggle must not content itself with a final goal, a resting point, a point of stability or identity. Political struggles are by their nature endless and ever-changing;"[38] in other words, rhizomatic.

The misogynistic construction of the female body made some women writers hesitant to claim bodiliness, in all its potentially disturbing mess and chaos, as ultimately redemptive. Like Langland and Chaucer, Christine de Pizan was highly influenced by Dante. Her dream vision poem, *Le Livre du Chemin de Long Estude*, borrows frequently from the *Commédia*. The narrator Christine, guided by the Sibyl who had guided Aeneas through the Underworld, undergoes an earthly pilgrimage to the Holy Land, among other places. Eventually, after arriving at the Court of Reason, Christine returns to where she began: in the domestic interior of her home.[39] Christine works to similar ends in her better known *Book of the City of Ladies* [*Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*]. This prose work contains numerous references to the *Commédia*, has a tripartite structure, and utilizes female guides for the narrator. The issue of prose versus poetry aside, Christine opts to forego the pilgrimage poem model. Why? Her choice to avoid pilgrimage may lie in the structure of the pilgrim

body itself. Pilgrim bodies are in a perpetual process of metamorphosis. Grosz's description of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the body as "a discontinuous, nontotalizable series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, speeds and durations"[40] could be applied to pilgrimage literature, specifically fourteenth-century pilgrimage poetry, which is intimately concerned with bodies. The porous, fluid pilgrim body closely resembles the body of women as constructed by misogynist writers. Women's bodies are analogous to the pilgrim body, fluid and changing. The rhizomatic pilgrim body, the body of non-closure, is threatening, much as women's bodies were perceived to be in the Middle Ages and, in the misogynistic tradition, condemned and reviled. The identification of women as leaky vessels carries over into secular pilgrimage literature, where women pilgrims are almost inevitably represented as sexual or deviant, singled out for censure. Their fluidity in movement makes them threatening figures, open to mockery and criticism.[41] The female pilgrim body constitutes the extreme instance of the rhizomatic body: both aspects—female and pilgrim—are rhizomatic in nature.

Perhaps the position of women pilgrims historically and as tropes in literature made the guise of the pilgrim impossible for some women writers to don. A pilgrimage work would only raise the spectre of women's penchant for wandering and remind the reader of their fluidity. Christine avoids the conventions set up by the pilgrim-poets of the previous century in order to establish the virtue and worthiness of women. Grosz has suggested that feminists might find Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the body useful for those wanting to "reconceive bodies outside the binary oppositions imposed on the body by the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object and interior/exterior oppositions."[42] In fact, Christine views women according to these binaries. She does not want to dismantle the binaries that had been used by misogynist writers. Rather than redeeming this body, Christine avoids it to argue for a body grounded in hierarchy, order, and stable identity. The pilgrim body as exemplified in fourteenth-century pilgrimage texts is too dangerous for Christine to co-opt for her project given the instability of that body, which overlaps with misogynistic readings of female bodies. Instead, Christine shows how women can be like men, can be as stable as men, as exemplified most perfectly in the Virgin Mary.[43] Christine constructs a literary text with closure, a textual body that shadows the body without fissures and openings. She challenges the common representations of women by emphasizing the stability of women by artfully and deliberately constructing a city of women as solid, stable, and eternal as Augustine's City of God. Her city has no mention of sewers, only

"fresh waters" used to construct it.[44] This aids her in her construction of women; in order for it to be a positive construction, she cannot allude to their production of filth.

Margery Kempe: Embracing the (Pilgrim) Body Without Organs

The body Christine posits is positioned in contrast to the one we see in Margery Kempe. Grosz writes that in Deleuze and Guattari's model, desire is "fundamentally nomadic not teleological, meandering, creative, nonrepetitive, proliferative, unpredictable."[45] Margery Kempe is literally nomadic in that she is virtually constantly on pilgrimage. The "Body without Organs" is the body that is opposed to "the body as it is stratified, regulated, ordered, and functional, as it is subordinated to the exigencies of property and propriety."[46] This seems to bespeak Margery's state in the first chapter of the book, when she goes mad after giving birth. Only in accepting the body when it is "stratified, unified, organized, and hierarchized"[47] does Margery regain her sanity and the buttery keys. Margery's pilgrim body is already dangerous by wandering over the landscape out of the control of (male) authorities. She threatens due to the inherent rhizomatic nature of the pilgrim body, that is, always changing, transforming, and sending out shoots like new paths headed to a shrine. Kempe creates a rhizomatic network all over England and Europe through the pilgrimage sites she visits. She recognizes that bodies in general, and hers—as female and a pilgrim—in particular, are porous and fissured; for example, at one point she relates how she has the flux[48] and later is compelled to repeatedly void her stomach.[49] She is aware how her own body has borders that can be crossed and transgressed, such as when she agrees to commit adultery, only to be rejected by her tempter, or when she fears rape.

Margery tells the long parable on misgovernance where a bear gobbles up pears and then shits them out. But she suggests that repentance and amendment will—essentially—cure this excreted filth.[50] Rather than creating a body without orifices, a body of purity, Margery reconfigures the rhizomatic, open, excremental body into one that can redeem, as in the case of the mad wife in Chapter 75, and be redeemed. While Christine prefers allegorical figures who transcend the flesh, Kempe finds her own body—fluid both metaphorically, in moving across the landscape, and literally, with cleansing and pure tears[51]—redeemed through Christ's acceptance of it. Her body, a simulacrum of virginity, is like Christ's body, one without closure, beaten, bleeding, dying, and resurrected. Indeed, Margery even desires abject humiliation: "And I wolde,

Lord, for þi lofe be leyd nakyd on an hyrdil, alle men to wonderyn on me for þi loue, so it wer no perel to her sowlys, & þei to castyn slory & slugge on me, & be drawyn fro town to town euery day my lyfe-tyme…." (Chapter 77) ["And I would, Lord, for your love be laid naked on a hurdle, all men to wonder on me, for your love, if it were no peril to their souls, and they to cast slurry and sludge on me, and be drawn from town to town every day of my lifetime…"].[52] *Slugge* is mud or mire and *slory* mud or slime. By redeeming the open, rhizomatic body, Margery simultaneously redeems her wandering and rhizomatic pilgrim body, a body viewed with suspicion by some of her contemporaries.

Poetic Alchemy

> Filth is an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it.[53]

The ecopoet Gary Snyder argues that language is "fundamentally wild. 'Wild' as in wild ecosystems—richly interconnected, interdependent, and incredibly complex…."[54] References to excrement are not solely self-disciplinary but part of a web of discursive practices; these circumscribe the body, yes, but also give voice to the repressed. "Wild" language is expressed in wordplay and the vernacular.[55] Rather than a grotesque body like that in the Bakhtinian model, where the reversal of up and down, though celebrated, retains the hierarchical binary, Snyder embraces a rhizomatic network of understanding. As he writes in *The Practice of the Wild*,

> I like to imagine a "depth ecology" that would go to the dark side of nature – the ball of crunched bones in a scat….Life is not just diurnal and a property of large interesting vertebrates, it is also nocturnal, anaerobic, cannibalistic, microscopic, digestive, fermentative: cooking away in the warm dark…. And there is a world of nature on the decay side, a world of beings who do rot and decay in the shade. Human beings have made much of purity, and are repelled by blood, pollution, putrefaction. The other side of the 'sacred' is the sight of your beloved in the underworld, dripping with maggots…. Narratives are one sort of trace that we leave in the world. All our literatures are leavings.[56]

Snyder envisions culture as decay,[57] with poets functioning as "mushrooms or fungus….[who] digest the symbol-detritus."[58] In other words, as cultures change (decay), new forms develop "in a composting, fermentive pattern." Artistic memory is also a way of "recycling the richest thoughts and feelings of a community."[59] Poets reconcile growth

and decay, renewal and rebirth. The poet mediates between nature and culture; references to excrement are poets' droppings.

We can endorse Chaucer's fecopoetics[60] as representative of social commentary beyond mere gross humor. The poet's use of scatological discourse acknowledges the porous boundaries of the body. In the *Prologue* to Sir Thopas, the Host characterizes the narrator as "elvyssh" (VII.703). In the Canon's Yeoman's *Tale*, the Yeoman calls alchemy an "elvysshe craft" (VIII.751). Through the linkage of the word "elvyssh[e]," Chaucer analogizes alchemy with poetry.[61] Excrement was a critical element in the scientific arena of alchemy.[62] An ongoing quarrel existed in the late medieval period between the adherents of "organic" approaches to alchemical transformation and adherents of the "metallic" approach. The organic proponents used elements like blood, saliva, urine, and dung, materials common to medicine and early chemistry, while the metallic proponents insisted upon the efficacy of mercury.[63] Excrement was used both as an ingredient and as an element in the alchemical cooking process. One mid-fourteenth-century medical alchemical treatise, for example, refers to distilling alcohol using a manure furnace when a more traditional apparatus is not available. The alcohol was then used for medical purposes.[64] One valence for the Middle English word *Digestioun* indicates "the transformation of any substance used in alchemy." This suggests a connection with the organic approach to alchemical transformation, since digestion is an organic transformative act. Alchemy is a field in which literal waste in the form of dung and piss was used to facilitate (pseudo-) scientific endeavors. Yet such creative efforts could backfire—literally. The Canon's Yeoman complains about the redness in his face. Metal fumes in his alchemical experiments "consumed and wasted han my reednesse" (VIII.1100). He warns against spending money on alchemy since you will only "wasten al that ye may rape and renne" (1422). The endeavor to create only produces waste. Alchemy, he tells us, uses "donge, pisse" (VIII.807), referring to the organic approach to alchemy as opposed to the metallic, which would have used material such as mercury. Like produces like: shit produces only shit, while metal alone can act as a catalyst for metal. But late medieval culture was well aware that, doctrinally, one element could become an entirely different element: bread could become flesh and wine could become blood. Dung as an element in alchemy reminds us of the Eucharist and the alchemical process of transubstantiation[65]—the bread and wine transformed into Christ's body and blood through language. The organic approach to alchemy was allied to transubstantiation, while the metallic approach was more appropriate to an increasingly prevalent rejection of the productive value of dung and excrement. The exoteric transmutation of metal

into gold is the accident of change, while the true substance is esoteric spiritual transformation.[66]

The poet as ploughman metaphor permeates *Piers Plowman*. The trade of the poet-ploughman-pilgrim involves shovelling English as good dung, not infertile Latin.[67] The vernacular helps fertilize in the sense of amending many souls; it multiplies faith. It is the true fecundity, not the false fertility of the fake relics advertised by the Pardoner. Vernacular poetry is amended into transforming dung that only the ploughman (poet) truly shovels. Like Piers, who is ploughman/pilgrim/Christ, Chaucer's narrator shovels shit in the many references to excrement. The poet in the *Retraction* divides those tales that lead to sin (morally corrupting excrement) from sacralized verse (redemptive dung). The *Nun's Priest's Tale* ends with the famous admonition: "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (VII.3443). According to the OED, chaff is defined as the "husks of corn or other grain separated by threshing or winnowing," ostensibly the definition of the *Nun's Priest's Tale*.[68] But there is a definition that follows: "Refuse, worthless matter" (earliest citation 1400). I would argue that this usage could be dated earlier to the *Nun's Priest's Tale*. In fact, the *MED* cites "chaf" as meaning "something trivial or worthless" or "something evil, such as temptation or sinning" starting around 1390. Chaucer frequently sets up a binary between what is worth something or useful (dung) and what is excrement (shit/useless). Perhaps he doubts that words can lead to anything virtuous and fears that poetry is all shit, that his poetry *is* "drasty" or not even worth a "toord" (VII.930), as the Host so rudely suggests. Or, could it be the poet even prays for his poetry *to be* "drasty" (what the *OED* define as the *dregs*, *feces*, *refuse*, *residue*), and, at best, a simulacrum of the Word.

Chaucer often uses excrement for signaling illicit greed for money: the friar desirous of money in *The Summoner's Tale* befouled by the fart; greedy religious punished by the image of Satan's anus; the avaricious pardoner insulted by a turd. The body politic is controlled by insulting the human body, by using its own filth to cleanse homeopathically. Excess desire, greed, and lust are punished by excess in the form of shit. But, less conventionally, excrement is an ingredient Chaucer uses to break open, explore, or question genres, just as the Canon's Yeoman's "pot tobreketh" (VIII.907). Filth does not just belong to the *fabliau*; it is everywhere human actors are present. Alison's "hol," punctuated by Nicholas's fart, destroys Absolon's courtly love fantasy. In *The Reeve's Tale*, the need to pee allows for vengeful rape. The incongruous presence of the dawn song genre spoken between Malyne and Aleyn interrupts the *fabliau*, discomforts us, exposing this romantic encounter as rape.[69] The Reeve attempts to control the danger or phantom of sexual assault through

genre manipulation. Chaucer, all too aware, allows the disjunction, this rupture in genre, to alert the reader to the problem of functioning solely *within* a genre. We want to passively succumb to the genre; we desire the oppression genres wield through their own version of social control. But Chaucer does not let us wallow in our generic ease. By forcing a disjunction of genres, signalled through excrement (when Symken's wife goes to piss), Chaucer discomforts us. Excrement functions as a kind of generic question mark: to criticize host desecration tales that demonize "others," to probe our supposed separation from animals in a beast tale, to point up the playful lust at the heart of the "love story" between Damian and May and the lack of power she suffers in her marriage to January.[70] Can poetry make gold out of dung?[71] Poetry reigns excess in through rhyme and meter. Doggerel and alliteration *is* "drasty" (VII.923); the endless associations seem untamed (though Langland would surely disagree). The way to control those tales that "sownen into synne" (X.1085) is through another sound; that of the fart, a sweet trumpet that controls and stops sin. The friar in *The Summoner's Tale* expects something worthwhile—money—yet all he gets is a fart, one that gets divided and interpreted. Perhaps this self-mocking moment functions metatextually, parodying hyperinterpretation, something we as readers need to be careful of. Sometimes a fart is just a fart.

Does the literary text function as a similacrum of the Host/God? The concept of concomitance, in which Christ was fully present in every crumb of the Eucharist, allowed for the idea of perfection being seen in the part, the whole as present in the fragment or relic.[72] Hence the fragmented pilgrimage texts, those works headed to the part, the relic, the fragment. It is arguable that the text acts or functions as a relic, a part of a sacred person, the veronica, the image of God that can lead to our being touched by God. Our reading is a pilgrimage. We eat a work, chew the cud, and try to create some higher good from it; but chewing suggests at the same time the final product—excrement. Think of the "cloutes" May tears Damian's love letter into (IV.1953). Could they refer to menstrual rags or paper for wiping herself? The *MED* includes the following meanings for "cloutes": fragment or pieces (clearly the primary meaning intended here); and cloth for bandaging (and presumably what women used for menstrual rags). Is the love letter nothing more than toilet paper; after all, once she has read the letter she takes it and "in the pryvee softely it caste" (IV.1954)?[73] Is this the fate destined for all writing once it has been consumed?

Chaucer suggests that the open pilgrim body—both written and fleshly—is capable of a vibrant future. Just as a saint's relic, a dead piece of bone, can be understood to be fertile healing dung, so too dead words can,

alchemically, be transformed into "gold" and transform—amend—the reader-pilgrim. Caedmon's retreat in Bede to the stable or cowshed is not merely a means to show his humility, but also to indicate how poetry is as alchemical as transformative pilgrimage.[74] Chaucer, like May, consigns his letters, his poetry, to the privy through fecopoetics. Just as May expresses her agency,[75] Chaucer grapples with issues of religion, gender, the environment, and poetry. The accident of Chaucer's fecopoetics may lie in the realm of the exoteric with its fecal vocabulary, genres like host desecration tales, and moral tales told by an immoral man, but the esoteric substance is redemption. Filth can be sacred when the book/poem functions as an alchemical relic. The real magic is poetry, even poetry laden with filth.

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CHAPTER 9

CHAUCERIAN FECOLOGY AND WASTEWAYS: *THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE*

> "I used to say to people, someday you're going to love us for our manure, and now it's true."
>
> Robert Feenstra, executive director of the local Milk Producers Council in the Chino Basin on a scheme to transform cow manure into energy.[1]

Rural and urban areas interpret dung differently. Excrement is not just disgusting, humiliating, or filthy; it can be disciplined for the public good and the maintenance of a self-sustaining economy. This chapter uses ecocriticism to understand the place of dung in *The Canterbury Tales*. While it may seem anachronistic to apply such a new approach to older literature, Chaucer's poem responds to a "green" reading.[2] Kathleen R. Wallace and Karla Armbruster have proposed applying ecocriticism to texts outside of those conventionally thought of as nature writing.[3] Increasingly, ecocritical studies of medieval literature exist,[4] but, as Lisa J. Kiser has pointed out, the medieval period has, until recently, been largely ignored by ecocritics. To help prevent ecocritical studies from becoming ghettoized and to help the field remain viable as a critical school of analysis, ecocriticism must explore "the role of culture in nature."[5] But the very division of culture from nature is, in itself, not "natural."[6] In fact, it has been argued that "[t]he story that Western civilization tells about itself is the story of culture transcending nature."[7] "Environment" refers not only to "wildness" or "natural" areas, but also landscapes tamed or altered by humans.[8] Nature has always been integrated with culture; that they do not interpenetrate is just an illusion. Practitioners of ecocriticism argue that we can illuminate "original meaning and subsequent significance," where "visions of nature" can be

simultaneously remote and relevant. As Scott Slovic contests, "[T]here is not a single literary work anywhere that utterly defies ecological interpretation, that is 'off limits' to green reading."[9]

Ecocriticism's focus on nature and culture helps us to understand the imaginative place of excrement in medieval thought and understanding. My very linking of excrement with nature may be problematic, reflective of assumptions that fecal matter equals nature.[10] Can we say that *human* excrement is "natural"? Human presence has been much discussed by ecocritics. Yes, humans are part of nature (they are animals, after all), but they create "culture," thereby bridging what is generally viewed as nature and culture. Urban and rural sites generate differing excremental discourses. The very existence of a binary like nature and culture condemns waste from the start,[11] the presence of excrement acting as an ambiguous link between nature and culture. Excrement is viewed as natural by culture, and therefore repellent. But within nature, excrement is vital. A close look at medieval texts and their allusions to excrement complicates a dualist view of excrement wherein absence is good and presence is bad. Fourteenth-century pilgrimage texts praise a sustainable economy of waste and growth. In the country, dung in fields is good. Rural dung-heaps signified wealth and future fertility; dung that fertilized crops would help society and symbolized community. An ecocritical reading of the scatological acknowledges excrement's place in the ecosystem.

> "Where there's muck there's brass."
> Proverbial phrase from the north of England[12]

Not all excrement is worthy of disguise or evasion. Anglo-Saxon England, chiefly a rural economy, endorsed and acknowledged the necessity and efficacy of dung. Estate memoranda from the tenth or eleventh century cite the rights to dung for shepherds and manuring duties for reeves.[13] Ælfric's *Colloquy*, a text meant to teach boys Latin, simultaneously instructs young minds that muck (dung) has a proper place.[14] Animal dung should not be inside, rather on the dung-heap or on the field. Evidence exists that at various times in Anglo-Saxon England, animals were valued more for their milk, wool, or manure than for their flesh.[15] Even late into the medieval period, dung equipment is mentioned in various documents, such as "[iron] dung forks."[16] Lessees were acknowledged to have duties associated with sanctioned and desirable dung, requiring them to dung land.[17] Tenants had certain obligations that, if left unfulfilled, would cause them be prosecuted, including neglecting to dung land.[18]

The image of the medieval peasant reflects varying perceptions of excrement in some traditions. The peasant, surrounded by manure and dirt,[19] becomes the symbol of stupidity and filth, marking him off as being subhuman.[20] The negative association between a boorish peasant and excrement does not apply, however, to the plowmen in Chaucer's *General Prologue* or William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, who view peasants as virtuous and for whom dung is understood to help society. In *Piers Plowman*, Conscience's utopic vision of the proper society includes dung. "Ech man to pleye with a plow, pykoise or spade,/ Spynne, or sprede donge, or spille himself with sleuthe . . ." (III.309–310).[21] Spreading dung becomes an action for the common profit, an activity that stands in opposition to sloth. Reason argues that once Meed stops controlling things, life will improve; in a land of justice, Law will work as a laborer does and put dung on the field (IV.145–148). Later the workers, who are meant to help Piers in the field, complain and kvetch. Piers chastises them, "Ac ye myghte travaille as Truthe wolde and take mete and hyre/ To kepe kyen in the feld, the corn fro the bestes,/ Diken or delven or dyngen upon sheves/ Or helpe make morter or bere muk afelde" (VI.139–142). Dunging or mucking the field is praised as a useful job, one that helps the entire community. Piers lists what he does have, including, "a cow and a calf, and a cart mare/ To drawe afeld my donge the while the droghte lasteth" (VI.286–287). Clearly in the country dung has a positive connotation. In cities, excrement is increasingly superfluous, privatized, and demonized, while rural dung, as a part of food production, is a sign of community. To be useful, excrement must go through some kind of amendment, such as composting into fertilizer. The Parson's brother, the plowman, "hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother" (I.530). Dung—that which fertilizes and helps produce food—is useful, profitable, and helpful.[22] When society functions well, dung fits in with social utility and both personal and common profit.[23] Dung should be, indeed must be, made public due to its efficacy as a fertilizer. The retention, recycling, and transformation of excrement is best done in rural communities.[24]

In the French fabliau, "Du Vilain Asnier (The Villager and His Two Asses)," a dung gatherer drives his donkeys through Montpellier. He faints on smelling the fragrant odors redolent of the spice quarter; no one can revive him until a forkful of dung is put under his nose. The moral, we are told, is as follows: "The moral's clear, and my advice is:/ though you be humble as manure,/ Stick to your nature. Pride is sure/ to make you sick, but Nature cures" ["Et por ce vos vueil ge monstrer/ Que cil fait ne sense ne mesure/ Qui d'orgueil se desennature:/ Ne se doit nus desnaturer"].[25] Here dung is associated with the peasant class in a mocking way, but is also curative, resurrecting the hapless dung farmer.

Dung need not be a turnoff. For example, Guccio Imbratta, the servant of the lying Friar Cipolla in *The Decameron*, delightedly catches sight of a kitchen wench "with a pair of paps like a couple of dung-baskets."[26] From Guccio's point of view, this is a great thing; presumably her breasts are plump and ample as dung piled in a basket might be. But his class is crucial for this comparison, as is hers. No nobleman or woman would make such a comparison. In *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the Owl makes a defense of excrement.

> ȝet þu me telst of oþer þinge,/ Of mine briddes seist gabbinge,/ Þat hore nest nis noȝt clene./ Hit is fale oþer wiȝte imene,/ Vor hors a stable & oxe a stalle/ Doþ al þat hom wule þar falle;/ An lutle children in þe cradele-/ Boþe chorles an ek aþele-/ Doþ al þat in hore ȝoeþe/ Þat hi uorleteþ in hore duȝeþe,/ Wat can þat ȝongling hit bihede? ["And yet you lay another charge against me, insulting my chicks by saying that their nest is dirty. That's true of lots of other creatures; for both the horse in its stable and the ox in its stall leave all their droppings there, just as they wish; and also little children in the cradle—whether peasants or gentlefolk—do in their infancy what they give up in adulthood. How can the youngster guard against it?" (625–635)].

Here the owl defends not only children, clearly recognized as having special defecation privileges before they have been successfully socially disciplined, but also peasants, who are no "lower" than so-called gentlefolk. All of us produce "droppings."[27]

The Host regulates Geoffrey Chaucer's poetry by saying *Sir Thopas* is "nat worth a toord!" (VII.930). While this linkage suggests that poetry is worthless, a turd *was*, in fact, worth something, albeit very little; it was economically valuable.[28] Dung was ascribed financial value as historical documents illustrate. In a probate inventory from 1456, William Atkynson from Helperby was said to have dung in the cowshed worth 1*s.* 8*d.* and John Jakson in a similar document from 1464 was noted as having a "parcel of dung 5*s*."[29] Damages are made against those removing dung illicitly.[30] This valorization of dung for farming purposes, recorded as early as the Anglo-Saxon period, extends into the late medieval and early modern periods. Indeed, a study of the Lancashire town of Prescot shows that well into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dung was permitted to be accumulated for up to a week outside inhabitants' doors, and even longer at the payment of a fee.[31] Much of what Emily Cockayne describes for seventeeth- and eighteenth-century Oxford, Manchester, and London indicates little change from the late medieval period.[32] In 1898, refuse from London was taken to Lett's Wharf in Lambeth on the south bank, a portion of which was sold or given as manure.[33] This

suggests the reciprocal relationship between city and country. Urban centers depended on surrounding rural area for food; but whatever was consumed, had to be excreted. The excreta could be sold back to the country as fertilizer, which would be used for growing food that, in turn, would be sent to the city to be consumed and, subsequently, excreted.[34]

Voicing Nature Fecologically

Ecofeminism suggests that women have been identified as nature and men as culture.[35] The conjoined interests of feminist and green scholarship demonstrate that the very institutions degrading the environment are often linked to the oppression of women.[36] These gender dynamics play out in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, which is packed with excrement, perhaps unsurprisingly, as it takes place on a farm. It has been pointed out that animals in this tale have been anthropomorphized to replicate allegorically the fall of man, disputes among differing religious orders, or the dangers of rhetorical excess. And, indeed, one could easily read the tale as critical of Pertelote. The charming chicken could be viewed as how women have been classically delineated in Western philosophy—as an equivalent for Nature. This association is underscored by her insistence on using herbs from the garden to cure Chauntecleer—both physically and mentally—from his unsettling dream. She understands excrement to be poisoning the ailing rooster's imagination.[37] The feathery fussbudget suggests that dreams are due to excess, hence her desire to purge her beloved rooster both above and below with laxatives. Chauntecleer himself could be read as "natural" since he crows as roosters are wont to do: "Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge/ Than is a clokke or an abbey orlogge./ By nature he knew ech ascencioun/ Of the equynoxial in thilke toun" (VII.2853–2856). In fact, his nature outperforms culture (mechanical clocks).

Patrick Murphy advocates a dialogics in the spirit of Bakhtin, wherein he rejects anthropocentrism and urges instead a relationship between the human self and nature as heterachical (horizontal), not hierarchical (vertical), in nature.[38] Dialogics suggests a rhizomatic web of interaction and mutual accountability.[39] A close examination of Chaucer's text indicates, rather than the hierarchy of man over beast, the cohabitation of human and animal. The rooster and chickens live in the house of the widow (VII.2884). Another example of humano–animal cohabitation occurs in a dream that Chauntecleer relates to demonstrate the accuracy of prophetic dreams. In it, two pilgrims are separated for the night. One beds down in a bed (evidently), while the other is "logged in a stalle,/ Fer in a yeerd, with oxen of the plough" (VII.2996–2997). The pilgrim is lodged *with* animals, not separately from them. This interdomesticity

suggests that in the late Middle Ages one could be literally next to, indeed within and part of, the animal world. Chaucer drives this home in the *Epilogue*, where the Host praises the Nun's Priest for his tale comparing him to "a sperhauk with his yen" (VII.3457). In fact, the tale does not show us so much about how animals are like us, but how we humans are like animals.[40] The man in the ox stall dies due to human lust for gold, just as humans kill oxen and other creatures for human gain. Our common cause is for survival, together. The culminating moment of protest against Chauntecleer's untimely death occurs upon the humans hearing the hens' cries. The widow and her daughters join in with their cries, and soon all the animals and neighboring men join in to rescue one animal from another. Jay Ruud has called this the noisiest passage in English poetry and, indeed, we have not only human voices, but also sounds from hens, dogs, cows, hogs, ducks, geese, and bees. This chorus of disapproval is ultimately life-affirming. Here animals and humans harmonize loudly, subverting hierarchies of human over nature, reflected in Chaucer's sole reference to the Rebellion of 1381 in the allusion to Jack Straw, who, with his followers, attempted to overturn political hierarchies (VII.3394).

Green studies or ecocriticism challenge the idea that nature is nothing more than a construct of language, a view that grew out of poststructuralist analyses of culture. Gillian Rudd's ecocritical study of late medieval English literature grapples with the problem of speaking for the "Other."[41] Various solutions abound whereby ecocritical strategies can be used to voice nature. Lawrence Buell, one of the staunchest of the green critics, argues for nature being represented "through a creative play of language which alerts the reader to the delicate poise between the non-human world and the human mind."[42] Murphy points out that numerous authors have made nature a speaking subject[43] and proposes how to understand nature as a speaking subject, best portrayed in conjunction with human characters.[44] An androcentric world can be decentered by imagining other centers. Dialogics allow us to reinforce interdependence of the human and nature dialogue and promotes an "ethics of answerability."[45] Murphy's argument stems from his conviction that Bakhtinian dialogics is ecological in nature by offering us a way out of binary constrictions such as nature versus culture, male versus female, human versus nonhuman. But what about the fox versus the rooster? The fox seeks out the cock to kill him; when Chauntecleer spies the fox, he cries out "For natureelly a beest desireth flee/ Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,/ Though he never erst hadde seyn it with his ye" (VII. 3279–3281). Nature dictates our instinctive responses. But nature in this tale is divided into domesticated and nondomesticated creatures. Both can be anthropomorphized and given voice to. The reaction of the hens is compared to numerous classic tales,

including the story of Hasdrubal's wife, the wives whose husbands died under Nero, and the fall of Troy. While this could be read within ecocriticism as animal voices being colonized by the human, we could see it as Chaucer playfully pointing out the absurdity, even the impossibility, for humans to give voice to animals. In other words, he exposes the folly of anthropomorphism.[46]

Wasteways

The anthropologist Carole Counihan has written about "foodways": "the beliefs and behaviour surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food."[47] Food, as the focus of economic activity, is the "product and mirror of the organization of society on both the broadest and most intimate levels. It is connected to many kinds of behavior and is endlessly meaningful. Food is a prism that absorbs and reflects a host of cultural phenomena."[48] Foodways is a language that "conveys meaning and contributes to the organization of the natural and social world."[49] But as Kathryn Lynch has discussed using Claude Lévi-Strauss's foundational work for "food studies," "the category of 'the cooked' is never unproblematic; it is always threatening to move backwards toward 'the raw' or forwards toward 'the rotten.'"[50] The end product of food, waste, is equally telling of cultural structures. In fact, we might baptize waste studies (to be discussed more thoroughly in chapters 11 and 12) "wasteways," which examines the leavings, leftovers, remains, and remnants of food once it has been digested and consumed. Wasteways reflect how the world orders filth.

