

Mary Adams

In the famous “witches’ brew” description in *Macbeth’s* fourth act, Shakespeare and Middleton describe a gruesome potion of human and non-human animals. Even if some of these ingredients are folk names for herbs, the brew is the product of dismembered creatures. Why? How might we read this array of body parts against the allusive tissue of other creatures in the play (dogs, birds, horses, tigers, deer, and chickens)? How do we understand the world-view that joins these beings in the cauldron? How do they help us interpret the play’s relationship with race and animality? Though we don’t usually associate *Macbeth* with race, I would argue that the protagonist and his world are implicated in the conversations about race in their time and our own, and that race in *Macbeth* was constantly understood in terms of animality. Over time, changing ways of seeing the protagonist correspond with changed understandings of his connection to blackness (aesthetic, spiritual, racial) and animality. I will discuss using race and animality as they inform the traditional view of *Macbeth*, which I imagine to be the view of someone like King James I watching the play, before turning to a modern view, one that makes it possible, according to Harry Lennix, for *Macbeth* to matter to a contemporary black actor. In the first view, as I see it, *Macbeth* is abetted by the weird sisters or witches before they finally abandon him to earthly justice. In the second, *Macbeth* neither colludes with nor is abandoned by the witches but is instead aligned with them and the Scotland they represent against the forces of colonial English rule. At the end of my paper I would like to consider what can be gained from my reading, either as an exercise in what Hofele would call historical empathy or as a way to think about and perform this play going forward.

Rebecca Bach

My paper for the seminar is still in the early stages. I am looking at moments in a number of Shakespeare plays where people employ murderers, or where murderers or outlaws act or define themselves. I'm interested in how these men on the boundaries of the social order represent themselves or are represented as distinct from women and "savage" people and/or as distinct from other kinds of animals. One example is the moment in the quarto *King Lear* where the Captain of the Guard hired by Edmund to kill Lear and Cordelia says, "I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats; / If it be man's work, I'll do it" (*Norton Shakespeare* 5.3.38-39). Earlier in their conversation, Edmund has appealed to the captain's masculinity to recruit him for the job. Here and elsewhere, other animals are limit cases for men as they define themselves as men, but different kinds of limit cases than women are. I'm trying to better understand how those different kinds of limit cases function in relation to one another. I'm also interested in exploring how work functions in these interactions. What is defined as man's work? What is defined as women's work? And what is other animals' work? Before modern engines, other animals do a lot of work, and the Captain is comparing himself to another kind of worker. Race and religious identity enter these conversations as well. For example, when Richard's murderers confront Clarence, they speak in explicitly gendered terms. "Relent? Tis cowardly and womanish," they say. Then, Clarence returns with the argument that "Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish" (*Richard III* 1.4.237-39). Clarence puts beasts in the same category as people who are not Christian

and not English, and the conversation puts the murderers in that category even as they define themselves against women. This is all food for thought for me.

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SAA 2023: Intersectional Animality Seminar

### **Abstract**

Focusing on metaphors of reproduction in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, this essay shows how the interweaving of speciesism and androcentrism in male fantasy functions to effectively disable women by granting men control over money, symbolic capital, and sexual pleasure. I argue that Timon's rhetoric of animality and disability in the play's second half is a response to the shattering of the homosocial fantasy of biopolitical control on display in the first half. Once his illusion of reproductive power over money, bodily health, and pleasure has collapsed, Timon views nature and humanity in a new way, and the misogynistic basis for his desire for power, friendship, and love back in Athens comes to light. The essay looks at the intersection of gender, disability, and animality, arguing that metaphors of reproduction in *Timon of Athens* offer us insight into the way female abilities have been restrained by patriarchal conceptions of nature and the human/animal distinction.