Many parallels exist between foodways and wasteways. Counihan uses Norbert Elias's notion of the lower classes emulating the richer. In foodways, for example, the poor wanted sugar, which only became cheaper and more accessible with slavery. Within the low, an additional hierarchy emerges in which unprivileged low domains (whatever is dirty, repulsive, noisy, contaminating) are further displaced onto the even lower (women, Jews, those of color) in a system of "displaced abjection."[51] Those socially low, then, only succeed in reaffirming the "official dominant culture"; they are ultimately complicit with the "official dominant culture," transgressing only to reaffirm.[52] In gaining sugar, the poor simultaneously imitated the rich and guaranteed the continued existence of a class even worse off than themselves—slaves. Food, thus, "reproduces and sustains hierarchy."[53] This is true for wasteways too. As the rich increasingly had a privatized area for defecation, lower classes wanted to replicate that architecture and behavior. Social distinctions and hierarchies set up binaries—in the case of wasteways, differentiating who are clean and who

are dirty. Those who are not in the privileged position (women, Jews, other races) are considered "dirty," even if they bathe regularly and are actually as "clean" as anyone belonging to the dominant category. Taboos exist for both food and excrement. As Counihan writes, "Manners and habits of eating are crucial to the very definition of community, the relationships between people, interactions between humans and their gods, and communication between the living and the dead."[54] This is true of excrement as well; when we recycle excrement as fertilizer, say, that step contributes to communal solidarity in the production of food; when it becomes pollution, it scars the natural earth and can cause disease and disgust in others. The study of food includes cuisine, etiquette and food rules, taboo, and symbolism.[55] The study of waste includes etiquette and rules—where and when one may defecate; taboo—against touching or talking about filth; and symbolism—such as a figure for sin. Wasteways does not reflect foodways in one key area: cuisine; although a urologist might say that, in fact, the cultivation of urine's color and density of feces to determine illness is the natural obverse of cuisine.

In *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, we learn in detail about the diet of the poor widow and her daughters:

> Hir diete was accordant to hir cote…
> No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
> Hir bord was served moost with whit and blak—
> Milk and broun breed, in which she foond no lak,
> Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an eye or tweye,
> For she was, as it were, a maner deye.
> (VII.2836–2846)

This limited diet reflects her income level and geographical location—as a dairy woman in the countryside she has access to milk, for example—but its simplicity follows what William Rathje and Cullen Murphy have established as the "First Principle of Food Waste" in their Garbage Project: "*The more repetitive your diet—the more you eat the same things day after day—the less food you waste.*"[56] So, while the widow's diet may seem boring or repetitive, it succeeds in being more ecologically friendly than a more varied and changing diet like that of the hypocritical religious in *Piers Plowman* (XIII.60–93).

Excrement is the first "gift" a child gives a parent. Marcel Mauss's work on food reads it as a gift; and gifts need to be given, received, and repaid.[57] How can this apply to wasteways? What does it mean when this gift is vilified? Shit as sin can only destroy or be waste; refusal to repay the gift destroys community. Excrement as fertilizer is a repaid gift. In

the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, the first pilgrim in one of Chauntecleer's prophetic dreams has a dream telling him the other pilgrim will be murdered in the ox stall that very night. The third time the pilgrim dreams, his fellow pilgrim tells him to check "'A carte ful of dong there shaltow se,/ In which my body is hid ful prively'" (VII.3018–3019). The dreamer goes to the west gate of the town as his dream instructed him and finds "A dong-carte, wente as it were to donge lond,/ That was arrayed in that same wise/ As ye han herd the dede man devyse" (VII.3036–3038). The town's dung is destined to fertilize nearby fields.[58] This temporary separation of filth, or lying fallow as in the case of human dung, is a kind of purgatory. Catholicism has waste, shit, and hell, with purgatory as a liminal space of transformation. Process indicates purgative Catholicism. Change and amendment are at the heart of Catholic theology; after all, the Host transubstantiates into the body of Christ. The possibility of conversion or change is analogous to the process food goes through as it transforms into excrement. As we will see in the next chapter, the early modern period commences a more excretophobic period in part because of the Reformation repudiation of purgatory and purgation. Stephen Greenblatt, who reads culture as increasingly "intolerant of disorder in society, in the individual, and in art,"[59] cites Norman O. Brown's "excremental vision"[60] that the Reformation brought about a transformation in the perception of excrement. While the medieval-Catholic view of shit allows for renewal, a difference exists "between the Catholic and Protestant semiotics of excrement."[61] Ecology as dialogics[62] provides us with a way to understand this late medieval and early modern shift to the repression of the excremental. Dung as positive is representative of dialogic thought; renewal and response are integral to both dung and dialogics, the conversation with our animal selves. Praying to God for grace or to Mary as intercessor is a dialogic way of viewing the world. Calvinist predestination is monologic, while Catholic good works are dialogic, creating a web among people.

Knowing where our food comes from and where our waste is disposed prevents alienation; this, in turn, helps us cultivate within ourselves a sense of responsibility toward taking care of the environment.[63] Just this sort of awareness of waste disposal and food production is integral to the positive weight given to dung in Langland and Chaucer. Medievals processed and understood waste as part of life, both positively and negatively, literally and figuratively. Rather than avoiding and repressing filth, medievals had to confront it for the health of their society. Thinking, even living, medievally may in some ways be healthier for our culture today. If we live post-ecologically, even fecologically, we might make the world a cleaner place. Our bodily orifices can be read as positive since they allow us to

connect and interact with nature. This approach also allows us to engage with others outside of our often limited field, not only with literary or historical scholars, but also with scientists, biologists, geographers,[64] and ecologists. The renewal inherent to the carnivalesque and the regenerative body are reflective of what Michael Bell calls "social ecology."[65] The excremental, open, and grotesque body, a taboo in modern Western culture, can be read as ecological in nature. "Fecology" suggests the ecological integration of excrement in rural communities and allows us to see the complex, integral relationship between excrement and ecological concerns. We can learn from literature in the past what models might best contribute to ethical relationships with nature today.[66]

PART III

LOOKING BEHIND, LOOKING AHEAD

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CHAPTER 10

LOOKING BEHIND

"[The Renaissance] seems to be leftover medieval stuff."

A graduate student musing on the periodization of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

Historical documents show how many of the material conditions concerning excrement changed little in the sixteenth century. Well into the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there continue to be complaints concerning dung. Fines for polluting public highways with filth and excrement appear in records for both Chester and Canterbury, to name just two cities.[1] In Chester, dung and filthy privies continue to be mentioned through Elizabeth's reign.[2] The vicar and churchwardens of St. Oswald permit a dung-hill in the churchyard, much to the annoyance of churchgoers.[3] During 1599–1600, Jeffrey Smith, a draper, is cited for allowing a "jaques or privy" to be "stopped up and filled with filth, earth, mud and sand." When it rains, it floods a nearby stable and prevents the ironmonger and his servants from going about their business,[4] for which Smith is fined 3*s*.4*d*. From 1599 to 1600 there are numerous references to such matters, including dung and dung-pits offensively being put near the Church of St. Olave, Loveland, Cowlane, Castle Lane, and Northgate, including the frequently cited culprit, Randle Throppe.[5] Canterbury experienced similar pollution problems. Various ill deeds were recorded on December 13, 1580, and include "Non-attendance at church; deposit of filth; unlawful games."[6] Here, literal filth is equated with lack of proper religious behavior and frivolous illicit activities. John Passheley, tailor, is said to have lain "a basket of dung short of [the] place at Dane John where sullage is usually laid."[7] Even William Shakespeare's father was fined twelve pence in 1552 for neglecting to move a dung-heap from in front of his house in Stratford-upon-Avon.[8] Water pollution is particularly singled out for condemnation.[9] As in earlier times, one

element frequently cited is precedent for right-of-way established by tradition.[10] Often dung is cited in instances where danger or ill health is a feared consequence of its presence;[11] documents reaffirm the miasma theory, the belief that foul smells could cause illness.

As in the Middle Ages, leases cite privies.[12] Documents make clear that lessors and lessees have certain obligations and expectations that need to be fulfilled, including repairing sewers and dunging fields. Spreading dung is clearly an important and expected task.[13] Dung has financial value and dung rights are assigned to tenants.[14] Documents cite the necessity for dung removal and the hiring of someone to take care of that task.[15] The Neat House Gardens in Chelsea lay along the Thames. London dung would be used to fertilize these market gardens whose produce was then sold back to Londoners. Laystalls where the dung was stored were so valuable that lessees would remove the dung upon the termination of a lease.[16] Property rights include privies and access to them.[17] Some legal documents stipulate the right to transgress others' property in order to access either privies or water or to carry dung.[18] The vast documentation concerning the retention of social and legal expectations and requirements that impinge on excrement shows that "medieval" concerns extend well into the early modern period.

As in the Middle Ages, moral impropriety is metaphorically linked to filth and purgation. John Stow's *Survey of London* comments on how those who had committed fornication and adultery in 1383 were imprisoned or displayed in the Cornhill to "purge their city from such filthiness."[19] In the late sixteenth century, this link between sin and filth still carries ideological weight. Sir John Harington, godson of Queen Elizabeth, in his 1596 publication called *Metamorphosis of Ajax: A Cloacinean Satire*, relates a story in which an angel accompanying a hermit is not offended by the stench from a gongfarmer's dung-filled cart, while the hermit stops his own nostrils. Yet the angel is offended when a beautifully dressed and adorned woman passes by. The conclusion is that "this fine courtesan laden with sinne, was a more stinking savour afore God & his holy Angels, then that beastly cart, laden with excrements."[20] Dung stinks less than moral stench. In a misanthropic view of mankind not unlike that of Pope Innocent III, John Marston writes in *The Malcontent*: "...this earth...; 'tis but the draught wherein the heavenly bodies discharge their corruption; the very muck-hill on which sublunary orbs cast their excrements: man is the slime of this dung-pit, and princes governors of these men" (IV.v). But excremental metaphors could still be used in ambiguous, and not always wholly negative, ways. Thomas Elyot in discussing the function of the fundament in "Of Euacuation" *The Castel of Helth* (1541) explains how there are two kinds of filth, one digested and the other

undigested and vomited. "Where I saye digested, I meane, that it is passed the stomake, and tourned in to another fygure."[21] Acts of ingestion and excretion could be viewed as moments of self-fashioning.[22] Late medieval and Renaissance courts borrowed the repression of bodily urges from Christian monastic writings. The increase in civility treatises reflects a secular emphasis on bodily restraint. In an Italian courtesy book, translated into English in 1576, gentlemen are told how to behave at table. Greedy gobbling should not be undertaken by gentlemen who

> with both their cheeks blown (as if they should sound a trumpet, or blow the fire) not eat, but ravin: who, besmearing their hands, almost up to their elbows, so bedaub the napkins that the cloths in the places of easement be other while cleaner.[23]

Filthy habits at table are condemned, while filthy cloths at defecation, while unpleasant as is to be expected, are, by comparison, cleaner. Hence, for example, Harington's *Metamorphosis*, which suggests a way of taming the body; not hiding it, but controlling it in an appropriation or colonization of human nature.[24]

An increased emphasis on the privatization of both domestic space and church space, with private chapels, pews, and oratories,[25] occurs in the late medieval period, paralleling a corresponding increase in the privatization of defecation. Shit became progressively more disciplined, not only through ordinances stipulating how ordure was to be collected, but also through the role of the sergeant of channels (*canelles*) who was to see that streets were to be kept rubbish free, an official position first mentioned in 1385.[26] The increasing privatization of the late Middle Ages is linked to urban growth and the need for private space in a highly populated space. Excremental practices became more regulated and privatized with increased urbanization in the sixteenth century.[27] Indeed, Dominique Laporte contends that it is impossible for there to be "public shit" under the State; its removal helps to construct the modern State. The danger inherent in the private marks the problem of waste disposal. Polluting shit is dangerous and should be secret, making it all the more powerful and threatening.[28] When shit enters the public sphere, it destroys the illusion of the public secret, the secret that waste, in fact, exists. The capacity of the state to remove filth establishes its power.[29] Filthiness—and its apparent absence—allows power to gain its agency.[30]

In Norbert Elias's view, shame increases as social relational density increases; that is, as classes become more interdependent, as in the urban arena, practices of self-control become more developed and regulated.[31] Yet Elias has been criticized, in part by Bakhtin's demonstration on how

popular culture penetrated "high" or elite culture. The process Elias described was not as seamless as he suggested; some Renaissance courts even resisted the civilizing process.[32] Privatization develops the sense of the individual, which philosophy since the seventeenth century has identified with modern subjectivity. Yet John Scanlan points out that the private individual dates from much earlier.

> [T]he medieval world had already seen the beginning of a privatized waste process—certainly by the thirteenth century—[This] is not only attested to by the existence of...public ordinances, but also in evidence that medieval England operated a form of market in waste disposal work.[33]

Gongfermors, as we have noted, were well compensated and documented several centuries before the early modern period. So the idea of a modern subjectivity emerging out of the dung-heap of the Middle Ages seems misguided, since private acts certainly occurred in the medieval period. The Anglo-Saxon letter to Brother Edward indicates that there is a proper and private place for certain acts, that boundaries should not be crossed, that private and public were discussed and acknowledged realms. The distinction between rural and urban vexed societal reception of excrement. Excrement is the same material product in the ideological locations of the city and country, yet geography prompts contrary readings.[34] Climate change, it has been argued, might also have been a factor in the privatization of excrement; the "Little Ice Age" ushered in a period colder and more humid, making waste more visible and detectable from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. From this emerged "[a] new mentality...fascinated by the 'excremental' and filled with fear of the day-to-day..."[35] The richer the town, the more it stank.[36] Just as excrement in the city is increasingly problematic as urban centers grew, so too the discipline of bodily excrement became more pointed. Drawing on Bourdieu, David Inglis cites the bourgeois fecal habitus, identified by meeting the imperatives of privacy, deodorization, and euphemism.[37] The repression of bodily filth leads to the closure of self and body.[38] Privatization is monologic, leading to the closed bourgeois body. We can see the increasing discomfort with the lowest of bodily functions in the euphemization and elimination of the "Groom of the Stool," a position of power under Henry VIII, by the nineteenth century,[39] even though this position is not one that has totally lost its necessity.[40]

Laporte connects the purification of the language with the elimination of excrement from city space.[41] This early modern shift in perceptions of the body, nature, and privacy can be seen in linguistic change. Culture, meaning "[t]he action or practice of cultivating the

soil; tillage; husbandry," is a late Middle English word and is used in this sense through the nineteenth century. Culture, figuratively meaning "[t]he cultivating or development (of the mind, faculties, manners, etc.) improvement or refinement by education and training," comes about in the early sixteenth century.[42] This modification in meaning parallels the epistemic shift from public, dialogic, life-giving excrement to repressed, hidden, private shit. Our notions of a scrubbed countryside as opposed to the working rural one emerge from the eighteenth century, when the messy country, "the untidy site of real, rural labor," replete with dung, transforms "into a [bourgeois] 'countryside.'"[43] This countryside, "nature," has become a tidied, purified, regulated, and de-corporealized commodity rarely found in the place most of us live: cities.[44] Another rare usage only from the late fifteenth century of "culture" is "worship, reverential homage," a poignant reminder of the transition from the reverence paid to cultivation of land (which included dung) to the reverence paid to cultivation of self (which represses and disdains the excremental). Filth's potency can be seen in the very rise to dominance of the sanitized word *excrement*, its first recorded usage being in 1533.[45] By 1611, when Randle Cotgrave's French-English Dictionary was produced, *excrement* appears ubiquitously in definitions for various French words. Reformation linguistic patterns indicate an increased distancing from excrement, as seen in the use of this Latinate word itself.

The trashing of the past is an integral strategy of progress; the history of Western culture has been characterized as the history of "disposal, of garbaging."[46] Pollution has been seen as being especially vexed in times of social unrest, disunity, and during times of (perceived) threats to moral, cultural, and religious norms.[47] Thus in the Reformation, which constitutes a period of intense crisis in Western Europe, waste, garbage, and filth, the margins of social disease, became central to ideological understandings of the time. Excrement provides a focus for religious and political rhetoric in the early modern period, one of upheaval and change. The theological difficulty of reconciling the ingestion of God's body with its excretion, the tension between the sacred ingested body and what becomes of it in the digesting human body, continues to be a vexed issue in the theological battles of the sixteenth century.[48] Jeff Persels's work on early modern rhetoric demonstrates how scatological discourse was integral to societies attempting to find a balance in the wake of the Reformation. The body politic had to purge itself of filth to find humoral balance. The presence of excrement in the writings of Luther, his attacker Thomas More, and the seemingly innocent Rabelais grow out of a similar compost; bodily order is analogous to social order.

Illness as metaphor exists in the early to mid-sixteenth century, with constipation and diarrhea as recurrent ailments, representative of the sick Catholic church. Elimination is key to good health; vital to the health of Christianity was "the increasingly problematic consecrated and transubstantiated Host."[49] If humanism replaced God with man as the center of the universe,[50] then man, like God before, came to be seen as, ideally, untainted by filth.

Despite the continuities between late medieval evidence and that of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in literature, legal documents, and theological writings, the Reformation initiates a heightened filth rhetoric in trashing the "medieval" past literally and figuratively. Glorious medieval shrines were literally laid waste under Henry VIII, a destruction recycled by sixteenth-century writers. The year 1538 marked the time when the great monastic shrines were attacked, buildings torn down, and images destroyed in public ceremonies. In July of that year the images from Walsingham, for example, were set to the flame in Chelsea.[51] Manuscripts were reduced to the level of "waste paper—or waste parchment,"[52] being used for everything from scarecrows, firelighters, mending material, and wrapping paper. Margaret Aston contends that an aching nostalgia for what was destroyed and plundered in the Reformation by iconoclasts was present in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature. The Protestant historian William Lambarde (1536–1601), who acknowledges how one might "pitie & lament this general desolation," nevertheless approves of the cause of the "ruine & decay" of monastic houses.[53] By the time of Shakespeare, ruins had been "plundered, quarried, adapted, abandoned."[54] There is some lament in the Renaissance of this medieval past. Shakespeare's Sonnet LXXIII refers to "bare ruin'd choirs," and in *Titus Andronicus*, the Second Goth describes how he strays upon a "ruinous monastery," a "wasted building" (V.i.2153, 2155). This debris and wreckage of the Reformation functions on both a literal level—the ruins of abbeys, the burnt manuscripts, the disfigured and destroyed artifacts—and a figurative level—in nostalgia for the past.[55] Yet the dominant mode of discourse concerning the Middle Ages was that of dismissal. The Reformation trashes the medieval past to justify its own glories; the prior age is presented as a dump site or waste pit.

Refusing the Middle Ages[56]

The Reformation's legacy has come down to us today.[57] Our own obsessions emerge from the medieval privy. One historical period that our culture "refuses" is the Middle Ages. We not only refuse it, in the sense of negating and rejecting it as a negative other, but also "refuse" it, in

the sense of constructing it as a site of waste, rubbish, and excrement. The Middle Ages has become, in the early twenty-first-century imagination, excremental. Popular culture contains numerous examples for the association between the medieval and filth. Yet this association does not "prove" that the medieval period was any more "excremental" than our own. Rather, we postmoderns set ourselves up against an "excremental" period in order to negate our material selves. Lennard Davis's theories on the "disabled" body aid us in understanding how the Middle Ages has been disciplined by us to be excremental.

Umberto Eco has argued that "every time one speaks of a dream of the Middle Ages, one should first ask which Middle Ages one is dreaming of."[58] One such "dream" concerns what Eco calls the site of "ironical revisitation, in order to speculate about our infancy, of course, but also about the illusion of our senility."[59] This is the bucolic Middle Ages of filth, dirt, and grotesque bodily enjoyment.

> *"My goodness, did you see her hem? Six inches deep in mud. She looked positively medieval."*
>
> Miss Bingley commenting on Elizabeth Bennett in the Keira Knightely *Pride and Prejudice* movie.

Why is the medieval body associated with filth? Is it simply because of the (presumed) inaccessibility to bathing and rarity of indoor plumbing? Is it due to scattered comments about lack of desire for bathing or fear of it? If one reads actual medieval literature, reality seems to have been quite different from our imagination about the period. If doctors' orders are any indication, people must have been fumigated, bathed, suppositoried, and pessaried constantly![60] On the other hand, some believed that the plague could enter your pores and so argued against particularly hot baths on that account.[61]

> A "dirty" Middle Ages is not restricted to mud and dirt.
> *First Peasant: Who's that then?*
> *Second Peasant: I don't know . . . Must be a king.*
> *First Peasant: Why?*
> *Second Peasant: He hasn't got shit all over him.*
>
> *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*

Stereotypes about the Middle Ages in popular culture, such as in the Monty Python moment quoted above, include the convention of the excremental body.[62] In an often quoted passage from the 1994 Quentin Tarantino film *Pulp Fiction*, Marsellus tells his rapist before he tortures him, "I'm gonna git Medieval on your ass." Tarantino associates the medieval with sexual perversion, violence, sin, sexual immorality, and "shit."[63]

As Carolyn Dinshaw argues in a famous reading of this film moment, the medieval is the space of the "rejects" and "abjects" of our world.[64] The popular characterization of the Middle Ages as the childhood of man, only properly growing up in the modern period, feeds into this image of the excremental medieval body.[65] One book even goes so far as to argue that, "In the Middle Ages, for example, there was no emphasis on early toilet training. People weren't going anywhere. There was no rush."[66] Public behavior, as Stephen greenblatt notes, has been the focus of much anthropological research. In the West, from childhood onward, one is trained in the "definition and control of wastes."[67] We could argue that the mark of culture (from the Western point of view) is the control of excrement. Sanitation is equated with civilization.[68] If the Middle Ages is the childhood of our modern selves, it is inevitable that this period was anally oriented since childhood is when anal control is enforced.[69] Certainly Norbert Elias would not quarrel with this understanding of civilization, considering his famous reading of medieval culture as the progression to a privatization of filth control.[70] As Georges Bataille comments, "What are children if not animals becoming human."[71] The contemporary period is built over a cesspool whose matter, instead of being recycled, is left in a fetid pit that can only poisonously seep into the present.

Excrement, which the bourgeois subject properly reviles, becomes a focus of perverse fascination, even desire.[72] After all, at Renaissance Fairs, which lump an imagined medieval and early modern aesthetic together, dirt, filth, and crudity are expected and taken delight in. These "low domains" are enjoyed in the strictly limited arena of the contemporary carnival. In order for us "postmoderns" to construct ourselves as "authentic,"[73] we must situate our origins in an "inauthentic humanity."[74] Our medieval origin functions as the filthy base for our triumph into present "authenticity."[75] Our progressivist assumption that material cultural development and spiritual advancement are necessarily linked is false.[76] All cultures are concerned with excrement; our century's obsession with detergents and cleansers indicates a fixation with cleanliness, reflecting, perversely, a fascination with what is dirty and out of place.[77] Our alienation from our excretion, a necessary act for all humans, can be seen in our fetishization of luxury appointments in the bathroom. For the newly rich in Russia, the fancy toilet is all the rage.[78] A recent craze for black toilet paper produced by a Portuguese paper company, called Renova Black, signals "avant-garde creative work." Luxury or art urinals in the shape of orchids or Jack-in-the-pulpits, created in the spirit of Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain," are increasingly seen as a "must" for designer homes, in part because of their touted environmental benefits in that they use less water than ordinary toilets.[79] While these fecal toys

could be a doorway to embracing or normalizing feces and the process of excretion, they simultaneously allow us to displace our anxieties on the artifacts associated with excretion, rather than deal with the filthy matter itself.[80]

Why do we find the "excremental body" so threatening? Lennard J. Davis's pioneering work in disability studies can be applied to our postmodern understanding of the medieval body. In Davis's Lacanian reading, Western culture typically has read the disabled body as a disruption that "must be regulated, rationalized, contained" for the modern binary normal/abnormal to function.[81] Our presumed coherent identity, situated in the body and willingly believed in, is exposed as a sham by the "abnormal" body. The "whole" is a "hallucination" or "fiction."[82] The disabled body, Davis argues, represents the "repressed fragmented body," or "the true self of the fragmented body."[83] The fragmented nature of all bodies is repressed.[84] The excremental body, like the disabled body, reminds us of our fragmented self. Cultures split (Freud's *Spaltung*) bodies into whole and fragmentary, as well as, I would argue, clean and filthy, as a way of addressing fears of fragmentation.[85] The "clean" body, like the "whole" body, is a fiction. Our rejection of excrement parallels the medieval mystics' rejection of food, which stopped or minimized excretions.[86] In our attempt to control our filth, we displace excrement onto the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages is remembered as waste. As John Scanlan writes, the "imaginary graveyard of progress . . . buries the past as if it was simply useless rubbish."[87] The past, the Middle Ages, is not "as if" it were garbage; it is made into literal filth.

The more excrement is made invisible, the more it becomes titillating, obscene, and taboo.[88] The increase in privatization in the early modern period accompanies a diminution in the valences, especially the positive ones, that excrement could possess. The body is not discrete or bounded; it has openings through which filth can be expelled. But some find this threatening.[89] It is only in the post-Rabelaisian world, certainly in a postmedieval world, that we are presented with "an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual . . . .All orifices of the body are closed."[90] The more excremental medieval bodies are, the less excremental are our modern bodies. The convention of the excremental medieval body in popular culture works to normalize our own bodies; that is, the medieval body—excremental, fragmentary, unnatural—is a fantasy conjured up by us to function in opposition to our modern—whole, clean, natural—bodies. By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, we have come to view the Middle Ages as a repository of filth and waste, a time when waste was domesticated and even embraced; this view of the Middle Ages

allows us to construct ourselves as clean and modern, unlike those filthy, childlike medievals. Thomas Aquinas famously wrote about prostitution as a necessary evil: "Remove the sewer and you will fill the palace with ordure; similarly with bilge from a ship; remove whores from the world and you will fill it with sodomy."[91] Similarly, the medieval functions as our necessary evil. Without it, *we* would be filthy, barbaric, and perverse. Ironically, the demonization and privatization of excrement also means, as Lewis Mumford regretfully points out, "the degradation of the inner life [which] is symbolized by the fact that the only place sacred from intrusion is the private toilet." Even today, defecation can inspire meditation: witness the frequent presence of reading matter in the private cell that is today's domestic bathroom.[92] The filth of our bodies is dealt with in privacy; our public selves emerge triumphantly clean. Indeed, the ability to tend to one's elimination in a private space assures our entry into public citizenship.[93] There are fecopolitical dimensions to this most necessary of bodily functions.

CHAPTER 11

WASTE STUDIES: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

"Man is a wasting animal."

J. C. Wylie, *The Wastes of Civilization*[1]

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the so-called great renunciation took place in men's clothing, whereby male attire shed the ornate design that had held sway since the High Middle Ages. In a parallel plot of history, the Middle Ages has been viewed as a period revelling in filth, prior to the "great renunciation" of filth with the advent of the early modern period. The danger for a medievalist in exploring excrement lies in confirming what some believe to be the essence of the Middle Ages: filth. A long study of such a topic might therefore be expected to underscore the very alterity and abject nature some ascribe to the period. Filth, as we have seen, is key to understanding the Middle Ages; it appears liberally in literary texts, legal documents, theological writings, and art historical material. But this book is not intended to reinforce a popular view of the Middle Ages as "excremental" nor is it intended to offend. Rather, my hope is that other scholars will continue to expand our knowledge of the excremental. Much work remains to be done: relic inventories could be investigated for references to waste as sacred and venerated object;[2] historical documents citing cases of pollution and property need to be paid attention to; and further explorations into the vast range of linguistic possibilities for expressing filth and excrement could be undertaken.

The exploration of excrement in both its literal and figurative manifestations falls under the larger field of waste studies, a conversation increasingly focused on filth, rubbish, garbage, and litter. There is a

veritable canon of theoretical works that address waste as a category: Zygmunt Bauman's *Wasted Lives* (2004), Michael Thompson's *Rubbish Theory* (1979), John Scanlan's *On Garbage* (2005), and Gay Hawkins' *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (2006). Waste and filth are words infused with negative connotations. Excrement is what is ejected; waste and filth judge it. While rubbish is not excrement, "it can metonymically suggest it."[3] When actions are figuratively made analogous to excrement, that suggests a moral dimension not inherent to the matter we call excrement itself. Filth similarly functions as a loaded or marked linguistic term. There is a difference between sewage leaking into a river and moral filth. Waste, it has been argued, is "an entirely flexible category,"[4] shifting historically and reflecting changing relations to the self; unlike "rubbish" or "litter," waste suggests "a much more complicated set of meanings."[5] The politics and metaphorics of filth allow us to understand society—both culture and nature—more profoundly. Any system of social distinction emerges out of categories distinguishing what is waste and what is valuable.[6] The separation of the useless from the useful is inherent in Western culture. God created order out of what was void and formless.[7] Garbage is formless; it consists of entrails, bits, and scraps.[8] In his philosophy of waste delineating categories of refuse, Cyrille Harpet suggests that scrap, waste, and loss lie at the center of the epistemology of waste; strands of knowledge emanate from this central notion. For example, clues, the detritus from a crime, lead to criminology, dirt leads to sanitation and hygiene, the excremental leads to scatology, and so on.[9] What gets accounted as trash or dirt varies depending on cultural context. As John Scanlan points out, "differentiation establishes culture."[10]

We need to develop waste studies as an integral field of study for literature. Medieval studies constitute the ideal testing ground for excremental or fecal studies, a subset of waste studies. Rather than seeing the potential for danger in generating waste studies as rooted in medieval studies, we should celebrate this field of research, one that allows us to value, recycle, and understand waste. Why is the excremental body so threatening? Why don't we want to be near the person covered in shit? Why don't we want to *be* the person covered in shit? As disability studies have shown, the body we can potentially become is both humorous and threatening. This is the "terror of the proximate"—the "adjacent" being more threatening than the "excluded."[11] The fear of proximity, like that in disability studies, suggests a fear of being filthed.[12] Like the disabled body that has lost control of how it is viewed, filth production cannot indefinitely be controlled. The beshitted body results in the loss of community. This animosity to excrement exists in an extended sense

to all waste. A figurative term for shit and unproductive excess, waste is likewise implicated with negative scorn.