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**“The unbearable whiteness of milk”<sup>1</sup> and more-than-human nurture in *Titus Andronicus***

In *Titus Andronicus* Aaron, having defied Tamora’s command to kill their newly born baby, saves his son by travelling through the forest to the Goths’ military camp. Before he sets off on his perilous and ultimately failed journey he presents his fantasy of a shared human-animal nurturance (*Titus*, 4.2.177-182). Aaron conjures up an image of a she-goat in place of a human female nurse. The goat nursing a human child replicates mythological precedents such as an ancient Greek creation story about Amalthea, Zeus’s foster mother, often represented as a goat or the founding myth of Rome – with Remus and Romulus having been nursed by a she-wolf. These mythological precedents play into the early modern masculine myth of self-sufficient nurture independent of a potentially threatening impact of human mothers so prevalent in Shakespeare’s plays (see e.g. Adelman, Kahn, Paster). These narratives also fashion superhuman masculinity fostered through animal-exclusive nurture. However, stories of animals nursing humans in early modern midwifery books often signal a threat of contamination; a terrifying blurring of lines between humans and animals where the hierarchies of the great chain of being are dangerously and irrevocably shifted. So, as I wish to argue, Aaron’s nurturance fantasy is imbued with various, often conflicting, meanings that spill into our modern ways of interpreting the ‘whiteness’ of milk. Since, as a result of miscegenation, Aaron’s son is already implicated in the blurring of human/non-human lines, I argue that the mammalian lactation fluid engenders another level of the racialized politics of more-than-human milk.

The aim of my paper is twofold. First of all, in a presentist stance I wish to bring maternal mammals such as the goat in *Titus* to the centre of my discussion in order to reflect on modern mammalian mothers. In early modern texts animals usually come to signify something other than themselves so my aim is to reflect on what their fictional presences may tell us of the actual lives of mammalian mothers in the modern world. Secondly, I would like to further investigate the significance of mammalian milk for the early modern culture. Rather than originating in the 19<sup>th</sup> century racist colonial discourses, I wish to argue that milk

and dairy were associated with exclusionary, proto-colonial narratives earlier than is usually assumed. By looking at the racialized milk and human-animal nurturance in early modern culture I hope to underline the intersecting natures of misogyny, racism and speciesism as well as their pervasive continuance into modernity.

**KEY WORDS:** animal nurture; wet-nursing; human mothering; more-than-human mothering; milk consumption; milk and white supremacy; the politics of milk consumption and milk production; food oppression.

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## John Donne's Creature Colonialism

This paper considers how John Donne evokes the notion of animality to ground a colonialist logic that conditions racialized subjectivity in a sermon preached to the Virginia company on November 13th, 1622. The sermon comes just a few months after a seminal moment in the history of relations between the early Virginia colony settlers and the Native Americans in which the Powhatan confederacy organized a retaliatory set of attacks against the English, killing 347 people in what the English referred to as the Virginia Massacre. In response to this event, much of the remaining, though already dwindling, English hopes of colonial development and financial gain soured, but more than this, the racialized prospects of converting and civilizing the Native Americans—a belief in their capacity to be in some sense whitened—also diminished. Speaking on the disordered state of the company's financial prospects as well as the prospects of converting and assimilating the Natives, Donne advocates for patience, declaring that “Great Creatures ly long in the wombe.” Through this metaphor of “Great Creatures,” Donne lumps together settler and native subjectivity in a way that implicitly elaborates a racializing logic that depends upon the porous relation between the human and the nonhuman animal.

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SAA Seminar: Intersectional Animality

## **Abstract**

Working Title: "Audience Response to Exotic Animal Displays"

Parrots, armadillos, monkeys, and penguins, among other animals both living and dead, were sailed across the Atlantic to be displayed as curiosities for eager audiences in Europe. What did audiences do when they saw those animals? How did their previous exposure to depictions of animals and places in travel narratives shape the way they responded when confronting those animals face-to-face? How did the animals respond in turn? This paper considers the role audience response played in displays of live exotic animals from the Americas, specifically focusing on the cycles of mutual responsivity between the human audience and animal performers. Drawing on visual representations and descriptions in poetry, prose narratives, and "wonder" literature, I analyze what kinds of gestures, movements, and noises audiences made in response to exotic animals in performance, how the animals responded to those reactions, and what kinds of affective experiences, such as disgust and curiosity, these outward responses might point towards. I then place these encounters within the context of emerging European perceptions of the Americas to consider the ways human audiences contextualized animal responses through depictions of animals in travel literature and natural histories of the Americas. Extending this analysis to exoticized and animalized human characters in court masques and dramatic interludes, such as Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness*, I consider how responsivity between real