Medieval Wasters in Chaucer and Langland: Wasted Production and Money

The insights of the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman can be applied to the Middle Ages. While he deals with our postmodern condition, what he calls "liquid modernity," Bauman's subtle observations about "wasted lives" are all too apt for a period of seeming alterity:[13] "Liquid modernity is a civilization of excess, redundancy, waste and waste disposal."[14] Late medieval England was a civilization of excess, redundancy, waste, and waste disposal—though, granted, not to the same degree as in the twenty-first century. The elements of excess might have been viewed differently, but attention paid to these elements allows us to focus on aspects of texts we might previously have glossed over or seen as extraneous waste.

Waste, of central concern in the Middle Ages, extended from the Old English word that meant "uninhabitable environment" to have a moral dimension. "Waste" in Middle English had multiple meanings, from uncultivated or wild land, as in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (l. 2098), to the consumption or using up of some material thing. It takes on the figurative connotation of squandering and pointless or foolish action.[15] It could mean to destroy or ruin, enfeeble or emaciate. Legally it signified the destruction or spoilage of property or goods. In the late fourteenth century, waste came to mean what is left over or is a remnant. Strength or wisdom can be exhausted or used up, as in time or speech;[16] for example, Chaucer's Host conventionally alludes to wasted time (II.20). In *Piers Plowman*, Truth asserts that the wasting of time or speech goes against the desires of Heaven since it signifies wastage of what God has granted humankind (IX.97–102).[17] The spirit of temperance guarantees moderation in one's life; wasted words will not be uttered.

> He that ete of that seed hadde swich a kynde,
> Sholde nevere....
> Waste word of ydelnesse ne wikked speche moeve....
> (XIX.284–288)

The fourteenth-century debate poem, *Wynnere and Wastoure*,[18] sets up a figure who hoards his goods and wealth (Wynnere) and one who consumes excessively (Wastoure). Wastoure asks, "What scholde worthe

of that wele if no waste come?" (l. 253). What should become of that wealth if no waste comes? God can only be pleased with waste since through it, and resultant feasts, the poor, too, get fed (ll. 294–296). He continues,

> Þis wate þou full wele witterly þiseluen,
> Whoso wele schal wyn, a wastour mo[st]e he fynde,
> For if it greues one gome, it gladdes anoþer.
> (389–391)

Wastoure suggests how waste is necessary for the proper functioning of society. If the poor had all the food they needed, then they would not work; this, of course, is what occurs in Passus VI of *Piers*.[19] Waste in the form of dung revitalizes as it fertilizes crops. But human waste and wastours spoil that economy, introducing waste onto the scene, and a voracious Hunger. Waste suggests an imbalance; wasters are rootless and cause garbage.[20] Analogously, these wasters, through wasting, *become* garbage, *are* garbage.

As Bauman points out, models for creation can be seen in the allegories of farming and mining. Mining necessitates rupture and discontinuity. "Mining is inconceivable without *waste*... Waste is the dark, shameful secret of all production." Legal documents from late medieval England demonstrate how various trades were attacked for creating smells and filth. Production based in the "strategy of excess" makes waste.[21] As the noted poet and ecocritic Gary Snyder points out, there is a distinction between what he calls an "ecosystem culture" and a "biosphere culture," the former one "whose economic base of support is a natural region" that is lived within, as opposed to the latter, which, after destroying one ecosystem, spreads out to destroy another.[22] Late medieval England seems to be grappling between these two models: while London appears to represent a biosphere culture, growing along the lines of Rome and Babylon, the farming methods practiced in *Piers Plowman* ideally follow the model of an ecosystem culture. Production as seen in farming creates anew through continuity and suggests perpetual resurrection.[23] We can certainly see that in *Piers Plowman*, for example, where a properly functioning society has workers produce food as they are protected by knights. Dunging the land is virtuous work in this sustainable society. Dung is not seen as filthy excess, but as valuable, worth something morally and materially. While peasants were figured as analogous to the dung they handled—condemned as filthy and stupid in some genres *fabliau*x, for example—they are championed by other writers, most especially Langland, due to their dunging, a symbolic contribution to the "common good."

Chaucer's characters cite waste in conjunction with money. Those suggesting the proper use of money adhere to Bauman's farming allegory of creation: money properly harvested, invested in the deserving poor or in enabling others to profit from production, will reap rewards, both material and spiritual. But money mined, either obsessively kept or thoughtlessly spent, will only undermine society. This attitude we see realized in the figure of Avarice in church art, consisting, as Lester Little has pointed out, "mainly of an alimentary canal, open at the receiving end and closed at the other."[24] He eats money, but does not digest it by giving back, and is doomed to Hell. Yet one should not thoughtlessly give money away. With misogynistic overtones, Chaucer's Parson explicitly says that it is a foul thing for man to waste his money on women (X.848). Similarly, the speaker in the *Shipman's Tale* says that other men will pay for a wife's fine clothing if the husband refuses to spend money on her, thinking the expenses "wasted and ylost" (VII.17). In the *Merchant's Tale*, Justinus advises January to make sure his prospective bride is not a "wastour of thy good" (IV.1535). The ideal wife "kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel" (IV.1343). The Summoner has the greedy friar in his tale preach to the people about how they must not give their money to clergy who do not need it, "Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured" (III.1720), but to him, who supposedly will not waste it. After making the friar swear to share the gift among his fellow friars, Thomas farts on the friar's hand. The furious friar, in turn, goes to the village lord and confronts him with the dilemma of how to divide a fart. The lord says it is impossible since "The rumblynge of a fart, and every soun,/ Nis but of eir reverberacioun,/ And evere it wasteth litel and litel awey" (III.2233–2235). The reverberating waste of the fart suggests how money is likewise a sign of waste, especially if not husbanded properly. In the *Tale of Melibee*, the issue of property and money is key. Prudence urges Melibee against vengeance since it would engender "muchel sorwe and wastynge of richesses" (VII.1391). Prudence argues against both the avaricious and the spendthrift man. She quotes Cato who argues for moderation and says to "spende [goodes] mesurably,/ for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han,/ whan they han namoore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man" (VII.1605–1607). She clearly senses the proper ownership of goods and the improper taking away of another's proper goods. Prudence's words economically match her name; prudent behavior entails moderate harnessing of goods and protecting, though not obsessively, one's wealth.

As Bauman points out, modernity wants to rid itself of excess workers, especially rural workers coming to cities in the wake of technological advances. But there are too many of them; they are not needed. In *Piers Plowman* we see a prelude to this in the urban wasters and malingerers

who do nothing, who contribute nothing, and who are valued as nothing. The wasters are archetypal parasites, relying on hardworking people to get by: "Somme putten hem to the plough, pleiden ful selde,/ In settynge and sowynge swonken ful harde,/ And wonnen that thise wastours with glotonye destruyeth" (Prologue.20–22). They are wastrels because they are wasteful; as such, they need to stop getting wasted and amend or recycle themselves into useful social actors. Just so does Reason tell Wastour in *Piers* to "go werche what he best kouthe/ And wynnen his wastyng with som maner crafte" (V.24–25). The wasted are also "untied to any place, shifty, unpredictable;"[25] as such, they can turn up anywhere and threaten the pristine borders of a constructed inviolability. Hence the Statute of Laborers that enforced immobility on workers in the wake of the demographic crisis engendered by the Black Plague. The Statute was enacted in 1349 recognizing that

> [M]any seeing the Necessity of Master, and great Scarcity of Servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive Wages, and some rather willing to beg in Idleness, than by Labour to get their Living....ITEM, Because that many valiant Beggars, as long as they may live of begging, do refuse to labour, giving themselves to Idleness and Vice, and sometime to Theft and other Abominations; none upon the said Pain of Imprisonment shall, under the colour of Pity or Alms, give any thing to such, which may labour, or presume to favour them towards their Desires, so that thereby they may be compelled to labour for their necessary Living.[26]

Charges brought about in the wake of the Statute included taking excessive wages or being a good plowman, for example, but refusing to work.[27] Waste in idleness symbolizes social disorder.[28] Hence Piers' vow to the Knight:

> "By Seint Poul!" quod Perkyn, "ye profre yow so faire
> That I shal swynke and swete and sowe for us bothe,
> And othere labours do for thi love al my lif tyme,
> In covenaunt that thow kepe Holy Kirke and myselve
> Fro wastours and fro wikked men that this world destruyeth."
> (VI.24–28)

Piers speaks angrily to the fakers who pretend not to be able to work: "'Ye ben wastours, I woot wel, and Truthe woot the sothe'" (VI.130). As Truth's servant, Piers is determined to defend what Truth stands for:

> And fro thise wastours wolveskynnes that maketh this world deere:
> For tho wasten and wynnen noght, and that [while ilke]

> Worth nevere plentee among the peple the while my plowgh liggeth.
> (VI.161–163)

The wasters are likened to wolves who lay waste to the world. Wasting wins nothing; there is no progress or creation through waste. Wasters and fakers, who profit from the labor of honest workmen, are to be chastised. Piers cannot even use his plow because he must tend to these wasters; thus, wasters affect others who want to work.

> Curteisly the knyght thanne, as his kynde wolde,
> Warnede Wastour and wissed hym bettre:
> "Or thow shalt abigge by the lawe, by the ordre that I bere!"
> "I was noght wont to werche," quod Wastour, "and now wol I noght bigynne!"....
> "Awreke me of thise wastours," quod [Piers], "that this world shendeth!"
> Hunger in haste thoo hente Wastour by the mawe
> And wrong hym so by the wombe that al watrede hise eighen.
> (VI.164–175)

The Knight deals with Wastour too gently, so Piers calls for Hunger to confront with the defiant Wastour and his companions. Piers works for everyone, even the wastours. "Right so Piers the Plowman peyneth hym to tilye/ As wel for a wastour and wenches of the stewes..." (XIX.438–439). Piers, the hardworking plowman and aspect of Christ, works for everyone, even those least deserving of it.

Chaucer's Parson is obsessed with waste, using the word more times than any other character in *The Canterbury Tales*. The rich shall be "wasted with hunger" (X.194) in Hell. The Parson attacks those who wear excessive clothing:

> [T]he superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gownes, trailynge in the dong and in the mire, on horse and eek on foote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailyng is verraily as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is yeven to the povre, to greet damage of the forseyde povre folk./ And that in sondry wise; this is to seyn that the moore that clooth is wasted, the moore moot it coste to the peple for the scarsnesse. (X.418–419)

It is not just the flagrant vanity that is to be blamed. Worst of all, argues the Parson, is how the wasteful use of cloth hurts the poor. Rather than being given to the poor in a selfless act of charity, the wasted cloth drives up the price of cloth for everyone, including the poor. The waste of gorging on fine materials is analogous to the shit the clothes are dragged

through. In a passage from *Piers* in which dragging tails are likewise invoked, rich men are compared to peacocks. The peacock can be easily caught due to his huge tail, just as the rich man who hoards his goods instead of sharing them with the poor will be caught after death (XII.239–255). Life, who lives for pleasure, laughs at Conscience and lets his clothes be slashed according to the fashion "And armed hym in haste in harlotes wordes/ And heeld Holynesse a jape and Hendenesse a wastour…" (XX.144–145). Wastage affects everyone. It is not just that the waster might be condemned after death; his acts actively hurt others now. The rich are wasters if they refuse to curtail their consumption and share with others.

Humans as Waste

> *There are always too many of them. "Them" are the fellows of whom there should be fewer—or better still none at all. And there are never enough of us. "Us" are the folks of whom there should be more….It is always the excess of them that worries us.*
>
> Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives*[29]

Who are the "them" in the Middle Ages? Bauman writes of how our planet has become too full to absorb both human waste and the wasted bodies of rejected peoples.[30] The sign of modernity's success is that there is no more space to dispose of human waste or humans as waste.[31] Who are "wasted" humans? Those who are unemployed or redundant, for example; they are unnecessary; they have "been disposed of *because of being disposable*." "'Redundancy' shares its semantic space with 'rejects,' 'wastrels,' 'garbage,' 'refuse'—with *waste*."[32] As Mervyn Jones has pointed out, the body in the late Middle Ages is a symbol for society and community. If society is a "body," what implications are possible? The boundaries of the body are vulnerable, suggesting disorder or functioning as a threat to community harmony and hygiene. Leaks disturb the humoral balance of a healthy culture. If society is a body, what is the role of excrement? Who or what is the "excrement" in a social context?

Among the wasted human beings are those who are deformed in some way: "Some human beings who do not fit into the designed form nor can be fitted into it….oddities, miscreants, hybrids who call the bluff of ostensibly inclusive/exclusive categories."[33] We can see them in the groteques inhabiting the margins of medieval manuscripts, in the perverse bodies of the sins in Passus Five of *Piers Plowman* whose bloated or emaciated flesh embodies the sins they perform, and in the damned of the *Inferno*, whose bodies are marked eternally by the sin they commit,

such as in the scorched faces of the sodomites and in the diviners and magicians, whose heads, attached in reverse to the bodies, weep down their backs and buttocks. These perverse bodies are meant to horrify and teach. Waste works both literally and figuratively. In the *Inferno*, people are waste, immersed in waste. Like those made redundant, the hopeless and condemned are confined to the ultimate scrapheap. As Bauman writes, "All waste, including wasted humans, tends to be piled up indiscriminately on the same refuse tip. The act of assigning waste puts an end to differences, individualities, idiosyncrasies. Waste has no need of fine distinctions and subtle nuances, unless it is earmarked for recycling."[34] In the *Inferno*, distinctions are made among the sinners. Their sins on earth determine their eternal suffering. All the punishments differ dramatically, but the condemned are lumped together. Any hopes for refugees to be recycled are dim or hopeless. Their lack of hope is like that of those in hell who have abandoned all hope of salvation: "[A]ll exits from the purgatory of the [refugee] camp lead to hell."[35] Yet those in Dante's purgatory do have hope; they are being recycled, on the rubbish mountain, for success in terms of salvation; those in hell are condemned, consigned to the eternal rubbish tip.

It is equally grim for "redundant humans already 'inside' ";[36] they are consigned to ghettoes. Humans as waste repulse us; in them, we see what we could become at any time. Consequently, we put them out of sight in camps or slums.[37] The Jews in England were consigned to ghettoes, as they were throughout Europe. In the 1290 Edict of Expulsion under Edward I, the Jews became stateless. Those without a state do not officially exist;[38] as such, it is simple to reject them. Expulsion not only meant banishment or exile, but also the action of expelling poisonous or superfluous matter, toxic or superfluous, from the body. In Middle English, to expel carried meanings supplemental to banishment or exile; it was used medically to signify the drawing out or eliminating of bad humors. The Edict of Expulsion, then, suggests a web of meanings identifying England as a body that needs to be purged of its ill health. Since England was imagined as poisoned by the Jews, they are purged from the body as waste and come to figuratively signify that filth themselves. The Jews are literally made excremental in that they are ejected, excreted, from the body of England.[39] Yet traces of their presence exist in place names or historical plaques, attesting to their existence despite the attempts by the state to efface their official presence. While, as Alan Dundes points out, it is a common trope to defame minority groups with the insult of filth,[40] Nazi rhetoric built a web of association among the concepts of filth, usury, Jew, and devil. Jewish ghettoes tended to be in the parts of towns that were less desirable or near rubbish dumps,

increasing the association between Jew and waste. The lack of washing facilities at concentration camps prevented prisoners from washing themselves properly, thus turning them literally into what they had been figured as rhetorically: filthy. The use of "showers" with which to gas the Jews in death camp was the ideal trope to suggest how Germany could be made clean by their elimination.[41] In his discussion of rubbish theory, Michael Thompson argues that the transfer of rubbish to consumption is not uncommon and takes place whenever rubbish is gotten rid of, for example,

> refuse collection and incineration, sewage treatment, the reinstatement of waste land, the clearance of slums, the deportation of undesirable aliens and, at its most extreme, the gassing of Jews and Gypsies in Nazi Germany. Such consumption is generally seen as a social service: a necessary transfer, but one which nevertheless is a burden on the community. The real horror of Nazi Germany resides not in its collective madness but in the perfect reasonable of the behaviour in terms of the particular category framework that constituted its historic condition.[42]

Within National Socialist logic, it is reasonable to eliminate human beings who are judged to be waste.

Another category of human waste is that of immigrants. If there were no immigrants, Bauman claims, they would have to be invented;[43] they are conceived of as waste so that we native-born citizens are not. Verging on waste himself, the Cook alludes to the Flemish in London in *The Canterbury Tales* (I.4357). The Cook, a classic "wastrel," reminds us of attacks on the working immigrant in 1381 whose industry threatens his own lack of useful productivity. They, as foreign waste, must be disposed of so he can be seen as anything but waste. The wastrel hates the immigrant who seeks community status. The Cook tells a tale about a merry apprentice who not only does little work, but also threatens the stability of his master's workplace. The Cook's own waste is embodied in his "mormal" (I.386), a flaking scab signifying his excess and filth. The Host even suggests that flies end up in the Cook's pies: "For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos" (I.4352). The wasted include "[r]efugees, the displaced, asylum seekers, migrants, the *sans papiers*"—though they are the ones to handle rubbish.[44] In order not to be a "*sans papiers*," the apprentice in the *Cook's Tale* "his papir soghte" (I.4404), presumably the certificate of release. The master lets him go, apparently officially releasing him with his paper. But the Cook goes on to describe a debauched life with a companion of his, "...for ther is no theef withoute a lowke,/ That helpeth hym to wasten and to sowke/ Of that he brybe kan or borwe may..." (I.4415–4417).

These two wasters go on to steal and despoil others in a waste-strewn lifestyle.[45]

Waste and the Poor

"To know obligates us to act."

Ted Hovet, "The Invisible London of *Dirty Pretty Things*, or, Dickens, Frear, and Film Today"[46]

Those with wealth can be flawed spenders. In *Piers Plowman*, Truth urges those who have money to use it for the common good (VII.23–32). Rather than hoarding it or spending it on ephemeral goods, those with the ability to support others should do so, whether it means supporting hospitals, roads, or the deserving poor people. There are always some who refuse to do charitable work with their excess money (X.28–29). Those with the most are the most unnatural; this selfishness is not only perverse, but hurts the common good. The seven deadly sins are signs of waste too. As Chaucer's Parson says, Ire, or Anger, "wasteth and destroyeth the liknesse of God—that is to seyn, the vertu that is in mannes soule" (X.544). Adultery, a subset of Lechery, likewise causes waste. "Unto the body anoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth hym, and wasteth him, and shent hym, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the feend of helle. It wasteth eek his catel and his substaunce" (X.847). This physical act causes the body to both materially and physically turn into waste. Gluttony is much criticized in *Piers*, since the food those with means consume excessively is the food the poor cannot have. Those who selfishly use money to fill their bellies are not only gluttons, but hurt everyone else (IX.60–61). They misuse their Inwit—a word with multiple meanings, but here it suggests conscience or the ability to actively discern what to do (X.53–59). Those who spend their time gorging themselves and casually citing religious texts to suit their own purposes ignore the virtuous needy. Pride, in the attack on Conscience, decides to lay waste to those living well, where living well does not mean living richly but justly. "'To wasten on welfare and on wikked kepynge/ Al the world in a while thorugh oure wit!' quod Pryde" (XIX.357–358). Despite knowing that gorging themselves at the expense of the genuinely poor and needy will hurt their own chances at salvation, selfish religious continue to guzzle their food and drink (X.83–84). The rich refuse to even allow the poor to eat with them in the same hall and have constructed private rooms in which they can consume their food without having to face those who want for food (X.96–102). Gluttonous religious have no pity for the poor (XIII.78–80). Pacience tells Will that such fellows come up with "proof"

from Scripture and the Church Fathers to endorse eating such rich foods. By gorging and consuming in excess, the false religious secures a condemned fate after death unless he or she repents (XIII.86–93).

The social body excretes people as waste. As Tadeusz Slawek has argued,[47] the margin is impossible in capitalism. Whatever is outside of production is waste. When freedom became redefined as the freedom to consume, waste becomes an ethically unsupportable category.[48] Capitalism changes everything into waste, so more can be produced. In a society of consumers, those who are poor are, as Bauman puts it, "flawed consumers"[49] and, as such, disposable. Though written before capitalism flourishes, *Piers* has many moments that echo these sentiments. As Derek Pearsall has shown, the poor are a central issue in *Piers*.[50] *Piers* attempts to redeem the poor widows and the disabled who are incapable of working or contributing. Those wasted who have agency are condemned; those who do not, the poet pleads, should be pitied and helped.[51] The "wasted" are seen as having value if they are innocent of their "waste" status. Bauman argues that the European state no longer provides protection from becoming human waste through extensive social welfare or employment opportunities.[52] In a parallel move, this is what Langland is protesting when Wit tells Will about those who lack "Inwit" or intention:

> Fooles that fauten Inwit, I fynde that Holy Chirche
> Sholde fynden hem that hem fauteth, and faderlese children,
> And widewes that han noght wherwith to wynnen hem hir foode,
> Madde men and maydenes that helplese were—
> Alle thise lakken Inwit, and loore bihoveth.
>
> (IX.67–71)

These helpless people are in dire straits, though not through their own deliberate actions. It is crucial, argues Wit, to help them. Do not let these people, the widows and poor, become waste, be cast out of society, or wasted. Provide them at least with food and shelter; even better, with the wherewithal to support themselves. Society must help them; the church should aid those suffering. But trust in the state has disappeared or is gone; the vows humans trust, as Bauman points out, are contingent.[53] So, too, in the corrupt church envisioned by Langland; the clergy who no longer fulfill their vows taint the social body. This is Chaucer's vision as well. Hence the *Friar's Tale* and the *Nun's Priest's Tale* focus on poor widows and devious entities, human (the Summoner) and animal (the fox). Authoritative liars prey on the innocent and weak; they cannot, should not, be trusted. These liars

are waste, parasites living off the credulous and innocent. If the social body is healthy, no one is assigned to being waste. Vows to help the poor and the trust of those poor in authorities with power and money need to be maintained.

Langland amplifies his defense of the poor in the C-Text.[54] In a passage extended from the B-text, Langland writes that while trade is fine as long as profits are used for good causes, keeping anything beyond what one needs is theft.[55]

> Ac vnder his secrete seal Treuthe sente hem a lettre
> That bad hem bugge boldly what hem best likede
> And sethe sullen hit aȝeyn and saue þe wynnynges,
> *Amende* meson-dewes þerwith and myseyse men fynde
> And wyckede wayes with here goed *amende*
> And brugges tobrokene by the heye wayes
> *Amende* in som manere wyse and maydones helpe,
> Pore peple bedredene and prisones in stokkes
> Fynde hem for godes loue, and fauntkynes to scole,
> Releue religion and renten hem bettere....
> (IX.27–36; italics my emphasis)

One major change from the B-text version is the use of the word "amende" three times. The point is to live better lives; by bettering others' lives, we better our own. Granted, we should be discriminating in whom we chose to give to. Avoid false beggars (C-Text, IX.61–69; 98 ff.), but give to those who "wanteth wyt" (C-Text, IX.106). Give to the truly needy, such as poor widows trying to support their families through work (C-Text, IX.74–83). These poor women, spinning and rocking the cradle, are not begrudged the little money they can save from their bare existence. Langland empathizes with these pitiful women; we, the readers, are meant to as well. If we read and do not act, if we do not amend a dire situation when we have the agency to do so, then we, too, are wasters. Reading is a wasteful, parasitic act unless it inspires action to support those in need.

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CHAPTER 12

BOTTOMS UP! A MANIFESTO FOR WASTE STUDIES

I think, therefore I shit.[1]

Why Waste Studies? The Paradigm Is Now

The split between the mind and body articulated by the Cartesian slogan "Cogito, ergo sum" [I think, therefore I am] reinforces a hierarchy that privileges reason over matter. Within this philosophical position, the figuring of excrement as shit—low, horrifying, disgusting—is a manifestation of the mind–body split. Reason is antithetical to excrement. Excrement, meaning to *sift out*, suggests a controlled process, while *sifting* itself suggests a division of ingredients. But there is still the smell of its material components to contend with. If the scholarly action of analyzing references to excrement is a suspect act, since "filth itself resists being rationalized,"[2] how can we rationally talk about it? To say that one is trying to understand or control filth is to domesticate it,[3] and explaining the excremental, as Richard Barney has pointed out, tends to "conceal filth's rancid reputation."[4] *Filth* stems from words meaning to *rot* and to *stink*; its stench can never be quite disinfected. Likewise, *rubbish* prevents us from being totally secure in our position of intellectual mastery; the word, concludes the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is of "obscure origin." If the premier etymological lexicon cannot fix an origin for *rubbish*, how can it be examined or dissected? As Michael Thompson suggests, "right from the word go rubbish theory is faced with the near-impossibility of taking a detached, objective, scientific approach to its subject matter."[5] Even *waste*, coming from the Latin for *desert* and *desolate*, suggests lack, a signifier devoid of meaning onto which the speaker can impose signification.[6] Those who handle filth, literally or figuratively, become tainted by it morally and socially.

As Gillian Rudd has written concerning ecocriticism, green methodology should be diverse. Concerning biodiversity, she points out that "[s]pecies and habitats flourish best where there is room for change and adaptation as well as for simple regeneration of what already exists. This seems to me to be an exciting and useful paradigm to follow in critical practice."[7] Analogously, brown studies demand a plural verb; they *are* rhizomatic, a network of critical discourses. The field can accommodate many points of views. Consider Bruno Latour's proposition for critics to focus on "matters of concern"[8] that facilitate gatherings or associations rather than division.[9] As Latour puts it, "The critic is not the one who lifts the rugs from under the feet of the naïve believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather."[10] Like the Anglo-Saxon countrywomen drinking and defecating in the same space, we can all congregate in the big privy school of theory for the convivial ingestion and production of ideas.

Yet excrement demands a meaningful new set of critical tools that the current amalgam of theoretical positions is unable to provide. Excrement deserves, indeed demands, a moral attention beyond Elias's civilized body, Douglas's dangerously impure and chaotic body, Davis's disabled body, and Freud and Brown's child-inflected yet death-obsessed body. Let us rather consider the body in a new way by borrowing from those writing on the ethics of waste and garbage. Gay Hawkins argues for the ethical necessity of the in-between as opposed to that of hierarchy and binaries. The relationship that the self has with waste should not be that of the fantasy of mastery, but one of dynamic and relational change.[11] Hawkins urges, "*Using* disturbances to cultivate new relations with waste is the radical possibility,"[12] for

> Acknowledging our co-existence with shit means giving up ethics and politics driven by the logic of purity; but this doesn't mean an embrace of messiness, disgust, impurity, unboundedness . . . [People should] experience another way of ordering the relation between pure and impure . . . . to *thicken* meaning.[13]

The privy can be a prison or sanctuary, the end of the process (immoral/dumpsite/rejection) or the start (ethics/recycling/[f]ecosystem).

Rather than imagining our body boundaries as threatening and the waste emerging from them as abject material to be hidden and destroyed, we need to cultivate a new sense of our bodies, modeled on a sense of embodiment that allows for an ethical relationship between self and waste. Unlike sin or moral corruption, excrement can be felt, touched, smelt, and tasted. Excrement, once it is voided from the body, cannot *be* avoided. Excrement's ubiquitous materiality demands attention.

While Latour points out that "transparent, unmediated, undisputable facts"[14] are rare, the anomaly of excrement is its very materiality, whose potency we are all invested in.[15] In the Kuhnian model of scientific revolutions, paradigm shifts occur when there is an accumulation of too much superfluous matter (data/information) that cannot be explained or subsumed into or under the existing paradigm.[16] This superfluous material is waste, until a new paradigm emerges into which the excess can be subsumed, processed, and thereby understood. Waste is everywhere; we need to understand it; the paradigm shi[f]t is now.

What is more disrupting on a walk with one's beloved than, say, stepping on dog doo? How do we represent the vexation of elevated amour brought literally to earth by canine stool? Slavoj Žižek characterizes the Lacanian Real as that which "defies" and "disrupts" representation; in this sense, we could argue that excrement signifies the "real."[17] Latour proposes *Dingpolitik* "as a substitute for *Realpolitik*."[18] True *Realpolitik* is "Fecalpolitik,"[19] that which allows us to expose what normally is hidden from view and to get closer to the "real" of bodily human existence. I propose *Fecalpolitik* as designating a specific kind of political and ethical theoretical approach.[20] Functioning "as a form of ethical investment," presentist theory[21] can help illuminate what was in the shadows—so what if it's a turd?

This is a Manifesto for the Real.

Brown Methodology: Embodying Fecal Morality

If we take Waste Studies as a method, these are the kinds of things that we will need to look for.

We need to think about *simultaneity*, how excrement is both outside (food) turned inside and the inside turned outside when it is produced. It is both us and not us, or at least not "truly" us, as Aquinas would agree concerning the resurrection of the body. It is both self and other. Currently, we see the excremental body as immoral, unethical, horrifying, unhealthful, and distasteful. In *Erotic Morality: The Role of Touch in Moral Agency*, Linda Holler has argued that, by creating "morally adaptive somatic conditions,"[22] we can pay attention to the full erotic, visceral dimensions of our world. While scholars are expected to be detached, reasonable, and logical, we are "concrete, embodied human being[s]."[23] Toril Moi has eloquently argued for reclaiming Simone de Beauvoir's "concept of the body as a situation."[24] One undeniable aspect of our bodies' situation is the production of excrement. Bodies do not necessitate illogic. You *can* be embodied, attached, and still logical.

We need to think about *process, fluidity,* and *transformation*. Excrement carries hierarchies with it, but it reminds us that these are delusions,

impositions imposed on matter we all produce. Like postmodernism, waste studies problematize long-held binary oppositions. Waste studies deal with the consequences of the breakdown of binaries and allow us to understand that the given in human nature is that the "normal" human is the dirty one, not the clean one. Gender is multiplicitous, not rigidly strapped into a binary system. Adrienne Harris and Muriel Dimen urge us to consider the phrase " 'many-drafted bodies' to open up a view of the body that is determinedly complex, multifaceted, and softly assembled."[25] The body is not a bounded object out of which disgusting fluids and solids are ejected. We should take up Christine Battersby's injunction: "We need to theorize agency in terms of patterns of potentiality and flow. Our body-boundaries do not *contain* the self; they *are* the embodied self."[26] And the matter within us touches an exterior; our bodies, then, embrace a world beyond the envelope of our skin.

We need to think about *mindfulness*. Mindfulness restores the enfeebled body to its place. We do not take back the body as in recent feminism; the body reminds us that we are already in a place. Excrement is a way to acknowledge the body, and with it comes an awareness of the interconnectedness of one's own body with those of others, enabling compassion for others.[27] There are dangers in ascribing weakness or disgust to defecation. We can lose our compassion for others when we sense they have lost their dignity. Mindfulness can enable a full, aware, nonjudgmental, and loving experience of our bodies, the bodies of others, and the world.[28]

We need to think about *affinity, webs, and connectivity*. We coalesce not through *identity*, which leads only to fragmentation, but through *affinity*.[29] Excrement provides us with a reason for acknowledging affinity among all people, one we normally deny. Waste is the great leveller linking us all through elective affinities.[30] Donna Haraway points out the "embodied nature of all vision."[31] Such "situated knowledges" allow for "connections and unexpected openings"[32] that "protect and care."[33] These openings provoke ethical and moral agency. Excrement reminds us that we are connected in all those ways.

I shit, therefore I think. I, fully embodied, think; therefore I, fully embodied, act fully.

Waste studies does not deal with signs or signifieds; it deals with materiality and the outcomes of that materiality. Shit is the opposite of no real consequences; it *is* real.[34] That is why we have to be responsible. There is an ethical dimension to defecating; waste studies calls our attention to ecological matters. Reflecting on the parallel between the way we view nature and the way we view society, culture, and human beings,[35] Michael Bell suggests that "[O]ur repudiation of the grotesque [Bakhtin's lower bodily stratum] may be one of the most powerful cultural forces

behind the ecological degradation of the planet."[36] Ecological decline is linked to the distinctions elites feel compelled to set up with inferiors, creating boundaries and privatizing their selves from the material world.[37] The demonization and privatization of excrement can limit us and harm our planet. It is very simple: we should deal with our own shit, both figuratively and literally. That is the only ethical, moral, and, indeed, logical course.

Dirt is matter out of place. Let's make dirt matter.

Necessary Waste

Waste is necessary to a healthy body. As the Wife of Bath points out, our "members" were "maked for purgacioun . . . To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure" (III.116–134); genitalia are necessary for both purgation and generation. Excremental bodily parts are bifurcated into negative (evacuation of the bowels) and positive (generative, fertilizing, reproductive) attributes, both of which are integral to the natural body. Medieval medical writings acknowledge this physiological process of digestion and ejection. Beyond the bodily necessity of waste, it contains figurative worth. Nature inevitably erodes and decays. Change and transformation are key to rebirth and resurrection. In the Glazier Ms. 24, f. 27v, a man wearing a caul and nothing else holds two jars: one behind his anus and the other over his penis. This visual reference to a comment ascribed to St. Augustine that we are born *inter faeces et urinam nascimur* ("we are born between [the places of] defecation and urination") is humorous and shocking.[38] Is this comment evidence of a misanthropic view of man, reduced to the basest of his body's extremities, made abject by the filth ejected from our bodies? Such a view of the human body certainly existed in the Middle Ages, but it was by no means the only view of the body. Like the image of the urinating man on fol. 236r of the Macclesfield Psalter, directly opposite the grim image at the Office of the Dead, the filth of urine and excrement can be read as redemptive and a sign of the rebirth and resurrection promised to devout Christians. Ultimately, waste as it composts and changes can be seen as a necessary element of the sacred. The sacred can embody filth; indeed, it should. For in God's design "nothing is redundant."[39]

Michelangelo, Zygmunt Bauman points out, said that he created his magnificent sculptures by taking marble and eliminating what was superfluous. "*Separation and destruction of waste was to be the trade secret of modern creation* . . . .For something to be created, something else must be consigned to waste."[40] But in medieval manuscripts, the rubbish is part of the art;[41] though emblematized by its location on the margin, filth is

not consigned to the rubbish heap. As Valerie Allen writes, "We need a different model of purity from that of hygiene, to rethink body waste as an aesthetic possibility."[42]

An ethos of waste emerges out of this sense of relationality between ourselves and the waste we produce.[43] Waste is valorized only if it can be recycled; similarly, the people who undertake the recycling matter only as long as the waste they recycle matters. The poor who recycle excrement as dung redeem what can be considered waste; work redeems the ugliness of both the laborer and the matter he or she works with.[44]

In a recent book, Allan Stoekl uses Georges Bataille's social model of waste and expenditure to argue beyond sustainability, for postsustainability, whose characteristics seem highly reminiscent of the medieval period. We can see a generous "ethics (and aesthetics) of filth, of orgiastic recycling"[45] realized in Agnès Varda's film *The Gleaners and I* (2000), where the salvaged object carries a sacred dimension leading to community.[46] The paradigm these gleaners work out of was already the framework for medievals, for whom, as we have seen, such recycling carried the *lagniappe* of resurrection. Likewise, homeless gleaners of bottles have recently been dubbed "Redeemers," who see their work as "a deeply connective act. . . .'Redemption is about taking something and changing it into something life-sustaining.' "[47] In a postdogma world, the everyday is sacred; there is transcendence in everyday things. Shit allows us into the infinite. In a postwasteful culture, we could learn to see how waste can be necessary and useful, even, at times, sacred and sublime.

Waste and excrement are among the most compelling issues of our time. The excremental body is the body each one of us possesses; seeing how it was viewed in the Middle Ages can help us to recognize the power of its legacy today. Understanding the multiple roles that excrement played in medieval culture allows us to touch the Middle Ages. Excrement is not a sign of otherness, but a sign of similarity between periods; the medieval is connected to us in the twenty-first century. The "civilizing process" is just that—a process—never a finished state. Part of our civilizing process is to recognize the value of that which we deem uncivilized and to see ourselves in that threatening, filthy alterity.

NOTES

1 Introduction

1. All references to Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer.* 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
2. Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York/London: Routledge, 1995), p. 32, cited in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, "Introduction: 'Talking Your Body's Language': The Menstrual Materialisations of Sexed Ontology," in *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, ed. Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie (London: Palgrave, 2005), p. 5 [1–10].
3. Bryan S. Turner, "The Body in Western Society: Social Theory and Its Perspectives," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 19 [15–41].
4. Thomas A. Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body: From Corpse to Corpus* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 3; also pp. 4, 10, 16. See Carolyn Walker Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective." *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995): 1–33; and Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, Part One, ed. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), esp. p. 196 [160–219].
5. Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), p. 92, citing Erasmus, *Ciceronianus* (1528), in *Collected Works*, trans. and ed. A. H. T. Levi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), XXVIII, p. 374.
6. Miri Rubin, "Body Techniques," in *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History*, ed. Miri Rubin (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1997), p. 216 [95–123]; also Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 185–187; and Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 151.
7. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 3, citing Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," *Economy and Society* 2 (1973 [1934]): 73 [70–88]. Although Mauss writes concerning the various

techniques of the body, "Hygiene in the needs of nature: Here I could list innumerable facts for you," he does not go on to do so. Marcel Mauss, *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 118. Also, David Inglis, *A Sociological History of Excretory Experience: Defecatory Manners and Toiletry Technologies* (Lewiston, ME: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 14.

8. Thomas DiPiero, "Shit Happens: Rabelais, Sade, and the Politics of Popular Fiction," *Genre* 27 (1994): 303 [295–314]. Also in Michael Uebel, "On Becoming Male," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), p. 371 [367–384].
9. I am playing with the term "ecopoetic" as used by Jonathan Bate, *Song of the Earth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 266.
10. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 25.
11. Peter J. Smith, "'The Wronged Breeches': Cavalier Scatology," in *Fecal Matters in Early Modern Literature and Art*: *Studies in Scatology*, ed. Jeff Persels and Russell Ganim (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), p. 170 [154–172]. See also Thomas W. Ross, *Chaucer's Bawdy* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1972), p. 18; and Tiffany Beechy, "Devil Take the Hindmost: Chaucer, John Gay, and the Pecuniary Anus," *The Chaucer Review* 41.1 (2006): 83 [71–85].
12. Zachary Leader, *The Life of Kingsley Amis* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), p. 193.
13. Valerie Allen, *On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jeremy J. Citrome, *The Surgeon in Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Martha Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen Jews and the Iconography of Jewish Unbelief," *Viator* 34 (2003): 142–156, and *The Devil in the Latrine: Sin and Material Corruption in Medieval Culture* (forthcoming); Conrad Leyser, "Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages," in D. M. Hadley, ed., *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 103–120; Kathryn L. Lynch, "From Tavern to Pie Shop: The Raw, the Cooked, and the Rotten in Fragment 1 of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," *Exemplaria* 19 (2007): 117–138; and Paul Strohm, "Sovereignty and Sewage," in *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 57–70.
14. This is a both a neologism and pun: coprolite signifies fossilized feces and corporeal signifies of the body. The term thus signifies the body through faecal production.
15. See Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, pp. 3, 5.
16. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, p. 38.

17. Cf. Robert Mills, "Ecce Homo," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 162 [152–173].
18. Lennard J. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body," in *Visualizing the Disabled Body: The Classical Nude and the Fragmented Torso*, reprinted in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Letch (New York: Norton, 2001), p. 2421 [2398–2421].
19. Persels and Ganim, *Fecal Matters,* p. xiii. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have influentially argued, "what is *socially* peripheral is so frequently *symbolically* central." Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 5; also see Chapter 3, entitled "The City: The Sewer, the Gaze and the Contaminating Touch," pp. 125–148, for an analysis of Chadwick, Engels, Marx, and sewage in the Victorian city.
20. There is a vast amount of literature dealing with filth in the Victorian period. A few include *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. William Cohen and Ryan Johnson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Dale H. Porter, *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology, and Society in Victorian London* (Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 1998); Anthony S. Wohl, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (London: J. M. Dent, 1983); Alison Bashford, *Purity and Pollution: Gender, Embodiment and Victorian Medicine* (Studies in Gender History) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); also Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Swerve Editions, 2000), p. 43.
21. Mervyn James, "Ritual, Drama and the Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town," *Past & Present* 98 (1983): 9, 7 [3–29].
22. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, p. 90.
23. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. 295; also Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 31.
24. Dav Pilkey, *Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People* (New York: Scholastic, 2006), pp. 19–20.
25. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966/2002), p. 200.
26. See, for just one example out of many, the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles who, in 1979/80, was an artist in residence at the New York City Department of Sanitation, in a performance called *Touch Sanitation*.
27. John Scanlan, *On Garbage* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), p. 163.
28. Gail Weiss, "The Body as Narrative Horizon," in *Thinking the Limits of the Body*, ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen and Gail Weiss (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), p. 25 [25–35].
29. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy, Vol. II the History of Eroticism, Vol. III: Sovereignty*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1993), p. 31, quoting Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 24.
30. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 52.

31. Kelly Anspaugh, "Powers of Ordure: James Joyce and the Excremental Vision." *Mosaic* 27, 1 (1994): 77 [73–100]. Also, Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke, "Introduction: Cultural Economies of Waste," in *Culture and Waste: The Creation and Destruction of Value*, ed. Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), p. xiv [ix–xvii].
32. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968/1984), p. 175.
33. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp. 19, 110; also Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, p. 14, on carnival.
34. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 149; Beechy, "Devil Take the Hindmost," 71.
35. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 124, 321.
36. Davis points out that "what the term [grotesque] has failed to liberate is the notion of actual bodies." "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2418.
37. Martin Pops, "The Metamorphosis of Shit," *Salmagundi* 56 (1982): 50 [26–61].
38. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, p. 9.
39. Gay Hawkins, "Down the Drain: Shit and the Politics of Disturbance," in *Culture and Waste,* p. 43 [39–52].
40. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation,* p. 4 [1–10].
41. Quoted in Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation,* p. 5, from Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion,* p. 35.
42. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 4–12, cited in Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation,* p. 5.
43. Maurice Bloch, "Religion and Ritual," in *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, ed. A. Kuper and J. Kuper, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 734–735 [732–736]. Cited by Miri Rubin, "Introduction: Rites of Passage," in *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Nicola F. McDonald and W. M. Ormrod (York: York Medieval Press, 2004), p. 2 [1–12].
44. Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 106.
45. Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence,* p. 106.
46. Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, pp. 108, 111.
47. Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, p. 220.
48. Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, pp. 23, 115. See also Keith Thomas, "The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England," *TLS* 21 (January 1977): 80; and Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 1.
49. Gail Kern Paster, "Purgation as the Allure of Mastery: Early Modern Medicine and the Technology of the Self," in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Olin (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 195 [193–205].
50. As William Tronzo writes, in his review of Nurith Kenaan-Kedar and Asher Ovadiah, eds., *The Metamorphosis of Marginal Images: From Antiquity*

to Present Time (Tel Aviv: The Yolanda and David Katz Faculty of the Arts, Tel Aviv University, 2001), in *The Medieval Review*, January 10, 2006, referring the work of Michael Camille, "[H]ow do we determine just what it is that constitutes an edge and hence a center in any given work of the past?"

51. Steven F. Kruger in a panel entitled "What Happened to Theory in Medieval Studies? A Roundtable," The Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University (May 2007).
52. Not uncommon are cases recorded of people having drowned in their own filth. For example, in Erfurt at a gathering given by Emperor Frederick I in his Great Hall, the weight of guests collapsed the floor and they sank into the cesspool below. Reginald Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1946), p. 52. Richard III is said to have conjured up the idea of killing the princes in the Tower while sitting on a privy; Pope Leo V was killed while fulfilling his human necessity. *The Arabian Nights* includes tales where people are killed while defecating. Ralph A. Lewin, *Merde: Excursions in Scientific, Cultural, and Sociohistorical Coprology* (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 59.
53. Inglis, *A Sociological History*, p. 15. Most medieval castles and Tudor manor-houses had garderobes from which excrement was directly placed into barrels or containers; the matter in them would then be used agriculturally or in tanning. Caroline Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung* (Thrupp: Sutton, 2006), p. 141.
54. This was transcribed in 875 at St. Gall. Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 55.
55. "Fecology, the study of dung, is an interdisciplinary pursuit that touches every science." Dan Sabbath and Mandel Hall, *End Product: The First Taboo* (New York: Urizen Books, 1977), pp. 13–14, also see p. 272, note 13.
56. Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth-Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, ed. Donna Haraway (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 149–181.

2 The Rhizomatic Body

1. William R. LaFleur, "Hungry Ghosts and Hungry People: Somaticity and Rationality in Medieval Japan," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body* Part One, ed. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 280–282 [270–303].
2. Fredric Jameson, "Marxism and Dualism in Deleuze," in *A Deleuzian Century?*, ed. Ian Buchanan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 25 [13–36].
3. Ardis Butterfield, ed., *Chaucer and the City* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), p. 9.

4. Peter Leese, "Dust in Van Diemen's Land: The Location of the Past," paper delivered at the conference, "Rubbish, Waste, and Litter: Culture/al Refusals," Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Institute of English Studies, November 17–18, 2006.
5. See the opening chapter of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* for a fascinating discussion of this phenomenon; also Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), p. 187, section 144; Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body," 7 [1–33]; *Monasteriales Indicia*, ed. and trans. Nancy Stork, http://www2.sjsu.edu/depts/english/Indicia.htm (accessed April 10, 2007), includes synonyms for latrine or privy in Old English; Allen, *On Farting,* p. 11; Thomas W. Ross, "Taboo-Words in Fifteenth-Century English," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1984), pp. 137, 140 [137–160]; and Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 2007), pp. 319–320, 344–346.
6. Many thanks to the anonymous reader who kindly elaborates that "[t]he metonymy in this word 'changes the name' (metonymy) of excrement to that of the agency spreading it, the human hands working it into the field; the effect is to sanitize the excrement by emphasizing the human intervention, the work with the hands. Thus, the metonymy holds a crucial truth . . .'shit,' unlike 'manure,' is *not* for 'working with the hands' (except in perversion, which exception secures the case)." Bataille argues that man negates nature through *work*. Hence, manure, which is shit worked over by hand, becomes good; it is not nature, but a symbol of man's work (and his non-animality). Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 61. Lower-class people in the Victorian period used words of French origin—such as "toilet"—to "seem refined. . . .The upper class shunned the words as arriviste affectations." Today some upper-crust people use the word "toilet" ironically. Sarah Lyall, "Why Can't the English Just Give Up That Class Folderol?" *The New York Times,* April 26, 2007.
7. Ross, "Taboo-Words," p. 151.
8. Walter King, "How High is Too High? Disposing of Dung in Seventeenth-Century Prescot," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 447 [443–457]; see also Bruce Thomas Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things: Ben Johnson, Sir John Harington, and the Culture of Excrement in Early Modern England," in *New Perspectives on Ben Jonson*, ed. James Hirsh (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), p. 180 [174–196]. When I want to indicate this kind of excrement, I will use the term *dung* since that is more frequently used in fourteenth-century literature, *manure* only coming into common usage in the early fifteenth century.
9. Only when one has a sense of privacy can words describing "private" actions gain agency; this is also when euphemism and graphic language come into play. R. W. Hanning, "Telling the Private Parts: 'Pryvetee' and Poetry in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," in *The Idea of Medieval Literature: New Essays on Chaucer and Medieval Culture in Honor of Donald R. Howard*,

ed. James M. Dean and Christian K. Zacher (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1992), p. 111 [108–125].

10. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G. H. McWilliam, 2nd Edition (London: Penguin Books, 1995), pp. 799–800.
11. "[T]he word 'poop' or even 'shit' is as powerful or powerless as our reaction to it allows it to be." Andrew Urbanus, "Habibi's Hutch: Preschool and Natural Childlife Preserve." http://www.habibishutch.com/Habibipkg0407.pdf (accessed April 21, 2008).
12. Citations, http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/med/ (accessed April 21, 2008).
13. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 15.
14. As Garrett Epp has pointed out, Mankind is "preoccupied" with excrement. "The Vicious Guise: Effeminacy, Sodomy, and Mankind," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), p. 306 [303–320]. New-Guise, Nowadays and Nought enjoy much potty talk, including a silly song about how, if you don't clean your ass, it will be seen on your breaches (ll. 335–343), see also ll. 373, l. 489. Mankind refers to his body as a dunghill: "Alasse, what was þi fortune and þi chaunce/To be assocyat wyth my flesch, þat stynkyng dungehyll?" (ll. 203–204). Mark Eccles, ed., *The Macro Plays*, EETS 262 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).
15. *The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. S. B. Meech and H. E. Allen, *EETS* 212 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940; reprint 1961), p. 181/ll.3–5.
16. John Arderne, *Treatises of Fistula in Ano, Haemorrhoids, and Clysters*, ed. D'Arcy Power EETS O.S. 139 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1910), p. 76/8.
17. Victoria Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky: Hildegard of Bingen and Premodern Medicine* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 165.
18. Wendy Knepper, "Romancing the Rhizome: Chrétien de Troyes' Place in the New Middle Ages" (unpublished).
19. Jeremy J. Citrome, "Bodies That Splatter: Surgery, Chivalry, and the Body in the *Practica* of John Arderne," *Exemplaria* 13.1 (2001): 143 [137–172].
20. Citrome, "Bodies That Splatter," 146.
21. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "The Inhuman Circuit," in Cohen and Weiss, *Thinking the Limits of the Body*, p. 167 [167–186].
22. Allen J. Frantzen, "Where the Boys Are: Children and Sex in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), p. 50 [43–66].
23. Citrome, "Bodies That Splatter," 138, 139.
24. Citrome, *The Surgeon*, p. 116.
25. Citrome, "Bodies That Splatter," 155. We might argue that the unified body is the fantasy of the Symbolic and excrement and defecation are part of the Real.
26. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* pp. 26, 317.
27. Semen is seen as negative in nocturnal emissions, say, where it signals moral laxness; but, as the most refined of the digestions, it is lauded as

a valuable "excrement" since it can produce life. Robert M. Durling, "Deceit and Digestion in the Belly of Hell," in *Allegory and Representation: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1979–80*, ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 68 [61–93].

28. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, trans. Arthur John Brock (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 275. See also pp. 251, 309.
29. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, pp. 285, 299.
30. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, p. 325.
31. William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy* (*Dragmaticon Philosophiae*), ed. and trans. Italo Ronca and Matthew Curr (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), p. 142. Cf. Constantine the African, *Pantegni* (*Theor.*) IV.I (Lyons ed., fol. 14 vb); *De stomachi affectionibus* V (Basel eds., p. 219); Nemesius, Premnon Phys. XXIII.I. From Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy*, p. 201, n. 77.
32. Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy*, pp. 143–144.
33. Lewin, *Merde*, p. vii.
34. "*[V]iriditas* 'greenness' is a key notion throughout Hildegard's works. . . .As the principle of life, *viriditas* implies generative energy, growing and greening power, verdure and fertility." Feces with their generally brown color clearly would indicate death or lack of life within Hildegard's schema. Hildegard of Bingen, *On Natural Philosophy and Medicine*: *Selections from Cause et Cure*, ed. and trans. Margaret Berger (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), p. 128.
35. Hildegard, *On Natural Philosophy*, p. 85, also p. 47.
36. Hildegard, *On Natural Philosophy,* p. 77.
37. Hildegard, *On Natural Philosophy*, p. 100.
38. Hildegard, *On Natural Philosophy,* see pp. 122–123.
39. Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth*, p. 101.
40. Sarah L. Higley, *Hildegard of Bingen's Unknown Language: An Edition, Translation, and Discussion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and personal communication.
41. Hildegard, *On Natural Philosophy*, p. 77. Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 323.
42. Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit*, trans. Nadia Benabid and Rodolphe el-Khoury (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), p. 102.
43. Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 299.
44. Richard Durling, "Excreta as a Remedy in Galen, His Predecessors and His Successors," in *Tradition et Traduction: Les Textes Philosophiques et Scientifiques Grecs au Moyen Age Latin: Hommage à Fernand Bossier*, ed. Rita Beyers, Jozef Brams, Dirk Sacré, and Koenraad Verrycken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 25–35.
45. Heinrich von Staden, "Women and Dirt," *Helios* 19 (1992): 9 [7–30].
46. Michael Swanton, trans. and ed., *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London: Everyman, 1993), p. 259.
47. Monica H. Green, *The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

Press, 2002), p. 67. Other recipes with dung are to be found on pp. 81, 82, 83, 91.

48. Green, *The Trotula*, pp. 76–77. Bran might be used because of its purgative ability.
49. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1462, fol. 56v.
50. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 399, fol. 22v–23r.
51. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 399, fol. 18r.
52. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 34.F.5r. This includes some fun doodles, including the lower half of a man's body with a graphic priapus. There is even a naked person with what looks like an upside-down twistie soft ice cream cone coming out of his bottom.
53. Ralph Hanna, "Henry Daniel's *Liber Uricrisiarum*, Book I, Chapters 1–3," in *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England*, ed. Lister M. Matheson (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1994), p. 195 [185–218].
54. Hanna, "Henry Daniel's *Liber Uricrisiarum*," pp. 206–207.
55. Jerome J. Citrome, "Medicine as Metaphor in the Middle English *Cleanness*," *The Chaucer Review* 35, 3 (2001): 265 [260–280].
56. Arderne, *Treatises of Fistula in Ano*, p. 26. For a discussion of this passage, see Citrome, *The Surgeon*, p. 124.
57. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, pp. 16–17.

3 Moral Filth and the Sinning Body: Hell, Purgatory, Resurrection

1. Quoted in Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 62. While this quote is frequently attributed to Augustine, finding the actual source has proven elusive; one commentator has suggested that the attribution might have been "retrofathered" onto Augustine. Many thanks to Robert Gorman for his tireless efforts.
2. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 62.
3. Mary Clayton endorses this ascription in "An Edition of Ælfric's *Letter to Brother Edward*," in *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), p. 264 [263–283].
4. From a twelfth-century collection of Ælfrician writings from Worcester. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 43.
5. In the Old English, masculine pronouns are used for the general disapproval voiced in the concluding passage; nevertheless, as Clayton points out, "It is possible that the practice was both a male and a female one, but that Ælfric connects it particularly with women and focuses his disgust on women." Clayton, "An Edition of Ælfric's *Letter to Brother Edward*," p. 274.
6. Nigel Barley, "The Letter to Brother Edward," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 79 (1978): 23–24. In Luis Buñuel's *The Phantom of Liberty,* people defecate together, but shamefully sneak off to eat privately in little rooms, a wry

comment on our obsession with what constitutes proper public behavior and private action.

7. Citrome, *The Surgeon*, pp. 105–106.
8. *The Holy Bible*, Douay Version 1609 (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1914).
9. 1 Kings 24:4 in the Douay.
10. Psalm 82:11 in the Douay.
11. Leslie Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives in Old English Prose* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), p. 39.
12. Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives,* p. 47.
13. Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives,* p. 73.
14. MED online. *De Officio Pastorale*, Wyclif translation.
15. Eccles, *The Macro Plays*, l. 1064, p. 34 and l. 2412, p. 74.
16. Sir John Clanvowe, *The Two Ways*, in *The Works of John Clanvowe*, ed. V. J. Scattergood (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1965), pp. 67–68.
17. Anna Popiel, "Between Potentiality and Non-existence: The Concept of Matter in the Light of Neoplatonic Philosophy," paper delivered at the conference "Rubbish, Waste, and Litter: Culture/al Refusals," Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Institute of English Studies, November 17–18, 2006.
18. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp. 401–402. It is clear that the entrails, including the intestine that contained excrement, were the lowest ranked body parts. See Elizabeth A. R. Bowen, "Death and the Human Body in the Later Middle Ages: The Legislation of Boniface VIII on the Division of the Corpse," *Viator* 12 (1981): 221–270; Miri Rubin, "The Body, Whole and Vulnerable, in Fifteenth-Century England," in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 23 [19–28].
19. William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 151. See also Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 68; Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body," 17 [1–33]; Thomas H. Seiler, "Filth and Stench as Aspects of the Iconography of Hell," in *The Iconography of Hell*, ed. Clifford Davidson and Thomas Seiler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), pp. 132–140; Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen," 148 [142–156]; Alan David Justice, "Trade Symbolism in the York Cycle," *Theatre Journal* 31 (1979), p. 58; Carolyne Larrington, "Diet, Defecation and the Devil: Disgust and the Pagan Past," in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), p. 140 [138–155].
20. On Satan and bowels, see Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 75; Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 140; Miriam Gill, "Female Piety and Impiety: Selected Images of Women in Wall Paintings in England After 1300," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women*

and Saints in Late Medieval Europe, ed. Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 110 [101–120].

21. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 42.
22. S. A. J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: J. M. Dent, 1991), pp. 195–196. Cynewulf's *Juliana* eliminates "Juliana's casting the demon into a dung heap." R. D. Fulk and Christopher Cain, *A History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 100.
23. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 142.
24. Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, ed., *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 90, ll. 34–36, p. 91.
25. Millett and Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women*, p. 124, ll. 10, p. 125. See also pp. 126–127.
26. Allen, *On Farting*, pp. 114–115, quoting and translating *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Robert Hasenfratz (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 2.434–2.437, pp. 126–127.
27. All references to Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam, 1984).
28. Durling, "Deceit and Digestion," p. 65 [61–93]. For a discussion on how Purgatory turns "excrement into words," see Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 73.
29. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Holkham misc. 48 from Bodleian Roll 389.1. canto 28, page 42, frame 43. The manuscript comes from northern Italy and dates from the third quarter of the fourteenth century.
30. Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen Jews," 147.
31. Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 39. See Annette Weber, "The Hanged Judas of Freiburg Cathedral," in *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other: Visual Representations and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. E. Frojmovic, Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 165–188.
32. All English quotes from Eugene Clasby, trans., *The Pilgrimage of Human Life* (New York: Garland, 1992), p. 46.
33. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 7.
34. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 36. A fourteenth-century Danish church wall painting shows a religious man brewing beer or wine. His helper, a devil, throws excrement into his jug, suggesting that liquor leads to sin. Ørslev-28S, circa 1325.
35. Millett and Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women*, p. 68, ll. 32–33, p. 69 and p. 70, ll. 4–5, p. 71.
36. Chaucer, The Riverside Chaucer, X.427–428.
37. Chaucer, The Riverside Chaucer, X.839–840 and X.848, 850.
38. *Monasteriales Indicia*, Nancy Stork.
39. Axel Bolvig, "'I Am Well Done – Please Go On Eating': Food, Digestion, and Humour in Late Medieval Danish Wall Paintings," in *Grant Risee?*

The Medieval Comic Presence / La Presence Comique Médiévale: Essays in Memory of Brian J Levy, ed. Adrian P. Tudor and Alan Hindley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 251 [247–263].

40. Monica H. Green and Linne R. Mooney, "The Sickness of Women," in *Sex, Aging & Death in a Medieval Medical Compendium,* ed. M. Teresa Tavormina, 2 vols. (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2006), vol. 2, p. 494.
41. John Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man,* ed. F. J. Furnivall and K. B. Locock, *EETS* 77, 83, 92 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1899/1996), lines 9114–9119; 20848–20850.
42. Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Viking, 1990), Book 24, ll. 197–198; see also Book 22, ll. 485–488.
43. In this manuscript of *La Estoire de Saint Aedward Le Rei,* the poet writes, "Mais ne regna pas A[e]dmundz mut,/ Un duc l'ocist par traisun/ A la foraine maisun" (365–367). The translation reads, "But Edmund reigned not long,/ A duke slew him by treason/ At the house of retirement" (365–367). From *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), pp. 35, 189.
44. Allen, *On Farting*, p. 78, quoting and translating Henry of Huntington, *Henrici Archidiaconi Huntendunensis Historia Anglorum*, *The History of the English by Henry from AC 55 to AD 1154 in 8 books*, ed. Thomas Arnold (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1879), 6.14, p. 186. James I of Scotland is also said to have been killed in a privy in 1437 at the Black Monastery in Perth. Lister M. Matheson, *Death and Dissent: Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999), pp. 43–45. Charles of Spain, the Holy Roman Emperor, was born in a privy. Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 325.
45. Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion, 1992), p. 134.
46. Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 9.
47. Arthur Rackham Cleveland, *Woman Under the English Law: From the Landing of the Saxons to the Present Time* (Littleton, CO: Fred B. Rothman, 1987), p. 75 and p. 75, n.1.
48. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 264, f.56. Many thanks to Rigmor Båtsvik for suggesting this interpretation. High and low become perversely interchanged: "Thus turds are the relics worshipped by a nun at the altar of the anus in the margins of the Bodleian Alexander Romance." Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 112. See also D. J. A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus: A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1963).
49. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 606.
50. Carol J. Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum* 68 (1993): 373 [363–387]. President Lyndon Johnson (in)famously would conduct interviews while sitting on the toilet. While it might seem that such an act would humiliate *him*, in fact,

he intimidated those *with* him, rendering the embarrassed voyeurs as filth in his power.