animals and human audiences were incorporated into fictionalized representations. This section focuses specifically on the kinds of affective responses that exoticized and animalized human performers were intended to elicit from audiences, and how these reflected audience experiences of exotic animals. As a whole, this paper will show how the experience of mutual responsivity with live exotic animals pervaded and inspired performances in other genres.

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Abstract: Cruelty and Animality in *King Lear* and Montaigne

*King Lear*, obviously a play that highlights the complexity of families, the ugliness of cruelty, and the painfulness of pain, and (perhaps less obviously) a play that is Montaignean in so doing, seems to me also a play that skeptically challenges self-privileging rhetorical strategies generally, again in a Montaignean way. Among others, it uses skeptical arguments to challenge those self-enhancing strategies that invoke as natural human privileges over animals. It skeptically interrogates claims that members of families naturally love each other, and in doing so it also skeptically interrogates claims of human superiority to animals. It frequently invokes animals in describing human bodies and human activities.

After a discussion of some of the asymmetries between animal advocacy and advocacy for oppressed human groups, including the disabled, my paper asks how humans acquire the beliefs they have about non-human animals. Natural answers to this question might (for us) involve Darwinian views about interspecies competition for the top predator niche. Cultural answers, both early modern and contemporary, draw on the scriptural grant of domination in Genesis and on Aristotle's influential hierarchical categorization that separates us from animals on the basis of our possession of discursive reason. We tend in teaching and writing to trace such genealogies of belief in order to demystify them, or explore their ideological utility as justifications for locally profitable (but cruel and in a larger view ecologically unsound) practices like raising animals in confinement for slaughter. In general, asking "how (or why) did you come to believe that?" offers a well-traveled and fruitful route for skeptical inquiry, also possibly a path to unbelief. Asking "what will it cost you to lose belief in that?" offers a perspective on, and perhaps a plot for, tragedy. I treat the widely-held belief that humans differ morally from animals both as a pathway to productive demystifying inquiry – pursued by Montaigne in the *Apology* among other essays – and as a source for tragedy, pursued by Shakespeare in *King Lear*.

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### **Skin coats and the making of race in Stuart masques**

This essay takes as its focus the 'skin coat', a tight-fitting garment that was used in Stuart court masques to cover, disguise, and extend the human skin of performers. Over the early seventeenth century, a vivid and problematic material language developed for staging human and animal skin in masque and anti-masque. While masquers usually wore white or light pink skin coats in silk or satin, the skin coverings worn by anti-masquers were far more varied. Anti-masque skin coats might attempt to imitate human skin, in all its global chromatic variety; to imitate animal skin and its more varied textures, through shaggy hair, fur, scales, or feathers; or to provide a base for more abstract designs of waves, flames, or other pictorial patterns. The surface of the performers' body thus becomes a key site where representations of race and the non-human meet. This entanglement is predicated on not only the form of the skin coat itself, but also its material construction using animal matter such as supple leather, brilliant feathers, and horsehair.

The phenomenon of skin coats thus presents a unique intersection between early modern critical race studies and ecocriticism. Yet these garments remain little-known and under-explored. This paper addresses this by platforming the body of evidence for 'skin coats' in early modern masques, outlining their material histories of design, construction, and use, and their connection to premodern concepts of animality and race. It shows how the term 'flesh colour', used to describe skin coats, shifts from indicating a range of colours (including the raw, universal red of flesh) to the colour of the epidermis, primarily the whiteness cultivated by English courtiers. Masques thus worked to shore up whiteness as an invisible category of its own, set against a human and nonhuman 'other'; a dynamic seen most clearly in the differing use of skin coats in Stuart masque and antimasque.