51. Bakthin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 148.
52. *Njal's Saga*, trans. Robert Cook (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 57, 74, 156. In the Renaissance, nails and hair were also referred to as excrements. See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1434, 292–294; and Will Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern Europe," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 168, 174, 177 [155–187].
53. *Njal's Saga*, p. 156.
54. *Njal's Saga*, p. 210.
55. Douglas, "Jokes," p. 104 [90–114]. For another story linking excrement and humiliation, see the German "Veilchenlegende" attributed to Neidhart von Reuenthal, as discussed in Alan Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder: A Study of German National Character Through Folklore* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), pp. 29–30; also Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
56. Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, trans., *Læxdala Saga* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 167–168. For a discussion of this scene, see Larringon, "Diet, Defecation and the Devil," p. 146.
57. Rita Hamilton and Janet Perry, trans., *The Poem of the Cid* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 142–143, ll. 2286a–2310. Many thanks to Misty Schieberle for elaboration on this passage.
58. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 60.
59. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 629, Eighth Story, Ninth Day. See illuminations of maestro Simone on a toilet at night in Chiara Frugoni, *A Day in a Medieval City*, trans. William McCuaig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 172.
60. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 103. For a lovely illumination of this scene, Frugoni, *A Day in a Medieval City*, p. 171.
61. Laporte, *History of Shit*, pp. 78–79. Urine was used by fullers into the Middle Ages to wash grease from woolen cloth, a process carried on well into the twentieth-century to full Harris Tweed in a process called "waulking."
62. Sigmund Freud, "Character and Anal Eroticism," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, Volume IX (London: The Hogarth Press, 1959), p. 174 [167–175]. He further discusses the link between gold and faeces as supported by anthropology in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, VI. "The Dream-Work E. Some Further Typical Dreams," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, Volume V (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 403 [350–404]. See also "H. Affects in Dreams," pp. 468–471 [460–487], about a dream concerning faeces. I disagree and think the link has to do with imaginary value and excess. Also see Allen, *On Farting*, pp. 92–96.
63. Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things," p. 176 [174–196].

64. Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 245. Also see Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 223, n. 4; and C. Ginzburg, "Representations of German Jewry: Images, Prejudices, Ideas—a Comment," in *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*, ed. R. P. Hsia and H. Lehmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 211 [209–212].
65. This is followed by the discussion on how to divide a fart into twelve parts. See Peter W. Travis, "Thirteen Ways of Listening to a Fart: Noise in Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*," *Exemplaria* 16 (2004): 323–348; and Beechy, "Devil Take the Hindmost," 81 [71–85].
66. Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 70; Laporte, *History of Shit*, p. 33.
67. Laporte, *History of Shit*, p. 34.
68. Laporte, *History of Shit*, p. 44.
69. Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust,* p. 154, also p. 155; Laporte, *History of Shit*, p. 40; Anna Sapir Abulafia, "Bodies in the Jewish-Christian Debate," in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 129 [123–137]; and Sharon Achinstein, "John Foxe and the Jews," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 86, n. 2 [86–120].
70. Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 34. See also Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, pp. 88–91, who, also citing R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), argues that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw an upsurge in somatically based religious polemic.
71. Little, *Religious Poverty,* p. 41.
72. Little, *Religious Poverty,* p. 52. Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 214, argues that the twelfth century signals the start of an intensification of the construction of the "other." She draws on the work of Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, and Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
73. Freedman, *Medieval Peasant*, p. 2.
74. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 6.
75. Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels: A History of the Conflict Between Christendom and Islam* (New York: Random House, 2003), p. 69, p. 349, n. 32, quoting Ibn Abdun, *Hisba manual*, in *Medieval Iberia: Reading from Christian, Muslim and Jewish Sources*, trans. Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. 178.
76. Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, p. 68, quoting al-Wansharishi, Abul Abbas Ahmad, *Kitah al-mi`yar al-mugrib* (Rabat: 1981), p. 141. Translated from the Arabic by L. P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 58–59. See also Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, p. 349, n. 31.
77. Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, p. 161, also pp. 53–55.

78. Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, p. 180.
79. For a description of this event, see Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, pp. 86–87, quoting Reinhart Dozy, *Spanish Islam: A History of the Moslems in Spain* (London: Frank Cass, 1913 reissued 1972), pp. 519–520.
80. Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen Jews," 142 [142–156]. Larry Scanlon has read such stories as "narrative enactment[s] of cultural authority." Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 34; quoted in Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen Jews," 147.
81. Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 115. Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 26. Usurers have been depicted as both eating and defecating money, as in a famous example in a façade on a house in Goslar.
82. John DuVal, *Cuckolds, Clerics, and Countrymen: Medieval French Fabliaux* (Fayetteville : University of Arkansas Press, 1982), pp. 77–86.
83. Little, *Religious Poverty*, pp. 54–55.
84. Steven F. Kruger, "The Bodies of Jews in the Late Middle Ages," in *The Idea of Medieval Literature: New Essays on Chaucer and Medieval Culture in Honor of Donald R. Howard*, ed. James M. Dean and Christian K. Zacher (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 318–319, 303 [301–323]. See also Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 36 on the Christian subject as constituted through the rejection of the Jew.
85. Irving A. Agus, *Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg: His Life and His Works As Sources for the Religious, Legal, and Social History of the Jews of Germany in the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Ktav, 1970), pp. 179, 180, and 183.
86. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Betty Radice, revised M. T. Clancy (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 81.
87. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 83
88. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 84.
89. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 87. He cites Vulgate Joel 1:17.
90. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 18.
91. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 108. Heloise cites Matthew 15:19–20.
92. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 171. He cites Romans 14:3 ff.
93. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, p. 184. Kristeva, like Abelard citing Matthew 15, argues that with the advent of Christianity there comes an "interiorization of [the] abject." Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 112, 114. Also Luke Ferretter, "*Histories de l'Église*: The Body of Christ in the Thought of Julia Kristeva," in *Writing the Bodies of Christ: The Church from Carlyle to Derrida*, ed. John Schad (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 147 [145–157]. Elliott, *Fallen Bodies,* p. 3, cites Jean Gerson (early fifteenth century) as arguing that "our conscience is a clean toilet filled with daily excrement," p. 26. Jeff Persels examines

this passage from the Gospel arguing that in Rabelais it is the damned who are constipated, retaining filth in their bodies, and the saved who are not. Jeff Persels, "'Straightened in the Bowels,' or Concerning the Rabelaisian Trope of Defecation," *Études rabelaisiennes* XXXI (1996): 101–112. Compare to Bridget of Sweden, *Saint Bride and Her Book: Birgitta of Sweden's Revelations,* Julia Bolton Holloway, trans. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 36–37.

94. Lothario Dei Segni (Pope Innocent III), *On the Misery of the Human Condition: De miseria humane conditionis*, ed. Donald R. Howard, trans. Margaret Mary Dietz (Indianapolis: The Bobbs–Merrill Company, 1969), p. 6.
95. Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 153. It is difficult to imagine Innocent sitting in a "stercoraceous chair" at St John Lateran, a processional throne the pope was, over the course of several hundred years, reputed to have sat on. Lewin, *Merde*, p. 57.
96. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, p. 8.
97. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, pp. 9, 11.
98. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, p. 12.
99. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, p. 46.
100. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, pp. 61–62.
101. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, p. 68.
102. Pope Innocent III, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, p. 71.
103. Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Francis of Assisi*, trans. Christine Rhone (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 33.
104. Paul Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Louise Seymour Houghton (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), pp. 227–228. From http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18787/18787-h/18787-h.htm (accessed February 24, 2006).
105. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 79.
106. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 80.
107. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 83.
108. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 84, 86.
109. Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life,* p. 76.
110. Lawrence Wright, *Clean and Decent* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 26.
111. MED. Ancient Petitions in the Public Record Office (PRO). 185.9240.
112. See Karma Lochrie, *Covert Operations: The Medieval Uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 29–30. Indeed, in Hull, Massachusetts, at St. Mary's of the Bay Church, sold by the Catholic Church in the 1990s, the confessional area was turned into a bathroom by its private owner.
113. Elizabeth Robertson, paper delivered at the Revisiting Chaucer and Christianity Conference (July 2003) called: "'I have . . . a Soule for to Kepe': Discerning the Female Subject in 'The Merchant's Tale.'" Canterbury, England.

114. Georges Duby, *A History of Private Life, Volume I, from Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 586.
115. Durling, "Deceit and Digestion," p. 84; also Citrome, *The Surgeon*, pp. 106, 109, concerning excremental language in the confessional exchange.
116. Clasby, *Pilgrimage,* p. 29. Penance continues in a similar vein on p. 30.
117. Clasby, *Pilgrimage,* p. 31.
118. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 134
119. Origen says no. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 67.
120. Bynum, *Resurrection*, pp. 57, 122. See also Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 17.
121. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 87.
122. John the Scot, *Periphyseon: On the Division of Nature*, ed. and trans. Myra L. Uhlfelder (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill), p. 229, from Book IV.
123. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 102.
124. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 161.
125. "Body is worse than dung, asserted the pagan Celsus (quoting Heraclitus); it is 'a disgusting vessel of urine' and 'bag of shit,' said the Christian apologist Arnobius." Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 61.
126. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 255.
127. Philip Lyndon Reynolds, *Food and the Body: Some Peculiar Questions in High Medieval Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 338–339.
128. Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 218.
129. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a.54.I. Quoted in Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 219.
130. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a.54.4 ad. 2. Quoted in Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 220.
131. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 265. See also Ralf Lützelschwab, "Zwischen Heilsvermittlung und Ärgernis – das *preputium Domini* im Mittelalter," *Pecia* 8–11 (2005) *(Reliques et saintetée dans l'espace médiéval*), ed. J. L. Deuffic, pp. 601–628, esp. 604, 608, 626–627, on issues of the Last Judgment.
132. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 269.
133. Reynolds, *Food and the Body*, pp. 361, 431.
134. Agamben, *The Open*, p. 19. Agamben cites Thomas Aquinas, *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas, vol. 20, Part III (Supplement) QQ. 69–86*, trans. Fathers of the Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1912), p. 193; original in Aquinas, *Somme théologique. La Résurrection*, ed. Jean-Dominique Folghera (Paris-Rome: Desclée, 1955), pp. 151–152.

4 Gendered Filth

1. Stephanie Saul, "Pill That Eliminates the Period Gets Decidedly Mixed Reviews," *The New York Times*, April 20, 2007, A1.

2. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, p. 2 [1–10], citing Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, p. 203.
3. Linda Holler, *Erotic Morality: The Role of Touch in Moral Agency* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 96.
4. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, p. 3, quoting Iris Marion Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 193.
5. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, p. 2. See Margrit Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries: Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio) Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 15. See Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 50. See also Patrick Viscuso, "Menstruation: A Problem in Late Byzantine Canon Law," *Abstracts of Papers-Byzantine Studies Conference* 26 (2000): 72–73.
6. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, p. 6.
7. Shail and Howie, "Introduction," in *Menstruation*, p. 7.
8. Elizabeth Grosz, "Histories of the Present and Future: Feminism, Power, Bodies," in Cohen and Weiss, *Thinking the Limits of the Body*, p. 22 [13–23].
9. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
10. Inglis, *A Sociological History*, p. 81.
11. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 200.
12. Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body," 17 [1–33].
13. Leyser, "Masculinity in Flux," p. 111, n. 18 [103–120]. See also Jacqueline Murray, "Men's Bodies, Men's Minds: Seminal Emissions and Sexual Anxiety in the Middle Ages," *Annual Review of Sex Research* 8 (1997): 3 [1–26]; Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 220.
14. Murray, "Men's Bodies," 1–2.
15. Leyser, "Masculinity," p. 108.
16. Leyser, "Masculinity," p. 116. See Murray, "Men's bodies," 4, 13–14, 19.
17. J. L. Nelson, "Monks, Secular Men and Masculinity, c. 900," in *Masculinity,* p. 128 [121–142].
18. Nelson, "Monks, Secular Men," p. 129.
19. Murray, "Men's Bodies," 2, 23.
20. Bynum, *Fragmentatio*n, p. 220.
21. Maurice Bloch, "Death, Women and Power," in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, ed. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 219 [211–230].
22. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 65. Cyrille Harpet, *Du Déchet: Philosophie des Immondices: Corps, Ville, Industrie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), p. 124. See also Allen, *On Farting*, p. 60.
23. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 70.
24. Jacqueline Murray, "'The Law of Sin That is in My Members': The Problem of Male Embodiment," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih

(London: Routledge, 2002), p. 11 [9–22]. See also Bryan S. Turner, "The Body in Western Society," in *Religion and the Body*, p. 24 [15–41].

25. Miranda Griffin, "Dirty Stories: Abjection in the Fabliaux," in *New Medieval Literatures* 3, ed. David Lawton, Wendy Scase, and Rita Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 255 [229–260]. Women were separated in castles along with their private privies. Roberta Gilchrist, "Medieval Bodies in the Material World: Gender, Stigma and the Body," in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 59 [43–61]. Also see Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, pp. 26–35, 124–131, about women and foulness; and Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, ed. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 180 [179–189].
26. Miri Rubin, "The Person in the Form: Medieval Challenges to Bodily 'Order,'" in Kay and Rubin, *Framing Medieval Bodies*, p. 113 [100–122]; Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, p. 179, n.76; Rob Meens, "Ritual Purity and the Influence of Gregory the Great," *Studies in Church History* 32 (1994): 35 [31–43]; and Paula M. Rieder, "Insecure Borders: Symbols of Clerical Privilege and Gender Ambiguity in the Liturgy of Churching," in *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation, and Marriage in Premodern Europe*, ed. Anne L. McClanan and Karen Rosoff Encarnación (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 99 [93–113]. But Becky Lee argues how postpartum purification rites, while separating the "impure," could be empowering for women and men. Becky R. Lee, "The Purification of Women after Childbirth: A Window onto Medieval Perceptions of Women," *Florilegium* 14 (1995–1996): 43–55; and Becky R. Lee, "Men's Recollections of a Women's Rite: Medieval English Men's Recollections Regarding the Rite of the Purification of Women after Childbirth," *Gender & History* 14 (2002): 228 [224–241].
27. Kruger, "The Bodies of Jews in the Late Middle Ages," p. 303 [301–323].
28. Alcuin Blamires, ed., *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 64.
29. Nelson, "Monks Secular Men," p. 132. See also Sabbath and Hall, *End Product*, p. 23; J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patriologia Latina*, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–1846), vol. 133, col 556; G. G. Coulton. *Five Centuries of Religion*, 3 vols (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1923). Vol. I, p. 528.
30. Many thanks to Edgar Laird who showed me this passage; his translation.
31. St. Bernard said that man[kind] is a sack of stercory. Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 319.
32. E. J. Burford, *The Bishop's Brothels* (London: Robert Hale, 1993), p. 57.
33. Millett and Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women*, see for example, pp. 9, 13, 24, 31, 33. Hildegard von Bingen depicts an excremental vision of the Antichrist and the harlot who pretends to be a

virgin. Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p. 493, quoted by Madeline H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 172, 508. Scatology and eschatology fuse in this image of an excremental end of the world.

34. The Parson's rhetoric is reminiscent of Wolf's [Wulfstan's] Sermon to the English under Viking persecution in 1014, where Wolf condemns those who act against common decency. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 181.
35. Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, pp. 154–155.
36. Anke Bernau, "Virginal Effects: Text and Identity in Ancrene Wisse," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 41 [36–48].
37. Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), p. 138.
38. Blamires, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, pp. 154–155.
39. Blamires, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, pp. 174, 176.
40. For a detailed discussion of "hol" and its implications for the *Miller's Tale*, see Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gende*r (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 226, n. 29; also Lochrie, *Covert Operations*, p. 173.
41. Hansen, *Chaucer*, p. 228; also David Lorenzo Boyd, "Seeking 'Goddes Pryvetee': Sodomy, Quitting, and Desire in the Miller's Tale," in *Words and Works: Studies in Medieval English Language and Literature in Honour of Fred C. Robinson,* ed. Peter S. Baker and Nicholas Howe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 257 [243–260].
42. Hansen, *Chaucer*, p. 227.
43. Hansen, *Chaucer*, p. 230; Peter G. Beidler, "Art and Scatology in the Miller's Tale," *The Chaucer Review* 12. 2 (1977): 90–102.
44. See Jeffrey L. Singman, *Daily Life in Medieval Europe* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 49. *Mempiria* were medieval balls of hay used to wipe oneself. Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 306. See also J. R. A. Greig, "The Investigation of a Medieval Barrel-Latrine from Worcester," *Journal of Archeological Science* 8 (1981): 265–282, whose excavation of a fifteenth-century barrel latrine uncovered straw, hay, and sedge, which most likely were used as toilet paper.
45. Griffin, "Dirty Stories," p. 239. Similarly, the fistula resembles a mouth. See Citrome, "Bodies That Splatter," 166 [137–172]; also David Williams, "Radical Therapy in the Miller's Tale," *Chaucer Review* 15 (1981): 227–235.
46. Robert Cook, trans. *Njal's Saga* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 223, 297.
47. Cook, *Njal's Saga*, p. 231.
48. Cook, *Njal's Saga*, p. 270.

49. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 5.
50. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 8. Cf. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 77, concerning the Muslim critique of Jesus in Mary's womb for nine months.
51. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 8.
52. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 81.
53. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 108.
54. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 114–115.
55. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 139.
56. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 140.
57. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 138.
58. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 142.
59. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 143.
60. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 144. Compare with Tertullian's passage about the offense of make-up; Blamires, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, p. 53.
61. Green, *The Trotula*, p. 93.
62. Green, *The Trotula*, p. 110.
63. Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 5.
64. Von Staden, "Women and Dirt," 15 [7–30].
65. Von Staden, "Women and Dirt," 16; also Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe (*Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 105–106, on cures for baldness involving goat excrement and her discussion on how hazing rituals involving excrement masculinized the initiates, p. 108.
66. Von Staden, "Women and Dirt," 16. One Old English spell against miscarriage utilizes running water, identified as a stream, to wash away the filth; the clean, running fluid symbolically flushes the filth-laden container of her womb. Nigel Barley, "Anglo-Saxon Magico-Medicine," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 3 (1972): 72 [67–76].
67. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 262. Although the bidet is an invention of the eighteenth century, it has been speculated that something of the kind was used in the Middle Ages to clean the intimate parts of women. Fanny Beaupré and Roger-Henri Guerrand*, Le confident des dames: Le bidet du XVIIIe au XXe siècle: histoire d'une intimité* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1997), pp. 31–32.
68. Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, *The Plays of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim*, trans. Katharina Wilson (New York: Garland, 1989), p. 113.
69. Hrotsvit, *Plays*, p. 113.
70. Green, *The Trotula*, pp. 11–22.
71. Green, *The Trotula*, p. 66.
72. Green, *The Trotula*, p. 66.
73. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 140. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); and Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

74. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 186.
75. This can have a political dimension as well. Peggy McCracken, "The Body Politic and the Queen's Adulterous Body in French Romance," in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 57 [38–64]; also Citrome, "Medicine as Metaphor," 264 [260–280].
76. Though Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, especially pp. 99–116, writes how anxiety about Mary and her body heightens in anti-Christian polemic of the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. This polemic carried power only because both attacker and victim were drawing on the same images and medical texts. For example, the Virgin had to have menstruated or else she could not have lactated according to medieval medical beliefs (p. 110).
77. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, trans. Barbara L. Grant (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 157.
78. Louise O. Fradenburg, "Criticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale," *Exemplaria* 1.1 (1989): 88 [69–115, 88].
79. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 95.
80. Clasby, *Pilgrimage*, p. 149.

5 Urban Excrement in *The Canterbury Tales*

1. J. Joyce, "The Grandeur That was Rome," *Ulysses* (New York: Viking, 1961), p. 131. Cited by Richard Neudecker, *Die Pracht der Latrine. Zum Wandel öffentlicher Bedürfnisanstalten in der kaiserzeitlichen Stadt*. Studien zur antiken Stadt, 1 (Munich: Verlag Dr. Friedrich Pfeil, 1994), p. 7. See also a review of Neudecker's book, Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* March 16, 2000.
2. St. Cuthbert used the ebb and flow of nature to cleanse his filth, by utilizing the tides of the ocean to clean his hut on Lindisfarne. See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price and D. H. Farmer (London: Penguin, 1990), Chapter 21, and his life of the saint. Monastic dykes at Tintern Abbey were flushed by the Severn. Reredorter latrine drains were cleaned by rainwater and bathhouse pipes. At St. Albans the presence of a stone rainwater cistern helped with the flushing of latrines. Wright, *Clean and Decent*, pp. 26, 32. The Old English word *gong*, which apparently comes from *gang* or passageway, was used to signify latrine, suggesting that it was located at some distance from the sleeping chamber. John W. Draper, "Chaucer's Wardrobe," *Englische Studien* 60 (1925–1926): 240 [238–251]. A monastery cloaca or *gangtun* in the tenth or eleventh centuries may have been connected to flowing water, but it is clear from a twelfth-century (c. 1165) plan for Canterbury that there were "pipes underneath the 'necessarium.'" Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, Vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 307 [300–313]. Quoted in Stork's *Monasteriales Indicia*. Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, Vol. 2, pp. 300–313.

3. See James, "Ritual, Drama and Social Body," 6 [3–29], who reads civic topography as a body. Cited in David N. DeVries, "And Away Go Troubles Down the Drain: Late Medieval London and the Poetics of Urban Renewal," *Exemplaria* 8 (1996): 402 [401–418]. See also Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, p. 104.
4. Catrin Gersdorf, "Gerald Vizenor, Urbanism, and Waste," paper presented at the conference, "Rubbish, Waste, and Litter: Culture/al Refusals," Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Institute of English Studies, November 17–18, 2006; also Strohm, "Sovereignty and Sewage," p. 62 [57–70].
5. María Bullón-Fernández, "Private Practices in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 28 (2006): 159 [141–174], citing Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," in *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p. 242.
6. Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of the Coroners Rolls of the City of London A.D. 1300–1378* (London: Richard Clay and Sons, 1913), p. 43.
7. Gay Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), p. 54.
8. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 160.
9. Ardis Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," in *Chaucer and the City*, ed. Ardis Butterfield (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), p. 6 [3–22]. Butterfield cites Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project: Walter Benjamin*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 1999), "Translators' Forward," p. ix.
10. Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 6.
11. Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 7.
12. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York:Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 4, quoted by Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 8.
13. Sharpe, *Calendar of the Coroners Rolls,* pp. 167–168.
14. John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 185, 184, 153, 168, 212.
15. Schofield, *Medieval London Houses*, pp. 86–87.
16. Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 49.
17. David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City 1300–1500* (London: Longman, 1997), p. 333.
18. Schofield, *Medieval London Houses*, p. 87.
19. Little, *Religious Poverty*, p. 28.
20. Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things," p. 178 [174–196]. The mainly African-American "tubmen," those who cleaned out privies at night in nineteenth-century New York City, were likewise scorned. Russell Shorto, "Our Captive Past," Review of Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, eds., *Slavery in New York* (Historical Society/The New Press), *The New York Times Book Review*, March 19, 2006, p. 13. In a charming book written during World War II with frequent references to Il Duce, Herr Hitler, and Chamberlain, Reginald Reynolds writes that in the Roman

world, those who cleaned were convicts and held in contempt like Untouchables. Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 31.

21. See Peter Ackroyd, *London: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 331. "The cost of removal, or of the labour and cartage [of excrement], limits the general use or deposit of the refuse within a radius which does not exceed three miles." Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, 1842*, ed. M. W. Flinn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), p. 118, quoted in Ellen Handy, "Dust Piles and Damp Pavements: Excrement, Repression, and the Victorian City in Photography and Literature," in *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Imagination*, ed. Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 121 [111–133]. This suggests that the effort in collecting waste may have exceeded the ultimate payment for it. Nevertheless, "the belief in the economic value of this waste was widespread." Burford, *The Bishop's Brothels*, pp. 136, 170.
22. Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 49. In Siena in 1296, there was a competition to win a contract for a year to "collect 'all the garbage and manure and spilled cereal grains from piazza del Campo and the streets adjacent to it.'" See Frugoni, *A Day in A Medieval City*, p. 65.
23. C. C. Dyer, "Gardens and Garden Produce in the Later Middle Ages," in *Food in Medieval England,* ed. C. M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 28 [27–40].
24. A2A, Gloucestershire Record Office, Gloucester Borough Record, Catalogue Ref. GBR/F/3/4, date: 1408/9. All records indicated by A2A can be accessed at the following Web site: http://www.a2a.org.uk/ (accessed April 21, 2008).
25. Ernest L. Sabine, "Latrines and Cesspools of Mediaeval London," *Speculum* 9 (1934): 315–316 [303–321]. Also: Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 52; A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Arundell Manorial Accounts, Cornwall, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/900, date: 1442–1442; A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Arundell Manorial Accounts, Cornwall, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/904, date: 1458–1459; A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Cornwall, Trembleath Manor, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/61/1, date: 1461–1462; A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Cornwall, Trembleath Manor, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/64, date: 1469–1470.
26. Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 78–79.
27. Sabine, "Latrines and Cesspools," 316–317. Also, Ernest L. Sabine, "City Cleaning in Medieval London," *Speculum* 12 (1937): 24 [19–43].
28. Sabine, "City Cleaning," 21.
29. Lewin, *Merde*, p. 55.
30. Patricia Yeager, "Introduction: Dreaming of Infrastructure," *PMLA* 122 (2007): 16 [9–26]. See also Gay Hawkins, "Waste in Sydney: Unwelcome Returns," *PMLA* 122 (2007): 350 [348–351].

31. André E. Guillerme, *The Age of Water: The Urban Environment in the North of France, A.D. 300–1800* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1988 [1983]), p. 96, see also p. 116.
32. Strohm, "Sovereignty and Sewage," p. 58.
33. Henry T. Riley, trans. *Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London* (London: Richard Griffin and Company, 1861), p. 280. See also Burford, *The Bishop's Brothels*, p. 63, though Henry Ansgar Kelly is generally dismissive of Burford's scholarship. Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Bishop, Prioress, and Bawd in the Stews of Southwark," *Speculum* 75 (2000): 349, n. 31 [342–388].
34. Sharpe, *Calendar of the Coroners Rolls*, pp. 58, 219–220, 221, 275–276; also Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 76; John B. Gleason, *John Colet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 221; J. H. Lupton, *A Life of John Colet* (London: Bell, 1887), p. 279; Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 50.
35. Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 10.
36. Ackroyd, *London*, p. 331.
37. Schofield, *Medieval London Houses*, p. 4.
38. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England*, pp. 78–79.
39. Riley, *Liber Albus*, p. 237.
40. Schofield, *Medieval London Houses*, p. 7. Accusations were also made in 1355, 1422, and 1477.
41. H. M. Chew and W. Kellaway, eds., *London Assize of Nuisance 1301–1431* (Chatham, Kent: London Record Society, 1973), p. 1 #2 and #3. See also p. 12 #60, p. 14 #69, p. 21 #96, p. 22 #98, p. 35 #165, and p. 41 #200 for similar complaints.
42. Bullón-Fernández, "Private Practices," 158.
43. Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize,* p. 45 #214.
44. Bullón-Fernández, "Private Practices," 147.
45. Riley, *Liber Albus*, p. 289.
46. Riley, *Liber Albus*, p. 291. See also pp. 498, 499, 500–501, and 503–504 for many references to dung and its removal during the times from Edward III to Henry IV.
47. Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize*, p. 93, #383.
48. Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize*, p. 79, #325.
49. All quotes and translations are from Neil Cartlidge, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale: Text and Translation* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2001). John of Arderne associates owls with Jews since it "nests in its own excrement." One manuscript depicts an image of an owl next to an enema pipe. Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, p. 21. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, pp. 227–234, argues that the owl symbolized either a Jew or a bad Christian in late medieval bestiaries.
50. Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things," p. 181.
51. *Calendar of Close Rolls* (henceforth *CCR*), *Edward III, 1349–54*, prepared under the superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records (London: Stationery Office, 1906), pp. 65–66.

52. Sabine, "Latrines and Cesspools," 312, 320.
53. Sabine, "City Cleaning," 27, 28. The belief was that air corrupted you. Jean-Pierre Leguay, *La Pollution au Moyen Âge*, 4th ed. (Paris: Editions Jen-Paul Gisserot, 2005), p. 14. Eustache Deschamps (c. 1340–1406) writes about how stench can cause plague in his "Ballade Showing the Causes and Reasons for the Plague," trans. Anne M. Dropick, *Harper's Magazine*, March 2007, p. 16.
54. *CCR*, *Edward III, 1354–1360*, prepared under the superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records (London: Stationery Office, 1908), p. 422.
55. A statute of 1388 states: "For that so much dung and filth of the garbage and intrails as well as of beasts killed, as of other corruption, be cast and put in ditches, rivers, and other waters, and also in many other places, within, about, and nigh unto divers cities, boroughs, and towns of the realm, and the suburbs of them, that the air there is greatly corrupt and infect, and many maladies and other intolerable diseases do daily happen . . . it is accorded and consented that proclamation be made as well in the city of London as in other cities, boroughs, and towns through the realm of England . . . that all they which do cast and lay all such annoyances . . . in ditches, waters, and other places aforesaid, shall cause them utterly to be removed and carried away before this and the Feast of St. Michael next ensuing . . . every one upon pain to lose and to forfeit to our lord the King £ 20." D. W. Robertson, Jr., *Chaucer's London* (New York: John Wiley, 1968), p. 37. See also Sabine, "Latrines and Cesspools," 311. For other statutes against polluting the Thames, see Laura Wright, *Sources of London English: Medieval Thames Vocabulary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 126.
56. G. Milne, "Medieval Riverfront Reclamation in London," in *Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe*, ed. Gustav Milne and Brian Hobley (London: The Council for British Archaeology, 1981), pp. 32–33 [32–36]. See also Gustav Milne and Chrissie Milne, "Excavations on the Thames Waterfront at Trig Lane, London, 1974–1976," *Medieval Archaeology* 22 (1978): 87 [84–104].
57. A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/237/2, date: March 4, 1348.
58. A2A, Bristol Record Office, All Saints, P/AS/D/WSS 23, date: 1401.
59. A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Cornwall, St Columb Manor, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/180, date: 1456–1457. See also: A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, City of Chester Assembly, Catalogue Ref. ZA/F/1/f. 3, date: 1421; A2A, Norfolk Record Office, King's Lynn Borough Archives, Catalogue Ref. KL/C50/437, date: 1445–1606; A2A, contact Cornwall Record Office, Arundell, Tywardreath Priory Archive, Catalogue Ref. ART/2/1/4, date: 1447–1448.
60. Cartlidge, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. xxxvii.
61. A2A, Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office, Conant MSS, Catalogue Ref. DG11/112, date: 1347. Edward III, "Friday the Epiphany of Our Lord."

62. A2A, Norfolk Record Office, King's Lynn Borough Archives, Catalogue Ref. KL/C50/41, date: 1314 or 1316, 1606. See also A2A, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, Records of the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation, Catalogue Ref. BRT1/2/469, date: March 25, 1438; A2A, Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch, The Iveagh (Phillipps) Suffolk Manuscripts, Catalogue Ref. HD 1538/329/14, date: April 8, 1450.
63. A2A, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester City Archives, Ref. CHICTY/AY/83, date: April 6, 1458.
64. Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 51. See also Strohm, "Sovereignty and Sewage," p. 58.
65. Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 50. A2A, East Sussex Record Office, Archive of Rye Corporation, Deeds of Ypres or Badding's Tower, Catalogue Ref. RYE/124/13, 14, date: January 28, 1495.
66. Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 50.
67. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), p. 10.
68. David Wallace, "Chaucer and the Absent City," in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 64 [59–90].
69. Phoebe Pettingell, "To Hell or Heaven and Back," *New Leader* 84 (March/April 2001): 32–34. Accessed through EBSCO.
70. Wallace, "Chaucer and the Absent City," in *Chaucer's England*, p. 65. See also Marion Turner, "Greater London," in Butterfield, *Chaucer and the City*, pp. 27–28 [25–40]; and Ruth Evans, "The Production of Space in Chaucer's London," in Butterfield, *Chaucer and the City*, p. 42 [41–56].
71. John of Gaunt made Chaucer in charge of "ditches and drains between Greenwich and Woolwich." Such activities would have made Chaucer even more aware of the problems of sewage. J. C. Wylie, *The Wastes of Civilization* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 24.
72. Sabine, "Latrines and Cesspools," 321.
73. Lochrie, *Covert Operations*, p. 136. See also Bullón-Fernández, "Private Practices," 168.
74. See Hansen, *Chaucer*, pp. 223–236, for a discussion of this scene.
75. Sharpe, *Calendar of the Coroners Rolls*, p. 142.
76. Beidler, "Art and Scatology in the Miller's Tale," 90–102. Lynch argues that "Nicholas's urination also becomes a form of self-expression." "From Tavern to Pie Shop," 125 [117–138].
77. Sharpe, *Calendar of the Coroners Rolls*, pp. 219–220, and Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 76.
78. Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 76, also Gleason, *John Colet*, p. 221; and Lupton, *A Life of John Colet*, p. 279.
79. Duby, *A History of Private Life*, p. 586.
80. Singman, *Daily Life in Medieval Europe*, p. 49.
81. Compare with Boccaccio's version, Sixth Story, Ninth Day, in which the wife gets up to check on a noise in the house caused by the cat.

Chaucer's counterpart gets up to address the call of nature. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 679.

82. "Symkyn is in between rural and urban spaces." Bullón-Fernández, "Private Practices," 169. In 1402, Cambridge in fact allowed dung-heaps to remain in public view for seven days while in the 1370s York "forbade altogether the appearance of any accumulation that could be called a heap." Inglis, *A Sociological History*, p. 109.
83. Diane Shaw, "The Construction of the Private in Medieval London," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26, 3 (1996): 449 [447–466].
84. Some of the material in this section of chapter 5 appears in *The Medieval Metropolis*, ed. Ruth Kennedy, Special Issue of the online journal, *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, general editor Lawrence Phillips, www.literarylondon.org (forthcoming).
85. Wallace, "Chaucer and the Absent City," in *Chaucer's England*, p. 60. See also Helen Cooper, "London and Southwark Poetic Companies: 'Si tost c'amis' and the *Canterbury Tales*," in Butterfield, *Chaucer and the City*, [109–125], on why Chaucer shifts from London to Southwark.
86. Martha Carlin, *Medieval Southwark* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996). Yet see Kelly, "Bishop, Prioress, and Bawd," 349–350.
87. Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 13 [3–22].
88. Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 15. Also Turner, "Greater London," in Butterfield, *Chaucer and the City*, pp. 26–29 [25–40].
89. Gilchrist, "Medieval Bodies in the Material World," p. 47 [43–61]. See Camille, *Image on the Edge*, pp. 131–132.
90. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, pp. 165, 235, 236, 239. In the Victorian period, this geography of filth is redirected to the East End, which came to signify city sewage, waste, desire, and prostitution. Chung-Jen Chen, "The Ripper Fascination," paper presented at the Literary London Conference, Greenwich, England, July 13, 2006.
91. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 241.
92. Jacques Le Goff, trans. Patricia Ranum, "Head or Heart? The Political Use of Body Metaphors in the Middle Ages," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, Part Three, ed. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), p. 17 [12–26].
93. See Third Day, Ninth Story in Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 264, in which the king has a fistula only to be healed by a young woman. This is a source for Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well.*
94. Ackroyd, *London,* pp. 1–2. See also Harpet, *Du Déchet*, p. 215.
95. Beechy, "Devil Take the Hindmost," 73 [71–85], citing Jeffrey Masten, "Is the Fundament a Grave?" in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 129–145.
96. Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, pp. 105–106.
97. Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, p. 104.
98. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 19. Kelly confirms this, pp. 364–365.
99. Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 61.

100. See, for example, *The Life of St. Guthlac* or Grendel's mere.
101. Riste Keskpaik, "A Cultural Semiotic Account of Trash," paper presented at the conference, "Rubbish, Waste, and Litter: Culture/al Refusals," Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Institute of English Studies, November 17–18, 2006.
102. DeVries, "And Away Go Troubles Down the Drain," 415. Likewise, see Strohm, "Sovereignty and Sewage," p. 61.
103. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 119.
104. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 121.
105. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, pp. 210, 215, 228.
106. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 211.
107. Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body," 18 [1–33].
108. Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, p. 2; also Michael Camille, "At the Sign of the 'Spinning Sow': The 'Other' Chartres and Images of Everyday Life of the Medieval Street," in Axel Bolvig and Phillip Lindley, eds., *History and Images: Towards a New Iconography* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003), p. 266 [249–276].
109. Mercantile London was imagined as "feminine" in its stressed and subservient power machinations at odds with an aristocratic Westminster. See Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 20, on the tension between London and Westminster, and especially Evans, "The Production of Space in Chaucer's London," in Butterfield, *Chaucer and the City*, p. 42 [41–56], on the gender figuration of London. Compare with Andrei Codrescu's comments about New Orleans, which he describes as "feminine." In "Questions for Andrei Cordrescu," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 11, 2005, p. 19. For more on the association between the female and disgust, see Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*.
110. Robertson, "'I have . . . a Soule for to Kepe': Discerning the Female Subject in 'The Merchant's Tale.'" Recent fieldwork in Rajasthan, India, confirms this theory. Latrine use is feminine, as identified by Western NGOs supporting water and sanitation projects. Kathleen O'Reilly, "'Traditional' Women, 'Modern' Water: Linking Gender and Commodification in Rajasthan, India," *Geoforum* 37 (2006): 958–972, and O'Reilly, "Women's Movements Public and Private: Combining Sanitation and Women's Empowerment in Water Supply," (forthcoming), pp. 8, 11, 17. The World Bank supports this view. See W. Wakeman, S. Davis, C. van Wijk, and A. Naithani, *Sourcebook for Gender Issues at the Policy Level in the Water and Sanitation Sector* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 1996). Organizations assume that latrines and water resources are women's arenas and concerns since "within their homes, [women] 'are responsible for hygienic practices' and 'teach and supervise young children in their defecation practices and ensure that they maintain personal hygiene.'" O'Reilly, "'Traditional' Women, 'Modern' Water," 964. One issue is building latrines in the house so that women no longer have to eat less during

the day to wait until dusk or evening to modestly urinate or defecate in the fields. As O'Reilly points out, while women have a unique position with regard to latrines due to their seclusion, "the sanitation program marketed women's empowerment and mobility, but household latrines created reasons for women to remain in seclusion at home." "Women's Movements," p. 2. Unintended effects concern women's traditional jobs as night-soil collectors. "Women's Movements," p. 12.

111. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 254.
112. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, p. 255.
113. Sabine, "City Cleaning," 38.
114. Anspaugh, "Powers of Ordure," 73 [73–100].
115. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).
116. Gail Kern Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1985), pp. 2–3.
117. "It will not be possible in the last movement of Fragment I . . . to wall 'the rotten' off from the narrative itself." Lynch, "From Tavern to Pie Shop," 131.
118. Eccles, *The Macro Plays*, l. 563, p. 172.
119. Consider the recent flurry of interest in "crap towns" of England and the United Kingdom.
120. And Chaucer may have had some personal experience with sanitation issues. In July 12, 1389 it is recorded that he is to be clerk of the works for a number of manors, "as well as of the gardens, stanks, mills and enclosures thereof, for which he is to receive 2 *s.* a day." *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Richard II A.D. 1388–1392*, Vol. IV (London: Mackie & Co., 1902). Now "stanks" comes from French meaning standing pools of water; but in English the aural link between stanks and stinks is too tempting to avoid (see one of the quotes in the OED which confirms this). Surely sanitation issues were not unheard of for Chaucer, particularly given this duty.

6 Sacred Filth: Relics, Ritual, and Remembering in *The Prioress's Tale*

1. Alan Bennett, *The History Boys* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), pp. 58–59.
2. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 124; also p. 321; Cecilia F. Klein, "Teocuitlatl, 'Divine Excrement': The Significance of 'Holy Shit' in Ancient Mexico," *Art Journal*, Fall, 1993; originally in "*Teocuitlatl*, `Divine Excrement': The Significance of 'Holy Shit' in Ancient Mexico"; Special issue on "Scatological Art," Gabriel Weisberg, Guest Editor, *Art Journal* 52, 3 (1993): 20–27; Lewin, *Merde*, p. 121.
3. Michael Camille, "Dr. Witkowski's Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art," in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), p. 36 [17–38].

4. James, "Ritual, Drama and the Social Body," 6 [3–29].
5. Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 44.
6. McCracken, "The Body Politic and the Queen's Adulterous Body in French Romance," p. 50 [38–64]. This has been recognized even in the popular press.
7. "[A]ll margins are dangerous. . . .Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins." Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 150. See also Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 108; James, "Ritual, Drama and the Social Body," 7, 9.
8. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 2, 44; also Freud, "Character and Anal Eroticism," pp. 172–173 [167–175]; and Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, p. 116, where Thompson ascribes the concept originally to Lord Chesterfield.
9. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 70; Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 35.
10. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, pp. 3, 69.
11. Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, pp. 100–101.
12. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 46; William A. Cohen, "Introduction: Locating Filth," in Cohen and Johnson, *Filth*, pp. xi, xxix [vii–xxxvii].
13. Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 52.
14. Molly Morrison, "Ingesting Bodily Filth: Defilement in the Spirituality of Angela of Foligno," *Romance Quarterly* 50 (2003): 204–216.
15. Camille, "At the Sign of the 'Spinning Sow,'" p. 276 [249–276].
16. Sheila Delany, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England: The Work of Osbern Bokenham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 115–116.
17. Patrick J. Nugent, "Bodily Effluvia and Liturgical Interruption in Medieval Miracle Stories," *History of Religions*, 41 (2001): 67–69 [49–70].
18. C. H. Talbot, ed. and trans., *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 103–105.
19. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich. Part Two. The Long Text* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), p. 606, n. 49, citing *The Chastising of God's Children and the Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*, ed. Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), p. 285.
20. Nona Fienberg, "Thematics of Value in *The Book of Margery Kempe*," *Modern Philology* 87 (1989): 140 [132–141]. Saint Simeon would lower down his excrement from the pillar he prayed on. Presumably someone would take it away and dispose of it as a charitable act. Lewin, *Merde*, p. 49.
21. Bell, *Ritual*, p. 14.
22. Bell, *Ritual*, p. 21.
23. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 91.
24. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 92.
25. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 99, also p. 95.
26. In Melanesian society, *mana*, as explored by Mircea Eliade, is a mysterious and active power that "[e]ven latrines have . . . in that they are 'receptacles of power'—for human bodies and their excretions. . . ." Mircea Eliade,

Patterns in Comparative Religion, trans. R. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958), p. 19.

27. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 80.
28. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 44.
29. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 2.
30. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 196.
31. R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 233. Quoted in Von Staden, "Women and Dirt," 16 [7–30].
32. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 3.
33. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 197.
34. Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 295; Laporte, *History of Shit*, p. 60. To see how fabliaux plays with this association between corpse and excrement, see Griffin, "Dirty Stories," p. 258 [229–260].
35. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 102.
36. Cohen and Johnson, *Filth*, p. xi. See also Ackroyd, *London*, p. 337; and Georges Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. and trans. Allan Stoekl. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie, Jr. *Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 14 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 94.
37. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 85.
38. Dung is "a very proper symbol of decay and re-birth." Reynolds, *Cleanliness and Godliness*, p. 249.
39. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 149.
40. See Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 213–214; also Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body: From Corpse to Corpus*, p. 2.
41. Dawn Marie Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe, 1100–1389* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 31.
42. Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 32.
43. See Hayes, Chapter Three, on the interpenetration of the sacred and profane in churches, and Susan Signe Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance* (London: Routledge, 2000), Chapter Three.
44. Bell, *Ritual*, p. 40.
45. Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body," 23 [1–33].
46. See also Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 130.
47. Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 9. See also Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, p. 11.
48. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 50.
49. Rubin, "The Person in the Form," p. 113 [100–122].
50. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 200.
51. Hayes talks about how when the murdered saint's body was undressed, the monks reveal a hair shirt and "breeches riddled with lice and worms." Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 91.

52. Britton J. Harwood, "Chaucer's Pardoner: The Dialectics of Inside and Outside," *Philological Quarterly* 67 (1988): 410 [409–422].
53. Piero Camporesi, trans. Anna Cancogne, "The Consecrated Host: A Wondrous Excess," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, Part One, ed. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), p. 228 [220–237].
54. Camporesi, "The Consecrated Host," p. 232; also Paul Strohm, "Chaucer's Lollard Joke: History and the Textual Unconscious," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995), pp. 23–44.
55. See "Du Prestre ki abevete (The Priest Who Peeked)," in Du Val, *Cuckolds, Clerics, and Countrymen*, pp. 43–46.
56. For a parallel example in the mid-seventeenth century, see Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, p. 284, n. 89, from Shane Leslie, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: A Record from History and Literature* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1932), p. 103.
57. Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen Jews," 147–148 [142–156]; also, Margaret E. Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p. 67.
58. Reynolds, *Food and the Body*, pp. 5–6. See also Teresa Whalen, *The Authentic Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1993), pp. 9–10.
59. Laporte, *History of Shit*, pp. 110–111. Also, Harpet, *Du Déchet*, p. 201; Lewin, *Merde*, p. 146.
60. Rubin, *Corpus Christi,* p. 320, also 37; Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, p. 39; J. H. Blunt (ed.), *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties and Schools of Religious Thought, London*, 1874, p. 579; J. G. Bourke, *Scatologic Rites of All Nations*, Washington, DC, 1891, p. 213.
61. In the Lollard trials of 1428, Agnes Bethom testified against Margery Baxter of Martha, claiming Margery said, "You believe wrongly, since if every such sacrament were God and Christ's real body, then gods would be infinite in number, because a thousand priests and more confect a thousand such gods every day and then eat them, and once eaten emit them from their back side in filthy and stinking pieces," Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 328; also, Norman P. Tanner, *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428–31* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977), pp. 44–45; Anne Hudson, "The Mouse in the Pyx: Popular Heresy and the Eucharist," *Trivium* 26 (1991): 44–45 [40–53]; and Strohm, "Chaucer's Lollard Joke," pp. 38–39. Very frequently the accused Lollards argued against transubstantiation, often affirming in virtually identical language "that Y have holde, beleved and affermed that no prest hath poar to make Goddis body in the sacrament of the auter, and that aftir the sacramentall wordis said of a prest at messe ther remaneth nothyng but only a cake of material bread" (Tanner, *Heresy Trials*, p. 111) [said by Johannes Reve de Becles, glover]. The expression "cake of material bread" shows up in numerous testimonies (pp. 115, 121, 126, 134).

62. See Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, p. 241; Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 69; Jeff Persels, "'Straightened in the Bowels,' or Concerning the Rabelaisian Trope of Defecation," *Études rabelaisiennes* XXXI (1996): 101–112.
63. Pops, "The Metamorphosis of Shit," 39 [26–61].
64. Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 337–338; also pp. 37, 25; also J. I. Catto, "John Wyclif and the Cult of the Eucharist," in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 279, 274 [269–286]. For a detailed discussion of transubstantiation, Joseph Goering, "The Invention of Transubstantiation," *Traditio* 46 (1991): 147–170; and Gary Macy, "The Dogma of Transubstantiation," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1994): 11–41.
65. See Paul Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 165–181, "What Can We Know about Chaucer That He Didn't Know about Himself?"
66. Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 64. For a discussion of Bakhtin and excrement see Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, pp. 14–15; also Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 147.
67. Paul Brians, *Bawdy Tales from the Courts of Medieval France* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), pp. 59, 60, 64, 69.
68. See Heather Blurton, *Cannibalism in High Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 73–80.
69. Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, p. 153.
70. Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, p. 153. See R. Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988); and Hsia, *Trent, 1475* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).
71. Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 360. Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body," 15 [1–33]. See also Merrall Llewelyn Price, *Consuming Passions: The Uses of Cannibalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 21–25.
72. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 192.
73. Geraldine Heng, "The Romance of England: *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Saracens, Jews, and the Politics of Race and Nation," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 148 [135–171].
74. Draper, "Chaucer's Wardrobe," 249 [238–251]; also Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 38.
75. Corey J. Marvin, "'I Will Thee Not Forsake': The Kristevan Maternal Space in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* and John of Garland's *Stella maris*," *Exemplaria* 8 (1996): 47–48, n. 16 [35–58]; also Bayless, "The Story of the Fallen Jews," 150, 152. Similarly, in some versions of Christ's passion, dung is thrown at him.

76. Louise O. Fradenburg, "Criticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale," in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 182 [174–192].
77. See Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 96. Also Robert Boenig, *Chaucer and the Mystics: The Canterbury Tales and the Genre of Devotional Prose* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1995), p. 87; Fradenburg, "Criticism," in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, p. 99.
78. There are cases from Coroners' papers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Middlesex Sessions of the Peace, c. 1350–1889, available through A2A), of newborn children and infants having been thrown into privies in cases of "willful murder." Presumably these cases were not limited to the modern period and could have happened earlier. Personal communication from Bridget Howlett. See Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise & Stench in England 1600–1770* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 143, 188 for cases in the eighteenth century.
79. Fradenburg, "Criticism," in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, pp. 105–106.
80. See R. Allen Shoaf, *Chaucer's Body: The Anxiety of Circulation in the "Canterbury Tales"* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), p. 26; Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life*, p. 36; and Durling, "Deceit and Digestion," p. 68 [61–93].
81. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 155.
82. Little, *Religious Poverty,* p. 52. See also Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 101, 104.
83. Kathleen Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 6.
84. See Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary*, p. 23.
85. Steven F. Kruger, "The Spectral Jew," *New Medieval Literatures* 2 (1998): 11 [9–35].
86. Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 78.
87. Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.
88. Sylvia Tomasch, "Judecca, Dante's Satan, and the Dis-placed Jew," *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 248 [247–267]; also Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, pp. 116–117.
89. Durling, "Deceit and Digestion," p. 61.
90. Tomasch, "Judecca," in *Text and Territory*, p. 261.
91. Tomasch, "Judecca," in *Text and Territory* , p. 262. Also Fradenburg, "Criticism," in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, p. 88, and Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing*, p. 107.
92. Kruger, "The Bodies of Jews in the Late Middle Ages," p. 303 [301–323]. Miri Rubin, "Medieval Bodies: Why Now, and How?" in *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History*, ed. Miri Rubin

(Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1997), p. 216 [209–219], writes of how the Jewish body has been linked to "stench [*foetur judaicus* or Jewish stink] [and a] predisposition to suffer from flux." Holler, *Erotic Morality*, p. 112, mentions how Jewish males were "stigmatized as feminized males." There were also suggestions that Jewish males menstruated, an accusation stemming from the distinction of the Christian male body from other, "lesser" bodies (female, Jewish, etc.). See Steven F. Kruger, "Becoming Christian, Becoming Male?" in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 21–41. This menstruation myth might have fed into a medieval belief, mentioned in Bernard de Gordon's 1305 *Lilium Medicinae*, that Jews suffered excessively from hemorrhoids. Harry Friedenwald, *The Jews and Medicine: Essays*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), Vol. 2, p. 527. See Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, pp. 175–182, about the feminization of Jewish males and its possible link to hemorrhoids.

93. Steven F. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis)identifications: Muslims and Jews in Guibert of Nogent," *New Literary History* 28 (1997): 186 [185–203]; also Kruger's "Becoming Christian, Becoming Male?" in *Becoming Male*, pp. 21–41.
94. Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, p. 80.
95. Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, p. 28. His translation is based on Richard of Devizes, *Cronicon*, ed. and trans. J. T. Appleby (Oxford: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), pp. 3–4.
96. Bale, *Jew in the Medieval Book*, pp. 28–29.
97. Bale, *Jew in the Medieval Book*, p. 166.
98. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 33.
99. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 33. See Elisheva Baumgarten's book, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), especially Chapter Four, for a fascinating discussion of wet nurses and contacts between Christians and Jews. Some Jewish documents express concern at the possibility that a Christian wet nurse could sing a Christian lullaby to a Jewish child (pp. 136–137) or introduce nonkosher foods to the child (pp. 137–138). There is, however, *no* evidence in Jewish sources that Jews forced Christian wet nurses to express milk in the three days after receiving communion (pp. 138–139).
100. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 45, 65, 72.
101. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 90, 91, 65.
102. Greenblatt, *Hamlet*, p. 131.
103. See the work of Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris: Editions Gallimar, 1984); Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Introduction," *Representations* 26 (1989): 1–6; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History," *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Marc Roudebush, trans., *Representations* 26 (1989), pp. 7–25; Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England*, pp. 134–135; also Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 131.

104. Jody Enders, "Emotion Memory and the Medieval Performance of Violence," *Theatre Survey* 38, 1 (1997): 149 [139–159].
105. Enders, "Emotion Memory," 154.
106. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 148.
107. Robert S. Nelson, "Tourists, Terrorists, and Metaphysical Theater at Hagia Sophia," in *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 74 [59–81].
108. "Introduction," in Nelson and Olin, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 3 [1–10]. They cite Pierra Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), Vol. 1, p. 1 also Nancy Wood, "Memory's Remains: *Les lieux* de *mémoire*," *History and Memory* 6 *(*1994): 123–151.
109. Nelson, "Tourists," in *Monuments and Memory*, p. 74.
110. Nelson and Olin, "Introduction," in *Monuments and Memory*, pp. 3–4.
111. Nelson and Olin, "Destruction/Reconstruction," in Nelson and Olin, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 206 [205–207]. See also Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 103–105, concerning the way in which the Christian community chose to remember a Jewish "purge."
112. Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, pp. 28, 85.
113. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 144, 145. Kathy Lavezzo in "The Minster and the Privy" (forthcoming) argues for a proximity between the Christian and Jewish worlds, one that the tale attempts, but fails, to disguise. One connection concerns how many of the physical spaces of Christian worship in England were funded by Jewish money.
114. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a. 1, f. 124v A. This manuscript is a miscellany of religious prose and verse, mainly in Middle English, though including some works in Anglo-Norman and Latin. It dates from after 1382, probably in the decade before 1400. Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490, Vol. II Catalogue and Indexes* (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), p. 19.
115. Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, p. 77.
116. See Boenig, *Chaucer and the Mystics*, pp. 77, 83.
117. Boenig, *Chaucer and the Mystics*, p. 87.
118. Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 138, also pp. 135–136; Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place,* p. 47; Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment*, p. 56.
119. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 131.
120. Achinstein, "John Foxe and the Jews," 95 [86–120]. Page 95, cites Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. and trans. Richard Vaughn (New York: 1984), p. 215.
121. Bynum, *Resurrection*, pp. 113–114.
122. Kruger, "The Spectral Jew," 13.
123. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 134.
124. There is, in fact, evidence that Henry III ordered a synagogue to be rebuilt as a chapel for friars. http://www.untoldlondon.org.uk/

news/ART35885.html (accessed April 24, 2008). See also http://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/AID/304691 (accessed April 24, 2008), for a fascinating discussion of *mikvaot* or ritual baths, for the speculation of a *mikveh* being reutilized by Christians, thereby further deconstructing the binaries of Jewish/Christian and filthy/clean.

7 The Excremental Human God and Redemptive Filth: *The Pardoner's Tale*

1. Nicholas Royle, "The Private Parts of Jesus Christ," in *Writing the Bodies of Christ: The Church from Carlyle to Derrida*, ed. John Schad (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 160, 169 [159–176].
2. See Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, p. 124 [103–130], on "Art and the ends of economic activity," and Lea Vergine, "From Junk to Art," in *Trash: From Junk to Art*, ed. Lea Vergine (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 1997), p. 23 [19–27].
3. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 142; also Russell Ganim, "Pissing Glass and the Body Crass: Adaptations of the Scatological in Théophile," in Persels and Ganim, *Fecal Matters*, pp. 66–84; Mills, "Ecce Homo," pp. 152–173; and Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment*, p. 81.
4. The following manuscripts, among others, have depictions of Job on the dung-heap: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 322; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Liturg. e.33; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS D'Orville 212; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.3.4; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 270b.
5. Vinderslev-28S, ca. 1500 (today touched up). http://www.kalkmalerier.dk/Site/listresult.php?nextpage=2 (accessed April 22, 2008).
6. Smørum-DSCN000gS, ca. 1500. http://www.kalkmalerier.dk/Site/listresult.php (accessed April 22, 2008). Axel Bolvig, "Reformation of What? Whose and Which Reformation is Exposed in Danish Wall-Paintings?" in *The Archaeology of Reformation 1480–1580,* ed. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney, 2003), p. 88 [84–93].
7. Bolvig, "Reformation of What?" p. 85. Axel Bolvig, "Images of Late Medieval 'Daily Life': A History of Mentalities," *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 39 (1998): 105–106, also 104 [94–111]; Alex Bolvig, "The Adaptation of an Established European Visual Language in Denmark from the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries," in *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, ed. Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004), p. 251 [237–251]; and Axel Bolvig, "I Am Well Done," p. 250 [247–263].
8. Bolvig, "I Am Well Done," p. 260.
9. Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 29.
10. Ms. 65, folio 12v; Musée Condé, Chantilly. The Hennessy Hours, likewise attributed to Simon Bening, include this trope as well. Joseph Destrée, *Les Heures de Notre-Dame: Dites de Hennessy* (Brussells: Maurice

Lamertin, 1923). The dovecotes evident in the Chantilly Hours and Grimani Breviary are eliminated in the Hennessy Hours; dovecotes were useful for collecting the bird dung for fertilizing fields.

11. Mario Salmi and Gain Lorenzo Mellini, *The Grimani Breviary*, trans. Simon Pleasance, Linda Packer, and Geoffrey Webb (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1974), pp. 12, 13.
12. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 49, fol. LXIII verso.
13. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 78.
14. Sabbath and Hall, *End Product*, p. 73.
15. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis)identifications," 200 [185–203]; Kruger's translation of *Tractatus de incarnatione contra Judaeos*, *Patrolina Latina*, 156, col. 499 [cols. 489–528]. See another version of this passage: "Bodies are pure as long as they lack sin; unlike all other human beings, there was not even a hint of sin in Jesus Christ. His body was as pure as can be. No opprobrium can be attached to the fact that like other men he too covered his private parts by wearing breeches. And because he had to eat and drink, his body would have functioned in the same way as that of all humans." Abulafia, "Bodies in the Jewish-Christian Debate," p. 124 [123–137]. She paraphrases Guibert of Nogent, *De Incarnatione contra Iudeos*, PL CLVI, cols 489–528. Juan Goytisolo writes that "Neither the Redeemer nor the Virgin expelled fecal matter. [Should there have been] visceral eliminations . . . they would have been lovingly preserved by pious souls as precious sacred relics." Juan Goytisolo, *Juan the Landless,* trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Serpent's Tale, 1977), pp. 11–12; quoted in Pops, "The Metamorphosis of Shit," 44 [26–61].
16. Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, pp. 52–53.
17. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis)identifications," 200. See the fascinating discussion of Christ's foreskin in Lützelschwab, "Zwischen Heilsvermittlung und Ärgernis – das *preputium Domini* im Mittelalter," pp. 601–628.
18. Harpet, *Du Déchet*, p. 203. His waste becomes disturbing to others. Freud's Wolf Man is obsessed with the thought that Christ had a bottom and might have defecated. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, pp. 165–166, citing Sigmund Freud (1918), "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis (the 'Wolf Man')," in *Pelican Freud Library* 9, ed. A. Richards, trans. J. Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 299.
19. John G. Bourke, *Scatalogic Rites of All Nations* (Washington, DC: W. H. Lowdermilk & Col, 1891), p. 56.
20. See (I Inf. iii. 6,7) in Bourke, *Scatalogic Rites*, p. 56. Also see http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/noncanon/gospels/infarab.htm accessed April 22, 2008.
21. See (I Inf. iv. 15, 16, 17) in Bourke, *Scatalogic Rites*, p. 57. In a humorous parody, Ion Zwitter concocts the discovery of Jesus's feces as a healing relic. Ion Zwitter, "Fossilized Feces of Jesus Wreaks Havoc," *Avant News* at http://www.avantnews.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=290 (accessed March 19, 2007).