In exploring the anti-masque's entangled depictions of human and nonhuman, the essay seeks to demonstrate how skin coats functioned as an extension of the body's surface, that could represent species, ethnicity, age, occupation or even moral status. But it also seeks to reveal the importance of textures to these items, and of the presence of animal matter in creating those textures. These garments communicated identity through a deepening variety of not only colours (white, carnation, olive, tawny, mulberry) but also textures, which became more sophisticated and diverse as the seventeenth century wore on. The creation of these textured designs often relied on the materials of the animal world, from silks to feathers and furs. Early modern understandings of race are thus shown to be not only a visual, but also a tactile, system of signs, centered in form and matter around the skins of the human and the animal world.

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SAA 2023 Abstract/Precis

## Animality, disability, and early modern witchcraft

### Abstract:

This essay considers how disability and animality intersect in the literature of early modern witchcraft. How does this literature in particular highlight early moderns' relational understandings of witchcraft, animals and animality, and disability, deformity, and monstrosity?

The dynamics are complex. Women accused of witchcraft are often bestialized in the rhetoric of witchcraft pamphlets and drama; at the same time, their bodies are often described as disabled, and often examined for deformity as evidence of their relations with animal familiars (and culpability in having entered into a demonic compact). Among witches' victims were scores of animals – livestock lamed and killed – along with human victims who were also often disabled or otherwise injured, if not killed. Disability could therefore be a marker of the witch as well as her victims, both human and animal. Animal injury was effected through malefic acts of animal familiars – that is, demonic spirits in the shapes of other animals, such as rats, toads, cats, dogs, and various hybrid or monstrous creatures. If witchcraft was, in many ways, an animal crime, as I have suggested elsewhere, disability, too, appears as a defining feature that is everywhere entangled with animals and animality in early modern incidents and representations of witchcraft. Together, animality and disability are associated with the body of the witch and the witch's victims. Disabled humans and animals are physical evidence against the witch. Because the witch is already animalized, both because of her relation to her own animal familiars as well as to her animal victims, she is subject to be treated “like an animal,” subjected to violence, and resulting injury, disability, or deformity.

Witchcraft, then, was an avenue for othering that intersects with and builds upon the logics of speciesism and ableism. Elizabeth Sawyer, the Witch of Edmonton, is described as hunched, missing one eye, and having “witches' marks” where her familiar sucked on her body. Her disability is a focal point in Goodcole's pamphlet, where he interrogates her specifically about how she lost the eye. The play, too, emphasizes Sawyer's physical deformity; the rhetoric of her accusers likewise animalizes her, as she is compared to a “beast” grazing among and endangering the community. Reginald Scot's skeptical *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, while casting doubt on the reality of witchcraft, describes women “witches,” famously, as “old, lame, blear-eyed, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkles; poor, sullen, superstitious, and papists; or such as know no religion: in whose drowsie minds the divell hath gotten a fine seat . . . They are leane and deformed, shewing melancholie in their faces, to the horror of all that see them” (1.3.4).

In this essay, then, I examine witchcraft pamphlets and plays to consider how and to what ends witchcraft, animality, and disability intersect: though often mutually reinforcing

one another, sometimes the tension and interplay among these categories – and a practice of carefully reading the actual bodies at stake – allow us to view critically their mutual construction and dependence upon one another for meaning.