22. J. A. S. Collin de Plancy, *Dictionnaire Critique des Reliques et des Images Miraculeuses,* 3 vols. (Paris: Guien et Companie, 1821), pp. 45–46 for other swaddling clothes of Christ.
23. Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg," in *Fragmentation*, p. 84 [79–117].
24. Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (New York: A Pantheon/October Book, 1983), pp. 23, 27.
25. Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ*, p. 117.
26. Bynum, "The Body of Christ," p. 116 [79–117].
27. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 63.
28. Though see Theresa Coletti, "Purity and Danger: The Paradox of Mary's Body and the En-gendering of the Infancy Narrative in the English Mystery Cycles," in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 65–95, on Mary's anomalous body.
29. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 151.
30. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 108.
31. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 152.
32. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, pp. 82, 204. "Rather than viewing the process as one of feminization, I prefer to think of it as eliminating sexual difference." Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages*, p. 158.
33. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, pp. 595–598, 605–606, 608, Chapters Sixty and Sixty-One. "[O]ur great God, the most sovereign wisdom of all, was raised in a humble place and dressed himself in our poor flesh to do the service and duties of motherhood in every way.... The mother can give her child her milk to suck, but our dear mother Jesus can feed us with himself....The mother can lay the child tenderly to her breast, but our tender mother Jesus, he can familiarly lead us into his blessed breast through his sweet open side....[A]nd he wants us to do the same, like a humble child, saying, 'My kind mother, my gracious Mother, take pity on me. I have made myself dirty and unlike you and I neither may nor can remedy this without your special help and grace.'....[F]or there is plenty of the food [*sic*] of mercy which is his dearest blood and precious water to make us clean and pure." Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love (Short Text and Long Text)*, trans. Elizabeth Spearing (London: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 141, 144, Chapter 61 (Long Text).
34. Bynum, *Fragmentation*, p. 147.
35. Sarah Beckwith, "Margery Kempe's *Imitatio*," in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Staley (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 285 [284–287].
36. Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 284 n. 37.
37. Spearing, *Revelations*, pp. 32, 34–5, Chapters 21, 23 (Short Text); pp. 153, 155–6, Chapters 66, 69 (Long Text).
38. Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 55, Chapter 10 (Long Text); Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, p. 324, see also n. 5 (Long Text).

39. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* pp. 327–330. "It was the form and likeness of the foul, dead covering which our fair, bright, blessed Lord bore when he took on human flesh for our sins.... [H]e wanted, loving and honouring man, to make himself as much like man in this mortal life, in our vileness and our wretchedness, as a man without guilt might be. So this means what was said before: it was the image and likeness of our vile, black, mortal covering which hid our fair, bright, blessed Lord." Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 56, Chapter 10 (Long).
40. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* pp. 357–359; Spearing, *Revelations*, pp. 64–65, Chapter 16 (Long).
41. She continues at Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* pp. 527–528, 543; Spearing, *Revelations*, pp. 120, 124, Chapter 51 (Long).
42. McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body*, pp. 128, 139.
43. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* p. 592. "...by taking on our created nature." Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 140, Chapter 59 (Long). See McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body*, pp. 141–142.
44. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* pp. 306–307. See McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body*, p. 139. Spearing avoids this passage, pp. 48–49.
45. "For Julian, the physical body and the abject—specifically here its waste matter (what she refers to as its 'soule' [glossed as 'undigested food'])—rather than being representative of the excesses of the foul flesh, are more a reflection of the beauty of creation and, in particular, the human soul (significantly also denoted as 'soule' in Julian's text), rather than being something to be disparaged, denigrated and transcended." McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body*, pp. 141–142. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins argue that "purse" denotes "bowel" and translate this passage as "A person walks upright and the food he has eaten is closed as though in a very beautiful drawstring purse. And when it is time for him to excrete, the purse is opened up and closed again very cleanly." *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), p. 142. But Cristina Maria Cervone, "The 'Soule' Crux in Julian of Norwich's *A Revelation of Love*," *The Review of English Studies* 55 (2004): 152 [151–156], argues that the passage "suggests an eschatological interpretation rather than a scatological one."
46. McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body*, p. 142. Julian suggests God cannot "disdain any need which 'to oure body longyth in kynde,'" including defecation and sexual desire. See Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, p. 307.
47. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* pp. 558–559. "[W]hen God was going to make man's body, he took the slime of the earth, which is a substance mixed and gathered from all bodily things, and from this he made man's body; but for the making of man's soul he did not wish to take anything at all, he simply made it." Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 129, Chapter 53 (Long).

48. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* p. 595. "dressed himself in our poor flesh." Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 141, Chapter 60 (Long).
49. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* pp. 622–624. "... a body lying on the earth, a body which looked dismal and ugly, without shape or form as if it were a swollen and heaving mass of stinking mire. And suddenly out of this body there sprang a very beautiful creature, a little child perfectly shaped and formed, quick and bright, whiter than a lily, which glided swiftly up into heaven. And the swelling of the body represents the great sinfulness of our mortal flesh and the smallness of the child represents the chaste purity of the soul. And I thought, 'None of the beauty of this child remains with the body, nor does any of this body's filth cling to the child.'" Spearing, *Revelations*, pp. 148–149, Chapter 64 (Long). McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body*, p. 144. See Bloch, "Death, Women and Power," pp. 223–224; discussed in Fradenburg, "Criticism," *Exemplaria* 1.1 (1989): 85–86 [69–115].
50. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* p. 694; Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 168, Chapter 77 (Long).
51. Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 339.
52. Quoted by Lisa J. Kiser, "The Garden of St. Francis: Plants, Landscape, and Economy in Thirteenth Century Italy," *Environmental History* 8 (2003); at http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/8.2/kiser.html (accessed February 24, 2006). Kiser cites *Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli Sociorum Francisci*, ed. and trans. Rosalind B. Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Chapters 110, 283.
53. Slavoj Žižek, "Christ's Breaking of the 'Great Chain of Being,'" in Schad, *Writing the Bodies of Christ,* p. 108 [105–110]. Elsewhere Žižek writes "(There is effectively an abundance of 'anal,' excremental innuendo in Schelling: God secretes the '*abjet*' and then pronounces the Word in order to pull Himself out of the shit He has got into)." Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, p. 36. He cites "Stuttgart Seminars," in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essay by F. W. J. Schelling* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1994).
54. This reading may also expand the possible understandings of the Catalonian *caganer*, or squatting defecating figure, traditionally (since the Baroque period) found in Catalan nativity scenes, to include a spiritual reading of the juxtaposition of the excremental peasant in the barn with God transformed into frail flesh.
55. Meech and Allen, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 87, 18–19.
56. Eccles, *The Macro Plays*, l. 745, p. 178. See also *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* ed. H. N. MacCracken, vol. 1, *EETSES* 107 (London: Oxford University Press, 1911; reprint 1962), p. 43, "An Holy Medytacion," and p. 238, "The Fifteen Ooes of Christ," for evocative waste-filled verse. See more on Lydgate and filth in Strohm, "Chaucer's Lollard Joke," pp. 23–44.
57. In a lovely fusion of transubstantiation and sacred filth, John Bunyan in the seventeenth-century *Pilgrim's Progress* refers to a purge made of

Christ's body and blood. Lewin, *Merde,* p. 11; John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp. 279–280.

58. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," pp. 2398–2421.
59. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2406.
60. See Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward A Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 100, who reads Christ as disabled by wounds that reveal a "new humanity."
61. Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 56; also see Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 30.
62. Holler, *Erotic Morality*, p. 157.
63. Holler, *Erotic Morality*, p. 163.
64. See Citrome, *The Surgeon*, p. 126, in his discussion of Bataille.
65. Yeats' poem, "Crazy Jane Talks With the Bishop," likewise suggests that Christ (Love) celebrated all aspects of the body, even the lowliest.
66. Much work has been done reading the insult in light of queer theory, including Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, "Kissing the Pardoner," *PMLA* 107 (1992): 1143–1156; Robert S. Sturges, *Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory: Bodies of Discourse* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Louise O. Vasvári, "The Semiotics of Phallic Aggression and Anal Penetration as Male Agonistic Ritual in the *Libro de buen amor*," in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 130–156; Anne Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender in the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 191–193. But see C. David Benson, "Chaucer's Pardoner: His Sexuality and Modern Critics," *Mediaevalia* 8 (1982): 337–349; Richard Firth Green, "The Sexual Normality of Chaucer's Pardoner," *Mediaevalia* 8 (1982): 351–358; and Alastair Minnis, "Chaucer and the Queering Eunuch," in *New Medieval Literatures* 6, ed. David Lawton, Rita Copeland, Wendy Scase (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 110 [107–128].
67. Allen J. Frantzen, "The *Pardoner's Tale*, the Pervert, and the Price of Order in Chaucer's World," in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature*, ed. Britton J. Harwood and Gillian Overing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 140 [131–147]. "Inter urinas et faeces nascimur," which Freud ascribes to St. Augustine. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), p. 52. Quoted in Frantzen, "The *Pardoner's Tale*," p. 147, n. 17.
68. Minnis, "Chaucer," in *New Medieval Literatures* 6, p. 121.
69. Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 96.
70. "In the usual way, what was considered low and dirty was inverted to become the high and holy. Thus turds are the relics worshipped by a

nun at the altar of the anus in the margins of the Bodleian Alexander Romance." Camille, *Image on the Edge*, pp. 111–112.

71. Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, pp. 179–180, 361, n. 68; "Tale of Umar b. Numan," *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*, 4 vols, trans. J. C. Mardrus and Powys Mathers (London: Routledge, 1994), vol. I, p. 442. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 145, reads this textual moment as part of a pattern of religious polemic by Christians, Jews, and Muslims against each other that filths the other's religious beliefs.
72. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, Charles Dahlberg, trans. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 135. "If Raison had used the term 'relic' rather than 'balls' to designate the male genitalia, and them 'balls' to designate 'relics,' we would now be calling balls 'relics' and relics 'balls' (7076–7085)." Alastair Minnis, "From *Coilles* to *Bel Chose*: Discourses of Obscenity in Jean de Meun and Chaucer," in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), p. 159 [156–178].
73. Douglas, *Implicit Meanings*, p. 107.
74. Miri Rubin tells us that it was "recommended [that] those who missed communion to take the kiss of peace, the *eulogia* (blessed bread), or to receive the priest's blessing." Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 73.
75. Host has multiple meanings, including "An armed company or multitude of men" (c.1290), from Old French *oste*, *hoste*; Latin *hospit-em* (*hospes*) meaning host, guest, stranger, foreigner; a man who lodges and entertains another in his house, first reference 1303; and "a victim for sacrifice; a sacrifice" (1340) and "the bread consecrated in the Eucharist, regarded as the body of Christ sacrificially offered; a consecrated wafer" (first reference 1303). This meaning comes from the Old French *oiste*, *hoiste* and L. *hostia* meaning victim, sacrifice.
76. David Aers, *Faith, Ethics and Church: Writing in England, 1360–1409* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2000), Chapter Two, especially pp. 44–49; also see Lynn Staley, *Languages of Power in the Age of Richard II* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), p. 140.
77. As Efraim Sicher, *Rereading the City Rereading Dickens: Representation, the Novel, and Urban Realism* (New York: AMS Press, 2003), p. 333, points out in his discussion of *Our Mutual Friend*, there is redemption in our waste.

8 The Rhizomatic Pilgrim Body and Alchemical Poetry

1. Claude Gaignebet and Jean-Dominique Lajoux, eds., *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), pp. 54–57, including a sculpture on a façade in Goslar, 1449, of a person shitting coins; wood carvings within cathedrals in the stalls; also Janetta Rebold Benton, *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle*

Ages (Phoenix Mill, England: Sutton, 2004), pp. 116–117; Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 94; and Malcolm Jones, *The Secret Middle Ages* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 274–294.

2. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 195, fol. 2r, col. II.
3. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.4.14, fol. 31r.
4. Oxford, Exeter College Library, MS Exeter College 47, fol. 23v.
5. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 276, Roll 162B (3), 110v.
6. Bolvig, "Images of Late Medieval 'Daily Life,'" 97 [94–111].
7. Camille, "At the Sign of the 'Spinning Sow,'" p. 271 [249–276]; also Michael Camille, "Labouring for the Lord: the Ploughman and the Social Order in the Luttrell Psalter," *Art History* 10, 4 (1987): 424 [415–445].
8. Camille, "Labouring for the Lord," 427, 429.
9. Bolvig, "Images of Late Medieval 'Daily Life,'" 107, also 98–99.
10. S. K. Davenport cites D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), as guilty of this kind of reading. S. K. Davenport, "Illustrations Direct and Oblique in the Margins of an Alexander Romance at Oxford," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971): 94–95 [83–95].
11. See Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. from 3rd ed. by Dora Nussey (1913 reprint. New York: Harper, 1958), pp. 59–62.
12. Karl P. Wentersdorf, "The Symbolic Significance & Figurae Scatologicae in Gothic Manuscripts," in *Word, Picture and Spectacle*, ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1984), p. 3 [1–20].
13. Lillian Randall, "Exempla as a Source of Gothic Marginal Illumination," *Art Bulletin* XXXIX (1957): 97–107. See also Randall's monumental *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).
14. Sylvia Huot, "Visualization and Memory: The Illustration of Troubadour Lyric in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript," *Gesta* 31 (1992): 4 [3–14], also Mary Carruthers, Chapter 7, "Memory and the Book," in *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 245–246 [221–257] on "drolleries." Joanna Fronska argues for the mnemonic utility of images in law manuscripts in a talk, "Turning the Pages of Legal Manuscripts: Reading and Remembering the Law," delivered at The Medieval Institute, May 2007. Marginal images facilitate a dynamic relationship between viewer and text, the images jogging the memory of the viewer. As Stella Panayotova has generously pointed out concerning the Macclesfield Psalter: "Some of the images are visual catchwords and reflect pictorial word-play (e.g. CUL in SECULUM). With the nude on fol. 28v I suspect a learned reference to ancient athletes because of the punning on the text (LUTUM) and the knowledge of classical realia it presupposes (for instance, from Seneca's letters)." Personal communication. Michael Camille points out that one manuscript plays with sin as "culpa" and "cul" as bum. Camille, *Image on*

the Edge, p. 26. In Trinity B.11.22, folio 73 (see book cover), the image (see book cover) of a man defecating and another bringing the turds in a bowl to a lady "occurs below Psalm 7, in which the Lord is asked to *libera me* (free his bowels?)...." Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 115.

15. Agamben, *The Open*, pp. 26–27.
16. Mary Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 82; also Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 160.
17. Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 10. See also Nicola McDonald, "Introduction," in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), p. 6 [1–16].
18. Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 111; Michael Camille, "Glossing the Flesh: Scopophilia and the Margins of the Medieval Book," in *The Margins of the Text*, ed. D. C. Greetham (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 249 [245–267].
19. Camille, "Glossing the Flesh," p. 247; also pp. 245–246, 261, 263.
20. Paolo Savonuzzi, Chiara Wolter, "So What's Trash in Architecture?" in *Trash*, ed. Vergine, p. 257 [255–261].
21. Camille, "Glossing the Flesh," pp. 246–247.
22. Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 1–2005, fol. 138v. See also fols. 45v, 167v, 242r.
23. Duby, *A History of Private Life*, p. 586.
24. Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 154.
25. Gail Weiss, "The Body as Narrative Horizon," in Cohen and Weiss, *Thinking the Limits of the Body*, p. 25 [25–35].
26. Knepper, "Romancing the Rhizome" (unpublished paper). Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, who uses terms like "grid" (p. 11), "network" (used twice on p. 90), and "web" (pp. 91, 97) to describe the shrine sites and the relationships that sprang up in the translation of relics.
27. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, p. 714. "And [God] showed himself on earth in another way as though on a pilgrimage: that is to say, he is here with us, leading us, and will be until he has brought us all up to his bliss in heaven." Spearing, *Revelations*, p. 174, Chapter 81 (Long).
28. Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings,* p. 731. "This book was begun by God's gift and his grace, but it seems to me that it is not yet completed," Spearing, *Revelations,* p. 179, Chapter 86 (Long).
29. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 33.
30. Rhizome stories "can be easily changed, retold, de- and reconstructed and are thus open to the future." Wolfgang Kraus, "The construction of belonging in post-modern times," *Second International Conference on the Dialogical Self* (Ghent, Belgium, October 2003): 6, quoted by Wendy Knepper in her abstract "Perceval, the errant knight: romancing the rhizome."
31. The coherence of the body is a fantasy that Elizabeth Grosz calls an "imaginary anatomy," in *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), p. 39. Quoted in Citrome, "Bodies that Splatter," 144 [137–172].
32. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, p. xii.

33. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, p. xiv.
34. See Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 172.
35. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 166.
36. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 161. The reality of our world is that it is "'becoming,' not 'being.'" Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, p. 224.
37. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 173.
38. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 178.
39. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre du Chemin de Long Estude* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1974) (reissue of Robert Püschel's manuscript work, 1887); Patricia Bonin Eargle, *An Edition of Christine de Pisan's "Livre du Chemin de Long Estude*," Ph.D. 1973, The University of Georgia; Julia Bolton Holloway, *Jerusalem: Essays on Pilgrimage and Literature* (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 207–208; and especially Ester Zago, "Christine de Pizan: A Feminist Way to Learning," in *Equally in God's Image: Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Julia Bolton Holloway, Joan Bechthold, and Constance S. Wright (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), pp. 105, 106, 108, 111 [103–116].
40. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 164.
41. Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England*, pp. 106–119.
42. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 164.
43. In one moment, Christine discusses Queen Artemesia whose love for her dead husband compelled her to "mix his ashes with wine until she had finished them all." No mention is made of what happened to those consumed ashes that must ultimately have been expelled, unless we are meant to read the passage as a quasi-transubstantiation. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea Books, 1982), p. 123.
44. de Pizan, *Book of the City of Ladies*, p. 11.
45. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 168; also see Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, p. 178.
46. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, pp. 169–170; also p. 104.
47. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 169.
48. "Sche had þe flyx a long tyme tyl sche was anoyntyd, wenyng to a be deed" (Chapter 56). Meech and Allen, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 137.
49. Meech and Allen, *The Book of Margery Kempe,* Chapter 56, p. 137; Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. and ed. Lynn Staley (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 101, 176.
50. See Chapter 52, Meech and Allen, *Margery Kempe*, pp. 126–127.
51. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 121, 154–155.
52. Meech and Allen, p. 184, Chapter 77. Staley, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 134.
53. Here I play with Cleanth Brooks' remark in *The Well Wrought Urn*: "[Paradox] is an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it." Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, p. 103.
54. Snyder, "Unnatural Writing," in Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995), p. 168 [163–172].

55. See Snyder, *A Place in Space*, pp. 173–175.
56. Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990) quoted in Snyder, *A Place in Space*, pp. 169–170.
57. Bate, *Song of the Earth*, p. 247.
58. John Elder, "Culture as Decay: Arnold, Eliot, Snyder," in Lawrence Coupe, *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 231 [227–234]. Elder cites Snyder's *The Real Work: Interviews and Talks, 1964–1979*, ed. W. Scott McLean (New York: New Directions, 1980), pp. 71, 62.
59. Elder, "Culture as Decay," p. 231.
60. I am basing this term on Jonathan Bate's "ecopoetic" in, for instance, *Song of the Earth*, p. 266.
61. For discussion comparing poetry making and alchemy, see Shoaf, *Chaucer's Body*, pp. 60–61 and 59; Lee Patterson, "Perpetual Motion: Alchemy and the Technology of the Self," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 15 (1993): 25–57; Mark J. Bruhn, "Art, Anxiety, and Alchemy in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 33 (1999): 290–292 [288–315]; David Raybin, "'And pave it all of silver and of gold': The Humane Artistry of the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*," in *Rebel and Rivals: The Contestive Spirit in The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Susanna Fein, David Raybin, and Peter Braeger (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), pp. 189–212; and C. David Benson, "Literary Contests and London Records in the *Canterbury Tales*," in *Chaucer and the City*, ed. Ardis Butterfield (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), p. 143 [129–144].
62. "[B]oth domestication and the use of manures may have had their origin in fertility rites and magic sacrifices." Mumford, *The City in History*, p. 11. "Investigations into the remarkable potential of fecal matter, its capacity to fertilize and nurture life, were part of the alchemical tradition of the Middle Ages and remained as a parallel discourse to those classifying shit as bad." Hawkins, "Down the Drain," p. 45 [39–52].
63. Many thanks to John Friedman for sharing this information with me from his forthcoming article, "The Merda Philosophorum: An English Problem."
64. See John of Rupescissa, *De consideratione quintae essentiae omnium rerum* (Basel, 1561), pp. 38–39. Translated by Leah M. Devun (forthcoming). Many thanks to Dr. Devun for this information. Also see Allen, *On Farting*, pp. 96–104.
65. See Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "The Corpse in the Middle Ages: The Problem of the Division of the Body," in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 341, 339 [327–341] and Michael A. Calabrese, "Meretricious Mixtures: Gold, Dung, and the *Canon's Yeoman's Prologue* and *Tale*," *The Chaucer Review* 27, 3 (1993): 277 [277–292].
66. Barbara Zimbalist, "The Currency of the Counterfeit Face: Alchemy, Physiognomy, and Transformation in *The Canon's Yeoman's Tale*," paper

delivered at The Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University (May 2007).

67. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 466. The interpenetration of the two cultures represented by English and Latin can be seen in macaronic poetry. Helen Cooper on Chaucer's link to French and Anglo-Norman lyric. Cooper, "London and Southwark Poetic Companies: 'Si tost c'amis' and the *Canterbury Tales*," pp. 116–117 [109–125].
68. John F. Plummer, "'Beth Fructuous and That in Litel Space': The Engendering of Harry Bailey," in *New Readings of Chaucer's Poetry*, ed. Robert G. Benson and Susan J. Ridyard (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 107–118; though see Patrick Gallacher, "Food, Laxatives, and Catharsis in Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale*," *Speculum* 51 (1976): 49–68.
69. Susan Signe Morrison, "The Uses of Biography in Medieval Literary Criticism: The Case of Geoffrey Chaucer and Cecily Chaumpaigne," *The Chaucer Review* 34 (1999): 81 [69–86].
70. See Christine M. Rose, "Woman's 'Pryvete,' May and the Privy: Fissures in the Narrative Voice in the *Merchant's Tale*, 1944–1986," *Chaucer Yearbook* 4 (1997): 61–77.
71. For comparisons between making excrement and poetry, see Freedman, *Medieval Peasant*, p. 153. See also R. Howard Bloch, *The Scandal of the Fabliaux* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 19, 51, 53, and 55, about the equivalence between "fiction making and excrement making," p. 51; Shoaf, *Chaucer's Body*, p. 85; Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 115; Camille, "Glossing the Flesh," p. 263; Tim Armstrong, "Eliot's Waste Paper," *Modernism, Technology, and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 69–74; and Durling, "Deceit and Digestion," p. 74 [61–93].
72. Bynum, *Resurrection*, pp. 314, 316.
73. See Greig, "The Investigation of a Medieval Barrel-Latrine from Worcester," 265–282, whose excavation of a fifteenth-century barrel latrine uncovered scraps of wool cloth, most likely tailor's waste, which had dark staining and was used as toilet paper or for feminine hygiene. Also Allen, *On Farting*, pp. 59–60; Hansen, *Chaucer*, p. 260.
74. Shoaf, *Chaucer's Body*, p. 58.
75. Robertson, "I have…a Soule for to Kepe": Discerning the Female Subject in 'The Merchant's Tale.'"

9 Chaucerian Fecology and Wasteways: *The Nun's Priest's Tale*

1. *The New York Times*, "Plan to Harness Power of Manure Draws Interest" (May 11, 2003).
2. Lawrence Coupe, "General Introduction," in *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. Lawrence Coupe (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 6 [1–8].

3. Kathleen R. Wallace and Karla Armbruster, "Introduction: Why Go Beyond Nature Writing, and Where To?" in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, ed. Armbruster and Wallace (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2001), p. 3 [1–25].
4. Most notably, Robert Pogue Harrison's brilliant *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Lisa J. Kiser, "Chaucer and the Politics of Nature," in Armbruster and Wallace, *Beyond Nature Writing*, pp. 41–56; Lesley Kordecki, "Ecofeminism and the Father of English Poetry: Chaucer's Parliament of Fowls," *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 10 (2003): 97–114; Sarah Stanbury, "Ecochaucer: Green Ethics and Medieval Nature," *The Chaucer Review* 39 (2004): 1–16; and Gillian Rudd, *Greenery: Ecocritical Readings of Late Medieval English Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
5. Wallace and Armbruster, "Introduction," in *Beyond Nature Writing*, p. 4.
6. Jhan Hochman, "Green Cultural Studies: An Introductory Critique of an Emerging Discipline," *Mosaic* 30, 1 (1997): 83 [81–96].
7. Deborah Bird Rose, "Decolonizing the Discourse of Environmental Knowledge in Settler Societies," in *Culture and Waste: The Creation and Destruction of Value*, ed. Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), p. 64 [53–72]; Richard A. Barney, "Filthy Thoughts, or, Cultural Criticism and the Ordure of Things," *Genre* 27 (1994): 281 [275–293]; and David Weir, "Sublime Excrement: Obscene Matter," *A Wake Newsletter Monograph* (1983), p. 8, who cites George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), p. 115: "Art is nature digested. Art is a sublime excrement."
8. Wallace and Armbruster, "Introduction," in *Beyond Nature Writing*, p. 4.
9. Scott Slovic, "Ecocriticism: Containing Multitudes, Practising Doctrine," in Coupe, *The Green Studies Reader*, p. 160 [160–162].
10. Hochman, "Green Cultural Studies," 86.
11. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 9; also Lynch, "From Tavern to Pie Shop," 125 [117–138].
12. Malcolm Jones, *The Secret Middle Ages* (Thrupp: Sutton, 2002), p. 284; also Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 157, for a speculative origin of ordure from "ord" (filthy, foul) or "or" (gold).
13. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, pp. 29, 31, 32.
14. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 170.
15. N. J. Sykes, "From *Cu* and *Sceap* to *Beffe* and *Motton*: The Management, Distribution, and Consumption of Cattle and Sheep in Medieval England," in *Food in Medieval England*, ed. C. M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 56 [56–71].
16. All records indicated by A2A can be accessed at the following Web site: http://www.a2a.org.uk/ (accessed April 21, 2008). All A2A citations from Scope and Content unless otherwise mentioned. Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds Branch, Hengrave, Fornham St Martin, Catalogue Ref. 449/2/285, date: 1374 and Catalogue Ref. 449/2/625,

date: August 20, 1491, from Scope and Content. See also A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Arches, Catalogue Ref. AR/31/2, date: Thursday, December 29, 1407.

17. A2A, Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch, The Iveagh (Phillipps) Suffolk Manuscripts, Catalogue Ref. HD 1538/2 Vol 2/fol.161 [n.d.]; A2A, Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch, The Iveagh (Phillipps) Suffolk Manuscripts, Catalogue Ref. HD 1538/197/21, date: November 1, 1438.
18. A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Cornwall, Treloy Manor, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/1, date: 1442.
19. Freedman, *Medieval Peasant*, p. 143.
20. Freedman, *Medieval Peasant*, p. 150. See also Mary Douglas, "Jokes," in Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 102 [90–114] and Karras, *From Boys to Men*, pp. 100–108.
21. All citations from William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt (London: J. M. Dent, 1995).
22. Lynn Thorndike, "Sanitation, Baths and Street-Cleaning in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Speculum* 3 (1928): 192–193 [192–203].
23. Donna Landry, "Mud, Blood, and Muck: Country Filth," *Genre* 27 (1994): 327, 328 [315–332].
24. Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things," pp. 182–183 [174–196].
25. DuVal, *Cuckolds, Clerics, and Countrymen*, p. 62; also, Freedman, *Medieval Peasant*, p. 159.
26. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, p. 472, Sixth Story, Tenth Day.
27. All quotes and translations are from Cartlidge, *The Owl and the Nightingale*.
28. See Ackroyd, *London*, p. 336. Shoaf, *Chaucer's Body*, p. 22.
29. P. M. Stell and Louise Hampson, *Probate Inventories of the York Diocese 1350–1500* (York: YML Occasional Series, Dean and Chapter of York, 1998), pp. 227, 241. Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop*, p. 13. See also A2A, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, H. L. Bradfer-Lawrence Collection, Millar Collection of Deeds for Snaith Area, Catalogue Ref. MD335/5/148, date: January 24, 1331; A2A, Northamptonshire Record Office, Fitzwilliam (Milton) Charters, Milton Deeds, Catalogue Ref. F(M) Charter/1378, date: Saturday before the Feast of the Translation of St Thomas, 1356.
30. See A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Cornwall, Trembleath Manor, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/62, date: 1446–1468; A2A, *Cornwall Record Office,* Arundell of Lanherne and Trerice, Cornwall, Trembleath Manor, Catalogue Ref. AR/2/64, date: 1469–1470.
31. Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things," p. 179. See King, "How High is Too High? Disposing of Dung in Seventeenth-Century Prescot," 444 [443–457].
32. Cockayne, *Hubbub*, especially pp. 183–191.
33. G. Lister Sutcliffe, *The Disposal of Refuse from the City of London* (London: Hodgetts, 1898), pp. 2, 4.

34. De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*, p. 106; Mumford, *The City in History*, p. 14. Gerald Maclean, Donna Landry, Joseph P. Ward, eds., *The Country and City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 4, revisit Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press 1973), and argue that we should read the urban–rural dichotomy as having "permeable boundaries." In medieval Northern French towns, human excrement was used to fertilize "backyard gardens." See also Donald Reid, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and Representations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 9–10; Rathje and Murphy, *Rubbish!*, p. 33; Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, p. 103; pp. 114–115.
35. A classic essay argues that the biblical account of creation sets up an exploitative relationship between humans and nature, Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–1207; yet Betsy S. Hilbert, "Beyond 'Thou Shalt Not': An Ecocritic Reads Deuteronomy," in Armbruster and Wallace, *Beyond Nature Writing*, pp. 29–40, reads Deuteronomy as promoting environmental responsibility. Wallace and Armbruster, "Introduction," in *Beyond Nature Writing* p. 9.
36. "Nature is gendered female, while women, from the male viewpoint, are territory for adventure, wildness to be tamed, owned and controlled." Richard Kerridge, *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, ed. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells (London: Zed Books, 1998), p. 3 [1–9]. Ecofeminist dialogics is the method Murphy proposes to "effect one of the paradigm shifts necessary to break down the dualistic thinking of patriarchy that perpetuates the exploitation and oppression of nature in general and woman in particular." Patrick D. Murphy, "Ecofeminist Dialogics," in Coupe, *The Green Studies Reader*, p. 197 [193–197].
37. David LaGuardia, "Doctor Rabelais and the Medicine of Scatology," in *Fecal Matters in Early Modern Literature and Art : Studies in Scatology*, ed. Jeff Persels and Russell Ganim (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), pp. [24–37]; also Glenn Ehrstine, "Foolectomies, Fool Enemas, and the Renaissance Anatomy of Folly," in Persels and Ganim, *Fecal Matters*, pp. 96–108. The association of women with excrement continues into the early modern period. Jeff Persels, "The Sorbonnic Trots: Staging the Intestinal Distress of the Roman Catholic Church in French Reform Theater," *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 (2003): 12–15, esp. 5, n.25 [1–24].
38. Coupe, "Introduction: Part IV: Ecocritical Principles," in *The Green Studies Reader*, p. 159 [157–159].
39. Stanbury, *Ecochaucer*, 1.
40. See Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, p. 59, who argue that there is "no clear separation of the human from the animal."
41. See, for example, Rudd, *Greenery,* p. 6.
42. Coupe, "Introduction: Part IV: Ecocritical Principles," in *The Green Studies Reader*, p. 158.