## The Wolf/Man's Lament: *King Lear* and Howling

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### Abstract:

Many of our profession's critical discourses subsume discussions of Early Modern gerontology into wider discussions of, e.g., disability studies, or of other engagements with displacement, dismissal, subjection, and similar discourses of what René Girard called "victimage," with its implications of dynamic process, and including those of racism, sexism, transphobia, and ableism, among others. This seminar's focus offers an opportunity to anatomize Shakespeare's own engagement with the question about who and what we are when we are old, and the threat to our sense of self as constructed across five or six of the seven Ages of Man that Jaques famously enumerated in *As You Like It*. Though for Jaques the picture isn't pretty at any of the "ages," a solid percentage of Shakespeare's work gives us a more balanced response. Several Shakespearean plays—I am thinking of *Hamlet* first, and then *Macbeth* and *Tempest*--confront the matter of human definitions, categories of thinking and understanding to which we seem driven, as if we cannot know ourselves without a referential label. My laboratory text for this paper is, perhaps predictably, *King Lear* because it seems to offer the most sustained (of all among the plays) inquiry into old age as end-stage humanity, despite humanity's repeated efforts to exclude it from its social circles.

## Circumcised Dogs: Animality, Violence, and Race — Beyond Intersectionality

### Abstract

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At one point in their 2017 book, *Aphro-Ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism*, sisters Syl and Aph Ko ask the reader to imagine activists' frustration when they try to follow a metaphorical GPS map for liberation provided by those in power.

All of the oppressed are in traffic honking at one another. We are all lost, trying to find the different roads the map keeps directing us to, which don't seem to exist on our terrain...In other words, the "intersections" the map tells us are there aren't real because the territory we're on has no intersections. We exist on one massive field labeled *subhuman*, where the systems are fused together and embedded within the soil of the terrain.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout their collection, the authors argue that the treatment of animals is not something that exists separate from, comparable to, or even intersecting with the treatment of racialized people but is instead fundamental. "The human animal divide," they say, "is the ideological bedrock underlying the framework of white supremacy. The negative notion of 'the animal' is the anchor of the system" (45). It follows that when animality is used to attack racialized groups or to justify their oppression, any attempt to "humanize" or to resist "de humanization" amounts to a "tacit acceptance of the hierarchical racial system and white supremacy in general." If the Ko sisters are correct, negative animality is not a weapon nor an intersecting discourse but the key to an entire system. The Ko's arguments should be of particular interest to early modern animal studies since this period witnesses the growth of coloniality: the attitudes that preceded

<sup>1</sup> Aph Ko and Syl Ko, *Aphro-Ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism from Two Sisters* (New York: Lantern Publishing & Media, 2017), 90.

and enabled later colonial ventures. I propose to see what happens when we apply the Ko's argument to *Othello*, a play in which negative animality is frequently used against the racialized hero. Furthermore, the animality in *Othello* has usually been viewed primarily as a weapon, particularly in the hands of Iago, and as problematic mainly because it is "dehumanizing," making the play a perfect candidate for Sylph and Aph Ko's critique of Eurocentric anti-racist strategies. Applying their argument to *Othello* means understanding animality and the human-animal divide in the play not as a secondary intersectional issue but as the play's "ideological bedrock." I suggest that this turn has at least one significant benefit: it helps us understand why *Othello* is so deeply interested in the idea of justified (or justifiable) violence, a topic that moves beyond Othello's own internal struggle. Legal scholar Maneesha Deckha has argued that the subhuman (or inhuman) is inherently a "violence producing category."<sup>2</sup> That is, it exists to justify and to enable violence that benefits the "human." Such violence was on the rise in the early modern world, both inside increasingly animal consuming European societies and outside them as an implicit part of the already developing colonial catastrophe.

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**Abstract:**

"Pelican Daughters, Toads, and Boxes of Wormseed: The Unnatural and the Animal in Early Modern Drama"

In many works of early modern drama, characters that are deemed behaviorally unnatural are compared to animals with striking regularity. This is particularly common in Shakespeare's corpus. In *King Lear*, the protagonist's appalling daughters, Goneril and Regan, are "unnatural hags" and Lear refers to Goneril specifically as a "detested kite" with a "wolvish visage." These two descriptions are only a minor sample of the animal imagery applied to these two sisters; Lear refers to them as "pelican daughters," Gloucester insinuates that they have "boarish fangs," and even Edmund, who is presumably attracted to the sisters, compares their jealousy to that of "the adder." The use of this sort of animal imagery isn't unique to Shakespeare, however; John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* is also rife with animal imagery and, as in *King Lear*, characters are often compared to animals to denote their unnaturalness, their corrupt natures. Antonio, the romantic hero of the play, states that the Duchess' brother, the wicked Cardinal, has a "face" that is "nothing but the engendering of toads." The Cardinal's equally abhorrent brother, Ferdinand, is compared to a spider in a "foul black cobweb." Ferdinand ultimately suffers guilt due to the extent of his unnatural behavior in the play, his corruption, and his guilt drives him to believe that he is a werewolf, a monster rather than a human being. Yet again, the animal and the unnatural are aligned. Of course, the irony that accompanies associating these characters that exhibit

supposedly unnatural qualities with animals is that animals are incapable of behaving unnaturally. All animal actions are, by definition, natural. In referring to unnatural behaviors in these plays as animalistic, then, the plays undermine themselves and inadvertently label natural the very behaviors they are seeking to categorize as dangerously corrupt.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock observes that he shares his "animal" attributes (eyes, hands, etc.) with all other men. Like Shylock, I argue that, for all that works of early modern drama such as these by Shakespeare and Webster label animalistic characters as "unnatural," common humanity is based on animality—a term referring to those natural, physical attributes and qualities that make us animals. Furthermore, *King Lear* and *Duchess* seem to unintentionally classify the distinction between the animal and the human as being societally constructed. Animality is actually the most *natural* part of being human. This essay will explore the relationship between the animal and the unnatural as it is presented in *King Lear* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, the two examples I've explored most extensively here. I plan to highlight how the plays craft a paradoxical relationship between the animal and the unnatural before highlighting how that relationship deconstructs itself. This essay will not decenter the human in the way that a lot of works of animal studies do, but I envision it as a piece that will consider how integral thoughts of animal bodies and behaviors were in the minds of particular early modern writers.

“We Will All Be Marine Mammals Soon”:  
Whales, Oceanic Dislocation, and Extinction from Shakespeare to the Left-to-Die Boat

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Abstract:

Whales sing to us songs of extinction that emerge from blue depths. These vast swimmers make us feel deeply. This paper explores Shakespeare’s relatively few references to whales to consider the symbolic history of these massive animals. Contemporary understandings of cetaceans have emerged from the heady “Save the Whales!” days of environmental activism in the 1970s and subsequently developed into today’s commercialization of whale-watching tourism. These contemporary figurations focus attention on extinction risk and the biological health of our oceans. For Shakespeare, however, the “belching whale” represent predatory domination, often in a social hierarchy, such as the whale in *Pericles* who eats up littler fish. Contrasting images in *Merry Wives* and *Troilus* present beached whales as figures for inversion of natural hierarchies. Hamlet’s cruel teasing of Polonius conjures whales out of clouds in ways that echo the polygeneric literary theories that the old counselor both parodies and represents. Together, these images of whales in Shakespeare provide a glimpse at what vast mammalian flesh meant before the surge of late twentieth-century conservation.

This essay takes its title and rallying cry from the stirring 2020 book *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* by Alexis Pauline Gumbs. Gumbs’s engagement with cetaceans combines visceral identification with political urgency. I use her framework of multispecies identification as an alternative and challenge to Shakespeare’s symbolic order. Depending on space, I may also consider competing eco-theoretical frameworks for thinking about whales, in particular Mette Brydl and Nina Lykke’s *Cosmodolphins* (1988), John Durham Peters’s *The Marvelous Clouds* (2015), Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell’s *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins* (2014), and Graham Huggan’s *Colonialism, Culture, Whales* (2018). These frameworks will enable me to propose two competing models for the human-whale relationship, one based on violence, the other on love.

My conclusion will draw on a lyric engagement with whales in the poet Caroline Bergvall’s experimental volume *Drift* (2014), which mashes together a translation of the Old English elegy “The Seafarer” with the experiences of the Left-to-Die Boat in the modern Mediterranean.