43. See Patrick Murphy, "Prolegomenon for an Ecofeminist Dialogics," in Murphy, *Literature, Nature, and Other: Ecofeminist Critiques* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1995), p. 12 [3–17].
44. Murphy, "Ecofeminist Dialogics," p. 196 [193–197]; also Stanbury, *Ecochaucer*, 11.
45. Patrick Murphy, "Anotherness and inhabitation in recent multicultural American literature," in Kerridge and Sammells, *Writing the Environment,* pp. 41–42 [40–52].
46. Kiser "Chaucer and the Politics of Nature," p. 44, and Kordecki, "Ecofeminism and the Father of English Poetry," 111.
47. Carole M. Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.
48. Counihan, *The Anthropology,* p. 6.
49. Counihan, *The Anthropology,* p. 19.
50. Lynch, "From Tavern to Pie Shop," 119. Here she is specifically referring to the structure of the *General Prologue* and Fragment I.
51. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, pp. 5, 191.
52. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics*, p. 19.
53. Counihan, *The Anthropology,* p. 8.
54. Counihan, *The Anthropology,* p. 13.
55. Counihan, *The Anthropology,* pp. 19–20.
56. Rathje and Murphy*, Rubbish!*, p. 62.
57. Counihan, *The Anthropology,* p. 95.
58. In *Njal's Saga*, Hallgerd asks some itinerant women about Njal's servants and what they were doing. She is told: "[O]ne was carting shit to the hillocks," p. 73. While human excrement contains pathogens that make it a danger for use as fertilizer, composting it for many months can kill bacteria.
59. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, p. 69. According to one eighteenth-century editor of Shakespeare, Cleopatra's mention of "dung" (V.ii. 7) becomes "dug" or nipple ("Excrement is transformed into milk)."
60. See Brown, *Life Against Death,* p. 179. The first reference to an "excremental vision" was as a chapter title in a biography about Jonathan Swift [John Middle Murry, *Jonathan Swift* (New York: Farrar, 1955)], which was then picked up by Brown. Also Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, p. 73, on Brown concerning Luther.
61. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, pp. 73, 72. Also Jeff Persels, " 'The Mass and the Fart are Sisters': Scatology and Calvinist Rhetoric against the Mass, 1560–1563," in *Fecal Matters*, p. 39 [38–55], discusses how scatology and Reformist polemic are linked. Likewise, David Tripp, "The image of the body in the formative phases of the Protestant Reformation," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 9, 131, 139 [131–152]. Also see Dundes*, Life is Like a Chicken Coop,* pp. 59–62, who cites Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958),

and Brown, *Life Against Death,* as key sources for discussing Luther's anality. Martin Luther, *Table Talk* (New York: Fount, 1995), p. 292.

62. See Murphy, "Prolegomenon," in *Literature, Nature, and Other,* pp. 3–17.
63. Wendell Berry, *What Are People For*? (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), pp. 148–149.
64. See, for example, the work by O'Reilly, " 'Traditional' women, 'modern' water," 958–972, and "Women's Movements Public and Private."
65. Michael Mayerfeld Bell, "Deep Fecology: Mikhail Bakhtin and the Call of Nature," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 5 (4) (1994): 75 [65–84].
66. In a panel entitled "What Happened to Theory in Medieval Studies? A Roundtable," Michael Uebel advocated for a theoretical position grounded in ethics and mutuality, The Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University (May 2007).

10 Looking Behind

1. All records indicated by A2A can be accessed at the following Web site: http://www.a2a.org.uk/ (accessed April 21, 2007). All A2A citations from Scope and Content, unless otherwise mentioned. A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/6ag, date: 1505–1506. See also: A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/5 e, date: 1509–1510; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/5 f, date: 1510–1511; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/5g, date: 1512–1513; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B7 b, date: 1533–1534; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/7 b, date: 1533–1534; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/7 d, date: 1535–1536; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/7 e, date: 1536–1537; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Sheriffs' of Chester Books, Catalogue Ref. ZS/B/7 e, date: 1536–1537.
2. A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Mayor's Books, Catalogue Ref. ZM/B/28a, date: 1599–1600.
3. A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Quarter Sessions Files, Catalogue Ref. QSF/26, date: 1571–1572.
4. A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Mayor's Books, Catalogue Ref. ZM/B/28a, date: 1599–1600. See also A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Chester City Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. QSF/44, date: 1594–1595.

5. A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Mayor's Books, Catalogue Ref. ZM/B/28a, date: 1599–1600. Also A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Mayor's Books, Catalogue Ref. SM/B/28d, date: 1605–1606.
6. A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/380/1, date: 1580–1581. See also A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/307/iv [n.d.]. See also A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/327/ii, date: 1528; A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/339/v, date: 1540; A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/352/3, [n.d.]; A2A, contact East Sussex Record Office, Winchelsea Corporation Records, Catalogue Ref. WIN/52, date: 1558–1575.
7. A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/391 (3), date: 1591. See also A2A, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Canterbury Court of Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. CC/JQ/392/iv, date: 1592; A2A, Centre for Kentish Studies, West Kent Quarter Sessions Records, Catalogue Ref. QM/SI/1596/7/11, date: April 1, 1596; A2A, Centre for Kentish Studies, West Kent Quarter Sessions Records, Catalogue Ref. QM/SI/1602/26, date: January 1, 1601/1602; A2A, contact East Sussex Record Office, Winchelsea Corporation Records, Catalogue Ref. WIN/55, date: 1597–1627.
8. Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop*, p. 15.
9. A2A, Corporation of London Records Office, Articles of the Charter and Liberties of London, Catalogue Ref. COL/AC/08/001, date: Seventeenth century—; A2A, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, Records of the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation, Catalogue Ref. BRU15/6/82 [n.d.].
10. A2A, Centre for Kentish Studies, Quarter Sessions Roll, Catalogue Ref. Q/SR/1/m.8, date: 1600; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Quarter Sessions Files, Catalogue Ref. QSF/53, date: 1604–1605.
11. A2A, Centre for Kentish Studies, Quarter Sessions Roll, Catalogue Ref. Q/SR/3/m.4, date: 1602; A2A, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Chester City Quarter Sessions, Catalogue Ref. QSF/53, date: 1604–1605.
12. A2A, Norfolk Record Office, Beauchamp-Proctor Collection, Catalogue Ref. BEA 213–250, 437 x 6, date: 1538–1594; A2A, West Sussex Record Office, The Cowdray Archives, Catalogue Ref. COWDRAY/7, date: September 21, 1526. The term common sewer, meaning "a drain through which much of the sewage of a town passages," appears as early as 1491/1492. See Wright, *Sources of London English*, p. 123.

13. A2A, contact Nottinghamshire Archives, Nottinghamshire Archives: Portland of Welbeck: Cavendish deeds, Catalogue Ref. DD/P/CD/49, date: January 6, 1536/1537.
14. A2A, Bristol Record Office, All Saints, Catalogue Ref. P/AS/D/NA 54, date: 1518; A2A, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, Records of the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation, Catalogue Ref. BRU15/4/200 [n.d.].
15. A2A, Centre for Kentish Studies, Faversham Borough Records, Wardmote minutes and memoranda, and town accounts, Catalogue Ref. Fa/A/C/1, date: 1436–1583.
16. Holmes, *The Not so Little Book of Dung*, p. 174. See Malcolm Thick, *The Neat House Gardens: Early Market Gardening Around London* (Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 1998), especially p. 52 and pp. 101–103, where he describes how hotbeds utilized dung to help plants sprout faster.
17. A2A, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, Records of the Ware Charity Estates, Catalogue Ref. D/EWe/4/59, date: January 15, 1507.
18. A2A, East Sussex Record Office, Archive of Messrs Paper and Fovargue of Battle, Solicitors, Deeds of Battle, Hooe, and so on, Catalogue Ref. SAS-RA/2, date: February 1, 1534.
19. From John Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. H. B. Wheatley (London: J. M. Dent, 1912/ rev. 1955), p. 170. Quoted in DeVries, "And Away Go Troubles Down the Drain, 406 [401–418].
20. Boehrer, "The Ordure of Things," pp. 177–178 [174–196].
21. Masten, "Is the Fundament a Grave?" p. 134 [128–145]. The title takes off from Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" in *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/ Cultural Activism*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1988).
22. Each bodily part is associated with its own excrement: stomach with feces and the liver with urine; sweat, hair, nails and mucus were likewise viewed as excrements. Michael Schoenfeldt, "Fables of the Belly in Early Modern England," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 242, 243, 245 [242–261].
23. From Giovanni della Casa, *Il Galateo*, in Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney Courier Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 122.
24. Gábor Klaniczay, "Everyday Life and Elites in the Later Middle Ages: The Civilised and the Barbarian," in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 675 [671–690].
25. Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 96. See also pp. 98, 119, n.79. There was an increase architecturally in the dominance of private space(s). Lochrie, *Covert Operations*, p. 164.
26. Sabine, "City Cleaning," 22 [19–43].
27. Inglis, *A Sociological History of Excretory Experience*, p. 152.
28. Laporte, *History of Shit*, pp. 2, 63. There was increasingly a general tendency to put noisy and smelly activities far from the political and religious areas. Leguay, *La Pollution au Moyen Âge*, p. 52. Gay Hawkins proposes that the "hint of shit in a public space doesn't just call the self

into question, but technologies of governance, *faith in infrastructure*." Hawkins, "Down the Drain," pp. 40, 41, 45–46 [39–52].

29. "In cultures that pride themselves on being technologically 'advanced' catching a glimpse of the brute physicality of waste signals a kind of failure." Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 1.
30. Compare to the discussion of Foucault and sexuality in Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, p. 83.
31. Inglis, *A Sociological History,* p. 135; Harpet, *Du Déchet,* pp. 252–253; Gábor Klaniczay, "Everyday Life and Elites in the Later Middle Ages: The Civilised and the Barbarian," in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 671–690, 672–673.
32. Klaniczay, "Everyday Life," in *The Medieval World*, pp. 674, 684.
33. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 126.
34. DiPiero, "Shit Happens," 304–305 [295–314].
35. Guillerme, *The Age of Water*, p. 138. Allen, *On Farting*, p. 13, argues that the domesticization of waste leads to the modern subject. Still, I am dubious of these facile judgments as to when or how the "modern subject" appeared.
36. Guillerme, *The Age of Water*, pp. 118–174. Also see Reid, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen*, p. 10.
37. Inglis, *A Sociological History*, p. 54.
38. Harpet, *Du Déchet*, p. 238.
39. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, p. 70.
40. *The Guardian* (November 8, 2003), p. 4, reports that Prince Charles's former top aide Michael Fawcett is reputed to have "held his specimen bottle when the prince had a broken arm."
41. Laporte, *History of Shit,* pp. 15, 17–18.
42. Bate, *Song of the Earth*, pp. 4–5.
43. Barney, "Filthy Thoughts," 283 [275–293].
44. Landry. "Mud, Blood, and Muck: Country Filth," 322 [315–332].
45. Available on-line through The Early Modern English Dictionaries Database (EMEDD) at the University of Toronto, accessible through the following address: http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/english/emed/emedd.html (accessed June 12, 2007).
46. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, pp. 8–9.
47. See Reid, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen*, p. 2 on Mary Douglas.
48. Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing*, pp. 146–147.
49. Persels, "The Sorbonnic Trots," 5–6 [1–24]. There is extensive literature, of course, on Reformation theological battles; some that address excrement in particular include George Hoffmann, "Anatomy of the Mass: Montaigne's 'Cannibals,'" *PMLA* 117 (2002): 218, n. 27, also pp. 215, 218, n.27 [207–221]; Andrew Willet, *Synopsis papismi, That is, a Generall View of Papiestrie* (London, 1600), p. 516, quoted in Stephen Greenblatt, "Remnants of the sacred in Early Modern England," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, eds. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and

Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 343 [337–345]; Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Pops, "The Metamorphosis of Shit," 30 [26–61]; *Martin Luthers Werke, Tischreden* (Weimar, 1967) (3. Band), translated in Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 202; Achinstein, "John Foxe and the Jews," 86–120. As W. H. Auden writes, "Revelation came to/ Luther in a privy" From "VI: The Geography of the House (For Christopher Isherwood)."

50. Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, p. 23.
51. Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts, Volume 1, Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 234; also Margaret Aston, "Iconoclasm in England: Official and Clandestine," in *Iconoclasm versus Art and Drama*, ed. Clifford Davidson and Ann Nichols (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), pp. 47–91, 55, 65.
52. Margaret Aston, "English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and the Sense of the Past," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 231–255, 245.
53. Aston, "English Ruins and English History," 247.
54. Aston, "English Ruins and English History," 232–233.
55. See, for example, Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, on Purgatory's traces in *Hamlet*, and Alison Chapman, "Ophelia's 'Old Lauds': Madness and Hagiography in *Hamlet*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 20 (2007): 111–135 on Catholic religious references in Ophelia's songs.
56. Some of the material in this section of chapter 10 appears in *Rubbish, Waste and Litter. Culture and Its Refuse(al)s*, ed. Tadeusz Rachwal. Forthcoming.
57. Greenblatt, "Remnants," in *Subject and Object,* p. 337 [337–345].
58. Umberto Eco, "Dreaming of the Middle Ages," in *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1986), p. 68 [61–72].
59. Eco, "Dreaming," in *Travels*, p. 69.
60. See Green, *The Trotula*; see also Fanny Beaupré and Roger-Henri Guerrand, *Le confident des dames: Le bidet du XVIIIe au XXe siècle: histoire d'une intimité* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1997), pp. 49–50, 196–197, and 210 about the importance and ubiquity of cleanliness in this "golden age" of bathing.
61. Leguay, *La Pollution au Moyen Âge*, p. 28.
62. For example, Charles McGrath, "I Confess: One Theme, 30 Writers, A Trend," *The New York Times*, May 28, 2006. Also, Eco, "Dreaming," in *Travels*, p. 69.
63. Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, pp. 186, 192; Marcus Bull, *Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 11.
64. Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, pp. 186–189. The subheading of a recent New York Times op-ed piece reads "The U.S. went medieval on Khalid Skaikh Mohammed." Slavoj Žižek, "Knight of the Living Dead," *The New York Times*, March 24, 2007, A 27.

65. Allen J. Frantzen has pointed out how numerous Victorian scholars (Thomas Babington Macaulay, Sharon Turner, and John Mitchell Kemble) constructed the Anglo-Saxon period as the childhood of English history and the Victorian period as its "manhood." See Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 32–35. See also R. Howard Bloch, "New Philology and Old French," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 43–44 [38–58]; Camille, *Image on the Edge*, p. 111; Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 22; and Ginia Bellafante, "Looking for the Bright side of a Brutish Few Centuries," *The New York Times*, March 3, 2007, A24.
66. Sabbath and Hall, *End Product*, p. 25; McGrath, "I Confess." The Middle Ages is naturally assumed to be linked to sanitation and hygiene, a link that necessarily suggests its opposite: dirt and filth.
67. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse,* p. 60.
68. Henry Jephson, *The Sanitary Evolution of London* (London: Unwin, 1907), p. 17. Also, Bryan S. Turner, "The body in Western society," in *Religion and the Body*, p. 20 [15–41]; Anthony Wohl, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (London: J. M. Dent, 1983), p. 101; quoted in Handy, "Dust Piles and Damp Pavements," p. 124 [111–133]. Brian W. Aldiss has said, "Civilization is the distance man has placed between himself and his excreta." From http://www.creativequotations.com/one/898.htm.
69. See Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 173. Hayes refers to the Middle Ages as being "the early adolescence." Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 99.
70. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Revised Edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000 [1939]); Butterfield, "Chaucer and the Detritus of the City," p. 20 [3–22].
71. Bataille*, The Accursed Share*, p. 65.
72. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics,* p. 192.
73. Bataille, *The Accursed Share,* p. 66.
74. Bataille, *The Accursed Share,* p. 74.
75. Bull, *Thinking Medieval*, pp. 29–30.
76. Bataille, *The Accursed Share,* p. 75; also, Bull, *Thinking Medieval*, p. 18.
77. See Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (New York: North Point Press, 2007).
78. Sophia Kishkovsky, "For Russia's Nouveaux Riches, Indoor Plumbing Deluxe," *The New York Times*, September. 14, 2005. Even the products of the rich can be fetishized as in the "Celebrity Shit Project," in which Cynthia von Buhler collects feces from the famous to mock our cult of celebrities. See Stephen Lemons, "Feces of the Rich and Famous: A celebrity shit project," October 6, 1999, *Dirt*. http://www.gettingit.com/article/148 (accessed June 23, 2006).
79. Suzanne Gannon, "For the High-End Bathroom, Something Unexpected," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2007, D6.
80. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 60, and Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 85.
81. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2402 [2398–2421].
82. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2403.

83. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2410.
84. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2405.
85. Davis, "Enforcing Normalcy," p. 2403.
86. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 300, and Counihan, *The Anthropology*, p. 100.
87. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, pp. 129, 163.
88. See McDonald, "Introduction," in *Medieval Obscenities*, p. 14 [1–16], on a parallel privatization of sexual acts.
89. See, for example, Camille, "Glossing the Flesh," pp. 245–246 [245–267].
90. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 320; also Bell, "Deep Fecology," 65–84, especially pp. 73–75; also Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 105.
91. "Tolle cloacam, et replebis foetore palatium; et similiter de sentina. Tolle meretrices de mundo, et replebis ipsum sodomia." Thomas Aquinas, "De regimine principum ad regem Cypri," 4.14, *Opera omnia* (Parma: Pietro Fiaccadori, 1864; reprint. New York: Musurgia, 1950), 16: p. 281 [225–291]. Translation from Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 185, n. 7. Quoted in Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, p. 108.
92. Mumford, *The City in History*, p. 269. Henry Alford writes about books in bathrooms in "Chamber Plots," *The New York Times Book Review*, July 23, 2006, p. 23.
93. This is in contrast to the poor in various Indian cities who hold Toilet Festivals. Slum dwellers are invisible to the state although they are forced to defecate publically; while advantaged citizens profit from the luxury of privacy. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, pp. 66–68. Kathleen O'Reilly's fascinating work on water supply and sanitation projects in Rajasthan, India, complicates "social norms about women's access to public and private spaces and their movements within these spaces," especially with regard to latrine building and usage. See O'Reilly, "Women's Movements" (forthcoming), pp. 1, 6. Western NGOs come to rural India in hopes of transforming people's lives by turning water into a commodity and "traditional" women into "modern" women. But there are unforeseen complications in the nexus of gender, water resource development, and empowerment. O'Reilly, "Women's Movements," p. 17. O'Reilly's work complicates the binaries "progress/modernity/empowerment" versus "backwardness/tradition/powerlessness." O'Reilly, "'Traditional' women, 'modern' water," 970 [958–972]. As O'Reilly points out, "NGO staff seek to modify men's, women's and children's defecation habits, but seldom consider the social and geographic changes that will enable them to use sanitation facilities." Sanitation projects are "politically charged." O'Reilly, "Women's Movements," pp. 3, 4.

11 Waste Studies: A Brief Introduction

1. (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 9.

2. For example, the fascinating de Plancy, *Dictionnaire Critique des Reliques et des Images Miraculeuses*, p. 46.
3. Gay Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006).
4. John Frow, "Invidious Distinction: Waste, Difference, and Classy Stuff," in *Culture and Waste: The Creation and Destruction of Value,* ed. Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), p. 28 [25–38].
5. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. vii.
6. See Barney, "Filthy Thoughts," 287 [275–293]; Anspaugh, "Powers of Ordure," 75 [73–100]; and Frow, "Invidious Distinction," in *Culture and Waste*, p. 26.
7. Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, p. 33.
8. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 14.
9. Harpet, *Du Déchet*, p. 67.
10. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 13.
11. Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, p. 52.
12. Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, p. 253.
13. Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).
14. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 96.
15. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 22. See the Ph.D. dissertation of Ruth L. Harris, "The Meanings of 'Waste' in Old and Middle English," University of Washington, 1989, especially p. 157 and following on *Piers Plowman* and *Wynnere and Wastoure*.
16. In Middle English, waste meant "despoiling, or unreasonable abuse of proper resource." Allen, *On Farting*, p. 17.
17. All references to Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*.
18. All references to the standard edition edited by Stephanie Trigg, *EETS* 297 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
19. William Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Norton Critical Edition*, eds. Elizabeth Robertson and Stephen H. A. Shepherd (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), p. 451, n. 8.
20. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, pp. 27, 32.
21. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, pp. 21, 27.
22. Gary Snyder, "The Politics of Ethnopoetics," in Snyder, *A Place in Space*, p. 131 [126–147].
23. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 20.
24. Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *The American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 37–38 [16–49].
25. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 66.
26. *Statutes of the Realm* (London, 1810–1828), 23 Edw. III, c. 5–7 (1339), vol. I., pp. 307–309; reprinted in Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Norton Critical Edition*, pp. 428, 430.
27. See Aers, *Faith, Ethics, and Church*, pp. 62–63.

28. Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, p. 78.
29. Bauman, *Wasted Lives,* pp. 34, 45.
30. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 5. Consider the recent report of "patient dumping," the practice of forcing patients, mainly the homeless, in an area known as Skid Row in Los Angeles, out of hospitals. Randal C. Archibold, "'Dumping' of Homeless by Hospitals Stirs Debate," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2007, A12. See also Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, Chapter Two, "A Fine and Private Place," for a discussion of the place of the poor in late antiquity and early Christianity.
31. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 6.
32. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, pp. 10–12.
33. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 30.
34. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 78.
35. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 79.
36. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 80.
37. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 128.
38. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 33.
39. Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop*, pp. 119, 127; also Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, p. 115.
40. Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop,* p. 119.
41. "[W]e seem to have [. . . a . . .] metaphorical *reductio ad absurdum* in which, through a fiendish triumph of technology, 'dirty' Jewish flesh was melted down in order to transform it into 'clean' soap." Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop*, p. 127.
42. Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, p. 115.
43. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 56.
44. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 58.
45. Perkyn wastes money (4387–4388). Bullón-Fernández, "Private Practices," 172 [141–174].
46. Paper presented at the Literary London Conference, Greenwich, England, July 13, 2006.
47. Tadeusz Slawek, paper presented at the "Rubbish, Waste, and Litter: Culture/al Refusals" Conference, Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Institute of English Studies, November 17–18, 2006.
48. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 29. See also Steven Shaviro, *Passion & Excess: Blanchot, Bataille, and Literary Theory* (Tallahassee: The Florida State University Press, 1990), pp. 54–56.
49. See Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 39, and his citation of Stefan Czarnowski, p. 40.
50. Derek Pearsall, "Poverty and Poor People in *Piers Plowman*," in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 167–185; excerpted and reprinted in Langland*, Piers Plowman, A Norton Critical Edition*, pp. 563–571. Pearsall argues that Langland is referring to the urban poor here, an increasingly bigger element in society in the fourteenth century. Also Elizabeth D. Kirk, "'What is this womman?'

Langland on Women and Gender," in Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Norton Critical Edition*, pp. 616–626, especially pp. 620–621.

51. See also the Guild Ordinances from 1402 to 1403 for St. Peter's Church, Cornhill. *Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London, 1877), pp. 407–414; reprinted in Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Norton Critical Edition*, p. 423.
52. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 88.
53. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 92.
54. All references to the C-Text come from Derek Pearsall, *Piers Plowman by William Langland: An Edition of the C-Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
55. Pearsall, *Piers Plowman*, C-Text, p. 162, n.27.

12 Bottoms Up! A Manifesto For Waste Studies

1. This entire chapter was inspired by three "audiences." First, the anonymous reader of this manuscript who made numerous stimulating suggestions. Second, the Scholars' Group in my department, who tolerated sessions addressing excrement and filth and helped generate several ideas emerging in this chapter. Many thanks especially to Victoria Smith who encouraged me to read and reflect on Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto," pp. 149–181. Finally, I am grateful to Vicky, Jim Kilfoyle, and Claudia Nelson for their comments and careful readings of this chapter; needless to say, I take full responsibility for how the positions are expressed here.
2. Barney, "Filthy Thoughts," 276 [275–293].
3. Scanlan, *On Garbage*, p. 15. Cf. Shaviro, *Passion & Excess*, p. 3.
4. See Barney, "Filthy Thoughts," 277.
5. Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, pp. 1, 10. See also Shaviro, *Passion & Excess*, p. 88.
6. See Michael Uebel's discussion of the desert as the ideal space for projective signification, in terms of religious, transcendent, and transformative possibility, in *Ecstatic Transformation: On the Uses of Alterity in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), Chapters 3 and 4, especially pp. 86–88.
7. Rudd, *Greenery*, p. 10; for rhizomatic terminology, see pp. 7–9.
8. Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 231 [225–248].
9. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" 245.
10. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" 246.
11. "Something else must happen [besides separation and mastery] to nurture an ethos of positive engagement with waste, to trigger a relation of openness and care, and to encourage the cultivation of new habits." Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 121; also Hochman, "Green Cultural Studies," 93 [81–96], and Hawkins, "Down the Drain," p. 50 [39–52].

12. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 50.
13. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, p. 51.
14. http://www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/96-DINGPOLITIK2.html (accessed April 23, 2008).
15. Bill Brown, "All Thumbs," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 456 [452– 457].
16. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), especially pp. 52–65.
17. Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 35–39, quoted in Richard Kerridge, "Introduction," in *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, ed. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells (London: Zed Books, 1998), p. 3 [1–9]; see also Sarah Kay, "Flayed Skin as *object a*: Representation and Materiality in Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de vie humaine*," in *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, ed. E. Jane Burns (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 200 [193–205], concerning how the material real leaves linguistic traces.
18. http://www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/96-DINGPOLITIK2.html (accessed April 23, 2008).
19. This term is possibly coined by Michael Weiss in his article, "Fecalpolitik," *Slate Magazine*, July 18, 2006, concerning the revelation that President George Bush used the word "shit" to describe the situation in Syria and Lebanon. http://www.slate.com/id/2146051/ (accessed July 24, 2006).
20. See Richard Neer, "Reaction and Response," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 474 [472–476] who equates the ethical with the political.
21. See Tracey Sedinger, "Theory Terminable and Interminable: On Presentism, Historicism, and the Problem of *Hamlet*," *Exemplaria* XIX (2007), especially pp. 460, 471 [455–473], who references Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2002).
22. Holler, *Erotic Morality*, p. 9.
23. Toril Moi, *What is a Woman? And Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 35.
24. Moi, *What is a Woman?* p. 43.
25. See Adrienne Harris, *Gender as Soft Assembly* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2005), p. 202, citing Muriel Dimen, "The Body as Rorschach," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 1 (2000): 11 [9–39].
26. Christine Battersby, "Her Body/Her Boundaries," in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, ed. Janet Price and Margrit Shildriek (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 355, also p. 351 [341–357]; also Uebel, "On Becoming Male," p. 369 [367–384].
27. Holler, *Erotic Morality*, p. 171.
28. See, for example, Daniel J. Siegel, *The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-Being* (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 2007).
29. See Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," pp. 155–156.
30. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 157. The phrase comes from Goethe's novel of that title, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*.

31. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Parital Perspective," in Haraway, *Simians*, p. 188 [183–201].
32. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," p. 196.
33. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" 232.
34. Cf. Shaviro, *Passion & Excess*, p. 10, on the corpse in art.
35. Kiser argues that Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* is "continually aware of its own tendencies to construct nature socially." Kiser, "Chaucer and the Politics of Nature," p. 44 [41–56].
36. Bell, "Deep Fecology," 81–82 [65–84].
37. Bell, "Deep Fecology," 82. He cites Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967 [1899]), which argues that "the leisure class signals its elevated social position in part by distancing itself from the dirt of nature." Bell, "Deep Fecology," 82, n. 47. Peter Stallybrass, drawing on Elias and Veblen, argues that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, social purity was established through bodily purity. Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 125 [123–142].
38. Wentersdorf, "The Symbolic Significance & Figurae Scatologicae in Gothic Manuscripts," p. 16, n. 31 [1–20]. See discussion, chapter 3, note 1.
39. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 95.
40. Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, p. 21.
41. In the case of the "trashball" creator, rubbish *is* the art. Ariel Sabar, "One Man's Trash is Another Man's Two-Bit 'Trashball,' " *The New York Times*, April 29, 2007.
42. Allen, *On Farting*, p. 17.
43. Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*, pp. 38–41. Hawkins has a lovely mediation on Italo Calvino's essay, "La Poubelle Agréée," in *The Road to San Giovanni* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1993), about putting out the trash.
44. Malogarzata Nitka, "Victorian Uses of Waste," in a paper presented at the "Rubbish, Waste, and Litter: Culture/al Refusals" Conference, Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Institute of English Studies, November 17–18, 2006. The ploughman "became synonymous with the good Christian." Bolvig, "Images of Late Medieval 'Daily Life,' " 106 [94–111]; also Camille, "At the Sign of the 'Spinning Sow,' " pp. 249–276; and Camille, "Labouring for the Lord," 430, 433 [415–445].
45. Allan Stoekl, *Bataille's Peak: Energy, Religion, and Postsustainability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. xix.
46. Stoekl, *Bataille's Peak*, pp. 145–148.
47. Jon Mooallem, "The Unintended Consequences of Hyperhydration," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 27, 2007, 35 [30–35].

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