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SAA 2023 ANIMAL INTERSECTIONALITY

OF ANTS AND ATOMS:  
THE PROBLEMATIC HUMAN IN HESTER PULTER'S POETRY

In her poem "The Pismire" (c. 1640s-1650s), Hester Pulter interprets an ant colony in her garden as an emblem of the imprisoning futility of human labor, an experience shared by Christian kings (whose claim to dominion over nature is baseless) and the "naked, sunburnt female slave" doing arduous millwork. Pulter's might be the first English *poem* to reference African Caribbean slave labor within an imagined English polity, with Barbados having just having become an English sugar producing colony. At first glance, "The Pismire" seems to present a conventional set of ideological early modern moves: positing non-human animals as useful for moralizing human exceptionalism and mystifying radical social/racial inequities through a seemingly universalized human experience. The poem does indeed flatten distinctions among coercive slave labor, non human animals, English women, and kings. If we situate "The Pismire" within the broader spiritual and natural philosophical project Pulter lays out in her collection, however, we find leverage for a nuanced intersectional reading that folds this reading into a broader critique of the insufficiency of "the human." The condition of *being embodied as a human* is precisely what Pulter identifies, throughout her poetic collection, as the oppressive obstacle that should be shed for a posthumanist, atomized Christian existence, one that would have the added salutary effect of eradicating social features such as gender and race. In this paper, I test ways to conceptualize Pulter's racecraft (which often takes the form of conventionally stigmatizing blackness and idealizing/norming whiteness) in light of the sometimes overtly resistant and radically material cosmopolity that her collection represents, a world in which creatures ontologically share a particulate basis that ideally should be disassembled and reconfigured. How, I ask, might we put Pulter's work productively into conversation with premodern race studies, feminist studies, and animal studies?

Pulter's bound manuscript of 120 devotional, religious, political, and psychological poems, *Poems Breathed Forth by the Noble Haddasas*, was only brought to light in the late twentieth century. In this collection, Pulter deploys competing notions of early modern race within the framework of her inordinate interest in the diverse spectrum of the creaturely community, overt protest against gender restrictions, celebration of fixed class hierarchies, and insistence on a physical world made up of atoms that are limited when harnessed to Earth-bound human forms. Mindful of Ian Smith's reminder that animal studies can sometimes deflect from critical analysis of race; of Kim F. Hall's pathbreaking attention to early modern women's participation in evolving racial ideologies; of scholars' disproportionate reliance on Shakespearean and dramatic sources in studying early modern race (despite Hall's multi-generic focus in *Things of Darkness*); of Margaret Ezell's pioneering call to look beyond printed sources in order to reorient our archive to recognize early modern female intellectual and creative contributions; of Kimberly Crenshaw's calls

for multi-axis frameworks of analysis; and of my own initial tendency to see Pulter as representing a seventeenth-century English *woman's* novel reordering of faith and intellectual systems in the period: I hope to read Pulter's poetry collectively with members of this seminar, with an eye to developing a method of reading cognizant of how Pulter's racial and class privilege enables her critique of species and gender norms as well as her skeptical probing of the meaning of blackness within the rubric of creatureliness.

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SAA 2023: Intersectional Animality

Abstract and Precis:

**“Dancing Satyrs and Apes: The Hybrid Species of Early Modern Ballet”**

In her seminal article “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” Joanne Kealiinohomoku displaced the rhetoric of universality that too often took root in discussions of ballet by pointing out that, just like the Hopi dances to which she compares it, “the ethnicity of ballet is revealed also in the kinds of flora and fauna which appear regularly. Horses and swans are esteemed fauna.” This is true of nineteenth-century ballet, but not of what preceded it. What might we learn about the cultural values encoded in ballet during its emergence across the seventeenth century by turning to two of the animals that appear regularly in the plays and masques of early modern England and France: satyrs and apes? To explore this topic, I look at stage directions for satyr dances found in two manuscript plays created between 1614 and ca.1630, and for a dance by apes in Davenant’s *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658). I argue that the movement vocabulary of each species mediated the relationship of Western Europe to the classical past and to the colonial present, respectively, and to theories of theatrical mimesis; more precisely, that throwback satyr dances allowed choreographers to distinguish the Christian present from pagan antiquity, and that dances for apes—in this case, humans dressed as apes—participated in the speciation and racialization of the so-called New World. As the case of satyrs and apes suggests, animal dances in early modern ballets, in contrast to those in nineteenth-century classical ballets, emphasize hybridity over any simple human-animal binary, and focus not on “esteemed fauna” but on those derided or mistrusted. So doing, early modern animal dances make a case for kinetic mimesis in playing not on the grounds of a virtuosity derived from clear-cut distinctions between the dancing body and what it represents, but a virtuosity derived from choreographed dancing bodies that evoke other kinds of improvisatory dancing bodies.

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ABSTRACT:

In lieu of advancing a uniform argument, the editors of *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals* sought to capture a range of perspectives on the propriety of anecdotal evidence in the scientific pursuit of animal knowledge. Of interest to this essay is how primatologist Frans de Waal sets the parameters of the discussion in the volume's foreword. He points to Elizabeth Marshall Thomas' *The Hidden Life of Dogs* as a limit case in the explanatory purchase of animal anecdotes. While de Waal is the first to admit that a hardline stance against anthropomorphism does more harm than good, he argues that Thomas goes too far. Her brand of "uncritical anthropomorphism" has no place in the volume ahead.<sup>1</sup>

In debarring Thomas, de Waal draws on a suspicion of animal anecdotes that is centuries old. I have selected de Waal and not an out-and-out skeptic of animal minds to demonstrate the resiliency of this suspicion: even in a volume dedicated to retheorizing the standing of anecdotes, the Cartesian-realist verdict of the anecdotalist as unqualified observer looms large. This essay excavates the early modern prehistory of the so-called impropriety of animal anecdotes, turning to two Cartesian works: Kenelm Digby's *Two Treatises: Of Bodies and of Man's Soul* and Antoine Le Grand's *Dissertation of the Want of Sense and Knowledge in Brute Animals*. My choice of these para-canonical figures is deliberate. Digby and Le Grand, unlike Descartes, turn to actual anecdotal accounts of animal behavior. In subjecting reams upon reams of anecdotes to scrutiny, Digby and Le Grand equate the very observation of intentionality in animals to pleonasm. Their innovation was to argue that the language of intentionality is superfluous to the explication of nonhuman behavior, irrespective of whether they possess minds.

Routing contemporary debates of animal anecdotes through the seventeenth century, we are reminded that de Waal's skepticism is not a foregone conclusion. Anecdotes had to be stripped of their import by the likes of Digby and Le Grand before they came to be associated with intellectual sloth. I hope to demonstrate in this paper that so long as we maintain blanket injunctions against animal anecdotes, we will continue to militate against the very modes of description that make animal minds manifest in the first place. A feminist reclamation of knowledges dismissed as anecdotal, anthropomorphic, and sentimental is a crucial component in the fight for animal wellbeing. To demonstrate this point, the balance of this essay turns to an account of a canine turnspit reported to have "shut the mouth" of

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<sup>1</sup> Frans de Waal, "Foreword," in *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals*, ed. Robert W. Mitchell, Nicholas S. Thompson, and H. Lyn Miles (Albany, 1997), xvi.

the famed Cartesian Antoine Arnauld.<sup>2</sup> Roger du Plessis, the relator of this anecdote, like Thomas, is unabashedly anthropomorphic in his description. A machinic model of cognition, he argues, is simply too impoverished an analytical tool to make sense of a turnspit who conditionally refuses to work. Herein lies the theoretical and, I argue, epiphanic affordance of animal anecdotes. By privileging moments where animals surprise or confound authors, accounts like du Plessis' testify to the irreducibility of animal minds.

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<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Fontaine, qtd. in Karl Steel, *How Not to Make a Human: Pets, Feral Children, Worms, Sky Burial, Oysters* (Minneapolis, 2019), 6.